GAZING AT THE SUN

REMARKS ON THE EGYPTIAN MAGICIAN AL-BUNI
AND HIS WORK

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The Corpus Bunianum

Whoever leafs through the editions of the works of the Egyptian magician Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Yusuf al-Buni (d. 622/1225) is bound to be soon confused. In his search for some structure in the author's argument, the reader will instead find numerous repetitions, and not seldom will he discover that he is reading what proves to be a second or third handling of issues that have already been the subject of earlier discussions, even in the very same work by al-Buni which he has at hand. The more one reads in al-Buni's published works, the more the impression grows that we here have the result of a continuous process of permutation of constituent elements and ideas. This may lead us to the assumption that some, if not all, of al-Buni's works were not written by himself. Instead, we may consider several of the titles that go under al-Buni's name as part of a Corpus Bunianum, as the product of the work of several generations of practicing magicians, who arranged al-Buni's work and thought and brought it out, probably while mixing these with elements of their own works. This does not merely imply that there is a pseudepigraphic Bunian literature, but also that some works by al-Buni, or ascribed to him, may in fact constitute a composition of fragments of very diverse origin. This should not shock the trained philologist, who usually thinks in terms of a fixed text with certain authorship and a reconstructable

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1 Mohamed M. El-Gawhary, Die Gottesnamen im magischen Gebrauch in den al-Buni zugeschriebenen Werken (Bonn, 1968), p. 17. El-Gawhary dates the composition of the Shams al-ma'ārif to at least a century after al-Buni's death. This is not contradicted by the datings of the Leiden manuscripts of the Shams al-ma'ārif and the Tartib al-da awat (see the 'Bibliographical note' below for all references to manuscripts and printed works).
stemma of manuscripts, since in the case of popular texts, both magical and other, the author is unimportant and has often disappeared behind ‘his’ text. Users and readers of such popular classics treat the work as their own books, in the double sense of the word, and feel free to alter these.²

Western scholarship has not always been kind to al-Būnī. Ullmann characterizes his intellectual achievement, while contrasting al-Būnī’s ingenuity in analyzing a finely structured cosmos to his practical approach of the unseen world, as a sign of ‘colossal credulity’, and al-Būnī’s method of using the numerical and other properties of words and letters as ‘stupid, formalistic arithmetic’.³ When reading such qualifications, one wonders whether Ullmann by this remark had actually wished to propose that al-Būnī, if only he had worked in a less credulous and less formalistic arithmetical way, would really have provided his readers with meaningful answers to the enigma of the universe.

Ullmann is however correct in stating that al-Būnī’s works do not constitute a source for our knowledge of the older Arabic literature on magic, and he proposes that they rather represent a cross section of practices and beliefs which were current before, during and after al-Būnī’s lifetime, during which period the corpus, which now counts some forty ⁴ titles, has come into being. Al-Būnī is the figurehead of this corpus, nothing more. Personally, I think that if the assumption of a popular origin of the varieties of magic discussed can be documented, it would make the Būnian corpus even more interesting.

Ibn Khaldūn, who often takes a relaxed view on those fields of science which he does not personally endorse, quotes al-Būnī on his own view of the attainability of letter magic, the most conspicuous element in his works, as: ‘One should not think that one can get at the secret of the

² See e.g. El-Gawhary, Die Gottesnamen, p. 14ff. for a full discussion on the genesis of the Būnian corpus.
⁴ Brockelmann, GAL, G I, p. 497, in combination with S I, pp. 910–911, mentions 39 titles, but he has not even attempted to relate these to one another. His list still reflects the order in which he worked through the catalogues that constitute his primary sources for the bibliography of al-Būnī’s works. Progress in manuscript cataloguing will reveal more titles. However, some of Brockelmann’s 39 different titles will, upon closer examination, prove to be identical with others which go by other titles. The Corpus Būnianum is as yet far from being clearly defined.
letters with the help of logical reasoning. One gets to it with the help of vision and divine aid.  

