# Collecting Knowledge in East and West

## *Studies in Honour of Arnoud Vrolijk*

*Edited by*

**Kasper van Ommen and Maurits van den Boogert**



THE HISTORY OF ORIENTAL STUDIES 18

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Collecting Knowledge in East and West

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Arnoud Vrolijk (Photo: Joke Pronk)

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# Preface

For many years, Arnoud Vrolijk has been the curator of Oriental manuscripts and rare books at Leiden University Libraries. His title of *Interpres Legati Warneriani* refers to the role of keeper of the manuscripts bequeathed to the Library of the University of Leiden by Levinus Warner in 1665. Warner's manuscripts and printed books continuing to contribute to the Leiden collection's international reputation until the present day. The scholars and students attracted to Leiden by its Arabic, Turkish, Persian manuscripts and printed works over the years – both the 'core collections' of Scaliger, Golius, Warner, and others, as well as more recent additions to its holdings – came to know Arnoud as an erudite colleague, whose many interests inevitably coincides with theirs. All remember his friendly disposition and Arnoud's willingness to help has enriched the research of innumerable visitors to the Special Collections in his care.

Arnoud is also a scholar in his own right and the author of books, journal articles, and other contributions that either furthered scholarship or made it more accessible beyond the ivory towers of Academia proper. Both the manuscript tradition of Muslim societies, and early printed works from the region have been central to Arnoud's research, which also extended to the history of Western scholarship about the East.

The problem with someone as learned as Arnoud Vrolijk, is that a Festschrift for him is unlikely accurately to reflect his many interest and activities. We have tried, nevertheless, hoping that both Arnoud, and other readers of this collected volume, will forgive us for its unequal coverage of the topics discussed in it.

This volume consists of five parts; the first offers two contributions about print culture in the Netherlands, both relevant to oriental scholarship in the early modern period. The second grouping ('Manuscripts') offers reflections on handwritten texts from the Islamic world – predominantly but not exclusively kept in Leiden – from various genres, covering not just Arabic, but also Persian. Part 3, on scholars and travellers, consists of four chapters that deal with Western collectors of manuscripts and other artefacts (including coins) who travelled to the Muslim world between the seventeenth and the early twentieth centuries. The first two contributions to the fourth section on artefacts and visual culture could just as easily have been grouped under Part 2, but these chapters have a slightly different perspective, the first discussing the preservation of manuscripts, the second chasing the history of one particular seal impression in Islamic manuscripts. A chapter about the nature of ephemera

and their place in the Special Collections of the Leiden University Libraries is followed by two chapters on early photography, one in nineteenth-century Persia, the other in the Arabian Peninsula. The fifth and final part, 'Literature', offers two contributions, one about an eighteenth-century Dutch novel about the prophet Muhammad, the other about the use of Arabic poetry in modern music from the Arab world.

Each of these contributions touches upon at least one of the fields that Arnoud is interested in, has worked on, or both. All also deal with the collection of knowledge, and how it has been brought together, been preserved, and has been – and is being – disseminated in East and West.

The first contribution, by Paul Hoftijzer, sheds light on printing from stereotype plates in Leiden in the final years of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth. This invention was the work of the Lutheran minister Johannes Müller, working with the metal founder Philip van der Meij, and the publishers Jordaan Luchtmans and Cornelis Boutesteyn. In 1700 Müller and Luchtmans set up a separate company aimed at commercial printing books from stereotype plates, bringing in Boutesteyn in 1709, but this enterprise was short-lived. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Luchtmans publishing house continued to use this technology, but they did not manage to set a trend. Their technological innovation would eventually be reinvented in both England and France and then have a major impact on the pre-modern publishing industry.

In the second chapter of Part 1, the collection of Oriental books of the Court of Holland is studied. Discovered in an attic in The Hague by Janus Dousa in 1594, these volumes, previously a reference collection for the lawyers of the Court of Holland, also included many other books written in Hebrew, Chaldean and Arabic. Efforts to transfer the almost 750 volumes to Leiden proved in vain due to legal disputes about their ownership. Based on the handlist produced by Dousa and his son, Kasper van Ommen discusses the relevance of these oriental tomes, which had once been part of the much larger library of Johannes Harius (d. 1532).

The focus of Jan Hogendijk's contribution is the Arabic manuscript Or. 123 (2 or b) in the Leiden University Library. Due its incompleteness – the beginning of the work is missing – Fuat Sezgin initially misidentified it, but he later discovered that it is a fragment of al-Biruni's *Isti'āb al-wujūh al-mumkina fī san'at al-asturlāb* (*The Exhaustive Comprehension of the Possible Ways to Construct the Astrolabe*). The aim of this chapter is to draw attention to the fact that the Leiden library possesses two manuscripts of this important text by al-Biruni, which is generally unknown. Hogendijk describes both manuscripts on the astrolabe, paying attention also to extraordinary diagrams they include.

In 'Manuscripts matter', Petra Sijpesteijn examines the Arabic treatise on book-making, entitled *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb wa-ʿuddat dhawī al-albāb* (A Support for Scribes and a Device for learned Men). It contains detailed instructions on how to produce writing utensils, glue, black, coloured and invisible inks made with carbon, iron-gall, or metals, and includes information on how to produce paper and to bind books. The Leiden University Library holds a copy and a fragment of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*. Sijpesteijn argues that the fluid tradition of technical manuals like this, whereby texts were constantly added, removed, rearranged, combined or changed, created multiple text recensions besides the usual scribal variation within each recension. The two copies kept in Leiden appear to represent different text recensions which connect them to other manuscript copies of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*.

In the third contribution of Part 2, Remke Kruk explains what the authors of medieval Arabic texts about animals imagined a beaver (Ar. *qasṭūriyūn*, 'sea dog'), which is not indigenous to the Middle East, looked like. Consulting works from the genre of *manafiʿ al-ḥayawān* ('useful properties of animals'), it turns out that its testicles were considered an essential ingredient for a variety of medicaments, and being pursued for them he rips them off with his claws. Many Arab authors repeated this myth of self-castration, but some agreed with Dioscorides that this was nonsense. Kruk's chapter includes an image of the beaver from the Arabic Dioscorides manuscript preserved in the Leiden University Library, Or. 289.

Offering another example of how difficult it can be to catalogue manuscripts accurately, Nico Kaptein discusses an astronomical treatise kept in the University of Michigan Library. Supplementing the original catalogue description, he identifies its author as Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi (1860–1916), a scholar from West Sumatra who moved to Mecca in 1870 and stayed there for the rest of his life. Although the copy kept in Ann Arbor is defective, Kaptein shows that it concerns *al-Jawahir al-naqiyya fi l-aʿmal al-jaybiyyah*. He also discusses the short treatise bound together with Ahmad Khatib's text, and how it came to be include in the same volume.

Gabrielle van den Berg offers a discussion of the Leiden Or. 8773, a Qajar manuscript copy of the tragic love story of *Laylī-u Majnūn*, but in a lesser-known version composed in 895/1489–1490 by the poet Maktabī Shīrāzī. After the famous versions authored by Niẓāmī, Amīr Khusraw, Jāmī, and Hātifī, many other Persian versions of the story of Laylī and Majnūn were composed, but many remain unpublished and exist only in manuscript form. This chapter draws attention to aspects of Qajar bookbinding and paper. In particular, it focuses on the Leiden manuscript's painted illustrations, which show how the story was perceived in Qajar times. Van den Berg also provides an inventory of the paintings in the manuscript.

Relatively little of the correspondence of Johann Michael Wansleben (1635–1679) appears to have survived, which makes the three letters in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, written by Wansleben to Francesco Redi between 1665 and 1671, and introduced and published here by Alastair Hamilton, so valuable. They contain details about Wansleben's life and movements not to be found elsewhere, as do the other pieces included in the appendix of this article – letters from Redi published in 1811 and the epistle dedicatory to the grand duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand II de' Medici, in the manuscript version of Wansleben's *Relazione dello stato presente dell'Egitto* in the British Library.

In his contribution, Maurits van den Boogert offers a survey of the 20 *alba amicorum* in which Jacobus Golius (b. 1596), the Professor of Oriental languages at the University of Leiden from 1626 until his death in 1667, wrote one or more entries. Golius' contributions to these albums draw attention not only to his personal motto – a fragment from an Arabic poem – but also to his network of friends and colleagues. In one album he wrote a few lines from a poem that was (and still is) very popular in Morocco, but which is not well-known elsewhere. The fact that he wrote two rather lengthy and personal notes for Hottinger within a short period of time confirms earlier research that suggests that their friendship was particularly close.

In a period when few Western students of the Middle East were interested in contemporary Ottoman numismatics, the Prussian envoy to the Ottoman Sublime Porte, Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817) was an exception. Not only did he bring home, in 1790, a collection of circa 2,000 coins, but he had also already catalogued them. On the basis of both the coins and the unpublished catalogue, which are preserved in Berlin's Münzkabinett, Christoph Rauch's article offers an initial survey of what we know about Diez's collection and his numismatic knowledge. Both the catalogue as well as his collection.

The renowned Arabist, Islamicist, and Africanist Eugen Mittwoch (1876–1942) undertook two extended trips to the Near East and Egypt, in 1899 and in 1907, travelling to Constantinople, Syria, and Palestine on a mission organized by the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden to investigate education among Jews in these locations. Upon his return, Mittwoch published extensively about his experiences, and he also gave public lectures. Sabine Schmidtke here offers a critical annotated edition of the manuscript of one such lecture, preserved in the Eugen Mittwoch Archive at the National Library of Israel, that offers insights into his personal encounters on his travels.

In the first chapter of Part 4, Karin Scheper addresses the tension between the practice of collecting manuscripts for study, their actual handling by scholars and students, and the ambition to preserve the manuscripts as

precious artefacts in their own right. For each manuscript, curators and conservators work with a documentation system, in which various aspects of the artefacts condition prior to treatment are recorded. The conservation report which is then made includes information about the reason(s) for intervention, the choices made, and condition and appearance of the manuscript post treatment. Based on her own extensive work on manuscripts from the collections for which Arnoud was the curator, Scheper here shares four case studies that illustrate – also literally – her interactions with manuscripts, why they were necessary, and how treatment changes their appearance.

On a mission to catalogue documentary manuscript notes of owners, readers, and endowers in manuscripts from the Arab world, Boris Liebrenz came across a seal impression left in a manuscript now kept in Leiden by a man called Muhammad ʿAli al-munajjim, who must have lived sometime between the middle of the tenth/sixteenth century and the early eleventh/seventeenth century in Istanbul. It was the seal's picture of a bird of prey descending on a snake that caught Liebrenz' eye. Arguing that this seemingly unique seal imprint actually represents a marginal tradition, this illustrated contribution also makes us aware of just how little we know about the production and use of seals in the Middle East.

In 'Trash or Treasure?' Birte Kristiansen explores some of the Leiden University Libraries' collections of ephemera relating to the Middle East. She draws attention to larger collections like the photographs made and collected by Albertus Hotz (1855–1930), a Dutch entrepreneur who lived and travelled through Iran; the holdings brought together under the auspices of the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM), and institute that no longer exists, but the collections of which remain relevant; and to smaller collections like the Egyptian film posters Arnoud Vrolijk acquired for Leiden in 2016.

Hendrik Dunlop (1867–1944) was a Dutch businessman in Qajar Persia, whose activities there have so far remained in the shadow of those of Hotz, Dunlop's employer. In addition to leaving extensive travel accounts, parts of Dunlop's collection of early photographs have also survived. In Tehran he also acquired manuscripts of Bábi and Bahá'í texts, and through both his writings and his photographs, he was the first to spread knowledge about the Bahá'í religion in the Netherlands. Based on these written and visual sources, Corien Vuurman's contribution gives Dunlop the attention he deserves.

Another valuable photographic collection, here studied by Luit Mols, was produced by the Leiden Arabist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) and the Meccan physician Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ghaffār ibn ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Baghdādī (died ca. 1902). From their experiments with photographic equipment in

improvised studios in Mecca and Jeddah between 1884 and 1889, more than 400 portraits have survived in the Special Collections of the Leiden University Libraries. Preserving the images of both Arabian Bedouins and local Sharifs and European diplomats and merchants and Ottoman officers – sometimes even depicting women – this collection of portraits offers a unique late-nineteenth-century visual archive of Western Arabian society.

Although the rise of the historical novel as a literary genre is usually situated in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Richard van Leeuwen discusses the Dutch novel *Mohammed, of de hervorming van de Arabieren* ('Muhammad, or the reformation of the Arabs') by the Dutch playwright Johannes Nomsz, which was published already in 1780. Now largely forgotten, the book is an interesting example of the Dutch Protestant view of Islam and Muhammad, while at the same time representing a new discursive and literary form, combining historical evidence with narrative techniques. Furthermore, Nomsz' novel reflects both eighteenth-century debates in the fields of religion and scholarship, and shows traces of literary orientalism in the artistic sense.

The volume's last contribution focuses on the singing of fine poetry, a prominent tradition in Arab culture for centuries that continues to be relevant today. Based on the compositions performed by artists of various Arab backgrounds in the Netherlands over the past two decades, Anne van Oostrum discusses two case studies: the Moroccan-Belgium group *Qayna* – the name referring to the singing enslaved girls who sometimes accompanied reciting poets in the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula – and Moroccan singer Walid Ben Selim, who, during interviews, shed light on their choice of lyrics and compositions. The chapter includes descriptions of songs that illustrate the intriguing interplay between heritage (*al-turath*) and 'new music' (*al-musiqa-l-jadida*) which is also open to non-Arab(ic) influences.

*Maurits van den Boogert*
*Kasper van Ommen*

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# PART 1

## *Print Culture*

∴

CHAPTER 1

# Early Stereotype Printing in Leiden

*Paul Hoftijzer*

In 1708 two remarkable books were published in Leiden. The first was an edition of the New Testament in Syriac and Latin, edited by Johannes Leusden, professor of Hebrew at Utrecht University, and Carolus Schaaf, lector of oriental languages in Leiden. The second was an accompanying dictionary of the Syriac New Testament compiled by Schaaf.[1] Both works were reprinted in 1709, and again in 1717, an indication that there was a considerable demand for them (Fig. 1.1; Fig. 1.2). The remarkable nature of the books, however, did not lie in their content or popularity. Editions of texts in oriental languages, dictionaries, grammars and historical and philological studies had been the bread and butter of Leiden oriental scholars since the foundation of the university in 1575, vide the work of, among others, Franciscus Raphelengius sr., Thomas Erpenius, Jacob Golius, Constantin l'Empereur, Johannes Nisselius and Theodorus Petraeus, and, of lesser fame, Carolus Schaaf. And with it a local publishing industry had developed capable of producing these works with the necessary oriental type material: Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac or Aramaic, Samaritan and Ethiopian.[2]

What made these two books of special interest is that they were printed from stereotype plates, and as such constituted one of the first examples of a technological innovation that a century later, after being re-invented in both England and France, would have an enormous impact on the mass production and distribution of printed texts.[3] This invention was the work of the Leiden Lutheran minister Johannes Müller, with the collaboration of the metal founder Philip van der Meij, and the publishers Jordaan Luchtmans and Cornelis Boutesteyn. The earliest product of the new printing method was *Ars magna et admirabilis*, an illustrated self-help book for students to memorize the contents of

1 Curiously, copies of these first editions are not in the collection of Leiden University Libraries.

2 For an overview of specifically Arabic printing in Leiden, see A. Vrolijk, 'Arabic Typography in the Netherlands. A Brief Introduction', *TXT. Exploring the Boundaries of the Book*, 1 (2014), pp. 146–160.

3 See for example Jeffrey M. Makala, *Publishing Plates. Stereotyping and Electrotyping in Nineteenth-Century US Print Culture* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2023).

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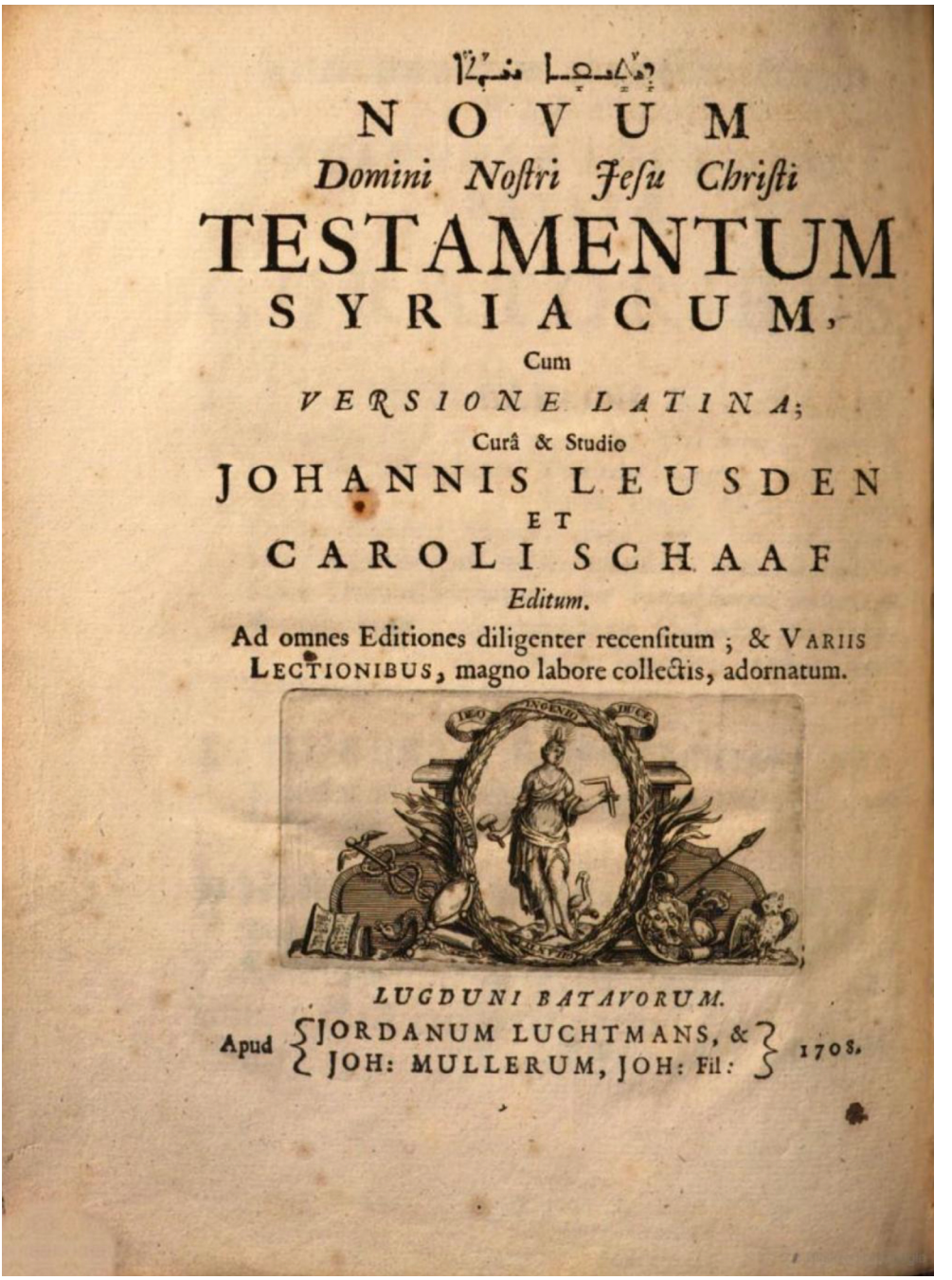


FIGURE 1.1 Title-page of the first edition of the Syriac New Testament, edited by Johannes Leusden and Carolus Schaaf, 1708 [University Library, Maastricht]

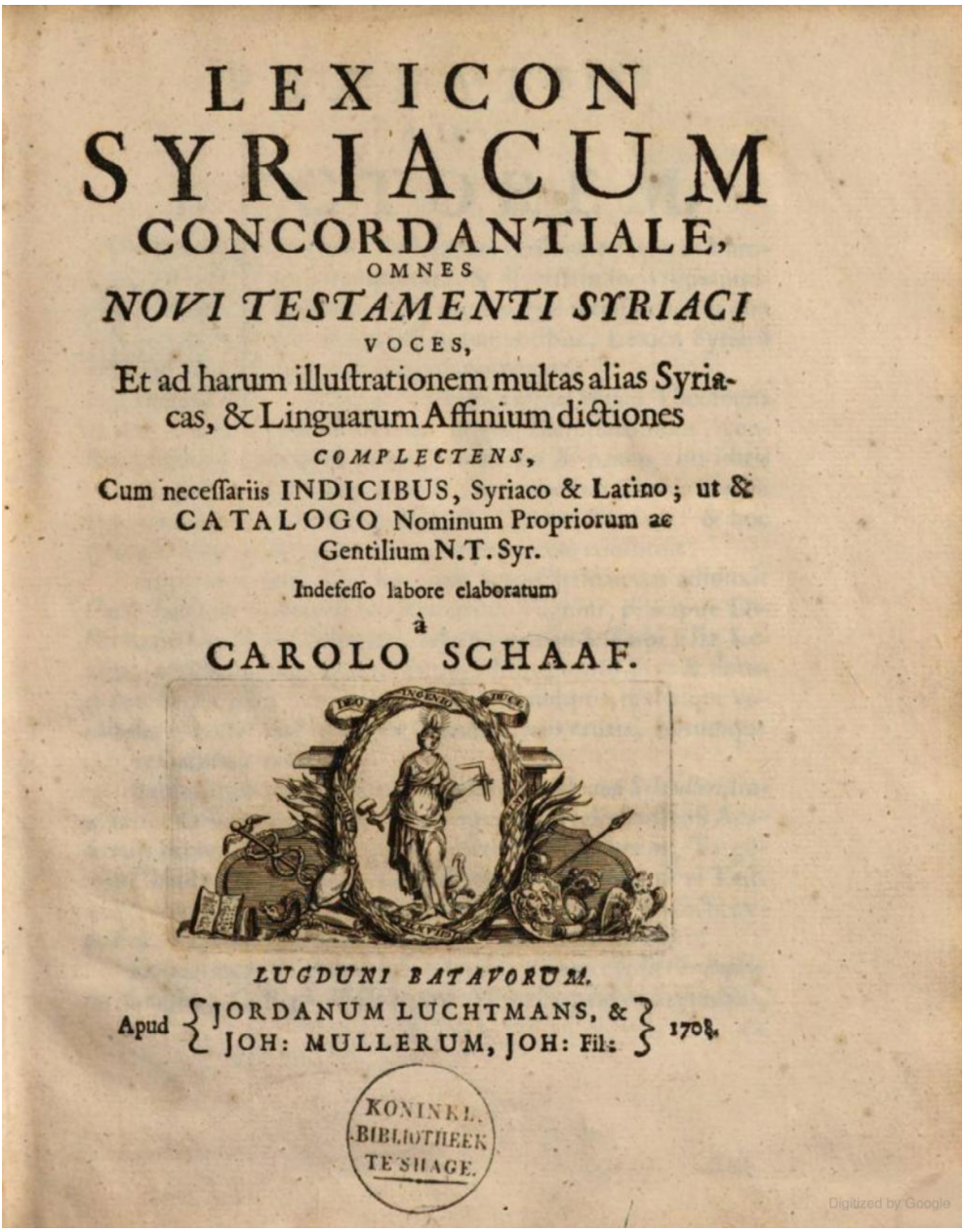
LEXICON
SYRIACUM
CONCORDANTIALE,
OMNES
*NOVI TESTAMENTI SYRIACI*
VOCES,
Et ad harum illuſtrationem multas alias Syriacas, & Linguarum Affinium dictiones
*COMPLECTENS,*
Cum neceſſariis INDICIBUS, Syriaco & Latino; ut & CATALOGO Nominum Propriorum ac Gentilium N.T. Syr.
Indefeſſo labore elaboratum
à
CAROLO SCHAAF.
*LUGDUNI BATAVORUM.*
Apud {JORDANUM LUCHTMANS, & JOH: MULLERUM, JOH: Fil:} 1708.
KONINKL. BIBLIOTHEEK 'S HAGE.
Digitized by Google

FIGURE 1.2 Title-page of the first edition of the Syriac-Latin dictionary of the New Testament, compiled by Carolus Schaaf, 1708 [Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague]




FIGURE 1.3 Title-page of the anonymous *Ars magna et admirabilis*, published by Jordaan Luchtmans in 1695 [Amsterdam University Library]

the *Corpus juris*, published in 1695 by Jordaan Luchtmans[4] (Fig. 1.3). Possibly Müller had been involved in writing the work as well, as in 1681 he had worked on a similar mnemotechnical guide for the New Testament.[5] In 1700 Müller and Luchtmans set up a company, aimed at establishing a commercial enterprise of printing books from stereotype plates, which in 1709 was expanded with the publisher Cornelis Boutesteyn. The company survived until the 1720s, after which Jordaan Luchtmans' successors Samuel sr. and jr. and Johannes Luchtmans continued stereotype printing until the end of the eighteenth century. This article aims to shed more light on this undertaking.[6]

## 1 Stereotyping: the Plates

Stereotype, or stereoplate, printing was a solution to the problem printers and publishers faced when printing texts for which there was a constant demand. In the age of printing with movable type it was normal practice to redistribute type after printing, in order to make it available for other print jobs. Only in exceptional cases, such as in the production of church books and bibles – one of the mainstays of the early modern publishing industry –, and only in larger printing establishments, would the typeset pages be kept standing, that is tied up with cord ready to be used again for a reprint. Having such a large quantity of type locked up was, however, expensive. Moreover, there was always the risk that the typeset pages would fall apart and had to be reset. It is, therefore, no surprise that printers were looking for ways to permanently fix the type in such a way that the typeset pages could easily be stored without getting damaged, with the additional advantage that no correction was needed anymore before reprinting. There are indications that the Amsterdam Jewish printer Joseph Athias had found a way to immobilize the type of the pages of the English bibles which he, together with his business partner Susanna Veselaer, widow of the publisher Jan Jacobsz Schipper, printed in vast quantities for the British market. Detailed information on what this invention actually implied,

4 Full title: *Ars magna et admirabilis, speciminibus variis confirmata, qua Pandectarum tituli, eorumq*[*ue*] *praecipua materia, ope figurarum emblematicarum … opportunè in usum transferri possunt* (Leiden: Jordaan Luchtmans, 1695).

5 Cf. H.C. Rogge, 'Een raadselachtig boek', *De Navorscher*, 48 (1898), pp. 534–555, esp. pp. 545–547.

6 For a brief note on Leiden stereotype printing, see M. Smolenaars, 'Een unieke bijbel in de UB Leiden', *Omslag, Bulletin van de universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden en het Scaliger Instituut*, 2 (2009), pp. 6–7.

however, is lacking. It appears that Athias had succeeded in soldering the type at the reverse side of the page block.[7]

Much stronger is the evidence concerning the invention, production and use of stereotype plates by Johannes Müller. First of all, there are the stereotype plates. Although most of the plates were melted down in the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when the books for which they were made were no longer in demand or because the plates had worn out by the repeated print runs, some of them were kept. According to W.H.J. van Westreenen van Tiellandt, who in 1833 on the request of the Dutch government wrote a report on the Dutch claims to the invention of stereotype printing, he had been able to save a small number of plates coming from varying origins, which subsequently ended up in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague.[8] In addition there are 21 plates which were given on loan by the Leiden publishing firm E.J. Brill, the successors of Luchtmans, to the Leiden Municipal Museum 'De Lakenhal'.[9] All of these plates are thin (up to 8 mm) casts made from lead, most of them still mounted on wood (Fig. 1.4). They can be identified as coming from the Syriac New Testament, two Dutch bibles in folio and quarto, and a small Greek New Testament (see below and the Appendix),[10] but there also are plates with fleurons and printer's marks and even a *cognossement* or acknowledgement of goods being shipped overseas, the kind of ephemera that was printed in large quantities. It appears that after the casting of these plates the non-printing areas were further hollowed out in order to make the plates lighter and save metal, but a further material analysis of them is warranted, also with regard to their alloy (Fig. 1.5).

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7 For a critical overview of the discussion, see K. Gnirrep, 'Standing Type or Stereotype in the Seventeenth Century', *Quaerendo*, 27 (1997), pp. 19–45.

8 W.H.J. Baron van Westreenen van Tiellandt, *Verslag der naspooringen, omtrent de oorspronkelijke uitvinding en het vroegste gebruik der stereotypische drukwijze, gedaan, op uitnoodiging van het gouvernement* (Den Haag: Algemene Lands Drukkerij, 1833), pp. 32–34 and 36–38. The text of the booklet is in Dutch and French. For the plates, still preserved at the National Library of the Netherlands, with accompanying prints and notes, see shelf-mark KW 69 A 23 I–V and the description at <https://webggc.oclc.org/cbs/DB=2.37/XMLPRS=Y/PPN?PPN=310817595> (10 August 2024). I thank Erik Geleijns (KB) for this information.

9 Municipal Museum De Lakenhal, inv. nos. 1806–1807, 1810–1813, 1815–1817, 1821–1823, 1825–1826, 1831–1834, 1839, B 1559. The set is accompanied by proofs of some of the plates (inv. no. 1828). For images, see <https://www.lakenhal.nl/nl/zoeken/collectie?q=STEREOTYPE> (10 August 2024).

10 Lakenhal, inv. nos. 1817 and 1821, are in fact made-up formes of six and twelve pages, the latter being half of the first quire, with the title-page, of the Greek New Testament, published in 1716.



FIGURE 1.4 Stereotype plate of the title-page of the Dutch New Testament, Bible, quarto edition [Leiden Municipal Museum 'De Lakenhal']

The remaining stereotype plates make clear that Müller's invention was totally different from that of Athias. He had found a way to make casts of the typeset pages and even formes (a set of pages for the printing of one side of a sheet of paper) of a book, possibly by means of a layer of 'Brussels earth', a very fine sandy loam or clay which was (and still is) used by copper founders. In it the typeset page or forme was gently pressed to create a matrix or mould (in later stereotype printing it was named a flong), into which a mixture of molten lead and antimony was poured, thus creating the stereotype plate or cliché. This also explains the mention in various sources of the contribution of a man named 'Van der Mey'.[11] This surely is Philip van der Meij, about whom not much is known, but who at his marriage in 1686 was said to be a *beeldgieter*,

11 Cf. A.G. Camus, *Histoire et procédés du polytypage et de la stéréotypie* (Paris: Antoine Auguste Renouard, 1802), p. 8, for a quote from a letter written on 24 June 1801 by S. and J. Luchtmans to Camus' publisher Renouard: 'Les planches ont été faites par un artiste nommé Van der Mey vers le commencement du siècle qui vient d'écouler et aux frais de feu mon grand-père Samuel Luchtmans libraire, qui en même temps et par ledit artiste a fait préparer de la même manière les planches stéréotypes d'une Bible hollandaise *in-folio*.'

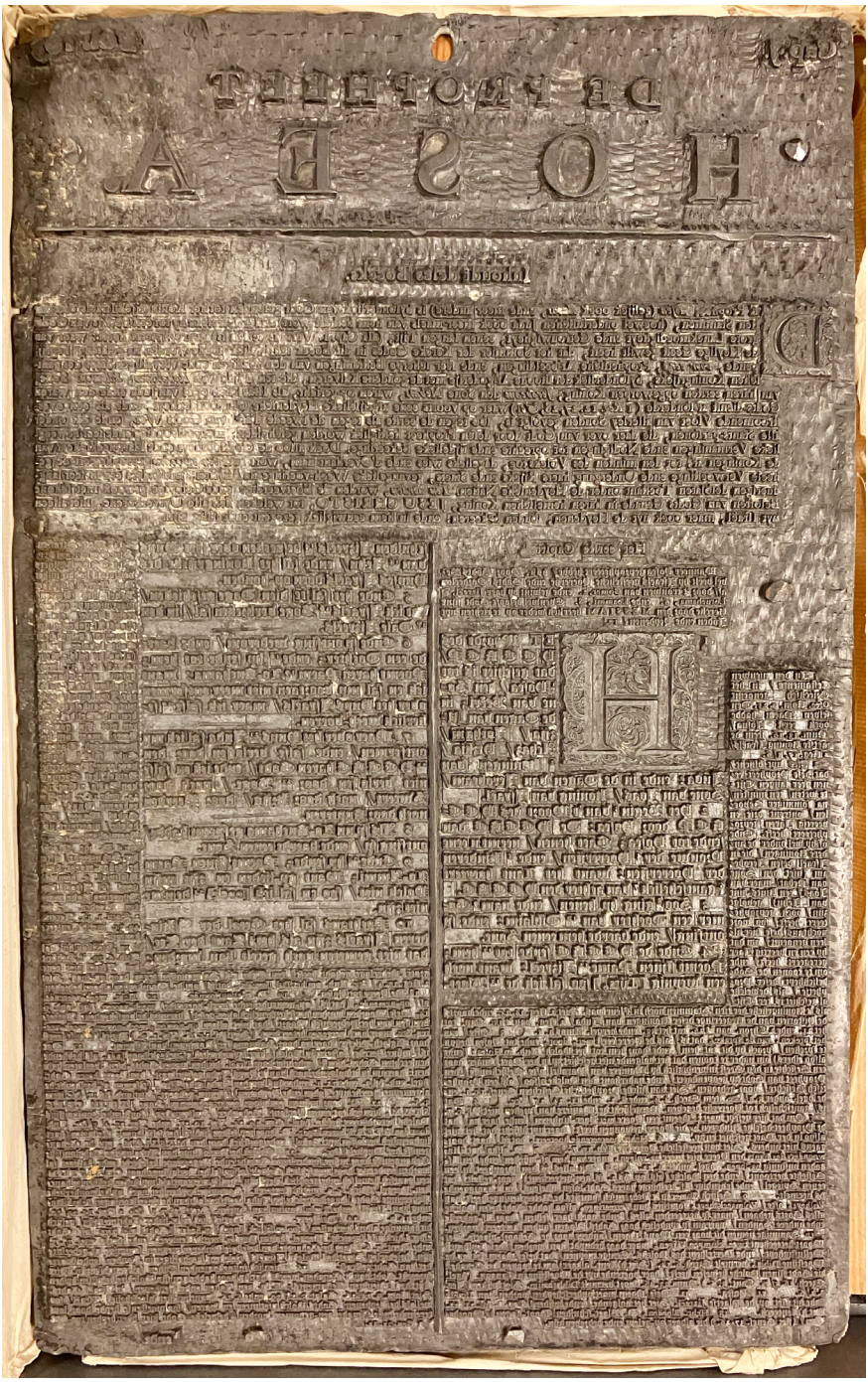

FIGURE 1.5 Stereotype plate of the first page of the Old Testament Book of Hosea, Bible, folio edition [Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague]

image founder.[12] There may be a connection here with the famous Leiden family of copper founders and instrument makers Van Musschenbroeck. Van der Meij owned a recreational garden outside the city gates which bordered on that of Adriaen van Musschenbroeck, while Jordaan Luchtmans, Müller's first partner, was married to Sara van Musschenbroek, a niece of Adriaen.[13] Philip van der Meij, moreover, was the father of the Leiden society painter Hieronymus van der Meij, who later painted several portraits of members of the Luchtmans family.[14]

## 2 Stereotyping: the Books

Besides the surviving stereotype plates there are the books printed from them. In the Appendix a list is given of the well over thirty publications printed from Müller's stereotype plates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first was the 1695 *Ars magna* mentioned above, which was reprinted by Samuel Luchtmans and Dirk Haak in 1728. The last was a folio edition of the Bible in Dutch, printed in Amsterdam in 1791 by Jan Barend Elwe, who had acquired the by now rather worn out stereotype plates from the Luchtmans firm. A curious early publication is Johann Habermann's *Christelijcke gebeeden ende danckseggingen*, a Lutheran steady-seller first published in 1565 and re-published in 1701 by the little-known Leiden printer Gabriel Kloos. He had a connection with Müller as he too had a German background – Müller came from Frankfurt, Kloos from Bremen – and was a member of the Lutheran church in Leiden. Besides, he oversaw the obligatory training of Müller – nota bene a Lutheran minister! – to become master printer of the Leiden guild of printers and booksellers in 1707.[15] Only one copy of this small (16°) book is known, in the Prosper

12 The Leiden betrothal of Philip van der Meij and Jannetje Rijs is dated 1 January 1686 (Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken [ELO], Marriage reconds of the Dutch Reformed Church).

13 Philip van der Meij acquired his garden in Leiderdorp in 1683 (ELO, Transportregister Leiderdorp, inv. no. 1601, f. 103a). Sara van Musschenbroeck was a daughter of the copper founder and lampmaker Joost Adriaensz van Musschenbroeck. She was betrothed to Jordaan Luchtmans on 24 May 1683 (ELO, Marriage records of the Dutch Reformed Church). Their son Samuel was engaged to his niece Cornelia van Musschenbroek on 1 June 1721 (ELO, Marriage records of the Dutch Reformed Church). Interestingly, the Van Musschenbroecks descended via Sara's grandfather Adriaen Joosten van Musschenbroek from Christopher Plantin. Cf. C.A. Crommelin, 'Leidsche leden van het geslacht Van Musschenbroek', *Leids jaarboekje*, 31 (1939), pp. 134–149, esp. the genealogy on p. 148.

14 A.J.M. Krikke-Frijns, 'Hieronymus van der Mij. Een achttiende-eeuwse Leidse schilder', *Leids jaarboekje*, 81 (1989), pp. 84–103.

15 ELO, Archive of the Guild of Printers and Booksellers, inv. no. 83a, f. 79r (1 December 1707). But the matter appears to be more complicated. In his *Boek-zaal der Nederduytsche bybels*

Marchand collection in Leiden University Library, which is no coincidence, as Marchand was preparing a second edition of his *Histoire de l'Imprimerie*, first published in The Hague in 1740, in which he intended to pay attention to the invention of stereotype printing[16] (Fig. 1.6).

The edition of the Syriac New Testament and the accompanying dictionary by Carolus Schaaf took considerable time to prepare, if only because of the large number of stereotype plates that had to be cast: over 750 for the New Testament and nearly 800 for the dictionary![17] The books came out in 1708 with Jordaan Luchtmans and Johannes Müller and were reprinted a year after, now with Cornelis Boutesteyn as partner, and again in 1717, with the imprint of Johannes Müller,[18] the widow and son of Cornelis Boutesteyn – he had died in 1712 – and Samuel Luchtmans, who had succeeded his father in the family business[19] (Fig. 1.7). Next, again after much preparation, came hardly less voluminous editions of the Dutch 'authorized version' or *Statenbijbel*, accompanied by separate editions of the psalms – the standard translation of Petrus Dathenus set to music by Cornelis de Leeuw –, in quarto in 1712 and 1715 (only the Bible) and in folio in 1718. In 1716 followed a duodecimo edition of the New Testament in Latin and Greek, edited by Johannes Leusden and published *sumptibus societatis*, i.e. the partnership of Müller, Samuel Luchtmans and the heirs of Cornelis Boutesteyn. After 1724, when the company was dissolved, Samuel Luchtmans and later his sons Samuel jr. and Johannes brought out two editions of the folio bible (1728 with the Amsterdam publishers Wetstein and Smith; 1757) and seven of the quarto bible (1721, 1731–32, 1737–38, 1750, 1762, 1775, 1785–86), while the Latin-Greek New Testament was printed three

(Amsterdam: Hendrik Vieroot, 1732), p. 825, the bibliographer Isaac Le Long wrote that he was in possession of a letter from Johannes Müller, dated 28 June 1709, in which Müller claimed that the booklet was the work of his son Willem, who had also signed the preface. Indeed, one finds the initials 'W.M.' at the end of the preface, but nothing is known of any further involvement of Willem Müller in this or any other project of his father.

16 The shelf-mark of the unique Leiden copy is 512 G 22. Cf. Van Westreenen, *Verslag der naspooringen*, pp. 44–48. He reproduces a manuscript note by Marchand on stereotype printing, which he had been able to acquire at an auction in Paris for the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (The National Library of the Netherlands), where it is still kept among other papers of Marchand (shelf-mark 71 K 46).

17 The number may have been smaller if the plates were cast in formes, but as these were quarto editions, that is unlikely.

18 This was another son of Johannes sr., who had died in 1710.

19 According to the title-pages, both were corrected and enlarged second editions. If true, it suggests that new stereotype plates had been made. The collational formulas, however, are identical to the first edition.




FIGURE 1.6 Title-page of Johann Habermann, *Christelijcke gebeeden ende danckseggingen*, Leiden: Gabriel Kloos, 1701 [Leiden University Library]

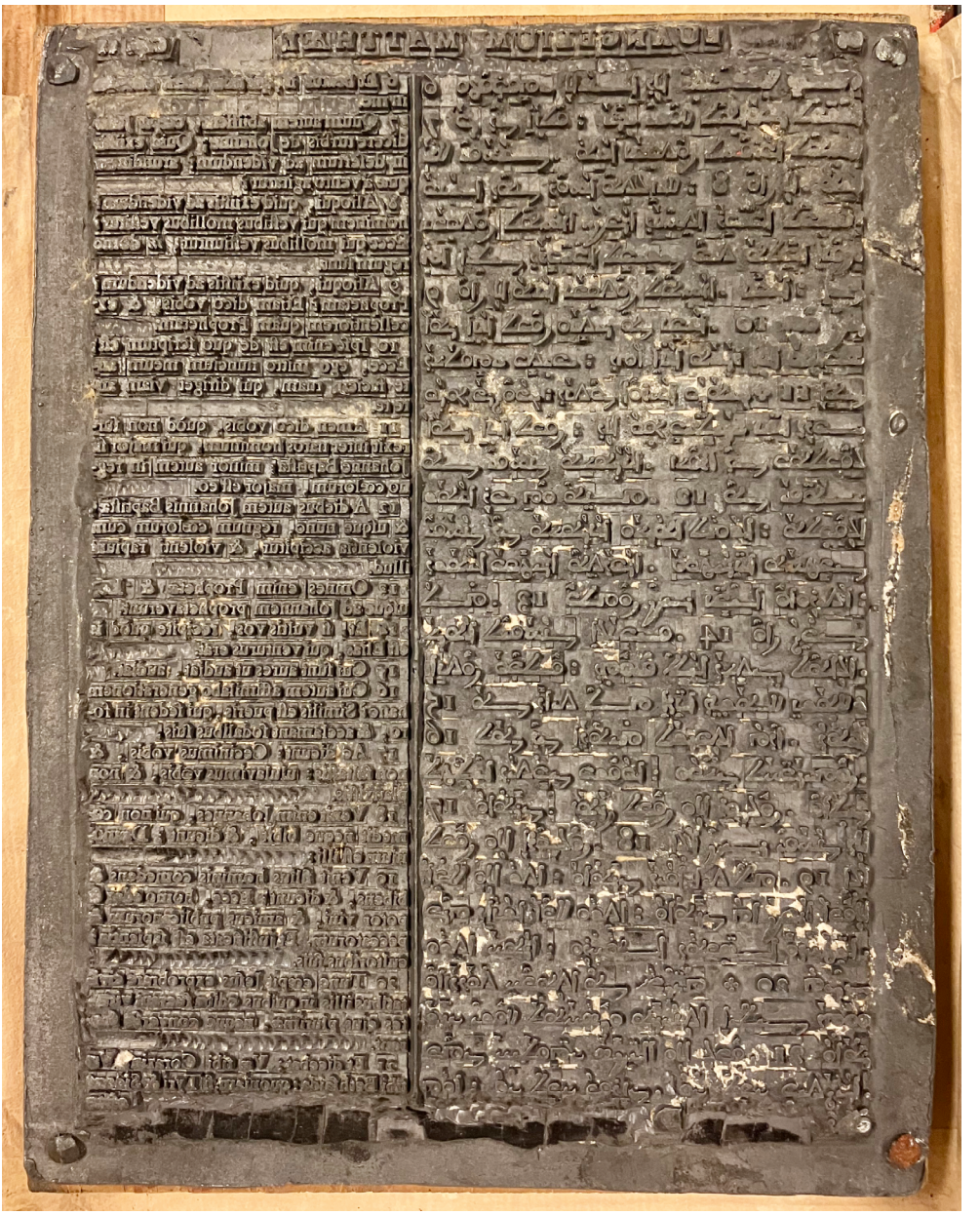

FIGURE 1.7 Stereotype plate of the first page of the Gospel of Matthew in the Syriac New Testament [Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague]




FIGURE 1.8 Title-page and engraved frontispiece of the last edition of the Greek New Testament, 1785 [Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague]

more times (1751, 1765, 1785) (Fig. 1.8). In every reprint, only the imprint on the title-page had to be adjusted, which meant that in the case of the quarto bible and psalms the original printer's mark of Cornelis Boutesteyn remained on the title-page up to the very last editions.[20]

20 This explains why on the surviving plate of the title-page of the New Testament in the quarto Bible (Municipal Museum 'De Lakenhal', Leiden) the Boutesteyn printer's mark is present, but the imprint with the names of the publishers and the year of publication is lacking. For the title-pages a second print-run with the imprint set in regular type was therefore necessary.

## 3 The Partnership of Müller, Luchtmans and Boutesteyn

Without a doubt this was a large and very time consuming and capital intensive undertaking, particularly with regard to the many experiments, preparations and investments that had to be made for the production of thousands of stereotype plates and the printing of the books. Regretfully, the contract which Johannes Müller and Jordaen Luchtmans drew up for their collaboration in 1700 is not preserved, possibly to keep the invention secret.[21] Luckily, a copy of a new contract that was drawn up in 1709 is kept in the archive of the Leiden notary Johannes van Swanenburg.[22] It is an extensive document, consisting of thirteen articles, which provides much information about the previous contract. The cause for making a new contract was that on 18 June 1708, Jordaan Luchtmans, founder of the Luchtmans firm, had died. Apparently the original arrangement was that Müller and Luchtmans each owned half of the company. His widow Sara van Musschenbroeck now wished to hand over half of her share, or one quarter, to Cornelis Boutesteyn for the substantial sum of fl. 6032. It means that the investment of the entire company amounted to fl. 24,128. And because the intended results of the company had not yet been achieved, the three partners committed themselves to a renewed agreement. In brief this is what the new contract stipulated.

The ownership of the stereotype foundry and printing office located on Cellebroersgracht (the present Kaiserstraat), which was originally acquired by Müller and had an estimated value of fl. 1000, was now shared by the three partners, Müller owning 50 per cent and Sara van Musschenbroeck and Cornelis Boutesteyn each 25 per cent. The – in all likelihood – private contract that was drawn up on 4 July 1696 between Müller and Luchtmans on the one side, and Philip van der Meij on the other, remained in force, as there was still a substantial amount of work for Van der Meij to be done. All the stock, costs and revenues of the company were shared following the ownership ratio mentioned above. Everything relating to the acquisition of type material and other necessities for the foundry and printing office, including the purchase of lead and antimony for casting and paper for printing, as well as the employment or dismissal of personnel in the foundry annex printing office had to be done with the consent of all three partners. The work that had already been undertaken, that is the preparations for the publication of a Dutch bible in folio and

21 Although the Luchtmans archives have been preserved in Amsterdam University Library, a copy of the contract could not be found there as well.

22 ELO, Old Notarial Archive (ONA), inv. no. 1468, no. 26 (21 March 1709).

quarto, an English bible in folio,[23] the Book of Psalms with the Catechism and Liturgy, the Syriac New Testament and dictionary, the Greek New Testament, the *Ars magna*, and Habermann's *Gebeeden*, as well as for the printing of music paper in folio, quarto and octavo, was to be continued without fail, until these books were finished and ready to be sold.

Other articles deal with the admission of new partners, who had to be instructed by Müller in the art of making the moulds and casting the stereotype plates, and what should happen in case one of the partners died. The decision as to whose names were to be printed in the imprint on the title page, and who would sell the books and at what price also had to be taken in consultation of all partners. Special attention is given to the dissolution of the company at a given moment in time. If the partners would not want to sell the foundry and printing office, a fair division had to be made of the stereotype plates and printed books, which were grouped in two sections of 50 per cent each: 1) the Dutch folio bible and the Syriac New Testament and dictionary; and 2) the English bible in folio and the Dutch bible in quarto. To these were added the plates of the remaining books. Any differences, also with regard to the management of the company, had to be solved by the verdict of a maximum of five neutral persons.

The contract is quite outspoken about the role of Müller as the driving force of the undertaking. He is explicitly named as the inventor of the new printing technique and as a reward for his great diligence, work and time in running the foundry and printing office, but also for his openness in sharing his invention with his partners, he was to receive a bonus of 50 copies of each title produced by the company, half of them printed on finest paper, half on ordinary paper, and the same number again in case of a reprint. Moreover, he was allowed to dedicate copies of the Dutch bibles in folio and quarto and of the English bible in folio to persons or institutions of his choice. Any remunerations following from that he could keep (Fig. 1.9).

The new contract between Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans and Cornelis Boutesteyn remained in force until at least 1718. In that year all the publications that had been envisaged in the first and second contract had appeared in at least one edition. But the road had not been easy. Johannes Müller died in 1710 and his place in the company was taken over by his widow Wilhelmina de Hulter and later her son Johannes jr. Two years later Cornelis Boutesteyn died, after which his widow, Jannetje Christiaens, informed the

23 This large English bible as yet remains unidentified, as it will have come out with an English imprint.

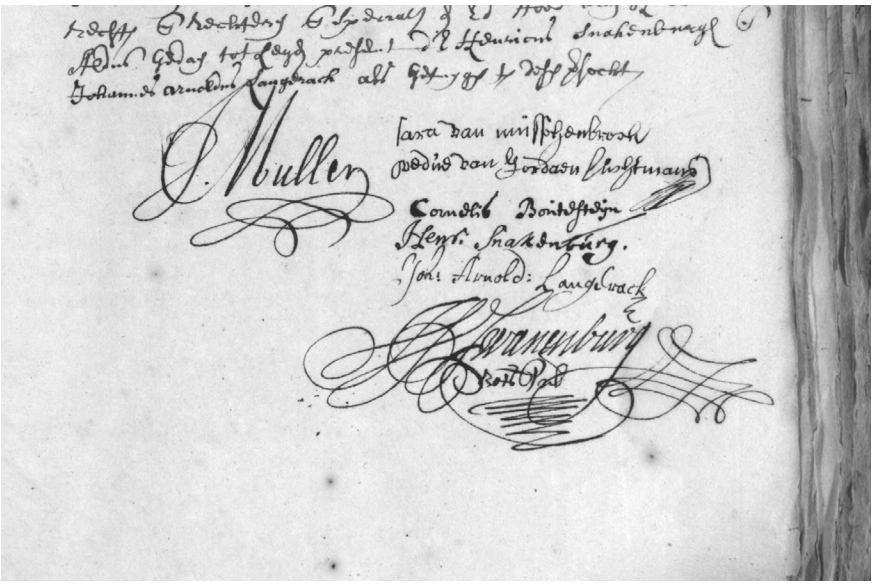

FIGURE 1.9 Signatures of the partners in the 1709 contract of the company: Johannes Müller, Sara van Musschenbroek, widow of Jordaan Luchtmans, and Cornelis Boutesteyn. Witnesses were the rector of the Leiden Latin School, Hendrik Snakenburg, and the young bookseller Johannes Arnoldus Langerack. [Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, Old Notarial Archive, inv. no. 1468, no. 26 (21 March 1709)]

other partners that she desired to quit the company.[24] Yet, her name, and that of her son Pieter can still be found on reprints until 1718.[25] Somewhat puzzling is the advertisement in the *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant* for an auction on 16 April 1716 of the stereotype plates of the Dutch and English bibles, the Syrian New Testament and dictionary, the Greek New Testament and Habermann's *Gebeeden*, of all the unsold books, and, separately, of the printing office 'at the house of P. van der My' on Cellebroersgracht, consisting of a printing press and its accessories and a variety of printing types, many of which had never been used[26] (Fig. 1.10).

24 ELO, ONA, inv. no. 1710, no. 199 (14-11-1712).

25 Cf. the advertisement in the *Oprechte Haerlemsche Coutrant* of 8 February 1718 by Johannes Müller jr., the widow of Cornelis Boutesteyn (but not Pieter Boutesteyn) and Samuel Luchtmans for the publication of a bible in folio with annotations, printed on *mediaen* (large) paper and corrected by the collective body of Leiden ministers of the church.

26 *Oprechte Haerlemsche courant*, 31 March 1716. A copy of the catalogue of printing types that was to be had from various printers and booksellers across the country has not survived. It is conceivable that the auction never took place. The mention of Philip van der

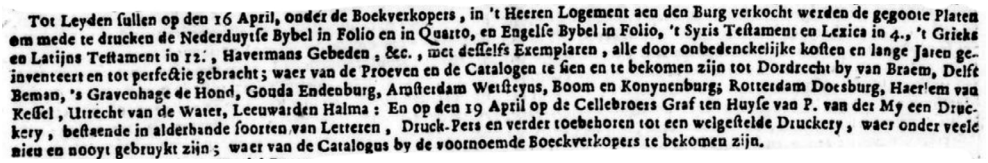
Tot Leyden ſullen op den 16 April, onder de Boekverkopers, in 't Heeren Logement aen den Burg verkocht werden de gegoote Platen om mede te drucken de Nederduytſe Bybel in Folio en in Quarto, en Engelſe Bybel in Folio, 't Syris Teſtament en Lexica in 4., 't Grieks en Latijns Teſtament in 12., Havermans Gebeden, &c., met deſſelfs Exemplaren, alle door onbedenckelijke koſten en lange Jaren geinventeert en tot perfectie gebracht; waer van de Proeven en de Catalogen te ſien en te bekomen zijn tot Dordrecht by van Braem, Delft Beman, 's Gravenhage de Hond, Gouda Endenburg, Amſterdam Weſteyns, Boom en Konynenburg; Rotterdam Doesburg, Haerlem van Keſſel, Utrecht van de Water, Leeuwarden Halma: En op den 19 April op de Cellebroers Graf ten Huyſe van P. van der My een Druckery, beſtaende in alderhande ſoorten van Letteren, Druck-Pers en verder toebehoren tot een welgeſtelde Druckery, waer onder veele niet en nooyt gebruykt zijn; waer van de Catalogus by de voornoemde Boeckverkopers te bekomen zijn.

FIGURE 1.10 Advertisement, dated 31 March 1716, in the *Oprechte Haerlemsche Courant* for the sale on 16 April of the stereotype plates, printed books and printing office of the company of Johannes Müller. Mention is made of proofs and catalogues, none of which have survived. SOURCE: WWW.DELPHER.NL

Whatever the case may be, the final division among the partners of the company of what remained in the workshop on Cellebroersgracht did not take place until 1724. In a notarial deed dated 3 August 1724, the partners, i.e. the surviving children of Johannes Müller – Jacoba and her husband Michiel Heldewier, Willem, who at the time was living in London, and Helena –, Cornelis Boutesteyn's widow Jannetje Christiaens, and Samuel Luchtmans declared that they had ended 'the contract of company and community of a type foundry and printing office' by settling and liquidating all mutual obligations and that each had been given his fair share (*contingent*) by drawing lots, based on the ownership ratio set in 1709.[27] Besides the remaining copies and music paper, which were divided equally among the partners, the Müller children obtained the stereotype plates of the English bible, including the Book of Common Prayer and Psalms, the plates of the Syriac New Testament and dictionary, the plates for printing the music paper, valued at fl. 100, and finally, the house on Cellebroersgracht with an estimated value of fl. 826.16 (guilders and stuivers). Jannetje Christiaens and Samuel Luchtmans together received the plates of the Dutch folio bible with the engraved title-page, the plates of the *Ars magna*, valued at fl. 100, the plates of the Greek New Testament, valued at fl. 200, the plates of Habermann's *Gebeeden*, valued at fl. 50, and finally the printing press in the workshop, with everything belonging to it, some type material, thick and thin brass rules, composing sticks and iron frames, correcting stones, two fire stoves, a copper kettle and lye tank, all together valued at fl. 576.16.

Samuel Luchtmans, later succeeded by his sons Samuel jr. and Johannes, was the only partner of the company who would continue printing a selection of titles from the stereotype plates, and it is likely that he acquired the plates that he needed for that purpose from Jannetje Christiaens. The plates

Meij is interesting, as apparently he was living and working in the house of the foundry and printing office.

27 ELO, ONA, inv. no. 1475, no. 84 (3 August 1724).

that were of no use to him, however, still had a considerable scrap metal value. The same is true for the plates that were obtained by the Müller children. Most were therefore melted down over time. Still, the various owners kept some of them, out of family pride or perhaps even from an awareness of the importance of Johannes Müller's invention.

## 4 The Aftermath

No information is available with regard to the success of the invention of stereotype printing by Johannes Müller. Still, from the fact that the company that was founded in 1700 remained in business until 1724 and in view of the continued use that the Luchtmans firm made of a small group of stereotype publications until the end of the eighteenth century, it can be deduced that the undertaking was profitable enough. At the same time it seems that the method of casting stereotype plates demanded a great deal of craftmanship and investment, which could not be easily copied. This may explain why stereotype printing was never practiced by other Dutch publishers during the eighteenth century and also that the expert craftmanship of a metal founder like Philip van der Meij was crucial. After the publication of the small Greek New Testament in 1716, which appears to be around the time when Van der Meij stopped working for the company, no more new titles were produced.

Another possible explanation why Müller's invention did not find a follow-up in Dutch printing and publishing is that, apart from the church books and bibles, there was not yet a market for mass produced publications in the Dutch Republic. For sure, newspapers, journals, schoolbooks, novels, and the like, were printed in large numbers, but either they did not lend themselves for labour intensive stereotype printing as practiced by Müller, or the existing printing infrastructure could still cope well enough with the existing demand. Stereotype printing flourished par excellence in an environment where an increasing need for high speed and high volume production pulled technological innovation. Such an environment existed in England and France, countries with a large population, and it is therefore no surprise that stereotype printing was re-invented there around 1800, respectively in France in 1795 by Firmin Didot, the famous Paris printer who introduced the word *stéréotypie*, and in England in 1805 by the inventor Charles, third Earl of Stanhope. Neither of them had any notion of Johannes Müller's invention a hundred years earlier. In fact, Müller's drive to invent a new method of printing appears to have been motivated first and foremost by the idea that stereotype printing made the text

of a book more reliable, not by its commercial uses.[28] Johannes Müller may have been a genius inventor, far ahead of his time, but his invention came a century too early.

## Appendix

Short-title list of Dutch publications up to 1791, using stereotype plates based on the invention of Johannes Müller. More detailed bibliographical information, including collational formulas, locations, and photos can be found in the *Short-Title Catalogue, Netherlands* <https://data.cerl.org/stcn/>.

### *1695*

– Anon., *Ars magna et admirabilis, speciminibus variis confirmata, qua Pandectarum tituli, eorumq; præcipua materia, ope figurarum emblematicarum … opportunè in usum transferri possunt* (Leiden: Jordaan Luchtmans), 8º.

### *1701*

– Johannes Habermann [Haverman], *Christelijcke gebeeden ende danckseggingen* (Leiden: Gabriel Pietersz Kloos), 16º.

### *1708*

– *Novum domini nostri Jesu Christi Testamentum Syriacum, cum versione Latina*, ed. Johannes Leusden & Carolus Schaaf (Leiden: Johannes Müller & Jordaan Luchtmans), 4º.
– Carolus Schaaf, *Lexicon Syriacum concordantiale, omnes Novi Testamenti Syriaci voces* (Leiden: Johannes Müller & Jordaan Luchtmans), 4º.

### *1709*

– *Novum domini nostri Jesu Christi Testamentum Syriacum, cum versione Latina*, ed. Johannes Leusden & Carolus Schaaf (Leiden: Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans & Cornelis Boutesteyn), 4º.

28 See Augustinus Calmet, *Het algemeen groot historisch, oordeelkundig, chronologisch, geografisch, en letterlyk naam- en woord-boek, van den gantschen H. Bybel …*, edited and translated by Mattheus Gargon (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans, 1725), vol. 1, p. 14: 'This edition [the Greek-Latin New Testament of 1716] is produced with cast plates by Johannes Mullerus, minister at Leiden, with the intention that it, once corrected, always will be printed unchangeably, and that one will not be subject to the errors, which normally occur due to the negligence of the typesetters, and are missed out.'

– Carolus Schaaf, *Lexicon Syriacum concordantiale, omnes Novi Testamenti Syriaci voces* (Leiden: Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans & Cornelis Boutesteyn), 4°.

***1712***

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans & Cornelis Boutesteyn), 4°.
– *De CL Psalmen des propheten Davids*, translated by Petrus Dathenus, set to music by Cornelis de Leeuw (Leiden: Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans & Cornelis Boutesteyn), 4°. Includes the text of the Heidelberg Catechism in Dutch.

***1715***

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans & the widow of Cornelis Boutesteyn), 4°.
– *De CL Psalmen des propheten Davids*, translated by Petrus Dathenus, set to music by Cornelis de Leeuw (Leiden: Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans & Cornelis Boutesteyn), 4°. Includes the text of the Heidelberg Catechism in Dutch.

***1716***

– *Hè Kainè Diathèkè. Novum Testamentum*, ed. Johannes Leusden (Leiden: "Sumptibus societatis" = Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans, the widow of Cornelis Boutesteyn & Pieter Boutesteyn, 1716), 12°.

***1717***

– *Novum domini nostri Jesu Christi Testamentum Syriacum, cum versione Latina*, ed. Johannes Leusden & Carolus Schaaf (Leiden: Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans, the widow of Cornelis Boutesteyn & Pieter Boutesteyn), 4°.
– Carolus Schaaf, *Lexicon Syriacum concordantiale, omnes Novi Testamenti Syriaci voces* (Leiden: Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans & the widow and son of Cornelis Boutesteyn), 4°.

***1718***

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Johannes Müller, Samuel Luchtmans & the widow of Cornelis Boutesteyn), 2°.

***1721***

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans), 4°.

– *De CL psalmen des propheten Davids*, translated by Petrus Dathenus, set to music by Cornelis de Leeuw (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans), 4°. Includes the text of the Heidelberg Catechism in Dutch.

***1728***

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boeken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans / Amsterdam: Rudolf & Jacobus Wetstein & William Smith), 2°.
– Anon., *Ars magna et admirabilis, speciminibus variis confirmata, qua Pandectarum tituli, eorumq*[*ue*] *praecipua materia, ope figurarum emblematicarum* (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans & Dirk Haak), 8°.

***1731–32***

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans), 4°.

***1737***

– *De CL. psalmen des propheten Davids*, transl. Petrus Dathenus, music Cornelis de Leeuw (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans), 4°. Includes the text of the Heidelberg Catechism in Dutch.

***1737–38***

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans); 4°; title-page 1737. The Bible is dated 1738, the New Testament 1737.

***1750***

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans), 4°.
– *De CL psalmen des propheten Davids*, transl. Petrus Dathenus, music Cornelis de Leeuw (Leiden: Samuel Luchtmans), 4°. Includes the text of the Heidelberg Catechism in Dutch.

***1751***

– *Hè Kainè Diathèkè. Novum Testamentum*, ed. Johannes Leusden (Leiden: Officina Luchtmanniana), 12°.

***1757***

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H: Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boeken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Samuel & Johannes Luchtmans), 2°.

*1762*

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Samuel & Johannes Luchtmans), 4°.

*1765*

– *Hè Kainè Diathèkè. Novum Testamentum*, ed. Johannes Leusden (Leiden: Samuel & Johannes Luchtmans), 12°.

*1775–76*

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boeken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Samuel & Johannes Luchtmans), 4°. The New Testament is dated 1776.

*1785–86*

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H. Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Leiden: Samuel & Johannes Luchtmans), 4°. The New Testament is dated 1786.
– *Hè Kainè Diathèkè. Novum Testamentum*, ed. Johannes Leusden (Leiden: Samuel & Johannes Luchtmans), 12°.

*1791*

– *Biblia, dat is de gantsche H: Schrifture, vervattende alle de canonijcke boecken des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments* (Amsterdam: Jan Barend Elwe), 2°.

*n.d.*

– *The Holy Bible*, 4°. Not identified. Presumably printed with a London imprint.
– Printed ephemera, such as *cognossementen* and music notes.

CHAPTER 2

# 'For Leyden, All Hope Is Lost'

## *The Oriental Books of the Court of Holland*

*Kasper van Ommen*

In his article 'Jan met de boeken en zijn wens van een 'publycke liberarye" in the Festschrift for Paul Hoftijzer, Wim van Anrooij concluded that there is little consolation for book historians in the fact that various lists and inventories have been preserved of the bequeathed books by the sixteenth-century canon Johannis Harius. The vicissitudes of his library must be further investigated. A complete overview of the books mentioned in the lists and inventories is however not available.[1] In my contribution below I attempt to provide relevant information on a specific list of books from the library of Harius: the Orientalia.

A year before librarian Petrus Bertius composed the *Nomenclator*, the first catalogue of Leiden University Library published in 1595, an opportunity suddenly arose to expand the book collection of the university library considerably. In the attic above the council room of the Court of Holland in The Hague, Janus Dousa, one of the curators of the university, 'discovered' a disorganised and derelict collection of books that barely resembled a library.[2] In 1591, Dousa had been appointed as a councillor of the High Court, and he probably came across the books in the course of his duties for the court. The other curators of Leiden University Jan de Groot and Jan van Banchem, expressed their interest in transferring this collection, which had previously been a reference collection for the lawyers of the Court of Holland, to the university library. As the collection held many theological books and many books that were written in 'Hebreeusche, Caldeesche ende Arabische tale' (Hebrew, Chaldean and Arabic) the curators held the opinion that especially students in Theology and

1 W. van Anrooij, 'Jan met de boeken en zijn wens van een 'publycke liberarye' in A. Dlabacova, E. Geleijns, J. Schaeps, G. Warnar, & S. van Zanen (Eds.), *Om het boek. Cultuurhistorische bespiegelingen over boeken en mensen* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2020), pp. 242–246.

2 UBL AC 101, 9v–10r: 'tot kennisse der Curateurs vander Universiteyt der Stadt gecomen was datter opt hoff inden Hage over des Provincialen Raedtcamer een grote menichte van boucken wesende toverblijfsel van der Biblioteque voor den Oorloge ende de iegenwoirdige beroerten opt voorsz hoff geweest zijnde niet alleen vruchteloos ende ongebruyct staende was mer ooc in stoff ende vuylicheyt van vogelen ende ongedierte vergingen'.

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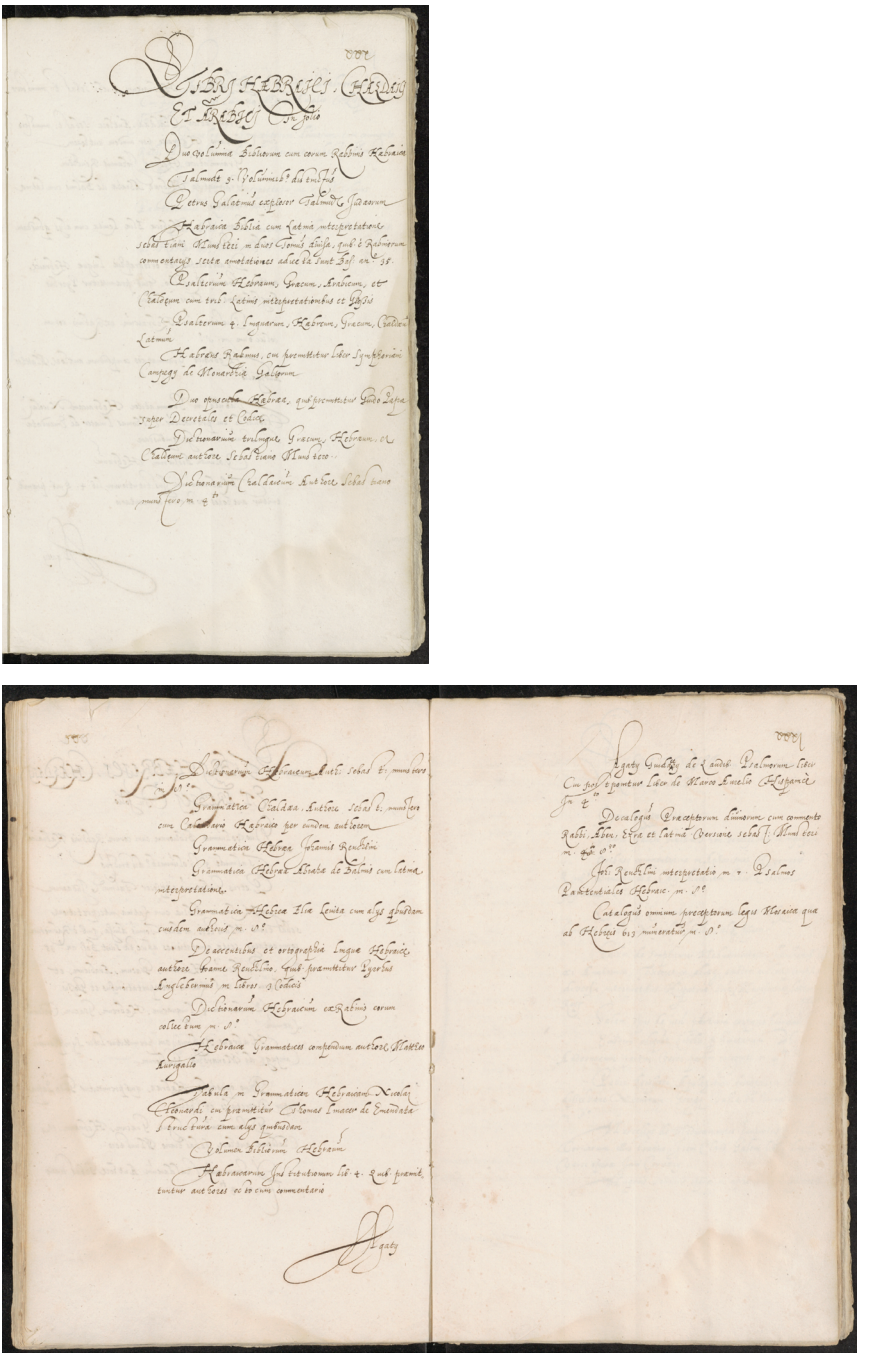

FIGURE 2.1 The list of books in Hebrew, Chaldean and Arabic from the library of Harius, compiled by Janus Dousa [UBL AC 1 101, ff 30r–31r]

also many students in the other faculties could benefit from access to these books.[3]

At the urging of the university, an inventory was compiled of the old library of the Court of Holland. Janus Dousa and his son Janus Junior were entrusted with this task and finished the list in August 1594. Dousa's inventory consists of 38 sheets written on both sides with a total of nearly 750 items, divided into nine sections. It soon became clear that the books in the attic had formerly belonged to the Gorinchem canon Jan Dircz van der Haer, or Johannes Harius (†1532), who had donated the books in 1531 to Charles V, Count of Holland, 'omme daarvan, nae syn doot gemaect te worden eene publycke liberarye tot behoef en profyte van den suppoesten en alle studiosen', that is to serve as a public library.[4] Originally, Van der Haer's library held 3,849 titles in 3,780 volumes, a very substantial library for the early sixteenth century, and still a large one for the late sixteenth-century terms (especially when considering the small size of the university library).[5] On account of the magnitude of his library, Van der Haer was nicknamed 'Jan met de boeken'. In the decades before 1594 Van der Haer's collection had already been partially destroyed, dispersed and ransacked. It was the wish of the university and the intention to transport the 750 books on Dousa's list to Leiden in six wicker baskets and to integrate the items into the holdings of the library. Van der Haer's collection consisted Apart from the many theological books Van der Haer's library consisted mainly of juridical works, but it also contained 24 'Libri Haebraici, Chaldaici et Arabici', mostly in folio. The title of this section is somewhat misleading because the list consists almost entirely of books printed in Hebrew. The only book in the section which actually has Arabic type (among other oriental languages) is a copy of the *Psalterium Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum, et Chaldeum cum trib. Latinus interpretationibus et Glossis* by Augustinus Justinianus printed in 1516.[6] This should not surprise us, because books that were printed in Arabic type before

3 Molhuysen, *Bronnen* I. 1913, p. 305*; see also the 'Resoluties van de Staten van Holland. Augustus 1594', p. 329.

4 M.J. Waale, 'De laat-middeleeuwse Gorcumer Jan Dirksz. van der Haar en zijn librije van het Hof van Holland' in: *Oud-Gorcum Varia*. 9; 23 1992–1, pp. 4–11; J.L. van der Gouw, 'De Librye van den Hove van Holland' in: *Het boek* 29 (1948), pp. 117–130; Tom de Smidt, 'An elderly, noble lady. The old books collection in the library of the Supreme Court of the Netherlands', in J.G.B. Pikkemaat (ed.), *The Old Library of the Supreme Court of the Netherlands* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2008), pp. 39–68; See most recently: Van Anrooij, 'Jan met de boeken en zijn wens van een 'publycke liberarye' (2020), pp. 242–246.

5 In comparison, the library of Desiderius Erasmus numbered 413 books in 1525.

6 Dousa's inventory can be found at UBL AC 1 101, f. 9v–51r; the section *Libri Haebraica, Chaldaici et Arabici* is at ff. 30r–32r.




FIGURE 2.2 Crispijn van de Passe the Elder, portrait of Janus Dousa, drawing. Ca. 1591. *Icones Leidenses* 37 [UBL BN 438]

1532, the year Van der Haer died, could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Basically only a copy of the *Kitāb Ṣalāt al-sawāʿī* (a *Horologion* for the Eastern Orthodox Churches) printed in Fano [actually printed in Venice!] by Gregorio de' Gregori in September 1514 could have been on this list. Only at the end of the sixteenth century printing in Arabic type took off seriously.

The transfer of the collection would never take place, as the formal ownership became disputed; the books remained in The Hague. After all his efforts, this would have been a serious disappointment to Janus Dousa and also for




FIGURE 2.3 Painted portrait of librarian Janus Dousa filius. Copy after Roelof Willemsz. van Culemborg, ca. 1612. *Icones Leidenses* 54

Janus junior, who had succeeded his father as librarian in July 1593.[7] Dousa could not suppress his disappointment when he wrote to his son: 'Thus you need not bother about the baskets in which the books were to be transported. For Leyden, all hope is lost.'[8]

Both father and son Dousa had made repeated attempts to acquire the Oriental books from the library of the Court of Holland for the university because at this point, the library contained few such works. The titles in the inventory compiled by Dousa provide us with a good overview of the Oriental collecting habits of a personal collector such as Van der Haer and at the same time gives us information on the desiderata of an institutional library in the early sixteenth century. Alongside the usual theological works, including Hebrew Bibles, Van der Haer's collection also included dictionaries and grammars. Van der Haer had clearly been a collector with a good grasp of Latin and Greek, but might also have taught himself Hebrew using these books. That the members of the Court of Holland would have had little use for the Hebrew books strengthened the case to donate the books on a later date to Leiden, where they would have greater value amongst the scholars and students of the academy.

## 1 Scaliger and the Talmud

When Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609) was invited by the curators of Leiden University to come to Leiden in 1593, he transferred a part of his library, mainly consisting of books in 'foreign tongues' from France to the Dutch Republic. These Oriental books were all his personal possessions. The university library did not immediately benefit from the influx of Scaliger's rare and valuable books and manuscripts from his personal library, for that they had to wait for the passing away of the scholar.

7 Molhuysen, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis der Leidsche Universiteit. Eerste deel: 1574–7 Febr. 1610* ('s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1913), pp. 266*–268*. Dousa junior died two years later, after which he was succeeded as librarian by Petrus Bertius. On the library of the court and the university library, see also: C.L. Heesakkers, 'Zes viercante witte manden' in: J.A.A.M. Biemans et al. (eds.), *Boeken verzamelen. Opstellen aangeboden aan Mr J.R. de Groot bij zijn afscheid als bibliothecaris der Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden* (Leiden: Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, 1983), pp. 182–197.

8 Letter by Janus Dousa pater to Janus Dousa filius, 13 on or after 13 August 1594 (Collection Tresoar, Leeuwarden Archief Gabbema 9056 Hs MM). The Dutch translation of the letter by C.L. Heesakkers in 'Zes viercante witte manden' (1983), pp. 187–189.

Scaliger regarded the Talmud as indispensable for his research on philology and chronology when he wrote to Jacques-Auguste de Thou: 'Les notes du Nouveau Testament ne se peuvent faire sans mes livres, car il fault avoir le Talmud et plusieurs aultres livres.'[9] Scaliger's own copy of the Talmud was printed in Basel between 1579 and 1581, but he rejoiced in the donation of the Court of Holland four years after he had written De Thou.[10] According to the *Scaligerana* or Table-talks Scaliger expressed that 'Le Thalmud qui est icy en la Bibliotheque est le bon, qui n'est point chastré. Messieurs les Estats l'ont eu d'un Monastère & l'ont donné à la Bibliotheque'.[11] At Leiden, Scaliger would later have the pleasure of studying the Talmud and other texts alongside Philippus Ferdinandus (1556–1599), the first Eastern European Jew in the Netherlands that we know of, and briefly professor of Arabic at Leiden University. The cooperation between Scaliger and Ferdinandus was remarkable because in the early sixteenth century, it was still relatively uncommon for Jews to help gentiles with the reading of the Talmud, because this was explicitly forbidden by the text.[12] Shortly before Ferdinandus's death, Scaliger described how they studied the Talmud and other Rabbinical literature together, 'with equal profit and no less pleasure'.[13] Together they also provided commentary on various Hebrew texts.[14] Scaliger wrote: 'In vain, we Christians make attempts at this work: one cannot understand such [Hebrew] literature properly without the aid of a Jew, who himself has been educated in these matters. I can confirm most sincerely that I have learned from Philippus what no one but a Jew could have taught me'.[15] Scaliger repeated this in similar words to Isaac Casaubon

9 Letter by Scaliger (Preuilly-sûr-Claise) to Jacques-Auguste de Thou (Tours), dated 13 April 1591, BnF, Coll. Dupuy, 395, fols 8r–v in *The Correspondence of Joseph Justus Scaliger*. Edited by Paul Botley and Dirk van Miert. Vol. II (Genève: Droz, 2009), p. 146. Hereafter cited as *Correspondence*.

10 Scaliger's copy of the Basel Talmud is in Leiden University Library UBL 875 A 1–8.

11 P. des Maizeaux, *Scaligerana, Thuana, Perroniana, Pithoeana, Et Colomesiana* [...] (Amsterdam: Covens & Mortier, 1740), p. 424.

12 According to Hebrew scholar Joahnnes Reuchlin (1455–1522), cited in Aaron L. Katschen, *Christian Hebraists and Dutch Rabbis: Seventeenth-Century Apologetics and the Study of Maimonides'* Mishneh Torah (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 10 note 19.

13 *Correspondence* 31 December 1599 from Scaliger to Drusius: 'Iam multa in Talmud magno cum fructus, neque minore voluptate, una legeramus.'

14 *Secunda Scaligerana* 1740, pp. 590–591 under *Thalmud*. Scaliger owned a manuscript copy of the Jerusalem Talmud (UBL SCA 3), as well as a printed edition.

15 *Correspondence* 31 December 1599 from Scaliger to Drusius. In the *Scaligerana* of 1740, pp. 590–591 *s. v.* 'Thalmud' is recorded 'On ne sçauroit l'entendre [i.e. the Talmud] sans la vive voix d'un juif. Le juif qui lis oit icy m'en a appris quelque chose: nous y leusmes ensemble. Je fus auteur qu'on le mist professeur en arabe. Il le parloit bien, mais il ne sçavoit pas les reigles: je les luy formois. Il avoit assez d'auditeurs.'

in 1602: 'Hoc meo suffragio adeptus fuit ante biennium quidam ex Iudaeo Christianus [Ferdinandus], quo ego in Talmud praeceptore usus sum. Sed ille obiit diem, et mea studia orba reliquit.'[16]

## 2 An Important Gift

Dousa's interest in the books from the Court of Holland however is indicative of the ambition of the curators to expand the institutional library of the university. Around 1600, the library was not only circumscribed in size, but there were serious gaps in the collection. Dousa must have been mightily pleased when in July 1595, a small number of oriental books found their way to the university library. Apparently, Scaliger's arrival at Leiden in 1593 meant a final push to induce the councillors of the Court of Holland to donate the nine-volume Talmud Babylonicum or Talmud Bavli and seven other Hebrew books from their collection to the university. These books were formally donated at the inauguration of the library's new accommodation on 24 May 1595 and officially handed over to Jan van Hout, the curator's secretary, on 14 July 1595.[17] In return the members of the Court of Holland and the commissioners of the States of Holland (the *Gecommitteerde Raden*) received a key of the library and a copy of the *Nomenclator* from the curators of the university and burgomasters of Leiden.[18]

Only the donation of the *Talmud Bavli*, considered as the most important gift, was gracefully recorded in the *Nomenclator* and dated 9 July 1595:

> Curia Hollandica Talmud Babylonicum, in novem Tomos distinctum misit. Itáque memoriae & gratitudinis caussa inscriptum est: Studiis sacrarum litterarum ornandis ivuandis promovendis, & haereticorum insanis furoribus noscendis consfutandisque, Curia Hollandica Academiae Lugduno-Batavae Curatorum rogatu Dedicavit, Anno MDXCV. Proprid. Nonas Iulij.[19]

16 *Correspondence* 22 January 1620 from Joseph Scaliger (Leiden) to Isaac Casaubon (Paris).

17 Molhuysen, I (1913), p. 93.

18 The copy of the *Nomenclator* that was handed out at the opening of the library comprised the gatherings A to M only. Later the additional gatherings 2C and 3C were added. These quires contain the names of the donors and their donations. Petrus Bertius, *Nomenclator. The First Printed Catalogue of Leiden University Library (1595). A Facsimile Edition with an Introduction by R. Breugelmans and an Authors Index compiled by Jan Just Witkam* (Leiden: Leiden University Library, 1995), p. [6].

19 Translation: The Duch Court sent us this Talmud Babylonicum, divided into nine volumes. The cause of memory and gratitude are thus inscribed: To the study of sacred literature, to

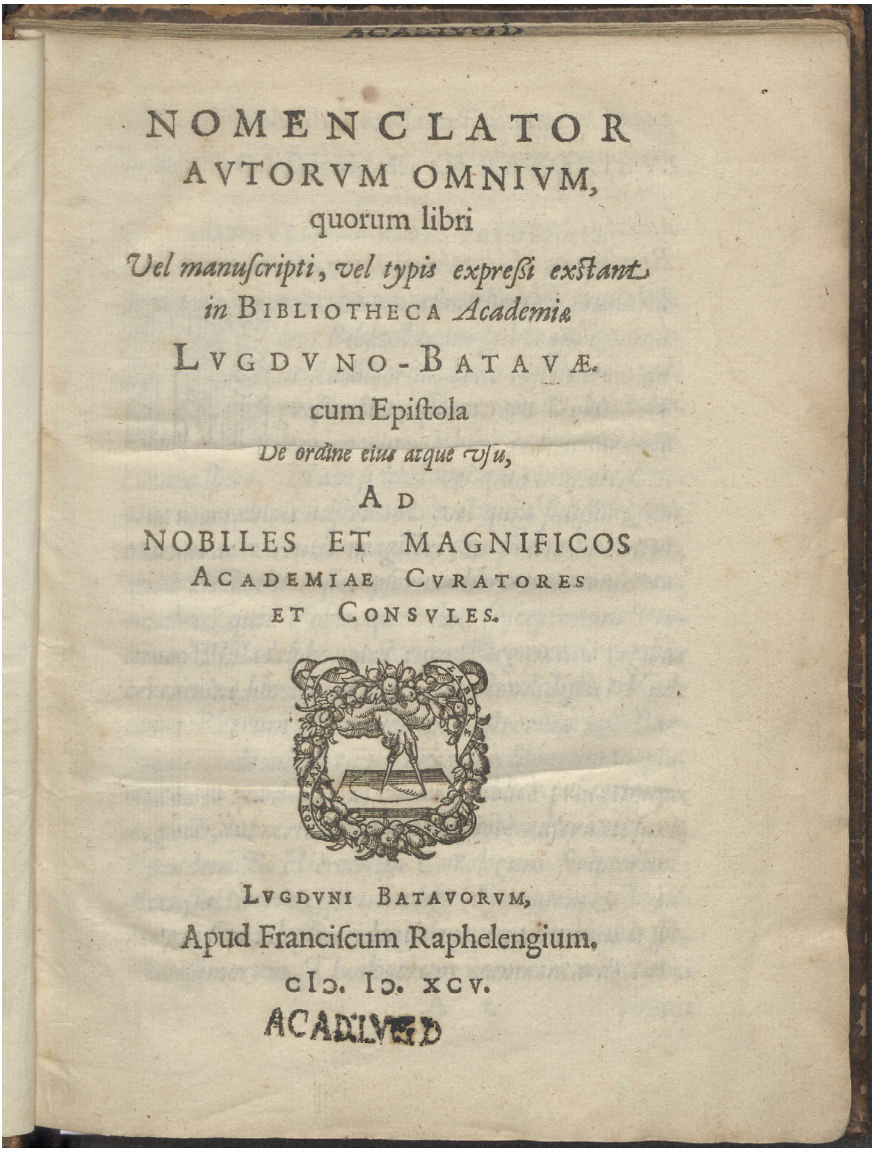
NOMENCLATOR
AVTORVM OMNIVM,
quorum libri
*Vel manuſcripti, vel typis expreſſi exſtant*
*in* BIBLIOTHECA *Academiæ*
LVGDVNO-BATAVÆ.
cum Epiſtola
*De ordine eius atque vſu,*
AD
NOBILES ET MAGNIFICOS
ACADEMIAE CVRATORES
ET CONSVLES.
LVGDVNI BATAVORVM,
Apud Franciſcum Raphelengium.
cIↃ. IↃ. XCV.
ACADLVGD

FIGURE 2.4 Title page of Petrus, Bertius, *Nomenclator autorum omnium. Quorum libri Vel manuscripti, vel typis expressi exstant in Bibliotheca-Batava* [...] (Lugduni Batavorum: Apud Franciscum Raphelengium, 1595) [UBL 21179 C 22]

The volumes of the Talmud were placed by Bertius in the theology section, in *pluteus* ד. As we have seen Scaliger would wax lyrical on the copy of the

beautify, to promote, and to know and ridicule the maddened furies of heretics, the Duch Court dedicated this copy to the Leiden Academy on the ninth of June 1595.



FIGURE 2.5 Four volumes of the *Talmud Babylonicum cum commentariis Mos. Maimonidis, Raschi et Tosafot* [...] (Venetsyah: Daniyel Bombergi, 1520–1530) [UBL 21523 A 1–9]

Talmud given to Leiden by the Court of Holland, as this edition of the Talmud had been barely censored by the authorities, and was thus an extremely valuable source for scholars. Scaliger was clearly unaware of the provenance of this edition and assumed that volumes were once part of a monastic library. The *Talmud Bavli* from Van der Haer's collection remained in the library for 250 years and was sold at auction as a duplicate in 1843. Since 1665 the library held a second set of this edition of the Talmud from Levinus Warner's collection that was most likely in a much better condition.

