Kātib Chelebi (1609-1657) and alphabetization: a methodological investigation of the autographs of his *Kashf al-Ẓunūn* and *Sullam al-Wuṣūl*

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L’étude turc Kâtib Çelebi a composé un grand nombre d’ouvrages utiles en arabe et en turc sur une vaste gamme de sujets. On le connaît surtout dans le monde islamique pour son énorme bibliographie en arabe: Kashf al-Zambil ‘an asâwi al-kutub wa-l-zambil, qui contient des informations sur environ 15 000 titres d’œuvres en arabe, turc et persan, pour environ 10 000 auteurs. Elle est originaire et innovante à plusieurs titres, surtout pour son organisation: les titres ne sont pas regroupés par sujet, mais disposés en une séquence unique, strictement alphabétique. Le grand dictionnaire bibliographique islamique de Kâtib Çelebi, le Sullam al-wuṣūl ilâ tabaqat il-fuṣūl n’ayant jamais été imprimé: il est donc moins connu. Compilé en arabe à partir de nombreux ouvrages de bibliographie (tabaqat) et d’histoire (taʾrij), il est également organisé alphabétiquement et peut servir d’index des auteurs du Kashf. Le brouillon en a heureusement été conservé et se trouve maintenant à la bibliothèque Sûleymaniye à Istanbul. Comment l’auteur a-t-il réussi l’organisation si strictement alphabétique de ces vastes ouvrages, alors que ses déconseils (et la plupart de ses successeurs) dans le domaine islamique y ont échoué? L’examen de l’autographie du Sullam ainsi que des brouillons autographes du Kashf de Kâtib Çelebi permettent de comprendre sa méthode. Dans son autobiographie, à la fin de son recueil d’œuvres, Mizân al-Haqq, il décrit la phase ultime qui correspond à la «publication» en langue moderne: des calligraphies furent chargées de faire des copies soignées (beyâk) destinées à être offertes à des notables.

The immense bibliography of Arabic, Turkish and Persian books Kashf al-Zambil (Keşf üz-Zambil) has been used by countless grateful scholars since its composition three and a half centuries ago. Its author, born Muṣṭafâ son of ‘Abd Allâh, has been generally known since his death, as during much of his lifetime (1609-1657), not by his personal name, but rather by two different titles. To his office colleagues in the Ottoman Army’s Cavalry Audit Office,

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2. For a recent appreciation of his contributions to scholarship, and a survey in English
biography Şiîli-i Oğmät by Mehmed Şîrâya2, will appreciate the greatness of Kâtîb Chelbî’s achievement in alphabetization.

Among the salient original features of the Kâşf is the order of the book titles. Whereas earlier bibliographical compositions were arranged by subject, and/or by the period in which the author of the works listed had lived, Kâtîb Chelbî used a single purely alphabetical sequence, regardless of the subject or the period of composition. He took the trouble to bring as many of the following items of information about each book title as was possible to discover during his many years of reading and research: the author’s death date (when he did not know it he often left a blank, which he might fill in later); the date of the work’s completion, when known; and the language of the book if the book was not in Arabic. In earlier times most authors of books written entirely in Persian or Turkish normally chose to give them titles which were purely Arabic. Since many Islamic book titles (or at least the first few words of their titles) are fancifully poetic3, and may not reveal the subject of the book, Kâtîb Chelbî often described the work’s nature and scope, and sometimes also its internal structure, by listing its major subdivisions or chapters. Only occasionally did he add a brief comment in praise or condemnation4. Not infrequently he quoted the insipit (the first few words of the book): this can be helpful for identifying manuscripts. When commentators (şarîfs) had been written on a work, he mentioned them in his main entry for that work. If such a commentary had a distinctive title, he was careful to provide an entry under the latter in its due alphabetical place. It might be an independent entry or else refer the reader to the main entry title for the original work which has been commented on. Similar treatment was accorded to abridgements (makhtasar or tâlkîfî), continuations (âbîyî), translations (tarjamiyya), etc., with the names of those responsible for the later compositions always being noted when Kâtîb Chelbî knew them. If a book had an alternative title, even if popular or unofficial, a reference from that to the main entry was generally given5.

Seeking also to provide subject bibliographies which could guide readers to good books on subjects in which they were interested but might be bibliographically ignorant, he included some 300 “brief” essays—not all were, in fact, brief—on specific subjects (‘ilm, “science”), each in its due alphabetical place among the book titles. For each “science”, such as medicine (tibî) or history (târîkh), he defined the subject’s scope and gave an alphabetical listing of some of the major book titles in that field. The reader can then find a full descriptive entry for each title in its alphabetical place in the Kâşf.

The present paper seeks to discover the technical methods Kâtîb Chelbî used to produce the Kâşf, his immense user-friendly bibliography which, after a third of a millennium, is still in daily use. The attempt is equally relevant to his biographical dictionary, the Sultanlân.

The composition of the Kâşf was a very long-term project, which lasted at least half of Kâtîb Chelbî’s rather short life of 50 Muslim years (only 48

4. Kâtîb Chelbî’s own books continue this old tradition, e.g. the Kâşf and the Sultanlân, i.e. the Appendix to the edition of the Notable’s); Mînîh ilî-i-Hamâ (‘The Well-crafted Dwelling’); Divanî-i Ârâl (“Guide to Achor”; Lâvîni-i Divanî (“Flashes of Light”).
5. E.g. in his various entries for histories of the Ottomans, Târîkh-i Ârâl: Urmîyye (Târîkh-i Aş-Şe’dar Isfahân). He describes those of İddîa Bûşînî (in Persian), Se dîdârîn and Qâşâîîî (both in Turkish) as being “delightful artistic prose (ıncîli tâyîfî),” while he dismisses that of İbâtî as “one of the foolish or insensitive days of his own time” in his Târîkh-i âmîrî. Similarly Şevî’s Târîkhî book of the 13th century is called “foolish tales” (arpayî niğmî). See Kâşf al-Zanîn, . (İmâm al-Çabrî) (ed. Selcuklu Yalçın and Kâunis Rûzaş); Istanbul, 1941-1943, 3 volumes 283-284.
6. For examples of such commentaries and abridgements, see for instance the entries under Qâlinî in al-Fîrûzî (Fig. 1, manuscript Câsinâlîh 1639, fol. 118r).
7. E.g. in Kâşf reference to Târîkh-i Esiîlî (Istanbul ed., col. 281) to Fânsî-î Mîkhâriçî (col. 198) from Târîkh-i İbn al-Çidâîl (col. 281) to Hâbiti, (col. 2034).
in solar years). Near the end of his last book, Miṣṣān al-Ḥaqq (a collection of essays in Turkish about controversial subjects, which he completed in 1067 h/1657), he refers to his grand bibliographical project. After mentioning that he made a fair copy of a work of his in 1063 h/1653, he describes the final stages of composing the Kashif, for which he had been so long gathering material:

The bibliographical material (esāṁ-i kūṭūb) which I had so far collected from histories and biographical dictionaries, I set in proper order, and moreover the names of many thousands of volumes in the libraries I had personally examined, and the books which for twenty years the booksellers had been bringing to me in a steady stream, all were recorded in their appropriate place... and I added over three hundred articles on the various branches of knowledge, taken from the textbooks on the axioms of the sciences, all in alphabetical order... I designed it to be a comprehensive work on the knowledge of the sciences and of bibliography (‘ulum ve kūṭūb).

We may arrive at some understanding of his methods, by using such references in his works, and by interpreting the make-up of surviving portions of autograph drafts of some of his major works which are preserved in Istanbul libraries, particularly of the Kashif, and the Sultan. In each case we have uncovered successive stages in the preparation. For the Kashif it is clear that Kāṭib Ḥelebi collected relevant information in two principal ways:

1. Indirectly by selecting, combining and editing information from a wide range of works, particularly from collective biographical compilations about scholars in specific fields, and
2. By making notes from books on many subjects, as he personally read or examined thousands of manuscripts over a period of more than two decades.

These were ongoing processes, so that he was continuously supplementing and improving his records for individual entries. At a certain point, perhaps in the last decade of his life, he must have decided that he was nearing what would nowadays be called “publication stage”. We can infer that it was from these individual entries that he edited and recopied the accumulated information to create a continuous text, in his own hand, onto quires of folded sheets of paper. Each page of the Kashif draft is three
times as long as it is wide: 39 x 15 cm. (The quires were probably not seven and bound into their present form of a ledger until later). While the first fifth of this draft is missing, the remainder, constituting folios 50 through 219 of manuscript Carullah 1619, is preserved in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul. The fate of the first 20% of this manuscript will be discussed below (p. 245-246).

I have used the words “we can infer” in the proceeding paragraph because the “individual records” which must have proceeded the drafting of manuscript Carullah 1619 are not extant. The entries in the manuscript are in Kāṭīb Chelebi’s very characteristic handwriting only from f. 50 onwards. Entered in strict alphabetical order of book titles, they form a single column occupying the centre of each page, taking up a little more than half of the page surface. The broad top and outer margins and the narrower bottom and inner ones were originally left blank, but are now crammed full of additional entries in Kāṭīb Chelebi’s own hand. Each addition has been inserted as nearly as possible opposite the point in the central text column where it needed insertion in correct alphabetical sequence. Sometimes Kāṭīb Chelebi has drawn a thin line in ink, linking the marginal annotation to the correct point in the central column.

These additions were written in different inks and often in different sizes of writing, sometimes very small, depending on how much space was still available in the margin. It is obvious that Kāṭīb Chelebi made these insertions on many occasions over a long period, as he never ceased to read widely and to come upon more and more book titles and new information. Many entries remain partly incomplete; e. g. some entries still have blank spaces for the insertion of the death dates of authors already long dead when Kāṭīb Chelebi wrote these entries. He obviously intended to find them and fill them in at some later time.

Typical of this stage of Kāṭīb Chelebi’s autograph draft is Fig. 1, reproduced from the Süleymaniye manuscript Carullah 1619: folios 118b-119a (from the end of Qānūn to Qānūn). In Fig. 1, the main entry for Avicenna’s Qānūn fi al-Tīb and its commentaries, is linked by ink lines to additional entries for later commentaries: they have been squeezed into the margins and small spaces between other entries. One of these insertions notes an abridgment of Avicenna’s Qānūn which Ibn al-Nafis composed under the title al-Mu‘īza. Kāṭīb Chelebi describes the structure of the latter work, starting the entry on fol. 118b and continuing it in the inner margin of the facing folio, 119a. He has drawn an ink line to link the two pages. This shows that when he wrote these pages, they had already been assembled in quires.

10. E.g. on Fig. 1, Carullah 1619, f. 119a, line 4 of the central column.
11. Quires were numbered in red ink in Islamic numerals at the centre of the top margin of the first leaf of each quire, probably by Kāṭīb Chelebi himself; see quire 14 on Fig. 1, f. 119a. The numeral 4 has the characteristic shape mostly used by Kāṭīb Chelebi; compare central column line 2 “sūnūs 484”. (He occasionally used an angular 4, as on the facing page, f. 118b, Qānūn 13h, sub-entry number 4).
though not necessarily been bound. (The current binding must, however, have been put on considerably later, to accommodate the present folios 1-49 which were copied by some other scribe, and are not in the author’s hand. Perhaps it was at this binding or a subsequent rebinding that the volume was trimmed, slicing off bits of Kātib Chelebi’s marginal additions on the outer margins of some pages.)

When he drafted f. 119a (see Fig. 1) he wrote a rubric ‘Ibn al-Qira’ah (“The Science of [Qur’ān] Recitation”), followed by a blank space, in which he evidently intended to briefly define the scope of this subject, based on formulations in four standard reference works: in the margins he noted for his own future convenience the folio references to (his own?) copies of manuscripts: Jawāmi’ 30; Ḥafṣ 12; Ṣa’d 60; Khālid 198. Before he had time to draft his definition of Qira’ah, which was to be one of the 300 brief essays on the sciences, he found himself obliged to invade that assigned space with entries for additional commentaries, etc., on Avicenna’s Qānūn.