By far the most widespread and best-known work by al-Būnī is his *Shams al-ma'ārif wa-laṭā'if al-'awārif*, which may be translated as 'The Sun of all Knowledge and the Niceties of Those who Know'. It is a true encyclopaedia of Islamic, or Islamicised, magic. The reason for the book's popularity must have been the practical use for which it was evidently composed. It contains only few theoretical passages and the work abounds with instructions for the manufacture of amulets and popular medical recipes for all sorts of purposes and occasions. The point of departure for al-Būnī's propositions are *al-Asmā' al-ḥusnā*, the 'Beautiful Names' of God. Although these ninety-nine names are not all literally derived from the Qur'ān, both by their very origin and by their semantic designation they have, in course of time, acquired an almost divine status. The elements of which they consist are the letters of the Arabic alphabet, and the many uses of letters (*ḥurūf*) are a recurrent theme in the Corpus Būnianum. The Arabic alphabet is of divine origin anyway, because God's final revelation to mankind was given in a clear Arabic tongue, and it may therefore be assumed that the writing on the well-preserved tablet, the archetype of the Qur'ān which is preserved in heaven, is in fact the Arabic script. But even if this assumption would somehow prove to be inexact or incorrect, the very fact that God's ninety-nine names are, at least in this world, written in Arabic script makes the letters through which they are expressed, into holy and magically powerful constituent parts for all sorts of formulas, prayers, well-proven recipes and amulets. This is the idea which lies at the basis of most of al-Būnī's magical devices.

Western scholarship got a first grasp of the content of the *Shams al-ma'ārif* through Ahlwardt's detailed list of the chapter titles of the Berlin manuscript of the text. The content of many other manuscripts

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7 Qur'ān 16:103.

of the *Shams al-ma‘ārif* closely follows this pattern. However, if one were to assume that the numerous uncritical and commercial editions which have appeared in the Orient since the middle of the 19th century follow that selfsame pattern, then one is in for a surprise. Although the printed editions are rather uniform in their content, they diverge widely from the manuscript tradition of this work. This can immediately be seen, not only by comparison between the texts, but especially from the enormous amount of figures, squares and other graphics in the printed editions, whereas the manuscripts have only a limited number of such features.

In the manuscripts, where the title is usually given by the author in his prologue, the book is entitled *Shams al-ma‘ārif wa-lātā‘if al-‘awārif*, and this title is equally given in the prologue to the work in the printed editions. However, the title-pages of the printed editions give slightly different title, namely *Shams al-‘awārif al-kubrā wa-lātā‘if al-‘awārif*, which makes all the difference. There are two ways to explain this addition. One may interpret this additional term *al-kubrā*, 'the larger/largest version', within the context of approaches in classical Islamic scholarship, where an author would compose several versions of one and the same work. It is not uncommon in many branches of Muslim scholarship to have an extended version, a concise version and even in some cases an intermediate version in circulation. Within that context, the addition *al-kubrā* to the title might indicate that the printed editions offer such an extended version, whereas the known manuscripts only give the shorter or the intermediate version. This may be as it is, but another explanation of the additional word *al-kubrā* in the title of the printed editions is possible and more probable. When the *Shams al-ma‘ārif* was first prepared for print, an enormous corpus of magical squares, schedules, circles and other graphics with their accompanying texts, was added to it. The unknown publisher or editor, who must have been responsible for this, may have wished to bring out a version that would supersede all other (manuscript) versions. The title, *Shams al-ma‘ārif al-kubrā* may be translated as 'the (most) extensive *Shams al-ma‘ārif*', whereby it is to

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9 Generally speaking, titles on title-pages, or on the lower edge of the book block for that matter, are additions by copyists, librarians, owners or readers, and have less bibliographical value than the information given by an author in his introductory remarks.

10 The terms *kabir, basit, mabsut, mutawwal*, etc. are all used for such extensive versions, and this would not exclude the use of the word *kubrā* in the same context.
be understood that the additions are the publisher’s own. This example of the first, or of an early, edition became the norm, and many of the later editions, if not all, contain this extensified and over-illustrated version of the text. As a result, the Shams al-ma’ārif al-kubrā consists of many parts that seem to have simply been patched together without much consideration for compository requirements and their mutual relevance. Hence the confusion which I noted at the beginning of this article.

Al-Būnī’s Tartib al-Da’awāt

If the Shams al-ma’ārif, whether kubrā or not, has become a popular and wide-spread text, because of its practical use and its matter-of-fact and non-intellectual approach of the mysterious world of the unseen, the opposite is true for a text by al-Būnī which so far has escaped the attention of scholars. It is a work entitled Tartib al-da’awāt fi takhṣīṣ al-awqāt ‘alā ikhtilāf al-irādāt, which may perhaps be translated as ‘The Order of Invocative Prayers. On the Determination of the Moments, according to the Different Wishes’. It is a rare text, and I am not aware of any other copy than the manuscript in the Leiden University Library. Although it was duly mentioned in all of this library’s catalogues, it somehow escaped Brockelmann’s attention, and, as a result, was not mentioned among his thirty-nine titles, nor does it seem to have attracted any further scholarly attention. Already the indication of the name of the author, immediately after the basmala, makes it clear that it was written after his death, probably by an admirer or a pupil. Its content is a mixture of the well-known Būnian themes on the magical use of letters, divine names and sentences from the Qur’ān, but astrological and other

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11 MS Or. 1233. It has been in Leiden since the mid-18th century, first in the private collection of J.J. Schultens (1716–1778). It was auctioned off in 1780, and in 1781 it was registered by the University Library, together with other manuscripts of the Schultens collection. It may already have been in Europe before it came into Schultens’ possession.


