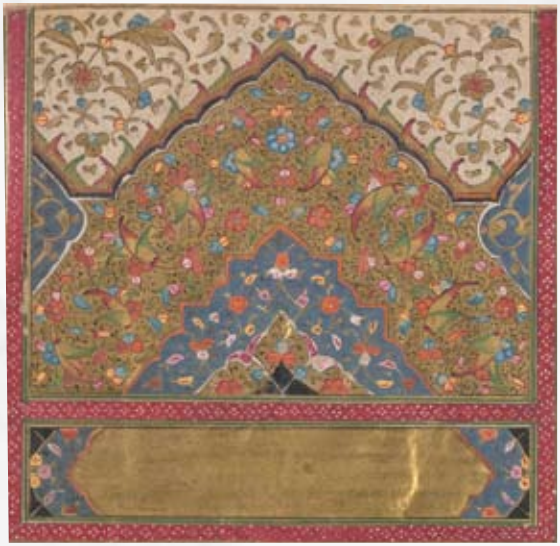

From Codicology to Technology

Islamic Manuscripts and their Place in Scholarship

Stefanie Brinkmann / Beate Wiesmüller (eds.)

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Notes on the edition

The present articles are based on lectures delivered on the panel "Islamic Manuscripts – Projects and Perspectives" at the Congress of German Oriental Studies, Freiburg im Breisgau, 24th–28th of September 2007 (www.dot2007.de).

Each article is followed by the author's bibliography. Only the introduction has listed its references exclusively in the footnotes due to the partly extensive quoting of website addresses. All URL addresses have been last checked in September 2008.

Each article is the sole property and responsibility of the single author.

The transliteration follows the Library of Congress.

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Quiring-Zoche, Rosemarie is a staff member of the project *The Union Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts in German Collections*. She completed her PhD in 1979 at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, with a dissertation on the history of the Iranian city of Isfahan in the 15th and 16th centuries. She is a specialist for Arabic manuscripts and has published three catalogues in the scope of the *Union Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts in German Collections*.

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Wiesmüller, Beate has been research associate in several projects on cataloguing Islamic manuscripts and Oriental rare books. Since 2006 she is research associate in Leipzig, where she has compiled the catalogue for the new database *Islamic manuscripts at Leipzig University Library*. She has authored several publications on Oriental collections and holds a M.A. in Islamic Studies, English Philology and Comparative Religious Studies.

Stefanie Brinkmann and Beate Wiesmüller

Introduction

"Erinnerst du dich, wie du uns das Leben zurückgabst, wie du, aufmerksam die halbzerstörten Zeilen betrachtend, allmählich ihren Sinn entdecktest, wie du aus den eiligen oder gekünstelten Schriftzeichen plötzlich unsere Geschichte erkanntest und ein leichter Schauer der Aufregung dir über den Rücken lief? Ein vor dir aufblitzender Name gab uns unseren Platz in der Vergangenheit, und wir erwachten für immer zum Leben, nachdem wir Hunderte von Jahren in der Erde oder in vergessenen Kästen gelegen hatten."[1]

The fascination of work with Islamic manuscripts[2] lies in its direct contact with history, reviving it in the moment of studying it. It is a moment of witnessing the transmission of scholarly knowledge or obtaining insight into daily affairs, of direct contact with the material produced centuries ago and with the copyist and artist who created the document. Manuscripts reveal cultural exchanges across the borders of regions and times defined by ethnic, political, social, and language patterns.

At the same time, they are the foundation of Orientalist scholarship in Europe, which became increasingly independent from theology and developed as philology in the 18th and 19th century. Early Orientalists[3], who often still had a

1 "Do you remember how you brought us back to life, how you studied the partly erased lines, and gradually discovered their meaning, how you suddenly understood our story from the hurriedly or artfully written characters, and a light shiver of excitement ran down your spine? As a name appeared like a sudden flash before your eyes we were given our place in history, and we awoke to eternal life after having been buried for centuries in the ground or in forgotten cases." (transl. by S. Brinkmann and C.-F. Vogt Andresen), from: Kratschkowski, Ignatij Julianovic: Über arabische Handschriften gebeugt, Leipzig 1949, p. 19.

