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Rare Saudi Arabian Manuscripts

Examples from a Collection of Rare Arabic Manuscripts
Preserved in the King Abdulaziz Foundation
for Research and Archives

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Preface

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the universe, and blessings and peace be upon the Seal of the Messengers, our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his family and Companions and all those who follow his guidance until the Day of Judgment.

Allah has given special favor to the Arabian Peninsula as it is the home of the Two Holy Mosques; He honored it yet again with the Islamic Sharia which rose out of its pure deserts and he honored its inhabitants by making them the bearers of the message of Islam and peace to all the world, and thereby to enlighten the darkness of the world with the lamps of the true guidance and knowledge.

There is no doubt that this blessed land witnessed a broad based renaissance in learning, a florescence of knowledge, and cultural activity, but the will of Allah decreed that - due to a variety of causes - this Arabian Peninsula would witness a withdrawal from learning, a weakness in the composition of books, but without totally extinguishing the lamp of learning.

It was as if the remaining embers of a glorious past awaited the appearance of a new sun beyond the horizon, whose good works would encompass all and benefit this blessed land. Then the Saudi State rose up, and through it Allah prepared the way for a true renaissance and real advancement; the movement of writing books once again became active; different sorts of libraries were established; and the educational circles gathered around the ulema proliferated, and were attended by students hungry for learning and knowledge. As a consequence of the changed conditions and the unlimited support granted by the Saudi State, scholarly activity once again arose, manuscripts were written, libraries began to proliferate containing many valuable texts. Today, it is up to us to harness our resources and expend all our efforts in order to preserve this heritage of learning and scholarship.

The King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives, supported by HRH Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz, Chairman of the Board, aware of the tremendous importance of the country's manuscript heritage, prepared urgent plans to rescue what remained of it and drew up long term goals to preserve it. Through these efforts, the Foundation achieved remarkable success, as manuscripts were collected as a result of thorough field surveys which embraced all corners of the Kingdom.

This volume presents the first collection of Saudi Arabian manuscripts, devoted to rare manuscripts preserved in the King Abdulaziz Foundation. Collected from more than sixty different libraries, each manuscript entry contained in this volume is accompanied by its classification number, subject, complete title, name of the author along with the date of his death, as well as the number of folios contained in the manuscript, the name of the抄ist, and the date copied.

Preceding the catalogue is an introduction which deals with the manuscript in general terms, before moving on to a consideration of what is meant by a rare manuscript. The situation of manuscripts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is then discussed, and attention is given to the special care given to manuscripts by the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives. Finally, the most important private libraries whose contents the Foundation has worked to conserve and protect are discussed.

In closing, the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives hopes that readers of this volume will derive benefit from it, and that it might be like a mirror which reflects some of the unceasing efforts which the Foundation exerts in the care of the nation's heritage.

Dr. Fahd A. Al-Soumairi
Secretary - General
King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives
Praise be to Allah, Lord of the universe, and blessings and peace be upon Muhammad, his family and his Companions. Catalogues are the keys to our cultural legacy, and any new catalogue which is published is like a new key which takes us inside a hidden treasure which we would be unaware of if we did not possess that key. Consequently, nothing pleases the Arabic Manuscripts Institute so much as the publication of a new catalogue which reveals part of our legacy heretofore hidden. This happiness is increased if the catalogue goes beyond the usual, and adds that which is new, thereby achieving a qualitative leap in the cataloguing tradition.

Such a leap has, indeed, been realized by this catalogue, because it deals, first of all, with a selection of manuscripts and, secondly, because it does not address itself exclusively to the scions of the Arab and Islamic heritage, but goes beyond them, and uses the English language side by side with Arabic. This, in turn, broadens the base of its potential users and points of necessity to the fact that those responsible for producing it are aware of the necessity of cultural exchange with others.

Catalogues of manuscripts and works like them do not possess the attractiveness of other types of books, no matter what their subject matter: literature, linguistics, history, etc. As a result, most readers - with the exception of a minority - will turn away from a book as soon as they find out that it is a catalogue, because they believe that it will not give the same pleasure as a book devoted to literature or history, or that it does not have the same value as a book on linguistics, or one of the sciences.

Perhaps such people are right, for a catalogue is not a book that one reads, especially if it is not well-organized; but even if it is well-organized, your eyes may read further than the title of the manuscript, to the information given beneath it, unless that which drew your attention was the information you were looking for.

But if you were to look at this catalogue as if it were the discovery of a hitherto unknown place on the map of our cultural legacy, then this sort of perusal can make a catalogue as important as any other work, if not more important.

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We are all aware that one of the principal dilemmas of the Arab and Islamic heritage is that our knowledge - by which we mean the most elementary sort of knowledge - regarding it, until this day, does not go beyond a minute percentage of its vast output. If we then add to this the observation that we are talking only about the knowledge itself, and have not gone beyond that to the teaching or utilization of this knowledge, then only are we able to realize the gravity and significance of this dilemma.

When a catalogue is devoted to unique or rare works, such as the one we are concerned with here, the importance of discovery becomes greater. This is in spite of the fact that we are not dealing with the classification of heritage in this stage - the stage of primary, or elementary, knowledge - since classification can only come after study. Attempts at doing so in light of titles or authors’ names, or on the basis of a cursory glance at the text, will never be free of deception and delusion, and these, in turn, engender mistakes, and perhaps even significant errors.

One day, people must become clearly aware of the importance of catalogues, for it is this awareness which transforms cultural legacy into a living entity in the present, and allows us to place our feet on the correct road to true development in a wide range of fields.
Foreword

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- 3 -

The importance of the rare manuscripts contained in this
catalogue increases if we realize their connection with
county, since the Arabian Peninsula (the Kingdom
of Saudi Arabia) is the cradle of Islam; from it proceeded the
intellectual contributions of this great religion in all its
manifold epistemological manifestations. There is no doubt
that this spatial depth (geography), when joined together with
chronological depth (time), permits us to comprehend the
great significance of this heritage in the light of those two
factors.

At this point, we need to stop a while and realize that these rare
works are not "Saudi," in the sense that they are of an origin
as recent as the Saudi state. On the contrary, among them
are manuscripts which date back to the early Hijri centuries,
which makes them even more precious. As a result, we are
of the opinion that a more accurate title would be "Arabic
Manuscripts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia." Yet there is a
solution to , namely that the manuscripts catalogued belong to
the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, or, more correctly, to prominent
Saudi individuals.

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We will go beyond what we have already said to declare that the
King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives
would not be able to realize its goals unless it gave its attention
to manuscripts, since manuscripts are a unique and rich
repository for the history of the Arabian Peninsula in general,
and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in particular. Any study of
Arabian history will perchance rely on manuscripts.

This makes it easy to explain the Foundation's early interest in
manuscripts, and its establishment of a center for documents
and manuscripts (AH 1393/1973) only one year after its own
foundation. Subsequently, in AH 1423/2003, the manuscript
unit was separated from that devoted to documents, and
became a specialized center in its own right. At this point,
it is worthy of mention that the Foundation undertook a
large-scale field project to survey all the manuscripts in the
Kingdom beginning in AH 1417/1997. The present catalogue
is without doubt one of the fruits of this project, just as the
project is one of the fruits of the center. We believe that the
near future will also witness further achievements, and one
indication of that is the observation that this catalogue of rare
manuscripts represents only the first collection, which leads
us to deduce - obviously - that we can expect to see further
collections in the near future.

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We know that the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research
and Archives and the officials who work therein shuy away
from praise, due to their conviction that their mission is the
most important consideration. Nevertheless, this catalogue
is perhaps the first of its kind (in the Arab world at least),
which combines two languages (Arabic and English), thereby
achieving two goals:
First of all, it reveals the Arab and Islamic heritage to Arabs
and Muslims and makes them aware of it.
Secondly, it makes this heritage available to non-Arabs and
non-Muslims, through the medium of the other language
(English), which opens the door wide to cultural
interaction, which is one of the necessities of life in the world
village in which we live, and of globalization which imposes
itself on the whole world.

From another standpoint, this catalogue departs from the norm
as we know it, which is that of an index depending exclusively
on the written word, and ascends to a higher level, that of a
true catalogue which combines text with image, presenting a
page or folio from the manuscript, and nothing can be more
expressive than a photograph, particularly in the case of
manuscripts, and this is one of the virtues of this particular
catalogue.

