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The neglect neglected. To point or not to point, that is the question

In the oldest forms of Arabic writing not all phonemes had a specific grapheme. The use of identical signs to indicate different sounds must have caused difficulties in reading and understanding.

The early grammarians have put an end to the confusion by the implementation of a system of writing dots over or under the script. By providing, or not providing, identical looking consonants with dots underneath or above, a differentiation of the fourteen graphemes of Arabic script into an unequivocal alphabetic system of twenty-eight letters was achieved. In theory this system of tanzīt or tāʾgām should be sufficient for avoiding misreading consonants, since within the system of nāqṣ each letter is different from any other similar letter.

Fourteen groups of graphemes are distinguished in the early Arabic script: 1. ʾālif; 2. bāʾ, tāʾ; thāʾ, nūn, yāʾ; 3. ḍīlam, hāʾ, khāʾ; 4. dāl, dhāʾ; 5. rāʾ, zāʾ, ṣād; 6. sīn, shīʾ; 7. sīdāʿ, dād; 8. tāʾ, zāʾ; 9. “ayn, ghayn; 10. fāʾ, qāf; 11. kāf, lām; 12. mīm; 13. wāw; 14. hāʾ. The letters in each composite group are nowadays distinguished from those in the same group by dots or no dots, or by one dot and more than one dot, written on top or underneath the ductus (ruṣūm). Writing such dots is called tāʾgām, ‘to point’, ‘to provide with a diacritical dot’. Also used are the terms nāqṣ and tanzīt, ‘pointing’. Not writing such dots is called isthmāl, ‘to neglect’, ‘to omit’, ‘to not provide with dots’.

However, copyists are not machines and they tend to omit dots where these should have been written. For undotted letters the uncertainties for the reader remained. The question whether a certain letter is really without a dot or without dots (muhālāt, ‘neglected [from nāqṣ]’) or whether the dots were accidentally omitted by the copyist, could never be answered with full certainty. In practice this has not been perceived as an important problem since many texts remain understandable even if defectively written, thereby showing that tanzīt is partly redundant. However, sometimes full certitude of reading had to be obtained and for that
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transcription of manuscripts for libraries  
(be-rasm-e khazanah)

transcription of manuscripts for the library (khazanat al-kutub) of kings, religious authorities, scientists or the greats is one of the specific aspects of the history of Islamic civilization, and surveying its peculiarities would be of significance for the purpose of the studies related to the history of transcription and production of the book in the Islamic world.

the first step to know the features and ceremonies of this type of transcription is to search and discover the collection of copied manuscripts for the libraries (be-rasm-e khazanah), in different eras in Islamic lands and are available now.

In this paper, relying on the bibliographical and codicological characteristics of 242 manuscripts in Arabic script, kept in the libraries of Iran and different parts of the world, copied during the 6th to 13th century A. H/12-19 cent. A. D. for libraries, and there are in them expression of be-rasm-e khazanah or li-khazanat al-kutub, we have tried to present a general picture of this activity and its historical cycle, and its development in the 8th to 10th century A. H./14-16 A. D.

title and topic of works commissioned, including of scientific, literary and historical works and other than, are the other information will be investigated in this paper.

the title of 242 manuscripts transcribed for the library of kings, princes or the greats is presented in a table with basic information about them is provided. It is organized based on the date of transcription, and includes date and place of transcription, title, topic, name of the scribe and owner of the library and where it is mentioned.

name of 242 manuscripts transcribed for the library of kings, princes or the greats is presented. Basic information about them is provided in this table. It is organized based on the date of transcription, and includes date and place of transcription, title, topic, name of the scribe and owner of the library and where it is mentioned.

A table show distribution of manuscripts in the various centuries.

Among these 242 manuscripts only in 33 of them places of transcription are presented.

Based recent research, name of 190 library owners are available including kings, princes, rulers, ministers, scholars, etc. Studying social base and scientific grade of library owners and their motives for ordering to make copies can clarify part of history of producing of copies and its methods in Islamic civilization.

In the following table, library owners (18 name) to whom more than one work has been assigned are listed in a chronological order.

Manuscripts transcribed for kings, rulers and ministers' library were more ornamental and were written by calligraphers, such as Yaghout Mostaesemi, Soltaan Ali Mashhadi and the others.

Based on information of this study, persons' favorite topic was poetry and literature. History and medicine were the second important topic.

mentioning the name of the owner of library in back page (title page or initial pages) or colophon of manuscripts, without any decoration, or inside of different shapes, like sample circle, inscription, circular medallion or central medallion, shows the similar methods and styles in the manuscripts that here will describe.
The codex unicus of the second volume of Ibn Hayyan’s Muqtabis, an example of cooperative copy

The second volume of the Muqtabis (M2) of Ibn Hayyan (d. 469/1076) has been partially preserved in two manuscripts that are nowadays at the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid and the Qarawiyyin Library in Fez, respectively. Both fragments belong to the same codex, which originally contained two hundred eighty-four leaves: the first eighty-seven folios have been lost, fols. 88 to 188 are in Madrid, and fols. 189 to 284 in Fez. It is important to bear in mind that thirty-eight leaves (fols. 237 to 275) belong to another codicological unity. The rest (i.e., one hundred fifty-eight leaves) are divided into seventeen quires: sixteen quinions and a binion. All of them have identical setting page: same number of lines to the page, same written surface, and same interlinear space.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of M2 from a codicological point of view is the fact that it was copied by several scribes in cooperation, each of whom undertook the transcription of one of the quires the volume is made up of. This practice was frequent in the medieval scriptoria: before being bound, the book was divided into quires; the gatherings were then distributed among several copyists, and each of them transcribed his share. In the Arab world the collective copy was not a usual practice but it was not as exceptional as F. Rosenthal suggested either.

In the case of M2, up to fourteen people participated in its transcription, the changing of hand coinciding with the changing of quire as a rule. Every evidence shows that there was a pressing need to finish the work as soon as possible, and that quickness of accomplishment was given priority over uniformity of result. There was even a sort of supply copyist to turn to when, whichever the reason might be, the copyist on duty had to leave his work place.

The present paper will deal with this particular aspect of the extant copy of M2, paying attention both to its characteristic features as being the result of teamwork and to the irregularities as to the general rule that occur throughout the manuscript. For instance, the succession of copyists every ten leaves is almost always respected in the fragment of Madrid, but not quite so in that of Fez, where up to three copyists participated in the transcription of a sole quire, whereas a copyist alone transcribed up to three quinions. Moreover, this codex offers a feature that is typical of collective copy: the scribe must accommodate his share of text into the available space, either by making his writing smaller or larger, or by enlarging or diminishing the space between words, or by manipulating the size of the quire.