So how many volumes in oriental languages did Leiden University library actually hold prior to the donation of the Court of Holland? Actually not that many: The *Biblia Regia* in eight volumes donated by William of Orange, a two volume Bible in Hebrew, Greek and Latin edited by François Vatable, the *Miclol* (*Grammatica Hebreae*) by Kimchi, two copies of the *Thesaurus Lingua Sanctae*

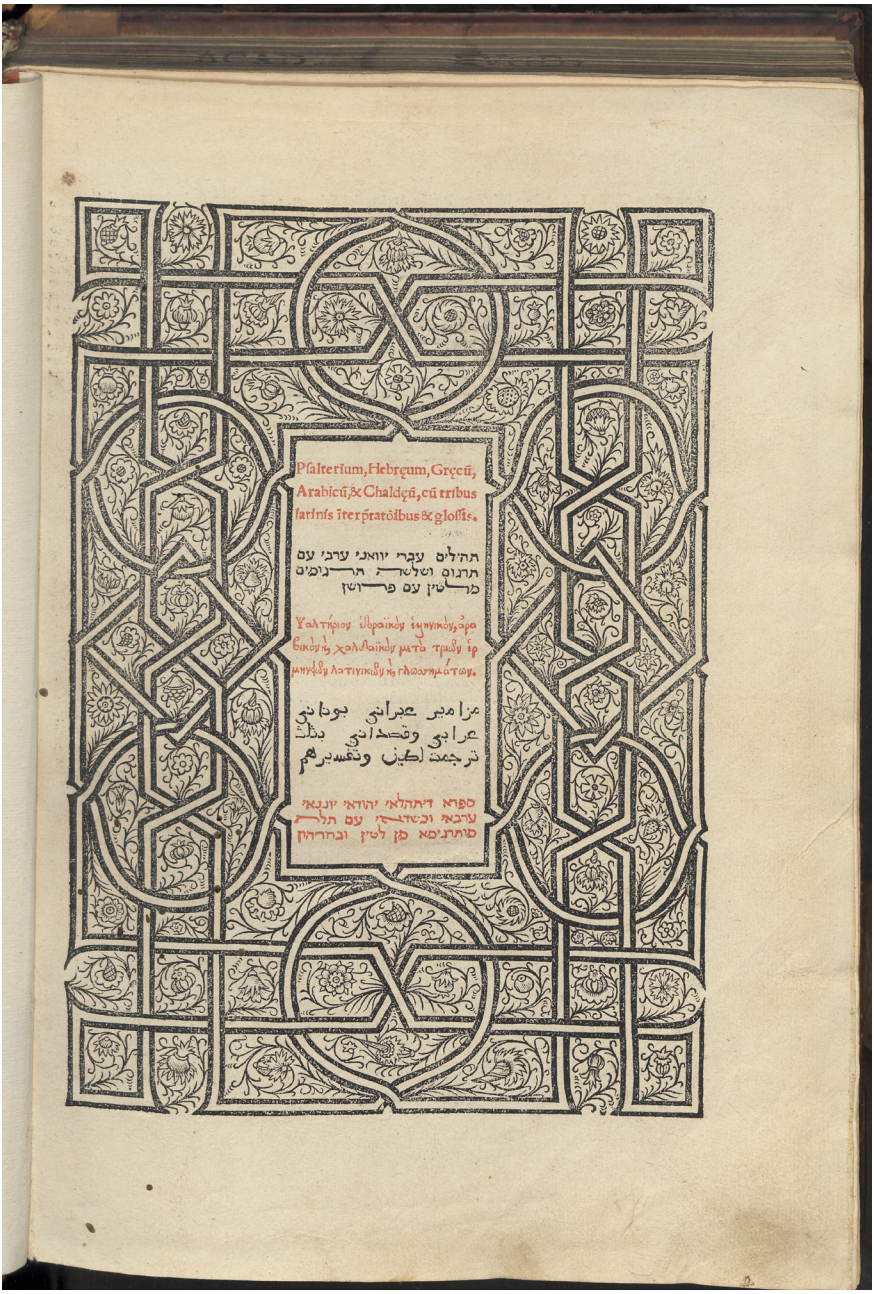


FIGURE 2.6 Title page of Augustinus Justinianus, *Psalterium, Hebręum, Gręcū, Arabicū, & Chaldęū, cū tribus latinis īterṕtatōibus & glossis* [...] (Genova: Pietro Paolo Porro, 1516) [UBL 1368 C 2]

TABLE 2.1 List by Janus Dousa of August 1594 with the *Libri Haebraici, Chaldaici et Arabici* from the library of the Court of Holland [UBL AC1 101, ff. 30r–31r]

| | |
|---|---|
| Duo volumina Bibliorum cum eorum Rabbinis Haebraicae | *Biblia hebraica. Cum utraque Masora, Targum Onkelosi et Hierosolym. In Pentateuchum, ceterisque Rabbinorum commentariis, curante R. Jac. Ben Chajim* (Venetiis: Dan. Bombergi, 1524–1526)<br>UBL 840 A 13–14<br>Probably *Nomenclator* Pluteo ד no. 1, 2 |
| Talmud 9. voluminibus distinctis | *Talmud Babylonicum cum commentariis Mos. Maimonidis, Raschi et Tosafot* [...] (Ṿenetsyah, Daniyel Bombergi, 1520–1530)<br>UBL 21523 A 1–9 (olim 874 A 5–13)[a]<br>*Nomenclator* Pluteo א no. 1, 2 &c |
| Petrus Galatmus explosor Talmud Judaeorum | Pietro Colonna Galatino, *Opus toti Christianę Reipublicę maxime utile, de arcanis catholic(a)ę ueritatis, contra obstinatissimam Iudęorū[m] nostrę tempestatis psidiam: ex Talmud, aliisq[ue] hebraicis libris nuper excerptum: & quadruplici linguarum genere eleganter congestum* (Ortonae Maris: per Girolamo Soncino, 1518)<br>UBL 612 A 8<br>*Nomenclator* Pluteo ד no. 16 |
| Hebraica Biblia cum Latina interpretatione Sebastiani Munsteri in duos Tomus divisa, quis è Rabinorum commentarijs sectae annotationes adiectae sunt. Bas. Anno [15]35 | Possibly a copy of the *Hebraica Biblia Latina planeque nova. Sebast. Munsteri tralatione* [...] *adjectis insuper é Rabinorum commentariis annotationibus* [...] (Basileae: ex. off. Bebeliana impend. Michael Isingrin et Heinrich Petri, 1534–1535)<br>UBL 516 A 1<br>*Nomenclator* Pluteo ד no. 13, 14 |
| Psalterium Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum, et Chaldeum cum trib. Latinus interpretationibus et Glossis | Augustinus Justinianus, *Psalterium, Hebręum, Gręcū[m], Arabicū[m], & Chaldęū[m], cū[m] tribus latinis ītерṕtatōibus & glossis = tehilim ʿIvri Yewaʾni ʿAravi ʿim targum we-šlošah targumim mi-Laṭin ʿim perušan* (Genova: Pietro Paolo Porro, 1516)<br>UBL 1368 C 2<br>Probably *Nomenclator* Pluteo א no. 18 |

a In 1843 the *Talmud Bavli* donated by the Court of Holland was sold as a duplicate because the library held another copy of this edition of the Talmud from Levinus Warner's bequest in the library, that probably was in a much better condition.

TABLE 2.1 List by Janus Dousa (*cont.*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Psalterium 4. Linguarum, Hebraeum, Graecum, Chaldaeum, Latinum | Johannes Potken, *Psalterium in quatuor linguis: Hebraea Graeca Chaldaea Latina* (Impressum Coloniae: Johannes Soter, alias Heyl, 1518) UBL 754 B 8 |
| Haebraeus Rabmus, cum premittitur Liber symphoriani Campegij de Monarchia Galiorum | **Possibly an edition of Hrabanus or Rabanus Maurus *De Cruce* (?) bound with *De Monarchia Gallorum campi aurei ac triplici imperio* [...] (Lugduni: Ex officina Melchioris et Gasparis Trechsel fratrum, 1537) by Benedictus Curtius Symphorien Champier** |
| Duo opuscula Haebraea, quis premittitur Guido Papa super Decretales et Codice[b] | Guido Papa, *Super decretales. Lectura super decretales, in qua singulares et autentice materie exanclantur cum additionibus concordantiis numeris summariis ante capitula et paragraphos affixis quatenus cuncta elucescant necnon cum repertorio alphabetico* (Lugduni: Antoine du Ry impensis Simonis Vincent, 1517) & *Super codice. Lectura super codice admodum cunctis ad praxim anhelantibus utilis et necessaria in qua plures questionum decisiones exanclantur quam neutique adhuc terminate fuerant. Cum additionibus concordantiis numeris et summariis materias* (Lugduni: Jean Marion [et] Simon Vincent, 1517) |
| Dictionarium trilingue Graecum, Hebraeum et Chaldaeum authore Sebastiano Munstero | Sebastian Münster, *Dictionarium trilingve, in quo scilicet Latinis vocabulis in ordinem alphabeticum digestis respondent Graeca & Hebraica: Hebraicis adiecta sunt magistralia & chaldaica, opera & labore Sebastiani Munsteri congestum* (Basileae: apud Heinrich aus Basel Petri, 1530) UBL 873 A 4:1[c] |

b Two books in Hebrew bound with two publication by the French lawyer Guy de La Pape (1402–1487). These books were not transferred to Leiden University Library.

c This copy is no longer in the collection and has been replaced by *Silus lesonot* or *Dictionarium trilingue, in quo scilicet Latinis vocabulis in ordinem alphabeticum digestis, respondent Græca & Hebraica* [...] (Basel: Henricum Petri, [1562]).

TABLE 2.1 List by Janus Dousa (*cont.*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Dictionarium Chaldaeum Authore Sebastiano Munstero in 4t° | Sebastian Münster, *Dictionarium Chaldaicum, ex Baal Aruch et Chál. bibliis atque Hebraeorum Peruschim* [...] (Basileae: [Johann Froben], 1527) UBL 874 D 15[d] |
| Dictionarium Hebraeum Auth. sebast. Munstero in 8° | Sebastian Münster, *Maqrē dardeqē* of *Dictionarium Hebraicum ex rabbinorum commentarijs collectum, adiectis ijs Chaldaicis vocabulis quorum in biblijs est usus* [...] (Basileae: Johann Froben, 1525) UBL 875 D 18 |
| Grammatica Chaldaea Authore sebast. Munstero cum Calendario Hebraico per eundem authorem | Sebastian Münster, *Sefer ha-Dikduk, Grammatica Hebraica Absolutissima Eliae Levitae Germani nuper per Seb. Münsterum iuxta hebraismum latinitate donata* [...] with the appendix *Compendium accentuum hebraicorum. – Luah ha-Binyonim omnium hebraicarum coniugationum octo verborum classes pulchre in ordinem digesta* (Basileae: Johann Froben, 1525) & *Chokhmat ha-mazzalot bitqufot u-m'ubb'rot v'ha-q'vi'ot = Kalendarium Hebraicu*[*m*], *opera Sebastiani Munsteri. Ex Hebrœorum penetralibus iam recens in lucem œditum, quod non tam hebraice studiosis quam historiographis et astronomiae peritis subservire poterit* (Basileae, apud Io[annis] Frob[en] 1527) UBL 878 F 65 & 877 D 3: 1 |
| Grammatica Hebraea Johannis Reuchlini | Johannes Reuchlin, *De rudimentis Hebraicis* [...] (Phorcæ: In aedib. Tho[mas] Anshelmi, 1506). UBL 874 B 6 |
| Grammatica Hebraea Abrahae de Balmis cum Latina interpretatione | *Miqneh Avram* or *Peculivm Abrae. Grammatica Hebraea una cum Latíno. Nuper edita per Abraham de Balmis* (Impressa Venetijs: in aedibus Danielis Bōbergi, 1523) UBL 837 C 7 |

d This copy may have been replaced by the copy from the library of Scaliger, that was bequeathed to the university in 1609.

TABLE 2.1 List by Janus Dousa (*cont.*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Grammatica Hebraea Eliae Levitae cum alijs quibusdam eisdem authoris in 8º | Elia Levita, *Grammatica Hebraica absolutissima, eliae leuitae Germani: nuper per Sebastianum Munsterum juxta hebraismu Latinitate donata, post quã lector aliam non facile desiderabis. Institutio elementaria in Hebraicã linguam eodem Sebast. Munstero autore. Institutio elementaria in Hebraicam linguam* (Basileae: apud Johann Froben, 1525) and other works by Levita, possibly a copy of *Sefer ha-harkava. Composita verborum & nominum Hebraicorum* (Basileae: [Johann Froben], 1525) |
| De accentibus et ortographia Linguae Hebraice authore Joanne Reuchlino quib. Praemittitur Pyrhus Anglebermius in Libros & Codices | Johannes Reuchlin, *De accentibus, et orthographia linguae Hebraicae. Libri tres* (Hagenae: Thomae Anshelmi Badensis, 1518); the book by the lawyer Jean Pyrrhus d'Anglebermes cannot be identified, but could possibly be a copy of *Institutio boni magistratus, ubi ad jurisprudentiam nonnulla maxime conducentia* (N.pl: In aedibus Jacobi Hoys et ejus generi, 1518)<br>Reuchlin is UBL 873 C 20 |
| Dictionarium Hebraicum ex Rabinis eorum collectum in 8º | Possibly a copy of *Miqre dardeqe* of *Dictionarium Hebraicum ex Rabbinorum commentarijs collectum, adiectis ijs Chaldaicis uocabulis quorum in biblijs est usus* (Basileae: Johann Froben, 1525)<br>UBL 875 D 18 |
| Hebraicae Grammatices compendium authore Mattheo Aurigalio[e] | Matthaeus Goldhahn's, *Compendium Hebreae Grammatices* (Vuittembergae: [Josef Klug, 1523 or 1525]) |
| Tabula in Grammaticen Hebraicam Nicolai Cleonardi cui praemittitur Thomas Linacer de Emendata Structura cum alijs quibusdam[f] | Nicolas Clenard, *Luah ha-diqduq* of *Tabula in grammaticen Hebream* (Paris: Christian Wechel, 1533) and Thomas Linacer, *De emendata structura Latina sermonis libri sex* (Basileae: apud Andreas Cratander, 1530)<br>*Nomenclator* In Bonis Litteris L4[r] (for Linacer) |

e This book gives a brief outline of the Hebrew language. The book did not enter the Leiden University Library collection.

f This copy was not transferred to Leiden University Library.

TABLE 2.1 List by Janus Dousa (*cont.*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Volumen Bibliorum Hebraeum | Not identified |
| Haebraeorum Institutionum lib. 4 quib. Praemittuntur authores octo cum commentario | Sante Pagnini, *Hebraicarum institutionum libri IV ex rabbi David Kimchi* (Lugduni: Antoine du Ry impensis François Guillaume de Castelnau de Clermont-Lodève, 1526)<br>UBL 837 D 17 & 873 D 15:1[g]<br>Probably *Nomenclator* In Bonis Litteris L3[v] |
| Agatij Guidaceij de Laudis. Psalmorum Liber cui postponitur Liber de Marco Aurelio Hispanicè in 4°[h] | Possibly a copy of Agatius Guidacerius, *De laudibus, & materia Psalmorum. Et in primum psalmum, secundum veritatem hebraicam expositio*. [Paris: P. Vidovae, 1529] & Antonio de Guevara, *Libro Aureo de Marco Aurelio, Emperador, eloquentissimo Orador en el qual contienen muchas cosas hasta aqui en ninguno otro impressas* (Venezia: Juan Batista Pedrezano, 1532) |
| Decalogus Praeceptorum divinorum cum comment Rabbi Aben Ezra et Latina versione Sebast. Munsteri in 8° | *Decalogus. Cum commentariolo Rabbi Aben Ezra, et Latina versione Sebastiani Munsteri* [...] (Basileae: Apud Johann Froben, 1527)<br>UBL 877 G 5 |
| Joh. Reuchlini interpretatio in 7 Psalmos Paenitentiales Hebraic. In 8°[i] | Johannis Reuchlin, *In septem psalmos poenitentiales hebraicos interpretatio de verbo ad verbum* [...] (Vuittembergae: Joseph Klug, 1529) |
| Catalogus omnium preceptorum legis Mosaica qua ab. Hebręis 613 numeratur in 8° | Moshe ben Ya'akov & Sebastian Münster, *Mitsvot-ha Torah* [= *Praecepta mosaica sexcenta atque tredecim, cum succincta & plerunque mirabili & superstitiosa rabinorum expositione*] (Basileae: Excudebat Henricus Petri, 1533)<br>UBL 854 F 4 |

g This copy may have been replaced by two copies of the 1549 edition from the library of Scaliger, that was bequeathed to the university in 1609.

h This copy was not transferred to Leiden University Library.

i This copy was not transferred to Leiden University Library.

by Sante Pagnini, the *Lexicon Ebraïcum* by Johannes Avenarius (Habermann), a *Biblia Hebraica* in quarto printed in Venice, the *Grammatica Hebraïca* by Antonius Cevalerius and the Basel edition of the *Grammatica Hebraea* by Sebastian Münster, in total a mere 17 volumes. It's only a small percentage of the total of 483 Items that are recorded in the *Nomenclator*.

Scaliger and other scholars interested in oriental languages however were able to consult these books in the library. Whether Scaliger did so for every title is uncertain, as he did own some of the editions himself, but not all. That the library was however a valuable resource to Scaliger is confirmed by the fact that he helped expand the library, especially its oriental holdings, during his lifetime. Especially after Scaliger's death in 1609, when he bequeathed all his books in foreign tongues to the university, the oriental collection grew extensively. At that moment, only 14 years after the publication of the *Nomenclator*, Leiden University could boast to hold one of the most important collections of books printed and written in Oriental languages.

# PART 2

## *Manuscripts*

∵

CHAPTER 3

# Fuat Sezgin's Identification of an Anonymous Manuscript on the Astrolabe in the Library of the University of Leiden

*Jan P. Hogendijk*

Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (973–1048) was born in Khwarizm, south of the Aral Sea, and spent the second half of his life in Ghazni, Afghanistan. He was a scholar with a unique combination of skills. He was a competent mathematician and astronomer and at the same time an expert in languages, history and literature. He wrote in a rich Arabic language which is much more challenging than the monotonous prose that was used by most of his colleague-mathematicians and astronomers. He travelled to India, learned Sanskrit, studied with local teachers of astronomy, and translated texts from Sanskrit into Arabic. These texts included astronomical works and also the yoga-sutras of Patanjali, even though philosophy was not al-Biruni's main interest.

The Library of the University of Leiden preserves important evidence on al-Biruni in Arabic manuscripts which were collected by Jacobus Golius (1596–1667) and Levinus Warner (1618–1665). First, the codex Or. 133 includes the only extant manuscript of al-Biruni's list of 113 titles of his own works which he had written at the end of the year 427 AH / October 1036 AD. Around twenty of these works have come down to us, as well as five or six other works which are not found in the list and which he may have written in his very productive old age (such as the *Mineralogy* and the *Pharmacology*).

Or. 133 also contains the only extant manuscript of a text by the al-Biruni-enthusiast al-Ghadanfar Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Tibrizi (13th century AD); thanks to this manuscript we know that al-Biruni's date of birth was 3 Dhu'l-Hijja 362 AH / September 4, 973 AD and that he died on 2 Rajab 440 AH / December 9, 1048 AD.

A few works by al-Biruni have been preserved in Arabic manuscripts in the Leiden University Library: the *Extraction of Chords in the Circle* in Or. 513, the *Projections of the Sphere* in Or. 14, and correspondence with contemporary mathematicians in Or. 168. The library also possesses in Or. 184 a manuscript of the famous discussions between al-Biruni and Ibn Sina. Finally, al-Biruni's most important work on the astrolabe, entitled

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*Isti'ab* ('Exhausive Comprehension'), is extant in Or. 591. We will come back to this manuscript and to the scientific instrument below.

The focus of this paper is the anonymous Arabic manuscript Or. 123(2) (also indicated as Or. 123 b) in the Leiden University Library. The manuscript consists of 23 leaves and it contains part of a work on the astrolabe. The beginning of the work is missing, and the text starts abruptly in the middle of a sentence. The back side of the first leaf contains the title of a new chapter: "summaries of the notions in the book of Abu Hamid al-Saghani on the complete projection". Thus Fuat Sezgin classified the manuscript in 1974 as an anonymous summary of a treatise by the tenth-century mathematician al-Saghani in vol. 5 of his *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums* [History of Arabic literature]. In the next volume of the *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, which appeared in 1978, Sezgin had come to realize that al-Biruni was the author of the work in Or. 123(2), but at that time he was unable to identify the title. In the 1980s Sezgin embarked on a project to reconstruct lost scientific instruments from illustrations in Arabic manuscripts. For this purpose, he investigated the illustrations in the manuscript Or. 123(2), in connection with the instrument with gears which al-Biruni used to illustrate the motions of the sun and the moon. Then Sezgin realised that Or. 123(2) is a large fragment of al-Biruni's most important astrolabe work *Isti'ab* itself, the same work as in Or. 591. In his 2003 catalogue of reconstructed instruments, Sezgin printed (p. 165) the splendid figure of al-Biruni's instrument from the manuscript Or. 123(2) (Fig. 3.1) with the caption 'Biruni, *Isti'ab*, Ms. Leiden Or. 123 b'; see the references at the end of this paper. Today, Sezgin's reconstructed instruments can be admired in the Museum of the History of Science and Technology in Islam in Gülhane Park, Istanbul.

Sezgin's discovery has not been noticed in the modern research literature and therefore it is generally unknown that the Leiden library possesses two manuscripts of al-Biruni's Isti'ab rather than one. We will now give a few details about the two manuscripts in support of Sezgin's identification, and then try to introduce the reader to the astrolabe by discussing a few other diagrams in the manuscripts. These diagrams are a witness of the skill of the scribes and we hope that the reader will also find them fascinating.

The full title of al-Biruni's astrolabe text in question is *Isti'ab al-wujuh al-mumkina fi san'at al-asturlab*, meaning *the Exhaustive Comprehension of the Possible Ways to Construct the Astrolabe*. This work survives in approximately twenty manuscripts, many of which are in oriental libraries and therefore generally inaccessible. The text has been published in Arabic but it has not been translated in full into any other language, although parts of the work have been translated and studied.




FIGURE 3.1 Diagram of the interior of al-Biruni's instrument with gears for representing the motions of the sun and moon. The central wheel revolves once a week and sets the other wheels in motion. The wheels to the lower right 2 and lower left display the positions of the moon and sun in the zodiac. The upper wheel shows the phases of the moon. [UBL Or. 123(2), f. 19b]

The text of the *Isti'ab* is contained in pages 47–175 of the codex Or. 591. The manuscript was written in the city of Aghlat, near Lake Van in Eastern Turkey, by a scribe named Isma'il ibn Ibrahim ibn Mahmud al-Khilati. Copying was finished on Monday 7 Jumada II 614 AH / September 8, 1217 AD. The text is nearly complete; only pages 110 and 111 are missing.

Manuscript Or. 123(2) was severely damaged in the course of its history. Many leaves are now lost, and the remaining leaves were bound in an incorrect order and then numbered. The existing manuscript text consists of four fragments, which together contain circa 40 percent of the *Isti'ab*. The manuscript was written in the city of Tokat in northern Anatolia, Turkey, and copying was finished on Monday 11 Jumada 1 676 AH / October 11, 1277 AD. The name of the scribe is 'Abd Allah, ibn Shafa' al-Munajjim al-Maraghi (meaning: astronomer from Maragha); as we will see the figures in the two manuscripts were expertly drawn.

We now compare the leaves of manuscript Or. 123(2) with the almost complete manuscript Or. 591 and the Arabic edition of the *Isti'ab* published in 2001–2002 in Meshed (notation: M), which is based on manuscripts from Iran and Istanbul. The text in this Arabic edition is fully satisfactory but the diagrams in the manuscripts were much 'embellished' by the Iranian editor, who also added many diagrams of his own. As a result the technical parts of the text are difficult to follow, and the edition M should be consulted together with at least one manuscript. Or. 123(2) consists of the four continuous fragments. in order of the text: (1) 2a–5b, (2) 6a–9a, (3) 1a–b immediately followed by 10a–17b, and finally (4) 18a–23b. Or. 123(2) includes the part which is missing in manuscript Or. 591. The precise correspondences are as follows:

Or. 123(2) 2a–5b = Or. 591 89:7–99:3 = M 110:10–124:1
Or. 123(2) 6a–8a = Or. 591 104:1–109 = M 128:14–137:18
Or. 123(2) 8b–9a:17 = Or. 591 missing = M 137:18–140:18
Or. 123(2) 9a:17–9b = Or. 591 112–113:12 = M 140:18–142:20
Or. 123(2) 1a–1b = Or. 591 136:24–139:4 = M 184:4–187:4
Or. 123(2) 10a–17b = Or. 591 139:4–158:14 = M 187:4–213:11
Or. 123(2) 18a–23b = Or. 591 161:16–175:12 = M 217:3–243:12

We now turn to the astrolabe. The astrolabe is an instrument, usually made in brass, for timekeeping, for determining the cardinal directions, and for solving all sorts of astronomical problems. Astrolabes were made in the Islamic world between the eight and eighteenth centuries AD and several hundred Islamic astrolabes have been preserved, perhaps more than one thousand. The astrolabe is a scientific precision instrument and at the same time many Islamic

astrolabes have great artistic value. In our description of the astrolabe, five parts are fundamental: (1) the 'plate', which is a map displaying the horizon with cardinal directions, the zenith, and much else; (2) the 'spider', a map of the sky including bright stars and the signs of the zodiac; (3) the alidade with two sights, to measure altitudes of the sun and stars; (4) the 'mother' in which the plate (or usually plates) are fitted and locked, with a scale at the circumference divided into 360 degrees; and (5) the little axis with the 'horse', to join all these parts. There may be additional parts, such as a ring to keep the astrolabe in vertical position, etc.

Fig. 3.2 displays the plate, a map in which the horizon appears as the largest and lowest circular arc running from the far left side all the way to the far right side of the figure. Above the horizon are smaller arcs and almost concentric and successively smaller circles, ending at the point which represents the zenith above our head. The two perpendicular horizontal and vertical straight lines on the plate intersect at the celestial North pole (the point near the pole star around which the stars seems to rotate at night). The vertical straight line intersects the horizon arc in the northernmost point, which is below the pole, and the straight line from left to right intersects the horizon arc in the East (left) and West (right) points which are indicated as East (al-mashriq) and West (al-maghrib) in the figure. Under the horizon arc the figure states that the plate is drawn for the geographical latitude of 30 degrees, where the longest day is 14 hours. The numbers are indicated by abjad (alphanumeric) symbols: alif = 1, ba' = 2, jim = 3, dal = 4, … ya' = 10, …, ya'-dal = 14, … kaf = 20, lam = 30, etc. These symbols are also used to indicate the height of the arcs 6, 12, 18, … 84 degrees above the horizon, with the zenith the point 90 degrees above the horizon. Under the horizon the figure displays shorter and very different arcs, the so-called hour lines which do not belong to the map. These hour lines can be used to measure time in the civil hours used in medieval Islamic society. The period between sunrise and sunset was always equal to 12 civil hours, therefore a civil hour was longer in the summer than in winter, and the civil hours are therefore in general not the same as the modern hours. The shape of the plate depends on one's geographical latitude, and most astrolabes contained more than one plate. The plates were tucked together in the container called the 'mother', surrounded by a scale divided into 360 degrees.

The left side of Fig. 3.3 displays the 'spider' ('ankabut), a map of the heavens including some bright stars. The exact positions of the stars are at the tips of the little pointers, and the star names are inscribed near the feet of the pointers; in Fig. 3.3, 15 pointers with stars can be distinguished. The big circle is the ecliptic, that is the path of the sun against the background of the stars. The ecliptic is divided into 12 equal signs, which are well-known to every modern



FIGURE 3.2 Drawing of an astrolabe plate for geographical latitude 30° [UBL Or. 591, f. 64]

reader of horoscopes. The names of the signs (Aries, Taurus, etc.) are written inside the circle, and each 30-degree sign is divided into five intervals of six degrees each. The intervals are indicated by numbers in abjad notation 6, 12, 18, 24 and 30. Fig. 3.3 also displays the alidade on the right side of the spider. The alidade is a rectangular piece of metal with a big circular hole in the middle



FIGURE 3.3 Spider, alidade, little axis with horse, and ring of an astrolabe [UBL Or. 591, f. 78]

and two pointers at the ends. Attached to the alidade are two perpendicular vanes or sights, with a little hole in each sight.

To make the astrolabe work, the little axis (drawn in solid red in the lower right of Fig. 3.3) is put through the small circle in the middle of the spider, then through a hole at the intersection of the two perpendicular straight line son

the plate in Fig. 3.2, then through the middle of the mother of the astrolabe (not shown), and finally through the hole in the middle of the alidade. Then everything is fastened by pushing the horse (also drawn in red in the lower right of Fig. 3.3) through the slit in the little axis. The final product looks like Fig. 3.4. The alidade is not visible in Fig. 3.4 because it rotates on the back side of the astrolabe.

If everything is attached correctly, the spider can rotate around the axis over the plate. If we do this, we simulate what happens in nature in the course of the night on the Northern hemisphere of the earth: the stars are seen to rotate very slowly around the celestial pole which is near the pole star. Fig. 3 also shows the handle and the ring (upper right) which can be attached to the astrolabe in order to hold everything vertically so that the alidade can be used for measurements; the ring and handle are also seen in Fig. 3.4.

Al-Biruni's *Isti'ab* includes not only the standard astrolabe but also variants of the astrolabe and other related instruments. A particularly interesting variant is the boat (zawraqi)-astrolabe which is illustrated in Fig. 3.5. Al-Biruni says that the standard astrolabe is based on the theory that the earth is fixed in the centre of the universe and that the stars rotate around it in 24 hours. He says that the boat-astrolabe is based on the theory that the earth rotates in 24 hours and that the universe with the stars is fixed. It may perhaps surprise the reader to find this theory, which is correct according to modern physics, related to a medieval Islamic instrument.

The plate of the boat-astrolabe (Fig. 3.5, left side) contains the signs of the ecliptic and also some bright stars; seven stars are visible as red dots in Fig. 3.5. The moving part is the 'boat' displayed on the right side of Fig. 3.5. The boat carries a mast with a pointer (used to indicate the time) and also two sights, so it can even function as alidade. The horizon is the down side of the boat. So if we fix the boat by a little axis through the hole in the mast and through a hole in the centre of the plate, and then rotate the boat over the plate, we see the horizon rotating over the map of the stars and in this way we can also simulate what happens in nature, with the difference that now the stars are fixed.

Al-Biruni says that it is an advantage of this type of astrolabe that the moving part (boat plus mast) is much easier to manufacture than the spider of a standard astrolabe with all its pointers. However, finding the time is much more difficult by means of the boat-astrolabe than by means of the standard astrolabe, and this explains why the boat-astrolabe never became popular.

The astrolabe is a precision instrument, and if executed correctly, can be used for an easy and reasonably accurate determination of the time. To achieve this goal, the circles have to be engraved on the brass plate with utmost precision. We have to point out that Figs. 3.2, 3.3 and 3.5 above are sketches, nothing



FIGURE 3.4 The spider, plate axis with horse, and the mother with the outermost circular scale. The alidade is invisible because it rotates on the back side of the astrolabe. Replica by Fuat Sezgin of an astrolabe made ca. 950 AD by Ahmad ibn Khalaf [Collection Institut für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften, Frankfurt]

more. The quality of the diagrams is very high, and the attentive reader will be able to identify an unimportant error in Fig. 3.2. The way to engrave a metal astrolabe very precisely is by computing (rather than constructing) the radii of the circles and the positions of the centres of the circles. Al-Biruni provides a 'fundamental table' for this purpose which is extant in Or. 123(2) but which



FIGURE 3.5 Boat-astrolabe [UBL Or. 123(2), f. 6a]



FIGURE 3.6 Numerical table for astrolabe design [UBL Or. 123(2), f. 8b]

is missing from the other manuscript Or. 591. The table is displayed in Fig. 3.6. The numbers are again in abjad (alphanumeric) notation. The scribe omitted many numbers which he believed to be self-evident, so there are many blank spaces in the table.[1] The precise positions of the circles on the plate of the astrolabe can be found by addition and subtraction of two numbers in the fundamental table; the way to do this depends on the geographical latitude for which the plate is constructed. If we convert to modern units of measurement, the table provides an accuracy in fractions of millimeters, sufficient for all practical purposes.

The illustrations in the two Leiden manuscripts Or. 123(2) and Or. 591 provide a glimpse of an interesting work by al-Biruni on the astrolabe. They are concrete examples of the depth of the Arabic-Islamic scientific tradition, and one may well understand why the two manuscripts were of interest to Jacobus Golius and Levinus Warner.

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1 In modern terms, the quantity tabulated in Fig. 3.6 is: 15 $\tan(x/2)/\tan(45 + \varepsilon/2)$ where al-Biruni takes the obliquity of the ecliptic $\varepsilon$ as 23 degrees 35 minutes, and x takes all values from 1 to 179 degrees. The table is constructed in such a way that the outer circumference of the astrolabe plates is always a circle with diameter 30.

Goethe-Universität 2003), 5 vols., see vol. 2 p. 165, Leiden Or. 123(2) as a manuscript of the *Isti'ab*; and vol. 2 p. 89 for the replica of the astrolabe which we have reproduced here as Fig. 3.4, made ca. 950 AD by the astrolabe maker Ahmad ibn Khalaf for a son of the Abbasid Caliph al-Muktafi. An English version of the catalog appeared in 2010. See also: https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/59012099/Museum.

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CHAPTER 4

# Manuscripts Matter

*Petra M. Sijpesteijn*

That Arabic manuscripts preserve uniquely rich materials on any imaginable topic with often much older and more extensive treatment than anything that is available from medieval Europe is hardly an exaggeration.[1] The Arabic treatise on book-making, entitled *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb wa-ʿuddat dhawī al-albāb*, "A support for scribes and a device for learned men" (from now on *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*) is a case in point. It contains detailed instructions on how to produce writing utensils, glue, black, and coloured and invisible inks made with carbon (*midād*), iron-gall (*ḥibr*), or metals, and includes information on how to produce paper and bind books. *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* has been popular in the Arabic-speaking world and beyond since its composition in the 12th century CE. The Leiden University Library holds a copy and a fragment of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*. In this paper I discuss some textual elements of the Leiden manuscript that show that every handwritten copy of a text, however well known, matters for the historical information it contains. I offer it as a tribute to Arnoud Vrolijk, who was always able to produce a manuscript from our collection to illustrate whatever historical topic presented to him.

## 1 Authorship and Provenance

Single recipes for ink-making are attested in pharmacological and alchemical works, manuals for craftsmen as well as descriptions of characteristics of organic and inorganic natural materials from antiquity onwards and are also regularly added to the blank pages at the beginning or end of medieval manuscripts. But dedicated works containing multiple recipes for producing ink organised on the basis of characteristics and purpose only appear much later.

1 This article took me to the lively field of Arabic ink recipe studies where Lucia Raggetti was kind enough to be my guide. I benefited immensely from the work of the members of her ERC team UseFool (grant agreement 101043939). Claudia Colini's comments on some technical aspects were especially helpful. I also should like to thank Ayyub, Jelle Bruning, Yifan Hu, Kate Pukhovaia and Adam Ramadhan, whose comments on the reading, translation and interpretation of the Arabic recipe in Or. 8511 were very helpful.

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The first such book in the Arabic-speaking world was written in the early tenth century, long before similarly comprehensive works appeared in Europe.[2] The next treatise to appear that gathered and organised ink recipes systematically in fact includes extensive descriptions of all the technical aspects involved in the production of handwritten books. But it also contains by far the largest collection of ink recipes – an impressive 150 or so, more than any other medieval Arabic work. This is *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*.

*ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* contains twelve chapters, starting with one on writing utensils and scripts; followed by seven chapters on inks; a chapter on how to remove writing; one on the production of glue and on how to adhere silver and gold to pages; a chapter on the production of paper; and a final one on leather book bindings (see Fig. 4.1). The text clearly served as a 'workshop manual' reflecting the interests of practitioners in the book production trade, but it also represents an encyclopaedic ambition with the compiler(s) aiming to bring together all available information on the topic.[3] The recipes in *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* are not very detailed and contain only the most minimal instructions, suggesting that its intended audience were more or less experienced tradesmen, rather than absolute beginners.[4]

Immediately following its composition, the *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* was very popular as the number of existing manuscripts, covering a wide geographic and chronological span, in collections around the world, attest. Many of the extant manuscripts were copied in Cairo or other places in Egypt (e.g. Damietta), but

2 It was written by Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyyāʾ al-Razī (d. 925). Cf. Sara Fani, *Prendi, aggiungi, mescola e scrivi. Ricettari arabi sullla preparazione di inchiostri* (Milan: Editrice Bibliografica, 2023), 61–75. Medieval European technical treatises for illuminators and scribes start to appear in the fifteenth century. Cf. Ricardo Córdoba (ed.), *Craft treatises and handbooks: The dissemination of technical knowledge in the middle ages. De diversis Artibus* 91 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

3 Claudia Colini, "Ink making the book: Learning a craft in the Arabic world," in *Education materialised. Reconstructing Teaching and Learning Contexts through Manuscripts*, eds. Stefanie Brinkmann *et al.* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), 97–126; Claudia Colini, "Ink recipes from the Islamic era: Texts, manuscripts, ink replication, and scientific analyses," in *Bridging the gap: Disciplines, times, and spaces in dialogue*, eds. Christian W. Hess and Federico Manuelli (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2021), 178. A similar double impetus of compiling recipes for practical purposes and to form a complete compilation of authoritative knowledge on the topic has been observed for late medieval European book production treatises by Doris Oltrogge, "Recipe books for illuminators in 15th-century Germany and Netherlands – Workshop practice and encyclopedic ambition," in *Craft treatises and handbooks: The dissemination of technical knowledge in the middle ages. De diversis Artibus* 91, ed. Ricardo Córdoba (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2013), pp. 55–68.

4 Colini, "Ink recipes," p. 177.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله المنعم المفضال الكبير المتعال وصلواته على محمد واله وصحبه خير ال
وبعد فاني جمعت في هذا الكتاب المسمى عمدة الكتاب وعدة
ذوي الالباب ما الاغنا للكاتب عنه من الصنايع وما يتعلق بالكتابة
من الغرايب والبدايع ماحرينه واستملحته مما لا يسع الكاتب تركه
واهماله ويكمل الكتابة بتعلمه واتقانه وشحنته على اثنا عشر بابا كل باب
يشتمل على فنون عجيبه ونتف غريبه ليسهل على طالب فن من الفنون الامر
نظره في بابه من غير تعب ولا امساس لعب والله الموفق وهو المسؤل للورع
الباب الاول
في فضل القلم والخط وانتخاب الاقلام واختيارها واختلاف بريها على اجناس
الخطوط والدواة وما يصلح لها من الالات ويليق بها على سايرالاوقات
الباب الثاني
في عمل اجناس المداد واصناف الحداد
الباب الثالث
في عمل الاحبار السود واجناس المركبات
الباب الرابع
في عمل الاحبار الملونه واليق المركبه
الباب الخامس
في عمل اليق العجيبه على الوان شتى غريبه
الباب السادس
في تلوين الاصباغ وخلطها واستخراج بعضها من بعض
الباب السابع
في الكتابة بليق الذهب والفضه والنحاس وحلهم وعمل ما يقوم مقامهم عند العوز
الباب الثامن
في وضع الاسرار في الكتب وما في ذلك من العجب
الباب

FIGURE 4.1 Part of the table of contents of *ʿUmdat al-kuttab wa-ʿuddat dhawī al-albāb* listing the chapters on how to choose and produce one's writing utensils and several chapters on ink production [UBL, Or. 8511, f. 1v]

there are also some that originate in Qayrawan, Damascus and Istanbul.[5] The text was also translated into Persian.[6] Parts of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* were reworked into new texts such as the part on ink-making which formed the basis for two other treatises. Some of the ink recipes ended up in a compilation of recipes for perfumes, medicines, foodstuffs and drinks composed under the Ayyubid sultan al-Ashraf (r. 1250–1254).[7] The ink compositions were combined with recipes for soap production, eye lotions and weaponry into a treatise in Yemen which was attributed to the Rasulid ruler al-Malik al-Muẓaffar (r. 1249–1295).[8] Thanks especially to its complete translation into English, and several Arabic editions, *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* has also been much used in modern studies, for example for analyses of the chemical composition of ink in Arabic manuscripts, studies on different aspects of the Islamic book such as book-binding and paper-making, and even for aspects of colour theory.[9]

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5 The oldest known copy comes from Damietta, but is now kept in the Manuscripts Institute in Cairo (*maʿhad al-makhṭūṭāt*) and dates to 1598. An even older one supposedly once kept in the library in Qayrawan apparently passed into the hands of the Orientalist Levi Provençal (d. 1956), and has since been missing (as stated in a blog by Maḥmūd Zakī published in 2012. www.alukah.net/library/0/39992/ accessed 28.1.2025). For an overview of the origin of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* manuscripts, see Armin Schopen,*Tinten und Tuschen des arabisch-islamischen Mittelalters: Dokumentation, Analyse, Rekonstruktion: ein Beitrag zur materiellen Kultur des Vorderen Orients.* Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen 269 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), pp. 28–32.

6 Yves Porter, "Une traduction persane du traité d'Ibn Bādis: ʿUmdat al-Kuttāb (ca. 1025)." In *Les Manuscrits du Moyen-Orient. Essais de codicologie et de paléographie*, ed. François Déroche (Istanbul: IFEA/Paris: Bibliothèque nationale & CNRS, 1989), pp. 61–67.

7 Schopen, *Tinten und Tuschen*, 32.

8 Schopen, *Tinten und Tuschen*, pp. 23–24; Fani, *Prendi*, pp. 79–81.

9 The full text was translated by Martin Levey, "Mediaeval Arabic bookmaking and its relation to early chemistry and pharmacology," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society. New Series* 52 (1962): pp. 1–79. An English translation of the part on book-binding was published in 1961 by Gulnar K. Bosch "The staff of the scribes and implements of the discerning: An excerpt," *Ars Orientalis* 4: pp. 1–13. See for a discussion of Arabic editions of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* and studies in Arabic and other languages, Maḥmūd b. Majkhūt, "'Umdat al-kuttāb wa-ʿuddat dhawī al-albāb fī ʿuyūn al-ʿarab wa-l-mushtariqīn," *Rufūf* 3 (2015): pp. 115–120. On-line: asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/67758 accessed 28.1.2025. The work was used for studies on ink e.g., by M. Vieira *et al.* "Organic red colorants in Islamic manuscripts (12th–15th c.) produced in al-Andalus, part 1," *Dyes and Pigments* 166 (2019): pp. 451–459; for book-binding e.g., by Karin Scheper, *The technique of Islamic bookbinding* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015) and Gulnar Bosch, John Carswell and Guy Petherbridge, *Islamic bindings and bookmaking* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1981); for paper-making e.g., by Sāmiya Muṣṭafā Masʿad, *al-Warāqa wa-l-warrāqūn fī al-Andalus min ʿaṣr al-khilāfa hattā nihāyat ʿaṣr al-muwaḥḥidīn* (Cairo: ʿAyn li-l-dirāsāt wa-l-buḥūth al-insāniyya wa-l-ijtimaʿiyya, 2000) and Ahmad Y. al-Hassan and Donald R. Hill, *Islamic technology. An illustrated history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press & Paris:

Despite its popularity and wide distribution, *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* has a complicated transmission history including questions about its authorship.[10] Armin Schopen distinguishes three recensions based on the number and contents of chapters and the attestation of different ink recipes. In general there is a decrease of carbon inks and an increase of iron-gall and mixed iron-gall carbon inks over time.[11] It is generally assumed that the text was written at the court of al-Muʿizz b. Badīs (d. 1062), the fourth ruler of the Zirid dynasty that reigned in Tunisia from 972 to 1148 CE, or that of his son Tamīm (d. 1108), with the dedication to the ruler having morphed into attribution of authorship over time.[12]

## 2 Living Text Tradition

The fluid nature of medieval Arabic texts transmitted in handwritten form, especially, but not exclusively, works with a more utilitarian function such as legal case studies, and medical, pharmacological, and magical manuals, is well established.[13] The technical documentation listing different possible situations and solutions in the form of recipes, treatments and the like invited written interventions in the form of comments, corrections, additions, and the removal and re-organisation of textual elements. Changes were made to fit the needs of individual practitioners, align with the availability of local products, existing cultural customs, and regional linguistic practice. Technical

UNESCO, 1986), and for ideas about colours by Eric Kirchner, "Color theory and color order in medieval Islam: A review," *Color. Research and application* 40 (2015): pp. 5–16.

10 For the most recent discussion about the likely author of the text is, see Fani, *Prendi*, pp. 76–79.

11 Armin Schopen, *Tinten und Tuschen des arabisch-islamischen Mittelalters: Dokumentation, Analyse, Rekonstruktion: Ein Beitrag zur materiellen Kultur des Vorderen Orients.* Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen 269 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), pp. 28–32.

12 For an overview of his life and reign, see Mohammad Talbi, "al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs," *Encyclopaedia of Islam* 2nd edition. Leiden: Brill. On-line. Accessed 20.12.2024; Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, "al-Muʿizz ibn Bādīs," *al-Aʿlām* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿilm li-l-malāyīn, 1990), vol. 7, 269–270 with a reference to his works on p. 270 n. 1. Cf. Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur. Erster Supplementband* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1937), pp. 473, 963. One manuscript from the Zahiriyya library in Damascus states that Abū al-Qāsim al-Zajājī (d. 1024) wrote the text in Bagdad (edited by Iyād Khālid al-Ṭabbāʿ, Damascus: Wizārat al-thaqāfa, 2007).

13 Fani, "Literary dimension," p. 113.

developments and literary goals similarly motivated textual emendations.[14] Such changes to the text were incorporated in subsequent copies resulting in multiple recensions sometimes attesting significant differences.[15] Indeed, the large number of recipes in *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* and similar technical treatises suggests it is the work not of a single author, but rather a compilation of several generations of practitioners.[16] How the contributions of each author, scribe, copyist, book-binder, compiler and user interacted to create a living textual tradition can be traced in the manuscripts.

The copy of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* preserved at Leiden University Library offers us exactly such a perspective. Or. 8511 was acquired by the library in 1954 at auction at Burgersdijk & Niermans auctioneers in Leiden. There is no information on the provenance of the work.[17] The loose leaves of the manuscript are kept in a modern western cardboard folder. The text is complete starting with the table of contents on the verso of the title page (folio 1v–2r). The first chapter starts on folio 2r. The text is written in the same hand throughout using black ink for the main texts with the recipe and chapter headings added later in red ink which. The script is *naskh* with characteristics suggesting it was written in Egypt or the Levant in the 11th/17th century.[18] Catch words are used throughout the text. There is some water damage to the text on several pages notes and marks are added in the margins. The Arabic words copied from the recipe on f. 5 onto the modern cover and the name transliterated in Latin script on the title page (see Fig. 4.2), both written with a pencil, were presumably added after the manuscript arrived in Leiden. The manuscript shows signs of historical repairs (e.g. the right bottom corner of folio 4v and 12v are reinforced with pieces of paper, and vertical strips of paper are added to connect torn bi-folios on 2v and 9r; 1v and 10r; 11v and 20r 22v–23r). The pages were

14 For the role of topoi and other literary techniques that impacted the ink recipe collections, see Sara Fani, "The literary dimension of Arabic treatises on ink making," in *Traces of ink. Experiences of philology and replication*, ed. Lucia Raggetti (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2021), pp. 122–123.

15 Schopen, *Tinten und Tuschen*, 28–32. Cf. Petra M. Sijpesteijn "Arabic medical-magical manuscripts: a living tradition," in *Amulets and talismans of the Middle East and North Africa in context*, ed. Marcela A. Garcia Probert and Petra M. Sijpesteijn (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2022), pp. 78–104; Fani, "Literary dimension."

16 Fani, "Literary dimension," 114.

17 P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic manuscripts in the library of the university of Leiden and other collections in the Netherlands. Second enlarged edition.* Codices Manuscripti VII (The Hague/Boston/London: 1980), 386–387 repeated in Jan Just Witkam, *Inventory of the oriental manuscripts of the Library of the University of Leiden. Volume 9: manuscripts Or. 8001–Or. 9000* (Leiden: Ter Lugt Press, 2019), Or. 8511.

18 Voorhoeve, *Handlist*, 387.

recut at some point after the text and marginalia were added with negligible text loss (e.g. on folio 5r). The manuscript has no colophon and the name on the title page, Muḥammad Suyūfī, cannot be used to provide a firm date or place of origin as the person remains unidentified (see Fig. 4.2).[19]

The visual characteristics of Or. 8511 confirm its mundane status as a users' manual, despite its encyclopaedic ambition. The *naskh* of the main text is not particularly beautifully executed and there are several corrections in the text such as crossings-out of words erroneously repeated (e.g. folio 4v l. 5) and additions of words accidentally left out (e.g. folios 3r, 4r, 8v). Sometimes insufficient space was left blank to add recipe titles in red ink after the main text was completed in black writing (e.g. folio 4v *ṣifa midād Ahwāzī* is crammed on half an open line; folio 5r *ṣifat ukhrā* is added at the bottom because there was no space left at the top of the recipe starting on folio 5v). In another case *dhahabiyya* was added in black ink to an incomplete title written in red, presumably to restore the complete title, but leaving out the preceding *aw* which is attested in the title in other manuscripts (folio 12r). Conversely, Or. 8511 seems to have formed a stand-alone book and was not bound with other texts as is often the case with this work.[20]

The most striking part of Or. 8511, however, appears at the bottom margin of folio 5r where an additional ink recipe is added (see Fig. 4.3). The recipe appears at the beginning of 'chapter three on the production of black iron-gall inks' (*al-bāb al-thālith fī ʿaml al-aḥbār al-sūd*) below the first recipe of that chapter and the heading of the second recipe. It is penned in a different hand from the main text and its corrections in the margins, at an oblique to ninety-degree angle to the main text. As will become clear below this recipe does not originate in the Arabic *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* corpus and it is a perfect example of how far textual elements travelled in this world. But before we discuss what this recipe can tell us about this feature of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*, let us read the recipe itself.

19 The text on the titlepage seems to identify Muḥammad Suyūfī as the book's copyist: "registered in name of its scribe Muḥammad Suyūfī (*quyyida bi-ism kātibihi muḥammad Suyūfī*). The two or three letters preceding the name I was not able to make sense of. I would like to thank Geert Jan van Gelder for his help in reading the scribe's nisba. Below the Arabic the name is written as Muhammad Sairaqī in pencil in Latin letters.

20 Colini, "Ink recipes," 178.




FIGURE 4.2 The title page with the title *ʿUmdat al-kuttab wa-ʿuddat dhawī al-albāb*. The name Muḥammad Sīraqī is mentioned but his relation to the manuscript is not clear [UBL, Or. 8511, f. 1r]



FIGURE 4.3 The additional recipe for black ink in the margin of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb wa-ʿuddat dhawī al-albāb* [UBL, Or. 8511, f. 5r]

## 3 A Recipe for Ink

صفة حبر يسمّى لعلي[21]

يؤخذ[22] مقدار من الوشنة[23] ويحطّ | في كيس ويغلى على النار حين[24] يدقس | إلى أسفل الماعون[25] ويمرس ويؤخذ | ماؤه[26] ثم يؤخذ من الدوده[27] ما شئت | وتسحق سحقا جيدا ويلقى على |ذلك الماء وهو يغلى حتى يبقى | منه ثلثيه ويرفع حتى يبر[د] | يسيرا ويلقى فيه شب | حتى نافذ له مقدار ثم يؤخذ | قشر بيض جزء ولسان البحر | جزء ويسحقا[28] ناعما ويستف[29] | من ذلك الماء المذكور إلى | أن يقوم له قوام مجرّب صحيح[30]

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21 The verb is combined with the preposition *li-* instead of the usual *bi-*. In other Arabic ink recipes, inks are associated with historical figures. E.g., "Ink of Abū Ṭāhir" (d. 893) mentioned in al-Qalalūsī (d. 1308) (Claudia Colini, ""I tried it and it is really good": Replicating recipes of Arabic black inks," in *Traces of ink. Experiences of philology and replication*, ed. Lucia Raggetti [Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2021], 134) and al-Marrākushī mentions an "ink (*ḥibr*) used by ʿĪsā b. ʿUmar al-Naḥwī" (d. 766) (Fani, *Prendi*, 127). *Laʿlī* has the specific meaning "bright red" in Egyptian Arabic (El-Said Badawi and Martin Hinds, *A dictionary of Egyptian Arabic* [Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1986], 791), but such a name seems to be unlikely considering the addition of black soot to the ink.

22 The passive third person singular regularly used in recipes is translated with an imperative.

23 *Wishna* (T. *vişne*) refers to a kind of sour cherries (morello cherry) used in Egyptian Arabic (Badawi and Hinds, *Dictionary*, 941). *Washna* is attested as well.

24 This reading is secured by the diacritical dots that are used in the text.

25 *Maʿūn* with the meaning kitchen pot is especially associated with Egyptian Arabic (Badawi and Hinds, *Dictionary*, p. 828).

26 *Mā'* is the water in which the juice of the smashed cherries has been integrated. Liquid seems a better term.

27 *Dūda* (Persian) meaning soot is attested in a discussion of "proportions for ink recorded on the first of Muharram in the year 1052" (April 1 1642) from a Persian handbook produced for courtiers and administrators at Shah Jahan's (r. 1628–1658) new capital Delhi. Translated in Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "Palette for princes: An unpublished source on Indian pigments," *South Asian Studies* 13 (1997): 51. It is identified as "soot, lamp-black, with which they make ink" in Francis Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), p. 542. I would like to thank Adam Ramadhan and Gabrielle van den Berg respectively for these references.

28 The dual verbal form is used in *yusaḥḥiqā* to refer to both ingredients.

29 Of the verb at the end of this line only the first three letters can be read with certainty as *yā'- sīn – nūn/tā'*. The reading *yusattifu* with the meaning "to stack up, to arrange" seems appropriate.

30 *Mujarrab ṣaḥīḥ* is a common addition to recipes in the *materia medica* to indicate they have been tried out and proven to be effective (Sijpesteijn, "Medical-magical," 83 n. 7). The tail of the final *ḥā'* is lost at the end of the line.

Recipe to prepare black iron-gall ink called ʿAlī |

Take an amount of sour cherries, place it | in a bag and boil it on a fire while crushing (it) | to the bottom of the vessel and letting it become diluted. Drain | its liquid. Then take as much soot as you want | and pound it well and pour the liquid on it, while it is boiling until two thirds of it remains. Then remove it (from the fire) so that it can cool off | a little. Pour alum over it | until it has an effective amount (i.e. until it has turned black enough).[31] Then take | one part of egg shells and one part of cuttlefish bones | and pound them into a fine powder and add | of the mentioned liquid until | it has the right consistency. (This recipe is) tried out and proven to be correct.

## 4 Mixed Text

The recipe added in the margin of Or. 8511 shows how textual elements travelled across time, place and text genre. The recipe lists the ingredients and provides instructions on how to combine and treat them to produce ink. The recipe falls into the category of so-called 'compound' or 'mixed' inks which combine elements of iron-gall (*ḥibr*) and carbon (*midād*) inks mixing ingredients and procedures. Such inks became more popular over time as they combined the immediate blackness of the soot with the non-water soluble qualities and penetrating darkness that the iron-gall ink obtained over time.[32] The recipe describes the ingredients and procedures that result in the chemical reaction of iron-gall ink: tannic acids from vegetable products are combined with iron ions (mostly in the form of iron salts) to form a water soluble ferrous tannate that turns dark by exposure to the air (oxygen). In our recipe the tannins are extracted from sour cherries (*wishna*) by being cooked and ground and then diluted in water.[33] Placing the cherries in a bag, supposedly made of

31 As in another recipe where it is stated "add to the formulation as much vitriol as you like until its tone satisfies you" (Colini, "Replicating," p. 138).

32 Claudia Colini *et al.* "The quest for mixed inks," *Manuscript cultures* 11 (2018): pp. 41–48; Colini, "Replicating," 149–152; François Déroche, *Islamic codicology. An introduction to the study of manuscripts in Arabic script* (London: Al-Furqān Islamic Hiertage Foundation, 2005), p. 115; Monique Zerdoun Bat-Yehouda, *Les encres noires au moyen âge* (jusqu'à 1600) (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1983), pp. 20, 110. Even though our recipe does not use gall nuts, but cherries to produce the necessary tannins for the chemical reaction with iron.

33 Tannins extracted from plants rather than gall nuts are retrieved through cooking or fermentation (Colini, "Replicating," p. 136). Al-Marrākushī mentions the use of cherries in a carbon ink recipe called 'Egyptian carbon ink' (*midād miṣrī*), presumably for their nice

textile because of its porosity, before letting them into the water and pounding them, has the same function as the filtering with a 'fine cloth' that is prescribed in other recipes: the solid remains of the cherries can be easily removed while the juice passes through the cloth so that it dissolves in the water.[34] The cherry juice also functions as a binder, keeping the different ingredients in the ink together. Soot (Persian *dūba*) is added to produce an immediate stable dark black colour. The double sulphate alum (*shabb*) provides the metallic salt in our recipe, especially through the iron that is generally present in natural, impure vitriols.[35] Finally, ground egg shells and cuttlefish bones (*lisān al-baḥr*) are added to neutralise or contain the acidity of the ink.

So in what ways does this recipe deviate from other ink recipes preserved in the Leiden *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*? The recipe differs from others in the manuscript in its script, language, ingredients and format. Let us treat these one by one and see what influences they represent. The handwriting clearly differs from the main text. It is written with a thicker *qalam* in a smaller script that shows influences from Ottoman *ruqʿa*, for example in the way the *hā'* of *ma'uhu* is connected to the *wāw* and curls up at the beginning of line 4.[36] Besides the obvious observation that the recipe in the margin was added after the main text was completed, the script points to a significantly later date than the main text of the manuscript. A later date is also supported by the character of the ink recipe as one of those mixing elements from soot and iron-gall ink recipes.

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smell (Schopen, *Tinten und Tuschen*, pp. 43–44). These are, however, of a different kind, namely *maḥlab*, i.e. *prunus mahaleb* (Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London/Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1865), vol. 1, p. 625). Because they are rich in condensed, rather than hydrolysable tannins, fruits like cherries are not ideal ingredients for iron-gall inks. However, as Claudia Colini's experiment using sumac, also high in condensed tannins, shows, it is possible to produce a nice black ink from them ("Replicating," 138–141). I would like to thank Claudia Colini for pointing me to the parallel ink recipes using cherries and sumac.

34 *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* contains a recipe that instructs: "sieve it with a thin piece of silk (fine cloth)" (*wa-yunkhilu bi-ḥarīra ṣafīfa/khirqa khafīfa*) (Ed. ʿAbd al-Sattār al-Ḥalwajī and ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Muḥsin Zakī, p. 94). In a thirteenth-century ink-recipe ground gall nuts are wrapped in a thin piece of cloth, on which water is poured and then the cloth is squeezed 'like a tea bag' to extract the ink (Rafael Javier Díaz Hidalgo *et al.* "The making of black inks in an Arabic treatise by al-Qalalūsī dated from the 13th c.: reproduction and characterization of iron-gall ink recipes" *Heritage Science* 11 [2023], 5, 6–7). In a manuscript dated 1342 several ink recipes are added, one of which instructs: 'sieve them with a piece of cloth' (*yunkhalu bi-khirqa*) (Raggetti, "Ink recipes," p. 318). Mostly no method of filtering is indicated (Raggetti, "Ink recipes," 300, 317; *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*, ed. ʿAbd al-Sattār al-Ḥalwajī and ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Muḥsin Zakī, pp. 91, 92).

35 I would like to thank Claudia Colini for explaining this technical point.

36 I would like to thank Kate Pukhovaia for this observation.

In the three recensions of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* that Armin Schopen identified the earliest one contains no recipes for mixed inks, while the subsequent two do. Armin Schopen thinks that the second recension came into being in the middle of the fourteenth century.[37] Or. 8511 follows the first recension and thus mentions no compound carbon iron-gall ink recipes such as the one that is written in its margin on folio 5r.

The additional recipe uses ingredients and words that show Persian *and* Egyptian influence and that are not attested in the Or. 8511 text of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*. The words that place the recipe in an Egyptian context include those used for sour cherries, *wishna*, and vessel, *maʿūn*, both of which have an Egyptian dialectal connotation.[38] However, the word *dūda*, Persian for soot or lamp-black, points to a very different geographical origin.[39] A Persian influence is supported by the use of alum (*shabb*) as the source for iron salts. In most Arabic recipes vitriol (*zāj*) is used for this purpose, but alum (*shabb*) is attested in iron-gall ink recipes in the Islamic world, especially those of Persian background, to bind with tannins instead of vitriol.[40] It remains to be seen whether these elements align with the Persian translation of the *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*, which indeed exhibits significant differences in recipes listed and ingredients used.[41] The addition of calcium carbonate in the form of pulverised egg shells and cuttlefish bones functions as a mild neutraliser in the iron-gall ink and decreases its acidity. Medieval Arabic ink recipes lack any recommendations to add calcium carbonate to iron-gall inks, even though some medieval authors knew of the corrosive effect of iron-gall inks that were too acidic.[42] On modern-day discussion forums where experiences with home-made inks are exchanged it does, however, occur including references to the use of egg shells and cuttlefish bones![43] For the same reason, calcium is used in conservation practices to de-acidify papers affected by iron-gall inks.[44] Another unusual feature of the recipe is the absence of the binder and thickener gum arabic which

37 Schopen, *Tinten und Tuschen*, pp. 28–29. Cf. Fani, "Literary dimension," 110 n. 21 citing Claudia Colini's PhD dissertation; Colini, "Replicating," pp. 150–151.

38 See above nn. 22 and 24.

39 See above, n. 26.

40 Zerdoun, *Encres noires*, 313–314; Déroche, *Islamic codicology*, 114 n. 84.

41 Porter, "Traduction perse."

42 Déroche quotes al-Marrakūshī (13th c.) (*Islamic codicology*, 114).

43 E.g., heraldry.sca.org/kwhss/2015/Making%20Medieval%20Ink.pdf; www.fountainpennetwork.com/forum/topic/295608-neutralising-acidity-in-home-made-iron-gall-ink/ Both accessed 27.1.2025.

44 Maria João *et al.* "Iron-gall inks: A review of their degradation mechanisms and conservation treatments," *Heritage Science* 10 (2022).

is most commonly attested in ink recipes from the medieval Arabic-speaking world and Europe, sometimes substituted by honey, including in those in *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*. The cherry juice could work as a binder, while the crushed egg shells and cuttlefish bones might have functioned as a thickener. The soot in the recipe compensates for the absence of gum Arabic with its quality to brighten the ink's colour.

Finally, two lexical items set the recipe in the margin apart from the main text of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*. The title of the ink recipe which describes it as 'called ʿAlī' deviates from the way the other recipes are identified in *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*, namely by geographical origin ('Persian'; 'Arabic'; 'Kufic'; 'from Ahwāz'), appearance ('black ink'; 'shiny ink'), substance ('dry ink'), purpose ('for kings'; 'for common people') or the manner of production ('without cooking'). This title is, moreover, not put in later in red ink, but written in the same black ink and hand as the recipe itself. Headings were added later, potentially by a different scribe than the one who wrote the recipes, making them a more dynamic element that was in some way disembodied from the recipe and therefore less suitable to compare writing recensions. However, in this case the difference between the way titles are written in the main text and in the added recipe surely reflect two different moments of composition.[45] Finally, the two words *mujarrab ṣaḥīḥ*, 'tried and tested', that appear at the end of the recipe do not occur in any of the ink recipes in *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* or in any of the other medieval Arabic ink recipe treatises.[46] Ink recipes can contain a reference to some form of observed trial such as 'it will come out well', 'it is wonderful', and even 'I confirmed that it is good', but these seem all to fall in a different category than 'tried and tested.'[47] The fixed expression, *mujarrab ṣaḥīḥ*, is commonly used at the end of recipes in *materia medica* and it might suggest a possible origin of the additional recipe. Single ink recipes do occur in medical and pharmacological treatises.

45 For the argument that titles have their own dynamic as they are copied from one manuscript to the next, see Fani, "Literary dimension," p. 115.

46 For examples from *ʿUmdat al-kuttab* and other medieval treatises on ink-making, see e.g., Levey, "Medieaval Arab bookmaking;" Lucia Raggetti, "Ordinary inks and incredible tricks in al-ʿĪrāqī's *ʿUyūn al-ḥaqāʾiq*," in *Traces of ink. Experiences of philology and replication*, ed. Lucia Raggetti (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2021), pp. 155–191; Lucia Raggetti, "Cum grano salis. Some Arabic ink recipes. In their historical and literary context," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 7 (2016): 294–338; Colini, "Replicating;" Fani, "Literary dimension."

47 Colini, "Replicating," 152–153. The latter expression (*taṣaḥḥaḥtuhu khayran*) is attested in a recipe added to the margin of a manuscript of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* now in Berlin (Lbg. 637 f. 13v) cited in Colini's aforementioned article. I would like to thank Claudia Colini for providing me with a photograph of the manuscript.

Based on these visual and textual elements we can thus conclude that the additional recipe in Leiden's *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* manuscript originated in a Persian medicinal text that was reworked in an Egyptian context, where many *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* copies were produced, after which it was penned in the margin of Or. 8511 some time after the main text was completed.[48] It does not seem to have made it into the textual tradition of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*, but it does show how readers and users added related information from other texts. The scribe who added the recipe made sure it was added in the right place, namely in the chapter on *ḥibr*, inks that involved a reaction between tannin acids and iron salts, and that might also entail additional elements including those used to make soot inks, even if in this particular recension of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* such compound ink recipes are lacking.

Armin Schopen distinguished three text recensions of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*. The first recension has no mixed inks, the second contains about half the amount of carbon inks and double the amount of iron-gall ink recipes compared to the first recension, and attests the introduction of mixed inks, while the third recension has two additional mixed ink recipes at the end of the twelfth chapter. The compound ink recipe added to the margin of Or. 8511, which itself does not contain mixed ink recipes shows exactly how such mixed ink recipes, which became more popular than soot inks and even than "pure" iron-gall inks, were introduced into *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*. First added to the margin as a user found the text lacking such a useful recipe, the additional recipe could have entered into the main text at the next round of copying. This is how the mixed inks became such characteristic features of the two subsequent recensions of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*.

## 5 Variants

Three distinct textual recensions have been identified for *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* based on the presence of certain ink recipes. Besides the complete manuscript Or. 8511, the Leiden University special collections also contain Or. 14.123, a fragment of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* consisting of two sheets from the middle of a quire (see Fig. 4.4). There is no information in the catalogue about its provenance.[49]

48 The Egyptian dialectical elements do not thus point to the original composition, but rather to a reworking of the Persian (influenced) original. For examples where dialectical elements in ink recipes *do* identify their location of origin, see Fani, "Literary dimension," p. 117.

49 Jan Just Witkam, *Catalogue of Arabic manuscripts* (Leiden: E.J. Brill & Leiden University Press, 1984), fascicule 2, 220.



FIGURE 4.4 Or. 14.123 folio 3r showing the same place in the text at the beginning of chapter 3 where Or. 8511 has the additional recipe in the margin [UBL, Or. 14.123, f. 3r]

The fragment itself contains few cues about its origins, except for the *nastaʿlīq* script in which the text is written, which points to a place of composition in the Persianate world. Interestingly, the two Leiden copies of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* in fact seem to represent two of the three text renditions that Schopen identified. He distinguished the different versions based on the presence or absence of mixed ink recipes and of additional chapters beyond the basic twelve. Or. 8511 coincides with the text edited by ʿAbd al-Sattār al-Ḥalwajī and ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Muḥsin Zakī in 1971 which Schopen recognised as the earliest version.[50] He listed Or. 14.123, albeit only a fragment, under the first rendering. The fragment, however, seems to coincide with the 1989 printed edition by Najīb Māyil Harawī and ʿIṣām Makiyya which Schopen equated with the second redaction.[51] Both manuscripts deviate significantly from Levey's translation which Schopen proposed as the third manifestation of the text.

## 6 Conclusion

*ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*'s exhaustive content on every aspect of Islamic book-production imaginable, organised in thematic chapters, became a popular text that is preserved in multiple manuscripts from its compilation date in the eleventh century into the twentieth century, as well as in printed editions. It is equally popular amongst modern scholars interested in book production. Due to the large number of different ink recipes, that *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* contains, it is also frequently consulted to study the composition of inks in Islamic manuscripts for purposes of academic research and heritage preservation. For studies into the methods of technical knowledge production and transmission the text similarly offers abundant information. This scholarly attention has cleared up many issues concerning *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* and the textual genre it belongs to. The fluid tradition of technical manuals such as *ʿUmdat*

50 Both Or. 8511 and ʿAbd al-Sattār al-Ḥalwajī and ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Muḥsin Zakī's edition attest the titles '*midād Ahwāzī*' (folio 4v and p. 83 respectively) and have a rubric with written in red ink "*wa-qad yaṣnaʿu li-l-mulūk khāṣṣa*" (folio 5r and p. 89 respectively) at the top of the last two recipes of chapter two. The printed edition, however, contains a number of recipes amongst others for inks specially for papyrus and parchment which are lacking in Or. 8511.

51 Or. 14.123 has "*ṣifa midād sūrānī*" (folio 2r), Najīb Māyil Harawī and ʿIṣām Makiyya's edition "*ṣifa midād tanūrānī*" (36) and Levey has "Nafuran," ("Medieaval Arabic bookmaking," 17). All these three copies do not indicate a separate chapter in red ink for the recipe for ink to be used by/for kings, instead attesting a continuous text without headings (folio 2v, pp. 36 and 18 respectively). While headings might not be a good indication to identify text recensions (see above n. 43), the divisions are striking. Or. 14.123 also uses different words in the recipes than Or. 8511.

*al-kuttāb*, whereby texts were constantly added, removed, rearranged, combined or changed, leads to the existence of multiple text recensions besides the usual scribal variation within each recension. The Leiden collection has two manuscript copies representing apparently different text recensions which connect them to other manuscript copies of the text. A more detailed comparison of the ink and other recipes in the different manuscripts, including those kept at Leiden University, needs to be conducted to establish more refined relations between the copies of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*. The complete copy, Or. 8511, moreover, attests to the process behind the development of diverting textual traditions in the kind of utilitarian texts like the *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*. It contains one additional recipe for compound black carbon iron-gall ink from a different yet unidentified source probably of Persian origin and presumably pertaining to the *materia medica* corpus. This recipe did not make it into the textual tradition of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*, possibly because Or. 8511 was never copied. Its prevalence of carbon ink recipes would have become outdated when iron-gall and mixed inks had become more popular. Even the attempt of the person adding a mixed ink recipe in the book's margin did not change its fate. In the meantime the text of *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb* had evolved which might be represented by Or. 14.123. In any case these two Leiden manuscripts show that each manually produced book contains valuable historical insights even about a well-known text that is preserved in multiple handwritten and printed editions.

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CHAPTER 5

# 'Dioscorides Made a Picture of it': What Did a Beaver Look Like?

*Remke Kruk*

Arnoud and I go a long way back: I taught him the Arabic alphabet when he took up his studies in Utrecht in 1976. Rarely have my basic efforts yielded such rich fruits: Arnoud's publications take up half a shelf in my bookcase. I have nothing but happy memories from the years that Arnoud was first my student and later my colleague and friend. Highlights were our visits to the Cairo book fair, where we browsed, often with great hilarity, through the latest productions. Together with Jan Hogendijk, Arnoud managed to completely surprise me at my farewell lecture in 2007 with a substantial and impressive Festschrift. The many references to the excellent contributions in this Festschrift continue to draw attention to my name, even this far into my *otiosum*.

Maybe I have sometimes too automatically presumed that Arnoud shared my enthusiasms: was giving him a hen as a doctorate present such a good idea, after all? Anyway, he accepted it with good grace, built a coop for it, named it Tokje and accepted it as a family member.

I hope he will not mind that for this occasion I also composed something on animals, the subject I have written about all my scholarly life. The topic of this paper, anyway, has a connection to the chickens in Arnoud's professional coop: it partly deals with the Leiden Dioscorides, Or. 298.



FIGURE 5.1 Beaver in Dioscorides, *Kitāb al-Ḥašā'iš fī hāyūlā al-'ilāǧ al-ṭibbī* (De materia medica) [UBL, Or. 289, f. 61a]

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Reading medieval Arabic texts on animals, which come in large variety, one constantly comes across surprising information. These texts are full of curious descriptions of animals and intriguing remarks about their uses. As to the descriptions: one often wonders whether people writing and reading these texts had any idea what particular animals looked like, especially the animals not common in their own countries. One such case is the beaver, and there were several good reasons to make it the subject of my contribution.

Apart from sketching how Arabic zoographical literature deals with the beaver, I will bring into focus two matters of interest: the relationship between text and image in Arabic texts, and the importance of Dioscorides as a source for Arabic zoographical literature. In the context of this article it is not possible to exhaustively explore the wider range of texts and scholarly literature connected to the topics I touch upon, so I have opted to work on the basis of a (fairly well informed) selection of texts and scholarly literature.

As I said, animals in Arabic texts are treated in a wide variety of contexts. Here I will focus on a particular genre, namely works that discuss the medical (and sometimes magical) use of the various body parts of animals. This is the so-called 'useful properties of animals' (*manāfiʿ al-ḥayawān*) genre. I have, of course, also checked other types of literature dealing with animals but as it turned out, major zoological works such as those of Aristotle (translated into Arabic in the 9th century) and Jāḥiẓ' (d. 868 CE) great *Book of Animals* did not contain much material that was relevant for my central question: what did people suppose that the beaver looked like and what were its uses?

To give a brief survey of what is found in some leading animal texts not specifically devoted to the medical uses: Aristotle only mentions the beaver in *Historia Animalium* 594b30–31: 'Certain of the animals that are quadruped and wild get their food at lakes and rivers, but none at the sea except the seal. The former sort include the so-called castor, the satherion, the saturion, otter and the so called latax.'[1]

As to Jāḥiẓ: in the index of his great *Book on Animals*, the beaver is not found under the various names used for it in Arabic: *jundbādastar*, *qāsṭūr*, *khazz* or *qundus.* Of the *sammūr*, Jāḥiẓ says that it is an animal with fur but that he does not know what its body is like. The *kalb al-māʾ* (water dog), he says, is an animal with fur; it is not a fish; it appears on river banks. It is mentioned in a list of animals with similar characteristics, just like in Aristotle.

1 Translation D.M. Balme, Loeb edition (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991). – The ninth-century Arabic translation edited by L.S. Filius (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2019) closely follows the Greek.

Geographical texts also sometimes have sections on animals with useful material: below, I will mention the case of al-Dimashqī as an example.

I will not deal with texts chronologically, but start with the text that, to my knowledge, offers the most extensive description of the beaver and its uses, namely a text from the 'uses of animals' genre: Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir's (died in 701/1301) *Rarities of Beings; about the uses of animals* (*Badāʾiʿ al-akwān fī manāfiʿ al-ḥayawān*).[2] It is a curious description, which shows that Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir has rather uncritically put together material from a range of different sources. I used the texts of MS Chester Beatty 4352, dated 725/1325, and Karatay Topkapi Saray no. 7188, kindly made available to me by Osman Ciner.

Chester Beatty f. 47v:

> About the natural characteristics of the beaver (*jundbādastar*). It is called (48r) water dog. It is found only in the land of the Qipcaq and what is adjacent to it. It is also called *sammūr*. It has the shape of a fox, is red of colour and has neither front nor hind legs. It has a long tail and a head like that of man. Its face is round. It walks leaning on its breast as if walking on four legs. It has four testicles, two inside and two outside. One of the secrets of nature in this animal is that when he sees hunters who are out to get hold of him, namely of that what is in his outside testicles,[3] and he sees that they are pursuing him very hard, he cuts off his testicles and throws them to them (i.e. the hunters), because these testicles are the only thing they need from him. When the hunters do not see them and continue to pursue him, he throws himself on his back in order to show them the blood, so that they see that he has cut them off and go away. When he has cut off his outer testicles, the inner ones start to protrude and to take their place. The beaver (*jundbādastar*) is in Persian called *alkbdtʿrb*, which can be translated as 'testicle'. In the testicle there is something like blood or honey, easy to rub (i.e. pulverize) between the fingers when it has dried. Galen has said that the beaver (*jundbādastar*) is the only animal of this kind. He says that it makes its lair on land, brings forth its young on it and grazes on it, and flees into the water and takes refuge in it. 'It is able to stay in the depth and hold its breath a long time; then it comes up into the air.

2 Ullmann, M. *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam*. Leiden 1972: 33–4. Ibn abi l-Uṣaybiʿa in his *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, does not mention him, but the edition of this work by Emily Savage-Smith et al. (*A Literary History of Medicine* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2020), refers to him in a footnote (14.44.2, n. 1)).

3 The castoreum sacs located between genitals and anus are what is really meant here.

The story about the beaver's self-castrating is very old and widespread. It is not the place here to go into the wider, and very extensive, literature about it. Having described the beaver and its habits, Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir continues with a long account (two pages) of the uses that can be made of the beaver's various organs and body parts. The 'testicles', or more specifically the castoreum, receive ample attention. This is the 'useful and occult properties' (*manāfiʿ wa khawāṣṣ*) part, prominent in many animal books. It is often boring to read, but also full of unexpected surprises: one such surprise for me was to discover repeated references to the use of pig bones for repairing damaged human bones. In the course of this part, Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir refers to various authorities. Galen is repeatedly mentioned, and from the Arab authors there are the physician al-Rāzī and the philosopher al-Kindī.

To demonstrate how widespread this type of zoographical information was, especially in all kinds of encyclopaedic literature, we may choose the example of Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir's contemporary, the geographer al-Dimashqī (d. 727 H/1326 CE). In his *Nukhbat al-dahr* Dimashqī describes, among many other things, also the beaver.[4] His account runs along the same line as Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir, including Galen's remark that the beaver is a wild aquatic animal that makes its burrow on land. Dimashqī adds the information that the castoreum smells like a scarab (*khunfusā'*). He does not include an extensive account of the uses of the body parts.

When talking about animals, a work that always has to be checked is al-Damīrī's (742/1341–808/1405, slightly later than Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir) alphabetically arranged animal encyclopedia, *The Great Life of Animals*, because it brings together material gleaned from a large number of earlier sources. He also has a section on the beaver (*jundbādastar*).[5] His description of the animal is similar to that of Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir (whom he, surprisingly, does not quote), but less extensive. Galen is not mentioned here. Damīrī gives the additional information that the beaver feeds itself with fish and crabs. This is already found in Dioscorides (1st century CE) great herbal, the *Materia Medica*, translated from Greek into Arabic in the 9th century.

Some books are exclusively devoted to the 'useful properties', without including a description of the animal and its habits. The oldest of them is ʿĪsā ibn ʿAlī's *Book on the useful properties of the animal parts*.[6] ʿĪsā ibn ʿAlī was court physician to the caliph al-Muʿtamid (reigned 256–279/870–892). The beaver is treated in this book under the name *qasṭūriyūn*, but the names *jārūd* and

4 Ed. Mehren, reprint (Frankfurt am Main: 1994), p. 147.

5 al-Damīrī, Kitāb al-Ḥayawān al-kabīr. Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmīya, 1415/1995, I: 308.

6 Ed. Lucia Raggetti (Berlin: 2018).

*jundbādastar* also occur. *Jārūd*, says the text, is in fact the *kalb al-mā'* (water dog), the otter. Such remarks about the confusion between the two also occur in other texts, as we have already seen above. ʿĪsā ibn ʿAlī only mentions the uses that can be made of the fat and of the testicles. Descriptions of animals are not included in his book. It is only later in the tradition that some (not all) authors start to combine descriptions of the animal with accounts of the uses of its body parts. These animal descriptions usually contain material from the older Greek and Byzantine tradition. When Aristotle is explicitly mentioned in these texts the reference is sometimes to his actual zoological works, but more frequently to a pseudo-Aristotelian text (which, is still not quite clear).

Then there is the famous anonymous Greek work known as the *Physiologus*, translated into many languages, including Syriac and Arabic. It was even translated twice into Arabic. One of them is edited, and the beaver has an entry in it, which duly includes the testicle story.[7]

Timotheus of Gaza's (5th century) Byzantine animal book is also quite important, and fragments of it continue to be discovered in Arabic texts. Here is what a later Byzantine summary of this text, translated by Bodenheimer, has to say about the beaver. I have slightly summarized the translation:

> The beaver has a large and wide belly and hence is called 'gastor' (the author etymologically connects the name to the Greek word for belly, 'gastèr'). It dwells in lairs near waters. It is bigger than the ichneumon, and with its teeth it fells big trees, eating the roots from below. His testicles are essential for various medicines, and being pursued for them he rips them off with his claws. When pursued again, he jumps up to show that he has none. By night the beaver often changes it lair for fear of being hunted. It nevertheless is caught by night, for it dreads the fire and remains motionless, and the hunter with his torch gets near and so can seize it. The beaver dwells by the waters and so do the satherion, the latax, the enhudris and the sapèrion from which the saperine garments are made.[8]

An important testimony for material transmitted via the Syriac transmission is the treatise translated by Karl Ahrens as *Buch der Naturgegenstände*. The beaver entry tells the usual story about the beaver biting off its testicles when

7 Sibylle Wentker, *Der arabische Physiologus; Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar*. Dissertation (Vienna: 2002); beaver mentioned on pp. 87–89. Wider literature: Caroline Macé and Jost Lippert, *The Multilingual* Physiologus).

8 Bodenheimer, *Timotheus of Gaza*, p. 48, ch. 54: 5.

hunted.[9] It also says that it makes its burrow in the banks of brooks and rivers and feeds on tree bark. – I have found this latter information nowhere in the selection of Arabic texts here explored. The only food of beavers that we find mentioned (by Damīrī) are fish and crabs. This may go back to Dioscurides, already mentioned above. Nothing is said in the *Buch der Naturgegenstände* about what the beaver looks like.[10]

A text always worth consulting is Marwazī (*fl.* around 1100 CE), *Kitāb ṭabā'iʿ al-ḥayawān* (*Book of the Natures of Animals*), for it represents an independent strand of the zoographical tradition. It often presents information found nowhere else, and I have never found him cited in any other work. Marwazī also often gives personal information or comments, which makes his book particularly interesting. His book was written in the 12th century, and not before 1124/25. The work is still for the larger part unedited.

The manuscript that I used here is MS UCLA, Ar. 52, ff. 145a16–146a18. This entry extensively deals with *al-khazz*, the beaver, also called *qasṭūriyūn*, or sea dog, because he takes refuge in the sea ('sea' basically meaning any large mass of water). Marwazī is a great transmitter of Greek material, and has, for instance, substantially enlarged our knowledge of Timotheus of Gaza's animal book. The beaver chapter (like Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir's) is mostly devoted to the uses of the beaver's various body parts. It yields (145b ult.–146a2), among other references to Greek texts, a rare quotation from Hippocrates' *K. al-Kharbaq*,[11] which says that the castoreum, the stuff from the beaver's 'testicles' is the best possible medicine for old people who feel cold (or: have a cold constitution).

Marwazī says very little about what the beaver looks like, but the little he says at least solves the problem of Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir's seemingly legless animal. According to Marwazī, he has short limbs (he is *qaṣīr al-aṭrāf*, 145a17). The widespread story about the beaver gnawing off its testicles is also present here (145a20ff), but the interesting thing is that Marwazī states (145b2) that although it may be widely known and documented (*mudawwan*), he personally does not believe it. Without mentioning him, he here agrees with Dioscorides, who qualifies this story as 'utter nonsense' in his *Materia Medica*.[12] The Arabic translation (Leiden Or. 289 f. 61b) also includes this passage.

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9 Karl Ahrens, *Das Buch der Naturgegenstände* (Kiel: C.F. Haeseler, 1892), p. 38, no. 6.

10 Sami Aydin, in Macé-Gippert, *Physiologus*, gives a much wider account of the Syriac transmission.

11 Ullmann, *Medizin*, 1970, p. 32, no. 24.

12 Pedanius Dioscurides of Anazarbus, *De Matera Medica*. Translated by Lily Y. Beck (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms-Weidman, 2005), p. 100.

All this does not bring us much closer to a clear picture of the beaver. What the selection of Arabic texts given above yields is that it has the shape of a fox, is red of colour and has neither front nor hind legs. It has a long tail and a head like that of man. Its face is round. It walks leaning on its breast as if walking on four legs (Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir). It has very short extremities (Marwazī). The descriptions display obvious confusion of animals: the fish and crab diet (already mentioned by Dioscorides) clearly is not that of the vegetarian beaver, a bark and wood eating rodent, but must be connected to the carnivorous otter. What also should be kept in mind is that there are several other animals that live near and in the water and may be confused with the beaver, such as the otter. Aristotle, and also later texts, mention a number of such animals that have so far been difficult to identify. Noteworthy is that the beaver's curious and very characteristic tail (flat, broad and leathery) is nowhere mentioned in the Arabic descriptions: there only is the 'long tail' of Ibn abi l-Ḥawāfir.

What we obviously long for, is a picture. Continuing to browse through Arabic animal texts, I made an unexpected discovery. Two Ayasofya MSS of Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ's (d. after 450/1058) *Kitāb manāfiʿ al-ḥayawān*,[13] (a famous but still unedited treatise on the uses of animal parts), both remark at the beginning of their beaver chapters that 'Dioscorides has given a picture of it in his *Kitāb al-Ḥashā'ish* (Book on Herbs).'

This may not sound surprising to the average modern reader. Why would Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ (or a later copyist of his work) not refer to a picture in a well-known book to illustrate his account? The remark struck me because textual references to pictorial representations are quite rare in premodern Arabic texts, although pictures themselves are not.[14] The matter of the Islamic *Bilderverbot* is far too complicated to discuss here, but on the whole we can say that religious discussions about whether it was permitted to depict living beings created a cultural climate in which references to pictures did not play a role in the written cultural discourse, except of course in specific technical contexts.

The transmission of Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ's *Book on the Uses of Animals* is quite complicated. As Arab bibliographers tell us, the physician Abu Saʿīd ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Jibrīl ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Bakhtīshūʿ (d. after 450/1058) wrote a book called *Kitāb manāfiʿ al-ḥayawān* (Useful properties of animals) for Amīr Naṣīr al-Dawla.[15] Abu Saʿīd ʿUbayd Allāh lived in Mayyāfāriqīn (in the province of Diyarbakir). He came from a famous family of physicians: his great-grandfather

13 MSS Ayasofya 2943, dated 736/1337, and Ayasofya 2916, dated 744/1343.

14 This applies to elite texts. In premodern popular storytelling, however, such as popular epic, references to pictures occur quite regularly, and sometimes play a crucial role in the story.