The second portion of the entry for ‘Ibn al-Qira’ah, is an alphabetical listing of book titles on this subject, under the rubric al-Kutub al-mu‘allafah fih. It remains intact and “uninvaded” in the centre of the page, since it had been mainly drafted earlier. Nevertheless, he made later insertions into this alphabetical list, some in the margins linked by an ink line to their correct place in the central column, as can be seen on Fig. 1.

Having digressed to point out a few of the interesting features on just a single 2-page opening, we will return to a more general discussion. The author evidently felt that the state of his manuscript was no longer sufficiently clear to serve as a final draft. It was full of insertions and additions, some written so small as to be almost illegible, and many words were in abbreviated forms, often without the full diacritical marks which distinguish graphically similar letters (such as bā‘, tā‘, thā‘, ni‘a, and yā‘, shin and sīn, dāl and dāl, sīd and dāl, qāf and ‘a‘).

He apparently decided to recopy the draft clearly, so as to make a new easily readable manuscript which would also incorporate all the previously marginal additions into a single sequence, as a single central column, and could then serve as the Vorlage or master text from which multiple copies could be made. In his volume of essays in Turkish, Miṣān il-Haqq he tells us:

> At the request of those scholars who had seen it in draft, when it reached the letter bā‘ it was copied for the first time were prepared and presented to the leading ‘ulama. They liked it and approved it."

It is presumably to what is now manuscript Revan 2059 in Topkapı Palace Library, that he is referring in this passage. Only f. 1-306 are in fact in Kātib Chelebi’s hand, covering from the beginning of the alphabet and extending in fact as far as the middle of the letter dāl (last entry: al-Darāk fi al-laff al-mustakhār).

As a sample of this stage of the Kāshīf I reproduce, as Fig. 2, folios 180b and 181a of the Revan manuscript, covering entries from ‘Ibn al-‘aṣāṣ” to ‘Ibn al-ḥāṣ.” Although the handwriting is obviously Kātib Chelebi’s, the general appearance of these pages differs greatly from those of the Carullah draft: the margins of the Revan manuscript are mainly blank as compared with the Carullah, because what had previously been additions in Carullah have been incorporated into the central column of this final version (Revan 2059).

Each of its pages is 33 x 11 cm, rather smaller than Carullah’s 39 x 13 cm, though in the same proportions of height to width. Since this was a fair copy (kāmil) intended for future copyists, Kātib Chelebi should, logically, have left the margins empty. Being an incorrigible perfectionist, however, he could not refrain from expanding and correcting some of its earlier pages, even as he was fair-copying the later ones of the same manuscript.

We may assume that Kātib Chelebi did not live to continue his fair copy for the remainder of the alphabet (al-Durūs to the end of yā‘) it is not mentioned anywhere.

The two surviving autographs do not overlap at all, but complement one another precisely. The Revan 2059 fair copy covers only alif to al-Darāk, the Carullah 1619 draft only from al-Durūs to the end of the alphabet. (The remaining portions of these two manuscripts were not written by Kātib Chelebi, but copied by others, as we have seen). This raises the question: what happened to the draft codex section containing alif to al-Darāk which must have originally constituted the first portion of the Carullah manuscript?

Neither Kātib Chelebi nor anyone else provides an answer. We have already seen that Kātib Chelebi was perfectionist. I suspect that as he completed the revision of each stage of his work, he destroyed the “superseded working papers” on which it was based, for fear that the superseded text might fall into the hands of a copyist and be reproduced, and thus compete with the improved text that Kātib Chelebi had worked so long and so hard to perfect. So, having made the effort to produce a final fair-copy of the sections alif to al-Darāk of the Kāshīf (which survives as Revan 2059), he

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12. E.g., fol. 89a top fol. 50a; fol. 73a bottom.
13. Alfaḥr, pp. 142-143 = Balans 144.
14. On manuscript Revan 2059, fol. 215b, a colophon in Kātib Chelebi’s hand at the end of the letter bā‘ states that this marks the end of volume 1. It is dated R 72h 1062 h/21 January 1652. On fol. 216a is the equivalent of a title page for “volume 2”, also in Kātib Chelebi’s handwriting; f. 216b starts with the letter lām. His own writing continues for another 90 lines, until the middle of fol. 30a, where the writing stops suddenly at the end of the entry of Darāk. The remainder of this page and all of fol. 30b is left blank.

Thus Kātib Chelebi gives us three different termination points for the text of: (a) the end of the letter bā‘ (manuscript Revan 2059, f. 215b); (b) the end of the letter bā‘ (last chapter of the Miṣān composed probably in the last year of his life in 1660 h/late 1659 or 1667; See Miṣān p. 142-143 = Balans p. 144-145); (c) the title al-Durūs (manuscript Revan 2059, f. 30a; this is the last entry in the author’s hand).
would have destroyed the corresponding part of the draft. He retained only sections Durus to yūf (now in Carullah 1619) for future editing into a fair copy—one which he did not live to complete.

Kātib Chelebi had set himself the task of producing a strictly alphabetical reference book covering the total production of books in the Muslim world. Anyone who wished to know about a specific book title would have an excellent chance of quickly finding a description of the book there in its alphabetical location, accompanied by information on its contents and its author. We have described the final and final stages of Kātib Chelebi's work. What of the earlier stages? We are still left with this puzzle: How did he establish and maintain bibliographical control of the many thousands of book titles to the point where he was able to arrange them in the strict alphabetical order exhibited in his Carullah and Revan autographs of the Kashf?

Over the course of many years, Kātib Chelebi examined thousands of manuscripts in Arabic, Turkish and Persian, and read all or part of many of them. It would have been impossible to memorize all this information and arrange it alphabetically in his mind only, and thus produce his working draft, by relying on his memory alone. He would surely not have decided to produce a bibliography without having previously determined how to store and retrieve the information efficiently and rapidly. Obviously he would have made written notes while reading, but where would he file this information? One possibility would be a series of blank ledgers, one for each letter of the alphabet: whenever he examined a manuscript he could have entered its title and details in the relevant alphabetical ledger. When ready to produce a working draft he could have numbered each title in its sub-alphabetical order. The next hypothetical stage would be to record all the entries into a single working copy or ledger in strict alphabetical order like Carullah 1619. Such a scenario is believable, because it would be complicated, time consuming and would leave many possibilities for error. It is practically inconceivable that a man skilled as a professional financial auditor would have used such an inefficient scheme.