2 The usage of the term "Islamic manuscripts" is not very precise since it covers apparently texts without an explicit Islamic content as well. It will be referred to nevertheless since it is a term commonly used in scholarship, trying to define those manuscripts that have been produced in a cultural and/or political Islamic context. This includes manuscripts containing explicit Islamic topics or literature without such explicit connotation.

3 The term refers to the self reference of those scholars as well as the historical usage of defining the subject until late into the 20th century. A severe critic of the term "Orientalism" has been put forward by Edward Said in the 1970ies (see Said, Edward S.: Orientalism, 3. edition, London 2003.)

theological background, had to rely heavily on manuscripts for their philological research. They concentrated on lexical research and grammar, particularly in the Arabic language, and produced grammatical treatises, concordances, lexical lists, and dictionaries. They not only copied manuscripts for the acquisition of writing skills or imitations of calligraphy, but pioneered the editorial process. Even though the fields of Arabic, Islamic, Persian, and other related studies have become enriched by a multitude of methodological approaches from the 19th century onward – from fields such as religious, social, political, and anthropological studies, as well as geography – still our knowledge of history ultimately depends on manuscripts (and their editions). They are the "voices from the past" – even though their limited number allows only scattered glimpses onto the field of history.

Given the fundamental importance of studying manuscripts[4], it is striking how much of this valuable source has been neglected by scholars throughout the recent decades. It is not only the limited number of manuscripts which gives us a limited insight into history, but the fact that only a small proportion of all these manuscripts has been indexed and studied at all. Of all the manuscripts slumbering in basements of repositories and public and private libraries, only a small number have been catalogued. We may simply not be aware of many existing texts that could give new insight into historical fields. Of the catalogued texts, only a few are known to scholars internationally, and only a few have been edited so far. The present book addresses the importance of manuscripts as sources for scholarship and daily life, codicology, collections and their significance, cataloguing, and technological developments for online presentation.

1 Scholars, Patrons, and Daily Life

The history of manuscripts in Islamic regions, with their changing owners and places of transmission – revealed in owners' stamps, marginal annotations, *waqf* entries, as well as *sama'āt* entries, and *ijāzāt*[5] – is part of research on

4 See Madelung, Wilferd F.: Manuscripts in historical research and text edition, in: Cooper, John (ed.): The significance of Islamic manuscripts. Proceedings of the inaugural conference of al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation (30th November–1st December 1991), London 1992, pp. 1–6; Nasr, Seyyed Hossein: The significance of Islamic manuscripts, in: ibidem, pp. 7–17.

5 Witkam, Jan Just: The Human Element Between Text and Reader: the Ijāza in Arabic Manuscripts,

scholarly discourses and networks. This research reveals the transmission of knowledge, and gives us an understanding of the institutions and private households where these manuscripts were kept. At the same time, the dispersion of a multitude of copies of a work over private households and public institutions in different countries poses a challenge to critical editing.

By investigating the transmission of al-Bayḍāwī's *Anwār al-tanzīl* on the base of a heretofore unnoticed copy from 1357 AD, Rosemarie Quiring-Zoche reconstructs scholarly activities in Shirāz and Damascus in the 14th century. At the same time, she points out the importance of this copy for a critical edition, taking into account that editions of *Anwār al-tanzīl* are mainly based on copies from the 16th and 17th century. As the proximity to an author is a decisive criterion for the value of a manuscript, the finding of the old copy by Quiring-Zoche at the State Library in Berlin is of special significance.[6]

The question of scholarly activities and networks displayed in a number of copies of a text is also central for Oman Fathurahman's research on manuscripts of *Itḥāf al-Dhakī*. Written by the Kurdish scholar Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (1616–1690), it apparently tries to reconcile Sufi doctrines of Ibn ʿArabī with Qur'ān and Sunnah. Even though this work is the result of a request of Malay Muslim scholars to al-Kūrānī who taught in Medina, it became rather popular and spread over different regions and countries, from West Africa to South East Asia. Fathurahman examines the copies of this work, discussing possible groupings based on collation and provenance.[7]

Just as scholars in Islamic regions travelled far to seek knowledge and copy texts, so did the early European "Orientalists" engage in their own *ṭalab al-ʿilm*. Their study of Islamic manuscripts was a precondition for the development of an independent Arabic philology in Europe during the 18th and especially the 19th century.