15 Ullmann, *Medizin* 109–11.

was court physician to the Abbasid caliph Mutawakkil. Ullmann (*Medizin*, 1972, pp. 109–11) gives an overview of the family; our Saʿīd ʿUbayd Allāh is no. 7 on his list.

We do not have the autograph of his *Manāfiʿ*, and the earliest MSS of the text circulating under that name date from the 13th century. The text tradition by then had become rather variable, a common phenomenon in this type of text. In some versions the text had been combined with a pseudo-Aristotelian text called *Naʿt* (or *Nuʿūt*) al-*ḥayawān*, 'Characteristics of animals'. This latter text supposedly gave not only the uses, but also descriptions of animals. It is not yet clear which pseudo-Aristotelian treatise this was. There exists a text (two MSS of it are known, a complete one in Tunis) which has been supposed to be the work in question, but the matter apparently is more complicated. That the texts are not identical is in the present context emphasized by the fact that although the Tunisian MS of this pseudo-Aristotelian animal book does not have an entry on the beaver, several of the *Manāfiʿ* texts in the Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ-tradition briefly refer to Aristotle in the beaver chapter: he is reported to have said that the only body part of the beaver that has medical use are the testicles. This, of course, is Pseudo-Aristotelian material: the real Aristotle does not mention such things.

The most prominent representative of this fused tradition is the London MS BL Or. 2784, called *Naʿt al-ḥayawān* (Characteristics of animals), a beautifully illustrated MS that is one of the highlights of Arab painting. Anna Contadini has made it the subject of her brilliant book *A World of Beasts: A Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Arabic Book on Animals* (*the* Kitāb Naʿt al-Ḥayawān) *in the Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ tradition* (Leiden-Boston, 2012) in which, besides many other things, she meticulously analyzes and describes the complicated text tradition of which this book is the product (Chapter 3 of her book).

What interests us, of course, is whether the London MS has a chapter on the beaver, and maybe also a picture. It has a beaver chapter (ff. 194r–195r, in the reconstructed version 103r–104v; Contadini p. 28), but it does not have a picture, as opposed to most chapters in this MS. It also does not mention Dioscorides.

As was said above, this London MS is by no means the only manuscript presenting a version of Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ's *Book on the Uses of Animals*. There are quite a few more, and also Persian translations. Contadini gives a list of them (pp. 5–7 of her book). Some present a simple text on the uses, others (like the London MS) a fusion with a pseudo-Aristotelian animal book. One of them is particularly interesting. This is MS Paris BNF Arabe 2782, dated 700/1300,[16]

16 Contadini, *Beasts*, p. 171: dated 700/1300, possibly from Egypt.



FIGURE 5.2 Beaver in ʿAbd Allah ibn Djibrîl ibn Bakhtyaschoûʿ, *A treatise on Zoology* [BnF arabe 2782 f 30r]

with the title: *Kitāb manāfiʿ al-ḥayawān li-bn Bakhtīshuʿ* (Book about the useful properties of animals of Ibn Bakhtīshuʿ) The beaver chapter (ff. 29v–30r) is quite short. It does not include the remark about Dioscorides' having made a picture of the beaver, but includes the hunters' story and the reference to (pseudo)-Aristotle's opinion on the uses of its body parts. It gives a few summarized examples of medical uses. And, like all the other entries of this particular MS, it is provided with an illustration, in this case a fox- or dog-like animal. The name 'water dog', often but mistakenly used for the beaver, may have put its stamp on the image.

Might there be any connection to the Dioscorides reference in the two Ayasofya MSS, in the sense that jointly they give us an indication what kind of image people at that time and in that particular cultural context associated with the beaver?

In order to see whether the beaver entry in the two Ayasofya MSS, which have an almost identical text, gives us an indication, I here give a full translation of the chapter in Ayasofya 2916 (dated 744/1343), f. 35v–36r. I took the youngest MS, because it has a slightly better text.

> The *qasṭāriyūn*. In Syriac it is called *jard*; it is the *jārūd*. It is called *al-khazz* and *jundbādastar*, and it is the *qunduz*. The characteristics (MS *khāṣīya*, **khāṣṣa*) of this animal are according to what the earlier scholars) have said, and Diyusqūrīdūs has given a picture of it in his *Book on Herbs*. When the beaver sees hunters doing their best to catch him, he bites off his testicles and throws them to them, and when (f. 36r) they do not see them and continue doing their best to catch him, he lies on his back in order to show them the blood flow so that they know that he has bitten them off and thrown them (to them), and go away from him. Arisṭūṭālīs has said that the other body parts of this animal have no (medical) use. I think that he did not know the uses of the body parts of this animal that in our day have become clear. Among them is that from the skin there are made saddle covers, and when people have to ride on them for a long time, these covers are beneficial against cold diseases of the lower part and against piles. Mattresses are made of it that benefit people who have to sit on them for a long time against pain in the joints and gout. Its fat, when it is melted with balm of mercury and smeared on a bald spot, will make the hair grow. Its meat is hot and dry and is beneficial for pain in a cold stomach, for numbness and for pain in the tendons. It is also beneficial for pain in the joints and gout. The testicle of the *khazz*, that is the *jundbādastar*, is beneficial for any sort of cold in the body, for palpitations, for weakness of the heart and for palsy, when it is inhaled, and for tremors when it is drunk. It warms every part of the body, and is beneficial for forgetfulness, cold of the brain and for illnesses of cold body parts. When drunk, it makes the menstrual blood flow and drives out the bad smell. It is beneficial for trembling that results from a cold humour, and for gasping resulting from cold and thick humours, and for flatulence and colic when drunk with vinegar. When used as fumigation, it is beneficial for cold illnesses manifesting themselves in the lungs and the brain. When worn with a flock of wool it is beneficial for cold of the womb. It is beneficial for scorpion stings.

As we see, the text runs along similar lines as the 'uses of animals' texts discussed earlier, and nothing explains the sudden emergence of a reference to Dioscorides' picture. The beaver entry is the only one in this text including such a remark.

Of course, one starts to wonder what the picture that Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ (or a later reworker of his text), had in mind looked like. This is a vast area to explore, but in the context of this Festschrift a suitable step is to focus on Arnoud

Vrolijk's professional surroundings. The Leiden library, after all, is in the happy possession of the oldest known illustrated copy of the Arabic translation of Dioscorides' famous *Materia Medica*.[17] One of the noteworthy aspects of the Leiden MS is that, as opposed to many other Dioscorides MSS (Greek as well as Arabic), it includes a substantial number of animal pictures. Among them is a picture of the beaver (f. 61b), and it looks like a dog, just like the beaver in the Paris MS.

Is there any chance that the picture referred to in the Ayasofya MS was similar to that in Or. 289, and that a picture like this defined the pictorial representation of the animal? That, of course, is impossible to determine, but it is at least worthwhile to have a look at the history of the Arabic Dioscorides translation, and in particular of Or. 289, in order to see where and when this text circulated.[18]

Or. 289, as was said above, it is the earliest dated illustrated Arabic Dioscorides MS that we possess. It was copied in Samarqand on a Monday in the middle of Ramaḍān 475 (February 1083) and contains the (slightly) corrected version that a scholar called al-Nāṭilī made of the first Arabic translation. Al-Nāṭilī also personally illustrated his revision – we very much would like to know whether the illustrations were copied from his exemplar. His revision was dated 380H/990–991. An interesting sideline here is that this al-Nāṭilī taught the famous philosopher and physician Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, ca. 980–1037) when he was about ten years old, just about the time that he was busy copying and illustrating Dioscorides.[19] It is a tempting idea that he may have shown the work to his pupil. Ibn Sīnā extensively quotes Dioscorides in his great medical work, the *Canon of Medicine* – Dioscorides' work was well known in medical circles-, but I have found no references to pictures.

The translation that al-Nāṭilī revised was made in the middle of the 9th century CE. The famous translator Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq brought a Greek copy to the court in Baghdad, where he translated it into Arabic together with Stephanos. Ḥunayn revised the whole of the translation. It is reported that the translation was made for the court physician of the reigning caliph at the time, al-Mutawakkil. The name of the court physician was Bakhtīshūʿ ibn Jibrīl – he

17 Leiden catalogus title: Dioscorides Pedanius (1e E), Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq al-ʿIbādī, Abū Zayd (810–873), Stephanus b. Bāsīl, Nātilī, Ḥusayn b. Ibrāhīm al- (990 fl). Kitāb al-Ḥašǎiš fi hāyūlā al-ʿilāg al-ṭibbī. Or. 289. Online accessible: http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1578266.

18 The Leiden Dioscorides MS was extensively studied and described by Sadek, who published his finding in his dissertation as well as in a later book, *The Arabic Materia Medica of Dioscorides* (1983). My account here has made grateful use of his work.

19 The supposition that Ibn Sīnā's teachter was a different Nāṭilī has turned out to be unfounded.

was the great-grandfather of 'Ubaydallāh ibn Bakhtīshūʿ, the author of the *Manāfiʿ*.

Or. 289 contains seven chapters (*maqālāt*), which is surprising because the original Greek text of Dioscorides' great herbal consisted of only five chapters. The bibliographer Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995 or 388/998) had doubts about these last two chapters in the Arabic version, and these in fact come from another work of Dioscorides, a work about poisons. This situation, by the way, also existed earlier in the Greek tradition: the famous Vienna Dioscorides, made in the 6th century CE for princess Anicia Juliana, also includes additional texts.[20] In the Eastern Arabic tradition, anyway, Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* henceforth circulated as a book with seven chapters. The two chapters on poisons are richly illustrated with pictures of (supposedly) venomous animals.

The large majority of the animal pictures, though, are found in the second chapter, which deals, among other things, with living creatures and their medical uses. This brings us to the question of illustrations. Dioscorides is reported to have personally made the botanical illustrations for his work, but not the animal drawings. So the animal illustrations formed a category separated from the botanical drawings that make up the bulk of the *Materia Medica*. Of the vast scholarly literature on this subject, I may here just refer to Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (1985), p. 133: 'Many of the animal pictures almost certainly were not Dioscorides' pictures (…) therefore, all we know is the species of fish, caterpillar, or rat that the illustrator had in mind when he drew it many hundreds of years after Dioscorides.' Later Greek MSS copies greatly differed in the number, and species, of animals which they included. Some have almost nothing, others have very striking animal illustrations.

In the Arabic tradition, the situation is similar to the Greek. The Leiden MS has a substantial number of animal illustrations, but an Arabic Dioscorides from London, for instance,[21] contains no animal pictures at all.

We know nothing about the illustrations of the first Arabic translation. There must have been some, especially of plants; these were possibly copied from the Greek exemplar. But the animals? They may not have been in the Greek exemplar. Were they added in the Arabic translation? And if so, when? In the first translation? Anyhow, it is clear that these illustrations were not based on Greek examples. Sadek has pointed out the obvious Persian influences in some of the illustrations: the elephant with its head covering, the deer with a branch in its mouth.

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20 Wiener Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis Med. Gr. 1.

21 BL Or. 3366, *Kitāb Dīsqūrīdis fī mawādd al-ʿilāj*, dated at Baghdad, 10 Rabīʿ I 735 (8 November 1334).

This, however, obviously is not the place for an extensive discussion of the vast topic of the (Greek and Arabic) Dioscorides MSS and their illustrations. This is an area for specialists, and a substantial amount of work has already been done on this topic. My brief and somewhat sketchy account of the beaver's fate in the Arabic zoographical tradition, however, may serve to support Contadini (*Beasts*, p. 7 column 1–2) remark that the illustrations of the London Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ MS need to be studied in connection with other illustrated scientific texts, including Dioscorides. To this we may add that this does not only apply to the London MS, and also that the importance of Dioscorides for the 'uses of animals' genre in general deserves more attention. In Ibn abi l- Ḥawāfir's treatise, for instance, Dioscorides is very frequently mentioned as a source.

Of course, we cannot resist asking the question: is there any chance that the Or. 289 animal pictures were representative for those in the wider Middle Eastern Dioscorides tradition? It is a long shot, but if we suppose that the first Arabic translation was illustrated, included animal pictures, and these pictures continued to be copied, ended up in the Nāṭilī version, and were taken over in Or. 289, the beaver picture in Or. 289 may be similar to the beaver image that had spread through the Middle East from the middle of the 9th century onwards. Thus the possibility that the reference in the Ayasofya MSS of the Ibn Bakhtīshūʿ *Manāfiʿ* referred to a picture not unlike that of the beaver in the Leiden Dioscorides may not be all that farfetched.

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CHAPTER 6

# The Astronomical Treatise (Isl. MS 811) in the University of Michigan Library

## *Authorship, Title and Peregrinations*

*Nico J.G. Kaptein*

## 1 Introduction

During my research on the life and work of Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, I came across an Arabic manuscript of an astronomical treatise kept in the University of Michigan Library (Isl. MS 811) which is ascribed to Khatib, Ahmad ibn ʿAbd al-Latif.[1] The catalogue description states that the manuscript's title has not been identified; that it contains 20 chapters and a conclusion; and that the copy is defective, beginning at end of chapter 2. Moreover, part of the colophon is given in transliteration, where the name of the author is mentioned as 'al-faqir … Ahmad al-Khatib ibn ʿAbd al-Latif al-Khatib …', and where the year 1886 is given as the date of finishing the text.[2] In this contribution I will investigate what work of Ahmad Khatib we are dealing with here and how this manuscript which was written in Mecca, ended up in Ann Arbor.

## 2 Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi (1860–1916) and His Writings

Apart from a rough indication of his lifetime, namely ca. 1886, the description of the catalogue provides no further information on the author of the treatise and it is therefore appropriate to give briefly some relevant biographical information on his life and work as a background to the current article. I take this information from Ahmad Khatib's autobiography, entitled *al-Qawl al-tahif fi tarjamat ta'rikh hayat al-Shaykh Ahmad Khatib ibn ʿAbd al-Latif* ('The Given Word and the Description of the Life of Shaykh Ahmad Khatib ibn ʿAbd al-Latif') which he finished some four months before he passed away on 9 Jumada al-awwal 1334, which corresponds to 14 March 1916.[3] This text has been

1 https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015078570408&seq=1.

2 The colophon is on page 27 of the manuscript. I return to this in greater detail below.

3 In addition to the manuscript see also my article on him in EI THREE.

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preserved as a unique manuscript in the Library of Mecca (*ta'rikh* 116), and which according to the catalogue of al-Hila is an autograph.[4]

Ahmad Khatib was born in 1860 in the village of his mother, Kota Tuo in the region of Minangkabau, West Sumatra, which was part of the Netherlands East Indies at the time. His grandfather had migrated from the Hijaz to Minangkabau and had become the most important preacher (*khatib*) of the region and this honorific title was passed on to his offspring, his son ʿAbd al-Latif and, via the latter, to his grandson Ahmad. In 1870, together with his male relatives, young Ahmad was taken to Mecca. He stayed there for the rest of his life, with an interruption of two years, from 1875 to 1877, which he spent in Minangkabau to be with his mother. Mecca at that time was a cosmopolitan city with a large group of people originating from Southeast Asia. They had originally come to the Holy City for the yearly pilgrimage, and many had stayed on as students of religious sciences or teachers. Collectively, this group was called the Jawiyyun ('the Southeast Asians'), or the Jawi colony,[5] and Ahmad Khatib and his relatives joined it.

From 1877 on, Ahmad Khatib studied with a number of important Meccan scholars, such as Sayyid Bakri Shatta (d. 1893) who was a prolific author and a popular teacher. Sayyid Bakri also attracted a lot of students from Southeast Asia and under his guidance Ahmad Khatib studied various branches of traditional Muslim scholarship. It seems that Bakri Shatta functioned as a kind of mentor to Ahmad Khatib. Another famous teacher of Ahmad Khatib was Ahmad ibn Zayni Dahlan (1816–1886), who was one of the most prestigious scholars in the Muslim world of his day. The Ottoman authorities in the Hejaz appointed him Mufti of the Shafiʿite School of Law in 1865 and, in addition, he also held the position of supervisor of all scholars (*shaykh al-ʿulama'*) in the Masjid al-Haram. He was very active as a writer and he published on the entire spectrum of traditional Islamic learning. Although Dahlan never left his homeland, he received pilgrims from all over the globe and he was held in high esteem in many parts of the Muslim world. He was most popular in the Netherlands East Indies, and he was often asked for *fatwas* from (and on) this part of the world, many of which have been preserved.[6]

A turning point in the life of Ahmad Khatib occurred in 1879, when, in Mecca, he married Khadija, the daughter of Muhammad Salih ibn Shaykh Fayd Allah al-Kurdi (d. 1910), and, after Khadija had died during childbirth in October 1884, a few months later he married Fatima, the second daughter of

4 M. al-Habib al-Hilah, *Handlist*, p. 93.

5 See for the Jawi colony in Mecca, C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, pp. 213–292.

6 Ibidem and Freitag, 'Der Orientalist und der Mufti'.

Muhammad Salih al-Kurdi. In his autobiography Ahmad Khatib describes his father-in-law as a notable and a man of piety and religious learning, who had memorized the Qur'an, and who was well connected to the Meccan religious and administrative elite. This also applies to the aforesaid Ahmad Dahlan, with whom he used to attend prayers in the great mosque in Ramadan, and the Emir of Mecca, Sharif ʿAwn al-Rafiq (1841–1905). Muhammad Salih al-Kurdi was a rich man and according to the autobiography he had made his fortune through selling real estate and from the revenues of his land. Thanks to his marriage ties, Ahmad Khatib became part of the religious elite in Mecca, and it seems that he owed his position as one of the official Shafiʿite prayer leaders (*imam*) in the Masjid al-Haram, as well as his position as preacher and teacher (*mudarris*) in the Holy Mosque, to the intervention of his father-in-law with the Sharif of Mecca.[7] Moreover, thanks to his father-in-law, Ahmad Khatib did not have to worry about money, and he could devote himself to religious studies and writing for the rest of his life. As a result, Ahmad Khatib could develop into one of the most knowledgeable and productive scholars and teachers of his day in the Jawi colony, and as such he formed an important chain in the transmission of knowledge from Mecca to the Netherlands East Indies and Muslim Southeast Asia at large.

Ahmad Khatib was a productive scholar and in his autobiography (pp. 36–49) he provides a list of 47 items in chronological order, which he wrote during his lifetime. These writings deal with various topics of traditional Muslim scholarship, including Arabic grammar, arithmetic, astronomy, different issues of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and other topics. Most of his writings were of a scholarly nature, but some were also more polemical and dealt with issues which were topical in the Netherlands East Indies at the time, like, for example a book in 1913 on the question of whether the Sarekat Islam, the first Islamic nationalist movement in the Netherlands East Indies, was in line with Islamic doctrine or not. In the list he not only gives the titles of his works, but he also elaborates on the reasons of why and when he wrote them, and on whether he wrote them in Arabic or in Malay. In the margin of the autobiography, moreover, we see whether or not the work in question was printed and, if so, where and by whom. We consequently gain an insight into his separate writings, even when we do not have a copy of the work in question which has been lost or seemingly lost.

7 ʿAbd al-Jabbar, *Siyar wa-tarajim*, p. 38.

## 3 Manuscript Isl. MS 811

When we now turn to the Michigan manuscript Isl. MS 811 which forms the focus of this article, we see that the colophon contains the following information (Fig. 6.1):

> I, the servant of God Almighty Ahmad al-Khatib ibn ʿAbd al-Latif ibn al-Khatib al-Jawi al-Minkabaw, the student (*al-mujawir*) in the Venerated City of God, state that the final draft (*tabyid*) of these leaves was finished on 28 dhu l-hijja 1303 of the Hijra of our Chosen Prophet – may God bless and preserve him. (p. 27)

Interestingly, the colophon mentions the words *al-Jawi al-Minkabaw*, which have been omitted from the catalogue description, but which specify the place of origin of Ahmad Khatib. The date given in the colophon corresponds to

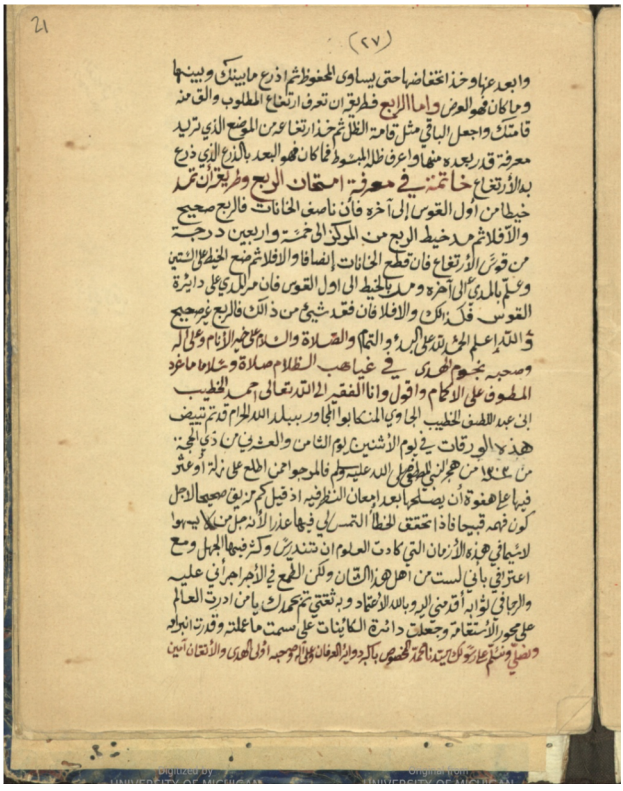

FIGURE 6.1 Colophon [University of Michigan Library Isl. MS 811, p. 27]

28 September 1886 and this is puzzling, because, in his autobiography, Ahmad Khatib states that his first book was from the year 1306 [1888]. Also, when we look into what he considers to be his second writing, *al-Jawahir al-naqiyya fi l-aʿmal al-jaybiyyah* ('The Pure Jewels on the Applications of the Sine') we are puzzled by the date of 1886. This work is an astronomical manual in Arabic for establishing the times for the daily ritual prayer and for determining the direction of prayer towards Mecca (*qibla*) in different places on the globe with the help of an instrument called the sine quadrant (*rubʿ al-mujayyab*).[8] In his autobiography, he comments on this astronomical text as follows:

> After the completion of it [my first book, NK], my soul longed for knowledge of the science of timekeeping (*ʿilm al-miqat*), because our community of Jawis had come to me frequently to ask for an easy book on this topic. At that time, I had no knowledge of this and I could not find a teacher who was competent to teach this science. I therefore worked hard by myself to study books on this topic night and day until I understood it. I next wrote a treatise on the sine quadrant (*rubʿ al-mujayyab*), which I called *al-Jawahir al-naqiyya fi l-aʿmal al-jaybiyyah*. This took place in the year 1309 [1892]. (fols. 36–7)

In the margin of this passage (Fig. 6.2), the manuscript gives some additional information:

> It was printed by my brother-in-law, my relative, and the uncle of my sons Muhammad Majid al-Kurdi at his expense in Cairo in the Maymaniyya Press and the treatise of al-Mardini on the functioning of the sine quadrant was printed in the margin. (fol. 37 margin)

We thus see that the date given by Ahmad Khatib (1892) is also later than the date of 1886, mentioned in the Michigan manuscript, but that the name of al-Mardini is mentioned as it is in the Michigan manuscript. When we, consequently, have a look at the colophon of the printed edition of the *al-Jawahir al-naqiyya* (p. 19), we see that the information on the printing is correct and that the book was indeed published at the expense of Muhammad Majid al-Kurdi at the aforesaid press in Rajab 1309, which corresponds to February 1892 (Fig. 6.3). This Muhammad Majid al-Kurdi (d. 1930) was a brother of Ahmad Khatib's first deceased wife Khadija and of his second wife Fatima, and here we see an

8 See for this instrument King, 'rubʿ'.



FIGURE 6.2 Ahmad Khatib, *al-Qawl al-tahif*, giving comments on his *al-Jawahir al-naqiyya* and in the margin (p. 37 top left) on its publication [Library of Makkah al-Mukarramah, Ta'rikh 116, pp. 36–37]

early example of al-Kurdi's activities as a sponsor of one of the publications of his brother-in-law.[9] The Maymaniyya Press in Cairo, mentioned in the colophon, was established in 1859 by three brothers from the village of al-Bab near Aleppo (Mustafa, 'Isa and Ahmad), who had initially come to Cairo to assist their uncle Bakri in his publishing activities, and the al-Babi al-Halabi family eventually become part of the most important publishers in Cairo.[10]

After having established the similarity between the colophons of the Michigan manuscript and the Cairo edition, we can now have a closer look at the text of the Michigan manuscript and the printed Cairo edition and make a comparison between the two. We see that both texts are actually identical, e.g. in the structure of the text with an introduction (*muqaddima*), twenty chapters, and a conclusion (*khatima*) and the titles of the separate chapters.

9 Later Muhammad Majid al-Kurdi would become a well-known publisher in his own right and the owner of the Majidiyyah Press in Mecca, see Maghribi, *A'lam al-Hijaz*, pp. 307–314. I thank Prof. Amr Riyad for this reference.

10 Reese, "The Ink of Excellence", pp. 224–225.



١٩

بالذرع الذى ذرعت به قطر فم البئر فالباقى هو عمق البئر بذلك الذرع (وأما الثالث) فطريقه ان تقف بطرف النهر وتأخذ انخفاض الطرف الآخر وأقم قامتك مقام قامة الظل وحصل به الظل المبسوط فما حصل فهو العرض أو احفظ الانخفاض واذهب الى مكان واسع مستو وضع علامة فى الارض وابعد عنها وخذ انخفاضها حتى يساوى المحفوظ ثم اذرع ما بينك وبينها وما كان فهو العرض (وأما الرابع) فطريقه ان تعرف ارتفاع المطلوب وألق منه قامتك واجعل الباقى مثل قامة الظل ثم خذ ارتفاعه من الموضع الذى تريد معرفة قدر بعده منها واعرف ظله المبسوط فما كان فهو البعد بالذرع الذى ذرع به الارتفاع *(خاتمة)* فى معرفة امتحان الربع وطريقه ان تمد خيطا من أوّل القوس الى آخره فان ناصف الخانات فالربع صحيح والا فلا ثم مد خيط الربع من المركز الى خمس وأربعين درجة من قوس الارتفاع فان قطع الخانات انصافا فكذلك والا فلا ثم ضع الخيط على الستينى وعلم بالمرى على آخره ومر بالخيط الى أوّل القوس فان مر المرى على دائرة القوس فكذلك والا فلا فان فقد شئ من ذلك فالربع غير صحيح والله أعلم الحمد لله على البدء والتمام والصلاة والسلام على خير الانام وعلى آله وصحبه نجوم الهدى فى غياهيب الظلام صلاة وسلاما ما غرد المطوق على الاكمام وأقول وأنا الفقير الى الله تعالى أحمد الخطيب بن عبد اللطيف الخطيب الجاوى المنكابو المجاور ببلد الله الحرام قد تم تبييض هذه الورقات فى يوم الاثنين يوم الثامن والعشرين من ذى الحجة من سنة ١٣٠٣ من هجر النبى المصطفى صلى الله عليه وسلم فالمرجو ممن اطلع على زلة أو عثر فيها على هفوة أن يصلحها بعد امعان النظر فيه اذ قيل كم مزيف صحيحا لاجل كون فهمه قبيحا فاذا تحقق الخطأ التمس لى فيها عذرا لانه جل من لا يسهو لا سيما فى هذه الازمان التى كادت العلوم ان تندرس وكثر فيها الجهل ومع اعترافى بانى لست من أهل هذا الشان ولكن الطمع فى الاجر أجزأنى عليه والرجا فى ثوابه أقدمنى اليه وبالله الاعتماد وبه ثقتى تم

نحمدك يا من أدرت العالم على محور الاستقامه وجعلت دائرة الكائنات على سمت ما علمته وقدرت انبرامه ونصلى ونسلم على رسولك سيدنا محمد المخصوص بأكبر دوائر العرفان وعلى آله وأصحابه أولى الهدى والاتقان أما بعد فقد تم بحمده تعالى طبع كتاب الجواهر النقيه فى الاعمال الجيبيه للعلامة الفاضل والفهامة الكامل الشيخ أحمد بن عبد اللطيف المنكابو الجاوى الخطيب بلغه الله من مرضاته أوفى نصيب وهو كتاب نال من التحقيق الذروة العلياء ومن السهولة اليد البيضاء فلذلك رغب فى نشره وبهجة النفوس بمحيا بشره فطبعه على ذمته حضرة المكرّم محمد ماجد نجل الشيخ محمد صالح بن فيض الله الكردى وفقه البارى لمعالى الفضائل وجعله لكل معروف يسدى وتكميلا للفوائد وللمبرات التى هى بالمحاسن عوائد قد حليت طرر هذا الكتاب ووشيت غرره بما يستملح فى هذا الفن ويستطاب وهى رسالة الماردينى فى العمل بالربع المجيب فجاء طبق ما يتمناه ذو المعرفة فى هذا الفن ومن قديم فى مثله يرغب وذلك بالمطبعة الميمنيه بمصر المحروسة المحميه بجوار سيدى أحمد الدردير قريبا من الجامع الازهر المنير ادارة المفتقر لعفو ربه القدير أحمد البابى الحلبى ذى العجز والتقصير وذلك فى شهر رجب سنة ١٣٠٩ هجريه على صاحبها أفضل الصلاة وأتم التحية آمين

FIGURE 6.3 Colophon of the printed edition of the al-Jawahir al-naqiyya (p. 19) with colophon on the text itself and the printing process

The table with the degrees of the signs of the zodiac also occurs in both texts after chapter four. Several tables with a large number of place names and their degrees of latitude and longitude on the globe to assist in establishing the *qibla* in both texts also occur in the same place, namely after chapter 16. All these tables are identical.[11] Although, as we saw, the catalogue description of the Michigan manuscript does not give a title for the text, it is evident that the defective handwritten astronomical treatise from the Michigan catalogue in fact constitutes the *al-Jawahir al-naqiyya fi l-aʿmal al-jaybiyyah*, written by Ahmad Khatib, without the missing introduction, Chapter One and the main part of Chapter Two, which originally took up pages 1 to 6.

Now that we have established the title of the treatise, there is another characteristic feature of the manuscript which should be noted here. When we compare the handwriting of the Meccan manuscript of Ahmad Khatib's autobiography which is an autograph, we see that the handwriting of the Michigan manuscript is identical, and for this reason I conclude that the Michigan manuscript was written by Ahmad Khatib himself.[12]

A final observation on the Michigan manuscript is that the defective treatise of Ahmad Khatib is followed by a short treatise by al-Mardini, entitled *Risalah fi l-ʿamal bi l-rubʿ al-mujayyab* ('Treatise on the Working of the Sine Quadrant') on pp. 28–33, which is bound together with the work of Ahmad Khatib. There were three astronomers bearing the name al-Mardini, and this al-Mardini should probably be identified as Badr al-Din Muhammad ibn Muhammad Sibt al-Mardini (1423–1506), since he was known for his works on timekeeping and astronomical instruments.[13] When we compare the manuscript of al-Mardini's small treatise with the text printed in the margin of Ahmad Khatib's *al-Jawahir al-naqiyya*, we see that both deal with the subject matter in twenty chapters, which both bear identical titles, and that both texts are identical.[14]

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11 The only difference is that the printed lay-out of the tables is not the same: the five tables in the manuscript (pp. 18–22) are rendered in four pages in the printed edition (pp. 13–16).

12 I do not agree with the remark in the catalogue description of the Michigan manuscript that there were two copyists at work, one on p. of 7–17, and the second (Ahmad Khatib) from pp. 18–27; I think the entire text was written by Ahmad Khatib himself.

13 M. Plessner – [J. Samsó], "al-Mardini".

14 The table at the end of the manuscript is not part of the printed Cairo edition, and I do not know what its relationship with the other two texts is. Other interesting observations on the *al-Jawahir al-naqiyya*, like the audience for whom it was meant (Southeast Asian topographical names like Minangkabau, Singapore and Surabaya are mentioned in the tables) and later Malay renderings of it fall outside the scope of this article and will be dealt with in my forthcoming book on Ahmad Khatib.

## 4 Conclusion: from Mecca to Cyber Space

We have thus seen that the defective Isl. MS 811 which is kept in the University of Michigan Library is part of the *al-Jawahir al-naqiyya fi l-aʿmal al-jaybiyyah*, which was written by Ahmad Khatib in Mecca in 1886 and, together with the brief treatise of al-Mardini, was printed by the al-Maymaniyyah Press in Cairo in 1892.

From the catalogue description we know that this manuscript, bound together with the brief treatise of al-Mardini, was bought in Cairo in 1933–4 by Max Meyerhof (1874–1945). He was born in a Jewish family in Germany, but, from 1903 onwards, spent the major part of his life in Egypt, even assuming Egyptian nationality after the start of the fanatical persecution of the Jews in the Third Reich. In Egypt Meyerhof acted as an eye care specialist and also developed into an eminent researcher in the history Arabic medicine and natural sciences, in which fields he collected many Arabic manuscripts.[15] The most probable reason why Meyerhof was able to buy this autograph copy of the manuscript (together with the treatise of al-Mardini) in Cairo is that it was this very manuscript which was sent from Mecca to Cairo by Ahmad Khatib and his sponsor Muhammad Majid al-Kurdi to be used as the basis for the printed edition in Cairo. Apparently, the publisher had not returned the manuscript to its author Ahmad Khatib after its publication in 1892 and for reasons unknown it ended up on the Cairo book market (without the missing introduction, Chapter One and the main part of Chapter Two), where it was eventually purchased by Meyerhof.

After the death of Max Meyerhof in Cairo in 1945, many of his Arabic manuscripts ended up in the University of Michigan Library in Ann Arbor, including the astronomical treatise which has been discussed here, and which is now physically kept in the Islamic Manuscripts Collection.[16] Moreover, since this unique manuscript has been included in the HathiTrust Digital Library, it is now also available in cyber space (hathitrust.org).

15 Litmann, Enno, "*Max Meyerhof (1874–1945)*".

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CHAPTER 7

# A Qajar Manuscript of Maktabī's "Laylī and Majnūn" in the Leiden University Library

*Gabrielle van den Berg*

## 1 Or. 8773 and the Laylī and Majnūn Tradition in Persian Poetry[1]

In 1955 or 1956 Leiden University Library acquired an illustrated Persian manuscript from a Mr. C.J. Nierstrasz in The Hague.[2] The manuscript, with shelf number Or. 8773, contains a narrative in verse (Persian: *mathnavī*) based on the tragic love story of Laylī and Majnūn. The manuscript includes a brief description in Dutch, possibly written by Petrus Voorhoeve (1899–1996), formerly curator of the Oriental Collections at Leiden University Library.[3] The first part of this description runs as follows:

> *Het handschrift bevat eene perzische bewerking van de romance van Laila en Madjnûn, geschreven in het jaar 895 der Mohammedaansche tijdrekening (= 1490 van de onze) door Maula Mektebi. Bedoelde romance is een geliefkoosd onderwerp in de perzische en turksche poëzie en vervult aldaar ongeveer de rol van die van Abaelard en Heloïse en dergelijke in de oostersche poëzie, nl. de schildering eener onveranderlijke en standvastige, maar tevens ongelukkige liefde.*
>
> The manuscript contains a Persian edition of the romance of Laila and Madjnûn, written in the year 895 of the Mohammedan calendar (= 1490 of our calendar) by Maula Mektebi [Maktabī Shīrāzī]. The romance in case is a beloved subject in Persian and Turkish poetry and plays a role

1 Research for this contribution took place in the framework of the VICI project "Turks, Texts and Territory: Imperial Ideology and Cultural Production in Central Eurasia," funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO, project number 277-69-001) See: https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/research/research-projects/humanities/turks-texts-and-territory.

2 Jan Just Witkam, *Inventory of the Persian Manuscripts in Leiden University* Library (Leiden 2002), 194–195.

3 I am grateful to Arnoud Vrolijk and Hans van der Velde for this information and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Arnoud for his continuing support, help and collegiality over the past decades.

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> similar to that of Abelard and Heloise and such like in Oriental poetry, that is the depiction of a constant and steadfast love, which is at the same time an unhappy love.

In a nutshell, the story of Laylī and Majnūn runs as follows: the well-to-do Arab children Laylī and Qays meet at school and fall in love. For a short time, they are happy together, but as soon as their love becomes known, Laylī is separated from Qays and taken out of school. Strongly affected by this separation, Qays alienates himself from society and seeks refuge in the wild, with wild animals as his only companions. Henceforth, he is known as Majnūn or "the mad lover." In an effort to retrieve his son, Majnūn's father asks Laylī's father for her hand, but Laylī's father refuses, whereupon Majnūn's father takes his son on a pilgrimage to the Kaaba, hoping in vain that this will bring Majnūn some comfort. On the road, Majnūn encounters the rich ruler Nawfal, who is prepared to fight for Majnūn's case against Laylī's tribe. In the end, this does not help Majnūn, who feels terrible about the suffering he caused Laylī and her tribe. Majnūn continues to live a retired life in the wilderness, also after his father and mother pass away. When he hears about Laylī's marriage to the rich Ibn Salām, he is utterly desperate. Laylī, still in love with Majnūn, equally suffers. The couple continues to be in touch with each other, and even manages to meet for one last time. But then Laylī dies, and Majnūn is heartbroken and beyond repair or consolation. Unable to keep himself alive, he dies at Laylī's grave, surrounded by the animals he had befriended.

This moving story was a source of inspiration for many poets and writers across the Middle East and Asia, and it exists in many versions. The most famous version in Persian is undoubtedly Niẓāmī Ganjavī's mathnavī entitled *Laylī-u Majnūn* (*c.*584/1188), consisting of about 4600 verses[4] composed in *hazaj* metre.[5] Many Persian poets tried their hand at the same story, following the successful example of Niẓāmī. They often did so by adopting the framework in which Niẓāmī Ganjavi's total of five mathnavīs was collected by later

4 The exact number of verses is difficult to establish, as verses may have been added at a later stage. Paola Orsatti, "Niẓāmī Ganjavī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online* DOI: https://doi-org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_40824.

5 One of the characteristics of the genre of the *mathnavī* is its use of so-called double rhyme: verses (*bayt*s) consist of two rhyming half verses (*miṣrā'*s), so that each verse is a formal entity; this implies that there is in theory no limit to the number of verses in this genre. The variant of the *hazaj* metre Niẓāmī chose for this mathnavī is *hazaj-i musaddas-i maqbūż-i maḥẕūf* (- - ○ / ○ - ○ - / ○ - -). Poets after him followed this poetic format and metre.

generations, the so-called *Khamsa*.[6] A khamsa is a collection of five narrative poems (mathnavīs), following the subjects and formal patterns introduced by Niẓāmī. This usually included a version of the story on Laylī and Majnūn. An example is the *Khamsa* of the poet Amīr Khusraw (1253–1325), who composed a mathnavī on the subject with the title *Majnūn-u Laylī* of about 2660 verses as part of his *Khamsa* at the end of the 13th century.[7] Another well-known version of the story of Laylī and Majnūn was composed in 1484 by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (1414–1492), as part of his *Haft Awrang*, a collection of seven mathnavīs.[8] Around the same time, Jāmī's nephew Hātifī also wrote a *Laylī-u Majnūn*, as part of an unfinished *Khamsa*.[9] Hātifī's version became celebrated in Ottoman literature and many Ottoman versions of the story exist.[10]

After Niẓāmī, Amīr Khusraw, Jāmī and Hātifī, many other versions of the story of Laylī and Majnūn were composed in Persian, especially from the 16th century CE onwards, when the art of *naẓīra-gū'ī*, "composing imitations" or rather "answers" (*javāb*), flourished in Persian literature.[11] Although the overall storyline in most versions of the Laylī and Majnūn story seems to coincide with the model set by Niẓāmī Ganjavi, the versions are often quite different on a more detailed level, and in terms of size, Niẓāmī's model being longer than most versions.[12] Of the versions composed from the 16th–19th century, many remain unpublished and exist only in manuscript form.[13]

6 See: J.T.P. de Bruijn, "Khamsa," *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online* (EI-2 English), https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4182.

7 Sunil Sharma, "Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online* DOI: https://doi-org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_23805.

8 For a brief introduction see Paul Losensky, "JĀMI i. Life and Works," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, XIV/ 5 (2008), 469–475.

9 According to Michele Bernardini, Hatifi finished his Laylī-u Majnūn before 1484. Michele Bernardini, "HĀTEFI, ʿABD-ALLĀH," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, XII/1 (2003), 55–57.

10 J.T.P. de Bruijn, in "Madjnūn Laylā", *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online* (EI-2 English) DOI: https://doi-org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0608.

11 As emphasized by the editors of the critical edition, Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū: Maktabī Shīrāzī, *Laylī-u Majnūn*, edited by Ḥasan Zu'l-faqārī and Parvīz Arasṭū (Tehran: Cheshmeh, 1387 (2008–2009)), 22. See also J.T.P. de Bruijn, "Khamsa," *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online* (EI-2 English) DOI: https://doi-org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4182.

12 See for example the brief description by Sunil Sharma of Amir Khusraw's *Majnūn-u Laylī* in comparison with Niẓāmī's *Laylī-u Majnūn*, Sunil Sharma, "ḴAMSA OF AMIR ḴOSROW," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, XV/4 (2010), 445–448. Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū also provide a comparison between Maktabī, Niẓāmī, Amīr Khusraw and Jāmī, see Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū, *Laylī-u Majnūn*, 49–80.

13 For a list, including also an indication of the size of the different versions, see Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū, *Laylī-u Majnūn*, 23–25.

The Leiden manuscript Or. 8773 represents a version that was composed by the poet Maktabī Shīrāzī in 895/1489–1490, three centuries after Niẓāmī Ganjavi composed his celebrated *Laylī-u Majnūn*, and just a few years after Jāmī and Hātifī completed their respective versions of the same story in the mid-1480s.[14] Maktabī Shīrāzī's version, a mathnavī of *c.*2160 verses, likewise entitled *Laylī-u Majnūn*, does not seem to be part of a khamsa.[15] In the introduction of his work, he humbly acknowledges Niẓāmī Ganjavi's *Laylī-u Majnūn* as his example and gives full praise to his predecessor, referring to his own poetry as a *shīrāza* (a part of a book-binding; but also a pun pointing to his hometown of Shiraz) of the *Khamsa* of Niẓāmī.[16]

Or. 8773 is one of the many available manuscripts of Maktabī's *Laylī-u Majnūn*: in his catalogue of Persian manuscripts, Aḥmad Munzavī mentions more than 60 manuscript copies of the work, which was clearly popular.[17] The work found modest acclaim with a small number of literary scholars, as noted in Jan Rypka's discussion of Maktabī, and is credited with "approaching his model [Niẓāmī] most nearly in his admirable epic poem *Laylī-u Majnūn*."[18] Perhaps also indicative of its popularity is that Leiden University Library owns

14 Maktabī's version is available in a facsimile edition by Mohammad Djafar Moïnfar. *Maktabī Šīrāzī, Laylī va Maǰnūn*, publié avec une introduction et un glossaire (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968). For this facsimile edition, Moïnfar has used a Safavid manuscript dating from 1052/1642 kept in the Bernisches Historisches Museum (Inv.-Nr. E/1914.650.0050, from the collection of Henri Moser and acquired by the museum in 1914). In his facsimile, does not provide details on shelf number or provenance, and I am very grateful to Rahel Wille of the Bernisches Historisches Museum for sending me this information. In Iran, Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū published a critical edition in 1387 (2008–2009). This critical edition has 2183 verses and is based on the oldest available manuscript, kept in the Kitābkhāna-yi Malik (Tehran, shelf number 2/4932) and dated 1014 (1605–6). See Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū, *Laylī-u Majnūn*, 100.

15 Jan Rypka refers to lost *Haft paykar* from Maktabī's hand. Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1968), 213.

16 The section in praise of Niẓāmī starts in Or. 8773 with the last verse of folio 11a and ends with the first verse on folio 13a. A rubric pointing to the contents of this section can be found at the top of folio 12a. Compare the edition of Maktabī's *Laylī-u Majnūn* by Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū, verses 268–301, 130–132. The verse in which Maktabī compares his poetry to a *shīrāza* can be found on folio 12b, verse 6.

17 Aḥmad Munzavī, *Fihrist-i nuskha-hā-yi khaṭṭī-yi fārsī* (Tehran: Mu'assisa-yi farhangī-yi manṭiqa'ī, 1348–1353/1969–1974), 3104–3108. Munzavī also mentions in his entry on Maktabī's *Laylī-u Majnūn* that this work was printed numerous times, first in Tabriz in 1259 (1843) and accordingly in India, Isfahan and Tehran. See also the overview of manuscripts and prints (lithographs) in Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū, *Laylī-u Majnūn*, 99–101.

18 Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, 213.

a second manuscript which contains this work, namely Or. 1329, a collective volume from Hyderabad dated 1048/1638 without illustrations.[19]

## 2 On the Manuscript and the Organization of the Text: Russian Paper, Rubrics and the Insertion of Ghazals

Or. 8773 is not dated, nor is its place of origin indicated: however, the style of its paintings, the clothes of the figures painted, and especially its lacquer binding with floral motifs (Figure 7.1) suggest that the volume was produced in 19th-century Qajar Iran. The Russian watermarks present on some of the folios of Or. 8773 confirm this provenance.[20] The watermark of folio 35b, for example, reads A. Goncharov, pointing to the paper factory established by Afanasy Abramovich Goncharov (1693–1788) in the Russian city of Kaluga.[21] That Russian paper was used in a Persian manuscript can be related to the intensified trade relations between Iran and Russia after the first Russo-Persian war (1804–1813) and the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813, which greatly increased Russia's economic and political influence in Iran.

Or. 8773 has 102 folios and is *c.*22.5 cm long, 13.5 cm wide and 2 cm high. The text is organized in two columns, framed by a red line, a thicker green-golden lines and two thin black lines and a slightly thicker grey-blue line. The text columns are separated by red lines running in the middle; each folio also has an outer frame consisting of red lines. This allows for a large white space between the text blocks, bordered by an inner frame, and the outer frame. The text is written on smooth cream-coloured paper in black *nasta'līq* calligraphy; the rubrics indicating the different chapters are written in red in separate red frames within the text blocks. The manuscript opens on folio 1b with a *sarlawḥ*, an illuminated title heading, executed rather crudely in red, gold and shades of blue. The heading reads: *kitāb-i Laylī Majnūn avval-i nāma ba (?) tawḥīd-i khudā-st*, "The book of Laylī and Majnūn, the first part of the book is on God's unity", written in red letters on a golden surface at the bottom of the sarlawḥ

19 Jan Just Witkam. *Inventory of the Persian Manuscripts in Leiden University Library*, 90. See also *Catalogus Codicum Orientalium Bibliothecae Academiae Lugduno-Batavae* II, 121.

20 The copper pigments used in the manuscript have severely affected the paper: hence the physical manuscript is only to be consulted in very exceptional cases, despite the manuscript's relatively young age. The watermarks are not visible on the digitized version of the manuscript, and my knowledge of the watermarks is based on consultations of the manuscript in the past. I have not been able to study the watermarks in further detail.

21 See S.A. Klepikov, *Watermarks and Stamps in paper of Russian and foreign production of the XVII–XX centuries* (Moscow: Publishing Office of All-Union Book Chamber, 1959), 102.



FIGURE 7.1 Lacquer book cover with floral motifs [UBL Or. 8773]



FIGURE 7.2 Illuminated heading (*sarlawḥ*) [UBL Or. 8773, f. 1b]

(Figure 7.2). Beneath the sarlawḥ we read the phrase *bismillāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*, written in black letters in a separate rubric, and followed by the first five verses of the poem. The poem opens with the verse:

> *Ay bar aḥadiyatat zi aghāz * khalq-i azal-u abad ham-āvāz*
>
> On your singularity from the start * Creatures in all eternity are singing in unison

The following folio 2a is a regular page, without painting or rubric, and typically counts 11 verses. In the remainder of the manuscript, a rubric takes the space of one verse, so that the pages with rubrics have 10 verses: all in all, Or. 8773 counts 48 rubrics. The first page with a regular rubric (*ba'd az ān na't-i rasūl-i du sarā-st* "Hereafter, the praise of the Prophet of the two worlds") is folio 4a. The

rubrics work like chapter headings or section headings, and at the same time form a kind of summary for the reader. After the customary opening parts, in praise of God and the Prophet Muhammad, the poet Maktabī continues with a eulogy (*madḥ*) on Niẓāmī, honouring the achievements of his predecessor and positioning himself humbly in his debt (ff. 12a–13a). On folio 13a the story itself begins, announced by the rubric *qiṣṣa-yi Laylī-u Majnūn bunyād*, "The story of Laylī and Majnūn – the origin".

The use of language in the rubrics now and then comes across as unusual and even slightly odd. Upon closer inspection, it appears that the rubrics are not just descriptive titles for the sections that follow, but rather chapter headings in verse, forming part of a larger whole. The rubric *qiṣṣa-yi Laylī-u Majnūn bunyād*, "The story of Laylī and Majnūn – the origin" on folio 13a is the second half of the preceding rubric, *īn buvad madḥ-i Niẓāmī ki nihād* "This is the praise of Niẓāmī who placed" on folio 12a. Read together these two halves – two half verses – produce the verse:

> *īn buvad madḥ-i Niẓāmī ki nihād * qiṣṣa-yi Laylī-u Majnūn bunyād*
>
> This is the praise for Niẓāmī who laid * The foundations of the story of Laylī and Majnūn.

Maktabī ingeniously composed 50 of such half verses (*miṣrā'*s) by way of chapter headings for his *Laylī-u Majnūn*. These half verses add up to a separate poem of 25 verses (*bayt*s) if put together.[22] To organize chapter headings like this seems to be an invention by Maktabī: perhaps he had the standard make-up of a Persian manuscript in mind, in which rubrics are usually separated from the running text of a poem.[23] As also in Or. 8773, these rubrics are often marked by framed borders and letters in a different colour. As such, rubrics automatically provide a clear demarcation between different types of (poetic) texts.

The implementation of this device by Maktabī may be seen as an indication of how standardized the organizational structure of manuscripts was in the late 15th century. By this time, a poet could consider to play and interact with the all-too familiar lay-out of a manuscript, in this case by effectively

22 As noted by Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū, *Laylī-u Majnūn*, 28–29: the form of this parallel poem or summary in verse is mathnavī, just as the text of *Laylī-u Majnūn* itself, but the metre is different: *ramal-i musaddas-i makhbūn-i maḥẕūf* (oo - - / oo - - /oo -) instead of the *hazaj* described above in fn. 5.

23 Maktabī refers to his work as a *nuskha* – a manuscript copy, in the conclusion of his work (fol. 101a, verse 5).

using the space for title headings to incorporate and transmit a kind of parallel poem in the manuscript, summarizing the contents of the main work. Copyists however may not necessarily have been aware of the poet's originality in this respect: in the other Leiden manuscript of Maktabī's *Laylī-u Majnūn*, Or. 1329, for example, the (non-framed) rubrics do not all represent the 50 half verses he devised as chapter headings. In Or. 8773 (fol. 1b) we see how the first verse of this parallel poem has been added almost as an afterthought to the sarlawḥ, immediately after the title given to the work here (*kitāb-i Laylī Majnūn*), rather than in a separate rubric. However, 45 of the original 50 half verses composed as chapter headings appear in Or. 8773, mostly in the shape of separate rubrics and written in red ink.[24]

Maktabī was a creative poetic mind in more than one respect. He also played with poetic genres in his *Laylī-u Majnūn*, by inserting two *ghazal*s into his mathnavī. These ghazals, short lyrical poems in monorhyme (a-a, b-a, c-a etc.), stand out visibly against the double rhyme (a-a, b-b, c-c etc) which is the most characteristic feature of any mathnavī. By mixing ghazals into his mathnavī, Maktabī follows the rare example of poets such as ʿAyyūqi and ʿIrāqī.[25] In Or. 8773, these ghazals can be found on folio 79a and folio 81b. On folio 81a the word "ghazal" announces the ghazal itself in a separate rubric; this is not the case for the ghazal on folio 79a. The ghazals form part of the moving letters that Laylī and Majnūn exchange when Laylī seems definitively separated from Majnūn by her marriage to Ibn Salām. Laylī, mad with love for Majnūn and turning into a Majnūn herself, manages to send a message to Majnūn via a messenger who knows where to find him and who has heard him calling for Laylī. She describes her feelings in a long letter, of which the concluding part is a ghazal, a love song and a lament which expresses Laylī's emotional state in a different manner. In the other Leiden Maktabī manuscript, Or. 1329, the exchange of letters – including the part in ghazal-format – is referred to as *muḥabbat-nāma* "book of love" (fol. 54b), in line with the connotation of the word ghazal.[26]

24 In three instances a different type of descriptive text appears in the rubric (fol. 79b, fol. 81a and fol. 100a); two rubrics have been left empty (on fol. 61a and fol. 100b); in some cases, the chapter headings are not in the form of a separate rubric (compare fol. 1b and fol. 98a).

25 Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, 98 and 213.

26 *Mażmūn-i muḥabbat-nāma az Laylī ba Majnūn rasīd* "The contents of the love letter from Laylī reached Majnūn," Or. 1329, folio 54b.

In Or. 8773 the ghazal Laylī composed for Majnūn can be found on folio 79a (verses 2–7). It is preceded by the following verses (fol. 78b, verse 11 and fol. 79a, verse 1):[27]

*ū hast ba pahlū-u az ānam * tang āmada bar dil āsmānam*
*ay kāsham az ū dadī rubāyad * shāyad ki ba suḥbat-i tu āyad*

He is at my side and I am his * The sky has closed in on my heart
Oh I wish that a wild animal would rob me from him * Maybe it would come to you

After these desperate words Laylī delivers the following ghazal of six verses, with the recurrent rhyme-word (*radīf*) *guzashtam* "I have forsaken/ I let go." While there is a shift in rhyme-scheme, marking a temporary shift in genre, the metre remains unchanged.

*Dar ʿishq-i tu az jahān guzashtam * v-az jumla jahāniyān guzashtam*
*bī rūy-i tu bar dar-i laḥad pāy * binhādam-u az jahān guzashtam*
*ān dam ki zi yakdigar guzashtim * tu az dil-u man zi jān guzashtam* [...]

Loving you I have forsaken the world * And I have forsaken all those who live in it
Without your face I put my foot on the brink of the grave * And I have forsaken the world
The moment we had to let go of each other * You of your heart and I of my soul –
I built a boat from my bier * And I let it go floating in the sea of grief for you
I ran through the desert of non-existence * So much so that I have forsaken the caravan
The day I grieved for you I was burnt * By the sea of fire, for I went through it.

The poetic creativity and originality of Maktabī, as demonstrated by the insertion of ghazals into his mathnavī and by the versification of section headings, has received little attention or recognition, despite the fact that so many

27 Preceding the ghazal, there is also a rubric in Or. 8773, which seems however to belong to the next section: *khwāndan-i nāma-yi majnūn rā yār*, "The beloved reads Majnūn's letter," compare also Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū, *Laylī-u Majnūn*, 216.

manuscripts of his work are available. Perhaps this is because he is first and foremost perceived as one of the many "imitators" of Niẓāmī, of whom apart from *Laylī-u Majnūn* no works survive. Moreover, Persian literary history traditionally focuses little on poets beyond the so-called classical period, which ends just around the time that Maktabī was active. Besides the thorough introduction by Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū in their relatively recent edition of Maktabī's work, no extensive study on his work seems to exist.[28]

## 3 A Closer Look at the Illustrations and the Text of Or. 8773

The works of Niẓāmī and of the poets who followed in his footsteps have often been illustrated, especially from the 16th century onwards, when manuscript production thrived at courtly centers in the Persianate world. In the 19th century, this tradition slowly came to an end with the introduction of the printing press, the rise of lithographed editions and the ensuing decrease in the production of manuscripts. Or. 8773 is an example of a late manuscript – even though it is undated, its lacquer binding, the style of its illustrations and its paper suggest that it was produced in the 19th century, as indicated above. The manuscript contains nineteen paintings, all rectangular, and typically 11 cm long and 7.5 cm wide. They are placed within the borders of the inner frame, usually in the middle of the folio. Apart from the painting on folio 61b and the last painting on folio 98a, the paintings are preceded by two verses and followed by two verses. The last painting, depicting Laylī and Majnūn lying dead in the wilderness, surrounded by animals who joined them in death, leaves only room for a single verse above and under the painting; the painting on folio 61b, an image of Majnūn, a camel and a camel driver, is preceded by three verses and followed by one verse. The folios following or preceding illustrated folios stand out for their strong brownish marks, often recognizable imprints of the painting on the folios before or after.

The first painting in the manuscript can be found on folio 6a and depicts the Ascent of the Prophet, illustrating the story of Muhammad's *mir'āj* or ascent to heaven (Figure 7.3). On top of folio 6a, outside the margins, this is indicated with the words *mir'āj raftan* in pencil. The story of the mir'āj forms a fixed part of the introductory sections of Persian mathnavīs, and images of this scene can be found in many illustrated manuscripts. Here we see the Prophet looking to

28 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā'ī was one of the first to notice this lack of recognition. He dedicated a short article in the journal Yadgar to Maktabī Shīrāzī, in which he presents the sparse information available from Persian poetic biographies. "Maktabī Shīrāzī," *Yādgār* 2/5, 1324–25 (1945–46), 52–60.



FIGURE 7.3 The Ascent of the Prophet (*mir'āj*) [UBL Or. 8773, f. 6a]

the left, seated on his steed Burāq, who has the body of a horse, the tail of a peacock and the face of a human being. The horse's body is painted purple and dotted with brown specks. The saddle cloth has green and brown colours; the peacock's feathers are likewise greenish brown. The human head of Burāq is crowned. The Prophet, clad in green with light brown boots, a white belt and a green turban, is floating in the air in between the sky and the green landscape beneath. The small mountains below may indicate that he is rising far above the earth. The Prophet's face is veiled with a long white cloth, and his head is surrounded by a halo in the form of a single large flame. Surrounding him are three angels, painted as cupids' heads floating in the air. Only the angel to the left of the Prophet has arms: this is probably the angel Gabriel, who guides the Prophet on his ascent to heaven.

Apart from the décor of the painting on folio 6a, two generic types of décors can be discerned in Or. 8773, one for depicting inside scenes and one for outside scenes. The inside décor (fol. 15b, fol. 25b and fol. 46a) is formed by a room

with a taupe brown-coloured floor, adorned with blue curly ornaments, perhaps depicting a carpet. The floor covers slightly more than half of the painting, and runs into a wall, which is mint-green with blue window (?) panels, adorned with brown specks – perhaps windows through which birds can be seen. Above the panels/windows a red-orange curtain with four golden cords hanging in a loop can be discerned on each painting with an inside décor.

In the second painting (fol. 15b) we see this décor in connection to the scene showing the school room in which the young Laylī and Majnūn, then still known as Qays, meet and fell in love (Figure 7.4). On the painting we see five children, chatting happily, with some books in front of them. At least two of them, seated on the left of the painting, are girls: they wear a skirt and a blouse in different colours and no headdress. The way they are portrayed is reminiscent of the more glorious oil paintings of Qajar princesses. Possibly Laylī is the girl with the pink skirt and the blue blouse: these clothes return also later in some of the paintings depicting Laylī (fol. 64b, fol. 98a). Qays may be the boy in the upper right of the painting: he is wearing refined clothes, contrasting this first capture of him to the emaciated figure in the wilderness he is soon to become as the story unfolds. A description of the painting (*maktab-i Laylī-u Majnūn*) is scribbled in pencil on top of the page, outside the outer margin.[29]

For the majority of the paintings in Or. 8773 an outside décor serves as the background for the illustrated scene. It consists of a surface with different shades of green merging into lilac-blue mountains. Above the mountains a light grey-white-blue sky is visible. On a number of paintings, we see two trees prominently present in the landscape. One of these, invariably located on the left hand side of the painting, is probably meant to be the weeping willow, the proverbial *darakht-i Majnūn* or tree of Majnūn. It is a frail and skinny tree with branches pointing to the ground. The second tree is a more sturdy tree, possibly a plane tree, and is mostly located on the right hand side of the paintings. Its proportion is often not in line with the rest of the landscape (compare fol. 20b and fol. 84b, where the tree is placed on top of the mountains), in the same way as animals and human figures are often too big in relation to their surroundings. Sometimes the place of one or both of the trees is taken by a different item, such as a tent on folio 64b, or the Kaaba on folio 33a. The mountains are covered with grey strokes and small brown vertical stripes, possibly indicating rocks and vegetation, while in the sky dots are painted, probably representing

29 This is not the case for the remaining paintings, though remnants of descriptions in pen are still visible on top of some of the illustrated folios. Perhaps the manuscript was rebound and the paper cut off at the margins, and in case of the first two paintings, a description in pencil put instead.



FIGURE 7.4 Laylī and Majnūn at school [UBL Or. 8773, f 15b]

birds. Given the nature of the story, it is logical that outside scenes dominate in Or. 8773.

On folio 18b, the rubric reads *kūh bigriftan-i Majnūn-i kharāb*, "The heart-broken Majnūn moves to the mountains." It is in this chapter that Qays becomes Majnūn, as the first verse on folio 19b reads:

> *z-āshuftagī-yi dil-i kharābash * Majnūn shuda dar jahān khaṭābash*
>
> Because of the confused state of his broken heart * Majnūn was how he came to be addressed in the world.

In the following verses (fol. 19b, verses 4–11), Maktabī describes Majnūn's first movements and feelings after being separated from Laylī. Majnūn first lingers around the encampment of Laylī's tribe, and then moves away into the mountains.

*ān shīfta-yi ramīda ārām * raftī ba qabīla-yi dilārām*
*pīrāmūn-i khaymahā birastī * z-ān bāgh gul-i shikufta jastī*
*chun khayma-yi yār dīdī az dūr * az sīna kashīdī āh-i pur shūr*
*guftī ba faghān-u nāla k-ay yār* ay burda ba* [*zi*] *khāṭiram ba yak bār* [...]

Mad from love and restless * He went to the tribe of the beloved
Resurfacing around the tents * Where flowers blossomed in the garden
When he saw from afar his beloved's tent * A tormented sigh rose from his chest
He cried and lamented: oh dear one * You were taken away from me all of a sudden
You took my heart and then sprang away from me * Putting on a thousand veils
Me, a madman, you threw on the market * You disappeared from my eye like a fairy
To be united with you and my going away * A long-lasting hope and a short life
How did this dust of grief * Suddenly became a wall on our path?
For the one who separated me from you * Hell cannot even compensate.

This utter despair is captured in an iconic image, present in virtually all illustrated Persian manuscripts of Laylī and Majnūn: the scene of Majnūn retreated into the wilderness, starving and half-naked, surrounded by the wild animals who have befriended him. In Or. 8773 this scene is depicted on folio 20b (Figure 7.5). Majnūn is portrayed here sitting on his knees in a green field, described in the text as the wadi. Mountains loom in the distance. Placed in a circle around Majnūn a group of animals seem to watch him. The group consists of six partridges; an orange-brown lion with a white belly, a longish tail and rather short legs; a white-grey leopard with dark grey spots and a long nose; a white-grey rabbit or hare with long straight ears, seated as if it were a cat; a light-brown gazelle or deer with thin legs; and a white animal covered in dark grey spots, with a face similar to the light-brown gazelle, but with fatter legs and a short rather furry tail. Majnūn wears a pink loincloth or short skirt. He is painted as a young boy, child-like, with black curly hair that is not too long; a partridge has nested in his hair. Overall he looks quite healthy, with rather broad shoulders and a round face: however, his emaciated state is hinted at by the clear depiction of his ribs. In eight of the nineteen paintings we find Majnūn in a similar landscape, surrounded by all or a selection of the animals present on folio 20b.



FIGURE 7.5 Majnūn in the wilderness [UBL Or. 8773, f 20b]

On folio 64b, a different group of animals is depicted, and Majnūn is one of them (Figure 7.6). Disguised in a sheep's skin, but his head still visible, he is standing on all fours near a tent, half hidden behind a shepherd, who is leaning on his staff. Laylī is seated just outside of the tent and seems to look at the shepherd and his flock, represented by four real sheep and Majnūn in disguise. This painting illustrates a chapter entitled *pūst pūshīdan-i majnūn gah-i shām* ("Majnūn puts on a skin in the evening," rubric on fol. 63a). In this chapter, Maktabī relates how the shepherd of Ibn Salām, Laylī's husband, pities Majnūn and agrees to provide him with an opportunity to come closer to Laylī. The shepherd is described in the text as a lovestruck poet and singer, who plays the reed flute and pastures his flock close to Majnūn's abode. Majnūn asks him to cover him in a sheep's skin and to take him with him to one evening back his beloved Laylī. Hopeless because of Laylī's marriage to Ibn Salām, it is Majnūn's intention is to be slaughtered as a sheep in her kitchen. Laylī is surrounded



FIGURE 7.6 Majnūn, disguised in a sheep's skin, visits Laylī's tent. [UBL Or. 8773, f. 64b]

by her servants in a tent, but he manages to speak to her, and when he understands that she is calling out to him and still as desperately in love with him as he is with her, he is overcome with emotions and makes so much noise that the butcher hastens to kill him. At the very last moment, the shepherd saves him, saying that he needs to take away this sick sheep. He brings Majnūn back to the wilderness.

After this brief meeting with Laylī, both his worn-out father and mother try to counsel and console Majnūn, but to little effect. They die shortly after one another, and Majnūn now not only laments his beloved Laylī, but also his parents, who stood by him in his hopeless ordeal. He barely seems to notice when Laylī;s husband, frustrated by her enduring love for Majnun, comes to attack him. His animals, as ever by his side, defend Majnūn and kill Ibn Salām (fol. 88b). Although a brief reunion between Laylī and Majnūn follows, thanks to the intercession of Laylī's doctor, the grief of separation has taken its toll for too long, and Laylī, utterly weakened, dies first, soon followed by a



FIGURE 7.7 Laylī and Majnūn's death [UBL Or. 8773, f. 98a]

grief-stricken Majnūn. Their dead bodies are depicted on the last painting in Or. 8773, folio 98a (Figure 7.7). Not only the unhappy couple, also the animals have died and surround the couple on the painting. Majnūn lies under his tree, traces of bloody tears on his face. Close to him we see the leopard, his legs in the air and his eyes closed. At his feet lie two partridges. Laylī's hands are at Majnūn's feet, and near her are the gazelles, another partridge and the lion. A text in black ink is written in the painting, saying: *sifat-i vādī-u Majnūn-i kharāb* "The state of the wadi and the broken Majnūn," which is one of the chapter headings in verse.

A few folios later, the work is neatly wrapped up. In one of the last verses, on folio 100b (verse 6), Maktabī once more humbly acknowledges his predecessor Niẓāmī and here also Amīr Khusraw (*īn ganj-i niẓāmī ast-u khusraw*, "This is the treasure of Niẓāmī and Khusraw"), describing himself as the one who restrung the pearls coming from their treasure, and in the following verse, as the one who prepared a stew on the basis of the scrapings of their pens (fol. 100b,

verse 7). On this same folio, Maktabī also gives the date of his composition – 895 AH, congruent with the numerical value of the letters of the phrase *kitab-i Maktabī*, "The Book of Maktabī" (fol. 100b, verse 10) and he provides the number of verses – 2,160 – in the first verse of the next folio. This last folio has only seven verses and the space possibly left for a colophon is empty. Or. 8773 ends with the verse:[30]

*Shud nāma tamām-u qiṣṣa kutāh*
*Al-minnat-u al-baqā' lillāh*

The book has ended and the story finished
Grace and eternity to God.

## 4 Conclusion and Inventory of the Paintings in Or. 8773

Or. 8773 is a fine Qajar manuscript copy of Maktabī's *Laylī-u Majnūn*, a work that has received less scholarly attention than it deserves. The manuscript provides insight into Qajar bookbinding and paper, and exemplifies the style of painting in the Qajar period. Though these paintings may be seen as rather crude in comparison especially to paintings in Persian illustrated manuscripts of earlier times, they give us an idea of how the love story of Laylī and Majnūn was perceived thorugh Qajar eyes. Since the illustrations of the manuscript have not been described in detail, here follows a brief inventory of its paintings by way of conclusion.

### 4.1 *Inventory of the Paintings in Or. 8773*

1. Folio 6a. The Ascent to Heaven (*mir'āj*) of the Prophet Muhammad.
2. Folio 15b. Laylī and Majnūn go to school together.
3. Folio 20b. Majnūn in the wilderness surrounded by a group of wild animals.
4. Folio 23a. Majnūn's father visits him in the wilderness.
5. Folio 25b. Majnūn's father asks Laylī's father for her hand.
6. Folio 29b. Majnūn and his father visit the wise man who prays for him.
7. Folio 33b. Majnūn and his father go on pilgrimage to the Kaaba.
8. Folio 42b. Laylī walking outside, accompanied by two girls and an old lady, the guardian (*raqīb*) who prevents her from walking away.

30 According to Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū, this verse is spurious, though it can be found in a number of manuscripts. Zu'l-faqārī and Arasṭū, *Laylī-u Majnūn*, 244n12.

9. Folio 46a. Majnūn is received by the tribal ruler Nawfal, who means to help Majnūn in his pursuit of Laylī. Nawfal, wearing a crown, is seated on an orange cushion with golden borders, leaning against a golden cushion with darker specks.
10. Folio 51a. Nawfal's troops fight for Majnūn against the troops of Laylī's tribe: on the right we see Naufal, with a crown, followed by two horsemen with banners; a similar group is standing opposite. In the midst Majnūn is standing, hands on his back and facing Nawfal, pleading for an end to the fight, which is costing the life of many. A beheaded man is lying in the foreground.
11. Folio 53b. Majnūn has convinced a hunter, who holds a rifle in his hand, to set free a gazelle. The two touch hands. The freed gazelle is painted on the foreground.
12. Folio 58a. Three servants (*mulāzimān*) of Laylī's tribe throw stones at Majnūn to chase him away from Laylī. The stones are painted in light grey and are rather large.
13. Folio 61b. A lowly man (*nāmunāsibī dūn*) from a passing caravan informs Majnūn about Laylī's marriage to Ibn Salām, and that she is on her way from her father's encampment to her husband's.
14. Folio 64b. Ibn Salām's shepherd helps Majnūn, hidden in a sheep's skin, to approach Laylī. Majnūn means to sacrifice himself in disguise, but this is prevented by the shepherd who takes him away.
15. Folio 73a. Majnūn, surrounded by his familiar group of wild animals, mourns his father. According to the text, he is desperate: this is not reflected in his facial expression. In this painting, the space for the partridge on his head is left empty.
16. Folio 84b. Majnūn is visited by his mother, who dies soon afterwards. She strokes his head with one hand, holding his arm with the other. Majnūn's hand is on her lap; he is gazing at her in an expressive manner. In the foreground the animals are watching them.
17. Folio 88b. Ibn Salām, planning to attack Majnūn in a futile effort to gain Laylī, is killed by a lion, while Majnūn stares into the void, sitting under the Majnūn-tree with his animals.
18. Folio 91a. Laylī's doctor (*ṭabīb*) reaches out to Laylī and Majnūn, who lie on the ground near Majnūn's abode. The doctor had arranged for a reunion, but as soon as the couple see each other, they faint. After their brief reunion, Laylī dies of grief, and Majnūn soon follows her in death.
19. Folio 98a. Laylī and Majnūn lie dead in the wilderness; the animals surrounding them are lying dead as well, their legs up in the air.

# PART 3

## *Scholars and Travelers*

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CHAPTER 8

# Johann Michael Wansleben and the Grand Ducal Court of Tuscany

*Alastair Hamilton*

Relatively little of the correspondence of Johann Michael Wansleben seems to have survived.[1] This is surprising in view of his distinction as a scholar and his many acquaintances in the Republic of Letters of the second half of the seventeenth century. As a promising young Ethiopicist he had been sent to London by Hiob Ludolf to see to the publication of his Ethiopic dictionary. He there spent some nineteen months staying with Edmund Castell and met the scholars involved in the preparation of the London Polyglot Bible. In Italy his friends included Francesco Redi, Carlo Dati, Ottavio Falconieri, Francesco Marucelli, Athanasius Kircher, and Melchisédéch Thévenot. In Paris he established his reputation with two publications and met Jean-Baptiste Cotelier, Eusèbe Renaudot, Louis Picques and other orientalists. When he was in Turkey, in Izmir and Istanbul, he frequented the English ambassador, Sir John Finch (whom he had first met in Florence), Paul Rycaut and John Covel. Of his exchanges of letters the most abundant and extensive appears to have been with the mathematician Pierre de Carcavy, a friend of Pascal, Mersenne and Descartes, custodian of the royal library and once the librarian of Colbert. He was responsible for organising Wansleben's second journey to Egypt to collect manuscripts and antiquities for the royal collection. Wansleben's correspondence with Carcavy and Colbert, at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, was published by Henri Auguste Omont in the first volume of his *Missions archéologiques françaises en Orient aux XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles* (Paris, 1902), and remains the only printed edition of Wansleben's letters.

Wansleben's communications with Ernest the Pious, duke of Saxe-Gotha, and his secretary of state Emanuel Fend are held in the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha but have never been published. The three letters in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, written by Wansleben to Francesco Redi between 1665 and 1671, are consequently of considerable interest, and I owe

1 I am particularly grateful to Alessandro Bausi for his comments on a first draft of this article. My thanks are also due to Asaph Ben-Tov, Cristina Cammelli, Sara Fani, Jill Kraye and Nicolette Mout.

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their identification to Mrs Cristina Cammelli, and the invaluable register she has compiled of Redi's correspondents. They contain details about Wansleben's life and movements not to be found elsewhere, as do the other pieces included in the appendix of this article – letters from Redi published in the sixth volume of his works which came out in 1811 and the epistle dedicatory to the grand duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand II de' Medici, in the manuscript version of Wansleben's *Relazione dello stato presente dell'Egitto* now in the British Library.[2]

Born in Sömmerda near Erfurt in 1635, Johann Michael Wansleben, the son of a Lutheran pastor, attended the university of Königsberg, enlisted briefly in the Swedish army, travelled to Amsterdam, and arrived back in Erfurt in 1658. He there met Hiob Ludolf, considered one of the finest orientalists in Germany. Clearly impressed by Wansleben's talent for languages, Ludolf had him to stay, taught him Ethiopic, and in 1660 sent him to London to supervise the publication, under the aegis of Edmund Castell, of his Ethiopic-Latin lexicon. When Wansleben returned to Germany in the summer of 1662 he discovered that Ludolf, together with the duke of Saxe-Gotha, Ernest I known as the Pious, had decided to dispatch him to Ethiopia in order to obtain general information about the country, acquire manuscripts, and confirm Ludolf's theory that the faith of the Ethiopians was far closer to Lutheranism than to Catholicism.[3] At the end of the following year Wansleben set out for Egypt in order to plan his journey further south. In Egypt, however, he met the Coptic patriarch, Matthew IV, who told him that it was all but impossible to travel to Ethiopia on account of the expense and the dangers of the journey. Wansleben remained in Egypt, adopted by the Coptic community, learning Arabic, copying some of the Ethiopic manuscripts which he found in the Coptic monasteries, and immersing himself in the world of the Copts on which he would become the greatest living expert.

Wansleben left Egypt in order to go back to Erfurt in January 1665 and, on 16 February, arrived in Livorno. According to Hiob Ludolf, the scholarly grand duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand II, was visiting the town when Wansleben disembarked and was struck by the appearance of a man in Egyptian dress with a long beard – an episode which brings to mind Justus Sustermans' portrait of Ferdinand II, himself in oriental attire (Figure 8.1). According to Wansleben's

2 Redi's letters to Wansleben are discussed by Alessandro Bausi, 'Johann Michael Wansleben's manuscripts and texts. An update' in Alessandro Bausi, Alessandro Gori and Denis Nosnitsin, eds, *Essays in Ethiopian Manuscript Studies. Proceedings of the International Conference. Manuscripts and Texts, Languages and Contexts: the Transmission of Knowledge in the Horn of Africa Hamburg, 17–19 July 2014* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), pp. 197–243, esp. pp. 209–211.

3 Alastair Hamilton, ed., *Johann Michael Wansleben's Travels in the Levant 1671–1674. An Annotated Edition of His Italian Report* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018). Henceforth *TiL*.



FIGURE 8.1 Ferdinand II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, by Justus Sustermans, ca. 1640. Oil on canvas, 64 × 50 cm [Galleria Palatina (Palazzo Pitti), Florence]

epistle dedicatory to the grand duke (Letter 3), however, it was Charles Longland, a rich merchant and former agent of the English Admiralty, with whom Wansleben was staying in Livorno after a brief period of quarantine, who brought him to Ferdinand's attention. The grand duke questioned Wansleben about the East and invited him to Florence. Ferdinand II had a strong interest in the Arab world and oriental studies, and, in the following year, would invite one of the greatest French orientalists, Barthélemi d'Herbelot, the future compiler of the *Bibliothèque orientale*, to catalogue the eastern material in his library.[4]

4 Cf. Pier Mattia Tommasino, 'Bulghaith al-Darawi and Barthélemy d'Herbelot: readers of the Qur'an in seventeenth-century Tuscany', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 20, 2018, pp. 94–120, esp. pp. 104–109.

Wansleben had hoped to travel to Venice, but the journey was considered too dangerous and he decided to accept the grand duke's invitation.[5] He reached Florence in mid-July and stayed there for four months, still intending to return to Germany, and trying, in letters to Ernest the Pious, to explain his failure to go to Ethiopia. Protected by Ferdinand II, he completed the first version, in German, of the account of his travels in Egypt, the *Beschreibung des Egypten Landes nach dem Zustand des Jahres 1664*. In contrast to the Italian version, the *Relazione dello stato presente dell'Egitto* which would be published in 1671, the German version was sent to Ernest the Pious and remained in manuscript until the late eighteenth century when it was published by Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus.[6] The German version, moreover, close though it was to the Italian, stressed, in accordance with the desires of Hiob Ludolf, the points that the beliefs of the Lutherans had in common with the Copts, such as communion in both kinds, the persuasion that the Church of Rome was in decline, and the rejection of the Roman papacy.[7]

Wansleben's other principal activity was copying the Ethiopic manuscripts in the Florentine libraries. One of these was the *Senodos*[8] to which he refers in his first letter to Redi from Rome (Letter 1). Of this he copied a manuscript belonging to Ferdinand II in the Palazzo Vecchio. In Rome he would find better manuscripts of the same text, but his first encounter with the *Senodos*, as Alessandro Bausi argues, was one of the main factors in his decision to convert from Lutheranism to Roman Catholicism.[9] The official conversion itself took place in Rome, probably in March 1667, but, judging from the last paragraph of his letter to Redi, Wansleben underwent a spiritual conversion when he was still in Florence, if not earlier. The reason was his growing conviction, based on Ethiopic texts and in contrast to the persuasion of Ludolf, that the faith of the Ethiopians was far closer to Roman Catholicism than to Lutheranism.[10]

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5 *TiL*, pp. 8–12.

6 Johann Michael Wansleben, *Beschreibung des Egypten Landes nach dem Zustand des Jahres 1664* in Heinrich Eberhard Paulus, ed., *Sammlung der merkwürdigsten Reisen in den Orient*, vol. 3 (Jena: bei Christian Heinrich Cuno's Erben, 1794), pp. 10–122.

7 In a manuscript note to the German version Wansleben lists the complaints of the Ethiopians against the Church of Rome. One of them is 'che il Papa non sia capo della Chiesa, ma che la Chiesa Romana sia la code [*sic*], o catedra del Diabolo' (British Library London MS Add. 8780, fo. 85$^{v}$).

8 See Alessandro Bausi, 'Senodos' in Siegbert Uhlig and Alessandro Bausi, eds., *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, vol. 4 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), cols 623a–625a.

9 Bausi, 'Johann Michael Wansleben's manuscripts', p. 217.

10 For a survey of the various reasons that have been suggested see *TiL*, pp. 15–16. The superiority of Catholicism to Lutheranism had already been stressed by the Coptic patriarch Matthew IV when Wansleben met him in Egypt. Wansleben seems also to have vowed to

In Florence the grand duke seems to have entrusted Wansleben to Francesco Redi, his physician (Figure 8.2), and it must have been thanks to Redi that Wansleben met the circle of scholars connected with the Accademia del Cimento.[11] The academy had been founded in 1657, the outcome of the interest in scientific experimentation shared by Ferdinand II and his brother Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici.[12] It consisted of a group of scientists inspired by Galileo Galilei. During its brief existence – its meetings came to an end in 1667 – it proved to be a major centre of the most progressive scientific research and has been described as 'the first organization founded for the sole purpose of making scientific experiments'[13] and as 'the first scientific society and predecessor of the English Royal Society'.[14] Wansleben, who undoubtedly attended some of the meetings and the experiments, made various friends at the academy. Besides Francesco Redi his closest friend was Carlo Dati. Dati's primary interest was lexicography and the study of the Italian language, but he also made his name as a poet and was a member of many academies.[15] Another member of the circle was the English minister at the grand ducal court John Finch, whose elder brother, Sir Heneage Finch, would be Lord High Chancellor of England and be created the first earl of Nottingham.[16] Even if the cantankerous mathematician at the Accademia del Cimento, Giovanni Alfonso Borelli, disapproved of his pomposity,[17] John Finch always preferred his studies to a political career and was the professor of anatomy at Pisa from 1659 to 1665. Regarded as an anatomist of distinction, he performed dissections at the Arcispedale of

convert if he survived shipwreck off the coast of Calabria on his way from Alexandria to Livorno in February 1665. But Bausi's hypothesis remains the most convincing.

11 For the Accademia del Cimento see Marco Beretta, Antonio Clericuzio and Lawrence M. Principe, eds., *The Accademia del Cimento and its European Context* (Sagamore Beach (MA): Science History Publications, 2009).

12 Although its foundation is usually attributed to Leopoldo de' Medici, W.E. Knowles Middleton, *The Experimenters: A Study of the Accademia del Cimento* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 17–26 rightly insists on the part played by the grand duke who shared to the full his brother's interest in science.

13 Knowles Middleton, *The Experimenters*, p. 1.

14 J.R. Hale, *Florence and the Medici. The Pattern of Control* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983), pp. 182–183.

15 Magda Vigilante, 'Dati, Carlo Roberto', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 33, pp. 24–28.

16 Sarah Hutton, 'Finch, Sir John', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 19, pp. 577–578. For John Finch and Wansleben, see *TiL*, pp. 11, 31–32, 434, 441, 446, 454–456; Alastair Hamilton with Maurits van den Boogert, eds, *Johann Michael Wansleben's Travels in Turkey, 1673–1676. An Annotated Edition of His French Report* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2023), pp. 3, 7, 12–13, 74–75, 79, 86–91, 98, 99, 105–106, 214–215.

17 Knowles Middleton, *The Experimenters*, p. 287.




FIGURE 8.2 Portrait of Francesco Redi by an anonymous engraver. Ca. 1650 [Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-P-2021-6631]

Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Wansleben and he would meet again in Izmir in 1674. Sir John Finch, by then knighted, was the new English ambassador to the Porte and Wansleben joined his train in order to sail to Istanbul. Once he was in Istanbul Wansleben was a frequent guest at the English embassy.

Of the various members of the Accademia del Cimento Francesco Redi, regarded as the founder of experimental biology and modern parasitology, was one of the most distinguished.[18] Born in Arezzo in 1626, he studied at the University of Pisa and took his degree in medicine and philosophy. Like Carlo Dati he was a poet and had a strong interest in lexicography and the history of the Italian language. After joining the best known of the Florentine academies, the Accademia della Crusca which specialised in lexicography, in 1655, he became a member of the Accademia del Cimento in 1657. As a private doctor in frequent attendance on the court and soon acknowledged as physician to Ferdinand II, he was well paid and gained distinction by curing the future grand duke, Cosimo III, of smallpox. He published his first major work in 1664 on the poison of the adder, demonstrating that its venom came from its fangs and not from its gall bladder. In 1666 he would be appointed primary physician at the grand ducal court, a position which gave him great power for the next thirty years. He then, in 1668, produced his important work on the generation of insects in which he confuted the idea of spontaneous generation and established his reputation as a biologist. Like the grand duke himself and a number of members of his court, Redi took a strong interest in the Arab world from which he gathered scientific information. He used the converted Muslim Abū al-Ghayth al-Darāwī 'as an informant on scientific issues,'[19] and it was to Redi that the Florentine physician Alessandro Pini communicated his discoveries in Egypt in the early 1680s.[20]

As a man who knew Ethiopic and Arabic and had just returned from a long stay in Egypt, Wansleben, who had italianised his name to Vanslebio, must have been unique in Florence at that moment and, with his access to esoteric sources, of the greatest interest to the versatile members of the Accademia del Cimento. Some years later, in 1671, in response to the claim by Athanasius Kircher that certain stones found in the head of some highly venomous snakes were capable of absorbing all types of poison, Redi published his *Esperienze*

18 Gabriele Bucchi and Lorella Mangani, 'Redi, Francesco', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 86 (1960–2020), pp. 708–712.

19 Tommasino, 'Bulghaith al-Darawi and Barthélemy d'Herbelot', p. 107; Sara Fani, 'Printing the Qur'an in Rome: From the Typographia Medicae to Marracci's Paduan edition' in Federico Stella and Roberto Tottoli, *The Qur'an in Rome. Manuscripts, Translations, and the Study of Islam in Early Modern Catholicism* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2024), pp. 79–122, esp. pp. 111–112.

20 See Davide Baldi Bellini, *Ipnosi turca. Un medico viaggiatore in terra ottomana (1681–1717)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022), pp. 26–28, 33–42, 67–72; Sara Fani, 'The Arabic manuscripts of the Riccardiana library of Florence and the retrieval of Alessandro Pini's allegedly lost collection', *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Bulletin*, 7, 2021, pp. 81–98, esp. pp. 86–95.

*intorno a diverse cose naturali* in which he recalled that Wansleben had shown him a booklet in Arabic that contained 'these and other absurdities', *queste e somiglianti vanità*.[21] Redi and Wansleben had two very different approaches. Redi, with the scepticism of a scientist who depended on experimentation, had no time for the likes of Kircher, *gran rombazzo, e poca lana*, a great deal of noise and little substance, as he put it in a letter to Antonio Baldigiani in December 1674.[22] Wansleben, on the other hand, was befriended and helped by Kircher in Rome, and intially fully agreed with his interpretation of the hieroglyphs.[23] While he was sceptical about the modern miracles to which the Greeks and the Copts laid claim, he was fascinated by magic and 'wonders' and was often ingenuously credulous.[24] These different views do not appear to have affected what turned into an affectionate friendship clear from the letters Wansleben wrote to Redi from Rome, where he had arrived in November 1665.