Far more likely, to my mind, is a scenario in which Kātib Chelebi would, whenever he examined a manuscript, jot down on a fiche, in a standardized format, all relevant details of its title, author, internal arrangement, subject, and sometimes incipit, language, etc. When a large number of such fiches had been assembled he could have alphabetized them for his own convenient quick reference, to avoid duplication and to easily make additions or corrections. After many years of accumulation he could have decided to make access to this information easier, by transferring it all into the form of a codex, which could ultimately be recopied and thus "published."

If only a box of such fiches were to be found, this theory would be proved. Unfortunately none has been found! I suggested above that Kātib Chelebi is likely to have destroyed the first portion of his working draft manuscript codex of the Kashf as soon as it became superseded by his fair copy (baydīl-baydīl) of the same section (Revan manuscript 2059). The same kind of thing would be likely to have taken place at the preceding stage. As soon as he would have transferred the information from his alphabetized fiches onto his autograph first draft codex (which became Carullah 1619), he would have destroyed all these now out-dated fiches which preceded it.

If we cannot resurrect the fiches which we assume must have underlain the Kashf, we can prove from the autograph draft of one of his other reference works that he did indeed use fiches for certain purposes (See below (p 257-258). His Sullam al-Wasā'il li'l Taṣābīl al-Fuḍūl, is a comprehensive biographical encyclopedia of notable men (and a few women) of all periods up to and including his own time, arranged in a single alphabetical sequence, by given personal name (i.e., not by function or title). Its composition took many years, and was partly contemporaneous with the Kashf. He compiled it in Arabic, largely from earlier books, many of them standard biographical works (Taṣābīl and Taḥkīrāt) and histories (Tawārīkh). Some of the more "recent" biographies were, however, provided, or supplemented from Kātib Chelebi's personal acquaintance either with the biographees or with people who had such first-hand personal knowledge of them.

Like many of his projects, the Sullam was never fully completed. The autograph draft now in the Soleymaniye Library in Istanbul, manuscript Şehit Ali Paşa 1887, gives two different completion dates, about five years apart: 1053 h/1643 and 1058 h/1649, both in the author's hand (19). The latter date must refer to the finishing of a revision. In the Mīzān (completed in 1067 h/ late 1663 or 1667), he declared that he had produced a fair copy of the Sullam up to the letter i'āf in 1061 and 1062 h/1651-1652 (19).

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16. E.g. Umāmah bint Aḥī al-‘Ad (second wife of Aḥī b. Aḥī Talḥā) (fol. 5a); Umm Ayyān, Umm Koltum, Aḥīmah bint Wāḥib b. ‘Abī al-Ma‘ṣūm (fol. 75b); Ḥawwasaw wājiz ‘Abī Ḥamīd, [five wife of ‘Abī Ḥamīd], Ḥawwasaw bint Yazīd (f. 88a), both of these having headings only, without source references or biographies.

17. E.g. in his biographical entry for Aḥmad al-Rūmānī (d. Dhu’l-Hijjah 1041 h/1632), he writes that his information came from Aḥmad’s son Māhnīdī, who studied a mathematical text under Kātib Chelebi. Māhnīdī himself died in 1058 h/1648 (f. 43a).

18. Respectively on f. 96a, the colophon of part 2, dated 22 December 1642; and on f. 97b, colophon of the whole work, "last decade of Dhu’l-Ḥijjah 1058 h/ 6-15 January 1649.

19. Mīzān 147 = Şehit Ali Paşa 1887. The catalogue of the Dir al-Kutub al-Mīyah (Ephraim National Library) records a manuscript, no. 52 M., containing the first part of the Sullam, [from al-ṣul] until the biographical entry for Būdūl Nisr (Nebuchadnezzar), written in an "ordinary" hand (fi-yānim mu’ āqal) (Bīrūt al-mu‘ādāt bi-l-Dir. Cairo, 1385 h/1965, vol. 5, p. 218). No further details of contents or foliation are given; but according to its title of Şehit Ali Paşa 1887, (written in Kātib Chelebi’s handwriting and assereti haktinda hicazetmeleri. Ankara, T. T. K., 1957, p. 61, f.). In the Şehit Ali Paşa
The Sullam is a biographical dictionary which is both unusual and very original in many ways. The author expressly designed it "as a service to scholars." As this great work has never been printed, a brief description of its contents and methods should be useful.

It is made up of two main parts. Part I (al-Qsim al-awwal, f. 1-272a) consists of biographies in strict alphabetical order of ism (personal name), followed by those of the subject's ancestors for two or more generations (son ibn father the name of father ...). After this comes several name elements or appellations, to the extent that they apply and are known, such as laqab, nasab, shubrah, tabahra. Kütib Chelebi writes the "best known" of these names or designations in red ink [which I indicate in my transcription here in bold type], much as later European scholars indicated these in their reference works by italics or wide spacing (e.g. Brockelmann in Geschichte der arabischen Literatur). Thus, on fol. 25b (see Fig. 3) we find such entries as: 'Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Malik [plus the ism of six more generations of ancestors] al-ma' ruf bi. Ibn al-Shubhayd [the last name vocalized thus, to warn against reading "Shahid"]. 'Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Wahid b. 'Abd al-Karim b. Khalaf Ibn al-Turkmâni; 'Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Walihab b. 'Abd al-Dâ'im al-Tâmâmi al-Qurashî al-ma' ruf bi al-Nuwaysî; 'Ahmad b. 'Ubayd Allah [plus 5 further ancestors] al-ma' ruf bi-šâd al-Shari'î al-Mabûbûbît; (f. 27a): 'Ahmad b. 'Alî al-Khâjîb al-Baghdâdî; (f. 27b): 'Ahmad b. 'Alî al-Warrâq; 'Ahmad b. 'Alî al-A'umâr al-Samarqandî; (f. 28a): 'Ahmad b. 'Umar al-ma' ruf bi-Najm al-Dîn Kâbrî; (f. 28b) Ahmad al-Yasawi; Ahmad Bi-Jân; Ahmad al-shâhir bi-Dînjûz (Dînîjûz); Qarqah Ahmad (Qarqa Ahmad).