Valentina Sagaria Rossi

Paléographie et genre littéraire en dialogue: trois manuscrits de amthāl arabes classiques des siècles XIIIe-XIVe

L’analyse de l’écriture d’un manuscrit a été normalement dévoilée à la quête ou à la confirmation d’une datation, tandis que les relations entre genre littéraire représenté par le texte et son identité paléographique sont considérées plutôt apanage des philologues spécialistes, même si le genre littéraire ne pourrait pas être négligé. Le procès déductive qui mène à généraliser les caractéristiques distinctives d’un graphie à travers l’œil des experts doit sans doute se mesurer sur le terrain d’une prise de contact globale, à plus forte raison s’il s’agit de manuscrits d’un même contenu.

Sous cette optique je propose la comparaison de trois manuscrits (Dublin, CBL, Or. 3669, Milan, Amb., Arz. A 80, Leiden, UB, Or. 359) – deux avec date de l’autre près comme datation – détenant dictions, locutions et expressions linguistiques arabes, sur la base d’une analyse inductrice, qui permettra de examiner le côté paléographique appliqué aux exigences textuelles similaires.

Dans le marc magnum de amthāl, reconnu désormais anonyme et demeuré de prédilection graphique, on propose trois témoins rédigés dans une période riche de documentation mal ou insuffisamment analysée – au cours du XIIIe et au début du XIVe siècles - et dans une région qui correspond à celle d’influence iranienne, de son ouest jusqu’à Isfahan.

Les siècles représentés ont trait plutôt généralisés et en même temps empruntés à des modèles désormais déchus, décrits par les philologues selon les schémas graphiques et extra-graphiques traditionnels: régularité des diacritiques, vocalisation ou non, au plus dimensions et positions des lettres.
On a donc essayer de dégager les ingrédients de cette évolution graphique en les insérant dans une plus vaste architecture du texte et de celui-ci dans la copie:
- au niveau des graphèmes: comportements des traits dans un contexte plus et moins délimité, proportions et tendances, observation du tracé et de sa fluctuation, identifications des indicateurs;
- au niveau de mise en page: espaces pleins et vides, emploi des marges, densité relative et globale dans la justification.

Jonathan M. Bloom
Boston College

The Blue Quran Revisited

The Blue Quran is one of the most distinctive copies of the text, copied in fifteen lines of an angular gold script on leaves of blue parchment with silver verse markings. Leaves from the manuscript have been known to scholars since the early years of the 20th century, but it first came to wide scholarly attention in the 1970s, following the publication of several leaves in such international exhibitions as The Arts of Islam at the Hayward Gallery in London. It was attributed either to ninth-century Iran or Tunisia, where the bulk of the manuscript was said to remain. In the 1980s and 1990s I published several articles on the manuscript, including a presentation at the first conference on codicology and paleography in Istanbul in 1976. I reconstructed the manuscript as a set of seven volumes and attributed it on the basis of its *abjad* numbering system and historical evidence to tenth-century Tunisia under Fatimid patronage. In the following years other scholars have challenged this attribution, suggesting that the manuscript could have been produced in Aghlabid Tunisia, Umayyad Spain or even Kalbid Sicily. Most recently, Alain George has proposed an Abbasid attribution to late eighth or early ninth-century Baghdad. He suggests that the original one-volume manuscript was then refashioned and renumbered at a later date into the manuscript whose fragments we know today.

Considering the many additional pages from this manuscript that have come to light in the past decades as well as the significant advances made in the study of Qur'anic paleography and codicology, it is time to reexamine what is known about the manuscript and what remains to be discovered. Although we know much more than ever about this intriguing and beautiful book, many questions remain concerning the manuscript's provenance, material, script, and color scheme.

Sheila Blair
Boston College

The Ilkhanid Qur’an

The turn of the thirteenth to the fourteenth century when Iran and Iraq were controlled by the dynasty known as the Ilkhanids and its successors marked the beginning of three centuries during which the illustrated book became a major artistic form in the region. Many people are familiar with the illustrated manuscripts produced at this time, but they know less about the large-format 30-volume manuscripts of the Qur’an that also proliferated at this time. This paper examines one such Qur’an manuscript — a dispersed copy that was transcribed at Maragha by ‘Abdallah ibn Ahmad ibn Fadlallah ibn ‘Abd al-Hamid al-Qazwini between Shawwal 738 and Shawwal 739 (April 1338- April 1339). Although known since the 1950s when two pages from the Chester Beatty Library (ms 1470) and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (no. 29.58) were illustrated in the *Survey of Persian Art* (pls. 93a and b), the manuscript is relatively poorly published, mainly through these two black-and-white reproductions.

This presentation will take the manuscript as an exemplar to show first how scriptoria in the Ilkhanid period codified features such as paper size, page format, calligraphic style, and multi-color illumination to produce so many of these sublime works of art. The paper will then use the manuscript’s codicology to investigate broader questions such as who commissioned these Qur’an manuscripts, who were the calligraphers and illuminators that produced them, how were these manuscripts used, how was the court style formulated at the turn of the century under Yaqt and his followers disseminated to provincial cities such as Maragha in northwest Iran, and how did these manuscripts in turn serve as models for others
made a century later for the Timurids who willfully copied Ilkhanid styles to promote their dynastic legitimacy.

Serpi Bağcı

An eighteenth-century re-creator of illustrated books: Mehmed Emin Efendi and his refurbished manuscripts

Mehmed Emin Efendi (d. 1802), a high ranked Ottoman official from a distinguished bibliophile family, was an avid collector of manuscripts. According to flyleaf notes that cite their provenance as from his estate, several albums and illustrated manuscripts from his collection found their way to the royal collection of Istanbul via his heritage.

To date, I have come across nine illustrated manuscripts and albums identified with a note stating their provenance as from his estate. Save for two examples, Mehmed Emin’s illustrated manuscripts are entirely refurbished: their illustrations were not originally executed for them, but were cut out from manuscripts of different texts with varying date and provenance, and used to illustrate these newly copied books.

In this paper, I will briefly introduce one of Mehmed Emin’s refurbished manuscripts and his ingenious technique of recycling ready-made images in a new context. I will then try to locate the original sources from which at least certain of these images were cut out. The manuscript I will deal with is a multi-volume Turkish version of Firdausi’s Shāhnāma, or more precisely, a compilation of epics (Istanbul University Library, T 6131, 6132, 6133). The volumes are lavishly illustrated by re-using images originally created for different books. Some of these images originally meant to illustrate copies of Shāhnāma, thus they fit their new context as they are. Some, however, are retouched, either slightly or heavily, to better relate to the text’s details.

Some clues provided by the themes, stylistic features and dimensions of the reused images allow speculating on the possible sources where Mehmed Emin acquired them. When all Ottoman paintings scattered among three volumes are grouped according to their styles the hands of six different artists become apparent, who are known from manuscripts prepared for

the court between 1580-1620, including copies of Turkish versions of the Shāhnāme. I believe most of the paintings are from two (or perhaps three) copies of Turkish Shāhnāme manuscripts illustrated by these court painters: The no longer extant first volume of a prose translation of which second volume is now in the library of Topkapı Palace, and, another copy housed by British Library. All paintings of the latter manuscript are now cut out. Some images pasted on Mehmed Emin’s Shāhnāme, along with their topics and dimensions, are a perfect match to the British Library manuscript.