13 Beginning on p. 1: قال الشيخ الإمام المغرابي الحلي في كتاب شيوخ السلاطين قوة الوراثة: أبو عبد الله أحمد بن علي بن يوسف النوري الفرذي قدم الله رحمته وبره نوره ضريحه.
considerations are given here as well. In the overall level of its intellectual approach, the work differs from the Shams al-ma‘ārif. Another difference consists in the fact that the application of amulets and recipes is made subservient to the appropriate moment, and such moments are determined by astrological considerations. Also concepts such as tabī‘a, ‘nature’, and imtizāj, ‘mixing’, of the natural elements of the letters are introduced and discussed. The four elements (fire, air, water and earth) are, among other things, brought into connection with the values of the letters of the Arabic alphabet, and consequently with the magical value of the words and sentences which they constitute. One may find such considerations and concepts in the Shams al-ma‘ārif as well, but in the Tarīb al-da‘awāt they seem to receive more attention, and, it would seem, on a higher intellectual level than is the case in al-Būnī’s other works. This in fact may be the reason why the text is so rare. Another reason for its rarity may be the fact that the Leiden manuscript of the Tarīb al-da‘awāt stands out by a large number of expertly drawn and sophisticatedly constructed magical squares and figures. These, too, may have hindered the manufacture of more manuscripts and the spread of this text.

The general structure of the content of the Tarīb al-da‘awāt is familiar enough. After an introduction on the subject of the divine names and the letters of the names as their constituent elements, al-Būnī (if he is the author) treats the divine names according to a categorization of his own (pp. 14–100). In the following, which is the main part of the text, the author sets out to treat Qur’ānic sentences (mufradāt al-Qur’ān) and the magical operations (a‘māl) which he performs in connection with these. The Qur’ānic sentences seem to be given more or less in their order of occurrence in the Qur’ān, a habit which is highly recommended among readers of the Qur’ān. This order is not strictly adhered to, however. The first quotation is from Surat al-Baqara (p. 101), and the last one

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14 See for this recommended habit e.g., ‘Ali Muḥammad al-Ḍabbā, Kitāb fath al-karim al-mannān fi ādāb hamalat al-Qur‘ān (Cairo, 1353/1934), p. 10: ‘It is a recommended custom that he [that is the Qārī who recites fragments of the Holy Book, Jawa’i‘] recites in the order of the Qur’ān text, because that order is there for a wise reason (ḥikmah).’ This short text by a 20th-century author on handling the divine word is available in many editions. It is often published together with al-Tibyān fi ādāb hamalat al-Qur‘ān, a similar text, by al-Nawawī. One of the editions which I have used is the one published in Cairo (Muṣṭafā al-Bābi al-Halabī) in 1353/1934. An English translation of the Fath al-karim al-mannān by myself is forthcoming in the Yusuf ibish Memorial volume, to be published by the al-Furqān Foundation in London.
from Sūrat al-ṣūrat al-Nās (p. 332), and generally speaking the author adheres to the order of the sūras and āyāt, but a random check reveals a few irregularities. One may view this part of the Tartīb al-ṣāfāwāt as a selective exegesis of the Qurʾān and the work of the author as a systematic attempt to make magic out of God’s Word.

One feature may be discussed here in more detail. At the end of the work, the author treats the Qalam al-ṣāfārī, the ‘natural secret alphabet’ (pp. 335–337), and he gives a table of this secret alphabet, which he connects with the four elements. The division according to the elements is as follows. Fire (Nār) has alif, bāʾ, tāʾ, thāʾ, jīm, hāʾ, khāʾ. Air (Hawāʾ) has dāl, dhāl, rāʾ, zāʾ, ṣāʾ, kāʾ. Water (Māʾ) has lām, mīm, nūn, sād, dād, ʾayn, ghayn. Earth (Ṭurāb) has fāʾ, qāf, sīn, shān, hāʾ, wāw, yāʾ. From the magical literature of the period in which the Corpus Būnianum has originated, at least two more examples of this particular ‘natural script’ are known from the survey of secret and esoteric scripts which was compiled by the hurūfī mystic al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 858/1454) in his work Kitāb mabāḥih al-ṣāfārī as maḥānīf al-aqlām. On f. 25a–b of the Leiden manuscript of this text, al-Qalam al-ṣāfārī is explained as the Qalam al-ḥikma, the ‘wisdom script,’ and its invention is attributed to a certain Ardīmūs al-Ḥakim, whom I have not identified. Al-Biṣṭāmī in his survey quotes yet another ‘natural script,’ which was purportedly taken from the work Kayfīyyat al-ḥittifāq fi tarkhīb al-awṣāfīq, a compilation made by al-Shaykh Ya’ish b. Ibrāhīm al-Umawī al-Andalusi. Although the explanations of the nature and use of these ‘natural scripts’ are entirely different between al-Būnī, al-Biṣṭāmī and al-Shaykh Ya’ish, the signs of the ‘natural script’ as given by al-Būnī and al-Shaykh Ya’ish are remarkably similar in shape, whereas the script proposed by al-Biṣṭāmī is entirely different from that of the other two authors. Whether or not the interest in such secret alphabets in different works dating from the 9/15th century would indicate that there is a multiple use from different sources of similar or related content, needs further investigation. Apart from more detailed information on the history of esoteric alphabets, it also may shed some