Part II of the Sullam (f. 272b-563a) is a very innovative index, referring the reader from the most commonly used appellation (shubrah, laqab, nisabah, or kanzah, etc.) of each biographee to his personal name entry as it appears in Part I (the main sequence). That Kütib Chelebi was very proud of this systematic index of cross references is evident from his marginal note opposite the heading of Part II: "This portion is of great utility and is very much needed." In the entries of Part II he explained many of these designations, for example nisabah, derived from little-known geographical or tribal names and

manuscript the letter 's' ends at f. 64b or 65a. That means the Cairo manuscript contains less than 12% of the full text of the Sullam. Without seeing the Cairo manuscript, we cannot absolutely preclude the possibility that it may be the first part of a fair copy – maybe even in Kütib Chelebi's hand, which could be described as ma'i 'azal. But Kütib Chelebi's statement in the Mûza (in the printed edition and in my own 18th century manuscripts, T18 and T19) that the fair copy of the Sullam went up to the letter 'f' (rather than Cairo's mid-'f') makes any identification of the Cairo manuscript with the fair copy mentioned in the Mûza extremely unlikely.

20 "kimmatan li-sâhit al-'ala'm i-sa al-\text{alâha}..." (manuscript Şehîd Ali Paşa, 1887, colophon, f. 577b).
21 The assistant director of the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, Dr. Nevzat Kaya, told me orally on 27 April 1994 that the Turkish Ministry of Culture (Kültür Bakanlığı) had decided to print a facsimile edition of the Sullam. When this will occur is not yet known.
22 "al-Qsim al-\text{a}lisî mîn al-\text{a}lisî, fi tarih al-\text{a}nisî waw al-\text{a}lîm, wa hamad nâyman 'alî li hawâjî bi-kull bâb! Facing it in the margin: wa hamad yâ 'azam măf 'an waqûtudd al-\text{a}lîm li-hawâjî. (Şab. 272b)."
the origin of some personal titles. His special subsection devoted to “surnames beginning with Ibn” includes occasional genealogical diagrams showing the relationship of famous members of such families. To aid identification he often noted the date of death in Part II, as he had in Part I. After the end of Part II, Kâbit Chelebi added a Khatûnînâ (“Conclusion”, f. 563b-577b), a mixed bag of interesting pieces of information, including various series of anecdotes, grouped by theme or other characteristics, which he had culled from many of the bibliographical sources which he had consulted.

While the Sultan stands an independent bibliographical dictionary, it can also serve as a kind of author index to the Kâbit Chelebi.

When the Sultan autograph was to be microfilmed at the Süleymaniye Library in 1957, I suspect that it was tightly bound, and the writing which projected into the inner margins on many pages was difficult to photograph. The problem may have been solved by cutting the sewing, thus disbinding the manuscript. The quires are now loose and the manuscript is very vulnerable to damage. For many years the Süleymaniye has routinely denied access to those wishing to study the manuscript. Instead, would-be readers have had to be content with examining a poor-quality photocopy, made from an uneven black and white microfilm in the Süleymaniye’s microfilm archive. If one must rely on this photocopy alone it is very difficult to check on important details of Kâbit Chelebi’s methods.

Despite the Süleymaniye’s policy, I allowed a very brief look at the original in December 1979. I noted down at that time that I saw pages of the manuscript containing biographies written on horizontal strips of paper stuck together vertically to form folios. This is not at all clearly visible from the Süleymaniye’s photocopy. My brief and cursory look at the original manuscript seemed to provide evidence that these pages might have been made up of separate fiches written by Kâbit Chelebi to record the biographies. They were certainly in his very characteristic handwriting. I guessed that if these fiches were alphabetized and assembled onto pages after they had been written, they might represent his own system of compilation, one that would be equally convenient and flexible for preparing his contemporaneous reference book. The Khatûnînâ. He would presumably have sorted the fiches from every manuscript which he examined. At a later stage he would alphabetize the fiches and then have them stuck together vertically to create pages. From this he would have developed, as a working draft, the manuscript which is now Caralh 1619. Ö. Ş. Gökilay examined this manuscript in detail in 1957 or earlier, and reported explicitly: “as some pages were composed of different articles [sou, biographical entries] glued together, it is clear that Kâbit Chelebi had prepared these fiches separately at a previous time.”

Before writing this paper on Kâbit Chelebi’s bibliographical methodology for oral presentation at the “Journées de Codicologie et de Paléographie des Manuscrits du Moyen-Orient” I felt it essential to verify my assumptions, based as they were on a brief look at the autograph 14 years earlier. Thanks to the kind intervention of a Turkish academic expert and manuscript specialist, the Süleymaniye authorities were persuaded to let me examine the original of the Sultan autograph at length in April 1994, and to permit me to choose selected pages to be photographed in colour. As a result, a much better understanding of the author’s methods has been gained.