Indexes or catalogues of manuscripts resemble indexes in their
methodology, in the sense that the information they contain
generally does not go beyond the following basic elements:
classification number, subject, title, author's name and date
of death, name of the copyist, date of copying, and number of
folios. But in this case, the wealth of comments appended to
each index card have changed the situation dramatically, since
they add extremely important information, and reveal what
distinguishes the particular manuscript, such as statements
recording that it has been read by certain individuals, or that
the manuscript has been collated with other copies, in addition
to notes, statements of ownership, endowments, and seals.
In conclusion, we wish to express once again the Institute's
happiness over this work in the service of the Arab and Islamic
heritage in general, and that portion of this heritage preserved
in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in particular. We are all
indebted to our heritage, and we have a debt to fulfill in this
regard, because it is part of our very fiber, without which we
can have no real life. Thus, we have no choice but to permit
it to live inside ourselves in order that we do not lose our
distinguishing features under the onslaught of globalization.
There is a huge difference between this heritage being alive
within us, and us living in it; its life within ourselves is life
for us, and our life in it is nothing but death for ourselves.
The distinction between them means our ability to resolve
the dilemma of our relationship with our cultural heritage.
However, this is not the place to discuss this matter further;
what we have said thus far must suffice for now.

Foreword by
Dr. Faysal Al-Hufyan
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Preface
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Manuscripts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Manuscripts and the King Abdulaziz Foundation
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The Most Important Private Libraries to Which the
Foundation Has Devoted Its Attention

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Jami’ al-bayan fi tasfīr al-Qur’an
Hidhiyat al-sālik ilā al-madīlah al-arba’a fi al-munaskik
Fatḥ al-Majdli bi-sharḥ Kitāb al-tawḥīd
Al-Inṣāf fi ma’rifat al-rajīḥ min al-khillīf
Badī’ al-ma’ānī fi faḍal al-qā’īn
Al-Darūr al-ma’dhiiyya sharḥ al-Durar al-bahīyya
Risāla ilā Abūmad al-Manṣūrī fi khilaṭtihi maa’
Muhammad b. Rabī’
Radd al-Shaykh Muhammad b. Rabī’ a’lā al-Shaykh
Alim al-Manṣūrī
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Musikil i rāḥ al-Qur’an
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56 al-Fawākīh al-shabīyya fi bal al-manṣūma al-musamma
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Kāhiirat al-sāmi' wa-mutakallimīn fī adāb al-ālim
Waltūna al-līlim
Sharī' al-Zarkashī 'alā Mukhtasar al-Khursī
Tahdhīb gharb al-ʿAhdūth
Buhjīt al-mubābīrī fī al-siyār wa-l-murjūt wa-shamā'il
Sharī' al-kabīr
Kashf al-qūmī fī sharī' al-īlnīn
Kashf al-qūmī fī sharī' al-fuqā'
al-Insīf fī ma'rāfīt al-rājīb min al-khilāf
al-Insīf fī ma'rāfīt al-rājīb min al-khilāf
Introduction

Allah, to Whom be praise, has said, {Read! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful, He Who taught (the use of) the Pen} (Sūrat al-Alaq, 5), and {Nūn. By the Pen and by the (Record) which (men) write} (Sūrat al-Qalam, 1). And may the blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and Companions; he it was who ordered the release of the Makkān unbelievers he had taken prisoner during the ghurba of Badr in return for teaching reading and writing to Muslim children.

Since the sun of Islam rose over the Arabian Peninsula and neighboring lands, oral culture began to decline, to be replaced by a culture founded upon writing, initially on materials such as shoulder blades of animals and various other bones, skins, and later early paper of Eastern manufacture, and ultimately a wide variety of paper. The production of books reached its peak during the the apogee of Islamic civilization, because the patronage and development of book production, as well as the florescence and proliferation of libraries were among its most significant manifestations. Although Islamic civilization may have retreated in some regions, and the production of books suffered a concomitant decline, such was not the case everywhere. In some areas of the Islamic world, the production of books continued, which is not unexpected from a community guided by Quranic verses containing words such as {Read!} (Sūrat al-Alaq, 1), {Say, 'O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge} (Sūrat Tahtā, 114), and {Allah will raise up, to (suitable) ranks (and degrees), those of you who believe} (Sūrat al-Mujādila, 11). (3)

Muslim scholars and men of letters were very interested in books, a matter which can be seen in the diverse expressions they use in praising the book and instruments used in writing, and in discussing their merits and awakening the interest of their readers in them.

The book is the most important tool for acquiring knowledge and discerning the means of obtaining it in those branches of learning affiliated with the Islamic Sharia and its ancillary sciences, such as those connected with the Arabic language. This also holds true for the various mundane branches of learning, such as medicine, engineering, agriculture and astronomy, which scholars of religion considered to be sufficiency duties for the whole Muslim community. The Arabs used to proclaim that "writing is one of the two tongues, and calligraphy is one of the two varieties of eloquence," and according to Ibn al-Muqaffa, "The tongue is restricted to the near and present, and the pen for what is present as well as absent, as it is for that which is bygone and forgotten.

Al-Faḍl b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭahar related that he heard the Imam ʿAbd ʿAbd b. Hānīb say, when a group of scholars of Prophetic Hadith carrying inkpots in their hands approached him, "These are the lamps of Islam." (2)

On the merits of the pen, it is related that Qudāda said in exegesis of God's word in the Quran (Tāghit (the use of) the Pen): "The pen is a great blessing from Allah; without it religion would not be practiced, nor would life be lived properly." (3)

ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Muṭṭahar remarked that "Ink on the clothes is the perfume with which scholars are adorned." (4) The Arabic word "khalqā" is used here with the meaning of perfume or fragrance. (5)

With the appearance of printed books in the Islamic World, the production of manuscripts declined, and at the same time the word "book," which previously denoted handwritten


(3) Ibid.

(4) Ibid.

(5) "Tālū al-ʿArīs," entry "khalqā."
texts, now came to be used solely for printed works, while handwritten books came to be styled 'manuscripts.' Printing did not appear throughout the Islamic World at the same time, and so manuscripts did not disappear everywhere at once. Nevertheless, the rise of the printed book did lead to a gradual disappearance of the manuscript in Islamic lands. Gradually, manuscripts began to disappear even from the hands of scholars and students, as well as from mosques and libraries, both public and private. Over time, manuscripts were ignored and consigned to forgetfulness or oblivion, or stored in locked chests, although some individuals did continue to preserve and treasure them.

With the advent of printing, the technique and science of manuscript editing began to develop, which involves transfer of the text of a written work from manuscript to printed form, reproducing it as its original author would have intended it to appear. Researchers and others interested in the subject began to learn the art of manuscript editing and to teach it to others in turn until it came to be widely known among researchers, scholars and students. Over time, various schools and methods of manuscript editing developed. Gradually, another aspect of attention to manuscripts began to appear, which was developed with the intention of protecting manuscripts from the ill effects of being passed from hand to hand or physically transported from one place to another. This was the application of photography to manuscripts, which, although it may have lessened the significance of the actual handwritten texts themselves, succeeded in disseminating them via a variety of means, including photocopies, microfilm, electronic storage on CDs or remote servers and even uploading them to the Internet where they would be accessible with the aid of the computer.

What is a Manuscript?

According to the Arabic dictionary, "al-Mu'jam al-wasli," a manuscript is a work which has been written by hand and not mechanically printed.\(^{(7)}\)

Abd al-Sattar al-Halwaji defined a manuscript in purely linguistic terms as a text that has been copied by hand, whether that be a book, a document or an inscription carved in stone. In the technical sense, the word manuscript is used solely for books that have been transcribed by hand, to the exclusion of documents, inscriptions, and writings on walls, coins and textiles.\(^{(9)}\)

According to the law for the protection of the manuscript heritage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia promulgated on AH 165/1422 (6/8/2001), a manuscript is defined as "that which has been written by hand or inscribed by an instrument, and since whose recording more than fifty years have passed, whether it has been published or not, and whether it is preserved in an official or private library, or belongs to an organization or an individual."\(^{(9)}\)

In another sense, a manuscript can be defined as any handwritten text, on any subject or topic, which has come down to us. Heritage is, consequently, not limited to any particular date, for it is conceivable that a contemporary scholar could die and leave works which he has written by hand and which would thereafter be considered part of our heritage.\(^{(9)}\)

Rare Manuscripts

A manuscript can be considered to be rare or valuable for several reasons, among the most important of which are the following:

1. The manuscript is an autograph copy, which is the most valuable of all.
2. The manuscript was written by one of the students of the author of the work by dictation from the author himself, and which bears a written confirmation that the text was read in the author's presence, or heard from the author's own reading, or that the copyist was granted a teaching authorization for the work concerned.