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10 Cursory mention of this 9/15th-century author is made in GAL II, p. 379. The work Kayfīyyat al-ḥittifāq is mentioned in GAL S II, p. 155.
light on the methods and chronology of the composition of the works which are part of the Corpus Būnianum.

Al-Būnī's spiritual genealogies

Ullmann seems to have expressed his unfavourable judgment of al-Būnī's working method exclusively on the basis of the printed editions of *Shams al-ma‘ārif al-kubrā*, since he mentions one particular section in the book which is absent in all manuscripts which I have seen. It is a number of sanad's, lists of authorities whom the author considers to be his predecessors or teachers, a sort of spiritual or educational pedigree, which is far from a rare feature in Islamic scholarly literature. At the end of part 4 of the *Shams al-ma‘ārif al-kubrā* is an epilogue which by content and form is different from the rest of the work. It is titled ‘Epilogue in which is mentioned the chain of our shaykhs […].’ The tone of this section is much more matter-of-fact, sometimes even personal, which stands in contrast to the descriptions of the world of magic phenomena in the main part of the *Shams al-ma‘ārif*, in which the author remains rather impersonal towards his readers. One wonders when and why these sanad's were added to the text, and what their origin might be. If they were not integral part of the *Shams al-ma‘ārif* from the very beginning (and the manuscript tradition does not seem to warrant this), they may have been part of the author’s *Fahrasa*, the educational (auto)biography, a genre which has become particularly popular in the Maghrib. The present sanad's may have been added to the printed text of the *Shams al-ma‘ārif*, and probably at a quite late date. This addition as well may have been the initiative of an early publisher of the printed text. However, its origin may also lie in one particular manuscript, or diploma text, which at some stage was added to the *Shams al-ma‘ārif*.

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18 *Shams al-ma‘ārif al-kubrā*, in the al-Halabi edition, pp. 530–535; the Murād edition, pp. 506–510; the Calcutta (or Bombay?) edition, pt. 4, pp. 135–139 (see below under 'Printed sources used or quoted'). This epilogue was – partly, but quite literally – also added at the end of *Manba‘ usūl al-hikma* (pp. 323–325), but its occurrence there is evidently a recent addition, whereas in the *Shams al-ma‘ārif al-kubrā* it makes at first the impression of being an integral part of the text.
The editions of the *Shams al-ma'ārif* which I have seen all contain these pedigrees at the end, whereas they are absent in all manuscripts which I have seen. Interestingly enough, apart from a few occasional remarks in the course of al-Būnī’s works, it seems to be the only longer text which contains a few details of his life. An obvious reason for the inclusion of the *sanad* material must have been an attempt to authenticate al-Būnī’s authorship of the *Shams al-ma’ārif*.

The epilogue contains the author’s spiritual pedigrees for four different sorts of knowledge (Shahīda, *ʿilm al-Batin*, Hurūf, Awfāq). A survey of the *Sanad* material follows here. After having stated that the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law, ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, first received the *Kalimat al-Shahīda* (the words of the confession of faith) from the Prophet Muḥammad, he continues with the spiritual pedigrees, which are here fully reproduced.20