Wansleben's letter to Redi dated 28 November 1665 (Letter 1) helps us to reconstruct his first days in Rome. We see that he was lodging in Piazza di Spagna with the young Count Johann Friedrich von Wallenstein, chamberlain and domestic prelate to the pope, and this suggests that Wansleben had arrived with the appropriate recommendations. Only in the second letter to Redi dated 6 February 1666 (Letter 2), written in response to Redi's reply of 11 December 1665, do we see that he received the recommendations from the grand duke for which he had asked in November and that he was in touch with the Tuscan ambassador in Rome, Count Torquato Barbolani di Montauto. From then on Barbolani di Montauto would be his principal intermediary with the grand duke. He probably saw to the payment of the grand duke's subsidies and may have introduced Wansleben to Cardinal Francesco Barberini who would be one of his main patrons in Rome.

Wansleben lost no time in going to S. Stefano dei Mori behind St Peter's, the church which had been frequented by the Abyssinians ever since 1481 when they established a true community in Rome. Befriended by an Abyssinian priest

21 Francesco Redi, *Esperienze intorno a diverse cose naturali, e particolarmente a quelle, che ci son portati dall'Indie* (Firenze: All'Insegna della Nave, 1671), p. 17.

22 Francesco Redi, *Opere* (Milano: Società tipografica de' classici italiani, 1809–1811). vol. 6, p. 93.

23 Johann Michael Wansleben, *Relazione dello stato presente dell'Egitto* (Paris: Andrea Cramoisy, 1671), pp. 274, 277–278, 280.

24 *TiL*, pp. 46–47. See also Jane O. Newman, 'Citational science: textuality and the authority of the "scientific fact" in Early Modern Central Europe (Lohenstein's *Cleopatra*, 1680)' in James F. Poag and Claire Baldwin, eds. *The Construction of Textual Authority in German Literature of the Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 211–238, esp. pp. 221–233. The article also refers to Redi.

who was staying there, Dom Pietro, he was shown the manuscript collection and found a further manuscript, better than the Florentine one, of the Ethiopic *Senodos*. Het set about copying it and gave the result, together with a number of manuscripts he had purchased or copied in Egypt, to the library of the grand duke in Rome.[25] He would soon find yet another codex of the same text at the Vatican which he also copied. We see from Letter 2, moreover, that Wansleben had completed the Italian version of his *Relazione dello stato presente dell'Egitto* by February 1666. It now placed a slight emphasis on the points of belief, such as the teaching of transubstantiation, that the Copts had in common with the Church of Rome. Wansleben prepared the Italian translation of the German original with the help of a learned priest, Giovanni Emmanuele, and he had it revised and corrected by Francesco Marucelli, the Florentine bibliophile who had moved to Rome but whose library, the Biblioteca Marucelliana, is still one of the finest in Florence.[26] Judging from the epistle dedicatory to Ferdinand II (Letter 3) dated 10 May 1668 Wansleben hoped to have it printed in Rome, but in fact he had to wait until he was in Paris three years later.

Sought after by other orientalists and eager to meet them, Wansleben, possibly through Cardinal Barberini who was himself interested in oriental studies, met Athanasius Kircher, and made a further bold step in his pursuit of learning. He started to attend courses at the Maronite College. The college, however, founded by Pope Gregory XIII in 1584, was intended exclusively for Maronites sent by the patriarch and Cardinal Barberini alone, the official protector of the Maronite nation, seems to have been able to authorise Wansleben to join the college as an external student. Although he moved to lodgings which he shared with the Maronites, Wansleben was never himself registered at the college.

25 For the Ethiopic material see Alessandro Bausi, 'I manoscritti etiopici di J.M. Wansleben nella Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze', *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, 33, 1989, pp. 5–33 and for the five Arabic manuscripts Sara Fani, 'Censimento conservativo dei manoscritti arabi presso la Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze,' Master in conservazione e restauro delle raccolte librarie e documentarie, Fondazione per la conservazione e il restauro dei beni librari, Spoleto – Università degli Studi di Perugia, a.a. 2008/2009 [schede dattiloscritte, Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Sala manoscritti e rari, Cataloghi 30a], schede nr. 10, 16, 17, 18, 24.

26 *TiL*, pp. 16–19. The details concerning the Italian version are contained in a note at the end of a manscript of the German original (British Library London, MS Add. 8799, fol. 126$^{v}$): 'Traductio facta est summa fide me presente ex exemplari germanico, in Italicam linguam, a D[omi]no Johanne Emanuelle Magistro Linguae Italicae per multos annos hic Romae, postmodum vero revisum et emendatum fuit ab Ill[ustrissi]mo D[omi]no Abate Maroscelli, Nobili Florentino, viro insignibus erga me meritis conspicuo, qui, uti huic nostrae opellae nitorem et splendorem suo labore addidit, sic etiam debitam suam laudem defraudandus non fuit.'

Nevertheless, for seven months in 1666 he attended the courses, probably in Arabic, Syriac and Italian. In November 1666 he was dismissed.[27]

At this point Wansleben decided to join the Dominican Order. Athanasius Kircher wrote to Barberini asking him to provide Wansleben with money to buy a Dominican habit and to request the help of the general of the Order of Preachers, Giovanni Battista de Marinis, in admitting him.[28] In March 1667 Wansleben officially renounced Lutheranism and, at the end of the year or the beginning of 1668, he began his novitiate. Judging from his epistle dedicatory to the grand duke of Tuscany written in May 1668, Letter 3, he performed his novitiate at the convent of S. Sisto Vecchio, at the Terme di Caracalla, one of the earliest Dominican convents and once a nunnery, but abandoned by the nuns in 1575 since it was considered particularly unhealthy on account of the marshy ground and the constant threat of malaria. In 1725, when it was entirely restructured, it had all but collapsed. By October 1668, however, Wansleben was at the central (and far healthier) convent attached to S. Maria sopra Minerva close to the Pantheon. It had become the headquarters of the Order in Rome, housing the general and the provincial administration as well as the offices of the Roman Inquisition. In a letter to the duke of Saxe-Gotha written on 10 October Wansleben described it as "*der vornehmste convent unsers ordens … und darzu sehr reich, da auch gemainiglich nur die nobiles romani, oder sonst rarissima ingenia, oder sanctisimae vitae homines affiliirt werden …*"[29]

The three years Wansleben spent in the Dominican convents of Rome were rewarding. There were practical advantages which do much to account for the decision to join a monastic order of a man who never appears to have been particularly devout. For ever short of money, Wansleben was at last sure of being lodged and fed. Rome, moreover, as he pointed out in the same letter to the duke of Saxe-Gotha, was an ideal city for an orientalist. Not only had he managed to keep the books and manuscripts he had collected in Egypt, but he had all the Roman libraries and archives at his disposal, *denn mir alle bibliothecen und archivia in Rom offenstehen*. There were other orientalists with whom he could discuss his ideas, and the large number of eastern Christians allowed him to improve his knowledge of their languages.[30] Although Wansleben seems to have interrupted his correspondence with Redi, he still remained attached to Florence. One of the scholars he frequented in Rome, the archaeologist Ottavio

27 *TiL*, pp. 12–13.

28 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Barberini latino 6467, fol. 38r.

29 Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, MS Chart. A 101, fo. 82r.

30 *TiL*, pp. 14–15.

Falconieri, was himself associated with the Accademia del Cimento and was constantly in touch with Redi and Dati.

Even if he was generally repudiated by the Protestants unable to forgive his conversion, Wansleben had a high reputation in the Catholic world, and in 1670, probably thanks to Melchisédech Thévenot, who had once been the French resident in Genoa and emissary to Rome and was in close touch with the Accademia del Cimento,[31] he was invited to Paris by François Bosquet, the bishop of Montpellier. When he was in France Wansleben had his *Relazione* published by André Cramoisy in 1671. He had originally planned to dedicate it to Ferdinand II, but Ferdinand died in 1670 to be succeeded by his son, Cosimo III, and it was to him that Wansleben finally dedicated his book. Also in 1671 Wansleben published, with Sébastien Mabre Cramoisy, the typographer royal, his *Conspectus operum aethiopicorum*, a detailed list of the Ethiopic works and manuscripts he hoped to publish, which contained an outright rejection of Lutheranism. He thus had two important publications which confirmed his growing fame. Bosquet and Thévenot arranged for him to meet Louis XIV's minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, and Colbert entrusted him to Pierre de Carcavy. Like Ludolf and the duke of Saxe-Gotha, Colbert wanted Wansleben to go to Ethiopia, collecting, on his way, manuscripts, curios and antiquities. Carcavy, however, who seems to have drawn up the instructions, said nothing about Ethiopia but insisted on Wansleben's contributions to the royal collections.

Wansleben was still a Dominican friar, and, for him to set out on his travels in the East, Colbert had to obtain a dispensation from the general of the Order. He did so, and Wansleben, equipped with money and letters of credit by Nicolas Arnoul, Colbert's inspector of galleys in Marseille, set sail for the Ottoman Empire on 21 May 1671. He stopped in Cyprus, where he acquired an important collection of manuscripts, but had to leave before he intended because of an outbreak of the plague. Ill himself, he made for Syrian Tripoli, where he stayed until 1 September, and then set out for Aleppo, which he reached on 13 September. It was from there, on 28 September, that he wrote to Redi (Letter 4, Figure 8.3).

When he first arrived in Aleppo Wansleben turned down the invitation of the French consul Joseph Du Pont, who had a bad reputation, and preferred to stay at the Khan Abrak with two French Huguenot brothers, Honoré and Jean Philibert, the latter a merchant with whom he had made the journey from Marseille to Cyprus. On 26 October Wansleben had still not recovered from the malady he contracted in Cyprus, but left their lodgings, and, on his doctor's

31 Knowles Middleton, *The Experimenters*, pp. 296–308.

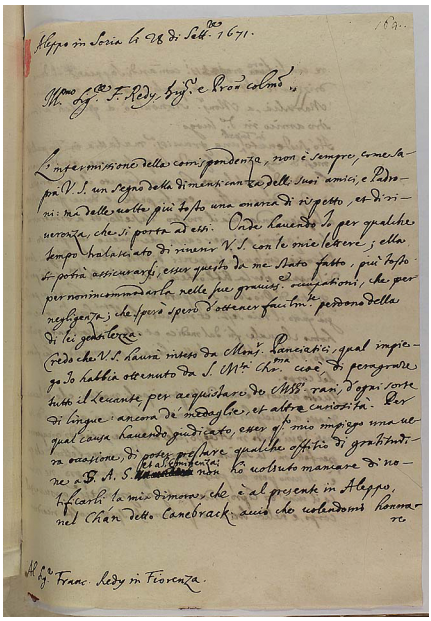

FIGURE 8.3
Letter from Wansleben to Redi [Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence MS Redi 203, fo. 163r., su concessione del MiC]

advice, moved briefly to the more salubrious outskirts of the city. Ten days later he returned to the centre of Aleppo and accepted the hospitality of Joseph Du Pont at the Khan al-Jumruk which housed both the French and the English consulates.[32] On 17 December 1671 Wansleben left Aleppo for Damascus, where he arrived on 27 December. On 18 January 1672 he proceeded to Sidon, and finally set sail for Egypt on 16 March. No more letters between him and Redi have come to light, and one wonders where and when he received Redi's letters written in January and February 1672 (Letters 6 and 7), well after his departure from Aleppo.

Wansleben was in Egypt until October 1673. He then travelled in Turkey, passing through Izmir on his way to Istanbul and meeting his old acquaintance from the days of the Accademia del Cimento, John Finch. He returned to Paris in April 1676. There he published his two most important works in 1677, the *Nouvelle relation en forme d'un journal. d'un voyage en Égypte … en 1672 et 1673*, an account of his second visit to the country with a vast amount of information, archaeological, zoological, botanical, and political, and his *Histoire de l'Eglise d'Alexandrie*, by far the best study of the Copts at the time and which can still be consulted with profit. But, for reasons which are not entirely clear,

32 *TiL*, pp. 23–26, 89–113.

he fell into disgrace, losing the favour of Colbert and Carcavy, and abandoned by the friends and supporters who had welcomed him back to France. He died in obscurity, serving as the vicar of the curate of Bourron near Fontainebleau, in June 1679.[33]

Redi, on the other hand, advanced from strength to strength. With the tact of the experienced courtier, he managed to adapt himself to the increasing bigotry of Cosimo III, and remained the main court physician, always on the best of terms with the grand duke. He continued his experiments in parasitology, confirming his name as one of the most influential and accomplished scientists in Italy. His health, however, was never good. He suffered from epilepsy and kidney complaints, and his strength diminished accordingly. He died in March 1697 as he was in attendance on the court in Pisa.

## Appendix

### *Letter 1*

Wansleben to Redi, 28 November 1665

Roma adi 28 Nov[embre] 1665[34]

Ill[ustrissi]mo Sig[no]re P[ad]rone[35] colend[issi]mo

L'infiniti favori e gratie ricevute per mezzo suo da S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima], che mi obligorno eternamente a custodirne la memoria, mi sforzano ancora a darli parte del mio arrivo in Roma, con rammentare a quel A[ltezza] S[erenissima] la mia perpetua servitù. Altra occasione sin ora non ho avuto per potere mostrare gl'effetti di humile servitù, se non che havendo nella casa degli Abissinesi ritrovato quel medesimo MSS$^{o}$: ciò e, Concilii de Santi Padri in lingua Abiss[ines]e, che dalla libraria di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] mi fu benig[namen]te concesso, e confrontando quello con questo ho fatto osservatione delli difetti, e mancamenti del medesimo; che per mostrare la mia gratitudine in parte, essendo stato da me quì in Roma accuratam[en]te copiato,

33 *TiL*, pp. 35–40, Hamilton and Van den Boogert, eds, *Johann Michael Wansleben's Travels in Turkey*, pp. 15–21.

34 Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Firenze, MS Redi 203, cc. 168, late copy MS Redi 210, cc. 307.

35 Here and elsewhere Wansleben uses the form 'Prone' with no sign of an abbreviation.

gliel'invio pregando S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] ricever questo picciolo tributo, che permettono le mie debole forze come segno di devota servitù.[36]

Havendo io fatta mentione quì in Roma della mia dimora in Fiorenza, con tanti favori ricevuti da quel A[ltezza] S[erenissima] era desiderata attestatione d'havermi conosciuto, è stimato degno di sue gratie; che perciò ricorro alla cortesia di V[ossignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma, ad intercedere da S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] per mia parte attestatione, ò in generale, ò in particolare diretta a qualche gran Sig[no]re, a fine potesse esser mostrata a sua Santità;[37] habilitandomi a tanta gratia e favore la renunzia della mia Luterana Religione, seguita col'abbracciamento della verità di S[anta] Madre chiesa, per ragione che da me saranno palesate a S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] con occasione quando si stamparà la relatione del mio viaggio in Egitto,[38] mentre per fine professando le infinite obligationi, la supplico a rammentare al A[tezza] S[ua] S[erenissima] la mia perpetua servitù, e li bacio li mani.

P.S. La risposta favorirà indrizzarla al palazzo di Monsignor di Wallenstein, con cui dimoro, in piazza di Spagna.[39]

Di V[ostra] S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma
Umilissimo servitore
Gio[vanni] Micaele manu propria

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36 The manuscript, now Magl. Cl.III Cod.2 at the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, is discussed and described in detail by Alessandro Bausi, 'I manoscritti di J.M. Wansleben nella Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze', *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, 33 (1989), pp. 1–33, esp. pp. 20–23. For Wansleben's treatment of it see Bausi, 'Johann Michael Wansleben's manuscripts', pp. 214–220. In fact the manuscript does not appear to have been sent to Ferdinand II in Florence but was deposited in his library in Rome. Alessandro Bausi has also published the text, together with an Italian translation, but based on other, superior manuscripts. See Alessandro Bausi, ed. and tr., *Il Sēnodos etiopico. Canoni dopo l'Ascensione, Canoni di Simone Cananeo, Canoni Apostolici, Letter di Pietro*, 2 vols. (Louvain: Peeters, 1995).

37 Alexander VII (Fabio Chigi), pope from 1655 until his death in 1667.

38 The *Relazione dello stato presente dell'Egitto* would be published in Paris by André Cramoisy in 1671. Wansleben had completed the German version while he was in Florence.

39 The reference is to the young Count Johann Friedrich von Wallenstein (1644–1694), the future archbishop of Prague, who was finishing his studies in Rome and acted as chamberlain and domestic prelate to the pope, Alexander VII. I owe this identification to the kindness of Nicolette Mout. Wallenstein probably occupied a part of the vast Palazzo di Spagna. Built in the last years of the sixteenth century by Carlo Lambardi for the Iacobilli family, it was subsequently owned by the Monaldeschi. In about 1620 it was rented by Spanish diplomats and was bought for Philip IV of Spain in 1647 to serve as the Spanish embassy to the Holy See.

Al Ill[ustrissi]mo Sig[no]re e P[ad]rone mio colend[issi]mo
il Sig[no]re Francesco Redi, Medico di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima]

### *Letter 2*

Wansleben to Redi, 6 February 1666

Roma 6 Febraro 1666[40]

Ill[ustrissi]mo Sig[no]re mio P[ad]rone Collend[issi]mo

Mi è capitata la gentiliss[im]a di V[ostra] S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma delli 11 del mese passato, insieme coll'inclusa per il Sig[no]re Conte Montauti;[41] la quale consegnai subito al detto Cav[allie]re, et egli per ossequio di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] se offerse di assistermi in tutto quello che potrà; si che non dubito punto che per mezzo di una persona tanto Ill[ust]re sortiranno li miei desiderii il loro bramato fine. Resto però con quelli indicibili oblighi verso S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] dell'eccesso di tante grazie, con cui anco in mia assenza benigniss[imamen]te si degna d'honorarmi, benche contra ogni mio merito. Le quali mi risolvo di non riverir con altro, che col confessarle irremunerabili. Et quanto a V[ostra] S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma andarò preghando il Sig[no]re Iddio a concedermi opportuna occasione, che io possa rendermi grato ricognoscitore della sua singolar benevolenza verso di me. E quì col fine me le raccordo fedel serv[it]ore di V[ostra] S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma humi[lissi]mo ser[vito]re

Gio[vanni] Micaele

P.S. La tradottione della mia relatione di Egitto in Italiano l'ha finito questa settimana, si che adesso si farà ogni forza possibile di poterla stampar presto.[42] E mentre che quì ho havuto otio di relegerla e d'emendarla, è cresciuta infino a 32 quinternioni.

Al Ill[ustrissi]mo Sig[no]re e P[ad]rone mio colend[issi]mo
il Sig[no]re Francesco Redi, Medico di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima]
in Firenza

40 Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Firenze, MS Redi 203, cc. 167, late copy Redi 210, cc. 310.
41 Torquato Barbolani di Montauto, the Tuscan ambassador in Rome. See also Letter 3.
42 This suggests, as does Letter 3, that Wansleben hoped to have his *Relazione dello stato presente dell'Egitto* published in Rome.

### *Letter 3*[43]

To Ferdinand II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, 10 May 1668.

Ser[enissi]mo Gran Duca

Assai più tardi di quello persuadevami, sono riverentemente a porgere i miei dovuti ossequii di servitù, a V[ostra] A[ltezza] Ser[enissi]ma e di tanta dimora posso ascriverne la cagione, et all'occupationi spirituali di qundici mesi di Novitiato, et alla speranza ch'io haveva di publicare alle stampe, et altresi offrire al suo Glorioso Nome, la narratione dello stato presente d'Egitto; mà impatiente d'andar procrastinando, nell'essecutione de i miei debiti, la tolsi dalle mani dello stampatore,[44] pago più tosto scritta, che impressa presentarla, all A[ltezza] V[ostra] Ser[enissi]ma.

Poiche ancor sono vive in me le memorie della Generosità impareggiabile del Ser[enissi]mo suo animo, si a me, come al mondo tutto nota, nè mai à bastanza celebrata; di ciò ne fan prova tanti stranieri, che ò Illustri per li natali, ò celebri per qualche arte, ò scientia, nella real Corte di V[ostra] A[ltezza] sono si benignam[ent]e, accolti, e favoriti, che quindi partono non meno arrichiti d'honori che di regali.

Ne sdegnò l'A[ltezza] V[ostra] Seren[issi]ma usar meco questa medesima benignità, benche privo di qual si sia merito, tre anni sono all'hora quando ritornando dall'Egitto giunsi a Livorno; ove appena hebbe contezza del mio arrivo, per mezzo del Sig[no]r Carlo Longland,[45] huomo dotato di segnalate prerogative, che di subito mandommi a chiamare, et altresi minutam[en]te prese ad interrogarmi di tutte le cose dell'Egitto, e degl'altri miei studii, ma perche io dubitava, di non haver sodisfatto in ogni parte, a quanto richiedeva il mio debito, con quella narratione succinta, e mal composta;

43 British Library, London, MS Add. 8780, fols. 1r–2r, 'Relazione dello stato presente dell'Egitto scritta e dedicata al Ser[enissi]mo Ferdinando II. Gran duce di Toscana da Fra Gio[vanni] Michele Vanslebio di Erffordia Domenicano'. The manuscript is described by Bausi, 'Johann Michael Wansleben's manuscripts', p. 224. The numerous deletions and insertions show that this was a rough copy. In the manuscript the *Relazione* (fols. 3r–75v) is followed by two letters to Ernest the Pious justifying and explaining Wansleben's failure to go to Ethiopia. The first is from the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria Matthew IV and the second from Wansleben's friend the archdeacon of the Church of St Mark in Alexandria, Yūḥannā Qummuṣ.

44 This suggests that Wansleben was planning to publish his *Relazione* in Rome.

45 Charles Longland, a rich and influential English merchant who had once been the agent of the English Admiralty in Livorno. He was a devout Protestant with a propensity for non-conformism. See Stefano Villani, 'A "Republican" Englishman in Leghorn: Charles Longland' in Gaby Mahlberg and Dirk Wiemann, eds, *European Contexts for English Republicanism*, Farnham: Routledge, 2013, pp. 163–177. Villani refers to Wansleben's epistle dedicatory, p. 164.

determinai con tempo opportuno, più copiosa, et meno imperfetta trasmetterla a V[ostra] A[ltezza].

Tanto più che io non posso senza taccia d'ingratitudine non ramentare gl'encomii della sua liberaliss[im]a e reale generosità, mercè che non solam[en]te in firenze per spatio di quattro mesi, ma anco in Roma ha voluto continuare con me per mezzo del Sig[no]r Conte Torquato Montauti[46] cortesam[en]te le mede[si]me[47] gratie, et altre, le quali sono di tal numero che non può la mia penna, benche obbligata, farne ne pur un imperfetto racconto. per lo che conoscendomi all'A[ltezza] V[ostra] S[erenissima] obligatiss[im]o hò pensato manifestare al mondo il mio debito, con offerirle queste mie poche fatiche. Supplico bensì la V[ostra] A[ltezza] Ser[enissi]ma si degni accettare benignam[en]te questo picciol tributo del mio affetto, et osservanza verso l'A[ltezza] V[ostra] Ser[enissi]ma e continuare la sua protettione verso di me che humilm[en]te la riverisco. Roma. In S. Sisto.[48] 10. di maggio 1668.

Di V[ostra] A[ltezza] Ser[enissi]ma
Humil[issi]mo et devotiss[im]o ser[vit]ore

Fra Gio[vanni] Michele Vanslebio dell'O[rdine]di S. Dom[eni]co[49]

### *Letter 4*

Wansleben to Redi, 28 September 1671

Aleppo in Soria li 28 di Sett[embr]e 1671[50]

Ill[ustrissi]mo Sig[nor] F. Redi S[ignor]e e P[ad]rone Colendissimo

L'intermissione della corrispondenza, non è sempre, come saprà V[ostra] S[ignoria] un segno della dimenticanza delli suoi amici, e Padroni: ma delle volte più tosto una marca di rispetto, et di riverenza, che si porta ad essi. Onde havendo Io per qualche tempo tralasciato di riverir V[ostra] S[ignoria] con le mie lettere, ella si potrà assicurarsi, esser questo da me stato fatto, più tosto per non incommodarla nelle sue graviss[im]e occupationi, che per negligenza; che però spero d'ottener facilm[en]te perdono della di lei gentilezza.

46 See Letter 2.

47 Spelt 'medeme'.

48 The convent known as S. Sisto Vecchio at the Terme di Caracalla.

49 There are two deletions on the left of the page just before the signature: 'Roma in Sisto Vecchio/ A[nn]o 1668 Maggio 1668' followed by 'Dal Con[ven]to de Sisto Vecchio/ in Roma A[nn]o 1668 10 Maggio'.

50 Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Firenze, MS Redi 203, cc. 164, late copy Redi 210, cc. 311.

Credo che V[ostra] S[ignoria] havrà inteso da Mons[ieu]r Panciatici,[51] qual impiego Io habbia ottenuto da S[ua] M[aes]tà Chr[istianissi]ma[52] cioè, di peragrare tutto il Levante per acquistare dei MSS[i] rari, d'ogni sorte di lingue, ancora de' medaglie, et altre curiosità. Per qual causa havendo giudicato, esser q[ues]to mio impiego una vera occasione, di poter prestare qualche offizio di gratitudine a S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] et a S[ua] Eminenza:[53] non ho volsuto mancare di notificarli la mia dimora, che è al presente in Aleppo, nel Chan detto Canebrack,[54] acciò che volendomi honorare con li loro pregiatiss[im]i comandi, sappiano dove indrizzar le lettere, le quali si possono mandare a Marsilia a Mons[ieu]r Arnoul,[55] ò à qualch'altro vostro amico in d[ett]o luogo.

Ho sustenuto in Tripoli una graviss[im]a malattia nei mesi di Luglio, et Agosto, la quale come giudicarono li medici di quel luogo haveva havuto il suo origine in Cipro, dove allora era la peste, e dove fui costretto a lasciar andar via il nostro Vascello, et a dimorarmi alcuni giorni più, per causa che havevo comprato a Nicosia cinquanta pezzi di MSS[i] Vecchi d'ogni sorte di lingua, per la bibliotheca di S[ua] M[aes]tà Chr[istianissi]ma.[56] Mà per la gratia di Dio sono scappato la morte. haveva però già fatto il mio Test[amen]to et ricevuti li S[antissi]mi Sacr[amen]ti come un homo il quale fù dal medico et altri circostanti giudicato, d'haver l'anima nella bocca, per mandarla fuora del corpo.[57]

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51 Lorenzo Panciatichi (1635–1676). A friend of Francesco Redi, Panciatichi was active in the Accademia della Crusca and was known for his poetry, his gifts as an orator, and for his knowledge of lexicography and the history of the Italian language. Protected by Leopoldo de' Medici, he was sent as ambassador to Paris in 1670 to inform Louis XIV of the death of Ferdinand II. Subject to fits of depression, he killed himself in 1676. See Paolo Rondinelli, 'Panciatichi, Lorenzo', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 80, pp. 692–694.

52 Louis XIV.

53 Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici.

54 The Khān Abrak, also called the Khān al-Qaṣṣābiyya, was built in 1510. See *TiL*, pp. 91, 109. Wansleben was staying there with the brothers Jean and Honoré Philibert from 13 September to 26 October. The khan was also inhabited by the French Capuchins.

55 Nicolas Arnoul, the inspector of galleys in Marseille, was one of Colbert's most devoted officers and was responsible for furnishing Wansleben with the money and supplies necessary for his journey and with letters of credit addressed to the various French merchants posted in the Levant. See *TiL*, pp. 22, 90–91.

56 This was one of the most important purchases of manuscripts made by Wansleben in the course of his travels in the Levant. It took place in Nicosia where a Coptic church had been obliged to close because of its debts and put its library up for sale. The collection consisted of 47 manuscripts, 6 Greek, 16 Arabic, 8 Syriac, one Ethiopic, one Armenian, and 16 Coptic-Arabic. It is described by Anne Boud'hors, 'Manuscrits coptes "chypriotes" à la Bibiothèque nationale', *Études coptes III. Troisième journée d'études, Musée du Louvre 23 mai 1986*, Louvain: Peeters, 1989, pp. 11–20. Cf. *TiL*, p. 76.

57 Wansleben's illness continued throughout his travels in Syria.

Questo ancora è una delle principali motivi che m'hanno mosso a scielgher la mia dimora (che sarà almeno di sei mesi) più tosto in Aleppo, che altrove; cioè di ricuperare perfettam[en]te la sanità: di poi per l'aria perfettiss[im]a che qui è. Il vino però del paese non mi fà niente prò, ne manco il vino di Cipro, onde patisco: grandiss[im]e arsure nel corpo e nella bocca e quello mi fà spesse volte ricordare delli buoni vini di Fiorenza, e monte Pulciano,[58] delli ottimi formaggi, presciuti, et altre bone cose che quel fioritiss[im]o paese produce. mà la commodità di farle venir adrittura da Ligorno, è lunghiss[im]a e per Marsilia più longa, onde m'evanisce ogni speranza di poterne far venir quì.

Desidero da V[ostra] S[ignoria] sapere se S[ua] A[ltezza] Ser[enissi]ma[59] hà gradito il mio libretto,[60] che li dedicai in Pariggi, et ottenni il favore da M[onsieu]r Panciatici di promettermi a volerglielo transmettere, dopo che la legatura fusse perfetta. Io sò che per li molti errori e solecismi che vi ci sono, devo più tosto temere, che S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] non l'havrà guardato con occhio benigno: dal altra banda però, considerando la sua Real benignità, con la quale accolge tutti quelli li quali fanno professione d'esser suo humil[issi]mo serv[ito]re: mi fà speranza, che mi perdonera l'ardire, e mi conserverà nella sua desideratiss[im]a gratia. Con che facendo una profondiss[im]a river[en]za a S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] come anche a sua Emin[en]za (alla quale professo le medesime obligationi) resto Di V[ostra] S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma

humil[issi]mo et devot[issi]mo serv[ito]re

Vanslebio

Ill[ustrissi]mo Sig[no]re mio P[ad]r[on]e Coll[endissi]mo

P.S. Attendo l'honore della sua risposta ò in Aleppo ò in Seyde, dove spero passar l'estate se piace a Dio.[61] le lettere indrizzate a Mons[ieu]r Arnoul a Marsilla non si possono perdere, lui poi li manda dove sà che sono. qui non c'è novità alcuna, ogni cosa sta in pace, al presente questa città è senza Bassa, perche il Bassa che era, è stato fatto Bassà

58 Wansleben's fondness for wine would be the source of considerable trouble when he tried to visit the monasteries of Wādī Naṭrūn in July 1672. See *TiL*, pp. 198–199. Redi, whose own fondness for wine emerges from a letter to Diacinto Cestoni written in July 1682 (*Opere*, vol. 6, pp. 119–120), would publish his poem *Bacco in Toscana* in 1685.

59 Cosimo III.

60 Ferdinand II died in 1670 and was succeeded by his son, Cosimo III, to whom Wansleben dedicated his *Relazione dello stato presente dell'Egitto*.

61 Wansleben would stay in Sidon from 21 January to 16 March 1672.

di Damasco, per dove anco si è partito.[62] Li corsari Ligornesi fanno gran male in questi contorni, non perdonano nè alli vascelli de franchi, nè a quelli de Christiani Levantini, noi ci incontrammo due di loro, li quali volevano che ci fermassimo, e quando non ci fidevamo di loro, ci salutorono con belle canonate. all'ultimo fummo costretti a fermarci, et essi montorono il nostro vascello, ma non ci fecero mal alcuno.[63] V[ostra] S[ignoria] faccia gratia di far un devot[issi]mo bacia mano al Sig[no]r Panciatici, e per fine l'avertisco che voglia metter l'inscrittione della sua lettera à me non come ad un Religioso, mà come ad un secolare, perche come tale sono conosciuto qui, e V[ostra] S[ignoria] mi farà gratia singolare.[64]

Li 28. di sett[emb]re 1671 Vanslebio

All'Ill[ustrissi]mo Sig[no]re e P[ad]rone mio on[oratissi]mo il Sig[no]r Francesco Redy Medico di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissi]ma
in Firenze

### *Letter 5*[65]

Redi to Arnoul, 7 January 1672

A Monsieur Arnoul
A Marseille

Dovendo in una risposta al Sig. Gio[vanni] Michele Vanslebio, il quale si trova presentemente in Aleppo, per servizio di Sua Maestà Cristianissima, tengo ordine da questo buon Virtuoso di valermi della cortesia di V[ostra] Sig[noria] acciochè elle gliele faccia pervenire, siccome cordialmente la prego; e le esibisco all'incontro in ogni altra sua

62 See *TiL*, pp. 87, 101. Probably Ṣārī Ḥusayn Pasha.

63 The episode, which occurred on 12 June 1671 off the coast of Cyprus, is described in *TiL*, p. 69: 'Alli 12. di giugno ci diedero ancora la caccia due vascelli corsari ligornesi dalla vista di Bafos in Cipro, perseguitandoci con tiri di canonate alla balla et abbordandoci anche alla sera. Ma quando io gli mostrai la mia patente di Sua Maestà Christanissima e loro seppero che io era inviato da Sua Maestà in Levante per li suoi affari, dopo haver fatto da noi un poco di collazione, si partirono senza molestarci.' For the corsairs of Livorno, who terrorised Ottoman shipping to such an extent that hardly any Turkish vessels dared even approach the Tuscan port, see Cesare Santus, *Il "turco" a Livorno. Incontri con l'Islam nella Toscana del Seicento*, Milan: Officina Libraria, 2019, pp. 26–30.

64 Wansleben had been granted a dispensation by the general of the Order of Preachers when he set off on his travels. See *TiL*, p. 22. He remained most reluctant to reveal his full identity, and, particularly while he was in the Levant, to let anyone know that he was a Catholic priest.

65 Redi, *Opere*, vol. 6, p. 83.

occorrenza la mia servitù, qualunque volta mi onorerà de' suoi comandamenti; e le bacio le mani.

Pisa 7. Gennajo 1671.[66]

### *Letter 6*[67]

Redi to Wansleben, 7 January 1672

Al Sig[nor] Gio[vanni] Michele Vanslebius
Aleppo

La lettera di V[ostra] S[ignoria] scrittami costì da Aleppo, mi è pervenuta gratissima per la memoria, che di me ella conserva: E l'assicuro che ancor io mi ricordo sempre della sua dolcissima conversazione. Mi rallegro dell'onorato, e litterario impiego a lei dato dalla Maestà del Re di Francia in coteste parti, di andar rintracciando, e provvedendo antichi manoscritti delle lingue tutte Orientali. Godo che fino ad ora ella abbia trovato così buona quantità di Codici antichi in Lingua Abissina. Ella certamente si farà grande onore al suo ritorno in Parigi, ed io gliele auguro con tutto l'affetto del cuore, perchè sempre ho amata la sua virtù, e la sua nobile litteratura nelle lingue più recondite dell'Oriente.

Se le desse mai alle mani qualche manoscritto di Teocrito, o dègli Scoliasti sopra di esso Teocrito,[68] la supplico a ricordarsi di me, e del mio bisogno. Ella sa quanto le ricordai, quando ella era in Toscana, e con quanto affetto la supplicai delle sue grazie.

Io mi trovo presentemente qui in Pisa a godere con la Corte le deliziose Cacce di questi Paesi. Di qui ho mandate le lettere di V[ostra] Sig[noria] al Sig[nor] Carlo Dati a Firenze; ed egli mi ha mandata qui l'inclusa sua risposta, che le trasmetto. Il Sig[nor] Carlo si conserva con la sua solita amabilissima giovialità, e conserva per V[ostra] Sig[noria] il solito suo affetto amorosissimo. Mi continui V[ostra] Sig[noria] l'onore de' suoi comandi, e caramente abbracciandola le bacio le mani.

Pisa 7. Gennajo 1671.

### *Letter 7*[69]

Redi to Wansleben, 2 February 1672

66 As Alessandro Bausi has pointed out ('Johann Michael Wansleben's manuscripts', p. 210) the dates of this and the next two letters are wrong. It must be January (and February) 1672.

67 Redi, *Opere*, vol. 6, pp. 83–85.

68 Redi may have been planning an edition of Theocritus, but we hear nothing more of it.

69 Redi, *Opere*, pp. 85–86.

Al Sig[nor] Gio[vanni] Michele Vanslebius
Aleppo

Fu buono il mio pronostico, quando con l'ultima mia lettera in data de' sette Gennajo le dissi, che sperava, che il Sig.[nor] N.N.[70] si fosse per valere dell'opera di V[ostra] S[ignoria] in coteste parti di Aleppo, e nelle altre, per le quali ella andrà vagando in traccia di manoscritti per servizio di Sua Maestà Cristianissima. Il Sig[nor] N.N. adunque desiderava dalla sua cortesia, che se ella s'imbattesse a trovar Medaglie antiche, o di bronzo, o di argento, o di oro, ella voglia prenderle per S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima]. Sa V[ostra] Sig[noria] il gusto di S[ua] A[ltezza] S[erenissima] ed è in ciò molto bene informata per sì lunghi, e frequenti discorsi, che ne ebbe seco quando ella fu in questa Corte ne' tempi del Sig. N.N. Onde il Sig[nor] N.N. si rimette in tutto e per tutto alla sua prudenza: anzi, acciochè ella possa operare con più sicura franchezza, mi comanda che io le mandi l'annesso foglio, nel quale è notato, come egli desidererebbe di esser servito, ed in quali cose. Io spero, che l'amorevole diligenza di V[ostra] Sig[noria] congiunta con la sua virtù, incontrerà premurosamente il desiderio, e l'intenzione sua. E perchè vi vorrà la spesa di qualche danaro, a questo fine il Console di Francia, che abita in Livorno,[71] darà gli ordini opportuni al Console di Francia, che abita costì in Aleppo, e con esso Console di Aleppo[72] all'occorrenze V[ostra] S[ignoria] potrà intendersela.

Dal Sig[nor] Carlo Dati ricevo l'annessa lettere, che qui inclusa le invio: ella sentirà il suo desiderio. Ancor io la prego a favorire questo ottimo Gentiluomo.

Se V[ostra] S[ignoria] s'imbatterà mai ne' suoi viaggi in qualche iscrizione antica in marmo, io la prego a voler favorirmi di mandarmene la copia, con le necessarie notizie del luogo, dove ella si troverà. Caro il mio Sig[nor] Gio[vanni] Michele, la prego a non tenere oziosa la mia servitù, e con tutto l'affetto le bacio le mani.

Pisa 2. Febbrajo. 1671.

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70 The only person mentioned in the preceding letter is Carlo Dati, but, judging from the second paragraph of this letter, N.N. must be someone else, possibly Lorenzo Magalotti or even Ottavio Falconieri who advised Cosimo III on his collection of antiquities.

71 Almost certainly François Cotolendy who was appointed in 1672 but, in contrast to his predecessor Jean-Baptiste Dulieu, who lived in Lyon and was served by an aged vice-consul, Jacopo Lorenzi, Cotolendy, competent and effective, had actually been living in Livorno. See Guillaume Calafat, 'Livourne et la Chambre de commerce de Marseille ai XVII^e^ siècle. Consuls français, agents et perception du droit de *cottimo*' in Xavier Daumalin, Daniel Faget and Olivier Raveux, eds., *La mer en partage, Réseaux, trafics et routes maritimes, XVI^e^–XX^e^ siècle*, Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaire de Provence, 2016, pp. 209–226.

72 Joseph Du Pont, consul from 1670 to 1679. see *TiL*, pp. 24–25, 90–91, 98–100, 104–105, 110–111.

CHAPTER 9

# Words of Wisdom: Golius' Entries in Three *Alba Amicorum*

*Maurits H. van den Boogert*

Those who are interested in the life of Jacobus Golius will be struck by how little detail is found in the literature.[1] For example, Golius was born in The Hague in 1596, but the exact day of his birth does not seem to have been recorded. And while it is generally acknowledged that his father was a high-ranking financial clerk in the bureaucracy of the young Dutch Republic, the significance of the family's close proximity to the stadtholders from the House of Orange for Jacobus' career has yet to be examined. Even a published edition of Golius' correspondence is still a desideratum.[2] The most extensive modern biographical sketch remains the chapter from 1931 by Wilhelmina Juynboll, who relied heavily on Gronovius' *laudatio funebris*, the most substantial contemporary source on Golius' life.[3]

An exercise in name-dropping, Gronovius' eulogy devotes a great deal of attention to the important people Golius had been friends or acquainted with. We find the usual suspects in Leiden, i.e. Descartes, and fellow professors like Salmasius and Rivet; Golius' counterpart in Groningen, Mathias Pasor; Menasseh ben Israel, the most prominent Jewish scholar in Amsterdam at the time; Christiaan Huygens; and of course fellow Orientalists abroad like Edward Pococke, Hottinger, Gerhard, and Wilhelm Schickard, the Professor of Hebrew and Astronomy at Tübingen. Gronovius also mentions Vopiscus Fortunatus Plempius (Foppe Plemp), a Catholic scholar and friend of Descartes, who

1 I am deeply indebted to Léon Buskens, the Director of the NIMAR Institute in Rabat, for finding the modern Moroccan literature I needed for this article, and to Alastair Hamilton for his unwavering support, even now I have less and less time for scholarly exploits.

2 There is Jacques Pétillat, *La correspondence de Jacobus Golius orientaliste et mathématicien hollandais (1596–1667)*, who produced an unpublished thesis at the École nationale de chartes in Paris in 1975, but it is kept in its library under embargo so I have not been able to obtain it.

3 Wilhelmina M.C. Juynboll, *Zeventiende-eeuwsche beoefenaars van het Arabisch in Nederland* (Utrecht: Kemink en Zoon, 1931); *Joh. Frederici Gronovii laudatio funebris recitata & exsequiis clarissimi viri Jacobi Golii Arabicae linguae & mathematicorum professori* (Leiden: ex officinâ Danielis & Abrahami à Gaesbeek, 1668).

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translated the first two books of Avicenna's *Canon* into Latin.[4] And it was not only scholars with whom Golius was on intimate terms; the *laudatio funebris* also lists some influental men in government circles at The Hague, like Abraham de Wicquefort and Hendrick Hudde, as well as the English ambassador to the States-General, William Boswell.

While Gronovius' *laudatio* offers valuable insights into the diversity of Golius' networks, there is an additional source that has not yet received a great deal of scholarly attention, the entries he wrote in other people's *alba amicorum*.[5] Focusing in particular on the use of Arabic, the present article will discuss Golius' contributions to three of these albums.

## 1 The Corpus

So far I have found 21 entries by Golius in *alba amicorum* dated between 1619 and the early 1660s (Table 1). The list includes the album compiled by Johann Friedrich Gronovius (1611–1671), who would be appointed the Professor of Greek at Leiden in 1658, but who was evidently already in contact with Golius in April, 1639. Some of the albums Golius contributed to were those of foreign students in Leiden, like the Dane Jørgen Bertelsen Taulov (1606–1680) and the Swedish prelate Samuel Enander (1607–1670).

Four of these albums are now lost, and we do not know what Golius wrote in them. Of the remaining 17, at least 10 entries consist of the Arabic phrase كل شيء ما خلا الله باطل, invariably accompanied by its translation, *Quicquid præter Deum vanum est*, along with a (usually short) message in Latin for the album's owner. Most entries are dated and mention the place where they were written.

The Arabic *kullu shayʾin ma khalā ʾllāha bāṭilu* – 'Lo, everything except God is vain' – was composed by Labīd, a poet from Hejaz.[6] He was a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, whose praise of these particular words was recorded by al-Bukhārī in his canonical collection of *ḥadīth*.[7] Golius did not use it for the earliest entries we have found, but from 1634 it could be considered his

4 *Avicenna canon Medicinae. Interprete et Scholiaste Vopisco Fortunato Plempio* (Louvanii: Hieronymus Nempaeus, 1658).

5 Jan Schmidt was aware of several. See Jan Schmidt, *Catalogue of Turkish Manuscripts in the Library of Leiden University and Other Collections in the Netherlands: Minor Collections* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 91.

6 Ch. Pellat, 'Labīd', *EI2*, vol. 5: 584–86. Carl Brockelmann (ed.), *Die Gedichte des Lebîd aus dem Nachlasse des Dr. A. Huber* (Leiden, 1892), p. 39 nr. XLI, 9, Arabic p. 28, line 9.

7 Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ḥadīth no. 3841.

TABLE 9.1 The *alba amicorum* to which Jacobus Golius contributed

| | Name | Location | Golius entry | Date of Golius entry |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Christian Otter (1598–1660) | Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Vilnius, Prisiminimų albumėliai (štambuchai) Rankraščių rinkinys "Borussica". F15 | f. 183v | Den Haag, xi Kal. Sext [11 July] 1619 |
| 2 | Cornelis [de Montigny] de Glarges (1599–1683) | Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague | f. 141r | 7 February 1630 |
| 3 | Jørgen Bertelsen Taulov (1606–1680) | Uppsala University Library, shelfmark Y 139 | f. 73v, entry 30 | 30 March 1634 |
| 4 | Samuel Enander (1607–1670) | Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket: Ie 21 | f. 283, entry 165 | 18 July 1637 |
| 5 | Johannes Fredericus Gronovius (1611–1671) | Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague | 68/125 | 5 April 1639 |
| 6 | Jacobus Alting (1618–1679) | Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague | f. 106r | 27 March 1640 |
| 7 | Philippus de Glarges (*c.*1615–1669) | British Library, Add MS 23105 | f. 91 | Leiden, 11 October 1640 |
| 8 | Johann Philipp Mulheiser (*c.*1603–*c.*1677) | Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, Hs. 129 F 6 | f. 138r | Leiden, 15 October 1644 |
| 9 | Johann Ernst Gerhard (1621–1668) | Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Chart. B 2590 | f. 70r | 27 June 1650 |
| 10 | René Gouret, Seigneur du Plessis-Saint-Dolay (1627/8–1689) | Archives du Morbihan, Morbihan: E 824 | f. 94r | Leiden, 12 December 1650 |
| 11a | Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1620–1667) | Zentralbibliothek Zürich, MS D 207ac | f. 134v | The Hague, 8 March 1651 |

TABLE 9.1 The *alba amicorum* to which Jacobus Golius contributed (*cont.*)

| | Name | Location | Golius entry | Date of Golius entry |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11b | Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1620–1667) | Zentralbibliothek Zürich, MS D 207ac | f. 188v–189r | Leiden, 15 March 1651 |
| 12 | Hieronymus de Backere | **Lost** | p. 293 | [1653] |
| 13 | Samuel van Diest (1631–1694) | Atheneum Bibliotheek Deventer, 100 G 31 KL | – | 9 July 1654 |
| 14 | Isaac de la Fontaine (d. 1664) | **Lost** | – | [1654] |
| 15 | Johannes Meinhard Docemius (1631–?) | Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg, Gen VIII 5000 | f. 223r | Leiden, October 1655 |
| 16 | Johannes Albertus Zaunschliefer (1636–1678) | **Lost** | | [Leiden, 1657] |
| 17 | Andreas Wilhelm Frise (Frisius) (1635–?) | Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Wolfenbüttel, Abt. Wolfenbüttel: VI Hs. 13, Nr. 20 | f. 136r | 20 July 1657 |
| 18 | Joannes Leonardus Blasius (1639–1672) | Universiteit van Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Depot; OTM: hs. V J 50 | f. 115r | after 1658 |
| 19 | Johannes Koerbagh (1634–1672) | **Lost** | Entry 18 | after 1659?[a] |
| 20 | Franciscus Hemsterhuis (1631–after 1720) | Tresoar, Leeuwarden, 507 Hs, Plank 1.1.1 | f. 187r | Leiden, 22 October 1661 |

a Frank Mertens, 'Johannes Koerbagh's lost *Album Amicorum* seen through the Eyes of Pieter de la Ruë', *Lias* 38:1 (Jan. 2011): 59–127, esp. p. 79.

personal motto. We can only speculate why this phrase appealed to him so much. Perhaps it reminded the Protestant professor of the biblical 'Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; All is vanity'?[8] For the present article our focus is on those *alba* in which Golius did *not* use his standard motto.

## 2 Christian Otter

The earliest entry by Golius that we have found is in the *album amicorum* of Christian Otter (1598–1660), who registered as a student of mathematics from Ragnit in Prussia ('Borutus Ragnetis') in Leiden in 1627, 1634, and 1636.[9] Most of the contributions to his album date from the 1620s, '30s and '40s, but Otter's first visit to the Dutch Republic already took place in 1619, when Golius was the first to write an entry for his album in The Hague on 11 July. Golius' entry is one of only two that include Arabic, the other being Matthias Pasor's standard motto, الله ينظر, *Dominus providebit* ('The Lord will provide', bringing to mind Gen. 22:8).[10] Pasor (1599–1658) was a German mathematician, linguist, philosopher and theologian who held several chairs at the University of Groningen.

It was mathematics, and its practical application for the construction of fortifications that must have led Otter to seek out Golius. During Otter's more extensive stay in the Dutch Republic – he also studied at Franeker – both he and Golius taught military fortification in Leiden to predominantly German mathematics students.[11] Although there is no evidence to suggest that Otter had any Arabic, Golius offered him the following lines of poetry for his *album amicorum*:

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8 Ecclesiastes 1:1–18. I am indebted to my colleague, Nienke Brienen-Moolenaar for this suggestion.

9 *Album studiosorum*, pp. 197 (18 November 1627), 264 (18 July 1634), 281 (22 October 1636).

10 Album Otter, f. 201r, 4 April 1636. The phrase *Dominus providebit* [Anno 1740] is also found at the beginning of Otter's album (f. 7r). The same motto, with the Arabic, was used by Hottinger in the *album amicorum* of Samuel van Diest. Hottinger signed it at Heidelberg in 1656. Atheneum Bibliotheek Deventer, 100 G 31 KL [contributions neither paginated nor numbered].

11 One of their students was Frans van Schooten Jr., the son of the professor of Mathematics at Leiden by the same name. Traces of the lectures by Golius and Otter are found in some of his manuscripts of his, e.g. University Library of Groningen, MS 108, *Problemata* from 1632. Cornelis de Waard, 'Otterus, Christiaan', in P.J. Blok, P.C. Molhuysen (eds.), *Nieuw Nederlandsch biografisch woordenboek* vol. 7 (Leiden, A.W. Sijthoff, 1927), pp. 935–936. On the connections between Golius, Otter and the Van Schootens, see Jantien Gea Dopper, *A life of learning in Leiden. The mathematician Frans van Schooten (1615–1660)*, unpublished PhD thesis Utrecht, 2014.

الأرجاني

أقرِنْ برأيكَ رأيَ غيركَ واستشرْ فالحقّ لا يخفى على اثنينِ
للمرءِ مِرآةٌ تريهِ وجههُ ويرى قفاهُ بجَمعِ مِرآتينِ

Connect the views of others with your own and seek advice, because the truth is not hidden from two people
A mirror shows a man his face, and he sees the back of his head by using two mirrors together

The entry was prematurely signed 'Jacobus Golius, Lingu. Arab. in Acad. Lugd. Bat. Profess.', Thomas Erpenius still holding the chair in Oriental languages in Leiden.

The author to whom these lines are attributed by Golius is Nāṣīḥaddīn Abī Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Husayn al-Arrajānī (d. 544 AH/1149 CE), who was both a judge and a poet. A collection of his poems was compiled after his death by his son.[12] There is, however, no trace of a manuscript of this collection among the Goliana preserved at the Leiden University Libraries, nor in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, where Golius' private collection is kept.[13] In the absence of a manuscript trail, it seems likely that Golius must have become familiar with the text during his travels in the Eastern Mediterranean between 1626 and 1629 – or earlier, when he was in Morocco from 1622 to 1624, which is almost certainly where he found the Arabic text for the next entry that deserves attention here.

## 3 Cornelis de Glarges

Cornelis de Montigny de Glarges (1599–1683) was a nobleman, born – like Golius – in The Hague. At the end of 1619, the family moved to Haarlem, where Cornelis' father, Gilles de Glarges, had been appointed pensionary. Towards the end of 1627, Cornelis was appointed secretary to the extraordinary missions to France of ambassadors François van Aerssen and Gaspar van Vosbergen.

12 GAL G I, 253–54; SI, 448.

13 A fragment of his *dīwan* is found in Leiden Cod. Or. 668/9, but that came to Leiden as part of the Warner bequest later in the seventeenth century.

In 1633, he was sent to Calais, where he would remain as the Dutch agent in residence until 1672.[14] Cornelis de Glarges died in Haarlem on 10 April 1683.[15]

De Glarges' *album amicorum* is one of the principal surviving sources about his youth. We know that in 1621–1622 he spent time in London, where he first got acquainted with Van Aerssen. At the beginning of 1623, Cornelis de Glarges was back in Leiden. It is clear that he had studied law there previously, even if his name does not appear in the university's records. He must have obtained his doctorate in law from Leiden before 10 January 1623, for that is when Daniel Heinsius already refers to him as 'D. [Doctor] Cornelio de Glarges' in his contribution to De Glarges' album.[16]

The album contains three contributions with Arabic. On 2 March 1651, Bartholomaeus van Wouw (d. 1657) wrote the entry اغنى الغناء العقل (*aghnā al-ghanā'i al-ʿaql*), which the editors of the album, in the spirit of Descartes, translated as 'La plus grande Richesse c'est la raison', but which could also be read as 'the most valuable of valuables is the mind'. The Latin words *Pie et prudenter* that Van Wouw included just below the Arabic phrase seem unconnected. Van Wouw, a nobleman and diplomat with a career in France, was related to De Glarges through their wives. In 1633 Cornelis de Glarges married Sara Parret (1611–1681), while in 1641 Van Wouw wedded Johanna Parret (1604–1678).[17] The Van Wouw family was also connected with the Van Gools, a sister of Golius' stepmother, Sophia Aelbrechts van Leuningen, being married to a Van Wouw.[18] Bartholomaeus van Wouw had registered as a student of philosophy at the university of Leiden in 1615,[19] so perhaps it was from Thomas Erpenius that he learned (a few words of) Arabic.

Erpenius himself also contributed to the album of Cornelis de Glarges. In July 1624, he wrote the following entry in Leiden:

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14 O. Schutte, *Repertorium der Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers residerende in het buitenland 1584–1810* (The Hague, 1976), pp. 4–7, esp. 5 (Van Aerssen), 61 (de Glarges, Calais).

15 Hans Bots, Giel van Gemert with Peter Rietbergen (eds.), *L'Album Amicorum de Cornelis de Glarges 1599–1683* (Amsterdam: Holland University Press, 1975). Cf. O. Schutte, *Repertorium der Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers residerende in het buitenland 1584–1810* ('s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1976), p. 61.

16 Bots et al. (eds.), *L'Album Amicorum de Cornelis de Glarges*, pp. xxv–xxxiii, p. 86 (Heinsius).

17 Online introduction to the De Glarges Family Archives in Haarlem: 5. Genealogie de Glarges (Noord-Hollands Archief) – Noord-Hollands Archief; Johanna Parret (1604–1678) » Stamboom Roël » Genealogie Online.

18 Maarten Hell, "Leuningen, Machteld Aelbrechtsdr. Van", in: *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*. URL: https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Leuningen [11/06/2015].

19 *Album studiosorum*, p. 120: '21 Maii 1615: Bartholomaeus Wouwius, Hagensis, 18, P.'

יִרְאַת יְהוָה רֵאשִׁית חָכְמָה[20]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | الشجاع | | الحرب |
| لا يعرف | الحكيم | الا عند | الغضب |
| | الصديق | | الحاجة اليه |

The Hebrew was already identified by the editors of the De Glarges album as a reference to Prov. 1.7 (and Prov. 9.10 and Ps. 110.10): *Timor Domini principium sapientiae*. The Arabic could be translated as:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | the brave | | in war |
| One cannot know | the wise | until | in dispute |
| | the friend | | you need him |

Jacobus Golius wrote the following entry to the De Glarges album in Leiden on 7 February 1630 (Illustration 1):

جد تسد

بتدبير مولاك فكن راضيا ولا تتخذ قط في ذا الحرج
جرت عادة الله في خلقه اذا ضاق أمر أتى بالفرج

In the edition of De Glarges' album these lines are translated as follows:

> Sois bon et tu règneras!
>
> Sois content de la façon dont ton Seigneur dispose et ne te laisse jamais abattre par une situation difficile. L'action de Dieu se dévoile dans son Création. Dans les moments les plus pénibles c'est Lui qui apportera la solution.[21]

20 I am grateful to my colleague Jarno Florusse for providing me with these words in Hebrew.

21 Bots, van Gemert with Rietbergen (eds.), *L'Album Amicorum de Cornelis de Glarges*, p. 91. It is not clear who made the translation. Two obvious typesetting errors in the transliteration (T instead of ī) suggest that none of the editors knew Arabic at the time.

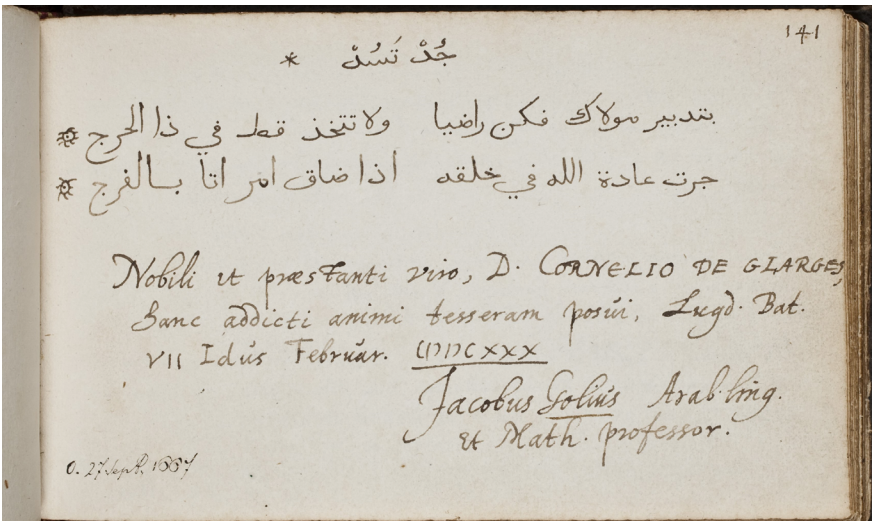


FIGURE 9.1 Entry by Jacobus Golius in the *Album amicorum* of diplomat Cornelis de Montigny de Glarges, f. 141r [Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 75 J 48]

The entry consists of two components. The words *jud tasud* do not have any obvious connection with the two lines of poetry that follow and they do not appear in modern versions of poem, which vary slightly from Golius' version:

بتدبير مولاك كن راضيا و لا تنزع أبدا من حرج
جرت عادة الله في خلقه اذا ضاق أمر أتى بالفرج

Be content with your Master's plan and never let embarrassment disturb you
It is God's custom in His creation that if something becomes difficult, He brings relief

These are two lines from the Qasīda Fiyyāshiyya,[22] a Sufi poem of supplication commonly attributed to the sixteenth-century saint Sīdī Uthmān b. Yaḥyā al-Sharqī (b. 926 AH/1520 CE), known as al-Bahlūl al-Sharqī, who lived in Morocco. According to a Spanish website called *MusulmanesAndaluces.org*,

22 For a version of the text online, see الفياشية | الأنطولوجيا (alantologia.com).

> Al-Qasîda al-Fiyâshía is a very easy text to find. Published in the form of a small booklet, it circulates in Morocco in street stalls selling cheap and worn traditional books. It belongs to a literature of genius that has been dismissed by academics but is capable of encapsulating tremendous truths in just a few words.[23]

It is true that references to it in academic texts are scarce. The poem, in the Maghribi genre of *al-malḥūn*, was commonly chanted at Sufi sessions in al-Andalus and North Africa, and remains popular in the latter region until this day.[24] What may have appealed to Golius, is the poem's theme of predetermination, a doctrine central to both Islam and Protestantism.

Once again, neither Golius' private book collection kept in Oxford, nor his work library preserved in Leiden appear to include this text, which he must have become familiar with during his stay in Morocco.

## 4 Johann Heinrich Hottinger

The *album amicorum* of Johann Heinrich Hottinger is interesting for a number of reasons. First of all, the number of entries with Arabic is higher than in the average album. Hottinger's album has no less than eight, including two by Golius. The other six are the entries by John Greaves at Oxford; Menasseh ben Israel in Amsterdam; Matthias Pasor in Groningen; Ludovicus de Dieu in Leiden; one Reichard Amling from the German town of Zerbst ('Servestanus'), perhaps a fellow theology student; and Abraham Wheelocke at Cambridge.[25]

Golius' two contributions are interesting not because of the Arabic he used, but due to the lengthy personal notes. Since neither note has been published before, it is worth reproducing them here in full:

> Prosequere assequeris تدارك فتدرك [*tadārak fa-tudirak*]
>
> *Habes sic, Eximie atque dilectissime Hottingere, duobus quidem verbis at amoris erga te magni symbolum et pignus, quo amicorum tuorum agmon,*

23 EL POEMA DEL DESTINO (musulmanesandaluces.org).

24 Charles Pellat's extensive entry *Malḥūn* in *EI2* (Vol. VI (Leiden, 1991), pp. 247b–257b) mentions neither this poem nor the author to whom it is attributed.

25 Zentralbibliothek Zürich, MS D 207ac, f. 3r (Greaves); f. 56r (ben Israel); f. 104r (Pasor; his standard motto); ff. 125v–126r (de Dieu, with a colour drawing of a Dutch warship); f. 187v (Amling); f. 190v (Wheelocke).

*et simul monita rorum et vota, quae libro hoc adscripta tibi extant, ceu epiphonemate quodam, claudere visum fuit. Animi, quem sactemis gessisti, constantiam commendo, et fructus fines beatos exopto. Nimirum, ut que indolis, ingenii, pietatis, industriae coelestis, dotes plus quam arriva consuetidine, eaque domestica, in te cum voluptate perspexi, excolere, et velut commissum a deo talentum, curare pergas, qua sactemis fide et seldulitate feeisti. Deum vero opt^imo^ max^imo^ // precor venerorque, ut in eo et omnibus institutis tuis gratia sua et benedictione propicius adsit tibi faveatque; ut virtute et eruditione auctorum patria reduceni laeta excipiat, et tum peculiari suo, tum communi Orbis Christiani bono diutissime florentem et ipsa florens adinat. Quod quidem ad nominis sui gloriam, Eccelsiu Christi, aedificationem, et ad aeternam animae tua salutem deus duit. Hoc affectu votoque disecdenti a nobis tibi valedico, absentem prosequar, et ad extremum vitae spiritum complectar. Scribebam* Lugd. Bat. iv Martii [1641] Iacobus Golius

You have thus, excellent and most beloved Hottinger, in two words indeed a great symbol and pledge of love towards you, with which the train of your friends, and at the same time the warnings and wishes which are written for you in this book, it seemed to me to close, as a sort of *epiphonus*.[26] I recommend constancy of the mind, which you have conducted with precision, and I wish you the fruits of happy ends. Of course, that you may continue to cultivate those gifts of character, intelligence, piety, and celestial energy, which are more than usual, and domestic ones, which I saw in you with pleasure, and, as if you were a talent entrusted by God, you continue to take care of them, with which you have performed with the utmost faith and diligence. I pray and worship God with the best and greatest, that in it and in all your institutions he may be more propitious and favour you with his grace and blessing; that the country may joyfully receive the returnee with the valour and learning of the leaders, and that both his particular and the common good of the Christian world may flourish for a long time and it itself flourishes. God grants this for the glory of his name, the edification of Christ, and for the eternal salvation of your soul. With this feeling and wish I bid farewell to the one who has separated from us, I will follow the absent one, and embrace [him] till the last breath of life. Written in Leiden on 4 March 1641. Jacobus Golius

26 The second of two musical notes and smaller than the first.

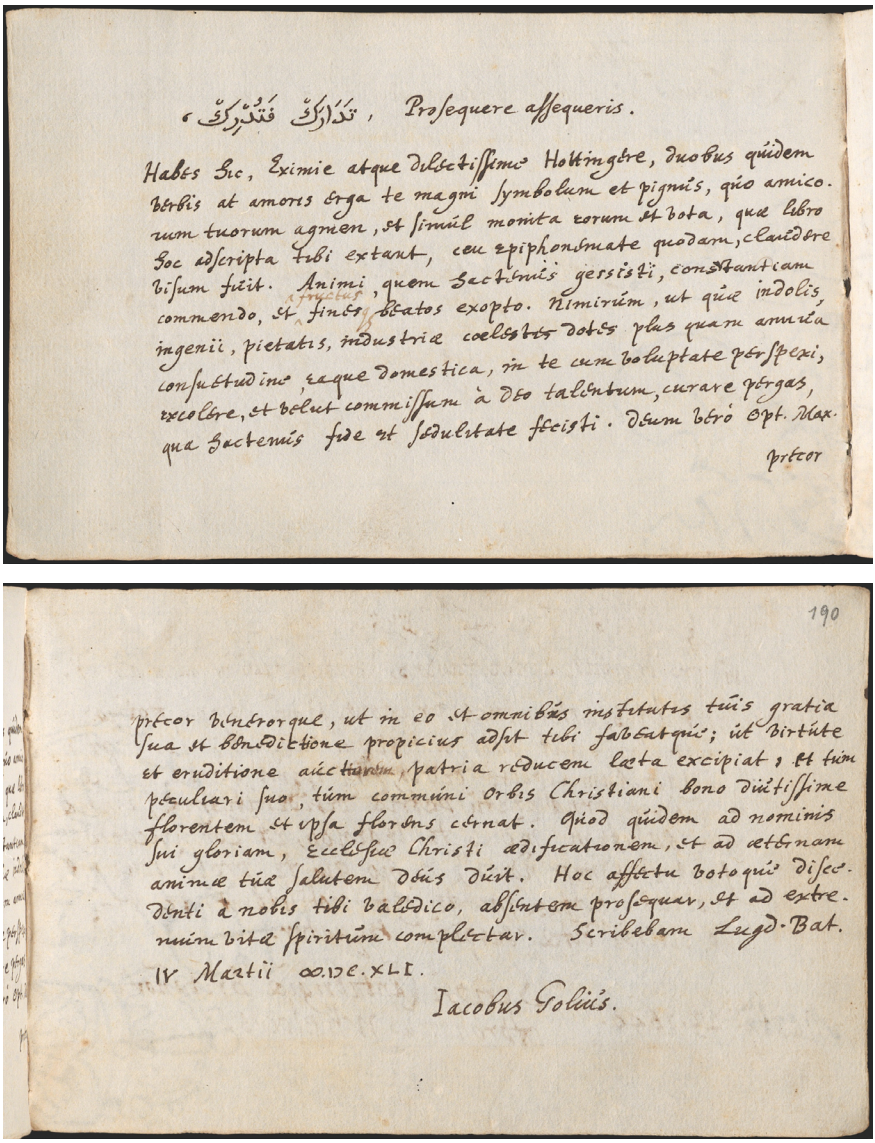

FIGURE 9.2 Entry by Jacobus Golius in the *Stammbuch* of Johann Heinrich Hottinger, f. 189v–190r [Zentralbibliothek Zürich, D 207 ab]

Although the note is not particularly informative about either Golius or Hottinger, its exceptional length – it is by far the longest personal note in all of the *alba* under examination here – suggests that the 'pledge of love' may have been heartfelt.

The second entry by Golius, dated four days later, starts with his standard motto in Arabic (*Kullu* …) and Latin, and is followed by another note:

> *Virtute atque eruditione eximio juveni, Io. Henrico Hottingero, s.s. Theologicae candidato, et in Literatura Orientali aequalium coryphaeo, discipulo meo, hospiti, amico optatissimo sanc mentis et manus meae teseram in perpetui amoris symbolum et memoriam fui ludius meritoque deponebam, et a deo opt^imo^ max^imo^ fausta omnia et salutaria ex animo precabar, ut ad suos salvos laetosque salvus laetusque reverti posset, accepta a deo animi dona et talenta, qua sactimis fecisset fide ac fedulitate, excolere pergeret, et ad Dei gloriam animae quo salutem suae in longaevati aetatem fructas uberrimos ferret et proferret, peculiari patriae sua commodo ac ornamento et communi eccelsia et rei publicae Christianae bono. Quo quidem affectu votoque a nobis discedenti postremum valedico, digressum et absentem prosequar, et ad extremum vita spiritum comprectar. Hagae Comitis, quo amoris et ultimi officii implendi ergo deduxeram.* viii Martii [1641] Iacobus Golius
>
> O, youth exceeding in strength and learning, Io. Henrico Hottinger, s.s. candidate in Theology, and to the *coryphaeus*[27] of my contemporaries in Oriental literature, my pupil, my guest, my most desired friend, the sanctity of my mind and my hand, I put down the *tesserae* as the symbol and memory of my perpetual love, and I deservedly put them down, and I prayed from the heart to God for everything auspicious and salutary, so that he could return safe and happy, safe and happy, having received from God the gifts of the spirit and the talents which he had made with faith and faithfulness, he would continue to cultivate them, and to the glory of God his soul would bear and bring forth the most abundant fruits of his health in a long age, for the special benefit and ornament of his country, with common exaltation and for the good of the Christian state. Indeed, with this feeling and wish that I bid him a final farewell, I will continue my journey and absence, and to the end of my life I will gather my breath. The Hague, where love and the fulfilment of the last duty conducted me. 8 March [1641] Jacobus Golius

27 Leader of the chorus.

We may never know why Golius wrote two extensive entries in Hottinger's album only 4 days apart and very similar in nature. What is clear, is that the personal notes in both entries are exceptionally lengthy and far more personal than any of the other entries we have found so far. This confirms Jan Loop's earlier description of the friendship between Golius and Hottinger as particularly warm.

## 5 Conclusion

The contrast between Golius' fame and what we actually know about his life is striking, little material having seemingly survived to contextualize the most important contemporary source about his life, Gronovius' eulogy. Even a relatively small corpus of sources therefore constitutes a welcome piece of the puzzle. Several of Golius' entries in alba from his time were already known, but they had not been studied systematically. From our first examination of the roughly two dozen entries we have found so far we learn that the majority of them – those with his standard motto – tell us little more than that Golius knew the owners of these albums and at which point in time he was in direct contact with them. The three album entries studied here are interesting, because Golius either included Arabic phrases or expressions other than his standard motto or because he added more personal notes in Latin. The quoted lines of poetry by al-Arrajānī are a case in point. The fragment from the Qasīda Fiyyāshiyya is even more interesting, because it was a text particularly popular in Morocco and no manuscripts of it appear to have been extant in Europe at the time.

CHAPTER 10

# The Forgotten *Museum Turcico-Diezianum*

## *Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817) as a Collector of Ottoman Coins*

*Christoph Rauch*

## 1 Introduction[1]

When the Prussian envoy to the Ottoman Sublime Porte, Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817), returned to Berlin from Constantinople in September 1790, he not only had a considerable number of Islamic manuscripts in his luggage, but also an extensive collection of coins minted in the Ottoman Empire. In the years that followed, he devoted himself intensively to studying these materials. As such an interest in recent Turkish money was rather exceptional in his time, Diez was essentially an autodidact. After the collector's death, the roughly 2,000 coins he had gathered and the accompanying detailed handwritten catalogue were largely forgotten. Today, both the collection and its catalogue are preserved in the Berlin Münzkabinett (coin cabinet). The following article offers an initial survey of what we know today about Diez's collection and his numismatic knowledge.

## 2 Heinrich Friedrich von Diez and His Legacy

Born in Bernburg in Anhalt, Germany, in 1751, Diez studied law at the University of Halle before working as a ministerial official in Magdeburg. Already as a young man, Diez made a name for himself with critical social and philosophical publications.[2] Without any diplomatic experience but full of ambition, he

1 I would like to thank Sebastian Hanstein, Tübingen, and Gerd Wädow, Berlin, for their valuable comments and suggestions. My special thanks go to Karsten Dahmen, deputy director of the Münzkabinett in Berlin. Thanks to his support, Diez' handwritten coin catalogue was identified and digitized at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. I am positive that future co-operation between institutions within the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation will bring further progress in the investigation of Diez's coin collection.

2 On Diez's life, activities and scholarly work, see the contributions in Christoph Rauch and Gideon Stiening, eds., *Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817): Freidenker – Diplomat – Orientkenner* (Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2020) with further references.

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successfully applied to the Prussian king Friedrich II (ruled 1740–1786) for the post of envoy to the Sublime Porte in 1784. He set foot on Turkish soil during a turbulent phase in the struggle between the major European powers both among each other and with the Ottoman Empire. Although Diez succeeded in preparing a treaty of alliance between Prussia and the Ottomans, by the time it was signed in January 1790, the decision of his dismissal had already been made. Obviously dissatisfied with what Prussia saw as too many concessions to the Turkish side, Diez was – unexpectedly for him – recalled to Berlin.[3] After six years, his short but eventful diplomatic career ended, and from then on, he lived a relatively secluded life on his pension and savings as a private scholar.

Diez initially retired to a country estate in Philippsthal, a small village near Potsdam, so that he could spend time studying his collections. He soon began to compile detailed catalogues of his manuscripts and coins. The self-taught orientalist had taken Turkish lessons in Constantinople and was interested in all aspects of Ottoman culture. Disappointed by what he considered the limited information value of the historical works and travelogues available to him, he planned to compile a comprehensive work on Ottoman history and society complemented by translations of many Turkish works. The coin collection also had a role to play.[4] Diez never realised this ambitious project, but, about twenty years after his return from Constantinople, he did publish several translations of Turkish works that were particularly important to him.[5] The last years of his life were dedicated to the preparation of an edition of the Turkish Bible based on a Leiden manuscript by Ali Ufki (1610–1675). He was commissioned to do this by the British and Foreign Bible Society. However, he no longer had

3 The most detailed report based on Prussian archive files on what happened in Constantinople and Berlin while Diez was negotiating the treaty of alliance is Johann Wilhelm Zinkeisen, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches in Europa: Sechster Theil. Umschwung des inneren Lebens des osmanischen Reiches und der orientalischen Politik während der Revolutionszeit. Von dem Frieden zu Kutschuk-Kainardsche im Jahre 1774 bis zum Frieden mit Frankreich im Jahre 1802* (Gotha: Perthes, 1802), 470–763.

4 Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, *Letter to Oluf Gerhard Tychsen*, Phillipsthal, 18 January 1792 (Universitätsbibliothek Rostock, Mss. orient. 284(4)), fol. 93a.

5 Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien in Künsten und Wissenschaften, Sitten, Gebräuchen und Alterthümern, Religion und Regierungsverfassung: Aus Handschriften und eigenen Erfahrungen gesammelt* (part 1: Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, 1811; part 2: Halle and Berlin: Buchhandlung des Hallischen Waisenhauses, 1815). His most influential work was probably his translation of the Kabusname, a Persian mirror for princes he translated from Ottoman-Turkish. Diez's translation was used by Goethe as inspration for his Divan: Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, *Buch des Kabus oder Lehren des persischen Königs Kjekjawus für seinen Sohn Ghilan Schach: Ein Werk für alle Zeitalter* (Berlin: in Commission der Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1811).



FIGURE 10.1 Portrait of Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, anonymous, *c.*1791
PHOTO: STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN

sufficient strength to complete this project.[6] Diez's feud with the Viennese scholar Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856) robbed him of much of his time and energy during his last years.[7]

6 After Diez's death, Jean Daniel Kieffer (1767–1833) from Paris took over this work and published the New Testament in 1819 and the Old Testament in 1827. The proofs of Diez's planned edition with parts of the Pentateuch are preserved at the Archive of the Foreign Bible Society at Cambridge University Library.

7 Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, *Unfug und Betrug in der morgenländischen Litteratur nebst vielen Hundert Proben von der groben Unwissenheit des H. v. Hammer zu Wien in Sprachen und Wissenschaften* (Halle and Berlin: Buchhandlung des Hallischen Waisenhauses, 1815); see

Diez died in Berlin in 1817. In his will, he bequeathed his extensive library of 17,000 printed works, more than 800 occidental and oriental manuscripts, as well as his coin collection, to the Prussian state. The detailed description of the coin collection in his will (see appendix) emphasises the importance it had for him.[8] In accordance with his will, the books are still kept as an independent collection in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. In contrast to his coin collection, librarians and scholars have always been aware of the outstanding importance of polymath Diez's library. At that time, the Münzkabinett, to which the coins had been transferred, was not yet an independent institution, but part of the Kunstkammer (Chamber of Arts). Under the order of its director Jean Henry (1761–1831), the royal coin collection underwent a significant expansion. Henry presented the first complete inventory of 21 folio-sized volumes in 1818, but a systematic inventory of new additions did not begin until 1822.[9] Diez's Ottoman coins were added to the cabinet right in between, in 1820, and thus gradually fell into oblivion.

## 3 Islamic Numismatics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century

Serious academic studies of Islamic coins emerged in Germany in the eighteenth century, Arabic coins with Kufic inscriptions being at the centre of interest. This attention was fuelled in particular by numerous hoards and treasure troves discovered along the Baltic coast. The finds often included Arab dirhams from the Abbasid period, which raised questions about their origin and early medieval trade routes. Georg Jacob Kehr (1692–1740) from Leipzig was one of the pioneers of Islamic numismatics who was up to the task of solving such mysteries. A few decades later, Johann Jakob Reiske (1716–1774),

also Klaus Kreiser, "Eine langatmige und unergiebige Polemik? Die Fehde zwischen Heinrich Friedrich von Diez und Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall," in *Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817): Freidenker – Diplomat – Orientkenner*, ed. Christoph Rauch and Gideon Stiening (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), pp. 243–272.

8 Diez, Heinrich Friedrich von, *Vermächtnis*, Berlin, 20 February 1817 (Berlin, GStA, I. HA Rep. 76, Vc Sekt. 2 Tit. XI, Nr. 8, vol. 1), pp. [25–28].

9 Elke Bannicke and Christian Stoess, "Die Anfänge im kurfürstlichen Schloss: 16. Jahrhundert bis 1830," in *Münzkabinett: Menschen, Münzen, Medaillen*, ed. Bernhard Weisser (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2020), 27, 30, and Karsten Dahmen, "Provenienzrecherche und ihre Hilfsmittel: Kartellen, Erwerbungsbücher und -akten, Inventarbücher des Münzkabinetts ab 1649," in *Münzkabinett: Menschen, Münzen, Medaillen*, ed. Bernhard Weisser (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2020), 332–333.

who also worked in Leipzig and studied Arabic manuscripts in Leiden for several years from 1738, gained particular fame in this field. Reiske's posthumously published *Briefe über das arabische Münzwesen* ('Letters on Arabic Coinage') were the first to systematically summarise the Islamic numismatic knowledge of his time.[10] The Rostock orientalist Oluf Gerhard Tychsen (1734–1815), who also worked on North German coin finds, was also part of this tradition. Diez had a short but intensive correspondence with him, which we will return to below. Tychsen also devoted himself to the coins brought back from the Arab and Iranian regions by Carsten Niebuhr (1733–1815).[11]

Early Islamic numismatics was of course not an independent discipline, but was embedded in historical, philological topics and, above all, in issues of biblical criticism. The question of the authenticity of Hebrew coins was a matter that occupied many scholars. Coins depicting biblical figures fascinated contemporaries, and studying them built bridges to bygone eras. As soon as it emerged that such coins were counterfeit, this heightened awareness of the need for a critical approach to these artefacts.[12] A prerequisite for scholars to be able to approach such foreign objects was the learning of oriental languages. The acquisition of knowledge about manuscripts went hand in hand with an increasing interregional exchange in politics, trade and Christian mission. The study of exotic coins thus became a fashionable phenomenon in Western Europe that combined erudition with an interest in past empires, curiosity, and a desire to explore. Ottoman coins, however, played virtually no role in the publications of the time, even if they were occasionally referenced in inventories of Arabic coins.[13]

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10 Johann Jakob Reiske, "Briefe über das Arabische Münzwesen. 1. Stück," in *Repertorium für Biblische und Morgenländische Litteratur*, vol. 9 (Leipzig: Weidmanns Erben und Reich, 1781); Idem, "Briefe über das Arabische Münzwesen. 2. Stück," in *Repertorium für Biblische und Morgenländische Litteratur*, vol. 10 (Leipzig: Weidmanns Erben und Reich, 1782).

11 On the history of studying Islamic coins in Germany, see Stefan Heidemann, ed., *Islamische Numismatik in Deutschland: Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), and Lutz Ilisch, "Die Sammlung orientalischer Münzen des Oluf Gerhard Tychsen," in *Der Rostocker Gelehrte Oluf Gerhard Tychsen (1734–1815) und seine internationalen Netzwerke*, ed. Rafael Arnold et al. (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2019), pp. 205–228.

12 Martin Mulsow, *Fremdprägung: Münzwissen im Zeitalter der Globalisierung* (Berlin: Matthes and Seitz, 2023).

13 See, for example, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn's (1752–1827) overview of publications on Arabic coins, where he provides a list of 32 Ottoman gold and silver coins, probably an excerpt from Andreas Acoluthus' (1654–1704) *Theatrum Monetarium Asiaticum*. Cf. Johann Gottfried Eichhorn: "Nachtrag zu Reiske's Briefen über das arabische Münzwesen," in *Repertorium für biblische und morgenländische Litteratur*, vol. 17 (Leipzig: Weidmanns Erben und Reich, 1785), pp. 230–236.

William Marsden (1754–1836) first described a significant number of 132 Ottoman coins in 1823 as part of his *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata*.[14] This seems to remain a singular attempt in nineteenth century western scholarship. It is probably not wrong to say that Islamic numismatics in the nineteenth century refers to the early Arab, Persian and – if Turkish – Central Asian dynasties.[15] Did the numismatic evidence of the Ottoman dynasty lack the exotic value or rarity to attract the interest of collectors? Is it possible that, from the point of view of scholars at the time, there were sufficient written sources on the Ottoman dynasty? The verification of historical epochs was one of the main purposes of collecting old coins for scholars.

One of Diez's Berlin contemporaries, Peter Philipp Adler (1726–1814), was an important collector of ancient coins. At an advanced age, Adler also began to take an interest in Islamic coins and learnt to decipher them.[16] The catalogue of Kufic coins he compiled in 1803 contains entries on various Islamic dynasties.[17] The absence of Ottoman coins is of course not surprising here, as they did not have inscriptions in the Kufic style. However, Adler's lack of interest in more recent material is typical of the European scholarship of his time. In a letter to Tychsen, Adler reports disappointedly that a recently discovered coin hoard sent to him from Stettin contained almost exclusively ordinary Ottoman coins.[18]

It is also possible that some of the scholars specialising in the decipherment of Kufic inscriptions were overwhelmed by the curved Arabic script on the Ottoman coins. This is suggested by a remark by Reiske who briefly mentions the peculiarities of Ottoman coins in his *Briefe über das arabische Münzwesen* when describing a silver coin minted in Tunis during the reign of Ahmed III (ruled 1703–1730). He speaks of confused and ugly entwined

14 William Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata: The Oriental Coins, Ancient and Modern, of His Collection Described and Historically Illustrated*, vol. 1 (London: Cox and Baylis, 1823), pp. 375–428.

15 The manual of oriental numismatics published by Johann Gustav Stickel (1805–1896) is exemplary for this observation: Johann Gustav Stickel, *Handbuch zur morgenländischen Münzkunde*, vol. 1 and 2 (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1845 and 1870).

16 His collection also ended up in the Berlin Münzkabinett. See Heinz Fengler, "Aus der Geschichte des Berliner Münzkabinetts: Peter Philipp Adler aus Frankfurt (Oder)," in *Numismatische Beiträge* 1, 1976, pp. 58–62.

17 Peter Philipp Adler, *Verzeichnis meiner kufischen Münzen*, Berlin: 1803 (handwritten catalogue).

18 Peter Phillip Adler, *Letter to Oluf Gerhard Tychsen*, Berlin, 6 November 1802 (Universitätsbibliothek Rostock, Mss. orient. 284(2)), fol. 135a.

lettering, the tracing of which is like being in a maze.[19] On the other hand, it should not go unnoticed that in the eighteenth century there was certainly an interest in coins from the Indo-Persian region, which had a similarly complex calligraphy.[20]

In Turkey, too, the systematic study of Ottoman coins beyond the collecting of curiosities seems to have been a phenomenon of the second half of the nineteenth century. Ismail Galip Edhem (1848–1895), a younger brother of the famous painter Osman Hamdi Bey (1840–1910), is regarded as the first numismatist in the tradition of Western scholars.[21] He published a catalogue of the Ottoman part of his collection in 1894.[22]

In Berlin, Ottoman coins shared, at least until the end of the nineteenth century, the little attention they received with manuscripts written in the Turkish. The collection of Turkish manuscripts at the Royal Library, which was given a solid foundation by the Diez bequest, was not systematically expanded in the course of the nineteenth century. The Turkish manuscripts that were added to the holdings of the Royal Library in Berlin in the following decades should rather be regarded as by-catch among the large Arabic and Persian acquisitions from the collections of Wetzstein, Petermann, Landberg and Sprenger. In 1852, the manuscript curator Richard Gosche (1824–1889) wrote instructions on the development of the collection in connection with the provision of funds for the trip to Syria and Iraq planned by Julius Heinrich Petermann's (1801–1876). Gosche wrote that acquisitions in Turkish were not relevant due to the low relevance (*secondary character*) of literature in this language. According to Gosche, the existing Turkish titles in Diez's library were absolutely sufficient for the needs of scholars.[23]

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19 Reiske, "Briefe, vol. 2", 173: "Auf den daselbst geschlagnen dünnen viereckigten Silberplechen, sieht man auf der einen Seite seltsam und heßlich umschlungene und verwirrte Züge, daß ich von manchen nicht einmal sagen kan, ob es arabische Schrift ist; manche Schrift läuft so wunderlich durch einander hin, daß man von einer Zeile zur andern überspringen muß, so wie man in einem Irrgarten aus einem Gange in den andern kommt."

20 See Mulsow, *Fremdprägung*, chapter 5.

21 Zeynep Çelik, *About Antiquities: Politics of Archeology in the Ottoman Empire* (Austin: University of Texas Press 2016), 81–83.

22 Ismail Galib, *Catalogue des Monnaies Turcomanes* (Istanbul: Mihran, 1894).

23 Christoph Rauch, "‚Im Wettkampfe mit den Bibliotheken anderer Nationen:' Die Königliche Bibliothek zu Berlin und der Erwerb arabischer Handschriftensammlungen zwischen 1850 und 1900," in *Sammler – Bibliothekare – Forscher: Zur Geschichte der Orientalischen Sammlungen an der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, ed. Sabine Mangold-Will, Christoph Rauch, and Siegfried Schmitt (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2021), p. 109.