Why We Need Manuscripts

An important question arises at this point: Do we need new manuscripts to reveal our heritage, after so many works have been published since the invention of printing in the fifteenth century or the advent of new technologies in our own day? The answer is, of course, that we will always be in need of manuscripts, for two main reasons:

• The search for manuscripts of works mentioned in biographical dictionaries, many of which are mentioned frequently and quoted from or otherwise referred to in the writers of later authors, and which are not mentioned in printed or handwritten library catalogues. It is the possibility of finding such lost works that inspires researchers to continue to search for such works, which are in fact found from time to time.

• The second reason is that texts which have been published have been based upon unknown originals during the early days of printing and prior to the development of the art of manuscript editing. The originals are unknown because the early publishers were not concerned with providing a description of the manuscript from which they took the text. Some even went so far as to destroy the manuscript after printing the work it contained.
Manuscripts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is no exception in this regard, as rare and valuable manuscripts have been found in its various and diverse regions. Makka al-Mukarrama and al-Madina al-Munawwarah, are, for example, the holy cities for which the hearts of all Muslims yearn, and to which Muslims have journeyed over the centuries. Some of those travelers were scholars, and at least some of whom undoubtedly carried a variety of manuscripts with them. Over time, those manuscripts formed the nuclei of libraries, which were well-organized, and contained a wealth of manuscripts on a wide variety of subjects.

In eastern Arabia, the region of al-Ahsa’ was renowned for the diversity of schools of Islamic jurisprudence and numerous madrasas. Najd, the heart of Arabia, was the springboard of the reformist movement inaugurated by Shaykh Muhammad b. ’Abd al-Wahhab which called for adherence to the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. The southern Arabian regions of Jazan and Asir was also renowned for learned families and collections of manuscripts.

One manifestation of interest in manuscripts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the law for the protection of manuscript heritage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which was promulgated by Royal Decree 23/m on6/5 AH 1422 (6/8/2001). King Fahad National Library was entrusted with the responsibility for the preservation, documentation, recording and cataloguing of manuscripts in the Kingdom.

Our manuscript heritage represents the intellectual wealth which has been bequeathed to us by earlier generations of the Muslim community. This heritage has survived the passage of years and centuries and has been handed down from one generation to the next, and has been dispersed throughout the world along with the knowledge contained therein. Today, libraries bear the responsibility for the collection and preservation of this heritage, so that it is rare to find a library without a manuscript section. In fact, a number of major libraries own their renown to the manuscripts which they contain. Rare manuscripts concerning Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula in general are important historical sources which libraries and learned institutions alike seek to acquire and preserve. Despite their importance, such manuscripts are not widely known on the one hand, and not readily available to researchers and others interested in regional history on the other.

(12) Ibid., 1:290-91.
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Manuscripts and the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives

Because of the importance attached to the study and documentation of the history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives was established in AH 1392/1972. Its purview includes a number of tasks, foremost among which is the preservation and service of national history by means of a variety of scholarly and cultural programs and activities. Among the Foundation’s most important objectives are:

First: The scholarly editing, publication and translation of texts dealing with the history, geography, literature and antiquities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in particular, and the Arabian Peninsula, and the Arab and Muslim Worlds in general.

Second: The preservation and collection of sources of the history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In accordance with its goal of serving the history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula, the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives has devoted much of its attention over the past 35 years to manuscripts. As part of its strategic commitment to the service of the sources of the history of the Kingdom, the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives initially established a Center for Documents and Manuscripts. Among the first manuscripts which were photographed for the new center was a collection belonging to Saudi Aramco; this was accomplished on 16/10/ AH 1393 (12/11/1973).

After HRH Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz was appointed Chairman of its Board of Directors, the Foundation came to devote much of its attention and concern to its responsibility to serve the local heritage and the Kingdom’s cultural and historical inheritance by undertaking a survey of the sources of this heritage, preserving them up and benefitting from them.

In AH 1416/1995, the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives, under the supervision of its Secretary General, HE Dr. Faisal al-Semari, launched a project for the survey of historical source materials. Field teams were set up from among the Foundation’s own employees as well as external collaborators and dispatched to the different regions of the Kingdom, where they undertook surveys of existing manuscripts, and carried out sterilization and restoration procedures on them. After photocopying the manuscripts, they were returned to their original owners.

Upon completion of this project, preliminary results showed an urgent need to launch the second phase of the project to survey historical sources, approval for which was granted according to Royal Decree 7/b/18074 dated 24/11/AH 1417 (2/4/1997). In spite of the hardships, poverty and warfare which afflicted the Arabian Peninsula for so long, families and libraries still managed to preserve many precious manuscripts. These manuscripts were not looked after properly, however, as they were oftentimes kept in a box in one of the rooms of a house. One collection of manuscripts - for example - was found in a mosque adjacent to the home of the collection’s owner, and it was in danger of being lost or destroyed. Another collection was even removed to be disposed of as refuse. In addition, manuscripts were stored without any protection against the harshness of winter, the heat of summer, damp which could rot the folios, or dryness which could render them brittle. Sound principles of collection and preservation were, in general, not adhered to. Among the examples of poor storage prevalent among many people included piling manuscripts one on top of another, which resulted in many instances of folios adhering to each other to the point where they became impossible to separate without the aid of special restoration equipment. Manuscripts were also plagued by the accumulation of dust and dirt, and infestation with insects.

In the majority of cases, the teams found the manuscript libraries maintained in a very basic manner, with folios being scattered, and even intermingled with folios belonging to other

(15) The project has been discussed in one of the Foundation’s publications: "Madinah mush af-taansiidi af-tawassiyaa af-mubad: al-il AH 1416 – 1417." The book includes photographs of the teams’ efforts as well as a discussion of the project and its achievements.

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manuscripts. Many were being kept along side by side with printed books, documents, papers, photographs and newspapers, among other things. These collections had to be sorted through at first and everything that was not manuscript-related set aside. Each manuscript would then be separately examined and all its folios sought out and collected together, while anything irrelevant would be removed. After this stage, each manuscript was numbered and catalogued. In certain cases, it was found that one or more folios was missing from a given manuscript which has already been given a number and catalogued. If the missing folio or folios were later found, or if they would be inserted in the manuscript in the proper place, and the manuscript would then be renumbered and catalogued anew taking the addition into account. One manuscript in particular was renumbered and re-catalogued a total of five times due to a situation like this!
An other occasions, it was discovered that parts of a single manuscript had been divided amongst a number of volumes by a careless binder, which entailed that all the volumes of that book be rebound in the proper way in a single binding, while removing anything extraneous. And there are numerous other instances of such problems which cannot be mentioned here. Because many of these manuscripts were designated as waqīfs, meaning that they were endowed for a particular purpose and could not be removed or transferred to another place, the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives sought a fatwa, or religious ruling on the matter from the Permanent Committee for Ifta. This was deemed necessary as it was thought that some people might consider that removal of manuscripts from the location where they were endowed contravened the conditions of the endowment.
Fatwa no. 23194 on 3/2/AH 1426 (13/3/2005) was issued in response to a question submitted by the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives for a ruling regarding the transfer of endowed manuscripts to the Foundation's library and their preservation therein. The fatwa committee ruled that this was permissible, and that transfer of manuscripts to the Foundation, and their preservation therein, does not constitute a violation of the terms of endowment.

(16) The following is the text of the fatwa issued by the Permanent Committee for Ifta: Fatwa no. 23194 on 3/2/AH 1426 (13/3/2005):

"Praise be to Allah alone, and blessings and peace be upon whom there is no prophet after him.
The Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta has studied the letter sent to His Eminence the Grand Mufti by the Secretary General of the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives, no. 2/2005 dated 25/2/AH 1426, which was forwarded to it by the General Secretary of the Consistory of Senior Religious Scholars under no. 379 on 25/2/AH 1426, and in which the Secretary General of the Foundation asked the following questions:

Question One: Is it permissible for the Foundation to transfer libraries in the possession of the heirs of a religious scholar and which are not part of an endowment, and which belong to them, and which consist of printed books - manuscripts - documents, after having obtained the approval of all heirs, none of the heirs being a legal minor, for the purpose of making them available to students, and preserving them in a special wing under their names?
Answer: It is permissible for the Foundation to transfer the libraries currently in the possession of the heirs, by way of gift or through purchase, provided that it was done with the approval of all the heirs, none of whom is a legal minor, as such libraries are their possession, and they have the right to act without restrictions in their capacity as property owners.