**Pedigree A (for the Kalimat al-Shahīda)**

1. Ahmad b. ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 622/1625), who took from:

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19 See Rosenthal’s remark to his translation of Ibn Khaldūn’s *al-Muqaddima*, III, note 807, concerning al-Būnī’s lifetime. The date of copying of the Berlin MS Mf. 80 (Ahlwardt 4126), a work going by the rather non-descriptive title *Kitāb maʿāní asrār al-hurūf*, identified by Ahlwardt, III, pp. 510–511 as *Latāʿ if al-ışhārat fi asrār al-falāk wa l-hurūf al-ma naughtyat*), and apparently identical with work entitled *Latāʿ if al-ʾishārat fi asrār al-hurūf al-ʿuwīyiyyat* (Ullmann, p. 391) is 669/1270, which would thereby be the oldest known historical indication of the existence of a work of the Būnīan corpus. For the commonly accepted year of al-Būnī’s demise (622/1225) there seems to be no other authority than the *Kashf al-zunun* of Ḥājjī Khalīfa. I am not aware of any research done on the manuscripts of the *Shams al-ma’ārif*, or any other text by al-Būnī for that matter. Many printed editions mention the fact that old and correct manuscripts were used, but such remarks should not be given any credit, as they are made by the publishers for commercial reasons, and do not serve any philological purpose. Numerous popular books with doubtful antecedents claim on their title-page to be based on unique, old or valuable manuscripts. The title-page of the Leiden MS Or. 336 has some additional information on al-Būnī’s parentage: his father is referred to as *al-Shaykh al-Ajall al-Muqri* Abū ʿl-Ḥasan ʿAli, the most striking element of which is the occupational indication, *al-Muqri*, ‘the Qur’ān reader’. It suggests that al-Būnī may have been intimately familiar with the text of the Qur’ān from an early age onwards.

20 The structuring of this material, by designating the different pedigrees with letter A–K, by numbering the names within each pedigree, and by indicating the cross-references, is mine. From the collation between the three printed texts, it is clear that the Murād edition belongs to one branch, and the combined Ḥalabi and Calcutta/Bombay editions to another.

21 Reading of Murād, Ḥalabi and Calcutta/Bombay have here: al-Kūfī.
3. *al-Shaykh Māḏī l-ʿAzāʿīm*, who took from:
4. *al-Shaykh al-Qutb Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAli b. Ḥirzhum*, who took from:
5. *al-Shaykh al-Tawīq* wa-*Maʿdin al-Tahiq* Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAqīb al-Wākīlī al-Mālikī, who took from:
6. ʿΗwijjat al-Zamān wal-Wāḥid fī ʿIrfān Abū Madyan Shuʿayb b. Ḥasan al-Andalusi al-Ishbili (E-9, H-3), who took from:
7. Abū Shuʿayb Ayyūb b. Saʿīd al-Ṣanḥājī (H5), who took from:
8. *Shaykh al-ʿArifīn Qutb al-Ghawth al-Fard al-Jāmīʿ Abū Yaʿzār* al-Māʾarrī, who took from:
9. Abū Muḥammad b. Manṣūr, who took from:
10. Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Jalīl b. Maḥlān, who took from:
11. Abū l-Faṣl ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Bishr (H-7), who took from:
12. Mūsā al-Kāzīmī, who took from:
13. Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (B-I?), who took from his father:
14. Muḥammad al-Baqīr, who took from his father:
15. Zayn al-ʿAbidīn, who took from his father:
16. al-Ḥusayn, who took from his father:
17. ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, who took from:
18. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh (B-3, H-14, I-13), the Prophet.

Pedigree B (ʿIlm al-Bāṭin)

1. *al-Imām* Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (A-13?), who took from:
2. Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, who took from:

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22 Reading of Murād. Halabi and Calcutta/Bombay have here: Ḥarām.
23 Reading of Murād. Halabi and Calcutta/Bombay have here: Shaykh al-Tariq.
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Pedigree C (IIm al-Ḥurūf):

1. al-Shaykh al-Imām Abū Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who took from:
2. Ḥabib al-ʾAjamī (H-11), who took from:
3. al-Shaykh Dāwūd al-Jabali,29 who took from:
4. al-Shaykh Maʿrūf al-Karkhī,30 who took from:
5. al-Shaykh Sari al-Din al-Saqāṭī (H-9),31 who took from:
6. Shaykh al-Waqt wa ʾl-Ṭartqa Maʿdīn al-Sulūk wa ʾl-Haqīqa al-Shaykh al-Junayd al-Baghdādī,32 who took from:
7. al-Shaykh Ḥammād al-Din Bahwari, who took from:
8. al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Aswad, who took from:
9. al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (I-2), who took from:
10. al-Shaykh Abū ʿl-Najīb al-Suhrawardī,33 who instructed (laqqana):
11. al-Shaykh al-ʿArif al-Fāṭīl Aṣīl al-Dīn al-Shirāzī, who instructed:
12. al-Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh al-Bāyānī, who instructed:
13. al-Shaykh Qāsim al-Sirjānī, who instructed:
14. al-Shaykh al-Sirjānī,34 who instructed:
15. al-Shaykh al-Imām al-ʿArif al-Ṣamadānī wa ʾl-Hammām al-Nūrānī Jalāl al-Dīn ʾAbd Allāh al-Bistāmī, who instructed:

Pedigree D (IIm al-Awfaq)

1. Also taken from al-Shaykh al-Imām al-ʿArif bi ʾl-lāh Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAlī.

Pedigree E (IIm al-Awfaq), taken from

1. al-Shaykh al-Imām al-ʿAllāmah Sirāj al-Dīn al-Ḥanāfī, who took from:

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29 Reading of Murād. Halabi and Calcutta/Bombay have here: al-Jili.
30 His hagiography in al-Sharānī, Lawāqīh, l., p. 72 (No. 142).
31 His hagiography in al-Sharānī, Lawāqīh, l., pp. 74–75 (No. 144).
32 His hagiography in al-Sharānī, Lawāqīh, l., pp. 84–86 (No. 164).
33 His hagiography in al-Sharānī, Lawāqīh, l., p. 140 (No. 261).
34 Reading of Murād. Halabi has for Nos. 13 and 14: al-Shaykh Qāsim al-Sirjānī, and al-Shaykh al-Sirjānī, whereas Calcutta/Bombay have here: al-Shaykh Qāsim al-Sirjānī, and al-Shaykh al-Sirjānī.
2. *al-Shaykh* Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maqdisī,35 who took from:
3. *al-Shaykh* Shams al-Dīn al-Ṭārisī, who took from:
4. *al-Shaykh* Shihāb al-Dīn al-Hamadānī (F-3), who took from:
5. *al-Shaykh* Quṭb al-Dīn al-Ḍiyā’ī (F-4), who took from:
6. *al-Shaykh* Muḥṣī l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī (F-5), who took from:
7. *al-Shaykh* ʿAbū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. al-Ṭūrīzī, who took from:
8. *al-Shaykh* Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Qurashi (H-2, K-1),36 who took from:

**Pedigree F (ʿIlm al-Awfaq), taken from**

1. *al-Shaykh* Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn b. Jamāʿa al-Shāfiʿī, who took from:
2. *al-Shaykh* Muḥammad b. Sirīn (H-12),37 who took from:
3. *al-Shaykh* Shihāb al-Dīn al-Hamadānī (E-4), who took also from:
4. *al-Shaykh* Quṭb al-Dīn al-Ḍiyā’ī (E-5), who took from:

**Pedigree G (ʿIlm al-Ḥurūf waʾl-Wafq), taken from**

2. *al-Shaykh* Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Shāḥīlī, who took from:
3. *al-Shaykh* Taj al-Dīn b. ʿAṭāʾ al-Malikī al-Shāḥīlī, who took from:

**Pedigree H (ʿIlm al-Ḥurūf waʾl-Wafq), taken from**

2. *al-Shaykh* Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurashi (E-8, K-1), who took from:

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35 Reading of Murād and Ḥalabī, whereas Calcutta/Bombay have here: Khalīfāt al-Maqdisī.
36 His hagiography in al-Shā ṭānī, Lawāqīh, I, pp. 159–160 (No. 281).
37 His hagiography in al-Shā ṭānī, Lawāqīh, I, p. 36 (No. 49).
38 His hagiography in al-Shā ṭānī, Lawāqīh, II, pp. 12–20 (No. 310).
39 Evident typesetting error in Murād: al-Sṭālānī.
4. al-Shaykh al-ʿUṣṭādhi al-Kabīr ʿAbdul wa-Rahat al-ʿArbaʿat Awtād b. Maymūn al-Harmīrī who apparently a blind man, with an anecdote on ʿAbū Madyan visiting him, who took from:
5. al-Shaykh al-Imām Qutb al-Ǧawth ʿAbū Ayyūb b. ʿAbū Saʿīd al-Ṣanḥājī al-ʿĀzamīrī (A7), who took from:
6. al-Shaykh al-Walī al-Kabīr ʿAbū Muḥammad b. Nūr, who took from:
7. al-Imām al-ʿĀlim ʿAbū ʿl-Faḍl ʿAbd Allāh b. Bishr (A-11), who took from his father:
8. ʿAbū Bishr al-Ḥasan al-Jūjārī, who took from:
9. Sarī al-Dīn al-Saqāṭī (C-5), who took from:
10. Dāwūd al-Ṭāʾī, who took from:
11. al-Shaykh Ḥabīb al-ʿĀjami (C-2), who took from:
12. al-Shaykh Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Sirīn (F-2), who took from:
13. Anas b. Mālik (I-12), who took from:

Pedigree 1 (ʿIlm al-Ḥurūf wa-l-Wafq)