Arnoud Vrolijk stresses the importance of manuscripts for European scholars in his article on editing *Majmaʿ al-amthāl* and the challenges scholars had to face: travelling far to view manuscripts, primitive printing technology for Arabic letters, as well as a scholarly competition leading to an "urge to publish".

in: Dutton, Yasin (ed.): The Codicology of Islamic Manuscripts. Proceedings of the Second Conference of al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation (4–5 December 1993), London 1995, pp.123–136. See among others Leder, Stefan: Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-dimashqīyah al-muntakhabah min sanat 550 ilā 750 h./1155 ilā 1349 m., Dimashq 1996.

6 See pp. 33–45

7 See pp. 47–58

Here, the renowned scholars Everhard Scheidius (1742–1794), Johann Jacob Reiske (1716–1774), and two members of the "Schultens' dynasty" were competing in studying and editing *Majmaʿ al-amthāl*.[8]

Apart from the importance of manuscripts for the reconstruction of scholarly discourses and networks, there is a significant aspect that unfortunately tends to be neglected in research: manuscripts as a source of knowledge of daily life and local social and economic structures. Trade registers, tax papers, and checks can inform about economic exchanges just as private letters can about daily affairs; they allow scholars a historical micro-perspective of inestimable value. However, such an intensive research on letters and administrative and business documents is a task still very much required: "Hundreds of thousands of documents are still waiting to be indexed and studied. More than 150,000 documents in Arabic conserved both on papyrus and paper, provide an unparalleled insight into the everyday life in Egypt between the 7th and the 16th century. Only a small part has been published, only some few have been studied closely, and the results of this research have only rarely been integrated into the wider fields of Arabic and Islamic studies. But what is even more striking is the scarcity of reference works. This becomes painfully obvious when we compare the situation of Arabic papyrology to the state of Greek and – to a lesser degree – Demotic papyrology."[9] Among others, Werner Diem, Adolf Grohmann, Andreas Kaplony, Geoffrey Khan, and Yūsuf Rāghib have rendered outstanding services in their research on, and editing of, Arabic documents of private, administrative, and business origins.

The Genizah collection (Taylor-Schechter-Genizah) located at Cambridge University Library is a unique source for everyday, religious, and cultural life in Egypt (and beyond), spanning primarily the period from the 11th to the 13th century. Recovered in 1897 from the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Fustat (Old Cairo) and the Jewish cemetery in Basatin, these approximately 140,000 fragments are mainly written in Judaeo-Arabic and Arabic, and to a lesser extent in Hebrew and other languages. Shelomo Dov Goitein (1900–1985) has analysed a part of the fragments and published his six-volume *A Mediterranean Society* on the cultural, economic, and religious life of Jewish communities.[10] Apart from

8 See pp. 59–80

9 Andreas Kaplony on his Arabic Papyrology Database (http://orientw.uzh.ch/apd/project1c.jsp).

10 Goitein, S.D.: A Mediterranean Society. The Jewish communities of the Arab world as portrayed in the documents of the Cairo Geniza, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1967–1993.

scholarly and literary texts, the Judeo-Arabic fragments are a major source for the relation between Jews and Arabs during that period. To this day, the Taylor-Schechter-Genizah Research Unit dedicates its efforts to the cataloguing of and the research on these fragments.[11] Avihai Shivtiel presents the Genizah collection in his article and describes its content from religious, mundane, and scientific literature up to private or business correspondence. The Genizah's importance for our knowledge of daily life and social and economic structures becomes evident as well as it does for the language use of Jews under Muslim rule.[12]