Various heritage registers from the turn of eighteenth century include entries with the title ‘torn and worn folios’, some of which were sold at high prices suggesting that they must have been painted or illuminated ones. Most likely, Mehmed Emin purchased a full folder of paintings from the collection of ‘torn and thorn folios’ of an antique book dealer, to bring them back to life in his newly copied Shāhnāme.

Éloïse Brac de la Perrière
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Le coran de Gwalior de la collection Aga Khan :

nouvelles données sur les manuscrits enluminés de l’Inde islamique pré-moghole

Depuis deux ans, un Coran indien pré-moghol appartenant à la collection Aga Khan fait l’objet d’un programme de recherche (CNRS - UMR 8167 - laboratoire « Islam médiéval ») réunissant des chercheurs spécialisés dans différents domaines en rapport avec les questions soulevées par ce manuscrit, fort nombreuses et diverses.

Exécuté à Gwalior, une forteresse située à environ 300 km au sud de Delhi, en 1399, ce Coran s’avère en effet incontournable dans l’étude des premières phases de l’histoire du manuscrit à peintures indo-musulman pour laquelle il n’existe que de rares données éparses, tout particulièrement en cette période encore ancienne. Il s’agit en tout premier lieu du seul codex orné d’enluminures daté et situé connu pour l’Inde des sultanats avant la fin du XVe siècle.

Ce manuscrit revêt par ailleurs une importance considérable du fait de son ancrage dans cette
période clé de l’histoire du sous-continent indien, à l’heure même où les armées timourides déferlent sur la capitale des Tughluqides (1320-1399), ébranlant définitivement les fondements du sultanat de Delhi. Ce manuscrit livre encore, à travers trente-trois doubles pages enluminées aux compositions particulièrement originales, un certain nombre d’informations sur les courants artistiques qui ont porté l’enluminure indo-islamique en période ancienne. Ces décors, qui reposent sur des répertoires ornementaux appartenant à des traditions distinctes, sont à mettre en lien avec l’Iran mongole, Ilkhânide et inquisite, mais aussi le Proche-Orient manéloïque et l’Inde non-musulmane, jaïna tout particulièrement. L’analyse iconographique du manuscrit amène dès lors à se poser un certain nombre de questions sur les liens qui ont pu exister entre ces confins orientaux du monde musulman et les zones centrales, la circulation et la diffusion des Corans enluminés durant la seconde moitié du XIVe siècle, ainsi que le patronage et les artistes à l’origine de manuscrits comme le Coran de Gwalior.

Enfin, le manuscrit de la collection Aga Khan présente le grand intérêt d’être agrémenté d’un des plus anciens exemples connus de livre de divination (Fūl-Nāmā) qui le rattache à un ensemble plus large de corans en écriture bhūrī, postérieurs de plusieurs décennies mais tous pourvus de livres divinitaires. Il paraît important de s’interroger aujourd’hui sur l’usage de tels Corans et sur le contexte de production dans lequel ils ont pu voir le jour.

Laura Emilia Parodi
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“Some Mughal album pages and their multiple avatars”

As part of my research on painting from the reign of Humayun (the first Mughal ruler: r. 153056, with interruptions), I have come across a few paintings which could be ascribed to artists patronised by him but have historically undergone a number of reworkings and were in some cases incorporated into later Mughal albums. Many of them contain or successively incorporate textual material, such as Persian poetry and / or historical inscriptions. Early scholarship notoriously privileged the images over the texts, while more recent scholarship is increasingly devoting attention to both. As we progress in our study of albums, it becomes increasingly clear that they are elusive and complex entities, and that their individual components are themselves elaborate constructions (see D.J. Roxburgh, The Persian Album, 2005; E. Wright, Muraqa‘, 2008, and my forthcoming article “Two Pages from the Late Shah Jahan Album”, Ars Orientalis no. 40). Recent investigation I conducted in collaboration with Jennifer Porter and Frank Preusser at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art’s Conservation Center (based on micrographs and multispectral images) has evidenced no less than five successive phases on the recto side of an individual Mughal album folio (LACMA M.78.9.11) (electronic publication: http://www.asianart.com/articles/mughal/index.html). Such complex sequences in the production of album pages may only be detected and properly contextualised through a collaborative effort – involving technical investigation, iconographic and stylistic analysis, along with a study of textual materials. Each phase is associated with a particular moment in the history of the artifact – be it the individual constituent or the album; this raises issues of authorship, patronage, artistic choice, and the reception of ‘library heirlooms’ such as rare Humayuni pages. This paper aims to discuss some Humayuni artifacts in their multiple avatars within successive Mughal albums, suggesting new directions for research that are potentially transferable to the wider study of albums in the Eastern Islamic lands.

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Codicological Problems of Topkapi Saray Library Jami al-tawarikh:
Refurbishing Activities in the Late Sixteenth Century Safavid Persia

The Topkapi Saray Museum Library has two illustrated copies of Jami al-tawarikh, the world history written by the Ilkhānid vizier Rashid al-Din. One of the copies (H. 1653) bears three colophons. One dates 1314, second 1425, the third 1426. The text is written on cream-colored polished paper, with strips of thick pink paper pasted along the margin. None of the illuminations date back to the 14th century. Illuminated dedication medallion is from the early 15th century. There is evidence that the illumination of the sections and the margin borders
date from the late sixteenth century. The second copy (H.1654), is dated 1317. The text is also written on cream-colored polished paper with borders of thick pink paper. On the first page is a star-shaped medallion illuminated in Safavid style. It contains an inscription stating that the manuscript is executed for of the Kitabkhana of Farhad Khan Qaramani. Illuminated headings also are in Safavid style. Both manuscripts were rebound during the reign of Abdulhamid II period in the Yildiz Palace with the special cover produced for the Yildiz Palace Library. We do not know what happened the original bindings. Farhad Khan Qaramani belonged to the Shirvan Qaramani family, Farhad Khan and his brother Zu'l-fakar Khan were high-ranking officials under the Shah Abbas I. In addition to the Topkapi Jami al-tawarikh, several other manuscripts prepared for him are survived. Qadi Ahmad also supports his reputation as a patron of the arts of the book, remarking on his generous patronage for the scribes. One of which is Gulistan-e Hunar (Moscow State Museum, No.444 II), the other is Divan of Ali Shir Nava'i (St.Petersburg Nat.Lib. Dorn.558). Nava'i manuscript was copied by Nazar Ali Faiizi in Kazl Agac of Azerbaijan and Mughan between 1592-1597. The gold-stamped leather binding is expertly executed by Muhammed Zaman b. Mirza Bey Tebrizî. Two partly published illustrated royal manuscripts in the Istanbul libraries were refurnished in the late 16th century in a manner similar to Farhad Khan's Jamâ al-tawarikh: A Khamsa of Jami (Topkapı Sarayi Museum Library, R. 888), text was copied in 1506 by Sultan Ali Mashadi and a Bostan of Sadi (Istanbul University Library, F.1410) was copied by Ali al-Husayni in 1526 at Herat. It contains the seal of Shah Safi's Astana, and the seal of Ottoman cuneiform Joshua Agha and record his ownership. Another lavishly illustrated, illuminated and expertly bound manuscript of Attar's Ma'ntik al-Tâyr (New York MMA.63.210) must also be refurnished in Farhad Khan's Kitâbkhana. Consequently it can be said that a semi-finished distinguishable work survived with improving value from past to present by courtesy of Farhad Han Qaramani during the Shah Abbas I period in Iran. The notes concerning Farhad Khan, on the dedication and colophon pages and in the Qadi Ahmad's text are further evidence that he was both a patron of art of the book and a biblioph.