## 4 A Passion for Collecting in Constantinople

But let us now return to the coin collector Diez. Under which circumstances had he been able to collate his extensive collection in a relatively short time? Travellers in Constantinople at the time seemed to use their stay primarily to collect ancient Greek coins. For example, Diez's successor, Wilhelm von Knobelsdorff (1752–1820), brought one of these highly regarded collections with him, which is also preserved in the Münzkabinett in Berlin. It was catalogued by Domenico Sestini, whom we will come to shortly.[24] But even if European interest in Ottoman coins was not particularly large at the time, Diez was in competition with other Europeans during his stay. One of them was Sir Robert Ainslie (1730–1812), the British envoy to the Sublime Porte from 1776 to 1794. Ainslie, who was also a serious rival to Diez in the arena of diplomatic intrigue, primarily collected ancient Greek coins, but Islamic coins, too.[25] Another numismatically educated traveller whom Diez met in Constantinople was the Italian Abbé Domenico Sestini (1750–1832), who was to make a name for himself as a librarian, numismatist and archaeologist. During his stay, Sestini lived in the house of the British envoy and assisted Ainslie in cataloguing his collection. Sestini had become friends with Diez in Constantinople and even dedicated a volume of his travelogue to him.[26] Sestini was one of the few people whom Diez recognised as having some knowledge of deciphering Turkish coins.[27] However, even for Sestini, collecting Ottoman coins was evidently not his main focus, as he ceded this part of his collection to Diez during his time in Constantinople. Diez later wrote to Tychsen: 'He [Sestini] had put together a small collection of Turkish coins for himself, which might have related to mine as 1 to 12. However, I bought them from him for 300 ducats with the sole intention, I confess, of destroying them as existing apart from my own.'[28]

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24 Domenico Sestini, *Descrizione delle Medaglie Rare del Museo Knobelsdorffiano* (Berlin: Quien, 1804). On Knobelsdorff see https://ikmk.smb.museum/ndp/person/6353.

25 The Islamic coins of Ainslie were acquired by William Marsden in 1805. The collection is most likely identical to the 132 Ottoman coins described in Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata*.

26 Domenico Sestini, *Viaggio di ritorno da Bassora a Costantinopoli* ([Yverdun]: 1788).

27 Cf. Christoph Rauch, "‚Die Türken als Menschen zu studiren:' Die Briefe von Diez an Tychsen," in *Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817): Freidenker – Diplomat – Orientkenner*, ed. Christoph Rauch and Gideon Stiening (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2020), p. 197.

28 Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, *Letter to Oluf Gerhard Tychsen*, Phillipsthal, 20 August 1791 (Universitätsbibliothek Rostock, Mss. orient. 284(4)), fol. 79b: "Er [Sestini] hatte sich selbst eine kleine Sammlung von Türkischen Münzen angelegt, welche sich zur meinigen verhalten mochte, wie 1 zu 12. Ich habe sie ihm aber für 300 Dukaten abgekauft, blos in der Absicht, ich gestehe, um sie als außer der meinigen existirend zu vernichten."

Collecting historical Ottoman coins was obviously a tough endeavour. It is reported in various sources, including by Diez himself,[29] that there were no public or private collections. It can therefore be assumed that there was only a rudimentary market for historical Ottoman coins. As the Swede Jakob Jonas Björnståhl (1731–1779) had reported a few years earlier in his letters to the Swedish royal librarian, Carl Christoffer Gjörwell (1731–1811):

> No one here in Constantinople has had the curiosity to collect the current coins, which are also very historical, because in addition to the emperor's name and his titles, along with the city where they were struck, they always have the year when he ascended the throne and how long he reigned at the time of the struck coin. [...] Now, I believe, there are no longer any traces of the old types of coins to be found in the entire Ottoman Empire, which were far better than the current ones and could have contributed so much to the understanding of the writers and the earlier history of the Turks.[30]

Due to his diplomatic post and his language skills, Diez was in a favourable position for acquiring knowledge about Ottoman coin history and buying interesting pieces. In his catalogue, he occasionally refers to Ottoman mint officials (*darbhane emini*) who served as his informants.[31] Diez also had good contacts with senior officials at the Topkapı Palace. He reports that he came into possession of the Piri Reis atlas of nautical charts (Diez A fol. 57), the famous albums containing Ilkhanid and Timurid miniatures and drawings (Diez A fol. 70–74), as well as other splendid illustrated manuscripts, from the sultan's

29 Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten II*, 472. Admittedly, Diez is not the most convincing source for these facts, as he wanted to show everyone that he was the only collector anyway.

30 Jakob Jonas Björnstahl, *Briefe auf seinen ausländischen Reisen an den königlichen Bibliothekar C.C. Gjörwell in Stockholm: Vierter Band welcher Briefe aus der Türkey und Griechenland enthält* (Rostock and Leipzig: Koppe, 1781), 73f.: "Niemand hat hier in Konstantinopel die Neugier gehabt, die gangbaren Münzen zu samlen, die gleichwol so sehr historisch sind, denn ausser dem geschlungenen Namen des Kaisers und seinen Titeln, nebst der Stadt, wo sie geschlagen worden, haben sie alzeit die Jahrzahl, da er den Thron bestiegen, und wie lange er zur Zeit der geschlagenen Münze regiert hat. [...] Itzt kann man also, ich glaube im ganzen ottomanischen Reiche nicht mehr einige Spuren der alten Münzsorten entdecken, die weit besser, als die itzigen gewesen sind, und so viel zum Verstande der Schriftsteller und ältern Geschichte der Türken hätten beytragen können."

31 This is particularly the case for the descriptions of the monetary system under Abdülhamid I and Selim III.

library through the mediation of a eunuch of the palace.[32] The secretary to the chief black eunuch at the Topkapı Palace at that time was Yazıcı Ahmed Efendi, whom Diez introduces to us as a coin connoisseur.[33] Diez writes about him and another collector:

> There is no public collection of oriental coins in Constantinople. In my time I only knew a certain Yazıcı Ahmed Efendi, former Pasha of Two Horse Tails, who had amassed such a coin collection. I was also told that a certain Hasib Efendi owned a similar collection. However, neither of them wrote any descriptions of them and after their deaths the collections were seized for the public treasury and melted down in the mint.[34]

It would be an unlikely coincidence, if this Ahmed Efendi had been the model for the secretary (*yazıcı*) portraited in the album *Costumes Turcs* (Fig. 10.2). But if the album, which is today kept in the British Museum, was indeed created for Diez, as a provenance note on the opening page suggests,[35] it is at least an amusing idea. Anyhow, what can be assumed with more probability is that this secretary helped Diez to obtain rare pieces and, being a collector himself, shared his knowledge with him. Diez was certainly reliant on this kind of support. That coins minted under previous rulers had to be melted down for new coins with the name of the ruling sultan was common practice (*tecdid-i sikke*).[36] Diez's observation quoted above emphasises the impression that coins were not sought after as collector's items and thus had no value beyond their monetary worth.

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32 Cf. Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten* I, 59; and Julian Raby, "Contents & Contexts: Re-viewing the Diez Albums," in *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents*, ed. Julia Gonnella, Friederike Weis, and Christoph Rauch (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 29–32.

33 Ethan L. Menchinger, *The First of the Modern Ottomans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 66.

34 Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten* II, 472: "Es giebt in Konstantinopel keine öffentliche Sammlung morgenländischer Münzen. Zu meiner Zeit habe ich nur einen gewissen Jazidschi Achmed Efendi, ehemaligen Pascha von zwey Rossschweifen, gekannt, der sich eine solche Münzsammlung angelegt hatte. Man hat mir auch einen Hassib Efendi als Besitzer einer ähnlichen Sammlung genannt. Beyde aber haben keine Beschreibungen davon aufgesetzt und nach ihrem Tode sind die Sammlungen für den öffentlichen Schatz in Beschlag genommen und in der Münze eingeschmolzen worden."

35 Elisabeth Fraser, "Heinrich Friedrich von Diez and Costumes turcs," in *Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751–1817): Freidenker – Diplomat – Orientkenner*, ed. Christoph Rauch and Gideon Stiening (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2020).

36 Cf. Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34.




FIGURE 10.2 Jazigi Effendi (= Yazıcı Efendi, secretary), Istanbul *c.*1789. From Costumes turcs, British Museum, London, MS 1974 0617 012 (1), fol. 29a
PHOTO: © TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

## 5 Diez's Catalogue and Numismatic Knowledge

Diez's entire knowledge of coins is contained in his handwritten catalogue, a folio-sized volume of almost 300 pages, tightly written in small script. This catalogue is preserved in the reference library of the Berlin Münzkabinett.[37] As the coins themselves were not inventoried when they were added to the collection, and further traces of provenance may have been obliterated over a period of more than 200 years, the catalogue is the only starting point for reconstructing the coin collection. The catalogue has the same lay-out and has a similar level of detail as Diez's manuscript catalogue.[38] Wilhelm Pertsch (1832–1899) characterized the latter in the introduction to his catalogue of Turkish manuscripts as "somewhat loquacious, but nevertheless very well written, with diligence, conscientiousness and expertise."[39] This applies equally to the catalogue of coins.

The catalogue consists of two parts. The first chapter (fol. 11b–122a) is devoted to Ottoman coins and is the most comprehensive, as the collector's main objective was to be able to present as complete a sequence as possible of the coinage of this dynasty. The second chapter (fol. 123–155) deals with coins from various Islamic dynasties. The catalogue was a work in progress. This is shown by the many blank pages between the entries as well as the numerous amendments and corrections added later by Diez.

The chapter on Ottoman coins includes historical introductions to the respective ruler, together with detailed descriptions of the corresponding coins, categorised by metal type, i.e. gold, silver or copper. The descriptions include precise information on the material, the minting and the condition of each coin, as well as its weight and size. Diez quotes extensively from historical travelogues for the descriptions of the ruling epochs and the respective coinage and analyses them on the basis of his own observations. In the section on Murad III (ruled 1574–1595), he quotes the report by Johannes Löwenklau (1541–1592), who travelled to the Sublime Porte in 1584/85; on Murad IV (ruled 1623–1640), Pietro Della Valle (1586–1652); on Ibrahim (ruled 1640–1648),

37 Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, *Erster Theil der Sammlung morgenländischer Münzen enthaltend die unter allen osmanischen Kaisern gangbar gewesenen Münzen seit Stiftung der Monarchie bis auf den heutigen Tag. Zweyter Theil der Sammlung morgenländischer Münzen* (handwritten catalogue). See also the entry on Diez in the Münzkabinett Normdatenportal (Authority File Portal): https://ikmk.smb.museum/ndp/person/15865.

38 Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, *Verzeichnis der morgenländischen und abendländischen Handschriften in meiner Bibliothek* (handwritten catalogue).

39 Wilhelm Pertsch, *Türkische Handschriften* (Berlin: Asher, 1889), x: "[…] etwas redselig, aber doch sehr gut, mit Fleiß, Gewissenhaftigkeit und Sachkenntnis gearbeitet."

the report by Balthasar de Monconys (1611–1665), and so on. In general, Diez refers very frequently to the works on Ottoman history by Dimitrie Cantemir (1673–1723)[40] and Joseph de Guignes (1721–1800).[41] Diez showed a certain appreciation especially of Cantemir, whom he nevertheless accused of numerous misjudgements. For example, Diez identifies a total of 46 different minting locations, whereas Cantemir only knew of four, as Diez points out.[42] Diez therefore endeavoured to include original Turkish sources, frequently quoting an anonymous Ottoman history.[43]

In the section on Sultan Orhan (ruled 1326–1359) (fol. 20a–21a), the first Ottoman ruler to have coins minted in his name, we first find a historical outline of his reign together with considerations as to why Osman I (ruled 1288–1326), as the founder of the dynasty, had not yet authorised the minting of coins in his name. Diez then discusses why the coins were nevertheless already called *ʿuthmānī* in Orhan's time, while being synonymously referred to as *akçe*, which the Europeans called *asper*. In the thicket of coin designations, Diez endeavoured to describe the relationship to other silver coins, some of which were only in use later, such as *drachma*, *dirham*, *nokrae* and *para*. For his argumentation, he drew on a wide variety of works, including Reiske's *Briefe*, the travelogue by Balthasar de Monconys, excerpts from the Ottoman historian Hoca Saʿd el-Din Efendi (943–1008/1536–1599), and a Turkish translation of an Arabic treatise by the Damascene scholar Ibn Taymiya (661–728/1263–1328). Finally, he included the description of three silver and three copper coins he attributed to Orhan.[44] It is highly disputed whether copper coins were already struck under Orhan, which is why it is surprising that Diez presents an equal number of silver and copper coins for this ruler. According to Diez's description, the coins showed the name Orhan, but no date or place.

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40 Dimitrie Cantemir, *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire*, part 1 (London: Knapton, 1734).

41 Joseph de Guignes, *Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mogols, et des autres Tartares occidentaux, &c. avant et depuis Jésus-Christ jusqu'à présent* (Paris: Desaint and Saillant, 1756).

42 Cf. Diez, *Sammlung morgenländischer Münzen*, fol. 16b and Cantemir, *History*, p. 11.

43 This is a fragment of an Ottoman history by an unknown author which Diez titled *Kitāb Tawārīkh Sulṭān Sulaymān* on the cover and that provides information for the years between 1687 and 1704, a period of fundamental changes in coinage. The shelfmark is Diez A quart. 75 (https://www.qalamos.net/receive/DE1Book_manuscript_00003526).

44 Damalı mentions in his *History of Ottoman coins* 34 different silver coins minted under Orhan. He further discusses a single copper *manghir*, which cannot be identical with that of Diez, because the latter misses the ornamentation of that presented by Damalı; cf. Atom Damalı, *History of Ottoman coins = Osmanlı sikkeleri tarihi*, vol. 1 (Istanbul: 2010), pp. 108–129.

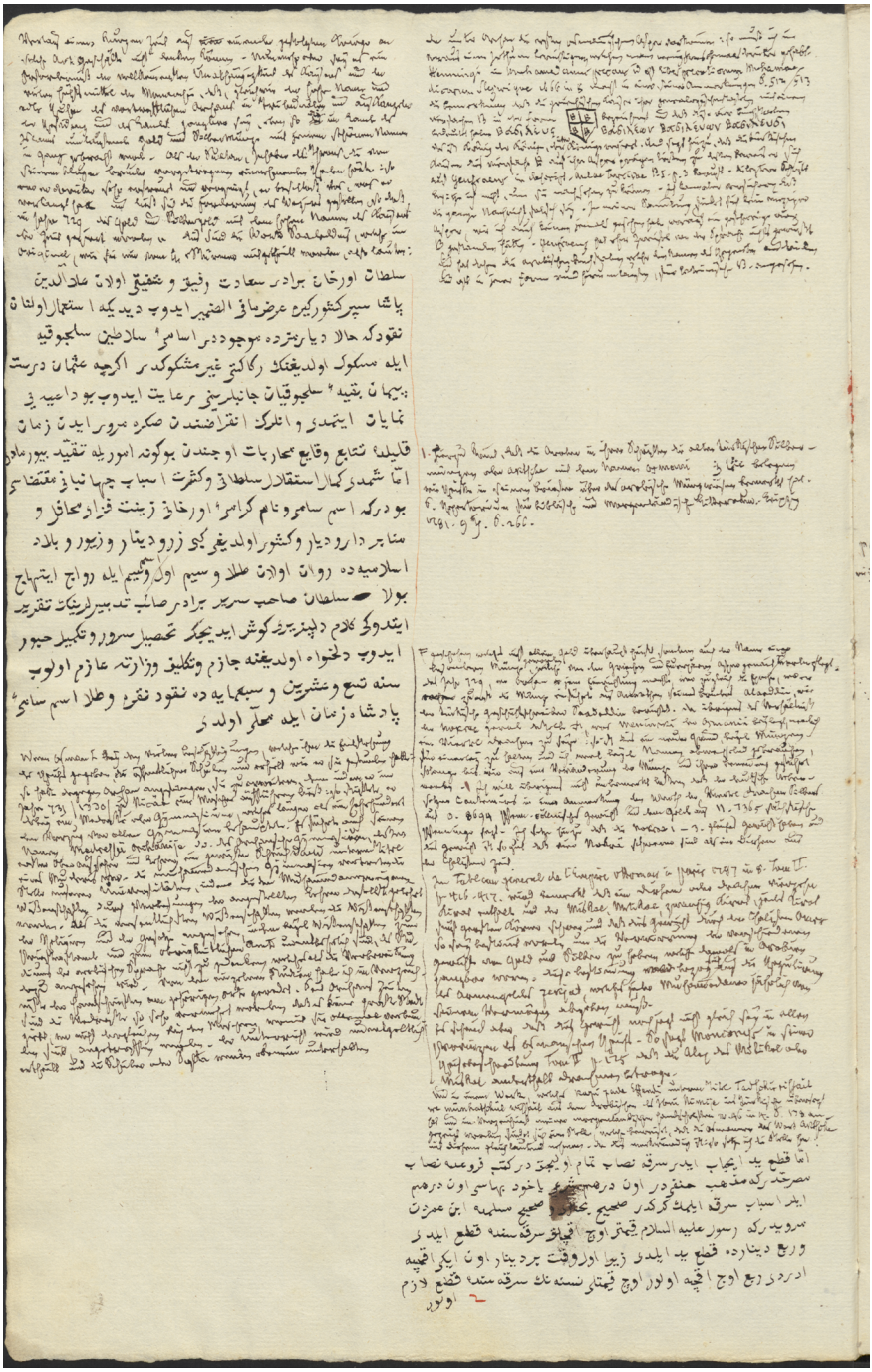
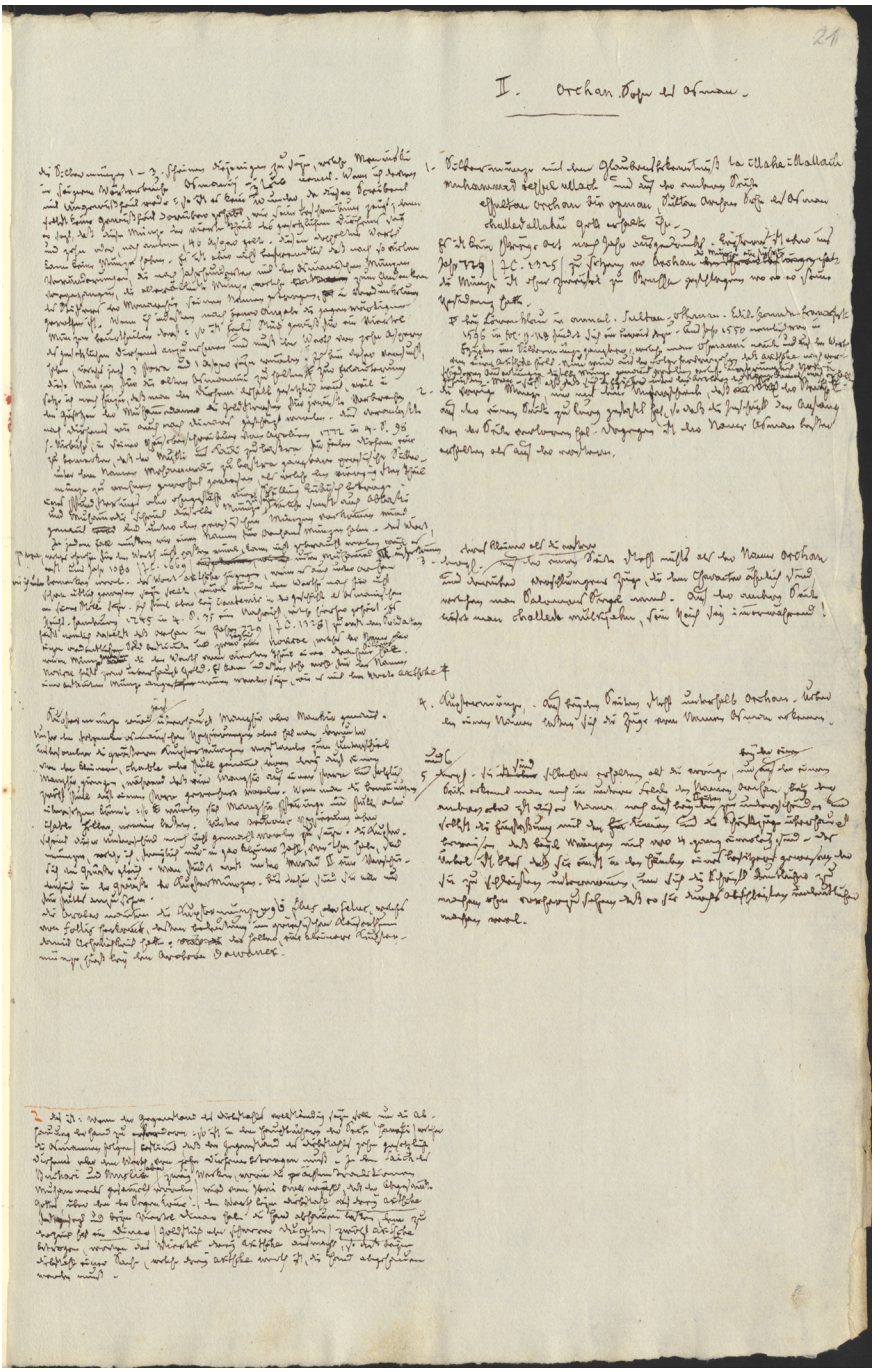


FIGURE 10.3 Diez's description of coins minted under Orhan (fol. 20b/21a)
PHOTO: STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, MÜNZKABINETT



The Ottoman Empire hardly constituted a closed monetary area, if only because of its geographical extent. Periods of economic and political prosperity alternated with times of crisis, and these were naturally reflected in the development of the currency.[45] In the early days of the empire, the silver coin *akçe* was a stable currency on the trade routes between the Balkans and Anatolia. With the increasing geographical expansion of the Ottoman state and its economic development under Mehmed II (ruled 1444–1446 and 1451–1481), the gold coin *altın* became the leading currency, while at the same time various silver currency zones emerged within the empire. In the seventeenth century, the importance of the *akçe* as a means of payment declined and the *guruş* (sg. *girş*) were introduced as the new central silver currency at the turn of the eighteenth century. At the same time, the circulation of copper coins for everyday goods and services was massively promoted, as Diez also observes.[46] The conclusion of this dynamic process, which brought numerous new partial coins of varying material quality into circulation in a short period of time, was the coinage reform that was initiated under Suleiman II (ruled 1687–1691) and completed under Ahmed III. In order to be able to grasp this dynamic in currency development, Diez relied primarily on a close examination of his objects, i.e., their circulation, inscriptions, material composition and in particular their weight.

The fact that determining the correct coin denomination was sometimes difficult can be clearly seen in Fig. 10.4. In the case of the introduction of the silver coin *para* under Murad IV (ruled 1623–1640), it was obvious to Diez that the increase in weight, which otherwise deteriorated from reign to reign, had to be associated with a new coin denomination. Under Suleiman I (the Magnificent, ruled 1520–1566), *para* were minted for the first time in Cairo, but this was an Egyptian regional currency under the official designation *medin*. *Para* were not minted in the Ottoman capital until the reign of Murad IV, as Diez correctly observed. However, according to him it was generally introduced earlier. It will probably only be possible to determine the coin Diez describes as a *para*, struck in Bursa already in 1012 AH during the reign of Ahmed I, once the piece in the coin collection has been identified.[47]

As Diez had a broad interest in cultural history, he also described charms and commemorative coins in this catalogue. The Ottoman coinage is therefore preceded by descriptions of several amulets and talismans (fol. 12–15). The first object is a gold amulet pendant with a *hilye*, a depiction of the physical

45 Cf. Pamuk, *History*, for a good overview on the monetary history of the Ottomans.

46 Cf. Diez, *Sammlung morgenländischer Münzen*, fol. 83a.

47 Ibid., fol. 62a.

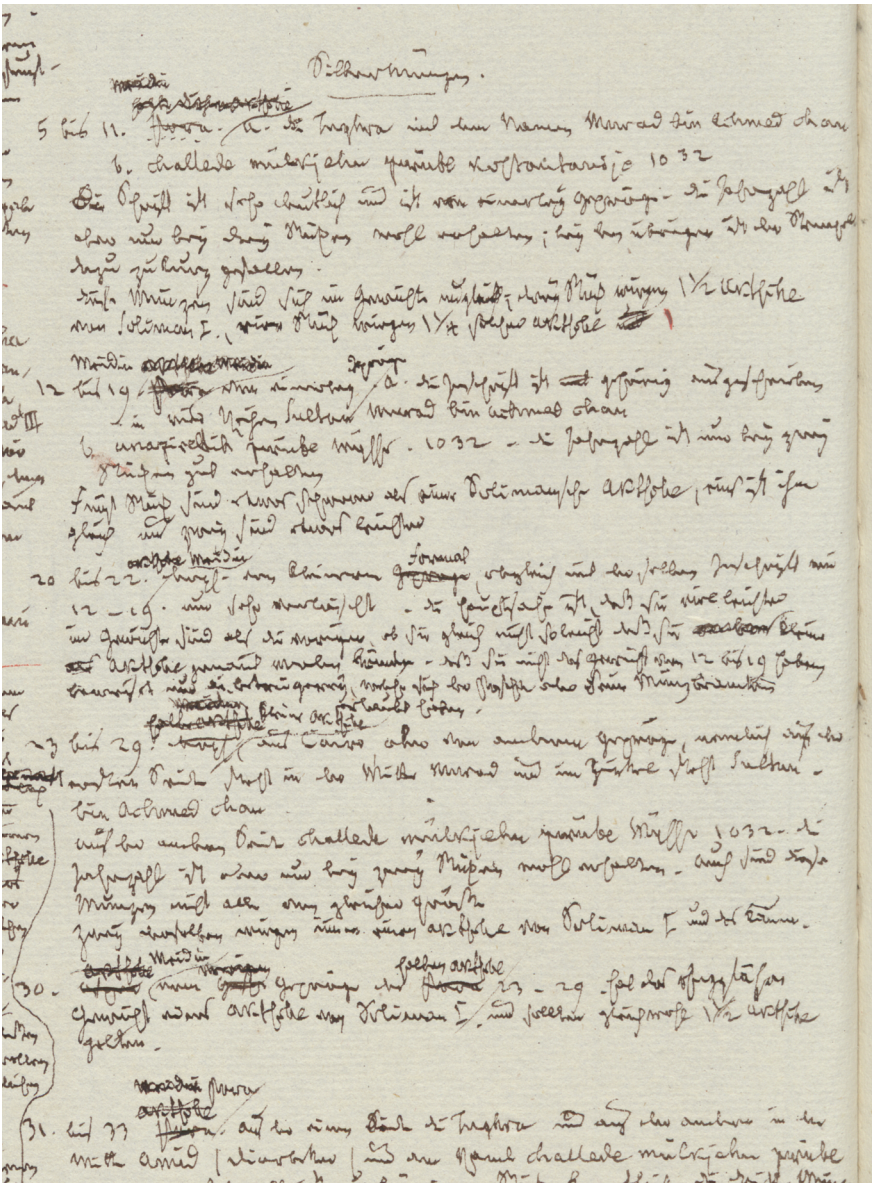


FIGURE 10.4 Descriptions of silver coins struck under Murad IV (detail from fol. 69b)
PHOTO: STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, MÜNZKABINETT

characteristics of the prophet Muhammad. The commemorative coins are of European origin, struck on the occasion of military victories over the Turks or to commemorate Ottoman missions to Europe. They are placed in the catalogue within the relevant Ottoman reign.



FIGURE 10.5 Dinar of Mehmed II, minted AH 883, from the collection of Diez
PHOTO: STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, MÜNZKABINETT

Compared to the Ottoman part, the second chapter of the catalogue is small in size, describing only 153 coins. These are scattered individual pieces from different regions of Asia. Half of the coins described in this second part alone are attributed to the Khanate of Crimea, a dynasty with close ties to the Ottoman Empire.

From today's advanced scholarly perspective, numerous misinterpretations will inevitably be found in Diez's catalogue. Due to the amount of material and his intensive examination of it, the catalogue nevertheless documents an extremely detailed overview of Ottoman coinage history for the time it was written in. In order to better evaluate his work, however, the collection must first be reconstructed, based on Diez's catalogue.

For one exceptional piece, this categorisation was an easy task. The *altın* minted by Mehmed II in the years 882 and 883 AH was the first gold coin of the Ottomans and was already very rare in the collector's time (Fig. 10.5).[48] Diez had to pay 13 ducats for it, as he writes, and many Ottomans had never seen such a coin before. The identification and allocation of the rest of the collection will certainly take time and can only be accomplished through a project. It is therefore regrettable that the position of curator for the extensive Islamic

48 Cf. https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18315189 of AH 883, Damalı, *History*, 296 no. 7-K-A1-883. In Marsden's catalogue (1823), Ottoman gold coinage is only associated from Suleiman II on.

collection at the Münzkabinett in Berlin has often remained vacant, except for the following intervals in 1876–1884, 1891–1927, and 1975–1985.[49]

## 6 Correspondence on Numismatic Questions

Gathering knowledge about coins around 1800 was no easy task. Not only was research on the topic still in its infancy and scholars were often still stumbling around in the dark when it came to correctly interpreting coin inscriptions. Numerous catalogues of oriental coin collections and treatises shared the fate of Diez's collection at the time, namely, that they only existed in handwritten form in a single copy and were therefore hardly accessible.[50] Reiske's important *Briefe* also only circulated in manuscript form during his lifetime. Diez did not share his knowledge of coins with anyone in his publications and did not mention his collection anywhere. As we have already seen, the sources Diez refers to in his catalogue are mainly travelogues and contemporary treatises on the Ottoman Empire, the reliability of which generally did not satisfy him. Personal networks were therefore crucial for him in order to expand his knowledge and to be able to discuss controversial issues.

There are only very few references to correspondents and sources of information in the catalogue. It is thus not possible to completely reconstruct Diez' exchange with other scholars on numismatic issues, since he destroyed his correspondence which has therefore only survived in fragmentary form.[51] We do know that numerous scholars approached Diez with requests to borrow rare manuscripts from his library, especially after he had acquired parts of the important library of the Dutch humanist Laurens van Santen (1746–1798) in 1800. In his exchange with the Greifswald scholar Friedrich Rühs (1781–1820), he showed an interest in an Arabic coin find that had been discovered in

49 Karsten Dahmen, „Die Sammlungen zum Orient: Ein Plädoyer," in: Bernhard Weisser, ed., *Münzkabinett: Menschen, Münzen, Medaillen* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2020), pp. 146–148.

50 For example, the catalogue of the imperial oriental coin collection in Saint Petersburg by the aforementioned Georg Jakob Kehr remained unpublished as well as the *Theatrum monetarium asiaticum* by Acoluthus, cf. Mulsow, *Fremdprägung*, 40, 194ff.

51 Nevertheless, around 350 personal letters, mainly from Diez, to around 40 correspondence partners have been preserved. An edition of the correspondence by Arne Klawitter and Christoph Rauch is in preparation.

Wolgast near Greifswald. Diez was also able to acquire a Mughal coin from him, which had been struck under Alamgir II (ruled 1754–1759).[52]

It is certain that Diez was in correspondence with the Austrian *Internuntius* Ignaz von Stürmer (1750–1829) over a longer period of time. Stürmer, whom Diez met in Constantinople in 1784, was obviously an exception among the diplomats whom Diez tended to despise. Stürmer continuously provided Diez with bibliographical and numismatic information from the Ottoman Empire, as can be seen from a surviving letter from Stürmer, as well as from allusions made by Diez to other correspondents and various references in the coin catalogue. Stürmer also received coins from Diez in order to help decipher them.

Unfortunately, no traces of a correspondence with his Constantinople numismatist friend Domenico Sestini have survived, if such a correspondence existed at all. Sestini lived in Berlin from 1804 to 1810, where he worked at the Münzkabinett,[53] while Diez returned to Berlin in 1807 after a ten-year stay in Kolberg (today Kołobrzeg in Poland). It can therefore be assumed that the two met in Berlin. There are allusions in later sources to a relationship with the important Berlin coin collector Adler, who has already been mentioned briefly.[54] Whether his contacts with Diez were really that close can be doubted. Adler reported to Tychsen in 1796 about an unexpected first visit from Diez, who must have left a rather strange impression. Adler feared, as he wrote to Tychsen, that their correspondence, which had only just begun, might have already ended as a result of his reply to Diez's last letter.[55]

The correspondence with Oluf Gerhard Tychsen also ended quite suddenly after a brief but intensive exchange.[56] But first we should describe how this exchange began. Soon after his return from Constantinople, Diez wrote to him because he wanted to find out whether the oriental coin collection of the

52 Heinrich Friedrich von Diez: *Letter to Friedrich Rühs*, Kolberg, 19 Februar and 20 April 1805 (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS germ. qu. 673), fol. 2b, 5a.

53 Julius Friedländer and Alfred Sallet, *Das Königliche Münzkabinet: Geschichte und Übersicht der Sammlung nebst erklärender Beschreibung der auf Schautischen ausgelegten Auswahl*, 2. ed. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877), p. 21.

54 Ibid., 22.

55 Peter Phillip Adler, *Letter to Oluf Gerhard Tychsen*, Berlin, 31. März 1796 (Universitätsbibliothek Rostock, Mss. orient. 284(2)), fol. 82b.

56 Tychsen had studied theology and oriental languages in Halle. He then initially worked at the orphanage in Halle and in the Jewish mission for Johann Heinrich Callenberg's Institutum Judaicum. In 1760, he settled in Bützow as a Hebrew teacher at the invitation of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Friedrich (1717–1785). In 1763, he was appointed professor of oriental languages there. When the University of Bützow was returned to Rostock in 1789, he resigned his professorship and concentrated on managing the university library there.

Dukes of Mecklenburg-Schwerin contained any Ottoman coins. The ambitious collector hoped to build up the only significant collection of its kind. It has already been shown that his fear of competitors was rather unfounded.

Out of the province of Mecklenburg, Tychsen cultivated an extensive network of correspondents that helped him obtain a reputation as a distinguished scholar throughout Europe. The number of his correspondents, most of whom were foreign, totalled more than 200.[57] Tychsen also cultivated contacts with the aim of expanding his extensive private library and coin collection, which is why the initiation of the correspondence by Diez could only have been convenient for him.[58] When he received the first letter from Philippsthal in early August 1791, Diez was already known to him from his 1783 pamphlet *Über Juden* ("About Jews").[59] Tychsen therefore hoped that Diez would provide him with information on the Jews in the Ottoman Empire as well as with numismatic information. Jews from Turkey used to visit him in Bützow, but their presence was forbidden in Rostock. Tychsen therefore had to rely on the reports of dubious travel writers, which he was extremely reluctant to trust.

From the beginning, the level of the exchange was very confident, and Diez gratefully accepted Tychsen's remark about travel writers, expressing his own disdain of and deep aversion to ignorant and opinionated travellers in his next letter. Tychsen spurred Diez on with his work on Ottoman coins, as he had never seen a complete Turkish coin collection anywhere and no description of such a collection had yet been published. A *Museum Turcico-Diezianum* would therefore be a desirable contribution to numismatics.[60] Tychsen offered Diez the opportunity to send him parts of his collection, as he himself was very interested in finding out the names and values of the Turkish coins. Diez therefore sent him a package of 418 coins, together with the next letter dated 1 October 1791, which Tychsen returned within nine days together with descriptions. In the ensuing correspondence, individual coins were offered to

57 Cf. Rafael Arnold et al., eds., *Der Rostocker Gelehrte Oluf Gerhard Tychsen (1734–1815) und seine internationalen Netzwerke* (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2019). The correspondence of Tychsen that is preserved in the Universitätsbibliothek Rostock is now completely digitized (https://gepris-extern.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/275976718).

58 Diez wrote eleven letters to Tychsen between July 1791 and June 1793. Diez received twelve letters, which can be reconstructed from Tychsen's notes on the surviving letters, but only a draft of the first reply dated 6 August 1791 has survived.

59 In this essay, Diez supported the theses of Christian Konrad Dohm, in which he advocated the improvement of civil rights for Jews (1781), see Heinrich Friedrich Diez, "Über Juden: An Herrn Kriegsrath Dohm zu Berlin," in *Berichte der allgemeinen Buchhandlung der Gelehrten* 1783, 3, pp. 320–347.

60 Oluf Gerhard Tychsen, *Letter to Heinrich Friedrich von Diez* (draft), Rostock, 6 August 1791 (Universitätsbibliothek Rostock, Mss. orient. 284(4)), fol. 76a.

each other as gifts and sent along. Transcriptions of coin inscriptions were a central topic of discussion. The number of mints in Turkey; minting dates; the rights of vassals to strike coins; the distribution of commemorative coins and medals; coin forgeries; and coins with images in the context of the Islamic ban on images were all discussed in detail, as was the dating of the beginnings of Islamic coinage in general. These topics were of great interest to scholars at the time.

There was also some dissent in the correspondence. From the outset, Diez commented critically on individual details from Tychsen's writings and emphasised how cautious one had to be with general conclusions based on the existing finds, as it was to be expected that new discoveries would open up a different view on the development of Islamic and Jewish coinage. In his last letter, dated 10 April 1793, Diez commented on the public dispute between the Spaniard Francisco Pérez Bayer (1711–1794) and Tychsen on the question of the authenticity of Maccabean coins.[61] Perez Bayer published two books on these coins of the Maccabees (Hasmoneans), which were minted in ancient Hebrew script and came into circulation from 143 BC.[62] Tychsen argued that all Hebrew coins from the pre-Christian period were forgeries. It was a debate that galvanised numerous scholars in Europe and in which Tychsen was forced to admit his error shortly afterwards.[63] Diez explained in detail why Perez Bayer's position could not be dismissed and why he also assumed that coins with ancient Hebrew inscriptions minted at the time of the Maccabees must have existed. It is not known what Tychsen replied to Diez on 12 June 1793. We know from the correspondence with Adler that Tychsen enclosed the first sheets or the complete proofs of his *Introductio in rem Numariam Muhammedanorum* ("Introduction to Islamic numismatics"), which was in print at the time. In this publication, he also included information that he had gained from his contact with Diez and from the autopsy of hundreds of his coins. For example, he published a list of mints in the Ottoman Empire.[64] Tychsen referred to a gold dinar of Harun al-Rashid as the cimelium of Diez's collection and reproduced

61 Cf. Anton Theodor Hartmann, *Oluf Gerhard Tychsen oder Wanderungen durch die mannigfaltigsten Gebiete der biblisch-asiatischen Literatur: Ein Denkmal der Freundschaft und Dankbarkeit*, vol. 2, sect. 3 (Bremen: Heyse 1820), pp. 36–37.

62 Francisco Pérez Bayer, *De numis Hebraeo-Samaritanis* (Valencia: Monfort, 1781); and Idem, *Numorum Hebraeo-Samaritanorum Vindiciae* (Valencia: Monfort, 1790).

63 It was not the only time that Tychsen was on the wrong side of a forgery scandal. He also failed to recognise the manuscript and coin forgeries in connection with the Sicilian *Codice Diplomatico* and supported its forger Giuseppe Vella (1749–1814).

64 Oluf Gerhard Tychsen, *Introductio in rem Numariam Muhammedanorum* (Rostock: Stiller, 1794), pp. 173–187.

it there.[65] Tychsen later enquired of Adler in Berlin whether he knew why Diez did not respond anymore, but Adler was unable to give him a conclusive answer.[66] Perhaps Diez did not like the fact that Tychsen referred to his coin collection here and there in the *Introductio*.

## 7 Conclusion

With his catalogue of oriental and, especially, Ottoman coins, a source has been rediscovered that widens the picture of the broad spectrum of topics that Heinrich Friedrich von Diez dealt with. We can assume that Diez would have significantly expanded the knowledge of Ottoman coins in his time due to his intensive and detailed study of his collection if only he had passed on his knowledge. His handwritten catalogue is therefore an important source not only for the coin knowledge of the time, but also for an autodidact's methods and techniques in acquiring numismatic knowledge around 1800. Although an amateur himself and equipped with limited methodological and philological skills, Diez already adopted an attitude that would later be characteristic of the positivist school of German oriental studies during the second half of the nineteenth century.

## Appendix

Section on the coin collection from a copy of the will of Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, dated 20 February 1817.[67]

14.
Dem Königl. Münzen Kabinet zu Berlin vermache ich meine Sammlung von morgenländischen Münzen nebst dem raisonnirten Verzeichniß in Folio, worin sie nach ihren Aufschriften erklärt worden, und das in meinem Schreibschranke neben den Catalog der Handschriften aufbewahret wird. Die Münzen selbst liegen in mehreren blechernen Büchsen in einem mit Eisen beschlagenen Kasten in der Manuscripten Stube

65 Tychsen, *Introductio*, 50f.: "Philipsthal iuxta Potsdam, Numophylacium illmi Regi Borussorum a consiliis legationis intimis, Legati olim apud Aulam Othomanicam in litteratura Turcia versatissimi de Diez, Seldsjucidarum et Osmanorum opibus abundat, vt cum quouis alio vel numis amplissimo de palma facile contendere queat, vt experientia me docuit. Denarius a. 192 in tab. I. n. III. expressus istius numophylacii cimelium est."

66 Peter Phillip Adler, *Letter to Oluf Gerhard Tychsen*, Berlin, 28 December 1793 (Universitätsbibliothek Rostock, Mss. orient. 284(2)), fol. 42a.

67 Diez, *Vermächtnis*, pp. [25–28].

eingepackt. Jede Büchse hat auf dem Deckel die Ueberschrift dessen, was sie im ganzen enthält, und die Münzen jeder Regenten sind für sich |p. 26| zusammengebunden, und die einzelnen Münzen sind wieder in Papier gewickelt, welche auf die Nummern und Erklärungen des Catalogs hinweisen. Es muß jedoch ein geübter Kenner sein, der die Münzen in irgend einem geräumigen Münz Schrank auseinanderlegen soll, als wozu es mir hier an Raum gefehlt hat. Zur Erläuterung muß ich noch Folgendes bemerken:
a) die Sammlung besteht überhaupt in 2053 Zweitausend drei und fünfzig Stücken oder einigen darüber, worunter Dreihundert siebenzig goldene, Eintausend zweihundert und neun silberne, vierhundert und fünfzig kupferne, eine messingerne, eine lederne Münze und vierzehn zinnerne Abgüsse begriffen sind. Unter den goldenen sind mehrere, welche den Werth von zwei bis sieben Ducaten und darüber enthalten.
b) die ganze Sammlung zerfällt in zwei Haupttheile. Der erste als der merkwürdigste |p. 27| und seltsamste ist die ganze vollständige Reihe der Münzen jeder Form welche unter osmanscher Monarchie seit ihrem ersten Stifter bis auf *Selim* III. oder bis zum Jahre 1790 als der Zeit meines Abgangs von *Constantinopel*, folglich in einer zusammenhängenden Folge von Fünfhundert Jahren an mehr als vierzig verschiedenen Münzstätten ausgeprägt worden, und wozu namentlich Dreyhundert Acht und Vierzig Goldstükke, ein Tausend und acht und neunzig Silber-Münzen, Vierhundert und vierzehn Kupfermünzen, eine lederne Nothmünze und vierzehn zinnerne Abgüsse gehören. Jedoch sind hierunter einbegriffen nicht allein vierzehn goldene und silberne Amulete, die unter der osmanschen Regierung geschlagen worden, sondern auch zehn Seldschukische Münzen, welche unter *Osmann* dem Ersten gangbar gewesen, denn da erst sein Sohn und Nachfolger Orchan als zweiter |p. 28| Regent, den Anfang gemacht hat, Münzen schlagen zu lassen: so habe ich geglaubt, daß die seldschukische Münzen von *Iconium* zur Vollständigkeit der ganzen Sammlung unentbehrlich sind, letztere ist deshalb merkwürdig und selten zu nennen, weil sie von Seiten der Vollständigkeit bis zu *Selim* III. gewiß ihres gleichen nicht in Europa hat, indem in der Reihe kein einziger Regent mit seinen Münzen fehlt, nicht zu gedenken, daß so viele Doppelmünzen vorhanden sind, daß mehrere Sammlungen hätten daraus gebildet werden können.
c) Der zweite Theil der Sammlung, der im Catalog besonders verzeichnet ist, enthält nichts zusammenhängendes sondern begreift nur einzelne oder mehrere Stücke asiatischer Dynastien z.B. der Chalifen zu Bagdad, der Perser, der Timuriden in Indien, auch der Tartaren der Krim und der Marockaner in Africa und anderer Fürsten mehr.

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CHAPTER 11

# Eugen Mittwoch's Trips to the East (1899, 1904, 1907)

*Sabine Schmidtke*

The renowned Arabist, Islamicist, and Africanist Eugen Mittwoch (1876–1942) undertook two extended trips to the Near East and Egypt, in 1899 and in 1907.[1] Moreover, in the first half of April 1904, he paid a brief visit to Haifa in Palestine.[2] The purpose of the 1907 trip was to accompany the honorary secretary (*Geschäftsführer im Ehrenamt*) of the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden, Dr. Paul Nathan (1857–1927),[3] on his journey to Constantinople, Syria, and Palestine to investigate the existing schools and educational systems for Jews in these locations, to learn more about the conditions of the various local Jewish communities, and to explore the needs for, and possibilities of, establishing additional educational institutions and vocational training schools. The Hilfsverein had been founded at Nathan's initiative on 28 May 1901, and one of its principal goals was to counterbalance the educational system established by the Alliance Israélite Universelle (founded in May 1860) throughout the Near East and Eastern Europe; the latter had a strong emphasis on French and instructional personnel trained in France.[4]

1 This is the third in a series of studies on Eugen Mittwoch; see Sabine Schmidtke, 'The Library of Eugen Mittwoch (1876–1942)', *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 11 (2023), pp. 267–301; Sabine Schmidtke, 'From *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to *Wissenschaft des Islams*: Eugen Mittwoch between Jewish and Islamic Studies', *Historical Interactions of Religious Cultures* 1 (2024), pp. 103–145. A monograph, entitled *Eugen Mittwoch's Biography as Seen Through His Scholarly Correspondence, 1898 Through 1940*, is in preparation. It contains annotated editions of the correspondence referred to in this paper. I thank Camilla Adang and Mirjam Thulin for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

2 See letter Mittwoch to Wilhelm Bacher (?), Berlin, 21 March 1904.

3 For Paul Nathan, see Ernst Feder, *Politik und Humanität: Paul Nathan. Ein Lebensbild* (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1929); Christoph Jahr, 'Philanthropy in Time of War: Paul Nathan and the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden', *Humanitarianism and the Greater War, 1914–24*, ed. Elisabeth Piller and Neville Wylie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 86–102; Christoph Jahr, *Paul Nathan: Publizist, Politiker und Philanthrop 1857–1927* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018).

4 Eli Bar-Chen, *Weder Asiaten noch Orientalen: Internationale jüdische Organisationen und die Europäisierung "rückständiger" Juden* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2005); Eli Bar-Chen, 'Two Communities with a Sense of Mission: The Alliance Israelite Universelle and the Hilfsverein

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The principal source for the 1907 trip is a report published in *Sechster Geschäftsbericht des Hilfsvereins der Deutschen Juden*,[5] complemented by various articles that appeared in the Jewish press during Nathan and Mittwoch's trip.[6] Mittwoch also provides some additional information about the itinerary in his correspondence. He had apparently embarked on the journey from his hometown, Schrimm, on 11 September 1907 and travelled via Romania to Constantinople. Here he joined Nathan, who had previously visited Sofia and Philippopolis in Bulgaria. From 15 to 27 September Nathan and Mittwoch sojourned in Constantinople, and from there they went on to Smyrna (until 4 October), Rhodes, Beirut (arriving on 7 October), Tripoli and Homs. On 19 October, Nathan and Mittwoch arrived in Aleppo. From here their journey continued southward via Palmyra and Damascus (1 to 5 November) to Palestine via Tiberias, Haifa (where the Hilfsverein had planned to found a technical university, the Technikum),[7] Acre, Jaffa, and Nablus, Jericho and Bethlehem, ending in Jerusalem, where they stayed for three weeks. By the end of December, Mittwoch had returned to Berlin.[8] From a scholarly perspective, the most important result of Mittwoch's 1907 trip was his encounter with

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der Deutschen Juden', *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, ed. Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron, and Uri R. Kaufmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), pp. 111–128. For the Alliance and its teachers, see Aron Rodrigue, *Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Transition: the Teachers of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, 1860–1939* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993); Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2006). For the Hilfsverein, see also Edmund Burkard, '"Überwindung von Armut durch Bildung": Die Geschichte des Schulwerks des Hilfsvereins der Deutschen Juden (1901–1938)', doctoral dissertation, University of Siegen, 2016.

5 *Sechster Geschäftsbericht (1907) des Hilfsvereins der Deutschen Juden erstattet der Generalversammlung am 29. März 1908* (Berlin: 1908), pp. 33, 35, 36–38, 49–77.

6 'Dr. Nathans Reise nach dem Orient', *Israelitisches Familienblatt* 10, no. 41 (10 October 1907), p. 3; 'Dr. P. Nathans Aufenthalt in Konstantinopel', *Dr. Bloch's österreichische Wochenschrift* 24, no. 41 (11 October 1907), p. 677; 'Die Reise Dr. Nathans', *Die Welt* 11, no. 41 (11 October 1907), p. 20; 'Dr. Nathan und Dr. Mittwoch im Orient', *Jüdische Rundschau* 12, no. 42 (18 October 1907), pp. 461–462; 'Dr. Paul Nathan's Journey to the East', *Hebrew Standard*, 1 November 1907. See also *Jüdische Rundschau* 12, no. 41 (10 October 1907), p. 417; no. 50 (13 December 1907), p. 537. See also Feder, *Politik und Humanität*, pp. 85–88. According to Christoph Jahr, *Paul Nathan*, p. 190, it was in 1908 that Nathan and Mittwoch spent four months together traveling the Near East, but this is not correct. Jahr correctly states (on p. 248) that Nathan undertook another, solo trip to the Near East, especially Haifa, in April–May 1908.

7 For the planning and founding of the Technikum and the role of Paul Nathan and the Hilfsverein, see Zeev W. Sadmon, *Die Gründung des Technions in Haifa im Lichte deutscher Politik, 1907–1920* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994); Jahr, *Paul Nathan*, p. 188ff.

8 See letters Mittwoch to Abraham Shalom Yahuda, Berlin, 21 August 1907, and to Leone Caetani, Haifa, 15 November 1907. All other dates are mentioned in the various press reports

Abyssinian monks in Jerusalem.[9] He also reports that in November he made a one-day visit to Nablus, where he spent time with the Samaritans.[10] Otherwise, Mittwoch remained largely silent about his 1907 trip in his correspondence with colleagues and friends, and there is nothing to suggest that he was able to pursue any other scholarly interests during the journey.

We are much better informed about Mittwoch's first trip to Egypt and the Near East. During the spring of 1899, shortly after the completion of his dissertation, he traveled to the region in the company of the Jewish archaeologist and orientalist Moritz Sobernheim (1872–1933). The preparations for the trip began in 1898, and Sobernheim's principal destination was Palmyra. Sobernheim had apparently also hoped to visit Hatra in Mesopotamia, but this seems to have been unfeasible at the time.[11] Mittwoch left Schrimm in the beginning of February 1899 and travelled via Berlin and Vienna to Trieste, where he joined Sobernheim. Their initial plan to leave Trieste for Egypt on 1 February 1899[12] was apparently delayed by a few days (it is possible that Mittwoch left a week after Sobernheim).[13] They spent sixteen or twenty-three days in Cairo, and on 2 March 1899 they embarked on a steamer heading from Alexandria to the Levant, where they visited Beirut, Damascus, Palmyra, Aleppo, and eventually Palestine before returning again to Cairo. From there, Mittwoch traveled back to Palestine, apparently on 31 May 1899, in order to visit Jerusalem – his first-ever visit to the city.[14]

Besides Sobernheim,[15] the travelling party included Sobernheim's brother, the bacteriologist and microbiologist Georg Sobernheim (1865–1963),[16] as well as the architect Wilhelm Bernoulli (1869–1909) and the engineer Robert Otzen (1872–1934) for at least some segments, certainly the journey from Damascus to Palmyra and then to Beirut and perhaps Cairo. The journey to Palmyra is

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or Feder's *Politik und Humanität*; see above, n. 6. It is unknown whether Mittwoch visited some of the destinations he mentions in his letters separately rather than with Nathan.

9 See letters Mittwoch to Hubert Grimme, Berlin, 6 April 1908 and to Carl Heinrich Becker, Berlin, 5 April 1908.

10 See letter Mittwoch to Ignaz Goldziher, Berlin, 10 May 1908.

11 See letter Mittwoch to Becker, Schrimm, 7 October 1898.

12 See letter Mittwoch to Becker, Berlin, 28 December 1898.

13 See letter Mittwoch to Goldziher, Schrimm, 5 February 1899.

14 See letter Mittwoch to Becker, Cairo, 28 May 1899. It is unclear whether Sobernheim also participated in this portion of the journey.

15 For the other travel companions, see Moritz Sobernheim, 'Palmyrenische Inschriften', *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* 4 (1902), pp. 207–219, at 207.

16 On him, see C.J. Hallauer, 'In memoriam Professor Georg Sobernheim (1865–1963)', *Pathologia et Microbiologia* 28 (1965), p. 235.

described in detail by Moritz Sobernheim,[17] and additional information is provided by Mittwoch in his correspondence with Carl Heinrich Becker (1876–1933).[18] According to Sobernheim's account, the group departed from Damascus on 19 March 1899 accompanied by several servants and a Turkish soldier and arrived in Palmyra on 25 March. On their way to Palmyra they camped in Quṭayfa, Dayr ʿAṭiyya, al-Qaryatayn, Qaṣr al-Khayr, and ʿAyn al-Bayḍa. Their sojourn in Palmyra lasted for twelve days, so they left Palmyra on or around 6 April. In Palmyra, they were prohibited from undertaking actual digging, and some of the squeezes they had taken of inscriptions got lost on the return journey. However, Sobernheim and Mittwoch copied numerous inscriptions,[19] and Sobernheim photographed extensively. He later gave some of his photographs to the art historian Josef Strzygowski (1862–1941), who analyzed some of them in his *Orient oder Rom: Beiträge zur Geschichte der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst* (1901).[20] Otzen also prepared a topographic map of Palmyra. In addition, the group undertook excursions into the surroundings of Palmyra and made other geographical observations.

The journey and his joint work with Sobernheim attracted Mittwoch to Near Eastern epigraphy, a fairly new area of scholarship at the time.[21] Mittwoch's first publication on epigraphic material appeared in 1902 and revolves around inscriptions gathered during the 1899 trip.[22] He continued working in this area

17 Moritz Sobernheim, 'Meine Reise von Palmyra nach Selemīje', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 22 (1899), pp. 189–196.

18 Letters Mittwoch to Becker, [Cairo], 28 May 1899, and Schrimm, 18 August 1899.

19 Sobernheim also copied the inscriptions of two tomb stones in al-Qaryatayn; see Sobernheim, 'Palmyrenische Inschriften', pp. 207–209.

20 Josef Strzygowski, *Orient oder Rom: Beiträge zur Geschichte der spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1901), p. 11ff. ('Eine Grabanlage in Palmyra vom j. 259 CA. und ihre Gemälde'). The chapter opens with the following statement: 'Herr Dr. Moritz Sobernheim hat im Frühjahr 1899 eine Reise nach Palmyra untermommen und u.a. Photographien einer künstlerisch ausgestatteten Grabhöhle im Südwesten der Stadt mitgebracht, die ich auf sein Ersuchen gern zur Veröffentlichung übernahm, weil mir dadurch der erwünschte Anlass gegeben wurde, einem für das Verständnis der Vorbedingungen der christlichen Kunst des Orients nicht unwichtigen Kreise näher zu treten'. For Strzygowski's notion of the Oriental origins of late antique art and the rise of Christian art and his attacks against Franz Wickhoff's (1853–1909) *Die Wiener Genesis* (1895) and Alois Riegl's (1858–1905) *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie* (1901), both of which argued for the continuity of Roman art, see Jaś Elsner, 'The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901', *Art History* 25 (2002), pp. 358–379.

21 See, e.g., Richard Gottheil, 'Arabic Epigraphy', *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 28 (1911), pp. 77–80.

22 Eugen Mittwoch, 'Hebräische Inschriften aus Palmyra', *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* 4 (1902), pp. 203–206.

until the late 1930s, when he collaborated with the German orientalist and diplomat Johannes Heinrich Mordtmann (1852–1932) and, after the latter's death, with his former student Hans Schlobies (1904–1950) on South Arabian material that had been brought from Yemen by Hermann Burchardt (1857–1909) and later by Carl Rathjens (1887–1966) and Hermann von Wissmann (1896–1979).[23] Sobernheim also involved Mittwoch in the preparation of epigraphic material that Sobernheim had collected on later journeys to the Middle East.[24]

It was in the Khedival Library in Cairo, where he was primarily looking for works of Arabic poetry, that Mittwoch consulted a manuscript of the *Dīwān* of the Umayyad poet Ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt (d. 80/699). He commissioned a copy of the codex, hoping to prepare a critical edition of the work.[25] In view of the poor quality of the copy, however, he eventually decided against it.[26] It is unclear why Mittwoch thought that the copy of the *Dīwān* he had seen was the only witness to the work. When Mittwoch visited the Khedival Library, Bernhard Moritz (1859–1939) was its director, having succeeded Karl Vollers (1857–1909) in 1896. Whereas Vollers had been nominated for the position by the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft and had served in it for a decade, Moritz's appointment was a political one.[27] Vollers was intimately familiar both with the copy of the *Dīwān* that Mittwoch had seen and with a commentary on it by al-Sukkarī (d 275/888), one of the work's transmitters, which was also preserved in the Khedival Library.[28] The Austrian Arabist Rudolf Geyer (1861–1929) had commissioned copies of both codices, and Vollers had

23 Walter Gottschalk, 'Die Schriften Eugen Mittwochs: Zum 4. Dezember 1936 verzeichnet', *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 81 (1937), pp. 243–250, nos. 66 (1928), 74 (1931), 75, 76 (1932), 81 (1933), 83 (1934), 85 (1935), 87 (1936). For von Wissmann's expeditions to Yemen with Rathjens and others, see Helmut Blume, 'Hermann von Wissmanns Beitrag zur Arabienforschung', *Geographische Zeitschrift* 68 (1980), pp. 161–172. On Mordtmann, see *Biographisches Handbuch des deutschen Auswärtigen Dienstes, 1871–1945*, ed. Auswärtiges Amt, Historischer Dienst, 5 vols. (Paderborn: F. Schönigh, 2000–2014), vol. 3, pp. 290–291. On Schlobies, see *Biographisches Handbuch*, vol. 4, pp. 91–92.

24 See Moritz Sobernheim and Eugen Mittwoch, 'Hebräische Inschriften in der Synagoge von Aleppo', *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* 4 (1902), pp. 203–206.

25 Mittwoch undoubtedly saw the manuscript that is described in *Fihrist al-kutub al-ʿarabiyya al-maḥfūẓa bi-l-Kutubkhāna al-Khadīwiyya*, 7 vols. (Miṣr: al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1884–1891), vol. 4, p. 235, "Dīwān Ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt."

26 See letter Mittwoch to Goldziher, Berlin, 13 May 1900.

27 See Sabine Mangold, 'Die Khedivial-Bibliothek zu Kairo und ihre deutschen Bibliothekare (1871–1914)', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 157 (2007), pp. 49–76.

28 See *Fihrist al-kutub al-ʿarabiyya al-maḥfūẓa bi-l-Kutubkhāna al-Khadīwiyya*, vol. 4, p. 250, 'Sharḥ Dīwān ʿUbayd Allāh b. Qays al-Ruqayyāt li-l-imām al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sukkarī.'

at some point during his term as the library's director collated these copies with the Cairene originals. But Vollers was no longer around when Mittwoch visited Cairo, and Moritz was mostly unfamiliar with the library's manuscript holdings.[29] An *editio princeps* of the *Dīwān* was published in 1902 by Nikolaus Rhodokanakis (1876–1945) as *Der Dîwân des ʿUbaid-Allâh ibn Ḳais ar-Ruḳajjât* (Vienna: Carl Gerold's Sohn, 1902) on the basis of Geyer's copies of the two Cairene witnesses. Mittwoch also encountered a fragmentary copy of the lexicographical work *Kitāb al-Muwāzana* by the fourth/tenth-century Muslim Arab philologist, lexicographer, and historian Abū ʿAbd Allāh Ḥamza b. al-Ḥasan al-Iṣfahānī, which may have prompted him to devote his *Habilitation* to Ḥamza and his oeuvre. Mittwoch commissioned a copy of this codex, too, during his sojourn in Cairo. He reported on his find in detail to Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921), who had assumed the work to be lost in his *Muhammedanische Studien* (1889),[30] and he included a detailed description of the fragment in his 1909 *Habilitation*.[31]

29 Mittwoch could also have learned about an additional copy of the *Dīwān* in the Khedival Library through August Fischer, 'Noch einmal Aus b. Ḥaǧar', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 49 (1895), pp. 673–680, esp. pp. 679–680, where Fischer quotes a letter from Goldziher describing the two copies, which Goldziher must have inspected. During Mittwoch's sojourn in Cairo, Friedrich Kern (1874–1921) was there as well with whom Mittwoch shared his interest in Ibn Qays al-Ruqayyāt. Kern connected Mittwoch with the scholar and editor Aḥmad b. al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1913), who informed them that the antigraph of the Cairene copy of the *Dīwān* was kept in Istanbul. Why Mittwoch did not follow this lead is unclear. See letter Friedrich Kern to Ignaz Goldziher, 27 February 1899, Pension Fink, Kairo (Oriental Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Correspondence Goldziher, GIL/21/02/16): 'Dr. Mittwoch aus Berlin, der mit Dr. Sobernheim hier ist (sie wollen in Palmyra ausgraben), gedenkt dem Ibn Qais ar-Ruqaijāt näherzutreten. Das Original der hiesigen Handschrift liegt, wie uns der Schech Šingītī sagte, in der Medrese 'Āšir Efendi in Konstantinopel'. For Friedrich Kern, see Sabine Schmidtke, "*Er versinkt aber in einem Meer von Handschriften*": Friedrich Kern (1874–1921) and His Studies on the Dogmatic History of Ḥanafism and Māturīdism,' *Sammler–Bibliothekare–Forscher: Zur Geschichte der Orientalischen Sammlungen an der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, ed. Sabine Mangold-Will, Christoph Rauch, and Siegfried Schmitt (Frankfurt/Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2022), pp. 315–386.

30 Letter Mittwoch to Goldziher, Berlin, 13 May 1900, which was accompanied by a detailed table of contents for the fragment. For Goldziher's discussion of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, see Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, 2 vols. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1888–1890), vol. 1, pp. 209–213, esp. p. 211, where he mentions Ḥamza's "leider ganz verlorene[s] *Kitâb al-muwâzana* (Buch der Abwägung)."

31 Eugen Mittwoch, *Die literarische Tätigkeit Ḥamza al-Iṣbahānīs: Ein Beitrag zur literarischen arabischen Literaturgeschichte*, Sonderabdruck aus den Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen 12, Abt. 2 (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1909), pp. 27–28, 48–51.

During his stay in Cairo, Mittwoch also purchased a bilingual Sephardic siddur, printed in Lemberg (or Bombay), that included an Arabic translation of the Hebrew text in the dialect of Baghdad. This acquisition fueled his interest in the dialect of the Jews of Baghdad.[32] During the years 1901 and 1902 Mittwoch was in close contact with Abraham Shalom Yahuda (1877–1951) about this and other materials pertinent to the Arabic dialects of Jews, especially those in Baghdad, and the two planned a joint publication on the topic, though one never materialized.

Finally, during his 1899 stay in Cairo Mittwoch obtained a small collection of forty Geniza fragments. He planned to prepare descriptions of the entire collection, but he eventually published on only three of the fragments, in 1903 and in 1914.[33] About half of Mittwoch's Geniza collection – twenty-two items, not including those described in his publications – were later sold to the Selly Oaks Colleges Library in Birmingham along with his books.[34] The library is renowned principally as the home of the collections assembled by Alphonse Mingana (1878–1937).[35] Brief descriptions of the twenty-two items from Mittwoch's Geniza collection were published in 1954 by Moshe H. Gottstein (1925–1991).[36] With one exception,[37] we do not know what happened to the remaining eighteen Geniza fragments acquired by Mittwoch in 1899.

After his return to Berlin, Mittwoch published a series of articles about his journey; they appeared in installments between May and December 1899 in *Der*

32 Letters Mittwoch to Goldziher, Berlin, 13 May 1900, and to Yahuda, Berlin, 25 March 1901.

33 See Gottschalk, 'Schriften', nos. 7, 8, 37.

34 Schmidtke, 'The Library of Eugen Mittwoch'.

35 Since 1999, when the Selly Oaks Colleges merged with the University of Birmingham, the latter institution has managed both the Mittwoch and the Mingana collection; see Benjamin Richler, *Guide to Hebrew Manuscript Collections*, 2nd rev. ed. (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2014), pp. 33–34, 142.

36 Moshe H. Gottstein, 'Hebrew Fragments in the Mingana Collection: To the Memory of Professor Eugen Mittwoch', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 5 (1954), pp. 172–176.

37 The fragment Mittwoch described in his 'Ein Genîza-Fragment', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 57 (1903), pp. 61–66, 214, is today in the possession of the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC (collection ID: MS.000883); for the item, see https://collections.museumofthebible.org/artifacts/34294-geniza-29-a-letter-by-rabbi-hananel?&tab=provenance#/ (accessed 1 October 2024). The fragment was identified as having been part of the original Mittwoch collection by Paul Fenton in 'A Re-Discovered Description of Maimonides by a Contemporary', *Maimonidean Studies* 5 (2008), pp. 267–291. Fenton's conclusion that the fragment indicates that Ḥananel ben Samuel had studied with Maimonides is contested by Mordechai Akiva Friedman, הרמב"ם וגניזת קהיר [*Maimonides and the Cairo Geniza*] (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2023), pp. 205–206. I thank Omer Michaelis for bringing the latter reference to my attention.

*Zeitgeist: Beiblatt zum Berliner Tageblatt* under the pseudonym "M.R. Credi."[38] On 28 January 1901, Mittwoch also delivered a public lecture at the invitation of the Hamburger Verein für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur about the situation of Jews in the East on the basis of his observations. The lecture was titled "Über die Lage der Juden in den muhammedanischen Ländern (Eindrücke nach einer im letzten Jahre unternommenen Orientreise)."[39] The manuscript of the lecture is preserved in the Eugen Mittwoch Archive at the National Library of Israel,[40] and a critical annotated edition is provided below. The lecture was also covered extensively by the local press.[41] The *Zeitgeist* articles and the Hamburg lecture were evidently written for a broader audience and did not discuss matters of purely academic interest. However, the lecture, in particular, provides some insights into the personal encounters Mittwoch had during his time in the East (the concluding sections on Morocco, Persia, and Mesopotamia are an exception, based as they are on published reports).

The following edition is based on Mittwoch's handwritten lecture manuscript, which he wrote on the recto pages of a notebook. Occasional corrections in Mittwoch's hand have been understood to represent the final version and are reflected in the edition, without any mention of the former, corrected version. Other occasional corrections by a later, unidentified hand have been ignored. The page numbers in the notebook are indicated in parentheses. Some of the pages, from p. 25 onward, have slight water damage, and the reading of

38 'Aus dem literarischen Kairo (Die Universität. – Der Buchhändlerbasar.). Von M.R. Credi', *Der Zeitgeist: Beiblatt zum Berliner Tageblatt* 18 (9 May 1899); 'Bilder aus dem Orient. I. Beirut. Von M.R. Credi', *Der Zeitgeist* 37 (11 September 1899); 'Bilder aus dem Orient. II. Der Libanon und seine Bewohner. Von M.R. Credi', *Der Zeitgeist* 38 (18 September 1899); 'Bilder aus dem Orient. III. Damaskus. Von M.R. Credi', *Der Zeitgeist* 41 (9 October 1899); 'Bilder aus dem Orient. IV. Durch die Wüste – nach Palmyra [Vorbereitung zur Reise. – Landschaftsbild.]. Von M.R. Credi', *Der Zeitgeist* 49 (4 December 1899); 'Bilder aus dem Orient. V. Durch die Wüste – nach Palmyra [Landschaftsbild. – Etappen der Reise.]. Von M.R. Credi', *Der Zeitgeist* 50 (11 December 1899). Why Mittwoch published his reports under a pseudonym and for what reason he picked 'M.R. Credi' is unknown. He refers to the name once in a letter to Carl Heinrich Becker (Schrimm, 18 August 1899) without providing an explanation.

39 See the announcements of the lecture in *Der Gemeindebote* 66, no. 4 (23 January 1902); *Israelitisches Familienblatt* 4, no. 4 (23 January 1901), p. 4. See also *Mittheilungen aus dem Verband der Vereine für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur in Deutschland* 9 (December 1901), p. 25.

40 Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Archives Department, ARC. MS Var. 540, Eugen Mittwoch Archive.

41 *Hamburger Fremdenblatt-Hamburger Abendzeitung* 73 no. 26 (31 Januar 1901), p. 9 ('Die Lage der Juden in den muhammedanischen Ländern'); *Hamburgischer Correspondent* 171 no. 51 (31 January 1901, morning edition), p. 18 [republished in abbreviated form in *Unterhaltungsblatt des Vorwärts*, no. 23 (1 February 1901), pp. 3–4].

the affected words is tentative. The spelling conventions found in the manuscript have been retained.

## 1 Edition

Die Lage der Juden in den mohammedanischen Ländern, von Eugen Mittwoch

Meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren!

Von Jahr zu Jahr wächst der Strom der Touristen, die aus allen Teilen der Welt an die Ufer des gewaltigen Mittelmeeres eilen, um die Wunder Ägyptens zu schauen. Denn es bedarf heute nur einer sechstägigen Reise, um den kalten Winter Deutschlands mit dem sonnigen Klima unter dem ewig blauen ägyptischen Himmel zu vertauschen. In früheren Jahrhunderten war es vorwiegend religiöse Sehnsucht, die fromme Pilger nach dem Morgenlande führte; ich brauche Ihnen an dieser Stelle nur einen Namen zu nennen, Juda Halléwi. Heute verbinden vor allem politische, wirtschaftliche und wissenschaftliche Interessen Abend- und Morgenland, und in mehr als einer Hinsicht gilt das Wort Goethes: Orient und Okzident sind nicht mehr zu trennen. Wissenschaftliche Zwecke waren es auch, die mich nach dem Orient führten, vor allem nach Palmyra, dem Tadmor der Bibel, fünf Tage von Damaskus in der syrischen Wüste gelegen. Die Reise bot mir auch willkommene Gelegenheit in Syrien nicht (2) nur, sondern auch in anderen Teilen des Orients, einen Blick zu thun in das Leben unserer morgenländischen Glaubensgenossen, deren Verhältnisse vielfach ganz anders geartet sind, als bei uns. Hiervon möchte ich Ihnen heute einiges vorführen. Zuvor aber will ich kurz das Milieu schildern, in welchem die Juden des Orient sich bewegen. –

Von Triest, dem dalmatinischen Hafen, aus trägt uns ein Eildampfer über die Fluten des adriatischen und mittelländischen Meeres hinüber zu den Gestaden Ägyptens. Das Schiff nimmt zunächst der italienischen Küste entlang seinen Weg, dann geht es weiter nach Süden, vorbei an Corfu und Cephallonia, hart an Ithaka heran, das liebliche Eiland des Odysseus, an Zaute und wie sie alle heißen, die ionischen Inseln, die dem Festland Griechenlands vorgelagert sind. Einen ganzen Tag über ist die Insel Kreta am Horizont sichtbar, dann nimmt das Schiff einen südöstlichen Kurs durch das offene, mittelländische Meer. Nun ist die Wasserfläche nirgends (3) mehr durch Land unterbrochen, so weit das Auge reicht, gleitet es über den glatten Spiegel des unermeßlichen Meeres. Am Morgen des fünften Tages ist das Festland sichtbar, immer näher rückt es, nur wenige Minuten noch, und wir laufen im Hafen von Alexandria ein. –

Endlich ist die Landung glücklich vollzogen; wir betreten afrikanischen Boden, ziehen ein in das Ägypterland, in die alte Stadt, die nach ihrem Gründer, dem großen Alexander, benannt ist. Wir sind im Orient, das zeigt uns die prachtvolle Blässe des Himmels, wie sie Ägypten auszeichnet; hochragende, schlanke Palmen erfreuen allenthalben unser Auge, das sich nicht satt sehen kann an der üppigen Pracht der Vegetation, jetzt in einem Moment, da im Vaterlande der Winter noch mit ungeschwächter Kraft regiert. Doch den *wahren* Orient lernen wir in Alexandria nicht kennen, die Stadt Alexander des Großen hat ihren orientalischen Charakter mehr und mehr verloren, der maurische Baustil ist verschwunden, moderne Geschäfts(4)häuser sind entstanden, das Straßenleben ist durch die zahlreichen Fremden beeinflusst. Doch auch der *alte* Orient ist aus Alexandria *fast* spurlos verschwunden. All die im Altertum als Weltwunder gepriesenen Tempel und Paläste, Synagogen und Kirchen, die griechische und jüdische Schriftsteller nicht genug verherrlichen können, sind dahin; und nur eine Säule zeugt noch von längst geschwundener Pracht. Dem roten Granit der Pompejussäule haben die Jahrhunderte wenig anzuhaben vermocht. Die 31 m. hohe Säule ist ein Meisterstück der Proportion. –

Von Alexandria bringt uns ein Eilzug in 3 1/2 Stunden nach Cairo. Er führt uns durch die gesegneten Fluten des Nildeltas, Getreide- und Baumwollenpflanzungen dehnen sich zu beiden Seiten des Weges; herrlich gedeihen Weintrauben, Mandarinen- und Orangenbäume. Rein und dünn und durchsichtig ist die Luft, und so können wir schon weit von Cairo entfernt die Umrisse der Pyramiden erkennen. Die Gegend wird immer freundlicher, die Zitadelle von Cairo wird sichtbar. Nur kurze Zeit (5) noch, und wir sind – an einer mit Sykamoren bestandenen Allee vorbei – im Bahnhof von Cairo eingelaufen. –

Was uns den unvergeßlichsten Eindruck von Cairo, der größten Stadt Afrikas und der mohammedanischen Welt, hinterläßt, ist mehr noch als die Pracht seiner Bauten, der Moscheen und Paläste, die allein hinreichen würde, des Europäers Auge zu entzücken, ist mehr als alles dies noch die bunte Mannigfaltigkeit des Straßenlebens. Tausend neue Eindrücke stürmen auf uns ein, mit einer solch überraschenden Vehemenz, dass wir die Einzelheiten zunächst nicht auseinanderhalten können. „Cairo ist“ nach einem trefflichen Ausspruch, „die bunteste und keckste Mosaik und Musterkarte aller Nationen, Lebensarten und kulturhistorischen Epochen, ein lebendiges Museum von allen möglichen und unmöglichen Formen, Fragmenten, Fetzen und Fratzen der Bildung, Mißbildung, der Sitte, der Künste, der Wissenschaften, des Heidentums, Christentums, Judentums und Mohammedanismus“.[42] Ich

42 Mittwoch quotes here, in abbreviated form and with slight modifications, from *Ein Kleinstädter in Aegypten: Reise von Bogumil Goltz* (Berlin: Franz Duncker, 1870), p. 185. The

spreche hier natürlich nicht von den neuen, in elegantem Pariser Geschmack eingerichteten Stadtteilen, die von der elektrischen Straßenbahn durchzogen werden. Wir müssen (6) [uns] vielmehr, wollen wir wahres orientalisches Straßenleben kennen lernen, in die alten Viertel begeben, in die Gegend der Basare und das dicht daneben gelegenen Haret el Jehūd, das Quartier der Juden. Sie dürfen sich unter diesem Quartier kein Ghetto vorstellen, in das die Juden Cairos gebannt wären. Längst sind die Thore gefallen, welche die einzelnen Viertel gegeneinander abtrennen. Die Juden dürfen überall, wo es ihnen beliebt, wohnen; die Reichen unter ihnen besitzen prächtige Villen in den vornehmsten Straßen der Stadt. Es ist nur das Bewußtsein der Zusammengehörigkeit, das die Mehrheit der Juden, wie auch die anderen Gemeinschaften, die Türken, Syrer, Armenier veranlaßt, in besonderen Quartieren nachbarlich bei einander zu wohnen. Das jüd[ische] Viertel ist in seinem äußeren Bilde von den muhammed[anischen] nur wenig unterschieden. Hier und dort sind die Straßen ungepflastert und oft so eng, daß zwei Rinder nur mit Mühe einander ausweichen können. Die vorspringenden Erker der gegenüberliegenden Häuser scheinen einander fast zu berühren. Beständig aber flutet durch die Straßen auf und ab (7) ein wirres Gedränge von Mensch und Tier. Der Lärm ist zunächst überwältigend; Kamelgebrüll, Eselsgeschrei, Peitschenknallen, die Stimmen der Treiber, die Rufe der Hausierer, alles tönt wild durcheinander. Je mehr wir aber das Ganze des Bildes überschauen und seine Einzelheiten festhalten können, umso packender wirkt auf uns der Reiz dieser einzigartigen Scenerie. Durch die Straßen bewegt sich, den wassergefüllten Ziegenschlauch auf dem Rücken, der Saḳḳā, der Wasserverkäufer, eine der populärsten Erscheinungen in einer orientalischen Großstadt. Ein anderer verkauft Orangenblütensaft, Süßholz- oder Rosinenwasser. Sie alle preisen ihre Waren in der dem Morgenländer eigenen blumigen Sprache an. Köstlich sind die Rufe der Früchteverkäufer: „Gott wird sie leicht machen, die Zitronen" – ruft der eine und meint, daß die Körbe durch schnellen Verkauf leicht werden. „O Tröster dessen, der in Not, o Kerne der Melone" ruft ein anderer. Und ein

original passage runs as follows: 'Kahira ist die bunteste, keckste Mosaik und Musterkarte aller Nationen, Lebensarten und kulturhistorischen Epochen, ein lebendiges Museum von allen möglichen und unmöglichen Formen, Fragmenten, Fetzen uud Fratzen der Bildung, der Mißbildung, der Artung, der Ausartung, der Rohheit, der Sitte, der Künste, der Wissenschaften, des Heidenthums, des Christenthums, des Muhamedanismus (nämlich des aufgewärmten Judenthums), der verwilderten Zivilisation, der Kulturbarbarei, der Ueberfeinerung, der Lebensvergeudung, der Lebensverkümmerung, der Verschwendung, der Bettelhaftigkeit, des Kleiderprunks, der Nacktheit, der Wollust, des Fakirthums, des Fanatismus, der Glaubenslosigkeit, der Glaubensmengerei, der Paradieses- und der Wüstennatur.'

Stiller, der Hennablüten verkauft, womit die Schönen des Orients die Fingernägel schminken, er spricht: „Düfte des Paradieses, Blumen der Henna“. (8)

In den Bazaren befinden sich die Läden der Juden in eigenen Straßen beieinander. Im Bazar der Juweliere finden wir fast ausschließlich Juden. Sehen wir da einem Handwerker bei der Arbeit zu, so finden wir Werkzeuge im Gebrauch, die bei uns schon längst zu der Urväter Hausrat gehören. Kaum hat der Verkäufer bemerkt, daß uns seine Auslage zu interessieren scheint, so läßt er Kaffee und eine Nargīle, die unvermeidliche Wasserpfeife, bringen, denn Gastfreundschaft wird im Morgenlande als alte von den Vätern ererbte Sitte treu geübt. Den Preis für ein Gegenstand erfährt man zunächst überhaupt nicht. „Wie du willst; nimm es umsonst.“ Natürlich sind diese Worte nicht ernst gemeint, sondern wie andere Phrasen, die wir hunderte Male am Tag hören, der Ausfluß der dem Orientalen eingeborenen Höflichkeit. Ist der Verkäufer, dessen Gastfreundschaft wir augenblicklich genießen, nicht wenig erstaunt, daß der Europäer sich in arabischer Sprache mit ihm unterhalte, welche Freude malt sich jetzt auf seinem ernsten, würdigen Gesichte, als wir ihn – denn nun (9) stehen [wir] vor dem Laden eines jüdischen Händlers –, in im Morgenlande noch recht lebendigen, hebräischen Sprache seine Fragen beantworten. Nun bedient auch *er* sich der Sprache der Bibel und entbietet uns zunächst den Gruß des Friedens. –

Seit alter Zeit wohnen Juden in Kairo; es war nicht lange nach Gründung der Stadt, als auch Juden sich dort niederließen. In Fustat – das ist der heute Altcairo genannte Stadtteil – wohnten unsere Glaubensgenossen in den Jahrhunderten des Mittelalters, die eine Blütezeit bildeten im Leben der Araber nicht nur, sondern auch der Juden. Hier in Fustat lebt Maimonides, von hier aus ritt er an jedem Tage hinüber nach der eigentlichen Stadt, in den Palast des Sultans, dessen Leibarzt er gewesen. Hier, in Fustat, schuf der vielbeschäftigte Mann in kargen Mußestunden seine unsterblichen Werke. –

Doch Bilder aus weit ferneren Zeiten steigen vor uns auf, wenn wir die Umgegend der Stadt durchstreifen: denn der Boden, auf dem wir wandern, ist geweiht durch die frühesten geschichtlichen Erinnerungen. (10)

Wir sind in Matarijje und sehen die Trümmer von Heliopolis, der Sonnenstadt, die uns als On nicht selten in der Bibel begegnet. An den Ruinen dieser Tempel standen einst Strabo und Plato, als sie urtümliche Weisheit suchten im Lande der Pyramiden. On = Heliopolis ist der Ort, von dem aus der Prophet Jeremias begeisterte Worte gerichtet an die Juden von Migdal, Memphis und Theben, vom Götzendienst zu lassen, so sie nicht der Zorn Gottes von neuem treffen sollte, wie in der Heimat, die sie ehedem verloren. –

Oder wir sind in dem nachbarlichen Gīze und bewundern die stattlichste Sammlung ägyptischer Altertümer, die die Welt aufweist. Sarkophage

und Mumien, Pflanzen und Tiere, Gebilde der Kunst und Erzeugnisse des Handwerks, sie alle hat der trockene Boden Ägyptens getreulich erhalten. Da liegt vor uns die Mumie Ramses II, der nach dem heutigen Stande der ägyptolog[ischen] Forschung mit dem Pharao der Bibel identifiziert wird. Der Körper des Ägypterkönigs ist prächtig unterziert, (11) das Gesicht läßt noch die kräftigen Züge des gewaltigen Herrschers erkennen, halbgeöffnet ist der Mund, mit Zähnen besetzt seine starken Kiefer, spärliches Haar bedeckt sein Haupt. Ein Gefühl eigener Art ist es, das uns beschleicht, die wir dem großen Ägypterkönig ins Antlitz schauen. –

Die gewaltigsten Schöpfungen der alten Pharaonen sind die Pyramiden. Der Gesamteindruck dieser ältesten Bautenkünstler des Menschengeschlechtes ist erhebend. In einer Viertelstunde haben wir mit Hilfe einiger Beduinen, die uns die oft meterhohen Felsstufen hinaufziehen und -schieben und -stützen, die größte der Pyramiden, die des Cheops, erklommen. Da eröffnet sich uns eine überraschende Aussicht. Die anderen Pyramiden liegen vor uns, und der Sphinx, der Vater des Schreckens, wie ihn die Araber nennen, ein gewaltiger Löwenleib mit einem Menschenhaupt, ganz aus dem Felsen gehauen. Leben und Tod, Fruchtbarkeit und Dürre sind vor uns gebreitet, ein überwältigender Kontrast. Nach Süd und West der tote Wüstensand, von Felsklippen umrahmt, alles ist gelb und braun und tot. Im Osten hingegen leuchtet der Nil und zu seinen Seiten prangt in lieblichem Blaugrün (12) das Fruchtland. Und dahinter gewahren wir – scharf von der Sonne beleuchtet – das große Cairo und das Wahrzeichen der Stadt, die hohen Minarette der Alabastermoschee. Wahrlich, ein grandioser Rundblick ist es, den wir von dieser luftigen Höhe aus genießen.

Meine verehrten Damen und Herren!

Ich habe lange verweilt bei der Schilderung von Cairo, weil diese Stadt, „die Mutter der Welt", in vorzüglicher Weise geeignet ist, das Leben einer jeden Großstadt des muhammedanischen Orients zu veranschaulichen. Allenthalben gewahren wir den Kontrast von Pracht und Elend, drängt sich uns auf der ergreifende Gegensatz von Einst und Jetzt. Nachdem wir so einen Blick gethan haben in das Milieu, in welchem sich unsere orientalischen Glaubensgenossen bewegt haben und bewegen, müssen wir uns nunmehr der *Gesamtheit* der Juden in muhammedanischen Ländern zuwenden und wollen ihr inneres und äußeres Leben, ihre Sitten und Bräuche und ihre wirtschaftlich-politische Lage einer Betrachtung unterziehen.