While the Genizah collection consists of different kinds of texts, ranging from scholarly works to checks, Michaela Hoffmann-Ruf presents in her article a collection of letters, found in the house of Shaykh Muḥsin ibn Zahrān in al-Ḥamrā', Oman. They cover a time span of about 170 years from the second half of the 18th century to the middle of the 20th century. These documents – correspondence with his own tribesmen as well as other communities – reveal the manifold duties of the sheikh and exemplify the required skills for a man of his position. At the same time, the letters give evidence of the impressively efficient and fast information network of that time.[13]

2 Codicology

Besides the importance of the manuscripts' content, the artistry they display, and their way of production are other parts of the cultural history of book production. The usage of certain writing materials, inks, and bindings provides knowledge about materials available and trade contacts, apart from being crucial for the dating in codicology.[14] Calligraphy, illumination, use of colours,

11 http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter

12 See pp. 149–158

13 See pp. 159–173

14 See among others Déroche, Francois: Islamic codicilogy. An introduction to the study of manuscripts in Arabic script, Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, London 2005; Endress, Gerhard: Handschriftenkunde, in: Fischer, Wolfdietrich (Hrsg.). Grundriss der arabischen Philologie, Bd. I, Wiesbaden 1982; Pedersen, Johannes: The Arabic book, Princeton, New York 1984; Sayyid, Ayman Fu'ād: Al-kitāb al-'arabī al-makḫṭūṭ wa-'ilm al-makḫṭūṭāṭ, Kairo 1997; al-Sāmarrā'ī, Qāsim: 'Ilm al-iktinā al-'Arabī al-Islāmī, al-Riyāḍ 1422/2001; Grohmann, Adolf: Arabische Papyruskunde, in: Handbuch der Orientalistik, Abt. 1, Ergänzungsband 2.1, Leiden und Köln 1966; Id.: Allgemeine Einführung in die arabischen Papyri, Wien 1924; Khoury, R.G.: Papyruskunde, in: Fischer, Wolfdietrich (Hrsg.): Grundriss der arabischen Philologie, Bd. I, Wiesbaden 1982, pp. 251–270; Endress, Gerhard: Pergament in der Codikologie des islamisch-arabischen Mittelalters, in: Rück,

and miniature paintings express aesthetic values and cultural influences. At the same time, paintings can serve as sources for insight in different cultural expressions such as clothing, hairstyle, architecture, gardens, vessels, food, festivities, and the like.[15]

Some trends and developments concerning the art of the book have been studied, though still many peculiarities remain to be investigated. Contributing to this, Francois Déroche presents Qur'ānic fragments[16] displaying an unusual use of coloured ink. While it was not uncommon to use coloured ink to highlight headings, or even to create symmetrical text structures on double pages, especially in Qur'ān manuscripts, these fragments display a rather unusual placement of coloured ink. Apart from shaping (geometrical) figures in the text, the copyist (or copyists) changed the colour even within one word.[17]

Peculiar characteristics of a Javanese Qur'ān manuscript from the 19th century are presented by Edwin P. Wieringa. Manuscripts as sources for daily life are often neglected in research, as are manuscripts from South East Asia in

P. (Hrsg.): Pergament, Geschichte, Struktur, Restaurierung, Herstellung, Sigmaringen o.J., pp. 45–46; Afshar, Iraj: The use of paper in Islamic manuscripts as documented in classical Persian texts, in: The codicology of Islamic manuscripts, Proceedings of the second conference of al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation 4–5 December 1993, ed. Yasin Dutton, London, al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation; Bloom, Jonathan M.: Paper before print. The history and impact of paper in the Islamic world, New Haven und London 2000; Loveday, Helen: Islamic paper: a study of the ancient craft, London 2001; Bosch, Gulnar/Carswell, John/Petherbridge, Guy: Islamic bindings and bookmaking, Exh. cat. Chicago: Oriental Institute, University of Chicago 1981; Bosch, Gulnar: Islamic book-bindings: twelfth to seventeenth centuries, Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Chicago 1952; Weisweiler, Max: Der islamische Bucheinband des Mittelalters, Wiesbaden 1962; Komaroff, Linda: Dawāt, in: Encyclopaedia Iranica, ed. E. Yarshater, London, Costa Mesa 1982-, vol. 7, pp. 137–139; Levey, Martin: Medieval Arabic bookmaking and its relation to early chemistry and pharmacology, Philadelphia 1962.