Jean-Louis Estève

Relire Oriol Valls i Subirà

Plusieurs auteurs, en se fondant sur trois articles écrits par Oriol Valls i Subirà et sur son important ouvrage : La historia del papel en España, soutiennent que la forme rigide plongée est inventée en Espagne au cours du XIIe siècle.

Les explications, souvent très compliquées, qu’avance l’historien, ne résistent pas à l’analyse particulièrement sur le plan technique.

La traduction des trois articles dans lesquels cette question est traitée nous conduira dans un premier temps à quelques remarques sur le vocabulaire technique que nous utilisons.

Méthodologiquement nous appuierons notre réflexion sur l’observation, l’analyse de nombreux manuscrits, mais aussi sur les essais de fabrication de formes que nous avons tenté en suivant les indications proposées par M. Subirà.

Cette réflexion critique et notre démonstration, se propose de traiter le problème au travers des grands items qui sont propres à la structure des formes papetières, allant chercher dans chacune des sources, les informations nécessaires.

Les vergeures ; nous montrerons comment cette invention de vergeures souples qui seraient rendues rigides par tension ne résiste pas, particulièrement à l’expérimentation.

Cette proposition de vergeures-cordelettes tendues se trouve être d’autre part, en contradiction avec les « vergeures doubles » comme les dénommés Valls i Subirà. L’explication qu’il propose de la décroissance de leur diamètre, d’une rare complexité, ne paraît pas satisfaisante, d’autant que cette trace, nous pensons l’avoir montré par ailleurs, est caractéristique des vergeures végétales. Nous en rappellerons le principe.

Les pontuseaux ; dont l’auteur estime qu’ils ne sont pas nécessaires pour soutenir un plan filtrant fait de cordelettes tendues, ce qui livre de nombreuses interrogations d’autant que ce discours est pétri de contradiction.

Les chainettes ; là encore la proposition d’organisation des chainettes que fait O. V. i Subirà, pour ce qui devrait être une forme rigide plongée, est pour le moins surprenante, dans la configuration proposée elles ne seraient pas attachées au cadre de bois qui porte le plan.
filtrant, mais seulement liées aux premières et dernières vergeures. La difficulté à les tendre dans cette disposition, sans déformer fortement les vergeures sollicitées, expliquerait selon l’auteur les déformations des chainettes que l’on peut observer dans ces papiers.

Au terme de cette analyse, il semble évident que nous ne pouvons pas nous satisfaire de l’affirmation faite par Oriol Valls i Suhin, cela sur plusieurs points et qu’il n’est pas possible, en conscience, d’affirmer que la forme rigide plongée est été inventée au XIe siècle par des papetiers travaillant en Espagne.

Encore un mystère qui reste à percer et sans doute cela est-il plutôt réjouissant ?

LUIS MOLINA

Watermarks as unique evidence for the collatio of a codex

In 1978 Spector highlighted the possibilities that the information provided by the alternation of watermarked and unwatermarked leaves offer when it comes to make the collatio of a codex. Afterwards, other scholars, such as Lyall, have moved forward on Spector’s track on the same path by demonstrating that the collatio is possible even when the copy to be studied is in a dismal condition, their leaves ripped and disarranged. To reconstruct the gatherings’ structure, Spector and his successors based their study on a number of features of the paper that allow to characterize each page of the codex according to various parameters. One of them is the appearance /lack of watermark in the leaf, in addition to which other distinguishing features can be relied upon: for example, the duplicity of the watermark types, which is well known since Stevenson published his fundamental work in 1951; the opposition between the mould side and the felt side; or, in the cases of in-quarto volumes, the alternation between the upper and the lower parts of the watermark. The concurrence of these distinctive features provides us with enough data to find the “center of symmetry” of a quire, which is the evidence on which Spector bases himself in order to restore the structure of the quires. However, in some cases the sole evidence we have is the existence or lack of watermark in the leaf (namely, in-folio volumes in which the mould side cannot be distinguished from the felt side for whichever reason). Is the collatio possible in those cases, based on that unique evidence?

In this paper I shall propose a method that allow us to reconstruct the division of a codex into quires and to acknowledge the changes in the arrangement of the leaves by analysing the succession of leaves with and without watermark. The manuscript that will serve to illustrate the process is the second volume of Ibn Hayyan’s Muqtatabis, which is preserved at the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid and the Qarawiyin Library in Fez.

Natalia Viola

Inventaire des papiers filigranés des manuscrits arabes provenant de l’Afrique de l’Ouest

Cette étude est consacrée à l’étude du papier filigrané dans la tradition manuscrite arabo-africaine du XVIIIe et XIXe siècle. Le but de ce travail est de créer un premier inventaire des filigranes employés à cette époque, afin d’avoir davantage d’éléments pour dater de manière approximative des copies qui demeurent toujours sans date.

Pour mieux comprendre ces papiers, leur format et leur qualité ont été pris en compte les manuscrits sur papiers filigranés du Fonds Archinard, de la BnF. Ces papiers, dont la variété de dessins s’est révélée importante, ont été répertoriés suivant un critère thématique qui devrait servir à reconnaitre les papiers ayant la même origine de fabrication. Cette classification servira également à cerner les caractéristiques d’une typologie régionale de manuscrit arabe.

Afin de fournir des détails utiles à l’histoire du papier filigrané, dans cet inventaire ont été répertorié non seulement la forme du filigrane mais également la totalité de ses éléments visibles : ses dimensions, la position exacte dans le folio, l’éventuelle présence de contremarque, la cote du manuscrit et le feuillet dans lequel il filigrané a été retrouvée. Dans la mesure du possible, l’inventaire fait également mention, au numéro des vergeures, à l’espacement entre les lignes de chainettes et éventuels défauts du papier. Tous ces éléments sont présentés en annexe de cette présentation.