1. al-Būnī met with:
2. (with many epithets) al-Shaykh Abū ʿl-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ǧazālī (C-9), who instructed (laqqana):
3. al-Sīr al-Makhzūn wal-Durr al-Maknūn wa ʿl-Sirāʾ al-Qarīb ʿAḍāf ʿĪbād Allāh wa-Aḥqār Khalq Allāh al-Mutamassik bi-Dhayl Karam Allāh Aḥmad b. ʿUbūs al-Quṣāṣī (with whom al-Būnī himself is meant, but evidently not in his own words), saying that he had seen:
4. al-Shaykh al-Imām ʿAlī b. ʿAmīr, who took from:
5. al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Dawrākī, together with whom he had sat [...] and who had seen:
6. al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Jazārī who had seen:

40 Reading of Murād. Ḥalabī and Calcutta/Bombay have here: al-Ḥarīrī, al-Hurayrī.
41 Reading of Murād. Ḥalabī and Calcutta/Bombay have here: al-ʿArmazi.
42 Reading of Murād. Ḥalabī and Calcutta/Bombay have here: al-Dawūkī.
43 Reading of Murād. Ḥalabī has al-Jaraẓī and Calcutta/Bombay has: al-Jarārī.
7. al-Šadr al-Kabîr al-Shaykh ʾIzz al-Dîn Muḥammad ʿAbd Allâh Muḥammad b. Mûsâ b. Sulaymân al-Anṣârî, who had seen:

8. al-Šadr al-Ajall al-Shaykh al-Imâm Abû ʾl-Ḥasan ʿAlî b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wâḥîd al-Qudsi, who had seen:

9. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allâh b. Ibrâhîm b. Mûsâ, who had seen:

10. Muslim b. Ibrâhîm b. ʿAbd Allâh al-Makki, who had seen:

11. Ḥumayd al-Ṭawil, who had seen:

12. Anas b. Mâlik (H-13), the companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, who had been accepted as the scribe of:


Pedigree K (ʿIlm al-Ḥurûf waʾl-Wafq), taken from

[other Shaykhs of al-Bûnî]

1. Shaykhūnâ Abû ʿAbd Allâh al-Qurashi (E-8, H-2), min Aʿyân Mashāʾīkh al-Gharb wa-Miṣr, who took from more than six hundred Shaykhs (follows anecdote).


After having mentioned these two Shaykhs the author gives a short epilogue, which concludes the Shams al-maʿârif al-kubrâ. I will desist, at least for the moment, from a detailed analysis of all authorities mentioned in these pedigrees. A few general remarks are in place, however. There are several Maghârib and Andalusians in the different pedigrees, and this shows that there is indeed a Western origin in the Corpus Bûnianum. Yet there are Oriental pedigrees as well. From pedigree A, especially from the mention of several of the earlier Shiʿa imâms (given as Nos. 12–16, though for some with curious variants in their names), it might be surmised that the spiritual forebears of al-Bûnî could also be found in the Shiʿa tradition. But the Shiʿa connection is clearly not the only one, and al-Bûnî should not, on the basis of pedigree A only, be identified as a Shiʿite.\(^{44}\) Pedigree B is an evident attempt to sunnify

\(^{44}\) As is done by El-Gawhary, p. 14. The fact that al-Bûnî's Shams al-maʿârif is mentioned in the Dhârîʿa is probably based on the occurrence of the names of the early imâms in pedigree A, and cannot, therefore, be adduced (as El-Gawhary seems to do) as additional proof for a Shiʿite affiliation of al-Bûnî. The names of the early Shiʿa imâms are also mentioned in the orthodox canon, and they are also mentioned in mainstream orthodox hagiographies such as al-Shârâni's Lâwâṣhir al-anwâr.
the Shi'a connection. Other pedigrees, such as pedigree H, show that the spiritual forebears of al-Būnī can also be found in the orthodox Sūfī milieu, with perfectly Sunni credentials, also for the early period. The ensemble of the pedigrees may be interpreted as an attempt to make al-Būnī into an author for all people, both Sunna and Shi'a, both in the East and in the West of the Islamic world.

Bibliographical note

1. Manuscripts of works by al-Būnī

*Shams al-maʿārif wa-latāʾif al-awārif*
Berlin, 1210 (Ahlwardt 4125). Undated, but the date of copying estimated by Ahlwardt as c. 1100/1688, copied by al-Ḥājī Ali al-Shāmī.
Leiden Or. 8371 (1) ff. 1a–89b, slightly lacunous. Dated Wednesday 14 Safar 1057/1647, copied by al-Ḥājī Muṣṭafā b. al-Ḥājī ʿAlī, commonly known as Ibn Anjir (or Abkhir).

*Tartib al-daʾawat fī takhṣīṣ al-awqāṭ ʿalā ikhtilāf al-irādāt*
Leiden Or. 1233. Dated 19 Rajab 812/1409, (partially according to the colophon) copied by Ahmad b. ʿAlī al-Anṣārī.