15 Baer, Eva: Islamic ornament, Edinburgh 1998; Bahari, Ebadollah: Bihzad, master of Persian painting, London 1996; Blair, Sheila: The development of the illustrated book in Iran, in: Muqarnas 10 (1993), pp. 266–74; Id.: Colour and gold. The decorated papers used in manuscripts in later Islamic times, in: Muqarnas 17 (2000), pp. 24–36; Hoffmann, Eva R.: The beginnings of the illustrated Arabic book: an intersection between art and scholarship, in: Muqarnas 17 (2000), pp. 37–52; Id.: The emergence of illustration in Arabic manuscripts: classical legacy and Islamic transformations, Ph.D. diss., Harvard University 1982; Milstein, Rachel: Miniature painting in Ottoman Baghdad, Costa Mesa (Ca.) 1990; Porter, Yves: Painters, paintings, and books: an essay on Indo-Persian technical literature, 12th–19th centuries, New Dehli 1994; Robinson, Basil et al.: Islamic painting and the arts of the book, London 1976.

16 Concerning the art of the Qur'ān see among others Déroche, François: The Abbasid Tradition: Qur'ans of the 8th to the 10th centuries AD, Oxford, New York 1992 (The Nasser D. Khalili collection of Islamic Art,1); James, David: Master scribes: Our'ans from the 11th to the 14th centuries, London 1992 (The Nasser D. Khalili collection of Islamic Art, 2); ID.: After Timur: Qur'ans of the 15th and 16th centuries, Oxford, New York 1992 (The Nasser D. Khalili collection of Islamic Art, 3); Id.: The Qur'āns of the Mamlūks, London 1988; Lings, Martin: The Qur'ānic art of calligraphy and illumination, London 1976.

17 See pp. 83–100

general, and Wieringa stresses the importance of intensifying codicological research in this field.[18] Apart from common Qur'ānic features such as the vowelled and pointed (*scriptio plena*) Arabic script shown in the manuscript, he emphasizes those features identifying the manuscript as specific Javanese in character: among others the decoration, the marking of the "centre" of the Qur'ān, the *ʿayn* in the margin as marker for *rukūʿ*, specific ways of writing the *tā' marbūṭah*, and folii of "Javanese paper" (*dluwang*) before and after the text-block made of Dutch paper.[19]

In the next article, the focus is not on the peculiarities of script or ornamentation but on the effort to reconstruct a manuscript's history on the basis of owners' stamps and annotations: in his article on a "Book of Dreams" by Abū Ṭāhir Ibrāhīm Yaḥyā ibn Ghannām al-Ḥarawī al-Maqdisī, Nikolaj Serikoff presents the probably oldest copy of this work, which is kept now at the Wellcome Library in London. It was copied in 1397 by a known Mamlūk calligrapher and statesman. Last traces can be found at the Ottoman court, the Levant, and Amman.

3 Collections, Cataloguing and New Technologies

Manuscripts serving the studies of early Orientalists, such as *Majmaʿ al-amthāl*, can tell their own story of how they finally surfaced in today's libraries: presented as gifts from an Islamic emperor or nobleman, purchased from libraries, private owners, or markets, or taken violently as booty in battle, such manuscripts are contemporary witnesses of political and social contacts and of cultural transfers. As an example for such contacts, Marijana Kavčić presents the collection of Oriental manuscripts of the National and University Library "St Kliment Ohridski" in Skopje, Macedonia. As part of the former Ottoman Empire, madrasas and tekkes became the first places for libraries of Islamic manuscripts. Later, some of these collections found their way to national Institutions. Of special importance are the authors represented in the collection who happen to be from that region.[20]

18 Important research is carried out by Annabel Teh Gallop, Head of the South and Southeast Asia section at the British Library in London.

19 See pp. 101–129

20 See pp. 175–193