Den überwiegenden Teil der jüdischen Bevölkerung des Morgenlandes bilden nicht die *alteingesessenen* orientalischen Juden, die sich vorzugsweise in Südarabien und am Euphrat und Tigris erhalten ha(13)ben, sondern

seit Jahrhunderten bereits die *sephardischen* oder spanischen Juden. Voll Stolz blicken sie auf ihre glorreiche Vergangenheit in der spanischen Heimat, als aus ihrer Mitte, aus den Gemeinden Toledo und Granada, Cordova und Sevilla, so mancher jüdische Gelehrte, Dichter und Philosoph hervorging. Doch auf die friedliche Blüte der spanischen Gemeinden folgten die Wirren der Verfolgung, die Folter der Inquisition, folgte endlich das grausame Edikt Ferdinands und Isabells der Katholischen, das die Juden unbarmherzig aus Spanien verjagte. Viele von ihnen suchten und fanden eine neue Heimat in den muhammedanischen Ländern, in den Staaten des Sultans, der damals noch einer der mächtigsten Herrscher der Welt war. Ihre spanische Heimat aber haben die Sephardim bis heute nicht vergessen, und heute sprechen die türkischen Juden *Spagniolisch*, d.i. das Spanische jener Zeit, mit hebräischen Bestandteilen vermengt. Noch heute schreiben sie in hebräischen Lettern die stolze Sprache ihrer Verfolger, in ihr drucken sie ihre Zeitungen, ja, das Spagniolische ist ihnen eine heilige Sprache, es hat Eingang gefunden in ihre synagogale Liturgie. Der conservative Zug, der den Juden überall eigen ist, mag diese zähe Festhalten an der Sprache der Vergangenheit erklären. – Der nämlichen Erscheinung begegnen wir bei den *aschkenasischen* Juden (14) des Orients. Die Aschkenasim sind nur zum kleinsten Teile aus *Deutschland*, zum größten aus Rußland, Galizien, Mähren und Ungarn nach Palästina und Ägypten eingewandert. Sie bedienen sich auch im fernen Morgenlande, auch wenn sie schon in der 5. oder 6. Generation dort weilen, der deutschen Sprache, freilich mit der merkwürdigen Betonung, die den Jargon ihrer Heimat kennzeichnet. Da sie wie die Sprache, so auch die Sitten und Bräuche ihre Heimat beibehalten haben und sich nur wenig von den Juden Berlins unterscheiden, können wir sie hier außer Acht lassen. Das Verhältnis zwischen Aschkenasim und Sephardim ist meist ein gespanntes. Das Wort „stolz wie ein Spanier“ gilt auch von den Sephardim, sie halten die Aschkenasim für einen minderwertigen Bestandteil der jüdischen Gemeinschaft. Mit dem Stolz der Spanier hat sich in den Sephardim des Morgenlandes gepaart die Ruhe und Würde der Türken und Araber, in deren Mitte sie gastliche Aufnahme gefunden. In Lebensweise und Gebahren unterscheiden sich die Sephardim nur wenig von den Muhammedanern. Höflichkeit und Gastfreundschaft, Ruhe und Gottesergebenheit zeichnen beide in gleicher Weise aus. Beobachten wir einen würdigen Sephardi, wie er zu glutvoller Mittagszeit (15) und nach des Tages Arbeit in kühler Abendstunde sich des Kēf erfreut, des süßen Nichtstuns, das die Lieblingsbeschäftigung der Morgenländer bildet! Wir können ihn kaum von einem arabischen Scheich unterscheiden. Da sitzt er nach der Landessitte mit untergeschlagenen Beinen auf einem Divān, mit besonderem Behagen schlürft er den kräftigen, schwarz braunen Kaffee, eingehüllt in blaue

Rauchwolken, die gurgelnd seiner Wasserpfeife entsteigen. Ruhe und Frieden lagern auf seinem Antlitz, sein Gottesvertrauen bannt jede Sorge; spielend lässt er die Glieder einer rosenkranzartigen Kette durch seine Finger gleiten. Denn der Rosenkranz ist im Morgenland des spezifisch-christlichen Charakters entkleidet und dient Muhammedanern und Juden in gleicher Weise, wie den Christen, zu angenehmem Zeitvertreib. –

Die sephardischen, besonders die arabischen Juden, halten in überwiegender Mehrheit treu zu den religiösen Satzungen des Judentums. Am fremdartigsten berührt es uns an den orientalischen Juden, daß es ihnen gestattet ist, zwei Frauen zu heiraten. Die Frau kann dem Willen des Mannes nicht entgegen sein, aber es steht ihr das Recht zu, die (16) zweite Frau nicht in ihrem Hause zu dulden. Der Mann muß dann der zweiten Frau einen besonderen Haushalt einräumen. Und da dies mit großen Kosten verbunden ist, so ist – übrigens auch unter Muhammedanern – die Polygamie meist seltener, als man im Abendlande annimmt.

Streng wird im allgemeinen die Sabbatfeier gewahrt, und da die Juden in vielen Städten einen beträchtlichen Teil der Kaufmannschaft bilden, so ist der Sonnabend von manchen Orten zu einem allgemeinen geschäftlichen Ruhetage geworden, zu einem Ruhetage für die gesamte Kaufmannswelt, die Muhammedaner und christlichen europäischen Kaufleute eingeschlossen.

Wer am Sabbat durch das jüdische Quartier von Cairo sich bewegt, sieht ein Bild, das ganz anders geartet ist, als in den Tagen der Woche. Tiefer Friede lagert über den sonst von Lärm widerhallenden Straßen der Judenstadt. Aus den Synagogen strömen, in festliche Gewänder gekleidet, die Scharen der Beter. In den Stunden vor Mittag – denn nachher ist die Hitze des Tages zu drückend – machen die angesehensten Mitglieder der Gemeinde dem Chacham-Baschi, dem von der Regierung über die Juden gesetzten größten Rabbiner und Beamten,[43] ihre Aufwartung. Mit (17) ihnen betreten wir sein stattliches Haus. Der Wirt sowohl als seine Gäste begrüßen uns, indem sie die Linke an Herz, Stirn und Lippe legen. Dann reicht uns der Chacham seine Rechte und and entbietet uns den Sabbat-Friedensgruß. Das erste Anrecht des Gastes ist die Bewirtung u[nd] heute wird nicht dampfender Kaffee und die Wasserpfeife gereicht; denn heute ist's Sabbat. Ein Diener reicht in silberner Schale verzuckerte Früchte, ein anderer in kristallener Schale eisgekühlte Limonade. Die

43 For the institution of the Ḥakham Bashī in the Ottoman Empire, see Avigdor Levy, 'Haham Başı (Chief Rabbi)', *Encyclopaedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, ed. Norman A. Stillman (Leiden: Brill, 2010), https://doi.org/10.1163/1878-9781_ejiw_COM_0008940; Yaron Harel, 'Ḥakham Bashī,' *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Dan Diner (Leiden: Brill, 2018), https://doi.org/10.1163/2468-2845_ejgk_COM_0284.

Höflichkeit erfordert, daß der Gast, ehe er von dem Dargebotenen genießt, sich wieder zum Herrn des Hauses wendet und die Hand an Herz, Stirn und Lippen führt. Das Gespräch wird im Hause des Chacham mit Vorliebe in hebräischer Sprache geführt; alles hat einen ernsteren und feierlicheren Charakter als bei uns. Die Frauen des Hauses – die verheiratheten Söhne mit ihren Familien bleiben gewöhnlich im Hause des Vaters – die Frauen wünschen Auskunft über europäische Verhältnisse und besonders über ihre abendländischen Schwestern. Inzwischen haben sich zwei von den anwesenden Gästen in einen Streit verwickelt, ob Elsaß-Lothringen zu Frankreich oder Rußland gehöre. (18) Der Chacham selbst ist mehrere Monate in Europa gewesen, und über die allgemeine Weltlage und die Verhältnisse der Judenheit im Besonderen wohl unterrichtet.

Der Chacham-Baschi in Cairo vertritt der Regierung gegenüber die gesamten ägyptischen Juden, wie der Chacham-Baschi in Constantinopel die Juden des weiten ottomanischen Reichs. Er besitzt dieselbe Stellung wie die Kirchenfürsten der christlichen Konfessionen, wie der romanische und koptische Patriarch, gehört also zu den hohen Würdenträgern des Staates. Macht er einen offiziellen Besuch, so schreitet wie vor einem Konsul ein Ḳawass, ein uniformierter, bewaffneter Diener,[44] einen silberbeschlagenen Heroldstab in der Hand, vor ihm her. Der Chacham-Baschi leitet nicht nur die religiösen, sondern auch die politischen Angelegenheiten der Gemeinde. In seiner Kanzlei werden die Register über die Juden geführt, werden Kaufverträge rechtsgiltig geschlossen; denn auch mit richterlichen Befugnissen ist er ausgestattet. Freilich haben sich auch hier die Verhältnisse in den letzten Jahren gewaltig verschoben; das Recht, Gefängnisstrafen zu vollziehen, ein Recht, von dem der Chacham in früherer Zeit noch wegen (19) religiöser Vergehen Gebrauch machte, wird er heute wohl schwerlich ausüben.

Die neben und unter dem Chacham-Baschi wirkenden Rabbinen unterstützen diesen in der Entscheidung religiöser Fragen und erteilen den hebräischen Unterricht an den Gemeindeschulen. Wir sind hiermit zu einem wunden Punkte in den Verhältnissen der orientalischen Judenheit gelangt.

Bis vor wenigen Jahrzehnten gab es im Orient nach europäischem Muster eingerichtete jüdische Schulen überhaupt nicht. Und auch heute noch besucht die Mehrzahl der jüdischen Kinder die Talmud-Thora-[Schulen], das sind die

44 For the term, see Enno Littmann, *Morgenländische Wörter im Deutschen*, 2nd revised edition (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1925), p. 72: 'Aus neuerer Zeit sind uns die Konsulatswächter, die Kawassen, bekannt geworden; im Arabischen ist qauwâs ein 'Bogenschütze,' dann auch, seit man das Wort für Bogenschießen auf das Gewehrschießen übertragen hat, 'Gewehrschütze'.'

von einem Chacham geleiteten Gemeindeschulen. Ein einziger Besuch einer derartigen Schule genügt, um ihren traurigen Zustand erkennen zu lassen. Der Unterricht ist im wesentlichen auf das Hebräische beschränkt; alles in völlig unmethodischer Weise und in Räumen, die jeder Hygiene Hohn sprechen. Diesen unerquicklichen Verhältnissen gegenüber bedeuten die im gesamten Orient von der Alliance Israélite und einige nach ihrem Muster errichteten Schulen einen entschiedenen Fortschritt. Die Schulhäuser machen einen freundlichen Eindruck (20). Die Lehrer, die zum größten Teil ehemalige Schüler der Anstalten sind, genießen an der Normalschule in Paris ihre Ausbildung, der Lehrplan ist systematisch und vielfältig. Die Schüler lernen neben der Landessprache noch hebräisch, französisch und englisch, sie werden eingeführt in das Leben der Völker, in die großen politischen Ereignisse, in die wesentlichen Naturerscheinungen, und in die hauptsächlichen Erfindungen der Neuzeit. Die Sprachbegabung, die alle Orientalen auszeichnet, erleichtert den Kindern die Erlernung der europäischen Sprachen. In verschiedenen Schulen zeigte man mir, wie leicht es den Kindern der oberen Klassen fällt einen Satz beispielsweise aus dem Französischen in das Arabische, aus diesem in das Englische, hieraus ins Hebräische, und dann natürlich zurück ins Französische zu übersetzen. Statt dieser sprachlichen Kunststücke sollte doch mehr Wert auf die Realien gelegt werden. Ein Fehler im Unterrichtsplan der Alliance Schulen scheint mir auch die ganz besondere Bevorzugung des Französischen zu sein; meist wird in den oberen Klassen der gesamte Unterricht in französischer Sprache erteilt. Es wäre entschieden ersprießlicher, wenn das Hauptgewicht auf (21) die Landessprache gelegt würde. Wenn überhaupt, wie ich nicht selten beobachtet zu haben glaube, die jungen Schüler geneigt sind, Sprache, Sitten und Bräuche ihrer Heimat für minderwertig zu halten gegenüber denen Europas, so scheint dies daran zu liegen, daß die Lehrer während ihrer Studienzeit in Paris allzu rasch Franzosen geworden sind und häufig dem Orient, aus dem sie selbst hervorgegangen sind, eine gewisse Geringschätzung entgegenbringen. So kommt es, daß sie oft auf die religiösen Gefühle ihrer Umgebung zu wenig Rücksicht nehmen und so das einträchtige Zusammenwirkung von Schule und Elternhaus nicht selten in Frage stellen. – Trotz der berührten Mängel ist der durch die Alliance Schulen vollzogene Fortschritt schon heute sichtbar. Die jüdische Jugend gewöhnt sich an Ordnung und Sauberkeit, die Schüler bekommen das Gefühl der persönlichen Würde, die geistigen Fähigkeiten, die lange genug im Morgenlande unterentwickelt schlummerten, regen sich und werden sich hoffentlich immer mehr entfalten.

Besonders segensreich wirken die von der Alliance errichteten Mädchenschulen. Was das Familienleben im (22) Morgenlande, besonders in den von europäischem Einfluß noch wenig berührten Gegenden, in den babylonischen

und marokkanischen Gemeinden, traurig gestaltet hat, ist die soziale Stellung der Frau. Die jungen Mädchen werden in vollständiger Unwissenheit erzogen, selbst zu Hausarbeiten würden sie nicht angehalten; die Juden teilen in dieser Hinsicht die Vorurteile der Muhammedaner. Dazu kam, daß die Töchter mit zwölf, ja mit zehn Jahren verheiratet würden. So würde das Mädchen in einem Alter, da seine abendländische Schwester noch mit Puppen spielte, schon Hausfrau und Mutter, ohne jene an geistiger Reife und Lebenserfahrung zu übertreffen. Daß sich die Verhältnisse in dieser Beziehung gebessert haben und die Eltern ihre Kinder doch erst mit 15 oder 16 Jahren verheiraten, ist nicht zum mindesten ein Verdienst der Alliance Schulen. –

Noch immer bleibt den Schulen im Orient eine große Aufgabe. Noch wurzeln tief im Volke gewisse abergläubische Ideen, die allen südlichen Völkern gemeinsam sind. Der Aberglaube hat mitunter feierliche Formen angenommen, Formen, die uns völlig fremdartig sind; ich meine: den Heiligenkult und die religiösen Pilgerfahrten (23).

Gegen 30.000 jüdische Pilger versammeln sich in jedem Jahre am 33. der Omertage[45] in Meron, zwei Stunden von Safed in Palästina gelegen, um teilzunehmen an den Feierlichkeiten am Grabe des R. Simon ben Jochai, in dem die Mystiker des Judentums, die Kabbalisten, ihren Heros verehren. Die Prozession wird geführt von einem jungen Mann, der barfüßig auf den Schultern zweier Freunde sich im Gleichgewicht hält. Hinter ihm her flattern silberverbrämte, den Namen des Rabbi tragende Fahnen. Sie werden tief gesenkt, so oft der Zug an einer Synagoge vorbeikommt. Eine Synagoge steht auch in der Nähe des Grabes; ihr Dach trägt auf hoher Säule ein steinernes Becken. Die Pilger füllen es mit Öl, und ihre Frauen werfen kostbare Tücher als Dochte hinein, ja manche Schöne verschmäht es nicht, ihren prächtigen Brautschleier zu opfern. Am Abend wird das Ölbecken entzündet. Blendende Helle lagert nunmehr über dem Becken am Grabe, und von Safed aus gesehen erscheint Meron wie ein einziger ungeheurer Feuerbrand. Nun werden die Massen lebendig, Begeisterung erfasst die Massen, wenn Greise um ein Feuer sich scharren und mystische Tänze aufführen den Ruhm des Rabbi besingend. Am Grabe kauern (24) Kranke, Blinde und Lahme, die aus weiter Ferne gekommen sind vom Glauben beseligt, daß der heilige Grabesstaub jegliche Krankheit bannen könne. Bis nach Mitternacht währt bei Musik und Tanz das festliche Treiben, das am Morgen darauf, nachdem man siebenmal mit den Gesetzesrollen den Platz umzogen, von neuem, diesmal noch frischer und fröhlicher, anhebt. Was die Freude erhöht, ist ein merkwürdiger Brauch. Die Eltern lassen ihren drei Jahre alten Kindern zum ersten Male – denn vorher hat nie eine Schere des

45 18 Iyyar 5659 fell on 28 April 1899. It is possible that Mittwoch attended the procession on that day in person.

Kindes Haupt berührt – die Haare scheren. Mit dieser feierlichen Handlung werden Verwandte und Freunde betraut. Daran schließen sich allerlei Lustbarkeiten; man ißt und trinkt und singt und tanzt und kehrt abends frohgemut nach Safed zurück.

Erscheinen uns so einzelne Bräuche der orientalischen Juden eigenartig und seltsam, um wie viel mehr befremdet uns das gesamte Leben einer jüdischen Sekte, die sich an einigen Orten des Morgenlandes erhalten hat, befremdet uns Leben und Lehre der Karäer.

(25) So sehr sich auch die sephardischen und aschkenasischen Juden unterscheiden, sie bilden den Karäern gegenüber eine Einheit, die der rabbanitischen Juden. [Denn] neben der Bibel ist ihnen der Talmud Quelle [religi]öser Überlieferung. Nicht so die Karäer, sie [verwer]fen die Autorität des Talmuds. Einst war die [Sekte] weit verbreitet im Morgenlande. Heute ist es nur noch ein spärlicher Rest; aber mit inniger Treue halten die Enkel zu den Lehren Anans, ihres Stifters. Auch in Südrußland und in der Krim wohnen, wie bekannt ist, Karäer, die dort nicht wie die Juden Ausnahmegesetzen unterworfen sind, sondern die gleichen Rechte besitzen, wie die griechisch-orthodoxe Bevölkerung. Im Morgenlande haben die Karäer heute nur noch drei Gemeinden, die größte in Kairo, eine kleinere in Constantinopel, und einige Familien wohnen in Jerusalem. Die Karäer in Cairo – etwa 1000 an Zahl – sind in Tracht und Sprache völlig arabisiert. Sie treiben mancherlei Handwerk, vor allem die Goldschmiedekunst, ein von Alters her von den arabischen Juden geübtes Handwerk; einige von ihnen besitzen ein fürstliches Vermögen. An einem Sabbat besuchte ich ihre Synagoge; (26) ich hatte es gut getroffen; denn an jenem Tage feierten die Karäer das Purimfest. Auf dem Dache der Laubhütte, die im Vorhofe steht, lagen noch vom Jahre zuvor Palmzweige und Myrthen; denn die Laubhütte wird nach karäischer Lehre mit den vier Pflanzenarten gedeckt, die die Rabbaniten zum Feststrauß vereinen. Gerade wollte ich die Schwelle der Synagoge betreten, da trat mir ein Greis entgegen und rief mir den Bibelvers zu: „Zieh aus den Schuh von deinen Füßen, denn der Ort, auf dem Du stehst, ist heiliger Boden" [Ex. 3:5]. Ich folgte seiner Mahnung. Die Synagoge ist überaus einfach gehalten, nur an der Wand stehen einige Bänke; die Mehrzahl der Beter sitzt auf dem Boden, der mit prächtigen antiken Teppichen belegt ist. Nach dem Gottesdienst fragte mich der Chacham, ob ich auch Karäer sei oder nur der Zufall mich hierhergeführt habe. „Ich bin gekommen", erwiderte ich, „um die alte Bibelhandschrift zu sehen, die in dieser Synagoge aufbewahrt wird." „Du hast nur die zweite meiner Fragen beantwortet", meinte der Chacham, „doch diese Worte enthielten auch die Antwort auf (27) die erste. Dann wärst du Karäer, so wüßtest du, daß wir heute, außer zur Toravorlesung, die Bibel nicht berühren dürfen, doch morgen sollst du sie sehen, denn wir sind Brüder".

Als ich am anderen Tage den Chacham besuchte, traf ich ihn, in die Lektüre der Bibel vertieft. Im selben Zimmer traf seine Frau die Vorbereitungen für das Mittagsmahl; denn Einfachheit ist die namhafte Tugend der Karaiten. Auch die Reichen unter ihnen halten keine Dienstboten. Nur der Chacham hat einen Ḳawassen, um seine Macht auch äußerlich zu repräsentieren. Der Chacham antwortete mir bereitwillig auf meine Fragen betreffs karäischer Bräuche. Als ich meiner Verwunderung Ausdruck gab, daß das Purimfest auf einen Sonnabend fallen könne,[46] was bekanntlich nach dem rabbanitischen Kalender unmöglich ist, gab er mir folgende Antwort: „Wir haben keinen ein für alle Mal festgesetzten Kalender; sondern, wie in den Tagen der Vorzeit, verkündige und heilige ich den neuen Monat, sobald zwei Zeugen bekunden, daß sie den Neumond gesehen. Und wie einst Feuersignale (28) gegeben wurden, von Ort zu Ort, weithin durch die jüdischen Lande, so vermittelt heute der elektrische Funke mit Blitzeseile die Kunde von der vollzogenen Neumondsweihe zwischen den karäischen Gemeinden von Cairo, Constantinopel und der Krim. Wiederum führte mich der Chacham in die Synagoge und zeigte mir das alte Bibelmanuskript, das älteste der Welt, geschrieben von der Hand des Vaters des berühmten Masorethen Ben Ascher.[47] Zwischen Karäern und Rabbaniten herrscht im allgemeinen heftige Feindschaft. Wenn ich den Eindruck hatte, als sei der Haß auf Seiten der Sephardim bedeutender, so liegt dies natürlich daran, daß die Karäer, mit denen ich zusammenkam, mir, dem Gastfreund, nicht ihre wahre Meinung von den Rabbaniten geäußert haben werden. –

Meine verehrten Damen und Herren!

Die Zeit ist vorgeschritten und ich werde die politisch-wirtschaftliche Lage der Juden des Morgenlandes nur in gedrängter Kürze behandeln können. Die Lage der ägyptischen und türkischen Juden ist recht günstig. Die Bedrückung

46 14 Adar 5659 thus fell on 26 Februrary 1899. I thank Meira Polliack and Jakham Magdi Shemuel for the calculation of the date.

47 Mittwoch refers here to the Cairo codex of the Prophets, transcribed by Moses ben Asher and dated 896 CE. In 1905 the manuscript was also seen by Richard Gottheil, who made some recommendations for its better treatment; see Richard Gottheil, 'Some Hebrew Manuscripts in Cairo', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 17 (1905), pp. 609–655, esp. p. 609ff. For the codex, see also Paul Kahle, 'The Hebrew Ben Asher Bible Manuscripts', *Vetus Testamentum* 1 (1951), pp. 161–167, esp. pp. 161–163. The codex was later published by an editorial team as *El Códice de profetas de el Cairo*, ed. F. Pérez Castro, Carmen Muñoz Abad [et al.], 8 vols. (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1979–1992). For the edition, see also Aron Dotan, 'The Cairo Codex of Prophets and Its Spanish Edition', *Sefarad* 46 (1986), pp. 161–175.

früherer Jahrhunderte fand ein Ende durch die freisinnigen Verordnungen der hohen Pforte, die zum Abschluß gelangt sind in der Constitution von 1876. Diese verkündet in den Artikeln 17–19 (29) die Gleichheit aller Ottomanen vor dem Gesetz. Diese Gleichheit besteht nicht etwa nur auf dem Papier, sondern ist in Wahrheit durchgeführt. Wir finden Juden in der Deputiertenversammlung, im Senat und in allen Zweigen der Verwaltung. Ungehindert dürfen sie jeden Beruf ergreifen, der ihnen beliebt. Die Mehrheit bilden die Kaufleute jede Art; mancher Beruf, wie der der Juweliere, Banquiers und Geldwechsler ist vorwiegend in Händen der Juden. Groß ist die Zahl der Handwerker und Arbeiter. Es gibt wohl kein Handwerk, das nicht von Juden ausgeübt würde. Und mancher Lastenträger und Bauarbeiter, Steinschleifer und Gerbergeselle verrichtet in schwerer Arbeit sein Tagewerk, um in den Mußestunden des Abends aus vergilbten Folianten der Weisheit der Ahnen zu lauschen.

Wenn auch die *wirtschaftliche* Lage der Juden des Morgenlandes günstiger zu nennen ist als die der Gesamtbevölkerung, so ist doch auch unter ihnen der Mittelstand nur schwach vertreten. Einzelnen Familien, in denen sich ungeheure Reichtümer angehäuft haben, steht die überwiegende Mehrheit jener gegenüber, die von ihrer Hände Arbeit nur kümmerlich ihr Dasein fristen. Weit schlimmer als in der Türkei und Ägypten ist die Lage der Juden in Palästina. Elend über Elend – trotz der Almosen, die aus allen Teilen der Welt nach Palästina wandern; über die Verteilung derselben hört man bittere Klagen. Ein Anfang zur Besserung scheint gemacht durch die sich kräftig entwickelnden (30) Colonien. Ich kann hier dieses Gebiet nur streifen; denn eine nähere Behandlung dieser wichtigen Frage würde zu weit führen. Trauriger noch als in Palästina ist die Lage unserer Glaubensgenossen in zwei Grenzländern der muhammedanischen Welt, in Marokko und Persien. Die Juden Marokkos haben mehr intellektuelle Kraft bewahrt, als die türkischer Länder. Sie haben gelehrte Rabbiner, ihre Talmudschulen blühen. Allein die Gesetze, denen sie unterworfen sind, sind bejammernswert. An der Küste werden die Juden geschützt durch die europäischen Consuln, im Innern des Landes hingegen sind sie das Opfer der Beamten, die Beute der Räuber und Wegelagerer, die Prügelknaben einer fanatischen Bevölkerung. Ständig sind sie der Gefahr körperlicher Torturen ausgesetzt; an ihrer Kleidung müssen sie ein Erkennungszeichen befestigen, das sie als Juden brandmarkt. Ein Pferd dürfen sie vieler Orten nicht besteigen; barhäuptig und barfuß müssen sie durch den heißen Sonnenbrand gehen. Ihre Frauen, die trotz aller Bedrückung ihre viel gepriesene Schönheit bewahrt haben, empfinden es als große Schmach, daß sie nicht nach der Landessitte mit verhülltem Gesicht einhergehen dürfen, sondern ihr Antlitz unverschleiert den Blicken der Araber aussetzen müssen

(31). Trotz alledem ist die jüdische Bevölkerung des inneren Marokko fleißig und arbeitsam; sie ist es, die den Handel zwischen dem Inneren des Landes und der Küste vermittelt. Der Sultan von Marokko kennt die Dienste, die sie dem Lande leisten und würdigt sie mit Wohlwollen. Doch es liegt nicht in seiner Macht allein, eine Lage umzugestalten, die mit den Gesamtverhältnissen des Landes zusammenhängt und in der allgemeinen Uncultur ihre Ursache hat.

Nicht minder beklagenswert sind die Juden Persiens. Erpressungen u[nd] Gewalttätigkeiten hören nicht auf; man erfährt sie kaum; denn die Juden fürchten, wenn sie sich beschweren, noch schlimmerer Dinge gewärtig zu sein. Auf das nichtigste Zeugnis hin wird ein Jude der Gotteslästerung überführt und hingerichtet. Der Schah ist den Juden wohlgesinnt; aber alles Wohlwollen der Regierung vermag die Ärmsten nicht vor den durch eine fanatische Geistlichkeit veranlaßten Bedrückungen zu schützen.

Ich möchte nicht mit den trüben Bildern aus Marokko und Persien schließen, sondern will Ihnen zum Schluss noch ein Idyll vorführen, ein Idyll aus einer kleinen mesopotamischen Gemeinde.[48] Hier im Zweistromlande, zwischen (32) Euphrat und Tigris giebt es jüdische Dörfer, die, wie es scheint, ununterbrochen seit den Tagen das babylonischen Exils bestehen, Dörfer, die völlig unberührt sind von den Einflüssen Europas nicht nur, sondern auch der Großstädte des Orients. Zu diesen Dörfern gehört Bartenura in der Nähe von Mossul, der Stadt, die sich auf dem Boden des alten Ninive erhebt. Bartenura zählt 100 Häuser und ist ausschließlich von Juden bewohnt. Von den 100 Familienhäuptern sind 30 Weber, sie kaufen Ziegenwolle, die Frauen spinnen und die Männer weben sie. Sie verfertigen daraus einen dauerhaften Stoff, verarbeiten ihn zu Kleidungsstücken und verkaufen diese in den umliegenden Dörfern. 20 unter ihnen sind Gerber und Schuster. Die Berge der Umgegend liefern ihnen in Menge die Eichen, aus denen sie den Gerbstoff ziehen. Die 50 anderen Familien betreiben den Kleinhandel; sie kaufen in Mossul Baumwollstoffe und Spezereien und verkaufen sie in den Dörfern der Umgegend. „Was verdient ihr täglich?“ fragte man einen jüdischen Bauer aus Bartenura, „bald mehr, bald weniger, doch immer genug“. Im (33) Durchschnitt beträgt der tägliche Ver[dienst] 50 Pfennige für die Familie. Und das genügt Ihnen. Von 4 Pfennige erhält man ein Pfund Brot und von 7 [Pfennige ein Pfund Fleisch]. Gemüse u[nd] Obst sind fast umsonst zu haben. Die [gesamten] Kosten für den Aufbau eines Hauses betragen – [40] Mark. „So sind wir“ – meinte jener

48 Mittwoch quotes in this section, in heavily abbreviated form and with slight modifications, a report that was published as ‘Alliance Israélite Universelle: Israeliten der asiatischen Türkei’, *Der Israelit: Ein Central-Organ für das orthodoxe Judenthum* 34, no. 89 (9 November 1893), supplement, pp. 23–24.

Jude – „weder reich noch arm; der Lohn ist billig, wir verdienen genug, um unsere Frauen und Kinder zu ernähren, u[nd] es bleibt uns Zeit übrig für das Studium der Bibel und des Talmuds."

Wie lange noch, u[nd] die friedlichen Ebenen Mesopotamiens durcheilt das Dampfroß. Unsere wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen zu jenen Ländern werden sich enger gestalten. Dann wird sich auch in den stillen Dörfern am Euphrat und Tigris eine Entwicklung vollziehen, deren Vorläufer wir schon jetzt in den Großstädten des Morgenlandes wahrnehmen. Auch hier werden dann mit den Erzeugnissen der Industrie die Sitten und Unsitten Europas Eingang finden, und die würdevollen Bräuche des Morgenlandes werden mehr u[nd] mehr schwinden, und nicht ohne Bedauern werden wir dann die Worte Goethes sprechen können, die ich im Eingange meiner Ausführungen genannt habe: „Orient und Okzident sind nicht mehr zu trennen".

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# PART 4

## *Artefacts and Visual Culture*

∴

CHAPTER 12

# Track-Changes. Aging, Use, Repair, and Conservation Treatments of Arabic Manuscripts in a Research Library

*Karin Scheper*

A corpus of texts as important as the Arabic manuscript collection in Leiden University Libraries (UBL) needs to be preserved *and* be accessible at the same time. The books were collected for study, and although the use of manuscripts in the Reading Room nowadays is hugely different from the circumstances in which many of the items were handled and studied when they first arrived in Leiden, it still is our duty as guardians and safekeepers to make and keep the books available to students and scholars who ask for them. Arnoud Vrolijk's approach to working with the collections has always been clear. He allowed physical access to the manuscripts, unless there were convincing arguments that a certain item was too fragile, and he generously contributed to courses, Summer Schools and other events, to share his knowledge about the collection and to give the manuscripts a podium and bring them to the attention of young scholars.

The steady stream of users who sat in the Reading Room and worked with the manuscripts, and the increasing number of loan requests and the subsequent international travels of many of them left marks on the physical condition of the objects. For several manuscripts, the accumulated damage eventually caused problems and affected their accessibility. Others had amassed damage prior to their arrival in the collection that had not been attended to previously. Conservation care and treatments became a necessity. Over the years, Arnoud and I discussed many conservation issues. We had – sometimes long – conversations about the pros and cons of certain interventions. In this collaborative approach we always tried to maintain the material integrity of the manuscripts involved, including the stratification of historical usage, with old repairs – both local and western – and former ownerships and users' marks, or traces of natural disasters. This certainly led to difficult choices at times. An intervention could irreversibly change the visual appearance or necessarily lead to the removal of local repairs, yet doing nothing might render these valuable manuscripts inaccessible. While we mostly tried to minimise

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our 'footprint', we also realised that our decisions added just another layer to these traces of use in the history of the artefacts.

The crucial tool that curators and conservators have is a documentation system. It is standard practice to make a record of the codicological aspects, the manuscript's condition and characteristic individual features prior to treatment. This provides future users with the material information that may become inaccessible or could possibly change during conservation. A conservation report is also an account of why intervention was needed, which choices were made and why, and it records the condition and appearance of the manuscript after treatment. All this information is relevant for future collection care, while the reports may also help scholars and collection staff to better understand the physical manuscripts. The four case studies presented here illustrate interactions with the manuscripts, why they occurred, and how they changed their appearance.

## 1 Aging and Decay

In the closed stacks where most of the early-printed books are kept, one of the walls is adorned with an old poster saying that "Some of us are into leather, but we are not tough".[1] This statement is equally true for the manuscript collections. Leather had been the predominant covering material from the early centuries onward, throughout the Middle East. Some exceptions show that boards could be covered with fabric, and with the introduction of decorated paper in the fifteenth century, partial leather bindings appeared on the scene. Bookbinders combined the various materials in such a manner that strength and functionality balanced practical and economical choices. They strove to make something durable, but they probably knew that their work would not last forever. Whether hand-copied or printed, the survival of the artefacts has always been under threat of forces of nature, fire and water calamities, biological attack, unfavourable climate conditions, potential chemical instability, and mechanical damage.

In the lives of manuscripts and books, human interference has always had both positive and negative effects on these factors. Obviously, the library tries to minimise the negative impact, by maintaining favourable circumstances such as climate-controlled stacks, and providing boxes and supports where needed. Natural, autonomous decay, however, will still take place. Organic

1 Signed with B.L. Books, this quote belongs to someone, but a search for a reference has not yielded success.

materials age slowly, even when sitting on a shelf under good conditions. The pace of this aging process depends on the substance and composition of the materials; good-quality handmade paper will age more slowly than poorer material such as wood-pulp paper, and certain inks and other media may affect and speed up the aging process, while others are fairly stable. Such differences in autonomous decay are sometimes visible in parallel in a single manuscript. A remarkable example is a *Dīvān* by Ḥāfiẓ, dated 1489 CE (UBL Or. 856).

The Persian text was copied in a black soot ink on paper made in the Islamic lands, and the text areas were set within gold and coloured frame lines. In addition, each text panel was framed in a decorative window, cut from a different, coloured paper. Most of these windows (forming the margins) are made of a single coloured sheet, others appear to be made of a double layer of paper, pasted together, and each side overlaps the text panel just slightly. The colourful and gilded frame-lines disguise the seam. Contrasting colours such as ochre, blue, pink, salmon, green, and several marbled papers were used in a playful mix. This technique of text or miniature inset in decorative margins, *vaṣṣālī* (Persian: paper joining), was developed in the fifteenth century.[2] It is often extremely difficult to establish whether the original copyist planned to execute the volume this way or whether this *vaṣṣālī*, or remargin technique, was applied later, perhaps in order to enhance the beauty of the volume, or to overcome condition problems with the original textblock.[3] In the case of Or. 856, a reconstruction of what happened (and what the original design was) has become impossible since the manuscript has been resewn and bound in western fashion, probably in the eighteenth century. The tight structure prohibits access to the spine-folds and obscures any information that could possibly be gleaned from the older sewing stations, or the assemblage of the gatherings. Despite this altered appearance, it is still possible to see that the former binding did have an envelope shaped flap that was so typical of the Islamic book culture. Abrasive damage of the first folio that follows the western, added fly leaves, has the shape of this envelope flap. Another enticing feature is the presence of fixed page markers. The folios with miniatures are marked with silk thread, knotted to the fore-edge margin for easy access and to help the user

2 François Déroche, *Islamic codicology: an introduction to the study of manuscripts in Arabic script*, London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2006, p. 177, and Jake Benson, *The Advent of Abrī: The First Wave of Paper Marbling in the Long 16th Century* (*ca. 1496–1616*), PhD thesis, Leiden, 2024.

3 In this manuscript, the various coloured papers are also produced in the Islamic lands. These papers offer no clues as to their dating; this paper was made on vegetal sieves and therefore they do not have watermarks such as western handmade papers may have, which is made on metal moulds.



FIGURE 12.1 Or. 856 – condition prior to conservation, ff. 43–44, with scattered fragments of the green margins

navigate the volume. It may be due to the presence of these page-markers that the western bookbinder decided *not* to trim the edges after resewing, which helped preserve the original format of the volume.

The loss of the Middle Eastern binding in which the manuscript undoubtedly arrived when it came to Leiden in 1685 (the volume was part of Levinus Warner's collection) may be lamented, but it certainly was not the only instance in which a regional binding was replaced with a sturdy full-leather western 'library binding'. We must assume that, at the time, this intervention was deemed the best solution to a problematic situation that we can no longer reconstruct. In any case, the manuscript remained accessible for study and in fact, it is still used for teaching purposes. In the early 2000s, however, there was one particular complication that required conservation intervention. The few folios with text areas inset in paper margins dyed in a vibrant pistachio green had started to burst and crumble. This posed immediate risks to the text panels, which could become detached and lost. The problem was caused by the green dye, a copper-containing pigment (*verdigris*) prone to corrosive processes (Fig. 12.1). None of the other coloured papers showed accelerated aging, and there were no hints of water damage or traces of humid conditions, yet the chemical process in the green paper was manifest. Though this may have



FIGURE 12.2 Or. 856 – the same opening, with the replacement margins applied



FIGURE 12.3 Ff. 10v–11r, the miniature inset in marbled paper. The red silk threads that are visible in the middle of the front margins on the left half of the textblock are remnants of fixed page-markers, attached to the folios that have a miniature. These page-markers were used to quickly navigate the manuscript.

started shortly after the assembling of the volume, at the time of the library rebinding the paper must have been in a reasonable condition to allow for the sewing and handling by the bookbinder. This means that the process is progressive. Once a paper is so affected, the fibres have broken down and repair is impossible. Action was needed to save and secure the text panels, and a relative quick solution was found in the traditional *vaṣṣālī* technique. New good quality paper was dyed in a matching green colour, and the text area was set in a window cut according to the original lay-out, as a replacement margin. These new folios were hinged with thin Japanese paper and starch in their respective places, without dismantling the binding structure or changing the appearance of the volume (Figs. 12.2 and 12.3).

## 2 Good Intentions, Misunderstandings and Bad Decisions

Nowadays, conservation discission-making is informed by the notion that the objects have a cultural importance as well as an intellectual value. We would not consider the replacement of an original but broken binding with a functional western-type library binding for the sake of use; those days are over. In fact, the collection bears witness of how former library colleagues have struggled with repair issues. Western bookbinders used different methods of sewing and connecting the binding to a textblock therefore they did not have a straightforward way to integrate parts of the original binding, the boards with the envelope flap attached. Sometimes, the original parts were discarded (as in the example above), but often bookbinders made an effort to keep the old boards and make the new leather spine match the original materials.

This is precisely how Or. 494, a *Shāhnāmeh* or 'Book of Kings', copied in 1437 was treated. The full-leather binding has almond-shaped stamps in the centre of the boards and the lining of the binding is also decorated with stamped leather in contrasting colours. It was clearly decided, sometime in the nineteenth century, that this binding should be reused when repair of the textblock became unavoidable. The gatherings were resewn, on thin cord supports as was common at the time, but the finishing of the new spine and inner joints was neat and sympathetic with the original binding. Only one detail escaped the attention of the bookbinder: the fore-edge and envelope flap of the manuscript are attached to the back board – the left board. The flap protects the textblock and closes under the front board – the right board. However, when the binder reattached the boards he reversed them, so that the envelope flap hinged at what now had become the front board. The mistake is understandable, probably caused by the unfamiliarity with the type of binding and the



FIGURE 12.4 Or. 494 – the richly illuminated opening pages prior to the treatment, with the envelope flap erroneously showing on the right side



FIGURE 12.5 Or. 494 – the manuscript in the wrongly positioned boards, prior to conservation, with the back cover and envelope flap erroneously attached as a front board



FIGURE 12.6 Or. 494 – during the treatment: the repair leather spine was loosened, which also gave access to the textblock spine for stabilisation, after which the binding could be reversed and reattached.



FIGURE 12.7 Or. 494 – the double opening painting, that was also displayed in the exhibition, with the traditional envelope flap in its right place on the left side

fact that Arabic, Persian and Ottoman-Turkish language books read from right to left, but also because the decoration of the bindings usually provides few clues as to what is back and front or up and down. There are no titles on the bindings, and the decorative designs are very balanced and symmetrical. A substantial number of repaired manuscripts show that the mistake was frequently made (Figs. 12.4 and 12.5).

For regular use of the volume, this reversed placement of the boards was not a huge issue; it was just a little awkward and the informed user would be disoriented by the upside-down position of the manuscript in its binding. However, when this early *Shāhnāmeh* was requested as a loan for the exhibition *Splendour & Bliss* (The Hague 2018), the physical appearance of the manuscript became a concern. The exhibition aimed to "showcase the astounding ornamental qualities of Islamic art" and it was felt that the *Shāhnāmeh* ought to represent the Islamic art of bookbinding as it was intended. We therefore decided to undo the erroneous placement of the boards, a rare case of intervention that was not instigated by damage, but out of respect for the original artisans and their book culture (Figs. 12.6 and 12.7).

## 3 Accumulated Damage of (Almost) All Sorts

Despite its tattered and frail condition, the quality of the elaborate illumination and six large miniatures in an early seventeenth-century copy of a *Kullīyāt* (collected poetry) by Ḥāfiẓ (d. circa 1390) was enough reason for Arnoud Vrolijk to make an effort to safeguard and purchase this manuscript for the Leiden collection, and it was acquired in 2018.[4] However, because of its condition, the manuscript could only be made available to readers after carefully stabilising the materials and composition of both textblock and binding. Treatment was needed to consolidate the worm-eaten covers and the many tears in the paper. The manuscript had been well-used in the past, evidenced by paper repairs in the textblock and previous resewing and rebinding. The lacquered boards with floral decoration, inside and out, were not contemporary with the manuscript but certainly made in the Safavid tradition. And even that second binding showed further traces of use, the spine having been repaired with a different strip of leather and the inner joints strengthened with paper hinges. At a certain point in its life, the volume must have seen less use, which allowed insects to feast on the lacquer boards. The infestation caused severe loss of the

4 The purchase was financially supported by Stichting Vrienden van de Universitaire Bibliotheken Leiden, who also contributed to the costs of the conservation.



FIGURE 12.8 Or. 27.665 – the worm-eaten front cover before treatment

fibrous paper boards, the lacquer substance and paint layer, to a degree that rendered the boards almost beyond repair. The worms had not greatly affected the textblock, but the folios were damaged nonetheless. Ruling lines around the text areas were drawn with a copper-containing ink, and especially in the vertical lines adjacent to the gutter, these lines had started to break due to corrosive properties of the ink and mechanical stress during use. The tension in the inner margins of the paper was increased due to the rigidity of the spine, which consisted of multiple layers of adhesive and leather (Figs. 12.8 and 12.9).



FIGURE 12.9 Or. 27.665 – the interior of the front cover, with the disturbing paper repair that covers the textblock and part of the board's painting

Where to begin treating so much damage? Interventions were needed to stabilise the different materials, yet we had to consider the cause of the damages. Obviously, the infestation was no longer active, but the problem of the copper corrosion causing cracks in the frame lines was a different matter. The occurrence of these breakages close to the spine suggested that the stiffness of the current structure worsened the progressive damage. To treat the paper without diminishing the stress on the inner paper margins would be ineffective. The treatment therefore started with the removal of the repair spine and excess of glue on the textblock spine. This restored the flexibility of the structure, after which the time-consuming paper repairs could be executed (Figs. 12.10 and 12.11).[5]

5 The decision-making process, preliminary material analysis, and treatment were part of the internship of Hoa Perriguey, a student in conservation at the Sorbonne, Paris, already experienced in working with Persianate manuscripts. We were fortunate to have her dedicated time and focus for this project.



FIGURE 12.10 Or. 27.665 – one of the miniatures (Rustam rescues Bijan from the pit) before conservation, with a clear break in the paper in the vertical frame line adjacent to the gutter

With the removal of the repair spine, the boards had come loose, and these could be treated simultaneously. Clearly, the aesthetic quality was badly affected by the insect damage and so much of the edges were eaten away that the boards could no longer provide sufficient protection to the textblock in the condition they were in. It would have been much easier to cut and use new boards. However, new boards could never be sympathetic to the manuscript in the way these tattered boards would. Apart from the fact that these non-contemporary boards by now belonged to the history of the Safavid manuscript, which was a good reason for wanting to preserve them, their damage also related to the overall appearance and condition of the volume. A much-used and repaired manuscript in a new pristine binding usually appears misplaced, the disconnection is visually evident as the material information is not aligned. This completed the argumentation for putting in the conservation effort, to restore the boards. First, the missing parts and gaps needed to be filled with a mix of cellulose and adhesive, already coloured to be compatible with the colour scheme of the floral design. Along the spine edge, a



FIGURE 12.11 Or. 27.665 – the same miniature, after treatment

thinly pared strip of leather was applied that would form the board attachment and leather spine covering at a later stage of the treatment. This particular technique, the use of two pieces of leather that overlap on the spine, is one of the archetypal features of bookbinding in Islamic lands. After the boards' shape had been filled and evened out, a thin layer with additional colouring was applied, toned to the original colouring but not intended to supplement the decoration where it was now missing. The effort was to show the damage in a sympathetic though hardly perceptible manner, so as not to distract the beholder with either apparent damage or obtrusive newness, while restoring the functionality of the boards.

Despite this restrained approach, the paper repairs on the inside were completely removed. These visually disturbing repairs had become dysfunctional, the machine-made paper contained wood pulp and was harmful rather than protective, and the joints had torn. On top of that, they were pasted over part of the interior boards with the daffodil painting. At the back of the manuscript, this repair paper was also used as a lining of the last folio, and its removal gave access to an added bit of large calligraphic script. New inner joints were made with strong Japanese paper, dyed to match the textblock on one side, and



FIGURE 12.12 Or. 27.665 – the front board, stabilised and retouched, and the new leather spine



FIGURE 12.13 Or. 27.665 – the interior of the front cover after treatment, with stabilised edges, retouching, and the western repair paper removed

the reddish hue of the inner boards on the other. Again, this intervention was chosen to stabilise the manuscript's condition, support access, and respect the volume's aesthetic qualities. For research into the manuscript's material history and provenance, the leftover repair materials were secured and these are kept with the treatment report (Figs. 12.12 and 12.13).

In the course of just two months, the condition of this manuscript changed from dilapidated to fit for purpose. Its tattered character has not been removed or disguised, the volume still shows that it has seen a lot of use, and some neglect. This may benefit future scholars who study this copy of the *Kullīyāt*. It will probably also compel this volume's users to be careful and handle it respectfully, more so than when a new binding would have been provided.

## 4 Tracing a Manuscript's History and Reading the Damage

One of the famous manuscripts in the collection is Or. 289, an Arabic copy of Dioscorides' first-century compilation of medicinal herbs, plants and animals, *Kitāb al-Hashā'ish* or *Materia Medica*. The manuscript was copied in Samarqand in 1083 CE and is well-illustrated with over 600 paintings. Because of the manuscript's age and splendour, its importance as an early example of illustrated scientific texts, and as a representative of the crucial role that Arabic copies – frequently, with revisions – played in the preservation of classical texts, the manuscript had been requested and used to exhaustion.

The past decade had already seen a change in the library's policy on its availability. While the precious volume was still used in presentations for the benefit of scholarly meetings, and was now and then featured in exhibitions in leading museums around the world, Reading Room visitors were discouraged from requesting the original physical manuscript and asked to use the digitised version instead.

Eventually, we had to conclude that even for these situations, such as an exhibition under the best of climate-controlled circumstances, the *Materia Medica* had become too fragile. Every handling and transportation, every page manipulation could cause pigment loss and cracks in the paper. A conservation treatment could no longer be avoided. This may sound as if we had postponed the idea of such an intervention, which in certain ways indeed we had. Not only were we facing a time-consuming trajectory which is not always easy to plan or even possible to undertake, most of all, we had to take on a very complex and extremely daunting task. The challenges were multifold.

During the condition reporting prior to the first full-colour digitisation of this volume, it was noticed that physical evidence suggested a different order of the folios than the manuscript's current composition. This corroborated

Jan Just Witkam's observation when he wrote the entry in the first part of his inventories of the Leiden oriental collection: "The leaves of manuscript do not seem to be in their correct order, and at the end there is apparently a lacuna. On the lower half of f. 51b are notes and corrections which apparently refer to a disorderly exemplar."[6] A previous study of the Leiden *Materia Medica* in comparison to Greek manuscripts in Vienna and New York also mentioned a divergent page order.[7] The material evidence consisted of tide lines in the paper, prominent discolouration in different shades of brown that formed a distinguishable pattern in the pages that were affected by water damage that certainly occurred before the manuscript was collected by Levinus Warner. We can establish this because the Ottoman binding, in which the manuscript was preserved, did not have traces of this water calamity. In addition, the water damage had reactivated the sticky properties of the gum binder used in pigments, which in turn caused some of the pigments to be partly transferred to the opposite pages – only, in certain openings of the manuscript it was clear that the mirror image of this process did not match the *current* opposite page.

Depending on how one uses and studies a manuscript, such physical characteristics are subtle and easily overlooked, or rather prominent and persistently drawing attention. For us it was clear that, when we would start a conservation trajectory, the flaws in the order of the text, the visual clues and the possibility to revise the order of the folios to how the copyist had structured the manuscript had to be centre to the discussion of our conservation approach. Arguments could well go both ways. On the one hand, it was easy to argue that we should leave the manuscript as is, since this was the state in which the volume had arrived in the Leiden collections, and – after the effort of a theoretical reconstruction – the manuscript could have a *digital* revision of its page order. That way, we would not need to intervene in the actual, physical item and thus allowed the preservation of its historic traces and particularities. On the other hand, this conservation treatment provided a unique opportunity to study all the physical details that would substantiate the basis for an informed decision to reverse the erroneous order. Such a decision would restore the manuscript to its first intellectual and visual appearance and this would also support the intended future use of the manuscript, as a fairly frequently asked-for artefact to feature in exhibitions. In this line of thinking, the existence of the digital version as a perpetual document of the faulty order of the pages was a key factor:

6 J.J. Witkam, *Inventory of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Library of the University of Leiden*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Ter Lugt Press, 2007), p. 129.

7 Mahmoud Mohamed Sadek, *The Arabic Materia Medica of Dioscorides* (Quebec: Les Éditions du sphinx, 1983).

scholars would have continued access to the 'historic flaw' through the digital file. However, an important ingredient of our conversation that prevented a straightforward decision was that such a major change in the composition of the manuscript would not be reversible.

Finally, in 2022, after much consideration and preliminary study of the physical manuscript, which included testing of the solubility of the adhesives of the multiple layers of previous paper repairs, the conservation approach began to take shape.[8] The tension in the paper, especially in the inner margins close to the spine-folds, that was caused by the many layers of repairs applied over several centuries, severely compromised the minimal intervention option. In fact, it appeared it would not be sensible to start strengthening the paper without addressing this problem, which involved the removal of this thick and stiff layer of mends. For this reason, the manuscript had to be dismantled, otherwise we would not have access to the fold lines. The removal of these various types of repair paper would also increase the aesthetic quality significantly, since some of these papers were visually disturbing because of their whiteness and divergent surface. As a result, the physical manuscript would already change considerably, so much so that it might complicate the readability of its history. Without the historic repairs to witness the multiple interventions, the erroneous order of the pages might even cause confusion. Furthermore, as the removal of the old mends required new repairs and possibly reattachment of torn fold-lines, we decided to aim for the reconstruction of the original order of the manuscript (Figs. 12.14–16).

While Arnoud Vrolijk began the comparative study of the manuscript's composition, using the edition by Sadek, Godelieva van der Randen started the dismantling of the manuscript and began drawing a table of the gathering structure. The latter was a useful tool for mapping the individual gatherings, loose sheets or conjugate or disjointed bifolios. With the combined theoretical and physical information, and factual checking whether the text in the proposed new composition was fluently and logically organised, it was possible to reconstruct the textblock. From there on, with the original sequence of the pages confirmed, the treatment was fairly straightforward, albeit time-consuming. At times, the repair work on the nearly 1000-year-old drawings was almost literally breathtaking, since the drawings that were severely affected by copper-corrosion required a very steady hand and stillness in the surroundings. Sometimes we needed to confer about the removal of old repairs with retouches, or refraining from doing so, as with the painting of the throat of the

8 The conservation treatment was generously supported with a financial contribution by Pro Parte.



FIGURE 12.14 Or. 289 – before treatment, opening ff. 33v–34r, showing the tidelines of a water calamity on the right (photograph by Godelieva van der Randen), while the facing page does not show any marks of this incident



FIGURE 12.15 Or. 289 – detail of f. 80v, showing the paper degradation caused by the copper-containing pigments




FIGURE 12.16 Or. 289 – opening page before treatment, with a large paper lamination covering the original paper, and text. The image also shows the added western flyleaves, and the western marbled paper lining the envelope flap.

rooster or the lower neck of the crane.[9] Whenever possible, the repair paper with historic retouch was retained. When replacement was needed, we opted for as neutral a retouch as possible. The old paper repairs that contain pigments and retouchings are kept together with the conservation report.

After all the work on the textblock was done, the gathering could be sewn into a stable textblock again. For this, the traditional method of sewing was used, an unsupported link-stitch sewing on two stations. At the start of the treatment, the gatherings were sewn on four thin cords, a western structure applied towards the end of the nineteenth-century when a repair was commissioned by the library. The bookbinder at the time fortunately reused the Ottoman leather binding, to which he added new fly leaves, and he lined the inside of the boards and envelope flap with comb-marbled machine-made papers. The traditional Islamic method of sewing was chosen because that would befit this textblock and its Ottoman binding. We also decided to remove the flyleaves, elements that would be applied routinely in western bookbinding but were not necessarily part of the standard Islamic bookbinder practice. In order to see what the Ottoman craftsman had used to line the boards, the

9 See f. 53b, accessible at https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/3641377, and f. 54b https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/3641376.



FIGURE 12.17 Or. 289 – the opening page after treatment, with the laminated paper and western flyleaves removed, and after the removal of the western marbled doublures. The original marbled paper is now visible again.

western marbled papers were lifted, using humidification, and to our surprise and delight, the former marbled paper doublures appeared, and in a good condition too. Presumably, the western bookbinder had only used *new* marbled paper (of a western variety) because it was easier for him to finish the inner joints that way; he had actually tried to match the type and colour scheme (Fig. 12.17).

To prepare for the reattachment of the leather binding, the textblock spine was lined with thin, finely-woven cloth, and endbands were sewn at head and tail of the textblock spine, again, in conformity with the traditional method. These endbands provide additional cohesion to the structure, and the add colour and a finished look. The leather covering, which really was in a fine condition, only had a few repair strips of leather along the joints of the fore-edge flap. These strips appeared to be nineteenth-century additions as well, judging by the type and quality, and therefore we wanted to replace them with more subtle yet stronger repair material. It turned out that the original leather underneath these strips was hardly damaged at all, only at head and tail was the leather torn and in need of strengthening.[10]

10 A much more detailed account of findings and decision-making during this treatment was presented by Godelieva van der Randen, at the 19th International Seminar on the



FIGURE 12.18 Or. 289 – f. 133v–f. 134r (f. 133v was formerly f. 33v, see Fig. 12.14), after treatment and reversing the page order, to restore the original text and, as a result, also the flow in the physical traces and appearance of the volume, including the tideline pattern (formerly f. 34r is now f. 24r)

Ultimately, the complex and thorough treatment of the *Materia Medica* has returned the manuscript into a state that is much closer to its appearance several hundred years ago (Fig. 12.18). Not only the page order, but the structure and the binding – even though this is not the original binding of the manuscript – match with the cultural origin of the volume. However, although the exhaustive conservation treatment may suggest that the manuscript is now again available for study and use, that is not the case. The condition of the paper will forever remain extremely fragile, due to the copper-corrosive damage and long-ago water damage. Access to the physical manuscript will therefore have to remain restrictive, though everyone is invited to access the digital version of the manuscript.[11] As for future loans and exhibitions, that is what the treatment was designed for and intended to support.

Care and Conservation of Manuscripts, which will be published in the proceedings (2025).

11 High-resolution images are downloadable for free from the Leiden 'Digital Collections': http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:3641201.

## 5 Concluding Thoughts

The extensive collections in Leiden present a wide range of types of manuscripts, in terms of content as well as physical appearance, and therefore also in terms of conservation concerns. The survival and continued accessibility of the manuscripts should not be taken for granted. To address the condition problems, a collaborative approach and diverse specialist knowledge is needed, and taking care of the collection requires a continuous conversation. Although certain repairs can be straightforward in a technical sense, the individual characteristics and value of the items, plus their material information and the context of their use impact the decision-making. Studying the material composition of the manuscripts and working with them, as a conservator, has taught me much about the Islamic manuscript tradition, while I have certainly learned a great deal from Arnoud in his role as curator too, and I hope that is true the other way around as well. In addition, we welcomed young conservation professionals who were committed to learning about the oriental book collections. During these internships, much more work could be done than would otherwise have been feasible. Some of the time-intensive treatments presented above would not have been possible without them.[12] The gains of these collaborations certainly are manifold; the direct benefits to the collection are only part of it. The experience of the work also adds to the skills and knowledge of the young professionals that they will bring into their further careers, and other collections.

The history of book repair and conservation, which shows a clear decrease in bold interventions and a growing awareness of the importance of careful, if not minimal, intervention, is not finished. Although we cannot foresee how the field will further develop, it is unlikely that it would revert to the former practice where the artefacts were mainly seen as carriers of textual information, and functionality prevailed over the artefact's historic evidence and authenticity. When handled with care, the manuscripts will outlive us, and the fact that we are only here for a moment in their existence should be a fair warning that we should not impose any alarmingly big changes on them. In turn, the manuscripts do leave indelible impressions on us, those who try and do their best to safeguard them.

12 The elaborate treatment of the *Dīvan* of Hafiz was conducted by Hoa Perriguey, and Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* was in the capable hands of Godelieva van der Randen.

CHAPTER 13

# Zoomorphic Seals in Islamic Manuscripts – a Marginal Note on a Marginal Tradition

*Boris Liebrenz*

In this essay, I am going to chronicle the evolution of my understanding of a set of zoomorphic seals used in Islamic manuscript books that, when I first wrote on them not long ago, still defied any explanation.[1] This evolution started in Leiden with what then appeared to me to be a one-off curiosity and has now led me to entertain the possibility of calling it a veritable, if indeed very marginal, tradition. The implications of this go beyond the pages of manuscript books and I will discuss possible attitudes towards the small-scale material remnants of antiquity that the usual literary sources often fail to register.

The impressions of seals found by the thousands in manuscripts from the Islamic world are an indispensable tool to learn more about the history of these objects. They can reveal the names of those who owned, read, or endowed a book, its legal status, the institutions in which they were once found, or the dates when any of this happened. Together with the more common handwritten notes, seal impressions form a rich tapestry recounting countless stories from the world of books and libraries, a tapestry long since unravelled but the threads of which we may still weave together today by systematically collecting and analysing these notes.

Apart from such utilitarian aspects, seals can also be delicate works of art. On their very limited surface, seal engravers were able to apply calligraphy as organic and as if written swiftly on paper. The script as its most prominent and central feature was usually supplemented by other elements. So small as to be often barely visible even in the best impressions, the engravers achieved the most intricate flowers, stars, spiralling tendrils, or knots. These elements, like the writing itself, were engraved with astonishing finesse onto the seal's hard materials, which include glass, crystals, precious stones, and metal. What Islamic seals are generally missing, though, are images from the world of living beings. There are no butterflies or bees swirling through those flowers, no faces

1 I want to acknowledge the valuable input I received from Umberto Bongianino, Maurits van den Boogert, Moya Carey, Juan de Lara, and Edward Shawe Taylor, who each have added substantial suggestions, literature, sources, or identifications.

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peeking out from behind the thickets of those letters, and there are certainly no human animals around. This is different from the Christian seals that were also produced in the same regions and that may at times feature saints and other creatures. Stories of a Jewish tradition, on the other hand, according to which the exilarch (the head of the descendants of the House of David) is said to have used a seal with a mosquito carved onto its gem, are probably satire. Within an attempt to undermine the prestige of the Davidic line, this has been interpreted as a parody of this line's identification through a lion heraldry, which might have been the motif actually found on the exilarch's seal.[2] True, in many volumes in Ann Arbor, Princeton, or the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem, a gazelle is jumping from the page. But this was obviously a very late example, impressed with the modern purple ink that came to be in use in the late 19th century, and it remains unclear even who its owner was.[3]

This state of affairs may be understood as a foregone conclusion derived from the fact that the first documented seal in the Islamic tradition, that of the Prophet Muhammad himself, was strictly scriptural as well. That, however, would be wrong. In fact, among the earliest surviving seals attached to papyrus documents found primarily in Egypt, there are purely zoomorphic examples bearing animals like the bull used by Egypt's governor ʿAmr b. al-ʿAss.[4] This practice, apparently, fell out of favour by the 2nd/8th century, and there is a gap of more than a millennium between these early-Islamic examples and the reappearance of animal seals in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

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2 Arnold E. Franklin, *This Noble House. Jewish Descendants of King David in the Medieval Islamic East* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 104–105; Simcha Gross, 'The Curious Case of the Jewish Sasanian Queen Šīšīnduxt: Exilarchal Propaganda and Zoroastrians in Tenth- to Eleventh-Century Baghdad', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 141 (2021), pp. 365–380, p. 377.

3 These manuscripts belong to the so-called Tiflis collection that came on the market in the 1920s under nebulous circumstances. Dominique Akhoun-Schwarb has identified nearly 500 of them in collections mostly in Great Britain and the US.

4 Venetia Porter, *Arabic and Persian Seals and Amulets in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 2011), pp. 5, 6; Adolf Grohmann, *Einführung und Chrestomatie zur arabischen Papyruskunde* (Prague: Státní Pedagogické Nakladatelství, 1955), pp. 128–130; Petra M. Sijpesteijn, "Expressing New Rule: Seals from Early Islamic Egypt and Syria, 600–800 CE," in *Seals – Making and Marking Connections across the Medieval World*, ed. Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak = *The Medieval Globe* 4.1 (2018), pp. 99–147, here p. 109 and (more generally on the widespread use of anepigraphic seals with images of living creatures) pp. 124–125. See also Priscilla Soucek, 'Early Islamic Seals. Their Artistic and Cultural Importance', in *Leaving no Stones Unturned. Essays on the Ancient Near East and Egypt in Honor of Donald P. Hansen*, ed. Erica Ehrenberg (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2002), pp. 237–260; Nitzan Amitai-Preiss, 'Faunal Iconography on Islamic Seals', *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography* 9 (2006), pp. 207–212.

Furthermore, there is no direct link between the distinct practices of sealing early documents and goods, both of which was usually done with clay or metal, and that of impressing a seal with ink on paper in a manuscript book. The latter appears not to have started before the fourteenth century, under Chinese influence, in the Eastern realm of the Mongol Ilkhanid dynasty (mainly in today's Iraq and Iran), whence it spread westwards to the Ottomans by the fifteenth century and all across the Arab world after the Ottoman expansion in the sixteenth.[5]

## 1 The Eagle and the Snake

After examining the impressions of thousands of Islamic seals (that is, seals used by Muslims) in manuscript books, from all periods, regions, and social backgrounds, I would have felt confident, not so long ago, to formulate the rule that there are no images to be found on them prior to the nineteenth century. Like any good rule, though (at least when talking about those applied to history), this one offered an exception. It was in Leiden that the general picture got something of a pictorial twist. Like so many other colleagues who were drawn to one of the oldest and most important collections of Arabic manuscripts in Europe, I could count on the hospitality and learning of its curator, Arnoud Vrolijk, and profit from his profound knowledge of the collection and its history. My long-term plan to catalogue documentary manuscript notes of owners, readers, endowers, and the like (among them seal impressions) met with his generous support.

One of the owners I kept finding in numerous volumes left very unassuming notes of few words, sometimes consisting of only his bare name, often so small that they could easily be overlooked. Frequently, these were also purposefully erased. His name was Muhammad ʿAli al-munajjim and he must have lived sometime between the middle of the tenth/sixteenth century (when the latest of his books was copied) and the early eleventh/seventeenth (when many of his books were already brought to Leiden by Jacob Golius). Furthermore, we can pinpoint Constantinople as his home, since this is where many of his

5 Boris Liebrenz, 'What's in a Seal? Identification and Interpretation of ʿAbd al-Bāqī Ibn al-ʿArabī's (d. 971/1564) Seal and Its Function', *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 13 (2022), pp. 55–80.



FIGURE 13.1 Muhammad Ali al-munajjim's ownership note with the seal impression [UBL Or. 51, 1r]

books can be located through manuscript notes prior to Muhammad ʿAli and where Golius and Levinus Warner bought virtually all of them afterwards.[6]

What made this owner stand out, however, was not his scrawly handwriting or the (comparatively rare) occurrence of a practicing astronomer, but the seal accompanying many of his notes. It showed a bird of prey descending on a snake. Its wings are spread, its claws grab the snake's tail, while the heads of both animals are turned towards each other. And it showed nothing else. Here, the logic of Islamic seals was blatantly reversed, as not a single letter accompanies the image. An eagle obviously evokes regal and imperial imagery and was widespread in early modern European heraldry and beyond (we may think of the double-headed eagle of so many entities with imperial ambitions from the Byzantines and Seljuks to the Serbs and Austrians), as it is today on a global scale (the coat of arms from Germany and the United States to Russia).

6 Boris Liebrenz, 'The Stars in Leiden: Listening to the Stories of Islamic Manuscripts', in *Prophets, Poets, and Scholars. The Collections of the Middle Eastern Library of Leiden University*, eds. Arnoud Vrolijk, Kasper van Ommen, Karin Scheper and Tijmen Baarda (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2024), pp. 42–51.

The Mexican coat of arms even depicts an eagle with a snake in its beak, an image introduced in the 19th century with recourse to local mythology. But for a long time, I could not find a direct model for this particular image, as much as I looked – with my admittedly limited means – for Byzantine or Seljuk coins, Roman cameo rings, pictures of star constellations, or anything else an astronomer in the 16th century Ottoman Empire could have encountered as an inspiration. Likewise, the search for what literary writers in Arabic might have had to say on the meaning of this motif has not yielded any enlightening explanations so far. The compilers of zoological lore, like the famous *Hayat al-hayawan* of the Egyptian Mamluk scholar Kamal al-Din al-Damiri (d. 808/1405–6) have much to say about many kinds of snakes and birds of prey, yet, to my knowledge, never comment on the epic battles that could be observed between the two species and the possible symbolic significance their use in any form of art might entail. Alas, with the deadline looming, I had to leave it at that.

Lately, however, when new findings prompted me to return to this iconography with renewed scrutiny, the parallels kept turning up. Arabic literature, as I learned most recently, was not so barren after all. The Abbasid theologian and prose writer al-Jahiz (d. 255/868–9), citing Aristotle, reports of the enmity (*ʿadawa*) between snakes and eagles in one of his digressions buried within the chapter on dogs, and the claim that this was caused by the snakes' eating of the eagle's eggs and chicks.[7] No symbolic meaning is associated with this explanation, and it covers no more than a short sentence within a longer discussion, but the sole illustrated manuscripts of the work still depicts precisely this scene with an eagle catching a snake in its beak.[8] It is uncertain whether our astronomer had a chance to glance at this very unusual image and it remains an unlikely candidate for a direct template on stylistic grounds.[9] But we can position it within a longer tradition of the motif that, in turn, we can locate right on his doorstep. First, the modern visitor of Istanbul can find a mosaic with what looks like a strikingly close parallel to what is depicted on the seal: an eagle battling a snake, wings spread, claws about to sink into the tail, heads facing. This rendition in the Great Palace Mosaics Museum is

7 ʿAmr b. Bahr al-Jahiz, *Kitab al-hayawan*, ed. Muhammad Basil ʿUyun al-Sud (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiya, 2003), vol. 1–2, p. 280.

8 MS Mailand, Biblioteca Accademia Ambrosiana, MS D.140 inf., fol. 63r.

9 Edward Shawe-Taylor, in his thorough and convincing discussion of the manuscript's paintings, which he kindly shared with me before publication, remarks on the anatomically weird 'helicopter wings' of the bird, which have an earlier Mamluk predecessor on the inlaid brass basin known as the Baptistère de Staint Louis (Louvre, LP 16; minus the snake, of course); see Edward Shawe-Taylor, 'The Ambrosiana Kitāb al-Ḥayawān and the Baptistère de Saint Louis: Manuscripts, Metalwork and the Mamluk Court' (forthcoming).



FIGURE 13.2
Mosaic of the Great Palace in Istanbul, north-eastern hall (detail)

a little bit more dramatic. The snake is wound around the bird's body (a very realistic scenario) and at the same time fatally snapped by its beak, while the seal shows more of a standoff between the two, the anticipation of blood to be spilled. Still, the whole posture and direction is closer than anything I had previously seen, and we could understand the differences as resulting from the translation of the large mosaic onto the different medium of the seal. There was just one problem with such a connection: This piece from the decoration of a Byzantine palace, probably made in the early sixth century, could not have been the direct inspiration for the seal, if the latter was an Ottoman product, as it had already been covered up during Byzantine times and not unearthed again until 1935.[10] It has been proposed that the inspiration for the mosaic's iconography might have been a bronze statue of an eagle catching a snake that had once been erected in the hippodrome and was reportedly still standing when the Crusaders conquered the city in 1204.[11] But whether that statue was still found anywhere in the city by the time of the Ottoman conquest is just as questionable.

Of course, the search for direct models in the surviving corpus of artworks and the stipulation of decisive lineages from it is, while tempting and often enlightening, also methodologically myopic. Other similar and now lost images could still have been present in Constantinople. And people could have been fascinated by birds of prey descending on snakes without recourse to a Byzantine mosaic. In fact, they appear to have been so constantly throughout the ages, as a study of this motif following it throughout ancient Near Eastern and European art history shows.[12] Even in my home city of Leipzig, exhibited in its museums or decorating its buildings, I kept encountering the timeless iconography of the two animals battling once I started to be alert to it.

10 Laura Caso, 'The Eagle Symbol in the Mosaic of the Great Palace in Constantinople', *Journal of Mosaic Research* 14 (2021), pp. 29–40.

11 Caso, 'The Eagle Symbol', p. 35.

12 Rudolf Wittkower, 'Eagle and Serpent. A Study in the Migration of Symbols', *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2,4 (1939), pp. 293–325.



FIGURE 13.3
British Museum, registration number 1814,0704.2029, provenance Peregrine Edward Towneley; catalogued as Roman, 1st century BCE–3rd century CE

While the search for parallels in Constantinople's pictorial environment was thus not in vain, it does not answer all our questions. Most of all, the use of this particular motif on this seal and even the use of a zoomorphic seal more generally was still unique in the Ottoman and wider Islamic context and its application as a mark of ownership on books seemingly unparalleled. So, where did Muhammad ʿAli al-munajjim get the inspiration for, and the means to execute, this apparently one-off piece? Was it maybe his original idea and commission? And was it even made in his lifetime? After all, could he not have reused an antique gemstone?

The latter, it turned out, did exist in abundance. A red gemstone, now set in a gold ring and held by the British Museum, is worked with finer details of feathers and movement compared to Muhammad ʿAli al-munajjim's seal. The snake, too, differs slightly with its curled body. Yet the whole arrangement is otherwise completely identical. This piece was catalogued as Roman, dating from the first century BCE to the third century CE (see Figure 13.4). Gems with the exact same arrangement and orientation of two facing animals, in which the place of the eagle is instead filled by a cock,[13] a crane,[14] and even a bull[15] or a lion,[16] are also known from antique Greek and Roman gems. Beyond the strict confines of mounted gemstones, a similar scene of a bird of prey sinking its beak into a snake in the same constellation can be found worked into the bottom of a Roman-era scarab that was excavated in Italy but is now housed

13 British Museum, Registration number 1987,0212.331.
14 British Museum, Registration number 1987,0212.343.
15 British Museum, Registration number 1872,0604.1278.
16 British Museum, Registration number 1814,0704.1406.



FIGURE 13.4
Musée du Louvre, Antiquités égyptiennes, MG 8766

in the Louvre's department of Egyptian antiquities.[17] Such scarabs, rather than mounted gems, were often used in Pharaonic and Hellenistic Egypt for sealing. Such labyrinthine provenance histories, a presumably Egyptian object excavated in Italy, show the trans-Mediterranean mobility of these objects. Wherever they had originally been made, many found their way to such cultural, economic, and demographic hubs as Constantinople.

And these gems echo another iconographic tradition, one found in much greater abundance, on some ancient Greek coin types. My, no doubt rudimentary, search in some, albeit major, publicly accessible museum collections has turned up exemplars dating from the fifth century BCE up to the second century CE and minted on the Greek mainland, its colonies in Italy and on Sicily, as well as the Black Sea coast in today's Bulgaria (Thrace).[18] Again, these were highly mobile artefacts and could be expected to turn up anywhere, especially in the commercial centres of the Ottoman Empire, where many of the monetary networks in which these coins were used were originally situated.

This calls to mind two previous elite interactions with cameos from antiquity bearing iconography from the pre-Islamic Hellenistic and Roman past. The first is the *Tazza Farnese*, an enormous cameo, probably produced in Hellenistic Egypt, that was apparently present in Timurid Samarkand or Herat in the first half of the fifteenth century, where its allegoric imagery was

17 Musée du Louvre, Antiquités égyptiennes, MG 8766.

18 Just from the Münzkabinett in the Berlin State Museums, I can cite (among several others): silver drachm from Chalkis in Greece, ca. 480 BCE, Ident. Nr. 18203385; silver stater from Elis in Greece, 452–432 BCE, Ident. Nr. 18225301; gold coin from Akragas on Sicily, ca. 409–406 BCE, Ident. Nr. 18226945; bronze coin from Abdera in Thrace, ca. 360–350 BCE, Ident. Nr. 18246037; bronze coin from Kroton in Italy, ca. 350–300 BCE, Ident. Nr. 18259529; bronze coin from Apollonia Pontika in Thrace, ca. 147–161 CE, Ident. Nr. 18246858.



FIGURE 13.5 Silver drachm, Akragas (Sicily), ca. 425–406 BCE [SMB Münzkabinett Ident. Nr. 18226976]
CREDIT: STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, MÜNZKABINETT/REINHARD SACZEWSKI
HTTPS://ID.SMB.MUSEUM/OBJECT/2369278/AKRAGAS

presumably drawn by Muhammad b. Mahmudshah al-Khayyam.[19] This image, too, travelled to Ottoman Constantinople, where it was included in one of the albums circulating in the palace, while the cameo itself found its way to Europe. Earlier still, a cameo showing the Roman emperor Nero was adorned with a surrounding inscription in Arabic praising the Ayyubid ruler al-Malik al-Manṣūr II (r. 1244–1284) of Hamah in Syria.[20] It has been proposed that diplomatic contacts with Hohenstaufen Sicily could be the reason for this transfer to the Ayyubid treasury. Whatever the circumstances, each of these artefacts, substantially more precious than the simple carved seals or coins discussed above, caused rarely seen artistic engagements with antiquity. We might see in them elite expressions of the same phenomenon we are tracing here with the possible use of an antique seal in Ottoman book culture.

19 Friederike Weis, 'A Persianate Drawing of the Tazza Farnese: A Work by Muhammad Khayyam?' in *The Diez Albums. Contexts and Contents*, eds. Julia Gonella, Friederike Weis, and Christoph Rauch (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 380–438; see the detailed overview of all the different itineraries of the piece that have been proposed, generally without much concrete data to support them, on pp. 414–415.

20 The identification of this piece, now part of the elaborate Devonshire Parure, and its connection with a bronze plaquette cast from it, had originally been made by Diana Scarisbrick, 'The Devonshire Parure,' *Archaeologia* 108 (1986), pp. 239–254; it has recently been re-affirmed in a substantial analysis by Arianna d'Ottone Rambach, Erika Zwierlein-Diehl, and Hadrien J. Rambach, 'The Roman Past in 7th/13th-Century Ḥamā (Syria): A Brass Cast with the Portrait of Nero in the Treasure of al-Malik al-Manṣūr II', in *Before Archaeology. The Meaning of the Past in the Islamic Pre-Modern Thought (and After)*, ed. Leonardo Capezzone (Rome: Artemide, 2020), pp. 143–176.

## 2 Ottoman Antiquarianism?

With such solid connections to the iconography of the past, Muhammad ʿAli al-munajjim's small zoomorphic seal opens the door to a much larger question. Did Muslim Ottoman scholars in Constantinople look at the material remnants of antiquity, think about ways to integrate them into their lives, or maybe even ponder their history? If this was in fact more than an isolated occurrence, could such practices then be described in terms akin to the antiquarianism that has been observed in contemporary non-Ottoman Europe? This latter antiquarianism was marked by emerging interest in the artefacts of antiquity (primarily those of the Greek and Roman past, but increasingly with a global outlook) that involved not only their artistic reuse, but also their systematic collection and an interest in their historical value. The importance of early modern antiquarianism goes beyond the pride of collecting as some of its learned protagonists played crucial parts in the development of source-critical historical methodologies that are foundational to modern academic disciplines.[21] Recently, the question whether something similar can be claimed for the intellectual tradition in Islamic lands at large has been pondered in high-profile conferences. The observations about it tend to be focussed on intangible cultural memory (pride in local pre-Islamic histories) or the perception of the monumental past, like the Egyptian pyramids or the Sasanian palaces.[22] For the period under investigation here, the interaction with Persepolis through spoliation, inscription, and depiction, on the background of a market for antiquities that was forming in Safavid Iran has been analysed.[23] Constantinople was, in this latter respect, obviously an exemplary case with its integration of prominent pre-Ottoman buildings like the Hagia Sophia and their transformation into Islamic spaces. Evidence for an Islamic antiquarianism that would have been

21 For a recent, enlightening study of the role of coins in this process, see Martin Mulsow, *Fremdprägung. Münzwissen in Zeiten der Globalisierung* (Berlin: Mathes & Seitz, 2023).

22 See the symposium *Antiquarianism in the Islamic World* at the Bard Graduate Center, New York City, convened on March 9, 2019. The recorded presentations can be viewed here: https://www.bgc.bard.edu/research-forum/articles/429/symposium-antiquarianism-in-the-islamic. Among the participants, only Stefan Heidemann engaged with an antiquarianism defined by the collection of objects in the sense of the present article in his rich talk "Appreciating, Collecting, and the Meaning of Ancient Objects in the Early and Middle Islamic Period". In a similar vein, the collected volume Capezzone (ed.), *Before Archaeology*, cited above, focuses on these aspects, with the above-mentioned article by d'Ottone/Zwierlein-Diehl/Rambach the sole exception.

23 Lindsay Allen and Moya Carey, 'Éminences grises: Emergent Antiquities in Seventeenth-Century Iran', in *Afterlives of Ancient Rock-cut Monuments in the Near East. Carvings in and out of Time*, eds. Jonathan Ben-Dov and Felipe Rojas (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 272–344.

centred on collected and ordered objects in similar ways, on the other hand, is scarce. What was the outlook on non-monumental antiquities?

While biographical and autobiographical reports, letters, diaries, collection catalogues, or similar sources that make the world of collecting so eminently palpable for us in non-Ottoman Europe are silent about the issue or outright non-existent in the regions under consideration here, there are isolated snippets suggesting that visitors with antiquarian predilections from outside the Ottoman realm could find kindred spirits in Constantinople. One of those visitors was the Austrian ambassador Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (1522–1592), who came to the Porte twice in order to negotiate peace. It is well known that he used his time on the Bosphorus to acquire precious manuscripts, like most famously the Vienna Dioscorides (MS Vienna, ÖNB, med. gr. 1), an illustrated Byzantine Greek copy of this fundamental *materia medica* text that had circulated in the orbit of the Ottoman court. But he was also searching for, and got his hands on, antiquities. One of the first items to enter the collection of Egyptian antiquities in Vienna was the naophor (a shrine-holding statuette) of Gem-nef-hor-bak from the 30th dynasty, made in the third century BCE, that Busbecq had bought in Constantinople (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Ägyptische Sammlung, INV 62).[24] A statue from pharaonic Egypt is not something that is just lying around and a Habsburg envoy in 16th century Constantinople is not someone who is digging through the city's soil. The artefacts Busbecq and others bought must have survived somehow throughout the centuries, safeguarded by people who consciously preserved them. Otherwise, it would have been no more than a stone, perfectly suited to disappear as spolia for new buildings. Whether at least some of them could have been part of curated collections of private individuals can only be speculated.

The French traveller Balthasar de Monconys (1611–1665), reporting on his time in Egypt, Syria, and Istanbul, is a rare witness to the fact that connoisseurs from the different shores of the Mediterranean did engage in fruitful exchanges on antiquarian subjects. He was especially interested in coins and precious stones. In 1648, a learned Ottoman acquaintance of his in Constantinople showed him one of the best carnelians he had ever seen.[25] Some people like

24 www.khm.at/fr/object/316886/.

25 Balthasar de Monconys, *Journal des voyages de Monsieur de Monconys. Vol. I: Voyage de Portugal, Provence, Italie, Egypte, Syrie, Constantinople, & Anatolie* (Lyon: Boissat & Remeus, 1677), p. 403. On a later collector in Constantinople, Osman Bey or Count Kotzi (d. 1785), originally from Hungary, who had assembled a collection of 3.000 ancient pieces and worked as a forger of ancient coins, see Daniela Williams, 'Osman Bey of Constantinople: A late 18th Century Forger of Ancient Coins', *Révue Numismatique* 176 (2019), pp. 361–383.

Monconys were always looking to acquire specimens for European coin collections and cabinets of curiosities. Numismatic networks of European courts and its republic of letters extended into Constantinople early on.[26] But under which circumstances these men found what they were looking for usually remains unexplained. Estate registers may be probed for occasional signs of collecting, as has been suggested for a man, ʿAli Çelebi, from sixteenth-century Buda, who appears to have owned ancient coins and art according to Tülay Artan's as yet unpublished interpretation.[27]

Coins and inscribed gemstones were an ideal medium for such confrontations with the past. Buried treasures could turn up wherever one dug into the earth, a fact that certainly engaged many people's imagination.[28] Apart from their value, strange-looking coins have fascinated people throughout history and Muslim historians have included numerous stories of encounters with them. One such story is related by ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Bistami (d. 858/1454) in his work *Manahij al-tawassul fī mabahij al-tarassul*. It concerns strange copper coins adorned with the figure of a ruler which turn up in the Egyptian city of Qus in 661 AH. A Byzantine priest is enrolled to decipher the coins' (presumably) Greek inscription for the curious Muslim finders.[29] Unfortunately, we are not informed, here or on other similar occasions, of what then happened to these coins.

Of course, for ancient objects, there were also the treasuries of rulers and their court dignitaries. In Constantinople, the Ottoman court treasury is the prime venue for such collecting, especially under the city's conqueror Mehmed Fatih with his inclination towards Greek learning and imperial tradition.[30]

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26 Agents were already working there for noble clients in the sixteenth century; see Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Kunstkammer. Early Modern Art and Curiosity Cabinets in the Holy Roman Empire* (London: Reaktion, 2022), p. 108. The antiquities market in Ottoman Constantinople and its agents prior to the nineteenth century are still barely researched.

27 See Mulsow, *Fremdprägung*, p. 59 based on unpublished research by Tülay Artan, which she has announced as the forthcoming article 'An Ottoman gentleman born before his time: A portrait of Ali Çelebi of Buda as a collector of curiosities'.

28 Christopher Braun, 'Equipped with Shovels, Pickaxes, and Books: Treasure Hunters and Grave Robbers in Medieval Egypt', in *Living with Nature and Things. Contributions to a new Social History of the Middle Islamic Periods*, eds. Bethany J. Walker and Abdelkader Al Ghouz (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2020), pp. 79–102.

29 MS Istanbul, Ragıp Paşa 1475, fol. 193v.

30 On the treasury as space and some insights on its contents, see Gülrü Necipoğlu, 'The Spatial Organization of Knowledge in the Ottoman Palace Library: An Encyclopedic Collection and its Inventory,' in *Treasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of the Ottoman Palace Library (1502/3–1503/4). Volume 1: Essays*, eds. Gülrü Necipoğlu, Cemal Kafadar, and Cornell H. Fleischer (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 1–77, here 3–9.

Throughout history, reports of the contents of Islamic court treasuries, the gifts exchanged between rulers and the objects looted by them contained marvellous things with ancient pedigrees.[31] Among them were antiquarian objects like, most pertinent for the purpose of this essay, Sasanian engraved gemstones set in rings,[32] but they are for the most part presented as valuables and not objects offering historical insights. Consequently, these treasuries were not meant to be a place of learning and reflection. The quintessential cabinet of curiosities in the Islamic world instead was a textual one. We will see shortly how a copy of the *Meadows of Gold* (*Muruj al-dhahab*) puts the present research on a different path. Such encyclopaedic and entertaining texts were eager to describe for their readers wondrous artefacts of all periods. The coins, stones, inscriptions, historical and natural curiosities mentioned in such works might never have been systematically collected apart from their intrinsic material and artistic value. But they were unlikely to be thrown away, either.

If this Islamic antiquarianism could be imagined like a sibling of the one observed in non-Ottoman Europe, it would have to be an unidentical twin. The two, if descendants of the same curiosity, would still look different in key aspects. Specific tools and practices of the early-modern non-Ottoman antiquarian are simply absent from the Ottoman material and written record. Key examples are bespoke furniture like the coin cabinet and methods of information exchange like the learned epistolary networks that allowed much of this development to happen under the surface of the printed word, or the (ideally illustrated) collection catalogue. Are these tools and practices central to a definition of antiquarianism or tangential to it? When Ottoman scholars took an interest in ancient coins and gems and wore them in their rings, is this at its core the same antiquarianism minus the furniture?

To be clear, epistemic proximity to European scientific practices is not a litmus test for the intellectual quality of a tradition. We should not look for an Ottoman antiquarianism in order to prove its value, but simply to probe the possible presence of transregional and transcultural developments or, indeed, their absence.

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31 Key texts of the genre are the anonymous *Book of Gifts and Rarities. Kitāb al-Hadāyā wa al-Tuḥaf*, translated and annotated by Ghāda al-Ḥijjāwī al-Qaddūmī (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996) and al-Qadi al-Rashid Ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitab al-Dhakha'ir wa-l-tuhaf*, ed. Muhammad Hamid Allah and foreword by Salah al-Din al-Munajjid, second ed. (Kuwayt: Matbaʿat Hukumat al-Kuwayt, 1984).

32 *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, p. 184.

## 3 An Egyptian Clue?

We could leave the story at this point as one of likely reuse of an antique gem and a possible hint of somewhat submerged practices of antiquarianism in Ottoman Constantinople. We should certainly keep up hope for more corroborating evidence in the future. But there is another lead that actually takes us into a new direction. Recently, I came across a marginal comment that might shed some interesting, if admittedly inconclusive, new light on these issues and redirect the quest for iconographic parallels away from Constantinople. The following text is found in a copy of ʿAli b. al-Husayn al-Masʿudi's (d. 346/957) famous work *Meadows of Gold* (*Muruj al-dhahab*) next to a passage discussing certain precious stones extracted by divers from the sea at Alexandria, which were then used to make seal rings. It is one of several passages about seals in al-Masʿudi's text that are less concerned with the natural world than with fantastic anecdotes. In this case, the stone extracted from the sea and turned into seals was believed to be from the drinking vessels of Alexander the Great which his mother had broken up and tossed into the water after his death.[33] The marginal comment answers to this in the following way (MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Damat İbrahim Paşa 921, fol. 118r):

اقول وفي وقتنا هذا وهو سنة خمس وتسعين بعد الالف تجلب الجواهر المذكورة
من الاسكندرية
الى مصر ويبتاعهم الحكاكون ويخرطون منها فصوصا للخواتم وقد رأيت منها
في مصر شيًا
كثيرا الا ان اكثرها من انواع الزجاج المصنوع بالوان مختلفة شبهية بالجواهر
المعدنية
وقد يوجد فيها فصوص من الزمرّد والعقيق والبيجادي والجزع وساير
الاحجار المعدنية وعليها صور عجيبة كصور الانسان والسباع والبهايم

33 This is not as far-fetched as it may at first sound. In 1801, Edward Daniel Clarke was able to salvage a 'vase of the Byzantine Emperors' that had been in the sultan's palace in Constantinople, where it broke. Clarke considered it a formidable piece of ancient art and found it with 'a poor lapidary', who would otherwise have turned the shards into signet rings; Edward Daniel Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Part the Second: Greece, Egypt, and the Holy Land* (New York: Whiting and Watson, 1813), p. 6.