Question Two: Is it permissible for the Foundation to transfer libraries in the possession of the heirs of a religious scholar and which are not part of an endowment, and which belong to them, and which consist of printed books - manuscripts - documents, after having obtained the approval of all heirs, some of whom are legal minors, for the purpose of making them available to students, and preserving them in a special wing under their names?
Answer: If the heirs include legal minors, then it is not permissible to dispose of their portion of them as gifts, since there is no benefit for them in such action. Sale of their portion is, however, permissible, for a sum equal to or greater than, their worth, in accordance with the word of Allah, "And come not near to the orphan's property, except to improve it", in other words, do not dispose of the property of a minor unless, and the meaning is that it is not permissible to give or donate such property.

Question Three: Is it permissible for the heirs of a scholar who endowed his library, or for the supervisor of such an endowment, to transfer a library consisting of printed books - manuscripts - documents which have been endowed for use by students, if they are unable to serve the needs of students, thereby resulting in the library failing to serve the purpose for which it was endowed, is it permissible for the heirs or the supervisor to transfer it to the Foundation in such a manner?
Answer: It is permissible to transfer a library endowed for the use of students from a place where it is not being used to one which is more appropriate and beneficial, since the intention of the person who made the endowment was that the library remain in the service of students, which will obtain in the case of its transfer.

Question Four: Is it permissible to transfer libraries endowed on the descendants of their owners, or a mosque, or a designated supervisor, or a city, or a particular school, or public library, or religious institute, or university, if they are unable to arrange that students benefit from them, or that they are unable to care for them, if they desire to transfer such libraries to the Foundation as a service to students, where they will be preserved in a wing named after them?
Answer: It is permissible to transfer libraries endowed on the descendants of their owners, or a mosque, or a school, or a particular place, if there was no use available at that location to protect them from destruction or theft, and it was not possible to care for them, and ensure that students derive benefit from them, as intended, on condition that anyone who so desires be permitted to study them, in accordance with the intention of the person who made the endowment, and all success comes from Allah, and blessings and peace be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions."
Many were being kept alongside side with s, documents, papers, photographs and newspapers, things. These collections had to be sorted through everything that was not manuscript related set aside. It would then be separately examined and all the rest out and collected together, while anything old would be removed. After this stage, each manuscript was catalogued. In certain cases, it was found that whereas was missing from a given manuscript which was given a number and catalogued. If the manuscript was found, it was then in the proper place, and the manuscript would then be catalogued again taking the addition. One manuscript in particular was numbered, and a total of five times due to a situation at this juncture it was discovered that parts of a single ad been divided amongst a number of volumes tender, which entailed that all the volumes of that end in the proper way in a single binding, while removing anything extraneous. And there are numerous other instances of such problems which cannot be mentioned here. Because many of these manuscripts were designated as waqfs, meaning that they were endowed for a particular purpose and could not be removed or transferred to another place, the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives sought a fatwa, or religious ruling on the matter from the Permanent Committee for Itta. This was deemed necessary as it was thought that some people might consider that removal of manuscripts from the location where they were endowed contravened the conditions of the endowment.

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After the results of the previous stage of the project for the survey of historical source materials, it became clear that many manuscripts were in the possession of individuals. It was then that the Foundation separated the Manuscript Department from the Document Center, and established the Manuscript Center in AH 1422/2002. The Manuscript Center was provided with a storage room equipped with the requirements for proper preservation as well as safety, and a cataloguing room containing the necessary books and source materials. A comprehensive training program in handling manuscripts was also provided for the staff. In addition, a specialized room was also set up to enable proper collection, disinfection, cataloguing, photographing and preservation of manuscripts. The Board of Directors of the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives approved a resolution calling for the establishment of an exhibition devoted to the manuscript heritage of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to be accompanied by several cultural activities, and the publication of relevant material.

The Foundation also devoted attention to technical aspects of working with manuscripts. To this end, it established a specialized unit known as the Center for the Preservation of Historical Materials, which occupies an area of 900 m² in the old building of the King Abdulaziz Foundation in the Mādrī district of Riyadh. This unit specializes in the disinfection, restoration and binding of manuscripts, as well as microfilming processes and digital photography; it is also equipped with a mobile disinfection unit.

The manuscripts which the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives has obtained from Saudi families may be divided into three categories: the first category includes manuscripts with which the Foundation has been endowed. In such cases, the manuscripts are a permanent deposit in the Foundation's collection, which assumes responsibility for their preservation.

The second category of manuscripts includes those which have been deposited in the Foundation on a temporary basis. In such instances, the families which deposit them benefit from the King Abdulaziz Foundation's expertise in cataloguing, disinfection and preservation of manuscripts in return for which the Foundation makes a copy of these manuscripts which it retains, and returns the original manuscripts to their owners if they so desire.

In some cases, the center acquires manuscripts through direct purchase from their owners after appraisal in accordance with specific criteria by a committee appointed for that purpose. In general, families in possession of manuscripts are first contacted by the Foundation, and an appointment is made to visit them. During the visit, representatives of the Foundation explain the services which it offers, including the cataloguing, restoration and disinfection of manuscripts, and present examples. Selected family members are then invited to visit the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives to learn more about its activities in person. The majority of families agree to participate in the Foundation's efforts to document and preserve the nation's manuscript heritage, although they are free to decline to do so.

Some people only allow a small percentage of the manuscripts in their possession to be taken to the Foundation's manuscript unit, in order to see the results before committing their collection as a whole. Once they witness the level of service provided to their manuscripts, in most cases, they are willing to present the remainder to the Foundation for care and analysis.

The King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives has taken upon itself the task of surveying, preserving and studying the books that have been written and copied during past centuries, motivated by the desire to make this legacy available to scholars and to the wider public as well through an exhibition of Saudi Arabian manuscripts.

The present volume, entitled "Rare Saudi Arabian Manuscripts: Examples from a Collection of Rare Arabic Manuscripts Preserved in the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives," is yet another manifestation of the attention which the Foundation lavishes on manuscripts. The rare manuscripts presented herein have been selected from among the contents of more than sixty libraries, numbering more than three thousand manuscripts in all, currently in the Foundation's collections. The majority of these manuscripts have a local character. The manuscripts are arranged alphabetically (in Arabic) according to the names of the local libraries from whose collections they come.
The King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives currently holds the contents of more than sixty private libraries. In what follows, a brief summary is given regarding each of the major private libraries and their contents, arranged according to the number of manuscripts in each collection.

1 - al-Anqar Library(17)
Shaykh 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-`Azziz b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad b. Ibrahîm b. Sulaymân b. Naṣr b. Ibrahîm b. Khânfar al-Anqar, from the tribe of Tanîm was born in the town of Tharîmâ in AH 1290/1873. After traveling to Riyadh for study, he went on pilgrimage to Makkah, where he studied with some of the Holy City's scholars. Al-Anqar eventually became a prayer leader (imâm) in Tharîmâ and was appointed a judge (qâdî) in al-Majma' a and Sa'dyâr.

al-Anqar was able to collect a large library; a former Minister of Education, Shaykh Muhammad al-Mu'âlî remarked that al-Anqar "collected books until he had amassed a very valuable collection, as it included rare manuscripts." In addition to rare works of Hanbali jurisprudence, this library also came to include books composed by the leaders of the Reform Movement in Najd, in addition to al-Anqar's own writings and faîsâs, and other works written by his son 'Abd al-'Azziz and a number of his students, among them al-Shaykh al-Khayyâl, al-Salîmân, Hanî and 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Tuwâiyîrî. al-Anqar died in al-Majma'a in AH 1373/1954, and the library which he left included 265 manuscripts.

2 - al-Khayyâl Library(18)
The library was established by Shaykh Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Mut'âsîn b. 'Abd al-'Azziz b. Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Khayîyâl, from the Banî Hanîfa. He was born in the town of al-Majma'a in the year AH 1318/1901, where he grew up under his father's care. Later, he became a student of Shaykh 'Abd Allah al-Anqar and was always in his company, and compiled the renowned `Hashîyat al-Shaykh al-Anqar, after which he copied it in his own hand, and distributed it among the students of religious sciences. The book was printed later on. Shaykh Muhammad's classes were held in the towns of Muhâyid, Naft and al-`Aţâwiyâ, where he was appointed qâdî. In AH 1360/1941, the shaykh was transferred to Riyadh, and later to al-Madînah al-Munawwara; he served for a time as qâdî in al-Abâsî and eventually in Qatar, after which he retired to Riyadh, where he opened his library to the public. The library contained rare manuscripts on a variety of subjects, including jurisprudence and Prophetic Hadîth, books composed by the leaders of the Najd Reform Movement, and valuable documents. Unfortunately, the collection suffered from temâse and flood damage, as well as works which were loaned but never returned. Nevertheless, the remaining manuscripts are very diverse, reflecting the fact that the shaykh had traveled widely both within the Kingdom as well as in a number of other countries in an official capacity. al-Khayyâl died on AH 9/9/1413 (33/3/1993) in Riyadh. His library includes 204 manuscripts.