Kâbit Chelebi’s autograph Sullam, manuscript Şehit Ali Paşa 1887, consists of 577 small folios, or 1154 individual pages, each measuring about 27 x 10 cm. Each original sheet of paper has been folded over, to constitute two leaves or folios, each folio therefore consisting of two pages of writing. In other words, each original sheet now consists of 4 pages (each written on both sides). Generally, each quire (or gathering) consists of 5 such sheets, constituting a total of 16 folios, which means 20 written surfaces or pages.27

23. Fad al-far‘ah wa l-funun (f. 273b).
24. E. ibn Al-A‘im (f. 274a); ibn al-Sukayn (277b); ibn Zahrâ’i (f. 293a); ibn al-‘Adîm (f. 293b); ibn Al-A‘im (f. 293b).
25. In Part I (the main entry sequence) he usually uses the euphemistic form al-mutnânh [f. nowf] a‘lam [year], followed by the date in words, to minimize errors in copying which would result from using only numerals. In Part II he normally uses the short word wâ‘ (he died), with the date in numerals only above it, to save space.
26. al-Khatûnînâ, fi farsÎy ‘alâ ‘ilâm al-‘arabîn. On various “firsts” the first mutanânh ever established (f. 560b); the first books composed (f. 564a); those who transmitted the largest number of hadîthr (f. 564-565a); the most prolific authors (f. 567a), with various later insertions by Kâbit Chelebi; remarkable facts (sou, anecdotes). In Part I, the anecdotes of the Qur‘an (hâfiz) who lived exceptionally long lives (567b); anecdotes about: sâmil al-hajj (568a) and scholars (568b); kings and voices, and kings who loved scholarship (570a); great men who refused to accept high religious office (572a); the powerlessness of important men, and mistakes of the great regarding the names of important people; difficult names (f. 573a); anecdotes on conflicts (qarîn) between notable scholars (573a-574a); on judges (qâdî); and shaykhs (574b-575a); shaykhs executed judicially under religious law (qarīf, 575b); scholars (‘ullamâ’) who opposed Sultan (576). The final section of the work (f. 576-577a) records a series of “firsts” and “lasts” e. g. the first convert to Islam; author; mature; judge in Egypt; the last Companions (al-Dhâhib) to do (577a).
27. Köşk Köşk, in the commemorative volume published by the Türk Tarih Kurumu in 1957 on the 300th anniversary of Kâbit Chelebi’s death, Kâbit Chelebi: i̇lmi̇ṫbi̇ṡḣ vîdeṫ ... p. 60. In his long examination of the manuscript he somehow failed to notice how these pages were glued together: Kâbit Chelebi’s habit of writing over the pages joins proven (as I will show below) that the pages could not have been physically constituted by assembling the author’s original fiches and later sticking them together.
28. The composition of the quires of the Sultan manuscript Şehid Ali Paşa 1887, their grouping and numeration, the binding and rebinding all deserve further study. At least some of the individual quires still have numbers. The first ones visible are on f. 12a, 22a, and 32a, and bear the Islamic numerals 4, 5 and 6 respectively, written in black ink at the top corner of the first page of each quire. The last numbered quire I noticed was on f. 312a; it is numbered 32. Various pages showed that words at the margins had sometimes been trimmed off (especially at the upper margins). It is therefore obvious that those had been the victim of the binder’s and (or rebinder’s) knife. The same knife may well have removed the missing quire numerals. Occasionally the pages of a gathering are numbered at the bottom of the verso in red ink: f. 52r through 56r are numbered respectively 1
Each page contains many entries, not in calligraphy but in what many be described as Turkish scholar’s functional 'iṣ'āq script. The size varies, from small (for regular entries) to very small or even tiny (for some of the additions and insertions).

I have now established that those folios made up of pieces of paper assembled and stuck together constitute no more than one sixth of the manuscript. My previous impression that such patched pages were much more numerous derived from the fact most of the first and the last parts of the manuscript were of this kind. In fact they were limited to f. 12 through 57/ and 567 through 577; that is, only 96 folios of the 577. The other five-sixths, totalling 481 folios, were on regular unpatched paper, including sheets bearing watermark design 29.

It was from pages like f. 13a and the other half of the same sheet, f. 20 (Fig. 4) that I had gained the false impression in 1979 that the manuscript was essentially made up of fiches staked together. I hope the figures reproduced in the present article come out clearly enough to show that each of these pages is an assemblage of four slips of paper (fiches) of similar heights (about 7 cm), plus a narrow strip at the bottom of the page. The slips are glued together slightly overlapping, so that the height of the page is near 27 cm.

The more pages I examined in 1994, the clearer it became that my first impression, gained from a brief look at the manuscript in 1979 was not tenable – the pages could not have been patched together from the author’s original individual working fiches. The patched pages could perhaps have been copied from pre-existing notes or fiches. There are several convincing proofs that the strips of paper which were assembled into pages could not have been Kâtib Chelebi’s original fiches: his writing often straddled the joins at the point where the strips were glued together – he had written on top of the joint. This means that the patchwork pages must have been blank at the time they were first stuck together. In addition, most of these strips contained not a single biography, but several, all in correct alphabetical order, which could hardly have been achieved, unless the biographies had previously been alphabetized on some preceding draft fiches.

through 5 (fol. 13a top also bears the numeral 1 in red ink). Elsewhere, on occasion, internal pages of a gathering are numbered in Islamic numerals on the top right margin of the verso and the top left margin of the recto, e.g., f. 548a is marked 6, and 548b has a 7. F. 549a through 557a seem to have no numbers at present, but 557b is marked 16 (This is the last example of such numeration). All these numbers are very old. The manuscript also bears modern Islamic numerals in black ink at the top left of each recto page; they are probably no older than the latter 20th century, and are sometimes by one number from the pencilled European style numerals next to them, which were added later in the 20th century. watermark are sometimes present at the bottom verso of folios, e.g., 23b-25b.

29 Watermarks are visible, inter alia, on the double folio 12 and 21, 255, 258 (different), 307, 286, 286, 292.

Fig. 4. Autograph draft of the Sulûm al-Wugal. Ms. Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Şebii Ali Pasha 1087, 121b.

Fig. 5. Diagram of a page of the Sulûm (compare with Fig. 4).
Further examination of these 48 sheets (96 folios) showed that they were not uniform in their make-up. The individual sheets consist of patchworks of papers of differing sizes glued together. Let us examine, for example, f. 25b-26a, the double folio centrefold of a quire (Fig. 3). It is a standard size sheet of 27 x 20 cm, but it is skillfully assembled from at least 7 or 8 separate pieces of paper, varying in colour and texture. The two largest pieces straddle portions of both folios, thus:

![Diagram of a bifolio of the Sallum (f. 25b-26a).](image)

On the diagram above, all size are approximate and I have assigned arbitrary numbers to the separate pieces of paper which were glued together.