Pour mieux comprendre la variété des papiers rencontrés et leur provenance, ont été abordées les implications historiques du marché du papier entre les pays de production et l’Afrique.
Une attention particulière à été donnée à l’histoire du papier italien, à celle de la famille Galvani qui avait créé spécialement un filigrane, dit les tre lune ou "trois croisants", pour les papiers destinés à l'exportation vers les pays musulmans.

Les dynamiques d'échange et de marché du papier ont été observées à partir de récits de voyage et de documents d'archives qui traçaient les routes sahariennes sur lesquelles voyageaient les papiers pour aller du pays de production jusqu'aux pays d'Afrique de l'ouest. Cette analyse a permis de constater l'insuffisance de sources à ce sujet pour la période qui nous concerne. Cette étude apporte un travail de dépouillement plus pointu qui reste encore à faire, par exemple dans les archives commerciales et douanières de certaines villes de la Méditerranée.

NOURANE BEN AZZOUNA

La codicologie et la question des niveaux de production, à travers quelques exemples de la période de la domination mongole en Iraq et en Iran (XIIIè – début du XVè siècle)

Cette communication vise à attirer l'attention sur une question rarement étudiée par les codicologues. Il s'agit de la question des divergences et des relations entre les différents niveaux de la production manuscrite, à travers l'étude de ce que nous proposons de qualifier de « production globale », c'est-à-dire de l'ensemble des manuscrits datés et localisés d'une période et d'une région données, quelle que soit leur qualité, dans la limite de la possibilité d'identifier ces manuscrits et de leur accessibilité. La période considérée est celle, à divers égards charnière, de la domination mongole, ilkhânide puis djalayiride (656-814 / 1258-1411) en Iraq et en Iran, plus précisément occidental. L'étude de la production manuscrite globale de cette période permet de jeter un nouvel éclairage sur plusieurs phénomènes codicologiques et esthétiques qui y sont traditionnellement associés. Le premier est l'augmentation des dimensions des feuilles de papier. Le second est l'apparition de nouveaux formats pour les manuscrits poétiques persans. Et le troisième est la vogue des papiers teintés. L'étude comparée de différentes catégories de manuscrits, ordinaires et de grande qualité, permet de proposer une analyse plus fine de ces phénomènes et ainsi de suggérer de nouvelles perspectives de recherche sur les cultures manuscrites islamiques d'une manière générale.

Delia Cortese
Middlesex University –London (UK)

The Commodification of the Mushaf in the Early Centuries of Islam

Due primarily to the lack of early relevant documentary material (with the possible exception of the Geniza documents) limited research has been conducted so far on the economics of the early and medieval Islamic book production and the commodification of books in the early and medieval Muslim societies. In this paper I will attempt to retrace the history of the process of commodification of the mushaf in the first two centuries of Islam by analysing the theological and legal debates regarding the various forms of trading that grew around the qur'ânic codex. I will base myself primarily on Traditions attributed to Companions and Successors of the Prophet Muhammad, mostly collected in 8th/9th century books extolling the excellence of the Qur'an (ṣaḥīḥ al-Qurʾān). While recording contrasting voices on the acceptability of selling, buying, pawnning, inheriting and exchanging the mushaf, this material also reveals the varied types of commodification that surrounded the early production and distribution of the qur'ânic codex, aspects of the organisation of labour for its production and the role that early traders of mushaf played in shaping the social history of the holy book. Finally I will use my findings to suggest how economic factors and considerations might have impacted on stylistic choices in the making of the early mushaf.

Methodological problems abound for research depending primarily on hadith narratives, without the complement of documentary sources. The occasionally anecdotal nature of the narratives, the time gap between the occurrence of events and the time of their reporting, the reliability of the informants and their agendas are just few of such concerns. However, for this paper I will not collect econometric data, but rather analyse the way in which the Qur'an—as object—came to be thought of, talked about and dealt with in economic terms, beyond— or because of—the believed sacred nature of its text. To this effect, I hope
that the material for inter-textual analysis at my disposal will suffice to minimise potential interpretative distortions.

Miriam Frenkel

The Book Revolution in the Medieval World of Islam as Reflected in the Cairo Genizah

From the 9th century onwards the culture of the book spread rapidly in the Islamic East among Muslims and Jews alike. It was a profound, widespread revolution. From the point of view of the volume of production and dissemination of books, as well as of their quality and variegation, it can be safely compared to the revolution of print.

It was the Jewish leading elite that adopted the new world of the book and turned it into its cultural epithet. The ruling elite of the Jewish world functioned at this time as a widespread cosmopolitan network of both commercial and intellectual connections. The network was based on very small circles, in which every member belonged to more than one circle, thus being able to serve as a link between several circles. The base of power was dependant upon one’s position in the network. The more connected one was the more powerful. The network constituted of social, economic, familial and intellectual ties. It crossed political borders and covered a vast geographical area. It was comprised of a stable pool of members who occupied the central key roles in the Jewish world centers and in the Jewish local communities. In spite of its universalism it formed a corporative, well defined and particularistic group.

Books came to be a crucial factor in this network, serving several functions, all aimed at preserving and consolidating this cosmopolitan elite.

The production of books, their distribution through copying, selling, buying, lending, and pawning, as well as their consumption through learning and reading, became central activities for the elite members of the Jewish community.

News about books – written, copied, borrowed, sold, lost, or captured – occupy a central place in the correspondence of the elite. Books are a central issue about which one normally writes to friends and partners, since they occupy a major role in life.

The high cost of books and the intensive labor which their production required, made them a very sensitive product. Even their exchange required much credence and turned into a major way to express trust and intimacy.

Books were not only passionately read, they were also produced by the elite members, who used to copy books for themselves and for their friends, edit them, punctuate them, cut and straighten their paper, and finally also bind them with their own hands. The production and the exchange of books became the cohesive glue of the members of the elite. The shared occupation with books served as a central axis around which the links and affinities of the members were consolidated and served to strengthen the ties of friendship. The mutual exchange of books was interpreted as a symbolic gesture of love, intimacy and belonging to the same social milieu.

In my lecture I will try to demonstrate through various Genizah letters, the social and cultural power of books in this society.

Roger-Puyo P., Boucetta S.
IRAMAT Orléans, CNRS.

Les matériaux de l’écrit et des décors dans les manuscrits islamiques réalisés au Maghreb.