2. Selected manuscripts containing texts with a possible connection to work by al-Būnī

Leiden Or. 947. *al-Fawāʾiḥ al-miskiyya fī l-Fawātīḥ al-makkiyya* by ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad al-Bīštāmī (d. 858/1454), GAL. G II, 231. Undated, but an owner's note by Muṣṭafā b. al-Ḥājī Yūsuf al-Fāṣīlī, with seal print with date 1034 AH. Ewald Wagner, describing MS Berlin Or. oct. 3931, says about this text: Auf 100 Kapitel geplante, aber nur bis zum 30. Kapitel vollendete Enzyklopädie aus der Sicht mystischer und magischer Weltschauung. According to Wagner the work is mainly based on al-Būnī's *Shams al-maʿārif* and Ibn al-ʿArabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*. This remark, however, shows a certain lack of familiarity with al-Būnī's works.
Leiden Or. 7283. This is a composite volume copied in the middle of the 19th century, most probably in Palembang, Sumatra, Indonesia. It contains the Malay translations

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of two substantial magical texts in Arabic, together with some shorter notes. The second text in the volume is characterized by the cataloguer, Teuku Iskandar, as an al-Buni-like text. The name of al-Buni does not seem to be mentioned in this text, however, and the link with the Shams al-ma‘ārif remains unsubstantiated by the text itself. The first text in the volume, however, is a work entitled Shumus al-anwar wa-kunuz al-asrār. It is the Malay translation of the Arabic work by that title by Ibn al-Hajj al-Tilimsāni al-Maghribī, which contains mystical calculations, diagrams, da‘īrah etc., and is divided into thirty chapters. This work does indeed offer some features which can also be encountered in works by al-Buni, including a sequence on huruf ‘asmā‘ and ‘ayāt in the first three chapters: f. 2b. Bab 1. Fī sīr al-hurūf; f. 14a. Bab 2. Pada menyatakan sekali ḥaṣṣiyat Asmā‘ Allāh yang Ḥusnā; f. 49a. Bab 3. Fī khawāṣṣ ba‘ṣ al-‘ayāt. Al-Tilimsāni’s authorship of this text, whether genuine or spurious, demonstrates again that this type of magic is considered to come from the West, as is the case with al-Buni, whose nisba refers to Bōne, now ‘Annāba, in Eastern Algeria.

3. Printed editions of works by al-Buni


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46 Teuku Iskandar, Catalogue of Malay, Minangkabau, and South Sumatran manuscripts in the Netherlands (Leiden, 1999), I, pp. 400–401 (No. 878).
47 C. Brockelmann, GAL G II, p. 83 mentions this author as Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Hājī al-Fāsī al-‘Abdārī al-Qayrawānī al-Tilimsānī, a scholar of maghribī origin, who died in Cairo in 737/1336. In GAL S II, p. 95 arguments are given for a different authorship of this popular magical compilation, of which many editions exist.
Būnī, Ahmad b. 'Ali al-, Shams al-maʿārif al-ṣughrā al-maʿrūf bi-Shams al-maʿārif wa-
laṭā if al- awārif al-ṣughrā, ed. Abū Salāma al-Farīdī al-Falāki (Al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: Mak-
tabāt al-Wāḥda al-ʿArabiyya, 1424/2003). The editor signs in the introduction (p. 3) without the addition al-Falāki to his name. He adds to it: al-ʿAzhār al-QUITR. In his list of writings of al-Būnī (18 items) he postulates the existence of a work Shams al-
maʿārif al-wustā, but he adds to it that he has never come across a manuscript of the
text. The books proves to a newly typeset edition of a manuscript version, which had on its titlepage, in clear naskh script: Kitāb Shams al-maʿārif wa-laṭā if al- awārif lil-
Shaykh al-Îmnān al-Qudwā Muḥyi ʾl-Dīn Abī ʾl-ʿAbbās Ahmad b. al-Shaykh al-ʾAjāl al-Muqri b. ʿAlī b. Yūṣuf al-Būnī rāḥimahu Lāhu tuʿālā wa-naffā anā bihi. From this is evident that the double al-ṣughrā addition on the title-page is of the making of the editor, to whom it had not escaped that this was indeed a version of more modest size than the large editions. Copyist of the manuscript (or is it in fact a lithograph?) is Hasan al-ʾInānī al-Sāʾidī. The manuscript seems to bear the date 1280
(1863–1864, see the reproductions on pp. 7–9).
O ye Gentlemen
Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture

In Honour of Remke Kruk

Edited by
Arnoud Vrolijk and Jan P. Hogendijk

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