3 - al-Bassâm Library(19)
The owner of this library was Shaykh 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Bassâm from the Wahhâb branch of the tribe of Tanîm. Born in `Unayza in AH 1346/1928, al-Bassâm studied under Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Sûfî. Afterwards, he studied in Dâr al-Tawâhid in Ta'if. Shaykh al-Bassâm held the position of qâdî in Makka al-Mukarramah and Ta'if, and was a member of numerous governmental organizations. His library includes a number of extremely rare manuscripts on the history of the Kingdom, a subject in which he was deeply interested. al-Bassâm was also interested in histories, biographies and documents which shed light on the commercial activities of the al-Bassâm family, and its relations with India, the Arabian Gulf and Iraq. This library - which contains a total of 187 manuscripts - also includes some manuscripts on Islamic jurisprudence as well as other topics. al-Bassâm died in AH 1422/2001.


(18) al-Bassâm, "`Ulamâ' Najd," 6:258. The library was endowed by his son 'Abd al-'Azziz b. Muhammad al-Khayîyâl.

(19) Cf. the introduction to al-Bassâm, "`Ulamâ' Najd." The manuscripts were presented by his sons Khâlid, Bassâm, Talîf and Tanîm.
The Most Important Private Libraries to Which The Foundation Has Devoted Its Attention

4 - al-Rashid Library

Muhammad b. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Rashid al-Mahdī b. al-Jahmis was born in the town of al-Shimānah in the governorate of al-Rass in Qasim in AH 1304/1915. After early study of the Holy Quran, he became a pupil of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Al Muhammad al-Diwayyānī - author of "Manār al-sahī" - and Shaykh Sālih al-Qarīn, who was the qadi of al-Rass. Al-Rashid then moved to Turāzaya and later Burāyda before settling in Riyadh for a time where he became the imām of the Masjid Makran, while continuing his religious studies. From Riyadh al-Rashid moved back to the Qasim region, where he was appointed to the position of qadi in al-Rass, Ra‘ay and al-Khurma. Al-Rashid amassed a large collection of books, which came to include a total of 177 manuscript works, including manuscripts which had belonged to the oneetime qadi of al-Rass, Shaykh Qarīn al-Qarīn and as well as a portion of the library of Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Diwayyānī. The library of al-Rashid is distinguished by the precious manuscripts it contains on the subject of Hanbali jurisprudence, in addition to a number of books which he himself had transcribed. Shaykh al-Rashid died in Taif on AH 10/8/395 (18/8/1975).

5 - Al Ya'qūb Library

Shaykh Muhammad b. Sa‘d Al Ya‘qūb (d. AH 1280/1863 or 1283/1866) - a qadi in Hārīr region - amassed a considerable collection of books, which was then augmented by additions made by his sons, Shaykh Ya‘qūb b. Muhammad b. Sa‘d Al Ya‘qūb (d. AH 1320/1902), Shaykh 'Umar b. Ya‘qūb (d. AH 1367/1948), and Shaykh Yusuf b. Ya‘qūb (d. AH 1355/1936). The Al Ya‘qūb library contains a number of rare manuscripts, and had been added to over time by way of endowment, including those made by Sa‘d b. Sa‘d Al Rashid. Supervision of the endowment was delegated to the Al Ya‘qūb, as has been recorded on the manuscripts. The collection includes works on topics such as Prophetic Hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, creeds, literature and medicine. Unfortunately, a large portion of the Al Ya‘qūb library was destroyed in a flood, after which the remainder was transferred first to the religious institute in Hārīr, and thereafter to the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives. There are 168 manuscripts in this collection.

6 - Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir Library

The Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir library was the largest and most important private libraries in the al-Asbī region, having been founded, it is believed, in the 12th/18th century by the renowned scholar Ahmad b. ‘Abd Allah Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir (d. AH 1197/1783), the progenitor of the family known today as the Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir family. Following the library’s initial establishment at the hands of Ahmad b. ‘Abd Allah Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir, it was augmented by many of his descendants until our own time, including Shaykh Muhammad b. ‘Abd al’Aziz Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir, Shaykh ‘Abd Allah B. Ahmad Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir (d. AH 1264/1848), Shaykh Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir (d. AH 1288/1871), Shaykh ‘Abd Allah Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir (d. AH 1344/1926), and the historian Shaykh Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir (d. AH 1391/1971), artful of "Tuhfat al-mustafa fi tārikh al-‘Al ‘Al-qādir wa‘l-jamā‘ah wa‘l-jamā‘ah al-‘Al ‘Al-Qādir family, and was at one time one of the largest family libraries in the Arabian Peninsula. Among its contents were more than one thousand manuscripts, most of which were rare works in subjects such as literature, Arabic language, and Shi‘i jurisprudence. Owing to the unique importance of this library, a delegation from the Arab League visited it and photocopied some manuscripts in its collection. A number of the manuscripts contained in this library were deposited in the library of King Faisal University in al-Asbī, but were later transferred to the Foundation for special care. The Al ‘Al ‘Al-Qādir library contains a total of 159 manuscripts.

7 - al-Mursīd Library


(20) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(21) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(22) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(23) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(26) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(27) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(28) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(30) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(31) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(33) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(34) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(35) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(36) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(37) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(38) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(39) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(40) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(41) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(42) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(43) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(44) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(45) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(47) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(48) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(49) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(50) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(51) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
(52) al-Mursīd, "‘Almā‘ al-Mursīd," 5-34.
The Most Important Private Libraries to Which the Foundation Has Devoted Its Attention

b. Fīris, and he studied under them along with his companion Shaykh Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm. The majority of manuscripts in Shaykh al-Muntasir ibn Shāhīd's library relate to Hanbali jurisprudence or represent epitomes compiled by leaders of the Reform Movement in Najd. Many of the manuscripts were themselves compendia of several works in a single binding. Due to the ravages of time, loss, and non-return of loaned volumes, part of the collection has disappeared, although 154 manuscripts survive.

8 - al-Salāmān Library

The al-Salāmān library was established by Ahmad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Ibrāhīm ibn B. 'Abd al-'Azīz from the Bīdārī branch of the Dawūsīr. Born in the town of Jilājī in AH 1315/1897, he studied under Shaykh 'Abd Allāh al-'Aqārī, with whom he was very close, and was one of his scribes. al-Salāmān died in AH 1405/1985. Most of the manuscripts in his library are works on Hanbali jurisprudence and writings of the leaders of the Reform Movement in Najd. Some of the manuscripts, which total 120, were copied by al-Salāmān himself.

9 - Muhammad al-Bassānī Library

Muhammad b. Sālih, the Bassānī belonged to the branch of the tribe of Tamīmī known as the Wahha. He was born in 'Unayzah in AH 1334/1916, and studied under Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sīdī in the town of his birth before moving to 'Umm al-Mukannah to teach. He also authored some books. al-Bassānī's library is distinguished for its collection of well-written manuscripts on Prophetic Hadith and Hanbali jurisprudence, in addition to other works containing admonitions. Among the contents of this library are works written by Shaykh Ibn Sīdī, including some autograph copies, in addition to an autograph copy of 'Tafṣīl al-mushfīq' by 'Abd Allāh b. Muhammad al-Bassānī. The library contains 77 manuscripts.

10 - al-Salāmān Library - 'Unayzah

Shaykh Sālih b. 'Abd Allāh al-Salāmān, from the Asā'īd, a branch of the tribe of 'Uyayba, was born in AH 1319/1901 in the town of 'Unayzah, where he studied under Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sīdī. He collected his private library from books which had belonged to his ancestors, as well as those which he had personally acquired or transcribed. Most of the books in the collection fall under the general heading of Hanbali jurisprudence, and include works by Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyīm, and the leaders of the Reform Movement in Najd, and contain statements of ownership in the name of the al-Salāmān family. The collection contains 77 manuscripts. Shaykh Sālih died in AH 1418/1997.