Après avoir étudié une série d’ouvrages issus de la zone géographique circonscrite à la partie nord du Maghreb, de récentes investigations menées dans la continuité de l’approche codicologique, ont porté sur des manuscrits actuellement conservés à la Bibliothèque du centre d’études de la civilisation et des arts islamiques de Raqqada en Tunisie. Les résultats que nous avons précédemment obtenus concernant les matériaux de la couleur et de l’écrit employés, nous avaient permis d’apprécier la nature et la diversité de ces derniers ainsi que leur évolution au cours de la période d’étude. Les nouveaux résultats issus de cette récente recherche doivent nous permettre de discerner des spécificités et mettre à jour l’emploi de techniques locales. Par une approche comparative des résultats de ces différents travaux, nous souhaitons apprécier si ces dernières peuvent avoir un lien entre elles et les différentes zones géographiques.
and so there were famous calligraphers, names of sponsors, in date of print, it can be obtained statistics about which of decades how many books were printed. And so, in place of print obtained recognition of city and geographic of transcribing location that we lead to study of history and regions culture. There are so many kinds of Colophons in lithographed books, similar to the manuscripts, according to their shape and decorations, writing and languages and its contents, for examples: external shape of colophon into text, decoration of around colophon, write and poem, signs, kind of script, and etc...

Prof. Dr. Mohd. Sanaullah
Aligarh Muslim University

Contribution of India to Codicology and Production of Books in Arabic Script

With the region of Sind formally annexed to Umayyid rule (661-750) after the military success under Mohammed b. Qasim al-Thaqafi, the Indian sub-continent became familiar with Arabia’s religion, language and culture. The subsequent march of Muslim invaders, traders, settlers and rulers from Persia and central Asia (chiefly the Ghaznavids 997-1152, the Ghaurids 1186-1206, the Slaves 1202-1290, the Khiljis 1290-1320, the Tughlaks 1320-1440 and the Mughals 1526-1857) reinforced the presence of Arabic-Persian script in a socio-cultural milieu more adaptive to Islam’s codes of belief and expression. Thousands of books written in Arabic in all realms of human knowledge in the middle ages (theology, philology, philosophy, scholasticism, history, geography, medicine, algebra, astronomy etc) besides poetry, literary prose, literary criticism, etc present as codices in various libraries of India (Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library Patna, Asafiya Library Hyderabad, Maulana Azad Library Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh, Raza Library Rampur, Shibib Noman Library Nadwatal Ulama Lucknow, Libraries of Royal Asiatic Society in Calcutta and Bombay - now...
Kolkata and Mumbai - and other libraries in India) simply testify the magnitude of Arab impact on India in spheres of language and culture. The legacy was sound enough to constitute a core of Arabic Codicology which saw several volumes being fruits of practical enthusiasm and dedication on part of scholars (some of them European orientalists), research institutes and libraries in managing the treasury of Arabic script for the posterity.

India has been home to a number of Lithographic enterprises paying due attention to the Arabic manuscripts. The Lithographic machines in Delhi, Agra, Lucknow, Calcutta, Hyderabad, Mumbai, etc. (Afzan al-Mutabi, Assab al-Mutabi, Madina-i-Majtabai and the likes) have printed hundreds of books in Arabic script. The Nawal Kishore Press (est. 1858) in Lucknow (credited with publication of 3,000 titles in Arabic script), Osmania Press in Hyderabad, Aligarh Muslim University Press in Aligarh, Salafia Press in Varanasi, and other presses in different Indian cities have contributed significantly toward printing the Arabic codices. Hundreds of Arabic manuscripts were edited and printed by these Presses. It should be noted that some of the books printed in India were the first ever editions of the codices. *Tafsir-i-Jalalain* was printed in 1796 from Delhi. *Ajab al-Maghrib fi Akhbar-i-Taimur* of Ibn Arabshai was printed in Calcutta in 1812. The Osmania Press established in 1888 (credited with publication of 232 books in Arabic script till 2007) printed *Kitab al-Tijan fi Mulook-i-Himyar* in 1928. It was the first ever edition of the book.

The paper aims at analyzing the theme (Codicology and Publication of Arabic codices in India) in historical perspectives. It evaluates the historical efforts and synchronizes the roles played by research institutes and publishing houses in preserving, editing and printing of the Arabic codices and books in India in different historical phases.

DAGMAR RIEDEL

The Analysis of a Manuscript Collection as a Contribution to the History of Printing in the Middle East: The Manuscripts in Arabic Script in Columbia University Libraries

I will explore the parallel uses of manuscript and print in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by comparing the contents of the Islamic manuscript collection in Columbia University Libraries with the contents of printed books published since the nineteenth century in the Middle East. That manuscript production continued after the introduction of printing has not yet received much attention in Islamic codicology, though Michael Clancy and David McKitterick have shown that the success of letterpress printing in Europe was fueled by a demand for books which originated in manuscript culture and sustained manuscript production until the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Richard Gottweil (1862–1936) and Arthur Jeffery (1892–1959) established Arabic and Islamic studies at Columbia. About 400 manuscripts in Arabic script entered the library during Gottweil’s tenure (1887–1916), while 50 manuscripts belong to the Jeffery bequest. The collection has not been developed since 1960. Some rare texts have nonetheless been published: a fourteenth-century copy of *Umar Khayyám’s* algebra treatise (eds. R. Rashid & B. Vahabzadeh, 1999, pp.116–237) and the only extant copy of the *Kitab Hartishiyah* (ed. M. Penelas, 2001), an Arabic translation of Orosius’ *Historiae adversus paganos*.

In the collection survey I will focus on contents and date, while systematically distinguishing between formal copies from professional workshops and informal copies for personal use. I argue that the formation of the collection reflects how both manuscripts and printed books were produced and traded in the Middle East because Gottweil and Jeffery acquired manuscripts whenever printed books were not yet available. My analysis will provide insight into which texts already circulated as prints, typeset or lithographed, and which texts still dominated manuscript production. Brinkley Messick’s field research has documented that in the 1970s students continued to copy their own textbooks as an integral component of their madrasa education in rural Yemen.
THE FIRST LAYER OF THE COLLECTION OF MANUSCRIPTS IN ARABIC SCRIPT:
Original sources for the teaching of Oriental studies that were grouped together with
Hebrew, Syriac, Avestan, and Middle Persian manuscripts as well as cuneiform tablets.

1 MS pers. gifted by Samuel P. Avery (1822–1904), described by A. Yohanan in JAOS 1902

47 Arabic, Persian and Ottoman MSS, described by N. Martinovich in JAOS 1929 and 1931
  • 41 MSS arab.
  • 5 MSS. turk.
  • 1 MS pers.
but 4 MSS are bilingual: 2 MSS arab.-pers. and 2 MSS arab.-turk.