![Autograph draft of the Sallum. Ms. Istanbul, Sicilemanize, Sehid Ali Pasa 1887, f. 26b-27a.](image)
to create the sheet. I do not imply that they were assembled in this sequence. Further, the paper numbered 6 may be a later repair. Other notable samples of patchwork pages are f. 20b-21a (Fig. 4); 27a (Fig. 7); 60-61; 83-90; 563; 564; 672b-673a (Fig. 8); 577b.

Why did Kâtib Chelebi choose to write his draft on such composite sheets of what may be considered scrap paper? A late 20th century analogy is suggested. When preparing the present article I did not use good new paper for my first and second drafts. When writing ephemeral notes like these drafts I have found it economical to recycle old photocopied paper which I no longer need, but which still has a perfectly usable blank reverse side. This is ideal for such temporary purposes. When I have established my final text and have it typed on good paper as my bayâd, for lecturing or printing, I throw away the recycled photocopy paper, as it has outlived its usefulness. I propose an analogous explanation in Kâtib Chelebi's case. His paper supplier offered him (perhaps at a bargain price!) a batch of about 48 or 50 sheets of “recycled scrap paper” made up of irregular bits and pieces glued together to form standard size sheets. Kâtib Chelebi decided that it was good enough for ephemeral writing, such as producing a draft, to be discarded in a few years when he was ready to edit his final text, to create a bayâd (fair copy) on normal quality paper. These 96 irregular folios were the recycled photocopy paper of the 17th century!

From the preceding paragraphs, it should be clear that this batch of abnormal folios in manuscript Şehid Ali Paşa 1887 cannot possibly be the original fiches which the author used when composing the Siliyam.

Having proved that these were not Kâtib Chelebi's fiches, it may appear paradoxical to declare now that this same manuscript demonstrates that he not only knew of fiches as a flexible system of note organization, but also that he actually used them in the earlier stages of composing the Siliyam (and other works). The evidence is found in the inner margins of the Siliyam manuscript, where slips of paper, i.e. fiches, are glued in. When there was no writing space left on the surface of a page and Kâtib Chelebi wanted to insert a previously unintended biography, or additional details on a biographee already included on the page, he would write a fiche containing the new information and glue it by its edge only, into the channel of the inner margin, so that it was near its correct alphabetical sequence in the book. To ensure accuracy he sometimes drew an ink line linking the fiche to its intended point of entry (e.g. the fiches between f. 26b and 27a = Fig. 7; between 47b and 48a = Fig. 9; for the two parts of Navaç's biography linked by a line across adjacent pages30). When Kâtib Chelebi found that the space available on the page was not large enough to complete an entry, he would

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30. The biography of 'Ali-Shir Navaç (Navaç) at the top of f. 48a is linked by a black ink line to its continuation, at an angle, at the top of f. 159a.
sometimes write as much as he could on the page, finishing with the three letters 'ayn lám-dáff (evidently an abbreviation for ‘āṣāwī’ lám, meaning "[Continued in] Addition [in insert]"). Into the channel of the inner margin opposite he would glue a fiche with the same three letters at the top, and complete the entry. 31 Kātib Chelebi was not the first nor the only person in the pre-modern Islamic world to glue in an occasional note containing additional information or comments into a manuscript book. 32 I know of no Islamic manuscript before his, however, where this occur so systematically and so often.

31. E.g., between f. 5 and 6 (two separate fiches on different kinds of paper but of the same size—one of them contains a different biography on each side); between f. 27/28; 63/64; 105/106; 174/175 (misplaced—it really belongs to f. 176a); 223/224; 225/226; 229/230; 231/232.

32. Manuscripts of works by other authors occasionally have comments or additional information, written on slips of paper glued in on the page or into the margin. Dr. Ian J. Wilmot of Leiden University Library has told me that he had seen quite a number of such manuscripts.

I believe we can extrapolate from this case to postulate the methods he used, in successive or (more likely), concurrent stages of compiling the Sullam. He must first have read a large number and variety of biographical works. At various points in the Sullam, indeed, he explicitly acknowledged many sources by title or author and sometimes even by folio number of the manuscripts which he consulted or planned to check. After this preliminary reading he must have drawn up a list of the names which he selected for inclusion in his book. Being already accustomed to use fiches to store information for later use, he must surely have entered the name of most of the selected biographees on separate fiches, later filling in details culled from different sources as he continued his research.

Consider the alternative. The autograph notes which we see next to many of the entries in the Sullam give references (often by folio number) to more than a hundred separate source works, many of which were not alphabetically arranged. It would have been impossible for Kātib Chelebi to have, in one single stage, edited and compiled all this information from the sources directly into his own codex, Şehit Ali Paşa 1887, and to have managed at the same time to create and maintain a strict alphabetical order in it.

While many entries in the Sullam were fairly complete when the working draft was first made, a considerable number were not. Some were only partly ready, and others consisted of nothing more than a heading giving the biographer’s name, perhaps accompanied by one or more abbreviated references to either the author or the title of some biographical or historical work, followed by a numeral. The latter is apparently the folio on which the biography occurs in that specific source—very likely in a copy in Kātib Chelebi’s own book collection. 33 Multiple source references for a single biographe are not uncommon. Yet not all source references were actually used in Kātib Chelebi’s biographies. For example, although he noted folio references to 5 separate sources for the life of al-Qisim... Abu ‘Ubaid on fol. 178a, he never managed to write the biography. At the bottom of the same page he completed a biography of al-Qisim... al-‘Umrānī, which was headed by no less than 6 source references with folio numbers. Yet in the relevant biographical entries beneath he often refers to only one of them: in very last words dhakara Tuṣ in al-Dīn, or... al-Suṣṭi, or... Ibn al-Nau’i [=Nevī‘ al-ṣūd].

Sometimes Kātib Chelebi has for some reason made the effort to scratch out, rather than cross out, a source reference at the head of a biography, e.g. f. 265a at the head of the entry for Haķim Ya‘qīb (Haķim Ya‘qīb), doctor to...
Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror. On line 4 of the entry the author refers to episodes in the doctor’s life karn al-Shafi ‘i 34.