11 - Ibn Iṣḥāq Library

Shaykh Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Iṣḥāq al-Shaykh from the Wāliya branch of Tamīmī, was born in AH 1330/1912 and studied under Shaykh Muhammad b. Ibrāhīm. He held many government positions, the last of which was that of a consultant in the Ministry for Islamic Affairs, Endowment, Dawa and Guidance. Among the most distinguished private libraries in the kingdom, Shaykh Ibn Iṣḥāq's collection included many works which he inherited from his forebears. The major part of the collection was devoted to Hanbali jurisprudence and the Islamic creed, although it also contained works by the leaders of the Reform Movement in Najd. Ibn Iṣḥāq's library includes 77 manuscripts.

12 - al-Sīdī Library

Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Nāṣir b. 'Abd Allāh Al-Sīdī was born in AH 1300/1883. He studied under several renowned Shaykhs in 'Unayzah and later taught there to a large number of students. The first person to establish a library in the town of 'Unayzah, Shaykh al-Sīdī was one of those who breathed new life into the study of Islamic jurisprudence in the Muslim World. His library contains 69 manuscripts, including autograph copies of his own writings, in addition to some teaching authorizations and works on Hanbali jurisprudence. Shaykh al-Sīdī died in AH 1376/1957.

13 - al-Manť Library

Shaykh 'Abd al-Muḥsin b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-

(26) al-Bassānī, "'Umnāta Najīb," i:479, and a biographical notice written by the author's son, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz, who endowed the manuscripts, in the Foundation's collection.


(28) al-Qādirī, "Rawaḍāt al-miftah," 3:50. The library was presented by his grandson Sālih b. 'Abd Allāh b. Sālih ibn al-Bassānī.

he studied under them along with his companion an-nadīr ibn Ṭibrīh. The information was provided by his son, Dr. 'Abd al-ʿAzīz b. Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Sī dī. al-Sālīnī collected his private library from books which had belonged to his ancestors, as well as those which he had personally acquired or transcribed. Most of the books in the collection fall under the general heading of Hadīth jurisprudence, and include works by Ibn Tayyīyra, Ibn al-Qayyīm, and the leaders of the Reform Movement in Najd, and contain statements of ownership in the name of the al-Sālīnī family. The collection contains 77 manuscripts. Shaykh Sulaymān al-Sālīnī died in AH 1418/1997.

11 - Ibn Ḫidrī Library
Shaykh Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Ḫidrī al-Sālīnī from the Wahba branch of Tamīm, was born in AH 1330/1912 and studied under Shaykh Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān. He held many government positions, the last of which was that of a consultant in the Ministry for Islamic Affairs, Endowment, Dawā and Guidance. Among the most distinguished private libraries in the kingdom, Shaykh Ibn Ḫidrī's collection included many works which he inherited from his forebears. The major part of the collection was devoted to Hanbali jurisprudence and the Islamic creed, although it also contained works by the leaders of the Reform Movement in Najd. Ibn Ḫidrī's library includes 77 manuscripts.

12 - al-Sīrī Library
Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Ṣūrī b. ʿAbd Allāh ʿAlī ʿAlī al-Tamīmī was born in AH 1300/1883. He studied under several renowned shaykhs in Ḫanāqān and later taught there to a large number of students. The first person to establish a library in the town of ʿUmanyā, Shaykh al-Sīrī was one of those who breathed new life into the study of Islamic jurisprudence in the Muslim World. His library contains 69 manuscripts, including autograph copies of his own writings, in addition to some teaching authorizations and works on Hanbalī jurisprudence. Shaykh al-Sīrī died in AH 1376/1957.

13 - al-Manīṭi Library

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14 - al-Fākhīrī Library
Shaykh Muhammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muhammad b. ʿUmar b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. Fākhīrī, a sheikh of the Wahba branch of the tribe of Tamīm, was born in the town of al-Tawwām in the year AH 1186/1772. After the death of his father in AH 1222/1807, Shaykh al-Fākhīrī moved to al-Aḥṣā, where he returned to al-Tawwām in AH 1228/1813. Afterwards, he moved to the town of ʿUmanyā in the region of Sadiyā. One of the leading men of letters and historians of his time, al-Fākhīrī was also knowledgeable about poetry. His handwriting was excellent, and a number of works in his clear handwriting have come down to us. He died in AH 1277/1861. Many of Shaykh al-Fākhīrī's libraries have been lost; only 57 have come down to us, including works on the Quranic sciences, Islamic jurisprudence and creeds.

15 - ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Jabīrī Library
ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Bīrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Jabīrī, who belonged to the Banū Zayd, was born in the town of Mizāl in AH 1321/1903. He studied under his father, who was the prayer leader (imām) and preacher of the sermon before Friday prayer (khātīb) in Mizāl, and also under Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh al-Sayyārī in the town of al-Qayrawān, al-Jabīrī then moved to Riyadh, where he studied under a number of shaykhs, including Shaykh Saʿīd b. Ṭaṭīfī, Shaykh Sulaymān b. ʿAbd Allāh Muhammad b. Bīrāhīm. He was the father of Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh al-Jabīrī. Among his writings are a work on arithmetic (Nabūdah fi ʿilm al-iḥsāʿ) and a collection of his own poetry, some in classical Arabic and some in the local dialect, which has not yet been published. Shaykh al-Jabīrī, who died in AH 1397/1977, left a library which contained 53 manuscripts as well as printed books.

16 - al-Barrāk Library
Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Muhammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Barrak, who belonged to the Banū ʿAzīz branch of the Dāwāris, was born in AH 1309/1892, in al-Hir, where he studied for some time, before moving to Riyadh, where he had the opportunity to study under some of the scholars of that town. When a school was opened in al-Hir in AH 1373/1954, Shaykh al-Barrāk was chosen to teach in it. al-Barrāk himself copied many of the writings of the leaders of the Reform Movement in Najd, as well as other works on Islamic jurisprudence. Shaykh Muhammad Rashīd Riḍā relied on some of these works for material in his book Maḥāz il-Baḥr al-Najdī. They were also used by other shaykhs in publishing the writings of the leaders of the Reform Movement, as well as by a number of publishers. There were 53 manuscripts in the library of Shaykh al-Barrāk, who died in AH 1388/1969.

17 - al-Amrī Library
A prolific Syrian poet, ʿUmar b. Muhammad Bahāʾ al-Dnī al-Amrī was born in Aleppo in AH 1337/1919. He received his early education in his hometown and later studied law at Damascus University.
He then held the post of director of the Arab Islamic Institute in Damascus for a period of time, after which he taught in the schools and colleges of Aleppo and also practiced law. al-Amirî also held the posts of Syrian minister plenipotentiary in Pakistan and Syrian ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, before eventually settling in Morocco, where he taught at the University of Mohammed V, the University of al-Qarawiyyin and Dar al-Hadîth al-Hasaniyya. His intellectual activities also included membership in the Jordanian Royal Academy for Research in Islamic Civilization and the Iraqi Academy of Sciences. Al-Amirî, who died in AH 1412/1992, wrote a number of books including collections of his own poetry. His library included 53 manuscripts.

18 - Dâr al-Hadîth al-Khayriyya Library

Dâr al-Hadîth al-Khayriyya was established by Shaykh Muhammad 'Abd al-Razzâq Hamza (d. AH 1385/1965) with the permission of King 'Abdulaziz in AH 1352/1933. Devoted to the teaching of the Holy Quran and the compilations of Prophetic Hadîth, Dar al-Hadîth also had an excellent library with a number of manuscripts on Prophetic Hadîth and the Arabic language. In all, the library contains 52 manuscripts.

19 - al-Sâlihi Library

Allî b. Hamad b. Muhammad b. Sâlihi b. 'Abd Allah al-Sâlihi was born in Unayza in the year AH 1333/1915, and studied under Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahîm al-Sâlihi. Upon completion of his studies, he graduated from the College of Sharia and the Higher Institute for Judge Qualification. Al-Sâlihi played a role in the establishment of the first public library in Najîd, which was the library of the mosque in 'Unayza, founded in AH1358/1939. Shaykh al-Sâlihi assisted in collecting books - including a number of manuscripts - and furnishings for the library. In its heyday, the library's collection included nearly forty thousand volumes on a wide range of subjects and became the site where Shaykh al-Sâlihi delivered his lectures and where his students met and studied. al-Sâlihi also founded Mu'affasat al-Nûr, an establishment specialized in printing and binding, and one of the oldest printers in the Kingdom, responsible for reprinting Arabic classic texts. In addition, al-Sâlihi wrote several books, including his "al-Daw' al-munîr 'ala al-ta'fîr." The library of Shaykh al-Sâlihi included manuscripts on Hanbali jurisprudence, as well as works composed by the leaders of the Reform Movement in Najîd and teaching authorizations. In all, it contained 50 manuscripts.