THE SECOND LAYER OF THE COLLECTION OF MANUSCRIPTS IN ARABIC SCRIPT:
New York bibliophiles donate large collections comprising manuscripts, printed books,
ephemera, and instruments after the establishment of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library
(RBML) in Columbia Libraries in 1930.

ca. 400 MSS were given by David E. Smith (1860–1944) from 1931 onwards
=part of a collection about the history of mathematics
ca. 45 MSS were given by George A. Plimpton (1855–1936) in 1936
= part of a collection about the history of education

Breakdown according to A. Stheyl Unver’s handlist from 1959:

375 MSS arab.
  • 78 Qurans (44 from Iran, 34 from the Ottoman Empire including the Arab provinces)
  • 40 Quran fragments from the Ottoman Empire including the Arab provinces
  • 21 single Quran leaves
  • 51 prayer books (25 from Iran, 12 from Turkey, 14 from the Central Arab lands)
  • 10 Bibles from Egypt

• 175 codices with Arabic texts

128 MSS pers.
  • 4 Persian translations of the Quran
  • 3 prayer books
  • 15 codices with religious literature
  • 24 codices with philosophical or Sufi literature
  • 4 codices with historical literature
  • 38 codices with scientific literature
  • 34 codices with belles-lettres
  • 5 codices with unidentified Persian texts
  • 1 dictionary

43 MSS turk.
  • 1 prayer book
  • 10 codices with religious literature
  • 4 codices with historical literature
  • 4 codices with scientific literature
  • 12 codices with belles-lettres
  • 2 codices with educational literature for letter writing and accounting
  • 2 codices with unidentified Ottoman texts
  • 4 dictionaries
  • 4 calendars

THE THIRD LAYER OF THE COLLECTION OF MANUSCRIPTS IN ARABIC SCRIPT:
In the early 1960s the widow of Arthur Jeffery (1892–1959) donates his library and his papers
to Columbia Libraries.

48 MSS arab. about Arabic linguistics, Quran exegesis, and Islamic law
Nafis-Sadat Sajjadi
University of Hamburg, Asien-Afrika-Institute

From manuscript to print: variance in text and media of copies of Shahnama from 19th century Iran

The media change that occurred from the manuscript to printing in Iran in the course of the 19th century can be considered an ongoing, complex coexistence of the old writing technique and the new printing techniques (type print and lithography). Artistically and to some extent also technically lithography, that became more widespread during the sample period, can be seen as a continuation of manuscript writing, as Ulrich Marzolph said, „lithographies are manuscripts in printed form“. On the same time, there are indications that during the transition period lithographies exerted some influence on the respective manuscripts.

The aim of this research is to study the influences and repercussions that the introduction of printing had on manuscript culture and to analyse if and how these influences are mirrored in concrete texts. For this aim the Shahnama by Ferdousi is chosen to be able to outline and compare the textual variances found in the printed editions of this text and its manuscripts that continued to be copied during the same time.

The approach is to compare the internal textual variety of manuscripts produced before the introduction of printing (around 1850 A.D.) in a first step, and then to compare these results to the variances found in manuscripts after the introduction of printing. Later the internal textual variances of printed editions will be entered in the analyses to be able to determine if the number of variances has become smaller in the later manuscripts due to the introduction of printing that has taken place in the meantime.

In addition to what was said before, it would stand to reason to assume, standardization of texts of manuscripts and lithographies in the second half of the 19th century but first preliminary results might contradict.

Jake Benson

Satisfying an Appetite for Books:
Innovation, Production, and Modernization in Later Islamic Bookbinding.

Fluctuating changes in style are often described in terms of fashion—especially at court—when in fact they are often developed to better meet the practical demands of everyday life. This is especially true of the craft of bookbinding, which evolved from the antiquated context of the early Islamic scribal tradition, into a separate and distinct trade over time. Rather than an individual scribe creating an entire manuscript from start to finish, a specialized bookbinder would instead concentrate on completing the covering of a book in a range of styles depending on their patron’s budget.

By the 16th century, binding specialists in the Eastern Islamic world had adopted a number of innovative procedures to reduce the cost and increase the speed at which books could be produced. For example, panel stamping largely supplanted the time-consuming process of tooling covers by hand. Cloth and decorative papers were adapted as frugal covering materials in place of more costly leather, and one particular method of minimal leather used only along the spine, flap, and edges of the board are commonly observed today covering a wide variety of materials. While some of these advances allowed books to be luxuriously decorated for the elite, it simultaneously also allowed for more affordable coverings to less affluent members of society. These methods proved so effective that with the passage of time, they became established traditions.

In the 19th century, the introduction of mechanized printing and lithography further transformed the operation of the bookbinding trade. In the specific context of Iran, several important documents shed light on steps taken to reform the bookbinding trade in response to the increasing output of an ever-burgeoning printing industry. These were initiated by ‘Etezād al-Saltaneh, a half brother of Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shāh who served as the Vaẓīr-e ‘Ulm or the Minister of Sciences. A set of legal resolutions approved by the Shah survives today which details the various actions taken, while a summary announcement in the newspaper Rāznāme-ye Dawlat-e Âlī-ye Iran confirms that they were carried out.
Modernization not only came through visits to Europe or by government reform, nor just colonization, but also quite simply, through the freer exchange of information that occurred within the region as a result of printing. One Indo-Persian treatise, the Kashf al-Sindaf va Makhlzun al-Bazī'at, popularly known by the title of the Mustakhab-e Muhmmadi is filled with technical information on a wide variety of recipes for inks and dyes, useful tricks, and other innovations, both native and foreign. Subject from fireworks to preparing paper specifically used for printing lithographed maps, and a dictionary of English transliterated and translated into Subcontinental Persian.

In some cases there are novel applications such as edge marbling books, a specifically European adaptation of the art of paper marbling, which already had by that time a well-established history in the Eastern Islamic World. Another section describes the recent innovative use of aniline dyes for leather.

Interestingly enough, the bulk of this text was copied out into a manuscript entitled the Kashf al-Sindaf by one Ali Hussein, which is now kept in the National Library of Iran. This further confirms the level of interest in such information at that time. When considered together with surviving physical evidence, these documents help to explain why, how, and to what extent the bookbinding trade in Iran dramatically changed in the early modern period.

Juan P. Arias, Ana Beny, Teresa Espejo.

About a possible characteristic Arabic bookbinding from the Iberian Peninsula between XIV and XVI century

During the settlement of Arabs in the Iberian Peninsula since begins of VIII century up to the end of XV century, Christians, Jews and Muslims coexisted and shared space. In consequence, the interchange and influences between these cultures where notable, specially flourished within the territory now as al-Andalus, and directly related to the widespread production of books, with specific characteristics and structure.

When the Catholic Kings of Castile and Aragon persecuted the Arabs, the majority of these books were burnt or damaged, except few of them which were hidden or relocated.

As part of research projects, researchers from different fields are involved on the study of the methods and materials used in the production of these books found in different Spanish collections.

Some of the documents we analysed, although their bindings are envelope-flap bindings, and could be included on type II, of Doréche classification, they show codicological and structural binding features which differ significantly from those other Islamic or western manuscripts, yet which still maintain elements of both.