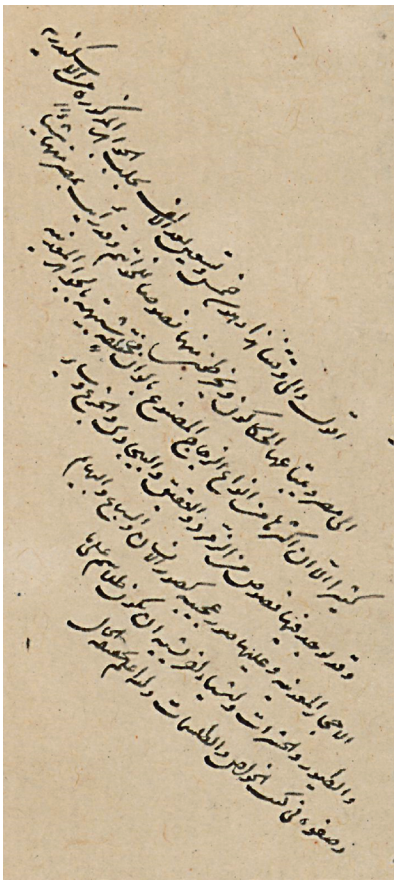

FIGURE 13.6
A marginal note reporting on the production of seals in Egypt in the seventeenth century [Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Damat İbrahim Paşa 921, fol. 118r]

والطيور والحشرات واشياء اخر يشبه ان يكون طلاسم على ما
وصفوه في كتب الخواص والطلسمات والله اعلم بحقيقة الحال

I say: In our time, that is in the year 1095, the mentioned stones are imported from Alexandria to Cairo. There, the engravers buy them, and they cut from them gemstones for seal-rings. I saw a lot of them in Cairo, yet most were made from coloured glass that resembles precious stones. But there are also gemstones made of emerald, carnelian, garnet, onyx, and other mineral stones. And on them are strange images, like human beings, lions, cattle, birds, insects, and other things resembling talismans as they describe them in the books of special properties and talismans. And God knows best about the truth of the matter.

Normally, I would not have had occasion to contemplate this note. After all, it was not signed. In my work, I collect, transcribe, and analyse documentary notes that shed light on the history of a manuscript, notes that contain factoids like names, dates, institutions, and places. Notes that start with *aqulu* (I say) have a greater claim to my attention, since the writer then tends to proceed with his own words and thoughts. In this case, even a personal nature of the information was evident, a rare occurrence in a textual practice that is otherwise dominated by citations and lexical glossing. And although this note was not signed, the identity of its writer is no mystery. It was the volume's former owner, whom I know well because a lot of volumes that he had once owned (more than seven hundred at this point) have gone through my hands or flickered across my screen.

This man is Abu Bakr b. Rustam b. Ahmad b. Mahmud al-Shirwani (d. 1135/1723).[34] He probably grew up in modern Azerbaijan, then part of the Safavid realm. But he knew Egypt extremely well, because after performing the pilgrimage as a child or young man, he spent his formative years there. After studying with such luminaries as ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Baghdadi, he then relocated to Constantinople where he embarked on a successful career in the Ottoman administration that led him to several appointments as head of the scribes (*raʾis al-kuttab*/*reisülküttap*). Along the way, al-Shirwani brought together one of the largest and choicest private book collections of his time, one that is now dispersed across the globe. In 1095/1683–84, when he wrote this note, his Egyptian years had been long behind him. He had left for Constantinople with the departing Ottoman governor already in 1083/1672 and there is no record of him ever coming back to the Arab provinces.[35] In fact, on a personal level, the date 1095/ 1683–84 puts the reading in a highly significant context as it came on the heels of the devastating Ottoman campaign against Vienna in 1683 during which al-Shirwani served in a high capacity in the entourage of the

34 See previous short treatments of al-Shirwani in Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i ʿoṯmānī*, 6 vols. (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı ile Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1996), vol. 1, p. 170; Frédéric Bauden, 'Maqriziana x: al-Maqrīzī and His *al-Tārīḫ al-Kabīr al-Muqaffā li-Miṣr*. Part 2: The Fortunes of the Work and Its Copies,' *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 15 (2020), pp. 194–269, here 234–235; Boris Liebrenz, 'The History and Provenance of the Unique *Dustūr al-munaǧǧimīn* Manuscript, BnF Arabe 5968. A Re-assessment', *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 11 (2020), pp. 28–42, here 37–38. I will explore his biography in depth, based on more literary and documentary sources, in my forthcoming book *The Archive of Arabic Literature. Ottoman Constantinople and the Library of Abū Bakr al-Širwānī (d. 1135/1723)*.

35 This does not mean that al-Shirwani was glued to Constantinople after leaving Egypt. Besides a constant presence in Edirne at the court, he did travel with the Ottoman army to Vienna in 1683, was exiled to the Gallipoli peninsula for some years, and toured the Greek peninsula in the entourage of a governor.

Grand Vizier, Qara Mustafa Köprülü. Even in the aftermath of such a disaster, life had to go on, of course, and books were read. But it is not often that we can draw so direct a connection between books and biographical junctures. Even far removed from the shores of the Nile in time and space, Egypt clearly had remained on al-Shirwani's mind. The very few notes in which he reminisces about his personal experiences and slightly lifts the curtain on his life usually have to do with his time there.

The testimony of al-Shirwani immediately raises more than one question. Is Muhammad ʿAli al-munajjim's seal one of those that al-Shirwani is talking about? And if the production of seals with animal imagery was such a successful tradition in Cairo, then why do we not see more images like this in the manuscripts? Admittedly, the note reads as though what al-Shirwani described as a particularly Egyptian experience was strange and noteworthy in the context of the central Ottoman lands in which he then wrote. But the material I have worked with includes scores of Egyptian book owners and their notes and seals from the seventeenth century. So, if they were not used on books, what was marked with those seal rings? Were they simply intended to be fashionable accessories? And does this allow us to identify the eagle-and-snake seal as one imported from Cairo?

The Egyptian connection evoked by al-Shirwani should encourage us to look around the Nile for possible sources of the iconography. The Ottoman province was probably richer with publicly visible imagery of animals than any other place in the empire. Snakes were just as much a part of this imagery as birds of prey. We could surmise a faint memory of artefacts like the stele of the snake king on the tomb of Djet found in Abydos (Louvre E11007).[36] While Horus falcon and snake are thus indeed found side by side or above each other, their stale proximity offers altogether unconvincing parallels when compared to the dramatic fight both animals are engaged in on the Byzantine mosaic in Istanbul or the many coins and gemstones cited above. A closer Egyptian example can be seen in the seal on a quittance from Hellenistic Fayoum, dated 102 CE. It depicts, according to the catalogue description, a creature with the body of a crocodile and the head of a sparrowhawk above a snake, resembling the constellation as it is found on the Ottoman astronomer's seal.[37] This shows that the Egyptian sphragistic tradition might be a more promising place and one that was ultimately a Mediterranean one merged with the iconography

36 https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010012035.

37 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Ident. Nr. P 7882; https://recherche.smb.museum/detail/1447600/steuer quittung-f%C3%BCr-opferkalb.



FIGURE 13.7
Falcon and snake on a stele above the tomb of Djet found in Abydos [Paris, Musée du Louvre, E11007]

found in other parts of the Hellenistic world and the Roman Empire. Crucially, this ancient seal leads directly to the second new clue, which we have to consider in the following chapter.

## 4 Animals for Astronomers?

There is still a final corner to turn on my as yet unfinished journey towards understanding the eagle-and-snake-seal. Recently, several thousand manuscripts after I first came across Muhammad ʿAli al-munajjim, his zoomorphic

seal finally ceased to be unique.[38] This new find, MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Laleli 1636, fol. 1r (a copy of Sadid al-Din al-Kaziruni's medical work *Kitab al-Mughni fi sharh al-Mujaz*) shows a resting animal. Here again, the image is not accompanied by any writing. The quality of the impression alone would not allow for a precise identification of the animal. On its head, we spot what could be a crown and there appear to be three flowers sprouting from the ground in front of its face. Indeed, this is exactly how the ancient Egyptian god Sobek has been depicted, as a crocodile with a sun disk or the atef crown adorning its head, which could be switched to that of Re as a falcon. This latter transformation turned this god into Sobek-Re or Soknapaiou, something that apparently happened in this instance. Now, if we compare this to the above-mentioned Egyptian seal showing a crocodile with a hawk's head, we can clearly recognize the type.

The seal impression is attached to the ownership note of one *ra'is al-munajjimīn* who calls himself simply by the name Ḥusayn. The post of head of astronomers as well as the history of the volume, its previous ownership history as well as the fact that it is found in a collection in modern Istanbul, where it was endowed in the twelfth/eighteenth century, all again point to pre-twelfth/eighteenth-century Constantinople as a possible place for Husayn. The dating is even more precise, as Husayn marks the year in which he wrote this note through abjad numerals, Arabic letters with a numerical value that can be added, a method of expressing numbers particularly en vogue with astronomers. In this case, they translate to the year 1051/1641–2 (gh = 1000 + n = 50 + a = 1), notably close to the time when al-Shirwani witnessed seals like this being produced in Cairo. And the connection to Egypt is indeed here, tenable not only in the seal's subject matter, but also in the fact that the volume was copied in 800 AH in the madrasa al-Barquqiyya in Cairo. That obviously happened long before Husayn's note, who may or may not have acquired the seal and/or the manuscript in Egypt to bring them to Constantinople. Unfortunately, beyond this conjectural hypothesis, I could not identify Husayn and this appears to be the only ownership note of his that I have ever come across. But the fact that the only two people so far who engaged with this rare pictorial practice were both astronomers and very likely from or working in the Ottoman centre is already suggestive.

38 Before this find, I suspected a round seal impression on MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 1507, fol. 1r to show an animal. But the impression or the image from which I was working was too unclear for a conclusive identification. I hope to follow up on this eventually.

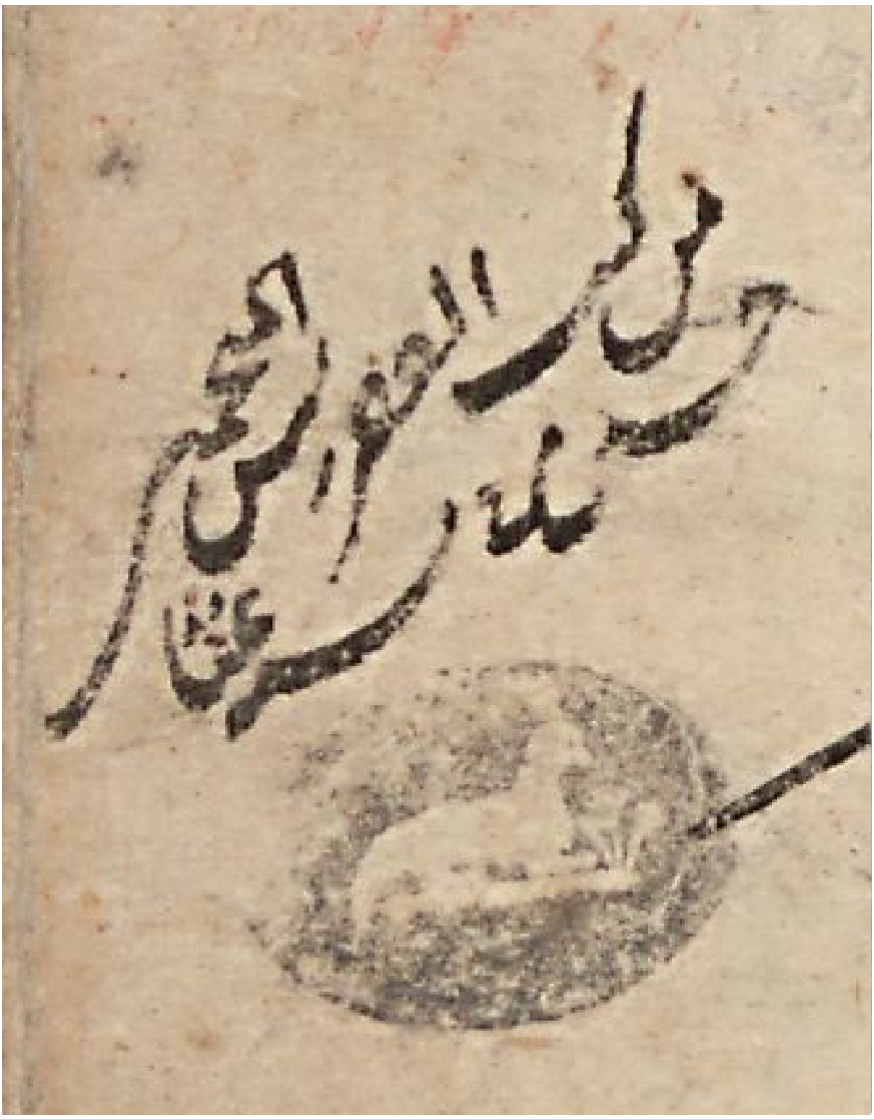

FIGURE 13.8 The ownership note of Husayn, the ra'is al-munajjimīn, with the impression of his zoomorphic seal [Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Laleli 1636, fol. 1r]

And while astronomy may not explain the meaning of those images, astronomers might have been particularly receptive to such imagery because of the fundamental role of zoomorphic star constellations for their professional and bookish practices. When many other people, according to al-Shirwani, wore similar rings, only these two individuals decided to ink them and make their



FIGURE 13.9
Seal on a quittance for a sacrificial calf, Roman Egypt, March 25, 102 CE [Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Ident. Nr. P 7882]

impressions the emblem of their possessive identification. Time (and much cataloguing work) will hopefully tell whether this is indeed more than a coincidence.

## 5 Conclusion

The confrontations of eagles, falcons, or hawks with snakes are dramatic spectacles and have always inspired people. Today, we can observe it in a very contemporary medium, the YouTube video, without those making it having any clue about the history of the motive. This should caution us against the forceful construction of iconographic dependencies by modern research. Still, artists throughout history tended to take an accessible tradition as their reference, confronting their audience with images they could recognize, understand, and of which they could appreciate the nuances in individual deviations. As this analysis has shown, such a tradition did exist around the Mediterranean in antiquity up until the early Islamic period.

This allows us to draw a line, however labyrinthine, between a marginal Ottoman sealing tradition and an antique artistic motif in use across media. This proposed line has been enforced by the discovery of a second zoomorphic seal, this one with a motive from the ancient Egyptian pantheon. Overall, antique gems, seals, and coins have proven to be the closest match for the seal used by two Ottoman astronomers in Constantinople. Other than the Tazza Farnese at the Timurid court in Samarkand or the cameo of emperor Nero in Ayyubid Hamah, seals and coins could represent a more widely accessible way to interact with the ancient past. With these examples in mind, scarce as they still are, antique coins, seals, and cameos emerge as ideal objects for such handy and mobile reuses of iconography. Their very mobility across the Mediterranean makes the attempt to answer questions of precise origins a

hopeless task. The nature of the connection is equally beyond our reach. Was Muhammad ʿAli al-munajjim's seal in the tenth/sixteenth century and that of his colleague Husayn a century later inspired by an antique piece or a repurposed original? If these were simply reused antiques, then why do we find this extremely rare form of reuse exclusively with two astronomers, probably both connected to Ottoman Constantinople? Could this be a simple coincidence?

These questions awkwardly confront us with the very uncomfortable amount of our ignorance about seals in general. Surprisingly little is known about all aspects concerning their production in the Middle East. Although many original specimens, as both engraved stones (mounted on rings and void of their carriers) and on handles that used to be worn with a cord around the neck, have survived and are today preserved in museum collections,[39] can be found in Islamic art auctions, and are sometimes incorporated like gems into medieval European artworks such as the Ballycottin cross[40] or the Birka ring,[41] their makers have left few traces. Like many other artisans, the people who produced these artefacts were not the subject of literary dissection and did not themselves write handbooks in which they laid out the details of their craft. Although many if not all historians would have known seal makers personally and probably had a closer relationship with them than with many other craftsmen (after all, discussing the design and texts they wanted engraved on their seals must have been a very individual matter), they kept these people's lives shrouded in anonymity. We have seen the same happen with Abu Bakr al-Shirwani's testimony to his extensive knowledge of the artisan tradition in his contemporary Egypt, which he might have taken to his grave had it not been for a passage in a book that provoked a comment.

Even as some seal makers started to sign their works during the eighteenth and nineteenth century with one-word names – or were they trademarks? – often too small to decipher without perfect impressions and the help of magnifying glasses or high-resolution images, the people behind these names so far have not been identified and studied. Seal engravers must have been present in all the major urban centres of the Islamic world, and it is likely that documents about individual craftsmen or their guilds can be found in the Ottoman empire's sprawling archives. Yet the – presumably collaborative – process

39 An excellent catalogue of such material is the aforementioned Porter, *Arabic and Persian Seals*.

40 Porter, *Arabic and Persian Seals*, p. 62; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1875-1211-1.

41 Stockholm, Historiska Museet, 106842_HST; https://samlingar.shm.se/object/A484E0B6-8FA6-4151-8539-9FC42F36D4E8.

between artist and client that led to a seal's design, and the sourcing of the raw materials are not the subject of the same explanatory and anecdotal literary sources that we have for many other aspects of the world of bookmaking. During the nineteenth century, many European Orientalists, diplomats, or colonial administrators sojourning in the Islamic world also had their personal seals made, yet they, too, kept silent about the details they must have learned in the process.[42]

The people who bought Muhammad 'Ali al-munajjim's books in Constantinople in the seventeenth century, foremost Jacob Golius and Levinus Warner, might have seen seal rings like his on the fingers of the people they encountered in the city. They might have been shown gemstones or coins with similar motifs in private homes or on the market. Whatever they might have known about the practice is now lost to us.

This scarcity of narrative evidence makes the collection and analysis of documentary data from the manuscripts imperative and the work of the learned custodian of this material evidence, the librarian scholar so completely embodied by Arnoud Vrolijk, just the more important.

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42 Edward Lane's short paragraph on seals in Egypt in the nineteenth century, void of any of the details relevant for the present discussion, is a case in point; it is cited in Porter, *Arabic and Persian Seals*, p. 6.

CHAPTER 14

# Trash or Treasure? Ephemera in the Leiden Middle Eastern Special Collections

*Birte Kristiansen*

In this short essay, I want to pay tribute to an often somewhat forgotten category in library collections: ephemera. While it is easy enough to see the beauty in a richly decorated centuries old manuscript, or the usefulness of a new encyclopaedia from a major university press, it is often harder to appreciate boxes full of loose-leaf paraphernalia; in short where does trash end and treasure begin?

Arnoud Vrolijk always greatly appreciated ephemera in the Leiden collections and the work he did in describing both newly acquired and existing collections, decidedly enhanced their visibility. While it will clearly be impossible to touch on everything the library owns, I intend to strategically highlight some collections to underline the width and scope of ephemeral beauty (in a literal sense) and to monumentalize the immense amount of work that Arnoud and the curators before him have done in the Leiden library to enrich the collection and its description.

> Deriving from the Greek ephēmeros ('subject to what the day may bring' or 'lasting only a day'), the generic term 'ephemera' denotes artefacts, especially printed or manuscript ones, that have only a brief or short-lived usefulness before they are discarded, as opposed to more ambitious literary or other productions that may be expected to have a long-lasting if not permanent interest. Ephemera include items such as notes, postcards, telegrams, trade cards, greetings cards, bills, receipts, tickets, theatre programs, advertising posters, and a host of other articles of generally limited and transitory interest.[1]

While the definition of 'ephemera' might seem fairly straightforward, the logic of whether something is classified as ephemeral or not seems more arbitrary. Photos (snapshots) and maps were in the past often categorized as

1 Peter Beal, "Ephemera" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

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ephemeral, but now they usually are their 'own category.' And indeed maps and photographs were generally not intended only for short-term use and thus quite incomparable to a brochure or theatre ticket. On the other hand, by a strict definition, the substantial Leiden collections of papyri, should fall quite clearly within the ephemeral (after all the only reason why they are available to us today, is that they were thrown away in places that happened to preserve them quite well. At the time of their creation, no one would have considered them worthy of preservation). Yet, 2000 year old papyri are not the first thing to come to mind when we talk about ephemeral collections. Maybe the most useful way to look at ephemera from a library perspective, is as items that are difficult to catalogue, because their context matters.

Where books hold enough information to stand up in their own right, containing a message with a beginning a middle and an end, ephemera largely depend on their context to gain their worth. A normal train ticket may become special if it marks the first or last journey of a specific train, if it was during that journey that a famous scientist got his 'eureka-moment', if it denoted a revolution in ticket printing and so on and so forth. However, if this context that makes the ticket special is not preserved together with the ticket, it changes back into a regular item of which many thousand were printed over the course of time. And as a general rule unconnected memorabilia with no clear provenance are of little use to a library (unless they are very old and thus rare, as is the case with the papyri).

Ephemera become useful to a library (user) when they are preserved together with the context that made them special or if they have enough 'mass' to become a collection open to analysing. The most organized collections of ephemera are the ones that were purposely collected by a collector and that are sold or donated as a complete set with the contextual information available. In principle a research librarian can serve as that collector, but this kind of collecting is incredibly time consuming asks dedication and specialized knowledge; or as the filmmaker and collector Bakhtiari formulated it: '*all these possessions did not just come to me out of the blue* [...]*; they are here because of a lifetime of my scrounging around in the gutters.*'[2]

Often enough collections of ephemera do not enter the library in such an organized and structured way as dictated by the ideal situation, but if they have enough 'mass,' some context can still be made out. For example, an unorganized pile of images in a scholar's archive can probably be contextualized

2 Hamid Naficy, "Collecting Pre- and Post-Revolution Iranian Movie Posters in the United States and in Iran," in *Collecting Prints, Posters, and Ephemera: Perspectives in a Global World*, ed. Ruth E. Iskin, Contextualizing Art Markets (New York: Bloomsbury visual arts, 2020).




FIGURE 14.1 Cartoons are a typical example of ephemera created for a short moment of fun related to current affairs. They do not always speak to an audience in a different setting, because without the background information most of the joke is lost on the observer. This example from circa 1867–1869 held in the Leiden collection making fun of administrators is pretty timeless however. [KITLV 36A211]

by a librarian or later scholar, because they are not lone items, but come in the context of a scholar's work and legacy.

The decision to collect ephemeral material of whatever sort, is complicated and touches on many facets of librarianship. Today's librarians daily deny brochures, written notes, bills, shopping lists, pamphlets, postcards, snapshots, posters, admission tickets and so on and so forth from entering their

collections, because for now they are not considered worth the effort of cataloguing and preserving, but if we would wait long enough, eventually they might become a piece of some value, like the papyri or the scraps of medieval manuscripts in book bindings before them.[3] Indeed on a more philosophical level we can even wonder if ephemera are still ephemera the moment a librarian deems them worthy of preservation. Is it in fact the act of preserving that distinguishes the non-ephemera from the ephemera?

## 1 The Hotz Collection

An important Leiden collection including a lot of ephemera is the Hotz collection.[4] Albertus. P.H. Hotz (1855–1930) was a Dutch entrepreneur who lived and travelled through Iran. Later he also became a consul in Beirut. As an amateur photographer he build up an extensive photo collection containing both his own photographs and photos that he bought from renowned local photographers, amongst others Antoin Sevruguin (ca. 1830–1933) and Ernst Hoeltzer (1835–1911).[5] The Hotz collection, that included books, some manuscripts, photos, and a variety of other materials, was donated to the library by his widow in 1935. Most of the collection was catalogued within the first year, but, interestingly, the photographs were not. The photographs remained in their box and slowly moved out of sight to a point where they were almost forgotten. They resurfaced in 1983 when the library moved from the old building at the Rapenburg to the new building at the Witte Singel.[6] What exactly happened and why the choice was made to leave the photographs in boxes can only be speculated on. But a reasonable explanation would be that the responsible librarian at the time, was unsure how to handle this collection. What to do with 1159 photographs most of which were made by an amateur

3 Jorien R. Duivenvoorden et al., "Hidden Library: Visualizing Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts in Early-Modern Bookbindings with Mobile Macro-XRF Scanner," *Heritage Science* 5, no. 1 (December 2017): 6, https://doi.org/10.1186/s40494-017-0117-6.

4 Arnoud Vrolijk, "Albertus Paulus Hermanus Hotz Archive and Collection," 2006, https://collectionguides.universiteitleiden.nl/resources/ubl063.

5 Corien J.M. Vuurman, "'Greetings from Shiraz, the City of the Purest Air and Clearest Sky in the World': Ordinary Pictorial Delights from the Collections of Leiden University Library," History of Photography 37, no. 1 (February 1, 2013), pp. 32–47, https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2012.728023.

6 Jan Just Witkam, 'Albert Hotz and His Photographs of Iran: An Introduction to the Leiden Collection', in Islāmī, Kāmbīz, *Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar* (Princeton, NJ: Zagros, 1998).




FIGURE 14.2 Hotz Album 1, p. 32 [Leiden University Library]

photographer? The work involved in cataloguing and preserving such a collection is enormous. Certainly if the library today would receive someone's travel snapshots, even if they were very nice snapshots, they would be uncertain what to do with them too. Keep them? throw them away? Enter them one by one in the catalogue? … maybe just leave the box for a bit and sleep on it? After sleeping on it for almost 50 years, there was no longer any doubt that these photographs had historical value and they were all entered into the collection. The collection received an unexpected addition in 1994 when Hotz's grandson Charles Haccius donated a bag with 246 watercolor pictures (Or. 27.133) stemming from the Qajar period (Second half nineteenth century). This addition has received only minor attention from scholars so far, but like the photographs before them, collections are patient.

The reason for mentioning Hotz as a collector of ephemera is, however, not (just) his photographs but even more so some additional boxes in the collection, which hold brochures and other loose-leaf materials that are generally accepted as ephemera. For this article I thought that the postcards of Iran

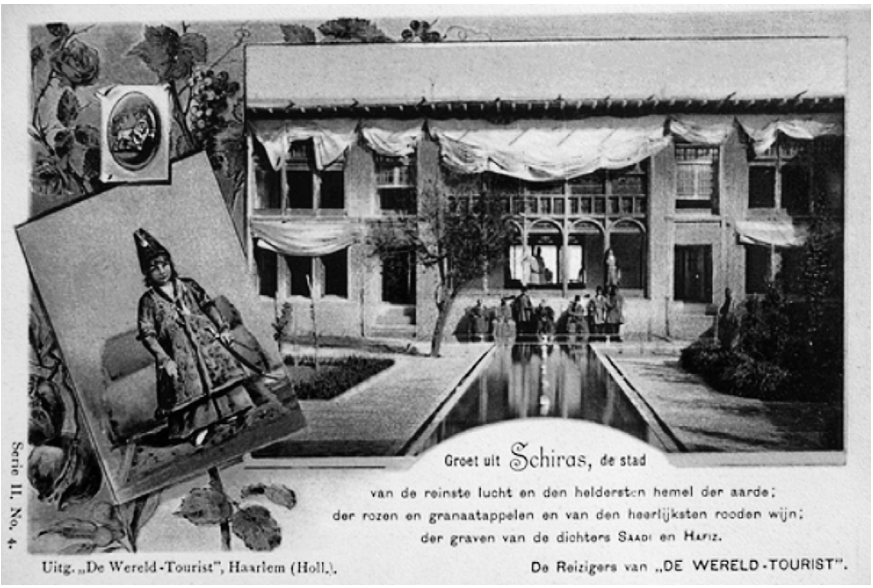


FIGURE 14.3 Greetings from Shiraz. Lost picture postcard, Hotz Collection, formerly in Box 'Travelling D–K'. This illustration was taken from the article 'Greetings from Shiraz, the city of the purest air and clearest sky in the world': Ordinary Pictorial Delights from the Collections of Leiden University Library' by Corien Vuurman [UBL]

printed by a Dutch printing company, *De Wereld-Tourist*,[7] would form a nice illustration of how ephemera functioned in collections.

I found out about the existence of these postcards in an article by Corien Vuurman.[8] It was the journalist/ printer E.T. Feenstra Kuiper (1857–1908) who took the initiative for a 3-year journal that would not only describe his journey around the world but also make available a total of 20 postcards to the subscribers of the journal. If indeed all 20 postcards were printed is unknown,[9] but some certainly were and part of those are depicted in Vuurman's article. Indeed I was hoping to find additional postcards from the collection of Feenstra Kuiper by going through the archival boxes on travel, but quite the opposite happened. When opening the Hotz archive box indicated in Vuurman's article no postcards were found. Opening some additional boxes that would be

7 Vuurman, 'Greetings from Shiraz', p. 33.

8 Vuurman, pp. 33–35.

9 Uit oude kranten: "Wereld-Tourist," Vereniging Documentatie Prentenbriefkaarten, 2021, https://www.prentbriefkaarten.info/blog/uit-oude-kranten-wereld-tourist.

logical competitors in the case of an honest (reference) mistake, did not give any results either. The next step would be to go minutely through all 94 boxes of archival material, but I decided that that would go beyond the scope of this article as the postcards were in this case merely intended as an illustration of ephemeral material and the article is not intended as a study of the Feenstra postcards as such. In a way by 'being lost,' they are as illustrative of ephemera as they can be. It is very easy for this kind of loose-leave material to get misplaced, for example when it is taken out of its storage to be scanned or restored. The value is not always obvious and – as said – depends on the context. Moreover because these cards are not individually described within the collection, it will be hard to find their way back to their original box if they are accidentally misplaced. So while I intended to use these postcards as a typical example of ephemeral material, they now came to play a different role in this article, namely as an illustration of the vulnerability of ephemeral collections.

## 2 Egyptian Film Posters

In 2016 Arnoud Vrolijk acquired a collection of circa 150 Egyptian film posters for the Leiden library from 1950–1980, collected by the German-British collector and dealer Thomas Hill. The posters are a great source to examine the role of cinema in Egyptian society and beyond. As Arnoud himself indicates in the short writings that he dedicated to this collection, we should not take the posters at face-value. Mostly we are presented with a very westernized image of Egyptian actresses with large cleavages and short skirts.[10] Additionally, we find some outspoken orientalist imagery.[11] Despite the collection's relatively modest size, its organization allows for meaningful analysis, demonstrating how a collection of ephemera, when viewed in aggregate, can reveal much more than the sum of its parts.

10 Arnoud Vrolijk, "Egyptian Screen Goddesses and Western Fashion: Freedom or Oppression?," 2020, https://www.leidenspecialcollectionsblog.nl/articles/egyptian-screen-goddesses-and-western-fashion-freedom-or-oppression-1.

11 Arnoud Vrolijk, "'They Are Driving Me Crazy': Egyptian Screen Goddesses and Western Fashion," in P*rophets, Poets and Scholars: The Collections of the Middle Eastern Library of Leiden University*, ed. Arnoud Vrolijk et al. (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2024), pp. 364–365.




FIGURE 14.4 Example of an Egyptian film poster in Westernized style from a film that translates as "Me, him, her." Or 27.532.7

## 3 ISIM Collection

One of the most ambitious collections that the university library holds, is the ISIM collection. While it is more correct to classify it as a collection of 'grey literature' rather than an ephemeral collection, the reason for collecting is the same as is the case for the other collections discussed here. The non-academic part of the ISIM collection consist of pamphlet-like books with, mostly, religious content. These booklets were collected around the Middle East, Indonesia and particularly Egypt, between 1987 and 2010, when the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) was situated in Leiden.

The intention of collecting was to create something of a time-capsule of how religious thought in the Islamicate World was developing in the street. Who were the famous preachers and what was the message for their constituency? Why and how did (parts of) century old texts get reprinted and surface in the streets of Cairo? What was proclaimed the face of evil by specific hate-preachers? Or indeed the opposite, why was Islam solely a message of love and peace according to others?

The process of cataloging such pamphlets would easily be tenfold of the original purchasing price and that was one of the reasons why not everyone in the library could appreciate the hunger for what came to be referred to as 'ISIM-material,' which summarized would mean something like "non-academic books of flimsy quality and possibly filled with messages of idealism, flagrant lies and/or inflammatory language."

With the closing of ISIM in 2010, the large-scale collecting of this material terminated. However, looking back now, if we see how crucial these years were after the ending of the cold war, with the twin tower attack in 2001, and with Islam finding new voices, some advocating peace, others resistance or even violence in a fast changing world, we can really start to see the innovative approach of this collection; only the future will allow us to judge the true historical value of the collection, but I am inclined to believe it will be of major importance, because the collection describes a timeframe in which Islam as a religion but also as a geopolitical force was reinventing itself.

In their little booklet *Duistere Machten*,[12] we get a glimpse of the enjoyment Arnoud Vrolijk and his long-term mentor and colleague Jan Just Witkam found in their treasure hunt around the Islamicate World (and in the existing Leiden

12 Arnoud Vrolijk and Jan Just Witkam, *Duistere Machten: Gestalten van Het Kwaad in de Wereld van de Islam : Catalogus Bij Een Tentoonstelling van Recente Boeken Uit de Arabische Wereld, Turkije En Indonesië in de Leidse Universiteitsbibliotheek, 6 December 2000–*




FIGURE 14.5 Cover of the booklet *Duistere Machten. Gestalten van het kwaad in de wereld van de Islam* written by Arnoud Vrolijk and Jan Just Witkam

collections) to find whatever they could find on a particular topic, in this case 'evil forces'. While it is easy to mistake this publication for an attempt to revile the Middle East, I think it should be seen as an honest endeavor to understand the quirkiness of apocalyptic conspiracies. Why were the words of such doomsayers so widely available in little, often improvised, bookstands and hardly seen in the more official bookstores? Who were the writers, the publishers, and who was their readership? The same questions could be asked and answered for a dozen other topics using the grey literature, ephemera and memorabilia acquired in those years.

While a lot of the collecting for this collection was done by the librarians themselves, Arnoud was always very accommodating if other people wanted to collect for the collection too. An excellent example of that is a set of Swahili books collected by Gerard van de Bruinhorst, which can safely be considered the most complete collection on the topic worldwide and which has been thoroughly analyzed in Van de Bruinhorst's work.[13] The entire ISIM collection can be found in the Leiden Catalogue by adding "ISIM" as holding information. Afterwards specifying 'swahili' as the searching language, gives the set that was collected by Van de Bruinhorst.

## 4 Struggling Libraries

Libraries struggle with the cataloguing of ephemera, and Leiden library forms no exception to that. Cataloguing item by item is often too time-consuming and in many cases the individual items just do not hold enough information to make up a proper record. Additionally the standard catalogue is not designed to add lots of contextual information and it is hard to keep the collection together as a collection if items are catalogued individually. For items held in the Special Collections department, the option of a digital collection guide is available. Examples of collection guides that Arnoud was involved in and that (partly) hold ephemeral material are amongst others the *Archive of Smitskamp's*

*29 Januari 2001*, vol. 40, Kleine Publicaties van de Leidse Universiteitsbibliotheek (Leiden: Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, 2000).

13 G.C. Bruinhorst, Van De, *'Raise Your Voices and Kill Your Animals' : Islamic Discourses on the Idd El-Hajj and Sacrifices in Tanga* (*Tanzania*) (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), https://doi.org/10.5117/9789053569467.

*'Het Oosters Antiquarium'*[14] the *Mostapha Naji Collection*,[15] the *Sayyida Salma* (*Emily Ruete*) *and Rudolph Said Ruete archive*,[16] and the *Gualtherus Hendrik Albert Juynboll archive and collection*.[17]

## 5 Digital Ephemera

The digital age adds a whole new dimension to the already complicated discussion on ephemera. The digitalization of ephemeral materials opens them up to a much larger audience, but is also slowed down by unclarity concerning copyrights. The chances that someone will object to the online availability of postcards, film posters or travel brochures are minor, but playing by the rules, the university is not allowed to make them available without contacting the designers, photographers and writers involved.

The biggest challenge, however, is the huge production of new 'born digital ephemera', in the form of social media posts, digital posters, (short-lived) websites and so on and so forth. Like the librarians of preceding generations, today's librarians have not found an answer to the question how to preserve such huge quantities of ephemeral material. An example of new ephemera are the posters for the many events that the Middle Eastern department of Leiden University organizes. These posters are a valuable source to give insight in the research interests of the staff and with their nice designs, many of them created by graphic designer Paul Oram, they are visually interesting too. Yet no systematic attempt has so far been made to collect and preserve – either digitally or in print – this great collection of ephemera.

Many of the ephemera in the collection now were not purposely created to survive time, but they did so because of the keen eye of a collector and the dedication and patience of the librarians that they were presented to. In conclusion then, we have to acknowledge that there is a thin line between trash and treasure. Ephemera can become of huge historical consequence, but their survival seems mostly a matter of sheer luck.

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14 Arnoud Vrolijk, "Archive of Smitskamp's 'Het Oosters Antiquarium,'" 2009, https://collectionguides.universiteitleiden.nl/resources/ubl131.

15 Arnoud Vrolijk and Birte Kristiansen, "Mostapha Naji Collection," 2016, https://collectionguides.universiteitleiden.nl/resources/ubl270.

16 Hans van der Velde and Arnoud Vrolijk, "Sayyida Salma (Emily Ruete) and Rudolph Said Ruete Archive," 2019, https://collectionguides.universiteitleiden.nl/repositories/2/resources/647.

17 Hans van de Velde and Arnoud Vrolijk, "Gualtherus Hendrik Albert Juynboll Archive and Collection," 2015, https://collectionguides.universiteitleiden.nl/resources/ubl251.




FIGURE 14.6 The Middle Eastern department at Leiden with help of amongst others LUCIS and the Babtain Foundation have organized an impressive number of events over the past years, many of them were advertised through posters. Sometimes these posters were designed by staff-members or students and some of the most impressive ones were made by graphic designer Paul Oram. If a systematic attempt to collect and preserve these digitally born posters, which sometimes do not make it beyond the Leiden website, would be made, in the future they would provide a rich source of information on the topics of interest of the Middle Eastern department in this specific time-frame.

CHAPTER 15

# Hendrik Dunlop's Experiences and Business Activities in Qajar Persia

## *A Reconstruction Using (Photographic) Sources from the Family Archive and from Dutch Collections*

*Corien J.M. Vuurman*

A nineteenth-century album with 37 photographs recently came to light in the collection of the Print Room of Leiden University Libraries. The photographs in this album were all taken by the already well-known Dutch entrepreneur Albert Paulus Hermanus Hotz (1855–1930) during his journey through Persia and the Caucasus in 1890–1891, when he paid a visit to his staff members and trading houses and, above all when he searched for business opportunities. It is an interesting photograph album for those who want to gain more insight into Dutch business activities in nineteenth-century Qajar Persia, especially as it holds photographs which experts in the field thought were only housed in the collection of a private collector in the United States.[1]

In this album especially composed by Hotz, the photographs also offer a glimpse into the life of European expatriates in Qajar Persia. They show the various European employees of Hotz and their family members, and provide information about the way they lived and worked, their trading houses and the various commercial products they marketed. Persian merchants, Persian employees and servants are also depicted. Particularly interesting is the way in which the photographer positioned the sitters, indicating that Hotz was more than just an amateur photographer. He must have been familiar with the way

1 Leiden University Libraries, Print Room, Hotz-Album (UBL PK-F-73.151) counts 37 photographs, titled *Aangeboden ter gedachtenis aan mijne reis in 1891* ('Presented in memory of my journey in 1891'). The Hotz-album in the Elmar Seibel collection (Ars Libri. Boston, MA) counts 45 photographs. It is titled *Aangeboden ter gedachtenis aan mijne reis in 1891. Kantoren en personeel in Perzië van de firma J.C.P. Hotz en Zoon en de Teheran Toko* ('Presented in memory of my journey in 1891. Offices and staff in Persia of the company J.C.P. Hotz and Son and the Tehran Toko') The subtitles are written by Hotz in Dutch. The photographs taken in Jezd (Yazd) and those of the Tehran Toko are missing from the Leiden University Libraries album. These photographs are albumen prints (and not platinum prints like the entire collection of photographs taken by Hotz) and may have been taken by another photographer. It is noteworthy that Hotz did not visit Jezd during his trip.

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in which artists or professional photographers created their composition for a group portrait. For instance, we can observe in his photographs an emphasis on a more or less hierarchical relationship or cooperation between the sitters. And by including different objects in the image, he illustrates the status or the daily activities of the person photographed. The handwritten subtitles by Hotz provide information about the subjects, the names of the staff, and the locations of Hotz's trading offices: *Bassorah* (*Basra*) (Tentoon – Keddell – Fowler), *Bender Abbas* (*Bandar-Abbas*) (Henry Marshall), *Bagdad* (Gale – Blockey – Blockey junior), *Bouchir* (*Bushehr*) (v.d. Zee [H.C. van der Zee] – Groeneweg), Shiraz (Dunlop – Muller), Isfahan (D. Collignon – J.W. Collignon – Boon – Walley), *Sultanabad* (De Vries – Brown – Gale), *Jezd* (*Yazd*) (Wilton van Reede – Prins) and *Tehran* (Tehran Toko).[2]

A certain amount has already been published about Hotz and his activities in Qajar Persia and the photographic and other collections he left behind.[3] Except for their names, however, we hardly have any information about the staff members who lived and worked there for Hotz over several years. In this essay, therefore, I will focus on the experiences and business activities of one of them, Hendrik Dunlop (1867–1944), who later became something of a public figure in the Netherlands, but who has since largely faded from memory. Originally employed by Hotz, Dunlop lived in Persia from 1890 to 1903 and later founded a trading company together with Hotz.[4] With the help of (photographic) sources from the family archive and from various Dutch collections, I will trace Dunlop's activities in Qajar Persia in an attempt to shed more light on Dutch trading practices in Persia in that period.

A commercial treaty between the Netherlands and Persia was concluded on 3 July 1857. It was announced in the first issue of the *Staatsblad*, the Dutch government's official gazette for the notification of new laws and regulations, of 1858. The treaty was an important agreement aimed at reviving and promoting

2 Ibidem. See also Leiden University Libraries (BPL 2404 – July–Dec 1889 H–J, 39th folder, nos. 1467–1489); a letter dated November, 18, 1889, to the curator of the National Ethnographic Museum in Leiden, Johannes Dietrich Eduard Schmeltz (1839–1909), written by Hotz (J.C.P. Hotz & Son) for Hotz's various trading offices and the names of its staff: *'A. Brown* (*Sultanabad*)*, I.H. Collignon* (*Isfahan*)*, W. Groeneweg* (*Bushire*)*, I.F. Muller* (*Shiraz*)*, Joh. F.B. Rolufs* (*Bussorah*)*'*. Leiden University Libraries, Special collections: In Hotz's photo album 5, we also find photographs of M. Ferguson and H.W. Maclean (no. 10, Isfahan), Mr. and Mrs. Charnaud (no. 25, Bagdad).

3 See for example: Vuurman en Martens (1995), Engelberts (1995/1999 en 2000), Witkam (1998), Vuurman (2011), en Vuurman (2013).

4 Dunlop (1912: 412).

trade between the two countries. Dunlop included it as an appendix to his book *Perzië voorheen en thans* ('Persia, then and now') that would be published in 1912.[5] From the moment the Suez Canal was opened in 1869, however, the commercial and merchant shipping that had long existed between Java and the Persian Gulf fell into decline. The Dutch consular post in the Persian port city of Bushir (Bandar-e Būshehr), where Consul General Richard Charles Keun van Hoogerwoerd (1838–1906) had worked for about twenty years to protect Dutch commercial activities, was closed. However, due to continued British interest in the trade with Persia, it was decided that a new Dutch consulate would be opened in Tehran.

In 1889 Fridolin Marinus Knobel (1857–1933) was appointed Dutch Consul General in Tehran. His appointment had a favourable effect on Dutch trade in Persia. Due to Knobel's efforts, Dutch entrepreneurs gained more prestige and were encouraged to do more business there. This led to the establishment of a Dutch trading house, the so-called Tehran Toko, in 1893. As a result, more and more European businessmen travelled to Persia for work and trade, and Hendrik Dunlop was one of them.[6] Between 1840 and 1850, only about 150 Europeans lived in Persia on an annual basis, mainly diplomats and military personnel, but also missionaries, scientists, and adventurers. Their number rose to about 800 in 1890 and to 1,000 around 1900. Only a very small number of them were Dutch nationals. It is estimated that between 1840 to 1915, a total of only about 100 Dutch people stayed in Persia for any length of time.[7]

In a Hotz photograph taken in Shiraz (Fig. 15.1), we see Dunlop sitting on the left with his arms folded next to his director, I.F. Muller,[8] wearing a light-coloured wide-brimmed hat and looking straight into the camera. Hendrik Dunlop was born in the port city of Rotterdam on 29 September 1867, the second son of Samuel Dunlop and Catharina Hillegonda Dalen. The Dunlops were a patrician family that traced back its origins to *c.*1753, when a merchant called David Dunlop settled in Rotterdam. His descendants founded one branch of the family in Amsterdam and another in the Dutch East Indies. Through intermarriage, the Rotterdam branch of the Dunlop family was closely connected with other prominent families in the city, including Mees, Havelaar, and van der Hoop.

5 Dunlop (1912: 575ff).

6 Vuurman (2011: 27) and Leiden University Libraries, Collection Leeuwenburgh (Or. 25.616) contains 11 photographs of the so-called 'Tehran Toko'. These photographs, probably taken by Antoin Sevruguin, show the outside and the interior of the building.

7 De Vries (2002: 20).

8 In Dunlop's travel diary, his director's name is occasionally written as Müller. Hotz also notes Muller and Müller.



FIGURE 15.1 Leiden University Library, Print Room, A. Hotz album [UBL PK-F-73.151 – photo 22]

Representing, together with his brother David (b. 1864), the sixth generation of Dunlops, Hendrik received his secondary education at the Higher Civic School (*Hogereburgerschool*, HBS) in Rotterdam. This was a practically oriented educational establishment for higher functions in industry and trade, and he was already determined to become an important businessman.[9] Dunlop started his career at the age of 21, when he joined J.C.P. Hotz & Son.[10] He had met Hotz in 1898 at the Vereniging Neerlandia, the 'Dutch Club' in London, a meeting place for young Dutchmen to develop personal friendships and meet businessmen in a relaxed atmosphere, allowing them to lay the foundation for their future careers.[11] One year later, on 2 April 1890, he set off for Persia on behalf of Hotz, travelling from the Netherlands (he had collected his passport in The Hague on 14 March 1890), overland via Berlin, Moscow and from there

9 The Rotterdam City Archives (RCA), 400 Dunlop Family Archives, No. 244: Hendrik Dunlop's date of birth is registered in the Birth Registers of the Municipality of Rotterdam. Also see the eulogy by his son David Dunlop in RCA, 400 Dunlop Family Archives, No. 265.

10 RCA – 400 Dunlop Family Archives, No. 248: Dunlop's travel diary, page 1.

11 Engelberts (2000, 41ff).

to Baku, Enzeli and Resht, finally arriving in Tehran on 27 April. From there he continued his journey to Isfahan and Shiraz.[12]

Dunlop's letters to the Cambridge Orientalist Edward Granville Browne (1862–1926) from 1896 and 1897 confirm that he had lived in Shiraz for about six years by then, revealing that he intended to move to Tehran.[13] It is not entirely clear when he actually did move to the Persian capital. However, in one photograph, taken in 1899, he stands in front of his house in Tehran with some Persian merchants as well as three Europeans, one of whom can be identified as Albert Houtum-Schindler (1846–1916), the Director of Persia's Foreign Office Control Department, who acted as general adviser to the Persian Government (Fig. 15.2).[14]

Dunlop travelled extensively for his work in Persia and Iraq.[15] Like everyone else – Persians and foreigners alike – Dunlop needed official travel passes, at least one of which is still preserved in the Dunlop family archives. An accompanying letter dated 1 June 1897 from a police station in Baghdad and written

12 Dunlop's travel diary, page 1ff. Dunlop travelled by train from Rotterdam to Berlin, Moscow, Tsaritsyn (Wolgograd/Stalingrad), then by boat to Astrachan, and finally to Enzeli. From here he rode on horseback to Resht, Manjil, Kasvin and Tehran. Dunlop recorded his daily travel experiences in a large notebook. The collection also includes a small notebook in which Dunlop summarized his daily travel experiences and also included some other information. According to his travel diary, Dunlop left Shiraz for Europe on 12 December 1894, arriving in Rotterdam on 22 January 1895. On 8 October 1895 he returned to Shiraz, arriving there on 12 December 1895. In 1899, he returned to the Netherlands permanently.

13 Cambridge University Library, E.G. Browne Collection, Letters from Dunlop to Browne dated 9 October 1896 and 2 January 1897. Browne and Dunlop had not met in Persia, the former already having returned to England in 1888. In his travel diary (p. 36), among his notes from the year 1890, Dunlop included a passage about 13 May 1891, stating that he left Shiraz to travel to Tehran to open an office there and that he had sold all his belongings. After this passage he continued with the year 1890. It is therefore not entirely clear when exactly he left for Tehran.

14 I am grateful to Heldine Dunlop for showing me this photograph from her family collection. For E.G. Browne's biographical sketch of Houtum-Schindler, see Edward G. Browne, "The Persian manuscripts of the late Sir Albert Houtum-Schindler, K.C.I.E", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 49/4 (1917): 657–694. For a more recent scholarly discussion, see Houtum-Schindler: John D. Gurney, 'Houtum-Schindler, Albert', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, XII/5, pp. 540–543, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/houtum-schindler-albert (accessed on 30 December 2012): Albert Houtum-Schindler was an authority on Persia, an engineer and employee of the Persian government for over thirty years in the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Some sources suggest that he was Dutch and was born in the Netherlands, but it was generally assumed that he was German.

15 Dunlop (1912: 8).



FIGURE 15.2 In 1899: Voor de pui van mijn huis te Teheran in den zomer, vermoedelijk. Europeanen, van links naar rechts: A. Houtum Schindler, employé, P.P. ter Meulen, employé, F.W. Emmerson, employé (per procuratie), H. Dunlop

in Arabic, states that all police stations on the way from Baghdad to Iran were to look after Dunlop and provide him with protection.[16]

Dunlop's manuscript travel diary contains a passage in which he wrote that he had become his own boss. He wrote that he was happy that from that moment on he no longer had to ride those miserable post horses, but could ride his own good horse Edgar, and that he had his own caravan consisting of six mules, his white greyhound Hector, and his servants Hassan and his brother. Intriguingly, these lines were written while travelling from Bushir to Shiraz on 12 November 1890, mere months after Dunlop's arrival in Persia.[17] The date cannot be correct – the abundant references to his director, Muller, testify to this – but the sentiment may fit in with a development nine years later. On

16 The RCA – 400 Dunlop Family Archives: The Arabic document bears a stamp and a signature of the relevant police station. It is remarkable that Dunlop should be mentioned here as an English citizen. I am grateful to Dr. Reza Sheikh and Dr. Nader Sohrabi for the translation of this document.

17 Dunlop's travel diary, p. 42f. '*Daar ik thans mijn eigen baas ben geworden, behoef ik niet meer die ellendige postpaarden te berijden, maar berijd mijn eigen goede paard Edgar, en mijn karavaan bestaat uit 6 muildieren en de hazewind hond* (*wit*) *Hector. Mijn bedienden zijn Hassan en zijn broeder.*'

25 October 1899 the Dutch daily newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad* announced that Dunlop had entered into a partnership with Hotz and Willem Groeneweg. At the time Hotz resided in London, Groeneweg in Constantinople, and Dunlop in Tehran. The company of Groeneweg, Dunlop & Co. was established for the purpose of conducting general commercial business and representing agencies, insurance companies, banks and trading houses.[18]

Another interesting photograph album is housed in the collections of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. It is Dunlop's travel album. As far as we know, Dunlop did not take any photographs himself, but he collected images during his travels to several countries and during his stay in Persia, at least in the period between 1890 and 1895. In his album we find 62 photographs 43 of which were taken in Persia by the well-known professional photographer Antoin Sevruguin (1851–1933).[19] The remaining photographs, purchased from other professional photographers during his travels, show interesting sights he visited in Germany and Russia, while he was on his way to Persia, and in China, Scotland, and Canada.[20] As we examine the Persian photographs in his album, we discover Dunlop's interest in themes that can also be found in his writings, such as landscapes, (ancient) monuments, cityscapes, travellers, Persians and dervishes, bridges and rivers, roads and telegraph poles. In his travel diary he recorded his daily experiences during his trip. He informs us about the times of departure and arrival, weather conditions, the landscape and travel route, the villages, cities and the post- or guesthouses, the horses, the meals, the people he met and the (ancient) monuments he saw.

Dunlop's notes are a valuable source on travel in Persia towards the end of the nineteenth century. His diary shows that he rode on horseback from one post house, caravanserai or telegraph station to the next. Roads were usually bad, full of holes or rocky. Since rooms were not always available, he and his travelling companions were occasionally forced to sleep on the roof or to continue their journey and ride through the night to the next station. After sunset they had to use torches or candles to find their way. This was quite a dangerous

18 For more detailed information, see the memorandum of association of this company in RCA – 400 Dunlop Family Archives, no. 259: Firmacontract tussen A.P.H. Hotz, W. Groeneweg en H. Dunlop, gepasseerd voor notaris Pollones te Amsterdam, 14 Sept. 1899. Also see https://www.delpher.nl – *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 25 October 1899, page 3.

19 For Sevruguin: see Bohrer (1999).

20 Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (RP-F-F01048) Travel album. Title 'H. Dunlop Shiraz, Perzië, 1890–1895'. The places in Persia mainly concern: Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan, Bushehr, Kasvin, Kazerun, Pasargadae and Persepolis. Dunlop's travel diary, page 7 – Dunlop writes that he bought photographs in Moscow.

endeavour because they did not know the roads well. Horse riding was especially dangerous in the mountain areas. In lower areas rivers which they then had to ford often overflowed their banks. There were not always enough post horses to rent, so that so now and then the journey had to be postponed. Most horses were in poor condition and fell regularly. On one occasion, Dunlop somersaulted over his horse's head, fell into a river and was completely soaked. Fortunately, he did not break anything himself, but one of his fellow travellers fractured a collarbone. A major problem during his journey was that there was not always enough food or water in the villages. The water was sometimes polluted or too salty to drink.

In addition to information about travelling, his notes also contain valuable information about the context of the photographs Dunlop collected. With the help of his notes some of his photographs can be described better and more fully. This is especially true of those elements that cannot be seen in a photograph, such as smells and sounds; the personal character of Persians he met along the way; the temperature; and the sulphurous taste of the water of the Daliki River, near which Europeans had placed derricks to find oil.[21] Noticeably absent from Dunlop's travel notes are reflections on current events and developments in Persia at the time – but his later publications show that he was interested in them nonetheless.

It is not surprising that the themes in Dunlop's photograph album are more or less similar to those found in the Hotz albums. Dunlop, like Hotz, belonged to the higher classes in society in which erudition was highly valued, also in merchants. He was therefore not only involved in trade, but also showed an interest in (ancient) history and the culture of Persia.[22] This is particularly well

21 Dunlop's travel diary, p. 43f. On 12 November 1890, Dunlop arrived at the derricks in Daliki. He met the Austrian engineer Kmentt who had recently started drilling with new workers. In other sources, he is referred to as "Captain Kmentt"; see British Library, India Office Records and Private Papers, Mss Eur F111/71: Correspondence, Printed Papers and Newspaper Cuttings Relating to the Persian Bank Mining Rights Corporation Ltd (581/586): The Persian Bank Mining Rights Corporation, Circular to the Shareholders, 24 April, 1891, f. 269r. The document mentions that the Corporation had acquired the mining rights to the Daliki petroleum fields "originally conceded to the firm of Messrs. Hotz". Kmentt's employees could not cope with the work, were lazy and drunk. After a tour of the work area and drinking tea, Dunlop swam in the Daliki River with Kmentt. Vuurman (2011: 309) In the early eighties of the nineteenth century Hotz acquired a small oil concession in Daliki (forty miles north-east of Bushehr). Hotz took photographs of a derrick in the petroleum camp in Daliki. See Hotz album 1, photo no. 60 and 61 and album 9, photo no. 59 and 60.

22 Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (RP-F-F01048) Travel album. Title '*H. Dunlop Shiraz, Perzië, 1890–1895*'. The photographed places in Persia in this album mainly concern: Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan, Bushehr, Kasvin, Kazerun, Pasargadae and Persepolis.

illustrated in Dunlop's book *Perzië Voorheen en Thans*, in which he provides an overview of the history of the Persian Empire and in which he also pays ample attention to the time of the Qajars (1779–1925).[23] His comments on the various events in the Persia of his time and the appendices with political, commercial and economic information were closely linked to Dunlop's business interests. In the introduction to his book, however, he says that the motivation for writing his book was that, after living in Persia for many years, he had become curious about its history. He had noticed many contradictory things in this country and had also discovered remnants of the past. For these reasons, he wanted to inform the general public about the great diversity of Persian culture. His book contains many photographs, most of which were taken by Sevruguin.[24]

Another publication that Dunlop compiled with the help of the sources collected by Hotz is a collection of Dutch archival sources on the history of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Persia. First established there in 1623, for more than a century, the Dutch East India Company had one of its most important branches in mainland Asia and Persia. For both Hotz and Dunlop, the Company was not only an interesting example of Dutch trade in the East, but it also demonstrated the age-old Dutch ties with Persia that were so important for the continuation of their activities there.[25] In Isfahan's Armenian quarter of New Julfa (established in 1606), Hotz took photographs of the tombstones of the employees of the Dutch East India Company. Dunlop copied the names on these tombstones and included them in his travelogue.[26]

At the end of Dunlop's photograph album a remarkable picture (Fig. 15.3) – photographer unknown, taken at "Bushira, Perzische Golf, Mei 1987" – shows a Western interior (with a table, chairs, and a cupboard) in which three white men in Western clothing are sitting at a rectangular set table, raising their glass in a toast. The subtitle of this picture provides us with three names of European expatriates in Persia, from left to right: F.W. Emmerson (who also figures in the photograph mentioned above with Houtum-Schindler), H.C. van der Zee, and H. van Pouderoyen, all three of whom worked for Dunlop in Bushir. In his

23 https://www.delpher.nl: Dunlop's book is announced in *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 25 November 1912, p. 12.

24 Dunlop (1912: 37ff) shares that he has made the journey from Bushir to Shiraz several times. He visited several ancient monuments likes Persepolis and Pasargadae.

25 Engelberts (2000: 86f and 102) See: *Bronnen tot de Geschiedenis der Oostindische Compagnie in Perzië*, No. 72, Vol. I (1611–1638), XCVII, 850 p. In 1906 Hotz was commissioned by the Minister of Education to compile this source publication. In 1926, toward the end of his life, he handed over the task to Dunlop.

26 Leiden University Libraries: Hotz album 2, no. 62. Dunlop's travel diary, p. 30. Dunlop (1912: 571ff) included Shah Abbas' treaty with the Dutch East India Company in his book (Translated into Dutch by the government).

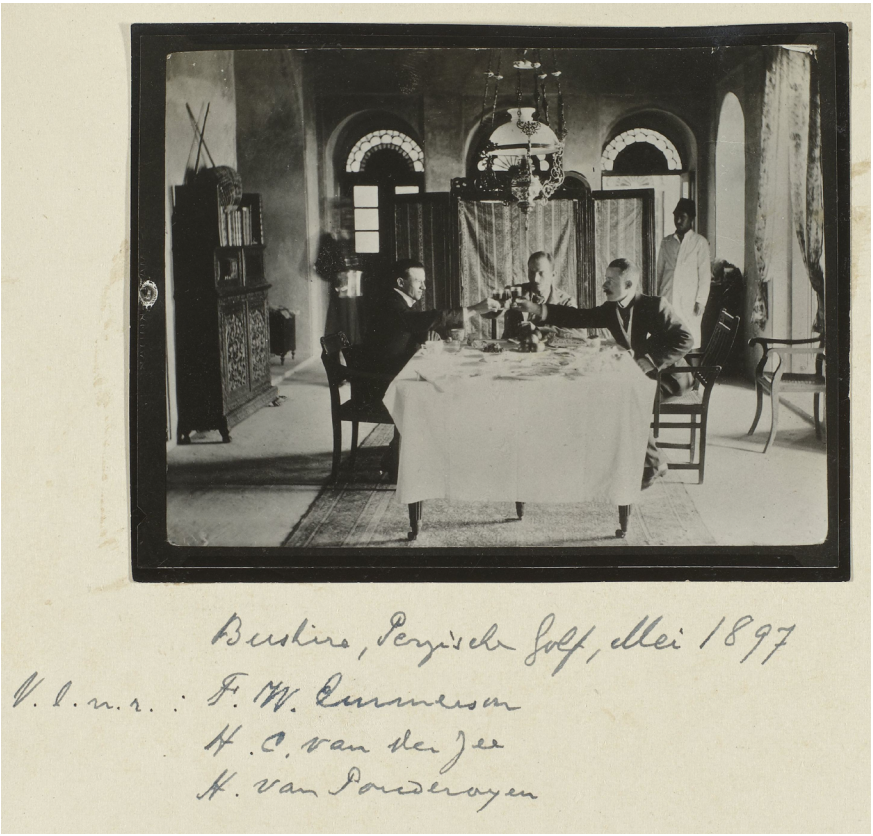


FIGURE 15.3 H. Dunlop, travel album, photographer unknown. Subtitle: Bushire, Perzische Golf, mei 1897. V.l.n.r. F.W. Emmerson, H.C. van der Zee, H. van Pouderoijen / *Bushire, Persian Gulf, May 1897. From left to right. F.W. Emmerson, H.C. van der Zee, H. van Pouderoijen*, developing gelatin silver print, 10.8 × 8.5 cm [Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-F-F01048-BJ]

travel diary Dunlop writes that he visited Van der Zee at the office in Bushir on 11 May 1890. He characterizes him as a middle-class man, not unpleasant, tall, blond, and very strong, but who spoke the beautiful Persian language very poorly, just like Muller in Shiraz, who pronounced the Persian word for 'water' (*âb*) like the Dutch word *aap* (monkey) – something which Dunlop ridiculed.[27]

27 Dunlop's travel diary, p. 42 'Arr. Bushire 8 ure 's-morgens. Van der Zee is op kantoor, ga met hem naar zijn huis. Hij is niet kwaad, groot en blond, zeer sterk, en een burgerman, die de mooie Pers. taal zeer slecht uitspreekt, evenals Müller te Shiraz, die âb (= water) uitsprak: 'aap'. Quel imbécile!'

Dunlop arrived in Shiraz on 1 June 1890 and first went to visit the house of his director, Muller. Muller was also not bad as far as Dunlop was concerned and was a man from the middle class. He owned a white horse that he rode every day and wore trousers that were very wide at the bottom.[28] Dunlop notes that the office in Shiraz was housed inside a caravanserai named 'Karavansera Amir' and that the bazar was very nice, high and cool. Several guilds were represented in the bazaar. Hotz's sales office sold mainly cotton goods, such as the Turkish-red twills and prints sourced from F. Steiner & Co dye works in Lancashire, as well as many bleached and grey shirting from the company H.J. van Heek & Sons in Enschede and also shirting from Jansen & Tilanus in Friezenveen.[29] Van Heek's correspondence with the trading houses in Persia is kept in the city archives in Zwolle. The archive also provides insight into the accounting, such as orders and the prices of the different cotton goods. There are also some cotton samples.[30]

In his book, Dunlop noted that Persia in his day was awash with foreign cheap cotton, which he considered a sad product of modern bad taste. In his opinion, mass production destroyed the domestic textile industry, while the arts and crafts in Persia were also in decline. According to Dunlop, the government would do well to encourage craftsmen again to produce products of quality.[31] Willem Floor confirms that in the course of the nineteenth century most of Persia's domestic textile industry disappeared because it could not compete with cheap Indian and European imports. It was not until the 1920s that the domestic textile manufacturing received government protection through tariffs and non-tariff barriers.[32]

Nine photographs of Dunlop's (business) activities in Persia and one in Constantinople can also be found in his family archive in the Rotterdam City Archives. It is not known who took these photographs. The images show Dunlop in or at the front of his house or his office in Shiraz with various other

28 Photographs of Muller and his house in Shiraz can be found in Leiden Library Universities, Hotz Collection, Hotz photo album 1, no. 10 and 11a and photo album 9, no. 80 and 81a. A photo of Van der Zee in Hotz-Album (UBL PK-F-73.151), photo 2.

29 Dunlop's travel diary p. 35f.

30 ANNO City Museum Zwolle. Archive of the Company Van Heek & Co 1817–1968 (1979) and the N.V. Boekelosche Stoombleekerij 1888–1965, file 1467–1473 (concerning Turkey) and file 1483–1489 (concerning Persia). For an inventory of the archive see: http://www2.historischcentrumoverijssel.nl/overijssel/inventarissen/vanheek/166i.htm.

31 Dunlop (1912: 29).

32 Floor (July, 20, 2005) for more information on the textile industry in Iran (Acta Iranica) – TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN IRAN – Encyclopaedia Iranica (iranicaonline.org): https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/textile-industry-in-iran/.



FIGURE 15.4 Photographer unknown, subtitle: Het huis met binnenplaats te Shiraz, waarin ons kantoor en verpakkingen waren ± 1892. De drie Europeanen (van l naar r) zijn: H. Dunlop, Alex Houtum Schindler en F.W. Emmerson. / *The house with courtyard in Shiraz, where our office and packaging were ± 1892. The three Europeans (from l to r) are: H. Dunlop. Alex Houtum Schindler and F.W. Emmerson*. Albumen print, 27.4 × 22.5 cm [RCA, 400 Dunop Family Archives, No. 248]

European and Persian business men, his director, Muller, and Persian employees, with different kinds of merchandise, camels, his horse Edgar and his greyhound Hector (Fig. 15.4).[33]

33 The RCA – 400 Dunlop Family Archives, No. 248: Loose photographs, photographers unknown. Photo 1. Subtitle: Shiraz, Perzië, april 1891, H.D. oud 23 jaar, met breedgeranden hoed, tegen den muur geleund. Staande de heer Muller, mijn chef. Het huis is dat van Hadji Mirza Hassan, een oud koopman, zittend, Om hem heen zijne vijf zonen. Albumen print 21. × 15.4 cm. Photo 2. Subtitle: Mijn kamer in mijn woonhuis te Shiraz. Staande: Mohamed Kerim, vrije manager, *c.*1890–1891. Albumen print, 29 × 23.9 cm. Photo 3. Subtitle: Het huis met binnenplaats te Shiraz, waarin ons kantoor en verpakkingen waren ± 1892. De drie Europeanen (van l naar r) zijn: H. Dunlop, Alex [sic] Houtum Schindler en F.W. Emmerson. Albumen print, 27.4 × 22.5 cm. Photo 4. Subtitle: Shiraz, Februari 1892. H.D. oud 24 jaar en de heer Cornelis uit Deli, die op bezoek was. Dit is de

During his first trip, Dunlop met several Europeans. They gave him different pieces of advice about travel and business, travelled with him every now and then, invited him to dinner, and offered him entertainment or hospitality in their houses. Important people in Persia who helped him further explore his business opportunities included the aforementioned consul Fridolin Knobel, the chief executive of the Imperial Bank of Persia, Joseph Rabino, and Albert Houtum-Schindler. Rabino introduced Dunlop in Tehran to the so-called 'Cercle des Européens'. Dunlop writes that Rabino was of Jewish descent – he was born in London to an Italian Jewish family – and was cross-eyed. He and Schindler were, according to Dunlop, very friendly and spoke fluent English. Van Houtum-Schindler, according to Dunlop, looked like a Dutchman and also spoke a little Dutch. During a dinner at his home he informed Dunlop about the various projects of the Imperial Bank such as the construction of roads and mines, and the irrigation of the Karun River in southwestern Iran.[34]

During his many years of residence in Shiraz, Dunlop was also part of a circle of European expatriates. In one photograph of Dunlop's tennis club we see how comfortable these expatriates felt together. They portrayed themselves as one big family. Being far from home, it was certainly important for them to hold on to their values, norms and traditions. This also applies to their sports activities (Fig. 15.5).

Regarding Dunlop's interest in (ancient) monuments, the photograph taken in 1892 on which Dunlop poses in front of the Bagh-i Takht (Fig. 15.6), while

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ruïne van een lustslot genaamd Bagh-i Takht, waar Comte de Gobineau in 1855 onthaald werd. Albumen print, 21.4 × 14.9 cm. Photo 5. Subtitle: H. Dunlop, Shiraz, Dec. 1893. Albumen print, 16.6 × 21.4 cm. Photo 6. Subtitle: Mijn huis te Shiraz. 1894/26 j. Mohammed Kerim (Makelaar) Paard: Edgar. Albumen print, 24 × 19.8 cm. Photo 7. Subtitle: April 1894 (portrait of Dunlop). Albumen print, 7 × 9.8 cm. Photo 8. Subtitle: Tennisclub te Sjiraz. H.D. 28 j. 1896. Ir. Fahie uit Ierland, superintendant v/d Eng. Telegraaf. At the back of the photograph: Shiraz 1896. H.D. oud 28 jaar. Albumen print, 23 × 19 cm. Photo 9. Subtitle: H.D. met Schindler in het wagentje met het paard genaamd Jumbo (een zeer slim paard) op het groote plein te Teheran, 1900(?). Pink albumen print, 8.6 × 7.2 cm. Photo 10. Subtitle: Constantinopel 20 juli 1901. Van Links naar rechts. Le Marez Oyens Jur. Cand., Huber (later vice consul te Melbourne), Von Zeppelin Obermüller (staande) (later consul der Ned. te Shanghai en in Brazilië), Dunlop (33 jaar), Müller, Rueb (later bij Jacobson, Vd Berg + Co, Batavia), Cauvée. Albumen print, 28.5 × 21.1 cm.

34 Dunlop's travel diary, 28 April 1890, p. 21ff. Abbas Amanat, GREAT BRITAIN iii. British influence in Persia in the 19th century: https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/great-britain-iii/ Originally Published: 15 December 2002. Last Updated: 23 February 2012, The establishment of the Imperial Bank of Persia in January 1889 has to be seen as Britain's crowning achievement and its most effective economic tool in penetrating the Persian markets. Under Joseph Rabino, its energetic director and Reuter representative in Tehran, the Bank grew from eight branches in Persia in 1890 to 17 in 1920.




FIGURE 15.5 Photographer unknown, subtitle: Tennisclub te Sjiraz. H.D. 28 j. 1896. Ir. Fahie uit Ierland, superintendant v/d Eng. Telegraaf. / *Tennis club in Shiraz. H.D. 28 y. 1896. Ir. Fahie from Ireland, superintendent of the Eng. Telegraph*. At the back of the photograph: Shiraz 1896. H.D. oud 28 jaar. / *Shiraz 1896. H.D. 28 years old.* Albumen print, 23 × 19 cm [RCA, 400 Dunlop Family Archives, No. 248]

sitting on his horse Edgar together with a gentleman, "Cornelis from Deli", who paid him a visit, is interesting. Bagh-i Takht is located on a rocky hillside north of Shiraz that existed as early as the eleventh century. It is a garden with a central water channel and laid out on multiple terraces with a palace at the uppermost terrace. Travellers through the ages have been impressed by it.[35]

Dunlop also refers in his travel diary to other ancient monuments in the environment of Shiraz, such as Pasargadae and Persepolis. He arrived in Persepolis on 1 June 1890 towards sunset and was impressed by the majestic

35 See htpps://www.archenet.org for more information on this site. In the nineteenth century, it was referred to as 'Takht-i Qajar'. It was only after 1850 that the garden became known as the Bagh-i Takht. In the early nineteenth century it was revealed that the foundation of the palace was dated 1789 and was attributed to the Qajar ruler Muhammad Shah (1796–1797). The construction of the Bagh-i Takht has also been attributed to Fath Ali Shah (1797–1834), the nephew and successor of Muhammad Shah.



FIGURE 15.6 Photographer unknown, subtitle: Shiraz, Februari 1892. H.D. oud 24 jaar en de heer Cornelis uit Deli, die op bezoek was. Dit is de ruïne van een lustslot genaamd Bagh-i Takht, waar Comte de Gobineau in 1855 onthaald werd. / *Shiraz, February 1892. H.D. old 24 years and Mr Cornelis from Deli, who was visiting. These are the ruins of a pleasure castle called Bah-I Takht, where Comte de Gobineau was entertained in 1855.* Albumen print, 21.4 × 14.9 cm [RCA, 400 Dunlop Family Archives, No. 248]

ancient palace complex. While climbing the entrance stairs to the platform, his horse fell and became paralyzed. The things he notes about the Achaemenid palace complex can also be found in travel reports by other writers, for example that the ruin reminds him of Omar Khayam's lines of poetry. He notices the cuneiform writing and graffiti of travellers such as that of the famous British-American explorer, Henry Morton Stanley (1841–1909), and of Cornelis de Bruijn (1652–1727), the Dutch artist who was the first European to make reliable drawings of Persepolis.[36] Dunlop also learned the basics of cuneiform script – a knowledge he later passed on to the Persian poet, scholar and artist,

36 Dunlop's travel diary p. 34ff: Dunlop also visited Persepolis on 23 November 1890, where he stayed for two or three hours. Dunlop arrived on 31 May and 26 November 1890 in

Mīrzā Moḥammad-Naṣīr (or Naṣīr-al-Dīn) Ḥosaynī Shīrāzī, also known as Mīrzā Āqā and Mīrzā-ye Forṣat, who used the pen-name of Forṣat al-Dawla.[37]

Being involved in business also brought Dunlop into contact with Persian merchants. A special photograph is that of Dunlop and his director Muller standing in front of the house of the old merchant Hadji Mirza Seyyed Hasan (1807–1892), or Afnán-i-Kabír (the Great Afnán) as he was known amongst Bahá'is, here surrounded by his five sons (Fig. 15.7).

According to De Vries, this is the first Dutch portrait of Bahá'is, Dunlop having met several Bábís during his stay in Shiraz. In Tehran he acquired several manuscripts of religious writings by the Bábi and Bahá'í, which he offered for sale in 1896 to E.G. Browne. Because a transaction never materialized, Dunlop then offered the manuscripts for free to Michael Jan De Goeje (1836–1909), the Professor of Arabic at Leiden University.[38] Not much is known about Dunlop's personal experiences with Bábís in Shiraz or Tehran, but by writing about this religious sect he was one of the first to spread knowledge about the Bahá'í religion in the Netherlands.[39]

At the beginning of 1902 Willem Groeneweg withdrew from the firm of Groeneweg, Dunlop & Co., because in his opinion the business had no future. The firm of J.C.P. Hotz & Son in London suffered significant losses in the next year. The resulting bankruptcy dragged the other branches in Persia along with it. Deferment of payments also had to be requested for Dunlop & Co.[40] The correspondence in the business archives of Van Heek illustrates the shock this bankruptcy caused in the Netherlands. It was also extensively reported in various Dutch newspapers. Dunlop eventually had nothing left and had to return to the Netherlands. Archival bank statements and the eulogy by his only child, David, confirm that Hendrik Dunlop came home bankrupt. His son David

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Pasargadae. He carried the book of Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia: From the Journals of a Traveller in the East'*, Vol. 1 and 2, 1827, with him. See also Vuurman (2015: 106f).

37 Manouchehr Kasheff, "Forṣat al-Dawla", *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, originally published: 15 December 1999, last updated 31 January 2012.

38 At least one of Dunlop's manuscripts is still preserved in the Leiden University Libraries, Cod. Or. 4970, a collective volume with texts in Arabic and Persian that includes the *Javāhir al-asrār fi ma'ārij al-afsār*, a Bābī scripture in Persian and Arabic. The provenance is recorded as: "Received on October 4, 1898, as gift from Hendrik Dunlop (*1867) in Tehran."

39 De Vries (2002: 37ff) states that Dunlop stayed in Shiraz until 1897 and that he then moved to Tehran. He also claims that Hotz took this photograph. Dunlop (1912: 327ff).

40 Engelberts (2000: 79), and https://www.delpher.nl – *Algemeen Handelsblad*, page 2, 17 March 1902 – for an announcement that Groeneweg had left the company. The RCA – 400 Dunlop Family Archives, no. 260: Documents regarding the liquidation of the company.



FIGURE 15.7 Photographer unknown, subtitle: Shiraz, Perzië, april 1891, H.D. oud 23 jaar, met breedgeranden hoed, tegen den muur geleund. Staande de heer Muller, mijn chef. Het huis is dat van Hadji Mirza Hassan, een oud koopman, zittend, Om hem heen zijne vijf zonen. / *Shiraz, Persia, April 1891, H.D. 23 years old, with a wide-brimmed hat, leaning against the wall. Standing Mr. Muller, my boss. The house is that of Hadji Mirza Hassan, an old merchant, sitting, around him his five sons*, albumen print 21.0 × 15.4 cm [RCA, 400 Dunlop Family Archives, No. 248]

concluded that, in financial terms, the whole Persian adventure had yielded his father nothing.[41]

After his return to the Netherlands, Hendrik Dunlop first started working in the family's distillery. On 9 March 1905 he married Emilie Viruly (1879–1946).

41 ANNO City Museum Zwolle. Archive of the Company Van Heek & Co 1817–1968 (1979) and the N.V. Boekelosche Stoombleekerij 1888–1965, file 1467–1473 (concerning Turkey) and file 1483–1489 (concerning Persia). It started with the suicide of a Hotz employee in London who had embezzled funds from the company. Van Heek went to Constantinople to claim his cotton. The Ottoman government had seized these goods. See for further information https://www.delpher.nl – *Dagblad van Noord-Brabant*, 5 June 1903 and *Haarlem's Dagblad*, 3 June 1903.

Their son, David, was born on 21 December of the same year. Once again, Dunlop was successful in business, while also becoming a public figure due to his many publications about international relations, current affairs, and economic developments. Among his correspondents we find the names of Dutch scholars such as the Orientalists Christian Snouck Hurgronje and Michael Jan de Goeje; scientists like the physicists Hendrik Lorentz and Heike Kamerlingh Onnes; as well as Dutch literary figures such as Louis Couperus and Albert Verwey. Some of his works were also published in English,[42] which might explain why a letter from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is also to be found among the Dunlop correspondence. The fact that he eventually overcame his financial troubles is illustrated by his purchase of the Loevesteyn estate in Wassenaar, a stately mansion on almost 10 acres of land.[43] He died on 21 February 1944.[44]

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42 E.g., Hendrik Dunlop, *The Supreme Will or the Danger of a Premature Peace*, published January, 1916 by Springer Science Business Media BV.

43 The RCA – 400 Dunlop Family Archives, No. 254.

44 The RCA – 400 Dunlop Family Archives, No. 265: David's eulogy.

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CHAPTER 16

# Dressing-up, Staging and Documenting

## *Portrait Photography from Late-Nineteenth-Century Mecca and Jeddah*

*Luitgard Mols*

'These days we have been busy photographing, i.e. making experiments, at the home of the hakiem, my namesake.'[1] The photographs that the Islam scholar and Arabist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) was referring to were taken by him and the Meccan physician Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ghaffār ibn ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Baghdādī (died ca. 1902). Their endeavours in improvised studios in Mecca and Jeddah between 1884 and 1889 resulted in a collection of more than 400 portraits that are kept at the Leiden University Libraries. They are part of an extensive Leiden collection of photographs taken in Western Arabia by Dutch, Indonesian and Arab academics, doctors and consuls who lived and worked in the Hejaz between 1884 and 1950.[2] The portraits offer a unique late-nineteenth-century visual archive of Western Arabian society. Those portrayed who included pilgrims (mostly from Indonesia), high-ranking officials, Arab Sharifs and Bedouins, musicians, Turkish officers and European expats, merchants and the occasional woman, give an impression of the diverse composition of the population in Mecca and Jeddah and the various economic, political and social classes in Hejazi society. The images also reflect the five-year collaboration between a researcher and a physician with a shared interest in the medium of photography.

Snouck Hurgronje published 66 of these portraits in two volumes of plates that came out in 1888 and 1889, 64 in his *Bilder-Atlas zu Mekka*, that accompanied his seminal two-volume work *Mekka. Aus dem Heutigen Leben* and two

1 Letter by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje to Pieter Nicolaas Van der Chijs, 29 April 1885, Leiden University Libraries, Or. 8952 L4:19, IV.

2 For an analysis of the collection, see for example Ulrike Freitag, 'Urban Life in Late Ottoman, Hashemite, and Early Saudi Jeddah, as Documented in the Photographs in the Snouck Hurgronje Collection in Leiden', in: Léon Buskens, Jan Just Witkam with Annemarie van Sandwijk, *Scholarship in Action. Essays on the Life and Work of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936)* (Leiden,Boston: Brill, 2021), pp. 139–167; Durkje van der Wal, *Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje: The First Western Photographer in Mecca, 1884–1885* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2011).

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in a separate album *Bilder aus Mekka*.[3] These albums also contained multiple views of the Haram mosque and panoramas of Mecca and various other ritual sites of the Hajj. At the time they were a sensation amongst European academics as photographs from the region were hardly known. Until then views of Mecca and its environs had only been photographed by the Egyptian army officer Muḥammad Sādiq Bey (1822–1902) and an Ottoman mission headed by Lieutenant Colonel Ali Bey in 1880.[4]

Among the portraits a subcategory of staged portraits of dressed-up people, sometimes surrounded by props, stands out. The portrait of the Dutch colony in Jeddah with local employees, which Arnoud Vrolijk described in 2015 as 'a carefully staged representation of western orientalism', falls into this category,[5] as do three other portraits of a bride, a bridegroom and two women, which were included in the two volumes of plates.[6] The largest subgroup within the category comprises portraits of Turkish officers dressed as Bedouins. Although the dressing-up is what these photographs have in common, the reason why they were made and the use to which they were put, as well as their audience and circulation differ. Several questions arise: What other than orientalist motifs underlie these different types of staged dress-up portraits? In which of the two photographic studios were they made? How were they used and for what audience were they intended? And what does this say about the intention of the portraitists ʿAbd al-Ghaffār and Snouck Hurgronje? These questions will be addressed after a short introduction on the collaboration between the two photographers and the two portrait studios in Jeddah and Mecca.

3 Snouck Hurgronje, Christiaan, *Mekka. 2 vols.* (*1: Die Stadt und ihre Herren; 11: Aus dem heutigen Leben*). (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1888–1889); Idem, *Bilder-Atlas zu Mekka* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1888); Idem, *Bilder aus Mekka. Mit kurzem erläuterendem Texte* (Leiden: Brill, 1889).

4 Arnoud Vrolijk, 'Early Hajj Photography, 1880–1914', in: Qaisra Khan with Nahla Nassar, *Hajj and the Arts of Pilgrimage. Essays in Honour of Nasser David Khalili*, 2 vols. (London: Gingko, 2023), vol. 2, pp. 45–72, there pp. 50–54. Sadiq Bey already photographed the Great Mosque of Medina in 1860; in 1880 and 1885 he also photographed the two Haram mosques in Mecca and Medina.

5 Arnoud Vrolijk, 'Appearances Belie. A Mecca-Centred World Map and a Snouck Hurgronje Photograph from the Leiden University Collections', in: Luitgard Mols & Marjo Buitelaar, *Hajj. Global Interactions through Pilgrimage* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015), pp. 213–227 [Mededelingen van het Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden 43].

6 For the portraits of the bride and the two ladies, see Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1888), pls. 25–3 and 25–4 respectively. For the portrait of the groom, see idem (1889), pl. 18B.

## 1 Portrait Studios in Jeddah and Mecca

When the Orientalist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje arrived in Jeddah with a grant from the Dutch Ministry of Colonies to gather information about the Indonesian community in Western Arabia, he simultaneously started working on his own ethnographic research on daily social and religious life in the Hejaz. To further his research with modern techniques he brought a dry-plate camera and glass plates with him from the Netherlands. Soon after his arrival in Jeddah in August 1884, Snouck Hurgronje started experimenting with it. The courtyard of the Dutch Consulate, where he also took up residence during the first months of his stay, turned out to be a suitable location for taking portraits of local residents for its peace and quiet and the lack of onlookers. The potted plants and wooden shutters in the courtyard gave the improvised studio a lively, natural, almost homely setting. This location also offered him the advantage of meeting numerous Indonesian pilgrims who were obliged to register in the consulate after arriving by steamship in the port of Jeddah, the gate to Mecca. This resulted in multiple portraits of pilgrims, too, both of individuals and groups, a number of them holding their travel permits in their hands. After his departure from Jeddah in February 1885, the courtyard of the consulate was not used as a portrait photography studio any more.

Already during his stay in Jeddah in 1884 he had met the general physician and ophthalmologist Sayyid ʿAbd al-Ghaffār from Mecca, with whom he would establish a collaboration. At that time, the physician already had an interest in and some experience of photography. When Snouck Hurgronje settled in Mecca in February 1885 after having converted to Islam, he and ʿAbd al-Ghaffār set up a photographic studio in the courtyard of the physician's house. Snouck Hurgronje mentions that he taught him photography[7] and wrote about this cooperation and the workplace:

> He has a studio, albeit a poor one, makes many of the necessary substances himself, distills water, etc., etc., and is happy to make everything available to me free of charge on condition that I grant him a patent for Mecca. My bottles, etc., will therefore probably move to his house and my machine will move from one place to another, depending on the

7 Jan Just Witkam (transl. and introd.), *Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje Mekka in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw. Schetsen uit het dagelijks leven* (Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Atlas, 2007), p. 568.

> circumstances. There is also a more suitable opportunity to portray people in his house, a courtyard with subdued light.[8]

The Meccan studio itself was simple: the courtyard was hidden from view by a plain cloth, its floor unpaved. In the ensuing years, however, ʿAbd al-Ghaffār dressed the improvised studio with carpets and props such as side tables, vases with flowers and chests of drawers, which was also common practice in other photo studios in the Middle East at the time. The collaboration proved beneficial for both parties: the Meccan physician could use Snouck Hurgronje's camera, and even started to photograph outdoors, something that Snouck Hurgronje as a Westerner was reluctant to do. And for portraits on demand, they both earned some extra money.

At the time that Snouck Hurgronje's was forced to leave Mecca in August 1885 after being falsely accused of trading antiquities, he left his camera in Mecca to be used by ʿAbd al-Ghaffār. Since the latter postponed payment for the camera, Snouck Hurgronje proposed that he would send prints of photos regularly in return. The physician did so until the beginning of 1889. The Dutch vice-consul, shipping-agent and entrepreneur Pieter Nicolaas van der Chijs (d. 1889), with whom Snouck Hurgronje has been friends since his stay in Jeddah and with whom he maintained an extensive correspondence both during his stay in Mecca and after his return to Leiden, served as an intermediary between the two men. At the request of Snouck Hurgronje, Van der Chijs would regularly provide ʿAbd al-Ghaffār with glass plates and photographic paper, in exchange for prints. In his letters, Snouck Hurgronje expressed his wish to create a portrait collection of 'Meccan types', and specifically mentioned notables, members of the guard, women and enslaved people.[9] He speculated, too, about the possibility of earning an additional income by selling photographs of enslaved people or dignitaries to European museums, which, according to him, paid money for good portraits of 'all kinds of race and nation', but there is no indication that he ever did so.[10] Although Snouck Hurgronje expressed himself time and time again negatively about the quality of the prints that ʿAbd al-Ghaffār sent him, he would nevertheless publish a selection and also used them for lectures.