20 - al-Tuwairib Library

Sâlihi b. 'Abî b. Sûd b. 'Abd al-Tuwairib was born in Unayza ca. AH1327/1909. Early in his life, he moved to Hîrîl with his father, where he began his education. He studied for a long time with Shaykh 'Abd Allah al-Sâlihi al-Khalayfi and became very close to him, eventually accompanying him to al-Jawf, where al-Khalayfi had been appointed as qâdi. al-Tuwairib copied many books with his own hand. He served as director of the Saudi School in Hîrîl for a period of time before being appointed deputy to the representative of the Ministry of Education during the time of Shaykh Ibn 'Munîf. Later on, he became principal of the 'Arzîyya school in Hîrîl. He died in Hîrîl in AH 1417/1996 and left behind a collection of 49 manuscripts.

21 - Royal Library - Political Section

The private library of King 'Abd al-'Azîz includes a diverse collection of manuscripts as well as printed books and periodicals which the king collected during his lifetime. It includes some rare and valuable manuscripts the king inherited from his ancestors as well as others which entered his library as gifts or else through purchase. It appears that this library was merged with the office in charge of books which the king had ordered to be printed at his own expense and then distributed. As a result, the library's contents began to slowly erode as more and more people, both scholars as well as readers in general, came to borrow some of the manuscript works in the collection but failed to return them. Despite the lack of sufficient information regarding the history of this library, and the stages of its development, it seems that it remained in the Muraba' palace after the king's death without proper attention being given to it, until it was

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(33) Biographical data provided by Sâlihi Qarnawiy. al-Amirî's library was presented by his children.


(35) al-Basîm, "`Ummî Najî," 5:185; some information provided by his son `Abd al-Munîm. The manuscripts were endowed by the shaykh's children.


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10. Al-Tuwairiy Library

Sāliḥ b. Abī ‘l-Sā‘. B. ‘All al-Tuwairī was born in ‘Umayya ca. AH1317/1909. Early in his life, he moved to Hā’il with his father, where he began his education. He studied for a long time with Shaykha ‘Abd Allāh b. Sāliḥ al-Khalīyafī and became very close to him, eventually accompanying him to Hā’il, where al-Khalīyafī had been appointed as qādī. al-Tuwairī copied many books with his own hand. He served as director of the Saudi School in Hā’il for a period of time before being appointed deputy to the representative of the Ministry of Education during the time of Shaykh Ibn Mā‘īn. Later on, he became principal of the ‘Aṣīriyya school in Hā’il. He died in Hā’il in AH1417/1996 and left behind a collection of 49 manuscripts.

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This library belonged to several scholars from the family of the Al ‘Abd al-Latif b. Bāhilī, among them ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Bāhilī, and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Bāhilī (d. AH1301/1913), who left behind a large collection of manuscripts which he himself had copied. Some of this latter group were divided among the latter’s grandchildren, including Shaykh Sāliḥ al-Ma‘āshī, ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Al ‘Abd al-Latif b. Bāhilī (d. AH1350/1931), ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Bāhilī, and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abd al-Latif b. Bāhilī (d. AH1362/1943). Other manuscripts from the same library found their way to the public library in Sharī‘a, while others were lost and destroyed. In the end, only 46 manuscripts remained in this library.

23. Rūshdī Malāhī

Rūshdī Malāhī was born in the town of Nabīs in Palestine in AH1317/1899. After studying in his home town and Istanbul, he became the editor of the Saudi Arabian official newspaper “Umūr al-Qarīn.” Malāhī was also employed in the Political Branch of the Royal Court and became one of the consultants of King Abdulaziz, and served him for more than thirty years. In addition to his official duties, Rūshdī Malāhī wrote numerous books and articles and edited Arabic texts.

The library of Rūshdī Malāhī includes a number of manuscripts on the history of the Arabian Peninsula and the genealogies of its people. In addition, it includes printed books, new as well as old newspapers, and rare documents. Shaykh Muhammad b. Sādūq al-Sabānī purchased the greater part of this collection of the death of Rūshdī Malāhī in AH1378/1959; the remainder includes 44 manuscripts.

24. Al-Salihiy Library


25. Al-Muhsīn Abī Butayn Library

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Muhsīn b. ‘Uthmān b. ‘Abd al-Karim Abī Butayn b. Sāliḥ b. Khāmis b. ‘Alīdī came from the ‘Ubaydī branch of the tribe of Qahtān and was born in al-‘Ushīn in Sudayr in AH1337/1919. He studied in Riyadh and then went on to establish private education in Rawdat Sudayr in AH1356/1937. Three years later, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Muhsīn founded a private school in Riyadh next to the business he operated. In AH1359/1940, he returned to Rawdat Sudayr, having been charged by the government with setting up and supervising the first government school there. In addition to his work in the field of education, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Muhsīn devoted his attention to the world of books, and in AH1364/1945 he founded the first bookstore in Riyadh, known as al-Maktoba al-Aḥliyya, which was located on King Su‘ūd Street. Besides selling books, al-Maktoba al-Aḥliyya was also concerned with publication. Later, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Muhsīn worked in the Ministry of Education as a teacher, an educational supervisor, and author of a number of textbooks.

The library of Al-Muhsīn Abī Butayn contains 200 rare and old manuscripts, as well as rare books, and rare primary and secondary documents. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Muhsīn was able to acquire the majority of this library from a descendant of Bāhilī b. Sāliḥ, the library’s owner. Shaykh ‘Abd al-Muhsīn endeavored to collect these manuscripts and books to create a unique collection that would serve as a reference for students of Islamic sciences and literature. The collection includes works on Arabic grammar, rhetoric, and literature, as well as works on Islamic history, jurisprudence, and philosophy. It also includes rare and old manuscripts on the history of the Arabian Peninsula, the genealogies of its people, and the geographical and cultural aspects of the region. In addition, it includes printed books, new as well as old newspapers, and rare documents. Shaykh Muhammad b. Sādūq al-Sabānī purchased the greater part of this collection of the death of Rūshdī Malāhī in AH1378/1959; the remainder includes 44 manuscripts.

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The library of Shaykh ’Abd al-Muhsin Abâ Butayn includes 34 manuscripts, the majority of which are copies of works which he published through al-Maktaba al-Ahliyya. The shaykh died in AH 1401/1981.

26 - 'Abd al-Baqi al-Mubarak Library

The library was founded by Mubarak (d. AH 1230/1815), the eponymous ancestor of the family, who belonged to the tribe of ’Amr b. Tamim. Mubarak’s books were divided equally among his six sons and then later on distributed among their descendants; the Foundation possesses that portion of the library which belonged to Shaykh Muhammad b. Ibrahim Al Mubarak. The manuscripts in this collection, which number 34, are devoted to Prophetic Hadith and Malikî jurisprudence.

27 - Library of the Mosque of Ibn ‘Abbâs in Taif

Credit for the establishment of this library goes to the Ottoman governor of the Hijaz, Muhammad Rushdi al-Shirwanî (d. AH 1291/1874). al-Shirwanî collected manuscripts and printed works and deposited them in a special place adjacent to the mosque of Ibn ‘Abbâs in Taif. Over time, this collection was augmented, as, for instance, when the manuscripts of ’Abd al-Ha˚fiz al-Qarî were added to it. Unfortunately, the library was neglected for a long time, and some of its manuscript holdings were lost. The library was ultimately reopened in AH 1384/1965 by the efforts of the former Minister of Pilgrimage and Endowments, Husayn Arâb. It currently falls under the care of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowment, Dawa and Guidance. Although most of this manuscript collection remains in the mosque library, 33 of its manuscripts have been transferred to the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives.

28 - The Khayriyya Library in Hîrîl

The Khayriyya Library was founded in AH 1395/1975 by a group of students of religion in the al-Mu‘ajjil Mosque in Hîrîl. Later on, the library was transferred to the Mosque of al-Urayfi, where it still remains to this day. Among its collection is a variety of printed books on many different subjects, in addition to some manuscripts of works by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim and others. There are 30 manuscripts in this collection.

29 - ’Ajlun Library

Shaykh ’Abd al-Azîz b. ’Abd al-Rahmân b. ’Abd al-’Azîz b. Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. ’Ajlun al-Mu‘awfi al-’Anazi was born in the town of al-Haraq at the beginning of the fourteenth Islamic century. He traveled to Riyadh to study, where he became a student of Shaykh Muhammad b. Ibrahim Al Shaykh. He also studied religious obligations under Shaykh ’Abd al-Latif b. Ibrahim Al Shaykh and Shaykh Sa’d b. Humaid b. Arîq. Al-’Ajlun held the position of judge in a number of locales, including al-Rayan, al-Hîwâ, Haw al-’Ist Bani Tamim, al-Dilam, Umrawj and Sajur; in some of these towns he was also imam of the local mosque. He died in Riyadh in AH 1415/1995 after having lived more than ninety years. A total of 28 manuscripts from his library were presented to the Foundation.