By contrast with the traditional Arabic loose-cover binding, the fabric used to the spine lining extends across the first and last gatherings and acts as a 'double' for the covers, thus forming part of the make-up of the book itself, by being pasted to the inner side of the pasteboards, the fore-edge and the envelope flap boards, after which the covering material is applied and the turn-ins folded over the fabric, remaining sometimes visible. Significant variations are done on cover materials, endbands structures, dimensions of text block, but all them retain the basic characteristic which is that the cover isn't make independently from the text-block, reason why these bindings can not be understood as a typical Islamic case binding. Otherwise it has more connection on the way it is constructed with their Coptic ancestors. We suggest that this sort of hybrid, a marriage done by a cultural cross-fertilisation, could be called the al-Andalus binding.

Although few in number, the documents in which we have identified these characteristics are significant in that they appear in different collections, in different locations around al-Andalus territory and from three different centuries, since the fourteenth until the sixteenth. We hope that other books within similar characteristics would be found which will enable us to confirm our hypothesis regarding the existence of a type of binding particular to the later centuries of al-Andalus.

1 Caracterización de los materiales de manuscritos árabes de la Península Ibérica para la elaboración de un corpus documental (PO8-HUM 04188, Proyectos de Investigación de excelencia, Junta de Andalucía), y Aplicación de tecnologías de análisis específicas para el conocimiento de materiales y la mejora de los procesos de conservación de los manuscritos árabes de la Península Ibérica (us.X-XVII) (MAT2008-02008MAT, Plan nacional 1+1+1+1 2008-2011). Ministerio de Ciencia y Tecnología.

2 DEROCHE, François, Islamic Codicology: an Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script; London: al-Faq`, in Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2006
The present paper has studied the collected notes (more than 300) from manuscripts (in Persian and Arabic), those which are kept in different Iranian libraries, and the loan department of manuscripts in different ages from the textology point of view. Also, it deals with the quality of registration and recording the notes from the perspective of copies, historical and structural course, semantics, idioms, history and place of writing the notes in the manuscripts.

The name of loaner, borrower, terms and duration of loan, objective of borrowers, depositing in lieu of loan, guarantee of the trustworthy individuals of the borrower and title and subject of books being borrowed are among other subjects of this notes.

Most of these notes, have been written by the user of books and some of them by the book owner which they loan their books to people. Name of books has refer in some notes the oldest manuscript is a Quran belongs to 6.H.G=12 century. The oldest loan note has written on 10.H.G=16 century and it relates to the Geographical Manuscript. Most of the books has loan by scholars of religious and the subject is religious and there is no limitation for the user of these books.

Also, at the end of some copies, the owners used to register an inventory of those who were borrowing the books in a specific script known as Siyaq. Reviewing the notes of books being borrowed can provide us with knowledge about the books which are not available now.

TÜLÜN DEGIRMENCİ

To be read or to be listened: Reading culture and circulations of the books in Ottoman Istanbul

This symposium presentation is based on my research-in-progress focuses on samples of manuscripts dated between the 17th and 19th centuries that were probably intended to be read aloud by the city dwellers in the various spots of Ottoman Istanbul. In my talk, I will try to elucidate how they read the books and how these manuscripts were transmitted. Further, I will seek answer the question: who are
the readers and listeners—do we know their identities? This talk will introduce and discuss insights we acquired in reading culture of Ottoman Istanbul without attempting either to provide a broad historical framework or analyze its social roots or to deal with the literary aspects of the books.

To explore my questions I will adduce manuscripts that derived their themes from literature, history, epics and the daily life of the city, while I will also draw attention to their fly-leaf notes. These notes provide vivid information about readers and listeners, their identities and occupations, as well as the places they were read. Besides, these notations, some of which remind one of today’s book reviews, reflect the cultural and literary inclinations of the audience. Most of the manuscripts I examined have several reader notes written by different hands which show that they were read out loud in various places of Istanbul by different readers. By extension, the notes provide rich information on the circulation of manuscripts among the book traders and readers of Istanbul. Although the fly-leaf notes offer invaluable data on the reading culture, the contents of the texts, which are predominantly based on the daily experiences of city life, they also give important information about the reading tradition, as well as about the social structure of Istanbul.

All the examples presented in this paper show that public reading became very widespread in Istanbul from the 17th century onwards. This coincides with the time that Istanbul was among the most populated cities of the world. As a result of demographic growth, a new type of social group, called “city boys”, emerged. Although they were regarded as idle populace lounging in the coffeehouses, while the city was viewed as the place of pleasure and comfort in contemporary sources, this new class was the main actor in the process of shaping a new cultural structure. Public reading was an important leisure-time activity for the new city dwellers gathering in the coffeehouses, private houses or courtyards of mosques in Istanbul. Although the extant manuscripts which are mostly dated between the 17th and the 19th centuries imply that this phenomenon became widespread in the 17th century along with the changing demographic formation of the city, it shouldn’t be considered as a mere product of city or popular culture. The interaction between palace and city relates to the movement of people. At this point one should bear in mind that the portable nature of manuscripts made them widespread in both the court and the city. Thus, it is possible to suggest that the manuscripts read aloud in public gatherings are not a product of opposing cultures, court versus city, but represent in fact a more nuanced, complex and fluid continuum.

Boris Liebrenz,
Leipzig University

The material aspect of private manuscript collections in the Ottoman Levant

Well into the 19th century, the Middle East was a region where knowledge was accessible primarily by means of the handwritten book. But while the remains of this flourishing book-culture are still visible in our libraries in form of tens of thousands of volumes and the intellectual value of the texts contained in them is the subject of many studies, the actual material value of possessing books remains poorly understood. How much was a book worth compared to other items of every-day life? Did the book constitute a pecuniary barrier for the lower stratum of society to access knowledge? Was there a difference in the price of a manuscript according to different criteria such as age or content?

The lecture tries to link information gathered from published literary sources and archival material with such as is found in the manuscripts themselves, i.e. in the many notes readers and owners left in them. It is thereby also advocating for a new appreciation of these ownership- and readership-notes as an invaluable source for the social history of the Oriental book and their systematic collection in cataloguing.

In order to do so, the lecture uses manuscripts from the collections of Leipzig and Berlin, all originating from Syria and purchased there at around the middle of the 19th century, as a paradigm. Many of the hundreds of names occurring in these manuscripts can be identified. Some books belonged to praised and influential scholars and notables, some to ordinary people who never made it into the biographical collections and chronicles. Thereby the study of their books can shed light on the intellectual, literary, and educational environment of several layers of a pre-modern society.
Annie Vernay-Nouri
Bibliothèque nationale de France

The cartography of al-Idrisi: problems of dating

Ten manuscripts containing the Geography of al-Idrisi are actually preserved in the world. Only five of them possess a colophon mentioning a date. On what criteria were dated the others? What are the contributions that can bring an codicological and palaeographical examination more deepened (type of writing, paper, foliation, catchwords...) in the problems of dating? Does it lead us to question and to propose new dates? The study will concern the manuscripts of Paris, Saint-Petersburg and Oxford.