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8 Letter from Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje to Van der Chijs, Mecca, 18 April 1885, Leiden University Libraries, Or. 8952 L 4: 17.

9 Letter from Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje to Van der Chijs, Leiden, 5 March 1886, Leiden University Libraries, Or. 8952 L 4: 23.

10 Idem.

## 2 Turkish Officers Dressed as Bedouins

The largest of the three subgroups of dressed-up people consisted of Turkish officers dressed as Bedouins who were portrayed in the photographic studio in Mecca. That the portrayed were military people can be deduced from various identifications. Four portraits were, for example, identified by Snouck Hurgronje with the rank *yüzbashi arkān harb* which in the Ottoman army indicates a captain, a member of the general staff. Another German identification on a portrait shown during his lecture on Mecca for the Berlin Geographic Society in March 1887 read 'als Beduine verkleideter türkischer Officier'.[11]

'Abd al-Ghaffār took at least thirteen unique portraits of dressed-up officers in his Meccan studio. Most stare somewhat uncertainly and self-consciously into the camera. The photographer either asked them to pose in front of a tightly stretched plain cloth (Fig. 16.1) or to stand or sit next to turned wooden tables with books and paper flowers in a vase (Fig. 16.2). Similar props also recurred on multiple portraits of local residents, a custom that was fashionable too in contemporary Arab and European portrait studios, much to the displeasure of Snouck Hurgronje. In two cases, a water pipe added a touch of Arab local colour. The otherwise neutral layout of the portrait studio did not in any way indicate that the photograhic studio was based in Mecca.

The outfit all officers wore consisted of a long shirt dress with embroidered neckline and cuffs with or without a long overgarment. As for headgear, all sported a folded square cloth (*ghutra*) kept in place by a circlet (*agal*), which matched the headgear worn by sharifs and Bedouins alike. The voluminous draping of the *ghutra* and its long strands with tassels increased the exotic effect of the garb in several pictures. Accessories, such as a short dagger (*janbiya*) or a longer bladed one (*khanjar*) with silver fittings on a belt around the waist, completed the ensemble. Some officers also carried a camel stick or a walking stick in their hands, others a wooden mace. With the embroidered cuffs and neckline and its new condition, the outfit looked nothing like the simpler and often worn clothing that several Bedouins wore in other photos. Most likely Sayyid 'Abd al-Ghaffār made sets of local Arab clothing and weapons available in his studio to anyone who wanted such a portrait, something that is corroborated by the fact that two shirt dresses and several ghutras and daggers recur in several photos. This implies that the photographer was known for his staging and dressing-up and must have enjoyed a certain fame among the officers stationed in Mecca.

11 Photograph Leiden University Libraries, Or. 26.368: 139.



FIGURE 16.1 Abd al-Ghaffar al-Baghdadi, portrait of a Turkish officer dressed up as a bedouin, identified with his rank as captain, yüzbashi arkan harb, 1885–1888 [KITLV 46634]

The Turkish officers commissioned these staged portraits for personal use. They were not models asking to have their portrait taken. The act of dressing up and posing for a photographer might have been a special event; resulting in a curiosity to show to family and friends. The photographic print could be kept



FIGURE 16.2 Abd al-Ghaffar al-Baghdadi, portrait of a Turkish officer in Arab dress in between two sidetables, 1885–1888 [UBL Or. 26.368 128]

as a memento of their social work environment in Mecca where Bedouins may have been considered the most exotic element.

The fact that ʿAbd al-Ghaffār sent prints of these privately commissioned portraits to Snouck Hurgronje is puzzling. If it was part of their agreement to send duplicates in exchange for lending the camera, what use did Snouck Hurgronje have for them? Although he showed one at his lecture in Berlin,

he did not include them in his volumes of plates. Nor would these staged dressed-up portraits have fitted an album of types, sought after by museums mentioned above. The portraits would have been too individualistic and personal for this purpose and the outfits of the portrayed too repetitive, not in any way relatable to, for example, the professional photoshoots of the Istanbul based photographer Pascal Sebah (1823–1886) who photographed three staged group portraits representing different members of Hejazi society for the *Elbise-i' Osmaniyye. Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie*.[12] For each portrait different models were posing. This photographic album of traditional Ottoman dress that accompanied the display of costumes in the Ottoman section of the Vienna World's Fair in 1873 replicated to a large extent the European convention of representing types, while simultaneously expressing cultural variety in Ottoman society with models detached from an ethnographic context.

In contrast to these conspicuously staged Istanbuli portraits, which were intended for a wide audience and distribution, the portraits of dressed up Turkish officers by the Meccan photographer ʿAbd al-Ghaffār remained individual and private and were made on demand for clients. They were a commercial transaction between the officers who commissioned the photographs and ʿAbd al-Ghaffār. One wonders what the prints that the clients received looked like? Were these plain, like those the physician sent to Snouck Hurgronje in Leiden, about the quality of which the academic regularly complained in his letters to Van der Chijs? Or were they more fancy, mounted on a cardboard backing with the name of the photographer, in keeping with other photographic studios in the Middle East, such as those by Beirut based photographer Jurji (or George) Saboungi (1840–1910)?[13] Additional research in private collections of family-members of those portrayed might shed light on ʿAbd al-Ghaffār's commercial output.

## 3 Portraits of Dressed-up Dutch People

The two portraits in the second subgroup, in which the Dutch people in Jeddah and Mecca donned themselves in Arab or Turkish dress and accessories, were

12 Osman Hamdi Bey & Marie de Launay (text), Pascal Sébah (phot.), *Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873* (Constantinople: Levant Times & Shipping gazette, 1873), pls. XXXIX, XL and XLII in part III, *Turquie d'Asie et Afrique, Vilayets de Hedjaz, Yemen et Tripoli de Barbarie*.

13 Sheehi, Stephen, *The Arab Imago. A Social History of Portrait Photography 1860–1910* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), pp. 28–31.

not part of a commercial transaction. The first is an individual portrait of Snouck Hurgronje, most probably taken by ʿAbd al-Ghaffār al-Baghdādī in Mecca (Fig. 16.3).[14] He is seated against a dark cotton background in the then customary Hejazi city-wear of a light-coloured *thawb* (a long-sleeved body-shirt) with a dark outer mantle (*bisht*) and a textile waistbelt. At his side is an umbrella for protection against the sun, an item often recurring in portraits made by the physician. His outfit matches that of ʿAbd al-Ghaffār – in a portrait taken by Snouck Hurgronje – except for the headgear.[15] Instead of the typical headcloth wound into a turban, Snouck Hurgronje wore a fez, which was worn in the nineteenth century by both civil and religious Ottoman officials and was a symbol of modernity. The blending of his Arabian outfit with a symbol of Turkish civil service is still an unsolved issue.[16]

In contrast to the Bedouin clothes of the Turkish officers discussed above, this was not a studio outfit made available by the Meccan physician. It reflects Snouck Hurgronje's customary dress during his half year stay in Mecca, in which he went about visiting and receiving scholars and friends, and which was intended to blend in as well as possible with Meccan locals and visitors alike.[17] Dressed in his traditional daily outfit, the portrait captures his sojourn as a participant observer and researcher in Mecca. After he had been forced to leave Western Arabia, it might well have been both a private keepsake and evidence for his colleagues of his unique fieldwork in late-nineteenth-century Meccan society. It could well be that the initial reasons for taking this portrait and that which Snouck Hurgronje made of ʿAbd al-Ghaffār, however, were a desire to practice the craft and technique of portraiture on each other or simply that they wanted a portrait of themselves.

In the other portrait the dressing-up and orientalist staging of a group is noticeable. The photograph with six Dutchmen and three local employees of the consulate was taken in 1884 or early 1885 in the courtyard of the Dutch Consulate in Jeddah by Snouck Hurgronje, who probably used a self-timer

14 Leiden University Libraries, Or. 8952 A: 2.

15 Leiden University Libraries, Or. 26.403: 26.

16 For different interpretations of the fez in this context, see P.S. van Koningsveld, 'Snouck Hurgronje alias Abdoel-Ghaffaar. Enige historisch-kritische aantekeningen', in: idem, *Snouck Hurgronje en de Islam* (Leiden: Rijksuniversiteit, 1987), pp. 107–130, 142, aldaar pp. 109–110, 142; Jan Just Witkam (2007), pp. 76–80; Vrolijk (2015), p. 223.

17 For a discussion of Snouck Hurgronje's play with multiple identities during his stay in Mecca, see Léon Buskens & Jean Kommers, 'Mekka as an Ethnographic Text: How Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje lived and constructed daily life in Arabia', in: Léon Buskens, Jan Just Witkam with Annemarie van Sandwijk (2021), pp. 221–224.



FIGURE 16.3 Abd al-Ghaffar al-Baghdadi, portrait of Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje in Arab dress, 1885 [UBL Or. 8952]

(Fig. 16.4). Standing next to Snouck Hurgronje is the consulate's guard Husayn with his ceremonial staff. Seated on chairs were the acting consul Johannes Adrianus Kruyt (1841–1928) and vice-consul van der Chijs, two of the latter's employees and possibly a Dutch scholar. Two local servants/employees were



FIGURE 16.4 Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, portrait of the Dutch colony in the Dutch Consulate in Jeddah, late 1884–early 1885 [UBL Or. 26.404 2]

sitting on the floor.[18] Although the Dutchmen were dressed in their colonial uniform jackets and western coats, Snouck Hurgronje and the consul surprisingly wore a fez. As mentioned in the introduction, Arnoud Vrolijk compared this and another group portrait of the same six Dutchmen in their everyday working clothes in the same location but without the local employees and argued convincingly that the former was a carefully staged orientalist portrait.[19] In addition to the fezzes, props such as the hookah, kilim and what was probably a (stuffed) falcon positioned on the table, added to the orientalist representation. Also the costumes of the three local employees gave credence to the local flavour of this staged tableau. Despite the serious expressions of all those portrayed, this staged orientalist image was clearly intended as a form

18 For an identification of all portrayed, Vrolijk (2015), p. 223 relied on that made by Dirry Oostdam and Jan Just Witkam. See Dirry Oostdam & Jan Just Witkam, *West-Arabian Encounters. Fifty years of Dutch-Arabian relations in images (1885–1935). Catalogue of an exhibition in Leiden University Library October 21–November 21, 2004* (Leiden: Leiden University Library, 2004), pp. 63–65, pl. 16 [Kleine publicaties van de Leidse Universiteitsbibliotheek nr. 63].

19 Arnoud Vrolijk (2015), pp. 221–225.

of entertainment and amusement for personal use, a memento of their stay in Jeddah.[20]

## 4 Models Dressed Up as Types

The aim of the three photographs in the third subgroup in which local people pose as models was to generate portraits of Meccan and Jeddan types. Two photographs, of a bride and bridegroom, were commissioned by Snouck Hurgronje and staged by ʿAbd al-Ghaffār (Figs. 16.5 and 16.6)). They were intended to illustrate the extensive section on the wedding ceremonies in Mecca in Snouck Hurgronje's two-volume *Mekka*.[21] And indeed both portraits served as illustrations in the two volumes of plates, although to Snouck Hurgronje's regret the portrait of the groom arrived too late in Leiden to be included in his earliest published collection of images, the *Bilder-Atlas zu Mekka*.[22] Snouck Hurgronje strove for as faithful an ethnographic image of the wedding outfit and accessories as possible. He urged ʿAbd al-Ghaffār in a letter also to photograph separately the various bridal jewelry items ('ambarsjah, labbah and other ornaments') on large glass plates, which he eventually did.[23] He even referred the physician to the Meccan ʿOmar Bagdadi for this, a man who owned several pairs of these bridal accessories, and who, according to Snouck Hurgronje, lent them to any reliable applicant.[24]

In his book, Snouck Hurgronje said the image of the bride that it 'goes without saying that no real bride could be photographed.'[25] For the portrait, ʿAbd al-Ghaffār positioned the female Meccan model with uncovered face and braids on a divan-like platform with her hands unnaturally raised. Leaning back against a pile of cushions, she almost looks overwhelmed by the weight of the jeweled clothing. Her awkward immobile stature indicated that the photographer's focus was primarily on capturing the wedding outfit. The female model was merely a means to that end. Moreover, in the portrait it

20 See idem, p. 224.

21 The Meccan bride is depicted in *Snouck Hurgronje* (1888), pl. 25–3; the Meccan groom *Snouck Hurgronje* (1889), pl. 18b.

22 Letter from Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje to Van der Chijs, Leiden, 27–01–1889, Leiden University Libraries, Or. 8952 L 4.34.

23 Letter from Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje to Van der Chijs, Leiden, 29 January 1888, Leiden University Libraries, Or. 8952 L 4.3.

24 Letter from Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje to Van der Chijs, Leiden, 4 November 1887, Leiden University Libraries, Or. 8952 L 4.30.

25 Witkam (2007), p. 357.




FIGURE 16.5 Abd al-Ghaffar al-Baghdadi, woman from Mecca in her bridal dress, published in Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Bilder-Atlas zu Mekka* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1888), pl. 25-3




FIGURE 16.6 Abd al-Ghaffar al-Baghdadi, the Meccan bridegroom in the throne seat where normally the Meccan bride would sit during one of the wedding ceremonies, published in Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Bilder aus Mekka. Mit kurzem erläuterendem Texte* (Leiden: Brill, 1889), pl. 18B

was not she who, as was customary at Meccan weddings during the so-called *dukhla*-ceremonies, was positioned on the *rikah*, the richly decorated throne seat that was commonly erected in the salon of the bride's house, but the male model in the second portrait.[26] In this image, the groom almost served as an extra, the proportions between man and context emphasizing the grandeur of the *rikah* construction. It was the decor around him, a profusion of chandeliers, glass balls and the reflection of the glittering embroidered heavy velvet, that stole the show. Why it was the groom who was portrayed on the *rikah* was not explained. Perhaps there was no throne seat available at the time the portrait of the bride was taken since they were specifically built for weddings. If ʿAbd al-Ghaffār had portrayed her in the very same way as the male model, the intricacies of the bridal dress and jewelry, though, would probably have been lost in the visual spectacle of the throne seat.

The choice of topic and the staging of these portraits signify an uneven relationship and clear division of tasks between the photographer and the models: it was the photographer who arranged the photographic shoot and the decor, while the models carried out what was devised. The latter might have been paid for their services, a commercial transaction that was common in other studios in the Arab world.[27] The unveiled face of the bride and her long visible braid suggest a low social status of the model or a foreign background. In the portraits by ʿAbd al-Ghaffār and Snouck Hurgronje of late-nineteenth-century Meccan and Jeddan society only girls of a young age, foreign and enslaved women were portrayed with their face unveiled.[28] In this context Snouck Hurgronje's remark in a letter to Van der Chijs, however, sheds another light on this fact when he declared that even the women had requested to be photographed unveiled, without specifying their social or economic status.[29] Would it have been acceptable for the model to be portrayed unveiled since the portrait was not circulating in Mecca but intended for a European scholar and audience?

The other staged portrait with two women is identified in the *Bilder-Atlas zu Mekka* as 'Ladies in outdoor and indoor wear (Jeddah)' and attributed there to

26 In the identification of the plates, Snouck Hurgronje informed the reader about the bridegroom having taken the place of the bride. See Snouck Hurgronje (1889), Erklärung der Tafeln, 18A en B. For more information on the rikah, see Witkam (2007), pp. 349–351.

27 Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women. The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860–1950* (London: Quartet Books, 1988), pp. 64–65.

28 See my forthcoming article on women's portraits by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and ʿAbd al-Ghaffār.

29 Letter from Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje to Van der Chijs, 2 July 1885, Leiden University Libraries, Or. 8952 L4: 20.

the orientalist Siegfried Langer (1857–1882), who visited Jeddah in 1881 or 1882 (Fig. 16.7).[30] Although the Levant has previously been suggested as the photograph's origin, it was actually taken in the Dutch Consulate in Jeddah. Proof of this is found in the comparison between the setting and accessories of this and that of the staged portrait of the Dutch colony in Jeddah in an oriental setting (Fig. 16.4) discussed above.[31] Not only does exactly the same ornamental water pipe with a remarkably long hose appear on both, but the wooden window with the crossbars on the right behind the woman also corresponds to the window partly visible in the lefthand corner of the Dutch colony photograph. The extended flower box is also the same, although the vegetation is different, – a feature – which points to a different period. Since, according to Snouck Hurgronje, Siegfried Langer received the same hospitality as he had enjoyed in the Dutch consulate, Langer might have been the photographer.[32]

While leaning sideways on stacked cushions with in her hand the hose of a water pipe as a cultural object symbolizing Arab culture, the woman wearing the indoor outfit does not look straight into the camera but instead stares absently diagonally ahead. In addition to this passive languid pose, her uncovered face and long braid and her rolled up sleeves for maximum visibility of her jewellery stand out, an exposure of decorative features that would normally only have been visible to family members and close female friends. The contrast with the veiled and fully covered lady in outdoor wear next to her could hardly be more striking: looking straight into the camera, she is completely covered with a veil, symbolizing the unattainable Arab woman.

This portrait shows a degree of orientalist staging between what is seen and what is imagined that is unlike most of the portraits by ʿAbd al-Ghaffār and Snouck Hurgronje. It went beyond simply showing two types of dress as suggested by the caption in the volume of plates. By juxtaposing the two models in outdoor and indoor dress, the photographer created a clear contrast between the public and the private sphere, between the veiled and the unveiled. The picturesque and inviting pose of the reclining model and the state of nakedness of the face and the exposed forearms further contributed to this studio phantasy, providing a staged glimpse of an otherwise hidden private world

30 Snouck Hurgronje, *Bilder-Atlas zu Mekka*, pl. 30–4.

31 Witkam (2007), p. 606, no. 83 suggested the Levant as origin of the portrait; Durkje van der Wal (2011), p. 40 was ambivalent about its attribution to Langer.

32 Letter by Snouck Hurgronje to Julius Euting, Jeddah 18 December 1884, in: Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld (ed.), *Minor German Correspondences of C. Snouck Hurgronje from Libraries in France, Germany, Sweden and The Netherlands* (Leiden: Documentatiebureau Islam-Christendom, 1987), p. 8.




FIGURE 16.7 Siegfried Langer, ca. 1881–1882, ladies in indoor and outdoor wear, Jeddah, published in Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Bilder-Atlas zu Mekka* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1888), pl. 25-4

that was not accessible to westerners. All these were common features in orientalist portraiture.

Was this staged orientalist portrait taken to satisfy the photographer's own curiosity or was he aware of its commercial benefits and was it intended for a wider audience? In cities such as Beirut, Cairo, Port Said and Istanbul, similar portraits were made commercially in local studios to satisfy the tourist market.[33] A steady influx of foreigners made this commercially valid. A portrait with two women from Western Arabia, a region where only few non-Muslims spent time and had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with female society, was unique. It would have been an asset to albums of Arab or Meccan types in Europe, to which Snouck Hurgronje referred. As tourism in Western Arabia at that time was, however, mainly restricted to religious tourism, however, there is unlikely to have been a market for these in the Hejaz. Besides the fact that the sale of staged portraits like this in Jeddah or Mecca would have given offense, pilgrims would have preferred to buy images of the Sanctuaries in Mecca and Medina, as had been the custom in the past.

## 5 Conclusion

Although the dressing-up is what these portraits had in common, the intention of why they were made and their use, audience and circulation differed. The photographic studios in Mecca and Jeddah were multi-purpose. Besides catering for individual clients who paid to have their portraits taken as a private keepsake, they served, too, as creators of staged orientalist studio portraits and a documentation of types to serve in publications.

The two photographic studios in Jeddah and Mecca were not conventional when compared to the commercial contemporary studios in other cities in the Arab world. They were not public studios, as they were located in a residential house and a consulate. They relied on word of mouth and did not advertise or carry a sign board. They were low key, acted for a limited time only, and did not develop into family businesses as other studios elsewhere in this period often did. Commercial transactions were limited to payment for a portrait; so far there is no evidence that ʿAbd al-Ghaffār sold portraits commercially to a broader audience.

33 Graham-Brown (1988), pp. 39–47.

# PART 5

## *Literature*

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CHAPTER 17

# Prophet or Statesman?

## *Johannes Nomsz and His Historical Novel about Muhammad* (1780)

*Richard van Leeuwen*

From the earliest encounters with Islam, European images of Muhammad, the Muslim prophet, were linked to inter-Christian debates on religion and philosophy. Medieval legends about the means used by Muhammad to increase his following were intended to support the claims that he was an impostor and a false prophet, who aimed to undermine the universal pretentions and union of the Church. For several centuries the polemics against Muhammad were not hampered by serious knowledge about the Islamic textual sources, nor by insight in the practices and doctrines upheld by Muslims. It was even commonly accepted that Islam was not a separate, autonomous religion, but rather a schismatic deviation from the teachings of the Mother Church. Significantly, in Dante's hell, Muhammad is relegated to the abode of the schismatics and false pretenders. Even though several individual thinkers proposed a more nuanced view and a more thorough examination of Islamic texts, the polemical stand of the Church remained unchanged until the end of the seventeenth century, when a new translation of the Qur'an by Ludovico Marracci was met with serious reservations.[1]

European attitudes towards Islam became more complex during the period of the Reformation, when Protestant theologians began to compare the deficiencies and 'vices' of Islam with those of the Roman Catholic Church. Although the idea of Muhammad as a counterfeit prophet was maintained, to some extent he compared favourably with the pope, who was portrayed as the arch-Antichrist. A more systematic study of those few Arabic texts that were available to Protestant scholars resulted in a favourable evaluation of some of Islam's doctrines, which were in harmony with certain Reformist opinions. For Protestant scholars, knowledge of Islam based on Arabic sources became an instrument to castigate Papists as well as certain Muslim practices and beliefs. This partial identification between Protestantism and Islam implied that the emergence and development of Islam were still seen within the framework

1 For early Christian polemics against Muhammad and Islam, see: Tolan (2019); see also: Hamilton (2018); Bevilacqua (2013).

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of the history of the Christian Church, as a kind of counter-movement initiated by God to oppose malpractices and false pretences that had corrupted the Eastern and Roman Churches.[2]

The scholarly endeavours of Protestant Orientalists and the religious debates between Catholic and Reformist Theologians converged in a book that became a landmark in the assessment of Islam in the eighteenth century: the compendium *De religione Muhammedica*, written by the Dutch Oriental scholar Adriaan Reland (1676–1718), which appeared in 1705 (second, enlarged edition 1717) and was immediately translated into Dutch, French and English. In his book, Reland attempts to rectify several misconceptions about Islam and advocates a thorough study of its texts without the usual polemical bias. Although he does not relinquish the idea that Islam is a 'false' religion, he emphasizes its positive aspects and its historical importance. According to him, it is absurd to think that a mere deceiver could be the inspirator of such a widespread community of believers and such powerful empires. He confirms the thesis that Muhammad was sent by God to castigate the Eastern Christians and the Catholic popes, but he seems to acknowledge the status of Islam as a self-contained religion.[3]

Among the remarkable aspects of Reland's book is a relatively positive evaluation of Muhammad, not only because he considered him to be an 'instrument' of God, but also because his doctrines were rational and recommendable, and his character was in general mild, frugal and dignified, This rather tolerant view gave Reland the reputation of being a 'crypto-Muslim', both among Catholics and fellow-Protestants, but it also influenced scholars who continued to examine, translate and edit Islamic texts. In 1728 Comte de Boulainvilliers published an uncompleted biography of Muhammad, after in 1723 the French Orientalist Jean Gagnier had published his translation of the history of Abu al-Fida', which was followed by a biography of the prophet, *La vie de Mahomed*, in 1748. These biographical texts contributed to the debates on the person and status of Muhammad, and on Islam more generally. In their attempts to promote a more nuanced and positive view of Islam, they tend to avoid a theological discussion of his prophethood, and instead stress his role as a historical figure, his mental disposition, and his importance as a statesman.[4]

Together, the 'revisionist' biographies shaped a new strand within the representation of Islam in the eighteenth century and paved the way for a work which profited from them but also added new elements: the historical novel

2 Malcolm (2019).

3 Reland (1717).

4 Boulainvilliers (1731); Gagnier (1723; 1748).

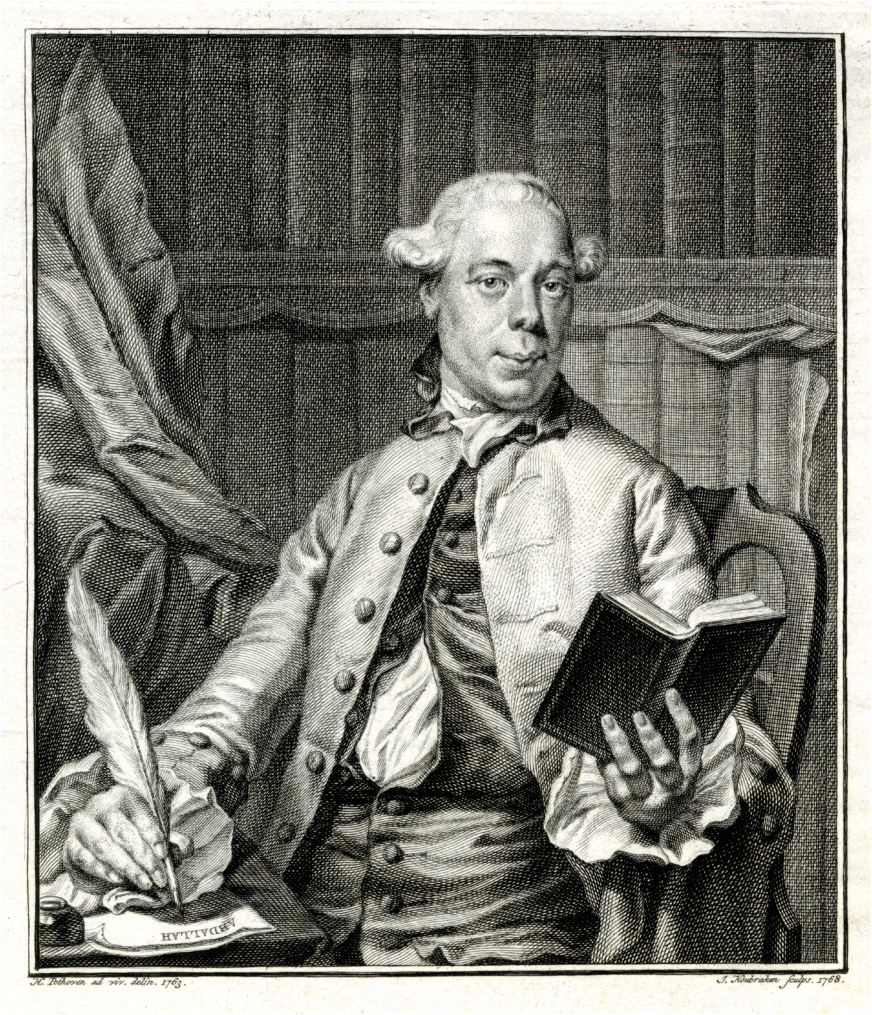


FIGURE 17.1 Jacob Houbraken after Hendrik Pothoven, portrait of Johannes Nomsz working on his novel Abdallah, 1768 [UBL PK Singer 22177]

*Mohammed, of de hervorming van de Arabieren* ('Muhammad, or the reformation of the Arabs'), which was published in 1780 by the Dutch playwright Johannes Nomsz. This book is not only interesting because it is an example of the Dutch Protestant view of Islam and Muhammad, but also because it represents a new discursive and literary form, combining historical evidence with narrative techniques. This is a procedure that is typical of what is now called the 'historical novel', but which was not commonly used at the time. The rise of the historical novel as a literary genre is usually situated in the

beginning of the nineteenth century, with the work of Sir Walter Scott and the spread of romantic nationalism. Apparently, although nowadays Nomsz' work is not well-known, and although it does not fit into a nationalist trend, in some respects it was ahead of its time. What is even more interesting is that his book not only reflects the eighteenth century debates in the fields of religion and scholarship, but also shows traces of literary orientalism in the artistic sense, as a medium to construct and spread representations of an imagined Orient.[5]

## 1 Nomsz and His Work

Johannes Nomsz was born in Amsterdam in 1738. At first, he tried his luck in the tobacco trade, but he soon developed an inclination for the theatre and gradually succeeded in becoming one of the most popular playwrights of his time, whose plays were regularly staged at the Amsterdam Theatre. He translated and adapted several plays from French authors, such as Voltaire, Corneille and Racine. His own original works included *Hassan, of de Algerijnen* (1789). Apart from his work for the stage, he also wrote a book about the Persian prophet Zoroaster, and a novella titled *Abdallah of het onvolmaakt geluk: eene Maroccaansche geschiedenis* (1771), which is a picaresque tale in the style of the *Thousand and one nights*. Unfortunately for him, after the 1780s his plays grew out of fashion and were no longer appreciated by the audience., Nomsz died in a poorhouse in 1803.[6]

Although Nomsz wrote a book about another prophet, Zoroaster, and was apparently well-versed in literary and intellectual trends in France, his interest in Islam and Muhammad is not self-evident, since he does not seem to have participated in any religious debates. Still, in the preface of his novel about Muhammad's life, he shows that the representation of the prophet of Islam was a relevant, even urgent, matter for him. He begins his introduction by observing that opinions about Muhammad oscillate between two extremes: On the one hand he is considered as a deceitful, devious, cunning and fanatic villain, who used absurd ceremonies to 'impose' a 'fabricated' religion onto his people to serve his political ambition ('staatszucht', or 'lust for political power'). On the other hand, he is also portrayed in an extremely positive way, as an honest person with a luminous mind. Not surprisingly, Nomsz prefers a more moderate image, in between the two extremes, which after several years of 'practising', or studying ('oefening') he will now present to his countrymen.[7]

5 Nomsz (1780).
6 Van Leeuwen/Vrolijk (2014).
7 Nomsz (1780), pp. v–vi, ix.

According to Nomsz, in order to achieve a balanced representation of Muhammad's life, one should take into account several factors, such as his descent, his education, his exploits, and his circumstances, apart from an evaluation of the natural inclinations of his people, the dominant religion, the system of administration, and previous historical developments. In doing so, it is inevitable to consult 'Eastern authors', although one should be aware of their preference for the 'miraculous' and 'ornate and oblique expressions and fabulous stories'. One should search for 'historical truth' stripped of their 'wondrous formulae'.[8] The most important source, in this respect, is the work of Abulfeda, after its fabulous elements have been removed. It is interesting that here Nomsz refers to the original source, that is, Gagnier's translation of Abu al-Fida's history, and does not mention Gagnier's biography of Muhammad, nor any other biographies that had appeared in the first half of the 18th century. Nomsz mentions three basic characteristics which determined Muhammad's trajectory: the 'wildness' of the Arabs; their tendency towards 'superstition'; and Muhammad's 'fanaticism' ('geestdrijverij') in spreading his religion.[9] These three assumptions recur throughout Nomsz' description and discussion of Muhammad's life.

Nomsz states that the aim of his book is to provide an 'elegant' ('sierlijk') historical story, which has three 'benefits' ('nuttigheden'). First, a description of Muhammad and his religion will reveal the loftiness of the Christian faith, particularly when Muhammad is compared to Jesus. Here, Nomsz critically refers to a 'certain great man in France', who placed Muhammad above Jesus, although he had previously presented a 'horrible' image of him. This is a reference to Voltaire, who in his play *Mohamed* staged Muhammad as an epitome of dictatorship, but later, in his play *Le diner du Comte de Boulainvilliers*, has the Comte say: 'Muhammad has fought and written: he possessed the courage of Alexander and the spirit of Numa; but what has Christ accomplished? Nothing! He has neither fought nor written anything'.[10] Nomsz adds a footnote to indicate that Muhammad was illiterate.[11]

Second, Nomsz states that his work can 'prove' the divine nature of the books of Moses. The prediction of the conversion of the 'wild' Arabs can already be found in the story of Abraham. God made the Arabs powerful in order to punish the corrupt ('ondeugende') followers of Jesus in the East, which means that the 'reformation' of the Arabs is the 'fulfilment of a prediction, in clear

8 Id., p. VIII.
9 Id., p. XI.
10 Voltaire/ Mr. St. Hiacinte (1728 [1768]), p. 31.
11 Nomsz (1780), p. XIX.

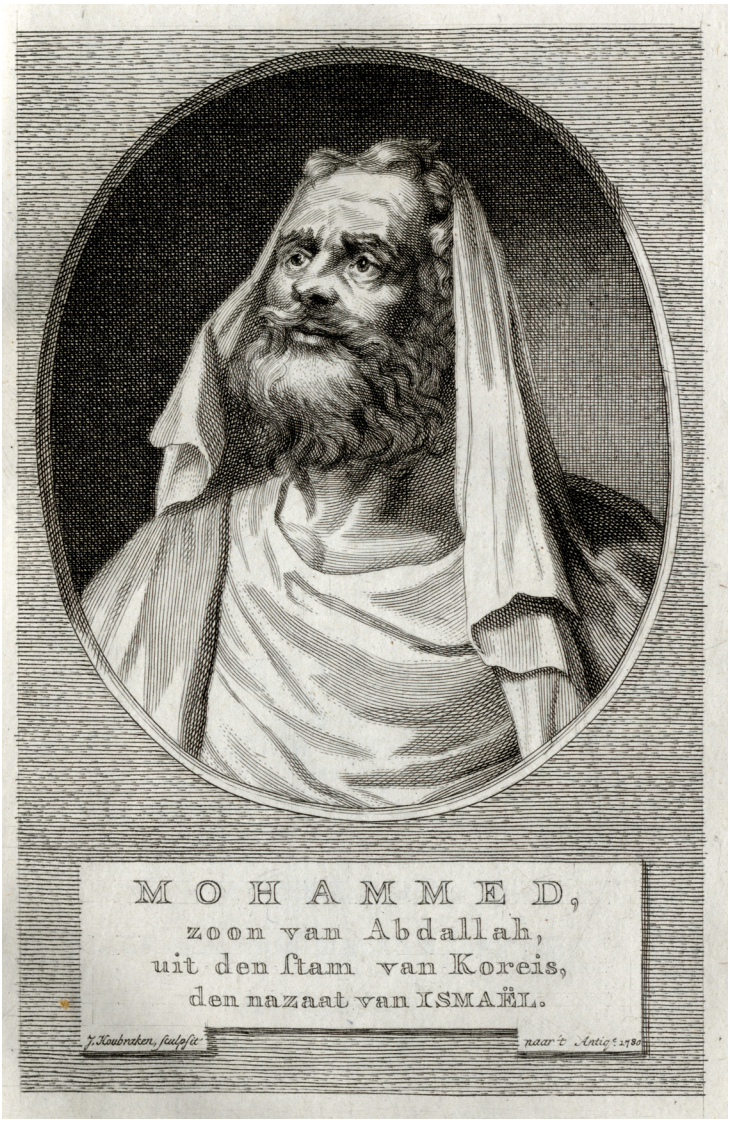


FIGURE 17.2 Jacob Houbraken, portrait of the Prophet Muhammad, in Johannes Nomsz, *Mohammed, of de hervorming der Arabieren* (Amsterdam: Erven David Klippink, 1780) [UBL 1212 G 12]

language contained in a book, whose authenticity and divine provenance is of great significance for the whole world.'[12]

12 Id., pp. XXI–XXIII.

Third, the book will show that the idea that the Arabs are foolish enough to let themselves be deceived by Muhammad is unjust, since it is impossible that 'imposture' would 'blindfold whole nations' for eleven centuries. Muhammad's 'design' rested on a foundation which was 'well-reasoned'. It is clear that God had provided the people of Arabia with a 'peculiar trajectory', but this should evoke our amazement rather than our depreciation.[13]

These three 'benefits' summarize Nomsz' position within the Protestant discourse about Islam as it crystallized during the eighteenth century along the path set out by Adriaan Reland: the acceptance of a role for Muhammad within religious history, as an instrument in God's scheme for the Christian community, thereby acknowledging the authenticity of Muhammad's mission; the necessity to take into consideration the sources of Islamic religion and history; and, ultimately, the recognition of the superiority of the Christian faith, obviously in its reformed manifestation.

At the end of his preface, Nomsz emphasizes that his book is not a 'historical life of Muhammad', but the story of his 'reformation', in other words, it is not a biography. It contains 'too much truth to situate it among the elegant tales which are called 'novels' ['Romannen'], but too little truth to call it a 'history'. However, all 'decorations' are adopted to support truths and to make true characters shine more clearly.'[14] His aim is for the book to be useful and not only entertaining. Nomsz distances himself from authors who possess the regrettable desire to please instead of being useful, such as many 'monsters who mar our theatres with vulgarity'.[15]

## 2 Muhammad's Mission

Immediately in the first chapter of the book, the reader notices that they are not reading a biography in the conventional sense of the term. The narrative does not begin with Muhammad's birth, or a description of his pre-history, his family, or his social environment; it begins *in medias res*, during the prophet's flight to Medina after he has escaped the hostility of the Meccan elite. It is briefly explained that Muhammad intended to 'reinstate' the veneration of Abraham, as a monotheistic faith, which used to be the common creed among the Arab tribes, and to counter the widespread superstition which was exploited by

13 Id., p. XXIV.
14 Id., p. XXV.
15 Id., p. XXV.

Abu-Sofian, the Meccan leader, and his wife Henda.[16] The second chapter, also a kind of 'flashback', summarizes Muhammad's character and inclinations, his natural aversion against pagan gods; his all-superseding zeal for religion; his natural piety and love for God; his sensitive nature; and his lively imagination. It is this imagination that, together with his 'ailment', that is, a 'nasty twitching of his nerves', shaped his encounters with an angel and God. Nomsz stresses that conversion to his message is not enforced by the sword, but is achieved on the basis of 'reason' and 'mildness' and 'love'.[17]

The staging of the escape of the prophet from Mecca to Medina in the beginning of the narrative enables Nomsz to present the main thematic line of the story: the tension between the religious and political ambitions of Muhammad, set in the context of the rivalry between Mecca and Medina, the two main towns of the Hijaz. In the past, the Medinans used to rule over Mecca, profiting from the revenues of the pilgrimage to the Meccan temple, but at a certain point the Meccans succeeded in gaining their independence. Maktoum, the ruler of Medina, is now seeking ways to reconquer Mecca and restore Medina's historical superiority. Maktoum is described as neutral in matters of religion, devious, haughty, greedy, fat and proud. As a clever politician, he sees Muhammad's arrival as an opportunity to mingle in the political divisions among the Meccan leaders and manipulate them to his advantage. When Ali is sent to him as a messenger, he receives him in his pompous ceremonial attire, which is described in detail.[18]

Nomsz uses the deliberations between Maktoum and Ali to explain the core concerns of Muhammad's preaching and the turbulences resulting from it in Mecca.[19] He stresses that Muhammad does not initiate a 'new religion', but calls for a return to the ancient belief in the oneness of God; that he advocates to combine the 'forces of our country' to benefit from the treasures of this world and the 'bliss' of the Hereafter; that conversion can only occur through 'mildness'; and that Muhammad is not guided by political ambition.[20] In an intermezzo, the political intrigues happening in Mecca in the meantime are described. In response to Ali's propositions, Maktoum decides to take a neutral stand and allow Muhammad to settle in Medina.

When Muhammad appears before Maktoum, he reiterates the basic issues of his preaching, emphasizing that conversion can only occur through

16 Id., pp. 1–3.
17 Id., pp. 20–30.
18 Id., pp. 38–44.
19 Id., pp. 51–88.
20 Id., pp. 66–7, 69–70, 78.

persuasion and mildness, not through coercion and violence, because 'God wants us to love Him not to fear Him'. Fear for God's anger is a 'political invention aimed to oppress the people', but it is not required, since a call for love for God and virtue will suffice. Conversion takes place on the basis of reason, and it will take time to 'reform' the people. However, images and statues are reprehensible, because they incur superstition and idolatry, confusing the boundaries between the original and the representation. As a result, the people will be inclined to attribute divine powers to idols. Significantly, Maktoum asks Muhammad if his religion contains elements deviating from 'our civil laws', whereupon Muhammad exclaims: 'Of course not!', and sums up his prescriptions and rules: lying, stealing, killing, deceiving and usury are forbidden; keeping the body clean, moderation and charity are mandatory; consumption of blood and food or drink intoxicating the mind is not allowed.[21] Clearly, this scene not only serves as a confrontation between religious and political ambitions, but also, conveniently, as a brief explanation of Muhammad's intentions. Eventually, Maktoum acknowledges Muhammad as a prophet and accepts his authority next to his own.

The following chapters recount the subsequent phases of Muhammad's ascendancy, both as the leader of a nascent and expanding religious community, but also, ultimately, as a political leader who succeeds in gradually extending his authority over the Arabian peninsula. Stepping from one intrigue to another, and from one battle to the next, the struggle between the Meccans and the Medinans is described, besides the violent expeditions against the Jewish tribes of Medina. An interesting and significant episode contains a dream of Muhammad in which he meets the spirit of Ishmael, who instructs him about the history of revelations, and the 'treason' of the Eastern Christians. He encourages Muhammad to implement reforms and laws, with virtuousness as their final aim, without pressure, because the Arabs are 'like donkeys in the forest' ('woudëzelen'). Here Nomsz remarks that a 'fanatic' could interpret this dream as a Divine revelation.[22]

The alternation between battles and pacts between the Meccans and Medinans ultimately results in Muhammad's conquest of Mecca, his farewell pilgrimage and the final consolidation of his religion and his political rule. He instructs that his tomb be located in Medina, so that Mecca will continue to profit from the revenues of the pilgrimage, while Medina will benefit from the 'presence' and commemoration of the prophet. In this way, the hajj is conceptualized as the ritual that not only impregnates the memory of the believers

21 Id., pp. 112–126.

22 Id,. 11, pp. 12–13.

with the events of the founders of the 'nation', but also reinstates the ancient religion at the expense of superstition and idolatry. What is more, the hajj serves as the basis for the political unification of Mecca, Medina and the Arabian tribes, not only as a religious symbol, but also as a practical political instrument.[23]

The final chapter of the book contains a detailed description of Muhammad's last days and of his physical appearance, which is supplemented with an engraving of his portrait. This shows the prophet as a determined but sensitive man, without exaggerated 'orientalizing' effects.

## 3 Narrative Procedures

In his preface, Nomsz states that his procedure is based on a combination of historical truth and literary 'embellishment' to ensure that the book is both entertaining and educational. However, there is a third layer in the text that more or less regulates this procedure, and that consists of Nomsz own comments, clarifications, and information added in footnotes. These interventions are partly concerned with factual information, but sometimes add personal evaluations. Nomsz remarks, for instance, that the sacred book of the Muslims is 'the Qur'an' and not 'the Alqur'an',[24] and in an explanation of Muhammad's journey to heaven, he claims that the prophet never disclosed whether this journey was 'physical' or only 'spiritual'. This was a crucial theological issue for both Muslims and Protestants.[25] Nomsz also stresses that Muhammad did not found a new religion, but acted in accordance with God's plan to castigate the Christians.[26] He repeatedly mentions the inclination of the Arabs to exaggeration, belief in miracles, superstition, and religious fanaticism.[27]

Nomsz also comments on Muhammad's violent expulsion of the Jews from Medina, saying that this has resulted in his reputation of cruelty among 'badly taught Christians and prejudiced authors'. According to Nomsz, the drastic measures against the Jews were provoked by the Jews themselves and were in accordance with the prediction that 'the Jews will wander as a sign of God's wrath'.[28] It is clear that Nomsz here aims to absolve the prophet from

23 Id., 11, pp. 172–174.
24 Id., p. 74.
25 Id., p. 152.
26 Id., pp. 75, 109.
27 Id., pp. 36, 83.
28 Id., pp. 12, 65, 82, 163.

unnecessary cruelty in order to ensure a positive evaluation of his character. Mild criticism can be found in the description of the farewell pilgrimage of the prophet, when Nomsz concludes his description of the ritual with the observation that the Christian faith only requires a 'pure heart' and has abolished this kind of unnecessary 'shadow services'. Still, Nomsz continues, whoever studies the background of these ceremonies will not find them ridiculous nor despise the Muslims because of them.[29] Most comments by Nomsz are related to the main thematic level of the narrative, which is Muhammad's evolution from prophet to statesman, and are intended to convey the idea that Muhammad did not consciously forge his religious mission for political purposes.

Taken together, Nomsz' comments serve as a framework to guide the reader towards the desired outcome, through a critical evaluation of sources, opinions, historical events and scholarly information. The reader should follow the narrow path between prejudices and hostility towards Muslims, and a too positive opinion of Islam in comparison to Christianity. However, the framework not only steers the potential interpretations of the reader, but also provides a form of referentiality for the text, which often has the appearance of a fictional story. Nomsz makes ample use of the technique with which he was familiar as a writer of theatre plays and fictional stories, such as short scenes built around encounters between characters, incorporating information in dialogues and monologues, descriptions of characters and settings, cliff-hangers, flashbacks, etc. All these procedures support the conceptualization of the text as a historical novel, a work in which historical information is wrapped in an attractive form.

The procedures used by Nomsz to enhance the literary aspects of his book show the influence of his experience as a playwright, but they can also be associated with the source material. All the characters in the narrative are historical figures, and there is no 'neutral' character representing the perspective of the author, or reader, in the story, which is a technique commonly used in historical fiction. Still, Ali plays a significant role as an aide and spokesman of the prophet, perhaps to bridge the distance between the reader and the formidable person of Muhammad, but certainly also to instil the story with action and liveliness, because he is less mild-tempered and more hot-headed than his master. Other characters, too, are both historical figures and characters filled with narrative potential. Abu-Sofian is devious but hesitant; Khalid ibn al-Walid, the military commander, is brave, loyal and sensible; Jahel is impulsive and rather stupid; Oraïka is clever and reliable. Likewise, the female characters are a combination

29 Id., II, pp. 173–174.

of historical roles and specific narrative features, such as Henda, the wife of Abu-Sofian, who is beautiful, fanatical, brave and hot-tempered, and Fatema, the daughter of the prophet, who is beautiful, loving, and loyal. Both women imbue the story with emotions which by themselves influence the course of events by forcing responses from the male characters.

The modification of the historical figures into story characters of course adds liveliness to the narrative and allows a role for human inclinations and impulsivity in an otherwise pre-determined and schematic account. It also allows for descriptions which have the function of adding aesthetic components to the narrative, stimulating the imagination of the reader and enabling them to visualize the scenes, but also to contribute to the course and interpretation of the events. For example, when Maktoum receives Ali for the first time to negotiate about Muhammad's entry into Medina, the former appears in a lustrous attire to exhibit his power and wealth, which is elaborately described, while Ali is dressed as a slave.[30] In another scene, Fatema is staged in an attractive, even sensual, outfit, which is described in an almost lascivious, orientalist, manner. Later, her beauty contributes to the conversion of one of Muhammad's opponents.[31] In both cases, the descriptions are not just embellishments but also have a function in the story as an expression of characters and roles.

## 4 From Prophet to Statesman

A remarkable element in the story is the description of a dream of Muhammad, in which he meets an old man who identifies himself as the Prophet Ishmael, the ancestor of the Arabs according to the Qur'an and the Bible. Ishmael encourages Muhammad to embark on his mission; he explains the history of revelations to him, and clarifies his task to counter the deviances of the Eastern Christians. It is explicitly stated that Muhammad's mission is the fulfilment of God's plan, and that he should not 'hate the followers of Christ'. Here a differentiation is made between the Jews, who will roam the earth, and the Christians, who enjoy God's favour. Ishmael advises Muhammad to complete his 'reformation' and to implement laws. After these admonitions, he takes him to the Kaʿba to show him the place where the ancient Abrahamic religion will be connected with Muhammad's 'reformation'. As Nomsz remarks that a 'religious fanatic' could easily mistake this dream for a divine revelation,[32] he

30 Id., p. 43.
31 Id., pp. 10, 14, 31.
32 Id., 11, pp. 7–13.

probably intends to cast doubt on Muhammad's claim to divine inspiration and prophethood. In other instances, too, Nomsz speaks in vague terms about the nature of Muhammad's revelation, which is not highlighted in the account of his life, but rather relegated to casual remarks and pronouncements by Ali, or attributed to Muhammad's imagination, illusions and nervous spasms.

It is of course no coincidence that the nature of Muhammad's prophethood and his revelation is pushed to the margin, because it was traditionally at the core of the Catholic polemics against Islam. Clearly, Nomsz wanted to avoid having to take a position about the authenticity of Muhammad's claims to prophetic inspiration, and instead encapsulated the event in references to God's design with humanity. After all, in this design Muhammad was not seen as the founder of a new religion, but as a reformer of the ancient Abrahamic faith. Moreover, in order to perform this role, he not only had to spread his ideas as a preacher, but also had to enable the Arabs to assume their preconceived position in the history of human civilizations. Therefore, apart from his religious role, Muhammad was also assigned a task as a politician and a statesman. The historical ascendancy of the Arabs was hampered by widespread superstition, division and neglect of ancient religion. It was Muhammad's task to restore indigenous monotheism to foster unity among the Arab tribes and unleash their historical potential as a 'nation'.

The tension which is inherent in Muhammad's dual role, and which is at the core of Nomsz book, is integrated in the interactions between Muhammad and Abu-Sofian, who usurped power in Mecca, and between Muhammad and Maktoum, the ruler of Medina. Nomsz makes it clear that Muhammad is the rightful ruler of Mecca, and that Abu-Sofian gained power only through a *coup d'état* and by exploiting the superstitious nature of the population. More distinct is the contrast between Muhammad and Maktoum, who is not interested in religion and only thinks in terms of political power and status. His aim is only to extend his authority over Mecca by any means available. He immediately recognizes the possibility to use Muhammad for his plans, and even pretends to consider conversion.[33] Gradually, he acknowledges Muhammad's religious authority and helps him to strengthen his position in Medina and its surroundings.[34] Nomsz emphasizes that at that point Muhammad still had no desire for secular power, 'because the might of Mecca cast doubt on the sustainability of his regal rank'. However, since all those who converted to his

33 Id., p. 107.
34 Id., pp. 146–148.

faith became his 'subjects', he gradually *de facto* acquired worldly power, and the desire for power began to stir in him.[35]

As Muhammad's campaigns became successful, and his influence among the population grew, the pressures on him to openly assume the role of a political leader increased. His followers urged him to break the treaty with the Meccans and fulfil the predictions of the 'dream', because they believed that Muhammad was helped by God. Muhammad feels a dilemma between the morality of religion, obliging him to adhere to his oath, and the requirements of statesmanship, which would give priority to political interests. In the end, he succumbs to the seduction of power, honour and worldly greatness. He begins to use his religious authority to support his political power, although he maintains that political power should be subservient to the interests of religion.[36] He acknowledges that no 'nation' can achieve greatness without a religion as a unifying force.[37] He seeks reconciliation with Abu-Sofian, abolishes idolatry and lays the foundation for his reformation. In this way, Muhammad's trajectory is completed: He aspired to become a preacher and a reformer, but he has become a 'victor' and 'king' by coincidence, without infringing upon his convictions. All factors, his descent, his rank, and the conditions of the people, enabled him to accomplish his aim as a reformer and a restorer of religion in a legitimate way.[38] This positive outcome, the synthesis of Muhammad's secular and religious power, is consolidated by the agreement between Mecca and Medina in which religious, political and economic interests are anchored. It is at this point, Nomsz adds, that Muhammad established his religion on the foundation on which it still rests, and which is the basis of the government of the Ottoman Empire.[39]

## 5 Conclusion

In several respects, Nomsz' reconstruction of Muhammad's life and mission, and the religious issues connected with them, followed the conventions of the hostile discourses within Christianity. However, in line with the Protestant trends that evolved in de 17th and 18th centuries, he puts them in a perspective that countered the main points of strife and condemnation. On the one hand,

35 Id., p. 154.
36 Id., pp. 107–114.
37 Id., p. 152.
38 Id., pp. 156–7.
39 Id., p. 129.

he sees the political and religious aspects of Muhammad's mission as inextricably interlaced, since the religious 'awakening' advocated by Muhammad was a crucial element in the political 'emancipation' of the Arabs as a nation. Since, according to Nomsz, the Arabs were by nature inclined to superstition and 'wildness', the disciplining effects of a religion based on strict doctrines and moral prescriptions was the only way to realize political unification and organization. Therefore, Muhammad's religious task was of vital importance for the fulfilment of the historical 'destiny' of the Arabs.

On the other hand, although stressing that the religious and political aspects of the birth of Islam converged in the person of Muhammad, Nomsz carefully differentiates between these two components of the prophet's mission. It is emphasized that in the beginning it was religious zeal which drove Muhammad to embark on his revolutionary trajectory, and that it was not mundane power that he sought. When the growth of the community and the rivalry with the Meccans and Jews forced a leadership role on him, he inevitably had to deal with political matters and with his increasing power. At a certain point, his moral and religious decisions became inseparable from his political interests, and to complete his mission he had to integrate his political power into his status as a religious leader. Still, power was bestowed upon him by the course of events, and lust for power was not his motivation at the beginning.

This differentiation between the two roles performed by Muhammad served two aims. First, in this way Nomsz is able to avoid a common prejudice concerning Muhammad, which portrayed him as an impostor, an opportunist and a ruthless potentate. He is represented here as a mild and benevolent preacher, who became involved in politics as a means to realize his religious and moral vision. Second, by separating the two components in Muhammad's life and person, Nomsz is able to distinguish between the claims of Muhammad's prophethood and his revelations from his historical role as a political leader and a unifier of his people. As far as Muhammad's supposed revelations are concerned, Nomsz more or less follows the conventional views that the prophet suffered from nervous attacks or had dreams in which his tasks were revealed to him, and which could not be defined as genuine revelations. After tackling this delicate point, Nomsz has ample opportunity to elaborate upon Muhammad's role as a historical figure, fulfilling his mission not so much as a prophet, but rather as a great statesman within the broad context of world history.

Within this careful disentanglement of Muhammad's roles, the key concept is the term 'reform', which indicates, first, that Muhammad did not found a new religion, as it were *ex nihilo*, but that he rather carried out a reformation of existing beliefs and practices; and, second, that Muhammad acted as

an instrument of God to correct the course of religious history. God enabled Muhammad to complete his mission both to punish and 'awaken' the deviant Eastern Christians, and to introduce a set of disciplinary measures and rules to remind the Christians of the true tenets of their religion and to strengthen their adherence to them. It is of course no coincidence that one of the aims of Nomsz book, as is stated in the preface, is to strengthen the Christian faith by comparing it with both the truths and falsities of Islam. It is of course no coincidence either that the term 'reformation' in the context of Islam resonates with the same concept in Christian religious debates.

The concept of reform, with its twofold implications, puts Nomsz vision of Muhammad at the core of what may be called the tradition of the Protestant enlightenment, and more specifically its perception of Islam. This vision implied not only a clear interpretation of Muhammad's claims to prophethood, but also required a conceptualization of the nature and meaning of history, both as a component of God's grand design, and as the scene of the unfolding of human destiny. It seems that Nomsz combines a moral view of history, which is aimed at the perfection of human morality and preparation for the Last Judgement, with a structural and evolutionary perception of history, in which various peoples have to deploy their capacities and energy to fulfil their historical roles. Whereas the former view is derived from the traditional views of the Catholic Church, the latter view seems to foreshadow the attitudes of romantic nationalists and, of course, Hegel.

An intriguing aspect of Nomsz' book is its self-definition as lying in between a historical study and a novel. In his preface he explains the basic presuppositions that should support a reconstruction of the life of a historical figure, including his historical circumstances, etc. In that sense, his account claims to be historically accurate and methodologically sound. He explicitly refers to the use of authentic Arabic sources after critical assessment. At the same time, as a literary writer, he allows himself to integrate 'embellishments' which should give the text a touch of entertainment, perhaps suspense, without affecting the veracity the of the reconstruction. In spite of his criticism of the 'fabulous' inclinations of Arab historians, he is not averse to adding ornamental details himself. Here, Nomsz' work heralds the narrative procedures of the historical novel, which as a genre did not yet exist in his time, but which came to full bloom in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Although, as seen above, biographies of Muhammad in which revisionist visions of the prophet were displayed were no novelty in the second half of the eighteenth century, Nomsz' procedures make his book unique, both in the Dutch and the European contexts. It is interesting to speculate how his specific mixture of fact and fiction came about. It is clear that he was influenced

by French playwrights and by the translations of Arabic sources, particularly Abu al-Fida's history, and the biography based upon it compiled by Jean Gagnier. Gagnier accused Boulainvilliers, who had begun to write a biography some years previously, of writing a novel rather than a proper historical study. Perhaps the biographers were ultimately all affected by the narrative procedures of their main source, since Abu al-Fida's history contains dialogues and monologues which could have inspired biographers to apply novelistic techniques. They would certainly have appealed to Nomsz, who, as a prolific playwright, was accustomed to structuring his work in specific scenes and settings, using dialogues and monologues, as a means to both provide information and to shape characters and their roles in the deployment of the plot. All these techniques were adopted to convey a balanced, convincing and attractive representation of a figure who, according to Nomsz, deserved his rightful place under God's sun.

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CHAPTER 18

# Arabic Poetry Set to Modern Arabic Music: Recited, Sung, and Rapped

*Anne van Oostrum*

In the past two decades of the twenty-first century, artists of various Arab backgrounds performed intriguing compositions in concert halls and radio programs in the Netherlands. Arabic poetry was set to modern Arabic music in the sense that these new compositions broke away from the tradition called *al-turath* (heritage) with its characteristics *of maqam* (musical mode), *iqaʿ* (rhythmical pattern), cyclical composition form, instrumentation, and heterophony. In the twentieth century, Western art music stimulated the emergence of a new musical idiom called *al-musiqa-l-jadida* (new music, modern music) in which Western harmony, composition forms, and experiments with rhythms, melodies, and instrumentation were introduced. *Al-turath* stands in contrast to al-*musiqa-l-jadida*, which is nowadays a wide field open to non-Arabic influences, including various styles and techniques outside the sphere of Arab music altogether.[1]

Due to the limited space of this article, two case studies are discussed here: the Moroccan-Belgium group *Qayna* and Moroccan singer Walid Ben Selim. During interviews, they explained their choice of lyrics and compositions as well as their motivations.[2] Instead of an in-depth musical analysis, only a few songs will be described here, and some traditional and modern style elements will be pointed out.

Singing fine poetry has always been a prominent tradition in Arabic culture. In the Arabian Peninsula of the pre-Islamic era, *al-shaʿir* (the poet) recited his poems in the markets and taverns of the cities, sometimes accompanied by

1 S. El-Shawan, 'The Social-Political Context of Al-Musiqa Al-'Arabiyyah in Cairo, Egypt: Policies, Patronage, Institutions and Musical Change (1927–1977)', *Asian Music* 12 (1), p. 86.

2 Concerts and personal communications with Walid Ben Selim took place at Tivoli Utrecht between 2017 and 2024. Walter Slosse (radio program *De Wandelende Tak* VPRO) and I interviewed the group *Qayna* (5-6-2006): *Q van Qayna* (2013, October 3). Walter Slosse's Alfabet. https://walterslosse.wordpress.com/2011/03/07/q-van-qayna/.

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a *qayna*, a 'singing enslaved girl' (plural *qiyan*).[3] Bedouin tribes of the desert considered poetry a noble art form and even held contests between poets. One of the most famous was the sixth-century Bedouin prince Imru'-al-Qays, who composed his ode (*qasida*, plural *qasa'id*) for the chief of his tribe.

After the rise of Islam in 622 AD and during the first early dynasties of the Umayyads in Damascus (661–750 AD) and the Abbasids in Baghdad (750–1258), poets, musicians, and *qiyan* were part of the court life of the caliph. Poets praised him in their *qasa'id* (plural of *qasida*), recited and often sung. In the ages gone by, the art music of the Arab world developed further at the courts of the successive Arab-Islamic dynasties in the east, such as Damascus, Aleppo, and Baghdad, as well as in the West, in the kingdoms of al-Andalus in the Islamic Iberian Peninsula, and North Africa.

Traditional Arabic art music, the *turath* of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, was performed by a vocalist accompanied by a small ensemble called *takht* in Syria and Egypt. It consisted of the Arabic lute, the *'ud*, the zither called *qanun*, the *kaman* (the violin), the *nay* (the reed flute), the *riqq* (tambourine) and the *tabla* (vase drum). This ensemble performed a *wasla*, a musical suite or compound form, in a particular musical mode (*maqam*), opened by an instrumental cyclical composition, such as a *sama'i*. An instrumentalist performed a *taqsim* (plural *taqasim*) or instrumental improvisation, usually on the *qanun*, followed by two vocal improvisations, the *layali* (on the words *ya layl ya 'ayn*) and the *mawwaal* (on a fixed poetic text). Then, the vocalist sang several forms of poetry, such as *qasida*, *muwashshaha*, and *dur*, accompanied by the *takht*. In other parts of the Arab world, similar small ensembles performed compound forms comparable to the *wasla*, for example, the Arabo-Andalusian *nauba* (also *nuba*) of North Africa.

In the twentieth century, the cyclical principle of composition was slowly replaced by the principle of development under the influence of Western art music. Some modern compositions are examples of program music that express an actual extra-musical event, thought, narrative, or idea. The *takht* changed into the much larger *firqa* ('band, orchestra') in which the *kaman*, the violin, was replaced by a dozen or more violins, celli, and a double base. In this new ensemble, the traditional Arabic instruments *'ud*, *qanun*, and *nay* can be doubled or tripled, while the percussion (*tabla* and *riqq*) beats the rhythmical pattern (*iqa'*).

3 C. Poché, 'Music in Ancient Arabia from Archaeological and Written Sources,' in V. Danielson, S. Marcus and D. Reynolds (eds.), *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: The Middle East* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 357–362.

Until today, an ensemble that reminds one of the traditional *takht* has been formed with additional Western instruments, such as violins, violas, celli, double basses, woodwind instruments, and a piano, accompanying solo vocalist, or choir.[4] In some compositions, instruments from other musical cultures are included. Although pure instrumental music is composed, vocal music with a central role for the solo singer remains an important art form.

## 1 Qayna

In the seventh century, after the Arab armies had conquered parts of the neighbouring reigns of Byzantium and the Sassanid empire, many *qiyan* and other singers and instrumentalists who had formerly been prominent court musicians were brought from these conquered territories to the Arabian Peninsula. These artists took their own musical culture and instruments with them and started to perform in the houses of the wealthy elite of Mecca and Medina. Thus, Arabic music developed into a hybrid genre with solid foreign influences. The figure of the *qayna* remained part of the Arab-Islamic courts in the subsequent ages, during which she played an essential role in the development of music.[5]

The *qayna* was well-versed in classical Arabic poetry, an outstanding songstress, and a skilled instrumentalist. She was often part of the household of a wealthy merchant, her patron, and performed for his family and friends. After she had reached a certain fame, she became a style icon in Arab-Islamic society: her beautiful appearance, clothes, etiquette, and eloquence were copied and added to her status. Some of these women had a circle of pupils as the conservatories of those days.[6]

In 2005, three Belgian musicians of Moroccan background, Abid al-Bahri, Samir Bendimered, and artistic director Addi Yahya, set up a new project called *Qayna* to revive the repertory of its historical namesake. They composed and arranged music for the classical poems that Yahya found in works such as the *Kitab al-Aghani* ('Book of Songs'), the immense compendium of Arabic poetry

4 S. El-Shawan 'Traditional Arab Music Ensembles in Egypt since 1967: "The Continuity of Tradition within a Contemporary Framework"?', *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (May 1984), pp. 271–288.

5 C. Pellat, 'Kayna,' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, C.E. Bosworth, et al., Vol. IV (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 820–24.

6 L. Nielson, *Music and Musicians in the Medieval Islamicate World: A Social History* (London: Bloomsbury/I.B. Tauris, 2021).

dating from the 7th until the 10th century, assembled by the scholar Abu-l-Faraj al-Isfahani (Baghdad, d. 967).

The music of *Qayna* could be classified as 'world music' based on the *nawba*, the musical suite of classical Arabo-Andalusian music. Songstresses Naziha Meftah, Laïla Amezian, and Anissa Rouas sang in a traditional Arabo-Andalusian style characterized by melismatic singing.[7] Foreign elements are also found, such as Amazigh music of South Morocco, Mauritanian rhythms, Japanese pentatonic scales, and Indian *ragas*. The instruments are from various musical cultures, including the Western violin, cello, flute, and recorder, alongside the Japanese *shakuhachi*, the Indian *bansuri*, the Turkish *saz*, and the Arabic *'ud*. The musicians wanted to use these foreign elements to reference the 'world music avant-la-lettre' of the historical *qayna*, who also brought her music, instruments, and styles from her home country.

The group strived to highlight the vital position of the historical *qayna* in Arabic music, which, in their view, is a fact that is not commonly known. This knowledge could help to empower the status of modern female performers in Arab countries. Unfortunately, the project *Qayna* stopped in 2007 when Yahya unexpectedly passed away in Brussels. The CD *Envol* with six tracks is the result of this short-lived project with notably the poems of the sixth-century Bedouin poet Imru'-al-Qays, Jamil al Buthayna (659–701), and Ibn Zaydun (1003–1071).

The lyric of the song *Samawtu ilayha* of CD *Envol* (11′45)[8] is part of a long *qasida* titled *Ala 'im sabahan ayyuha t-talalu-l-bali* ('A morning of joy at the remains of the campsite') found in the *diwan* of the sixth-century Bedouin prince and poet Imru'-al-Qays. The *qasida* traditionally started with the *nasib*, the erotic introduction, to attract the public. Its story is a cliché: the poet grieved about his beloved lady of a tribe other than his own, usually a married woman, who had been his secret lover for the past few days. He came to visit her, but unfortunately for him, she had traveled further into the desert, leaving him behind as he cried over his lost love. All that was left on the deserted campsite were the remains of the Bedouin camp, called *al-atlal* or *al-talal* ('the remains'), such as a smoldering campfire. This word *al-atlal* immediately sketches Bedouin desert life, the shared history of Arab people. Modern poets use this metaphor, for example, the *qasida al-atlal* by the Egyptian poet Ibrahim Naji (1898–1953), which he composed for the famous Egyptian singer

7 Melismatic singing is singing a single syllable while moving between several different tones in succession.

8 *Envol*. (2005a). Sowarex asbi, label IGLOOMONDO & Zig Zag World. Retrieved August 16, 2024, from https://open.spotify.com/track/4UJ7iMlV2jPnEipfiwNp5h?si=550e8cf5a30340b5.

Umm Kulthum (ca. 1904–1975).[9] Certain words and poetic verses such *al-atlal* can induce *tarab* or musical emotion. An Arab audience can express *tarab* by voicing words or exclamations of approval, the ultimate goal of a performer.[10]

Only a few verses of this poem, *Samawtu ilayha*, numbered 1–6 below, are sung by the members of *Qayna*.[11] The poet told of his beloved Salma and his erotic adventures with her at her campsite at night when her tribe was soundly asleep:

> 1. I crawled towards her after her family had gone to sleep
> I crept like rippling water, drop by drop
> 2. She said: "My God, have you gone mad? You'll shame us!
> Can't you see the people around us are still awake?"
> 3. I said: "I swear to God that I'll remain here,
> Even if they chop off my head and limbs in front of you!"
> 4. I falsely swore to her: "By God, they're sound asleep!
> Nobody is still talking, warming themselves by the campfire."
> 5. After this quarrel she had given in, I drew her body near me,
> Flexible as a twig, her hair in thick locks,
> 6. We engaged in the best activity there is, then we spoke softly,
> I had tamed her after I broke her short resistance.

The composition starts with a prelude on the *saz*, followed by the first vocalist, who sings the poem's first verse in a slow tempo on a low tonal level. Each verse is a musical unit with its melody, and the second and third singer, each in their turn, start a following verse, each time on a higher tonal level. The climax is reached at 2′25 with the words 'And I falsely swore to her' (verse 4). At 2′43 the cello plays a calm, majestic solo, then the other instruments join in. The choir sings the syllables *eh* and *oh* a few times, and at 5′14, verse 5 is sung. Then the *saz* starts with an interlude at 6′41, and then a rhythmical pattern is performed on the *bindir*, which is slowly accelerated to a climax at 8′27 when two singers repeat the first verse, and one sings the last verse, verse 6, in sync

9 R. Kruk, 'Arabische poëzie, enkele thema's en motieven', *De Arabische Wereld* (nr. 9/10), *De Gids*, 1980, pp. 639–647.

10 A.J. Racy, *Making Music in the Arab World, the Culture and Artistry of Tarab* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 147–190.

11 Imru' al-Qays, *Diwan al-Asr al-Jahili*, Imru' al-Qays: https://www.aldiwan.net/cat-poet-imru-alqays poem nr. 51. This poem is written in the *tawil*, one of the sixteen meters of classical Arabic poetry. A Dutch translation of the complete poem is found in G.J. van Gelder, *Een Arabische Tuin: Klassieke Arabische Poëzie* (Amsterdam, Leuven: Bulaaq/van Halewyck, 2000), pp. 91–95.

with the first verse. Finally, the three singers end with the first verse in unison. The dominant percussion instrument is the *bindir*, a frame drum of Amazigh music, with a few strings stretched at the back of the membrane, producing a buzzing sound.

Traditional elements of Arabic music are woven into this composition, notably the rhythmical pattern (*iqa'*) with its heavy (*dum*) and light (*tak*) beats, which is accelerated to the end of the song. The melismatic singing on the syllables of the words reminds one of the Arabo-Andalusian tradition.

This composition is an example of program music that seeks to express an actual event, in this case, the narrative of this poem. For example, verse 1 is sung softly with its secretive text ('I crept towards her'), while verses 5 and 6 clearly form the climax of the composition when the two lovers finally engage in their union. An experimental element is the instrumentation: the Turkish *saz*, the Western recorder, violins, and the cello.

*Jamalak*, 'Your Beauty' (7'19) (CD *Envol*),[12] is inspired by the Arabo-Andalusian heritage of an anonymous poet, with the cliché of a classical love poem: the beauty (*jamal*) of the beloved, the inability of the lover to reach and be together with him (*wisal*), his painful indifference and rejection of his lover, who concludes he has to forget him. The gender of the lover and the beloved is not revealed; the male form is used in the Arabic text. In this way, the identities are deliberately kept secret, a phenomenon called *kitman* (hiding) in Arabic poetry.

*Ma abda jamalak -ma abha jamalak, ya nur 'ayni!*

O, how radiant is your beauty, O light of my eyes!
How can I be together with you If you turn away from me?
I have to forget my beloved and his pretty eyes
Hide my admiration while his sweet voice reigns my senses.
And forget my love for him that is only growing
I have to forget my beloved and his beauty.

This composition begins with a solo of the *bansuri*, the flute of classical Indian music, with a melody reminding of a *raga* (Indian musical mode). One hears the *bindir* again, rhythmical patterns, and call-and-response singing, a characteristic of female choir singing from south Morocco.

12 *Envol*. (2005b). Retrieved August 16, 2024, from https://open.spotify.com/track/0dADvhP1dtm9l8jPBRLmxa?si=871ebaed951a494f.



FIGURE 18.1 Photographs by the author of a *bindir* (front and back with two strings), a wooden-framed frame drum, bought in the city of Taroudant, South Morocco. A sieve maker often makes the instrument.

## 2 Walid Ben Selim

The Moroccan singer, rapper, and composer Walid Ben Selim (Casablanca, 1984) strives to build bridges in his music between the Arab world and the West, working with musicians of various backgrounds. He started his career as a singer in a heavy metal band, then became a rapper, and turned to performing Arabic poetry in 2014. He chooses lyrics that express the secular, progressive side of the Arab world, the message of peace and tolerance, freedom of speech, and artistic autonomy. His mission is to make the literary culture of Arabic poetry well-known worldwide.[13] He creates a musical universe in which song, spoken word, rap, and urban beats blend with African and Arab melodies. Nowadays, he tours Europe with his band N3rdistan, performing poetry with a modern urban sound. His songs represent a compilation of the rich tradition of Arabic poetry, and he also composes and raps his poems.

The *qasida ʿAla qadri ahli-l-ʿazmi taʾti-l-ʿazaʾimi*ʾ of the classical poet al-Mutanabbi (d. 965) for Sayf al-Dawla (916–967), monarch of the Hamdanid

13 Walid Ben Selim's concerts in the Netherlands are part of the *Arabic Crossroads Music & Poetry* series, organized by the *Culture Connection Foundation* in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Dynasty of Aleppo, inspired Ben Selim's poem *Sada* ('Echo'). *Sada* starts with the same first verse as al-Mutanabbi's *qasida*, who wrote with humour and wisdom on human nature.[14]

> People would be judged on the nobleness of their deeds
> It's the measure of nobility that makes their deeds noble
> In the eyes of insignificant people, little affairs are enormous
> But for great minds, these things are futile.

Ben Selim plays an introduction on the *gembri*, the lute of South Morocco, a lute with a rectangular sound box covered by camel skin and three strings of goat gut. The *gembri* is the leading instrument of the rituals of the Gnawa, a Sufi brotherhood in the South of Morocco. The *kora* of Senegal, a type of harp-lute, joins the *gembri* here in a pentatonic scale (five-tone scale), a characteristic of Amazigh music that belongs to the vast domain of African music.

Until the twentieth century, classical Arabic poems obeyed strict rules of rhyme and meter. Poets of the Free Verse, a modern movement headed by Badri Shakir al-Sayyab (1926–1964), broke with those limitations at the end of the 1940ties. Among them was the Iraqi poetess Nazik al-Mala'ika (1923–2007), who is famous for her frank love poetry, for example, the poem *Ana wa anti* ('You and me'), sung and rapped by Walid ben Salim and his band N3rdistan.[15]

Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish (1941–2008) was another follower of Free Verse who wrote about the Palestinian diaspora, exile, longing for his home country, and the warmth and agricultural life of his youth. Ben Selim has performed a few of his poems: *Bitaqatuh Huwiyya* (Identity Card, 1964) and *La'ib al-nard* (The Dice Player, 2009). In *La'ib al-nard*, he uses three techniques to express the text: reciting, singing, and rap.

Arabic rap was developed inspired by its American predecessor, but it has a distinct sound or local couleur. The genre's 'Arabification' took place in the music studios of France, where North African musicians started to use fragments of French popular music and Algerian *raï*, a genre of protest music, in their samplings. Thus, one of the first forms of Arabic rap emerged in the

14 Abu-l-Tayyib al-Mutanabbi, *Diwan*, Cairo, Matba'at Mustafa al-Tibani al-Halabi wa-awladihi bi-misr, 1926, 378–379, and a classical poem with a tawil meter. The song *Sada* is found on YouTube: Walead Ben Selim – (Al-Mutanabbi) عَـلَى قَدْرِ أَهـلِ العَـزمِ (2012, September 6) [Video]. Retrieved August 16, 2024, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXAruM6y2Ko&list=RDWXAruM6y2Ko&start_radio=1.

15 Ben Selim, W. (label Le Rocher, 2019). *N3rdistan*. Retrieved August 16, 2024, from https://open.spotify.com/track/17pLQ2KxvRQajNcvMfB5hj?si=03315499dba94f8c.



FIGURE 18.2 Walid Ben Selim playing the *gembri*
PHOTOGRAPH BY WINEKE VAN MUISWINKEL, COURTESY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER AND THE *CULTURAL CONNECTIONS FOUNDATION*

1990s.[16] Subjects are often social issues, such as young people's lack of freedom, poverty, unemployment, protest, feminism, and political conflicts.

*La'ib al-nard* is composed of two parts that are about 30 minutes each.[17] Walid Ben Selim, pianist Agathe Di Piro, and *qanun* player Nidhal Jaoua have composed this piece and arranged it for a 'modern' *takht*, in which the pianist and the *qanun* player have a leading role, supported by musicians of the National Opera Orchestra of Montpellier on two violins, viola, cello, and double bass. Sometimes, the piano takes the role of the percussion instrument,

16 L. Plenckers, *Arabische Muziek: een overzicht van de geschiedenis en de hedendaagse praktijk* (Amsterdam: Bulaaq, 2014), p. 255.

17 The album will be released in 2025, label NUUN. The two parts of Walid Ben Selim's performance of *La'ib al-nard* (5-2-2022, Montpellier) are found on YouTube:

Ben Selim, W. [Walid Ben Selim] (2023, April 7). The Dice Player: Part I لاعب النرد : الجزء [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved August 16, 2024, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gu53wW6i2cY.

The dice player: Part II لاعب النرد : الجزء الثاني [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFncO2_W21c.

performing the *iqaʿ* or rhythmical pattern. In a few fragments, the *qanun* creates a hint of a *maqam* (musical scale/mode) by playing a quartertone, characteristic of Arabic music.[18] The musicians read from a musical score as they are used to this as members of the Opera Orchestra.

Mahmud Darwish's poem is about identity on a personal, plural, worldly, and local level.[19] The dice player is a metaphor for the poet, the one who struggles, and every human being: chance determines whether one is born male or female, in a particular family, with inherited disabilities and talents, and luck or misfortune in certain situations. Darwish was born as a Palestinian under harsh circumstances such as exile and military occupation, in which every member of his people could easily lose his or her life with a throw of the dice.

According to Ben Selim, this poem is a literary masterpiece, and performing it on stage is both a pleasure and a duty. It is also a marvel of philosophy as it brings up existential questions such as one's free will and chance and the choices one makes in life. He sings about 65 percent of the verses of this long poem, treating each grouping of verses as a musical unit interspersed with instrumental interludes. A few of these units with musical turning points stressing the poem's meaning are highlighted here, with a focus on keywords or verses.

## 3 The Dice Player (*Laʿib al-nard*), Part 1

After a recitation of verses 1–6 (2′44–) in French, the piano and the *qanun* set in a romantic melody. The main theme is repeated throughout the first part of the composition. Then, a recitation in Arabic follows, and slowly, the recitation changes into singing.

18 Traditional Arabic music is based on a system of numerous musical modes (maqam); some contain one or two tones that are a quartertone lower than tones of the Western major or minor musical scale.

19 Atef Alshaer, 'Identity in Mahmoud Darwish's Poem 'The dice player'', *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 4 (2011) 90–110. See for the Arabic text: M. Darwish, *La uridu li-hadhihi al-qasidah an tantah, al-diwan al-akhir*, Bayrut, Riyad al-Rayyis lil-Kutub wa-al-Nashr, 2009. Muhammad Shaheen's complete translation is found in Mahmud Darwish, *I Don't Want This Poem to End: Final Poems and Prose*, Skyscraper Publication 2017. I've made a few changes in the wording.

### 3.1 *Verses 1–6 (2′44–)*

| | |
|---|---|
| Who am I to say to you | man ana li-aqula la-kum |
| what I say to you? | ma aqulu la-kum? |
| I was not a stone polished by water | |
| and became a face | |
| nor was I a cane punctured by the wind | |
| and became a flute | |

Verses 7–93 (3′09–) are half sung; half recited on a higher tonal level. The rest of the verses are sung, with kernel words stressed or sung melismatically.

### 3.2 *Verses 7–9 (3′09–)*

| | |
|---|---|
| I am a dice player | ana laʿib an-nard |
| Sometimes I win, and sometimes I lose | |
| I am like you or slightly less | |

At 12′40, the orchestra sets in a common Arabic rhythmical pattern (*iqaʿ*) called *shaftatalli*, performed at a low tempo: 8/4 dum tak tak tak tak| dum dum tak s| *dum* = heavy blow, *tak* = light one, *s* = rest.

The *shaftatalli* supports a *taqsim mawzun*, a traditional instrumental improvisation accompanied by a rhythmical pattern. The piano plays this pattern here, in the role of a percussion instrument. Later, the rest of the orchestra joins in. Then, at 17′25, the vocalist takes over and sings a *mawwaal*, a vocal improvisation on a fixed text in traditional Arabic music; in this case, the fixed text is verses 64 and 65. Words prolonged by melismatic singing or stressed are *kana* and *alla*, and *musaban* ('I could not have been infected') in verse 64 and *bi-jinni muʿallaqat al-jahiliyya* ('by the *jinnis*, the demons, of the ancient *muʿallaqat* poems') in verse 65, especially the word *muʿallaqat* as a historical symbol of Arab culture. These *muʿallaqat*, literally 'the hanging poems', were seven famous odes, *qasaʾid*, by pre-Islamic poets, including Imruʾ-al-Qays, mentioned above.[20] The vocalist is repeated by the *qanun* in each pause, called *tarjama* ('interpretation') in traditional Arabic music. The whole part builds up towards a climax: 17′25–23′18, ending with the word *sada*, echo.

20 It is not clear why these poems are called *muʿallaqat*, literally 'the hanging poems' (G.J. van Gelder, 2000, p. 85).

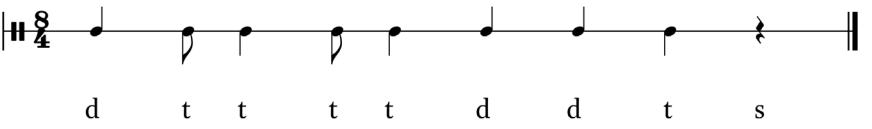


FIGURE 18.3 The *shaftatalli* rhythmical pattern

### 3.3 *Verses 64–76 (17′33–)*

| | |
|---|---|
| I could have not been infected | kana yumkinu alla akuna musaban |
| by the demons of the ancient *muʿallaqat* poems | bi-jinni muʿallaqat-il-jahiliyya |
| If the house gate was northerly | |
| not overlooking the sea | |
| If the army patrol did not see the village fire | |
| baking the night | |
| Had the fifteen martyrs re-built the barricades, | |
| Had that field not fallen, | |
| I could have become an olive tree | |
| or a geography teacher | |
| or an expert in the kingdom of ants | |
| or a guardian of echo! | |

At 29′27, verses 96–99 are rapped, starting on a low tonal level and ascending in a speeding tempo and volume, then the rap changes into singing, building up to a climax, and until the text reaches verses 100 and 101 that ends with the word *jaysh*, i.e., army.

### 3.4 *Verse 96–99 (29′27–)*

| | |
|---|---|
| I walk /haste/run/go up/go down /… | amshi/uharwilu/arkudu/asʿadu/ anzilu |

### 3.5 *Verse 100–101 (30′17–)*

I am fortunate that the wolves
disappeared from there by chance,
or escaped from the army.

(End of part 1 at 30′31.)

Part II sets off with the recitation of the poem in French, followed by a prelude of the whole ensemble (1′57) with a rhythmical pattern based on an a-symmetrical meter: 10/8 **1**-2-3 **4**-5-6 7-8 **9**-10, called *khamsa* in a high tempo and volume. When Ben Selim composed this section, he wanted to break the monotonous rhythm and create a dynamic rupture around the text because the poem changes at this precise moment, from poet-witness (*la dawra li fi-hayati*, 'I played no role in my life') to poet-actor (*wa-awqadtu qandilaha*, 'I lit its lamp then tried to amend it'). Then the vocalist sets in with verses 102–106 (2′38). The rhythmical pattern is maintained until verse 125 when a new section starts.

### 3.6 *Verses 102–106 (2′38)*

I played no role in my life, except, — la dawra li fi-hayati
when it taught me its hymns,
I said: is there any more?
and I lit its lamp then tried to amend it …

At 9′27, the vocalist performs verses 127–131 as a *mawwaal* on its words, stressing and using melismatic singing on the following words: *kana*, *wahidin*, *qasida*, and *la*.

### 3.7 *Verses 127–131 (9′27)*

I could not have been inspired — kana yumkin an yukhalifuni-l-wahy

Inspiration is the luck of the lonely soles
The poem is a throw of a dice
on a board of darkness
that may or may not shine
and the words fall like feathers on the sand

The last verses (176–181) are marked by a melody with blue notes, an element of Jazz as if the composition has turned into a Blues. It starts at 20′41, with verses 154 until 181. The last part of the poem, verses 176–181, ends with the word *lahn*, 'melody', at 28′34.

### 3.8 *Verses 176–181 (27′06)*

To life I say: slow down, wait for me — lil-hayati aqulu: 'ala mahlak, intazirini

until the drunkenness dries from my
glass
There are communal roses in the
garden,
and air cannot escape the rose
Wait for me so the Nightingales do not
escape
and I do not make a mistake in the
melody.

## 4 Concluding Remarks

In modern Arabic music, many composers and performers experiment with new composition forms, unusual combinations of instruments, and elements of various musical cultures, combined with traditional Arabic style features, tonality, and rhythmical patterns. The two case studies presented here in this paper, the compositions of *Qayna* and Walid Ben Selim, are examples of program music that expresses the content of the sung poems. These musicians have in common the desire to highlight Arabic poetry, the literary means of expression par excellence of past and present in the Arab world. Although they experiment with various elements from other musical cultures, they refer to traditional Arabic art music (*turath*) and their Moroccan musical background of the Arabo-Andalusian tradition and Amazigh music.

The figure of the historical *qayna*, her repertory of pre-Islamic and classical Arabic poetry, and her essential role in the musical scene in the early ages of Arab-Islamic society inspired the contemporary group *Qayna*. The group uses instruments from various countries as a tribute to the historical *qiyan*, who brought their music with them to the Arabian Peninsula.

Ben Selim shares the same fascination for Arabic poetry with the members of *Qayna* because he wants its fame to reach all corners of the earth. He sings classical poems and the modern genre of the Free Verse, such as the poem *La'ib al-nard* of the Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish. He applies different vocal techniques in his music, for example, recitation, singing, and rapping the lyrics. Features of Amazigh music, often accompanied by the *gembri*, are found in his compositions, as well as elements of Jazz and Western romantic music, accompanied by a modern *takht*. At the same time, traditional aspects of *turath* are present, for example, the instrumentation, the sporadic use of *maqamat* with or without quartertones, rhythmical patterns, and vocal techniques such as melismatic singing and vocal improvisation.

This domain of experimental Arabic music requires comparative research, as many composers and performers are prolific innovators. Traditional and new elements are combined with or without Arabic poetry in a way that results in new, intriguing compositions.

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This is a festschrift in honour of Arnoud Vrolijk, the emeritus curator of Oriental manuscripts and rare books at Leiden University Libraries. His title of *Interpres Legati Warneriani* refers to the role of keeper of the manuscripts bequeathed to the Library of the University of Leiden by Levinus Warner in 1665. The eighteen articles, ranging from book history to manuscript studies, philology and oriental art, reflect Vrolijk's many interests and activities. Each of the contributions touches upon at least one of the fields Arnoud is interested in, has worked on, or both. All articles also deal with the collection of knowledge, and how it has been brought together, been preserved, and has been – and is being – disseminated in East and West.

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