30 - ’Abd al-Rahmân al-Isâ Library

This library contains, the most important manuscripts as well as printed works from the legacy of the Al Isâ family from the Banî Zayd, including such figures as Shaykh Ahmad b. Ibrahim Al Isâ (d. AH 1329/1911), Shaykh ’Arb. ’Abd Allah b. Isâ (d. AH 1331/1913), and the historian Shaykh Ibrahim b. Sâlih b. Isâ (d. AH 1343/1925). The library passed into the possession of Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Bayyâ (d. AH 1392/1972), one of whose children gave it to Shaykh ’Abd al-Rahmân b. Muhammad al-Isâ. Shaykh ’Abd al-Rahmân was born in Shaqra in AH 1340/1922. He began to study in his home town but soon lost his sight, and moved to Taif where he studied in Dar al-Tawhid and thereafter in the College of Sharia. After completing his education, Shaykh ’Abd al-Rahmân served as qadi in several cities in the Kingdom, the last one of which was al-Dhîrîyya. The shaykh died in Riyadh in AH 1399/1979 and his library contained a total of 26 manuscripts.

(42) [Footnote reference]
(43) [Footnote reference]
(44) [Footnote reference]
(45) [Footnote reference]
(46) [Footnote reference]
of Shaykh 'Abd al-Muisin Abū Batayn includes
ripts, the majority of which are copies of works
published through al-Maktaba al-Ahlyya. The
in 1401/1481.

al-Bāqī al-Mubārak Library

was founded by Mubarak (d. AH 1230/1815),
the ancestor of the family, who belonged to the tribe
Qaṭṭān. His father, Muḥammad b. Qayyum, was
booked equally among his six sons
ripped among their descendants; the
possessions that portion of the library
which Shaykh Muḥammad b. Qayyum al-Mubarak. In
this collection, which number 34, are devoted
Hudail and Maḥfīz juridico-literary.

y of the Mosque of Ibn 'Abbās in Tāif

establishment of this library goes to the Ottoman
period, when it was a part of the local
institutions in Tāif. Over time, this collection was
slowly expanded, including the efforts of the
former Minister of Endowments, Nūrān al-Hajj. It
particularly the care of the Ministry of Islamic
Affairs, Dawah, and Guidance. Although most of this
collection remains in the mosque library, 33 of
which have been transferred to the King Abdulaziz
Research and Archives.

al-Mas'ūdi Library in Ḥillah

a Library was founded in AH 1395/1975 by
the grandson of the Malikī Imam Mosque in
the Masjid was transferred to the Mosque
which still remains to this day. Among its

31 - al-Zāmil Library

Shaykh 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Muisin al-Zāmil from the tribe of
Qaṭṭān was born in AH 1355/1936 in the town of Uthaybiyah in
After working in commerce for a while, he entered government
service in the Royal Guard. Al-Zāmil then studied in King Saud
University from where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree
in history, after which he was sent to the United States to study
English. His library contained 25 manuscripts.

32 - al-Dakhil Library

Abd Allāh b. Hamdān b. Dakhil al-Najāri al-Tamīmī was born
in the town of al-Majma'a, capital of the Najd region, in AH
1290/1874. After studying Prophetic Hadith with scholars in
al-Madīnah al-Munawwara, al-Dakhil went to Makka al-
Mukarramah for the Hajj, where he had the opportunity to study
with some of the scholars of the holy city. Afterwards,
he traveled to al-Qūdayr region, and studied under scholars
in 'Umaray and Bayrūz. In answer to the request of the town's
inhabitants, Shaykh al-Dakhil then assumed the position of
qādir in al-Madīnah.

al-Dakhil was an avid collector of books, particularly
those of the Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya and his student
Ibn al-Qayyim, in addition to the writings of the leading
proponents of the Reform Movement in Najd. Many of the
works in Shaykh al-Dakhil's library bear his own annotations,
particularly manuscripts of the writings of Ibn Taymiyya
and Ibn al-Qayyim. Supported by Shaykh Qayyum B. Thānt,
Shaykh al-Dakhil worked vigorously to distribute religious
books. After his death in al-Madīnah in AH 1323/1905, some
of the manuscripts which were in his library were lost: a total of
23 manuscripts were handed over to the King Abdulaziz
Foundation for Research and Archives.

33 - Fuṣūd Hamza Library

researcher, played a role in the foreign affairs of the Kingdom
of Saudi Arabia during a quarter century.

Born in Lebanon, Fuṣūd Hamza taught in government schools
in Damascus and Jerusalem. He was appointed as private
translator to King Abdulaziz in Riyadh and then became
department minister and an ambassador of the Kingdom
of Saudi Arabia in several countries. He was one of the most
important people who worked with King Abdulaziz,
and was charged with carrying out numerous tasks within
the Kingdom and abroad.

Fuṣūd Hamza (d. AH 1371/1951) authored a number of books,
including "Qālīb al-Jāfīr al-Arābiyya" and "Fi bīlād 'Arās." He
collected manuscripts on different subjects, such as literature,
the Arabic language and history, 22 of which were presented
to the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives.

34 - al-Subayy al-Ghayyab Library

Ali b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-‘Azhir al-Subayy, one of the
Subayy al-Ghayyab, gave much of his attention to
the acquisition of books and was renowned for his love
of reading and learning. He was known to invite
men who visited Subayy's home for a meal, to
which he also used to invite notable of the town itself. He died in
Subayy in AH 1316/1996. The King Abdulaziz Foundation possesses 20 manuscripts from his library.

35 - al-Sāliḥiya Library in 'Umaray

This library, officially known as al-Maktaba al-'Ilmiyya al-
Sāliḥiya bi-'Umaray was established by Muḥammad al-
Uthmān al-Qādir in AH 1373/1954 in the Mosque of Umm
Khāmitt in 'Umaray. Its nucleus was the books collected by
al-Qādir's father, to which he added his own collection, and
the library of the qādir of 'Umaray, Shaykh Sāliḥ al-Uthmān
al-Qādir. In all, there are fifteen manuscripts in the Sāliḥiya
library, on subjects including Hanbali jurisprudence, Prophetic
Hadith and history.

(44) His biography was obtained from his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān.
(45) His biography was obtained from his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān.
(46) His biography was obtained from his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān.
(47) His biography was obtained from his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān.
(48) His biography was obtained from his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān.
(49) His biography was obtained from his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān.
(50) His biography was obtained from his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān.
(51) His biography was obtained from his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān.
(52) His biography was obtained from his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān.
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(64) His biography was obtained from his son 'Abd al-Raḥmān.
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The manuscript collection of the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives has also been enriched by the acquisition of manuscripts belonging to the following persons and parties:

* `Abd al-Khaliq al-Hifzi
* Muhammad b. Naṣir al-`Abbādí
* Muzhir b. Muhammad al-Qarnī
* `Abd al-Rahmān b. Muhammad al-Fāris
* `Abd Allāh b. Jalīf
* Ahmad b. `Ali `Āl Mubarak
* Muhammad b. `Uthmān b. Bishr
* Muhammad b. Badr al-Badr
* `Abd al-`Azīz b. Sulaymān al-Shīhrī
* `Ali b. Muhammad al-Ṣubayy al-Ghurayh
* Dr. `Abd al-Rahmān b. `Abd Allāh al-Rahī'ī
* Dr. Muhammad al-Rabī‘ī
* Naṣir b. Sa`ād al-Salīma
* Fahd b. `Abd al-Rahmān al-Ṣumayt
* Dr. Sa`d al-Urayfī
* Badr b. Muhammad al-Uwayn
* Dr. `Abd al-Rahmān b. `Abd Allāh al-Jamshūr
* `Abd al-Malik b. al-Rahmān al-Kaftūrī
* Badr b. Muhammad al-Badr
* The al-Mughayyib family
* Sa`d b. Muhammad b. Darrān
* The children of `Abd Allāh b. Umar Balikhayr
* Muḥammad al-Sa`īb al-`Uthaymīn Foundation
* `Abd al-`Azīz b. Ahmad al-`Umārī
* Dr. Sa`d b. Muhammad al-Balikhayr
* The children of Muhammad Rashed Kījā
* Maktabat Makkah al-Mukarramah (Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Scholars and Communities)
* Bassām b. Naṣir al-Humaydī