Occasionally Kāṭīb Chelebi inadvertently provided two biographies for a single individual, and rectified the error by crossing one of them out 35. Sometimes he crossed out a completed biography even when it seems not to be a duplicate. 36.

It is remarkable how well the author managed to maintain alphabetical order when he noticed an entry which was out of sequence, he restored the correct order by putting the numerals 2 and 1 in the margin. This occurs a few times in Part II (the index of kuṣūṣ etc.). In the Carullah 1619 draft of the Kāṣīf the author now and then inserted in the margin the letters mīm and kha, conventional abbreviations for muqaddam [insert earlier] and mu‘akkhar [insert later], meaning that these entries should be in reverse sequence— but such instances are rather rare.

In some parts of the Sullām manuscript, many entry headings are not followed by biographies, even when Kāṭīb Chelebi has supplied them with source references. For example, fol. 259b (Fig. 10) has headings and source references for 4 different bearers of the name Yaqūt, but only one has a biography attached. On the facing folio (260a), only 5 of the 9 entries have biographies. That of Yahyā b. Ja‘far al-Barmakī was never written although his name is accompanied by a source reference. Still more surprising is the fact that Kāṭīb Chelebi later crossed his name out. Indeed, there are many similar cases of his eliminating previously planned biographies (e. g., Fig. 3, two each on f. 25b and 26a; Fig. 4, one on f. 20b, and 3 on f. 21a).

Of great interest, too, is the way in which Kāṭīb Chelebi made additions when space for a new or expanded entry was too limited or not available at all. He would then write in increasingly tiny writing, squeezing it into any unoccupied surface, sometimes at unusual angles. On occasion, he would start an additional entry above an existing, previously written biography and would then continue on its left and right margins and beneath it, so engulffing the earlier one, leaving it like an island surrounded by additions. When he could not complete an additional entry on one page he would continue it in the margin or other space on the facing page, linking the two parts with an ink line.

35. E. g. Mustafā ibn Muhammād, Bustan Chelebi, f. 243a; the second biography of the same man, on the reverse of the same folio, is crossed out, although its content is somewhat different.

Fig. 10. Autograph draft of the Sullām. Ms. Istanbul, Sûleymaniye, Şehid Ali Paşa 1887, f. 259b-260a.
Conclusion

In this section we will summarise our conclusions and make some final observations.

From studying Kâtûb Chelebi’s autographs, in particular the draft of his Sülûm (Süleymaniye, Şehid Ali Paşa 1887), and the Kashf; both the fair copy of the first part (Topkapı, Revan 2059) and the draft of the remainder (Süleymaniye, Carullah 1619) we have learnt a lot about his methods of compilation, and can deduce a good deal more. The period when he compiled these two works overlapped and the methods he used were similar. We can therefore extrapolate the procedures employed in one to those used in the other. In summary, I see the following stages:

1. Kâtûb Chelebi must have used fiches for his initial record-making, in preparing both of these works. He may have been the first Muslim scholar to have used a fiche system systematically. While the original fiches are no longer extant, some later fiches on which he noted additions are extant, glued into the inner margin channels at various points in the Sülûm draft.

2. He made a separate fiche for each biography planned for the first stage of the Sülûm, as he must have done in the early years of note-taking of book titles for the Kashf.

3. For the Sülûm he went through well over 100 biographical and historical works, selecting the names of those whose biographies he planned to include, making notes on fiches of either the biographical details or only the folio number of these biographies in his source manuscripts. For contemporaneous or recent personalities he did not usually cite sources.

4. For the Kashf he apparently made notes on fiches for many years about the titles of books he read, or saw personally, or knew of indirectly through written references in other books.

5. He arranged the fiches in strict alphabetical order. He referred to these stages of his work on the Kashf when he wrote: “The bibliographical material I had so far collected, from histories and biographical dictionaries, I set in proper order and moreover the names of the many thousands of volumes in the libraries I had personally examined, and the books which for 20 years the booksellers had been bringing me a steady stream.”

6. When he decided that the information he had accumulated was sufficient to constitute the basis of a reference work, he edited the fiches, copying them on to the elongated quires conventionally used for drafts (i.e. each page three times as high as it was wide).

7. He discarded the original fiches as superseded. One may surmise that he destroyed them to ensure that some future copyist should not come upon them, and create an alternative recension based on out-of-date material which had been superseded by his own revisions and additions.

8. Henceforth Kâtûb Chelebi made all deletions and other changes directly onto the working draft codes, musawwarâdah (miicwâdâ). In the case of the Sülûm, this was Şehid Ali Paşa 1887, and for the Kashf Carullah 1619. This stage lasted many years, as attested by his numerous additions and corrections in different inks and script sizes.

9. A final “edition”, bayâlî (beyâlî) was his ultimate objective, a fair copy which would act as a Vorlage for future copies to be made by professional copyists as required. He partly achieved this in his autograph of the first part of the Kashf, listing alphabetically book titles from the letters alif to the middle of dâl. (This is now manuscript Revan 2059, f. 1-306b). He referred to this stage, when he wrote in the Mîzâra (his last work):

... at the request of scholars who had seen it in draft, when it reached the letter lâ’; fair copies of the first volume, were prepared.²⁸

Manuscript Revan 2059 is in typical Kâtûb Chelebi handwriting. Most pages, like f. 180b-181a (Fig. 2), seem much neater than those of his draft (see above, p. 240, Fig. 1 from Carullah 1619), which was characterised by masses of additions crammed into the margins and all available spaces. Those additions would be incorporated in the main central column of the Revan manuscript, so that, in principle at least, its margins remain blank. But old habits die hard. Even the perfectionist, he just found it impossible to refrain from making marginal additions to the earlier pages of his fair copy, even while he was fair copying its later pages from his Carullah draft.

Long before the Islamic world had any printed books Kâtûb Chelebi managed by prodigious and unrelenting efforts, to produce amazing and innovative bibliographical achievements, as well as other important books. From his generation to ours, the many who have constantly consulted his works have felt an abiding sense of gratitude.

Rahim Allah rahmatan wali’ anum.

²⁸. ibid.

37. Mitta, p. 142 – Bâliner, p. 143-144.