

BAHRAIN

by

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1991

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SHEIKHA NAILA AL KHALIFA, Director of the National Museum of Bahrain and her assistants MARYAM MOHAMMED ALI and EYAD AL GHAMIDI; DR. ALI ABA HUSSAIN, Director of the Historical Documents Centre; and ASHRAF AL ANSARI, Curator of Manuscripts in Bayt al-Qurʿān.

UNION CATALOGUES & SURVEYS

1976. *Al-makhtūṭāt fī Dawlat al-Baḥrayn*. By ʿALĪ ʿABD AL-RAḤMĀN AB[Ā] ḤUSAYN. *Al-Mawrid*, 5 i, 1976, pp. 36–38.

1976. *Dār al-makhtūṭāt fī ʿl-Baḥrayn*. By ʿALĪ ʿABD AL-RAḤMĀN ABĀ ḤUSAYN. *Al-Khalīj al-ʿArabī*, 6, 1976, pp. 117–121.

1977–83. *Fihris makhtūṭāt al-Baḥrayn*. By ʿALĪ [ʿABD AL-RAḤMĀN] ABĀ ḤUSAYN. Vol. 1—Bahrain: Wizārat al-Tarbiya wa-ʿl-Taʿlīm, 1977, 310pp. 2nd. ed. Bahrain: Markaz al-Wathāʿiq al-Tārikhīya, 1983. Vol. 2.—Bahrain: Markaz al-Wathāʿiq al-Tārikhīya, 1981, 260pp.

This catalogue lists some 656 manuscripts. About 60 per cent of these are held in the National Museum of Bahrain. The rest are scattered in private and public collections. Among these is the private collection of ʿABD AL-RASŪL AL-TĀJIR, from which about 90 MSS appear in the catalogue. It does not include any of Dr. Kanoo's manuscripts. The Bayt al-Qurʿān collection is also not covered, perhaps because of its relative newness.

The catalogue gives full details, including title, author, subject, language, date and place of copying, name of scribe and style of script. It also has author, scribe and title indexes. The present location of each title as well as its previous owner are also given. At the present time some attempts are being made to update this catalogue.

An abridged English version was published in 1986 (see below).

1983. Ma^c al-makḥṭūṭāt al-nādira. By ʿALĪ ʿABD AL-RAḤMAN ABĀ ḤUSAYN. *Al-Wathīqa*, 1 ii, 1983, pp. 82–122.

1983. Maṣāḥif bi-'l-Baḥrayn taʿūd ilā 'l-qarn al-awwal al-Hijrī. By ʿABD AL-LAṬĪF JĀSIM KĀNŪ [KANOO]. *Al-Wathīqa*, 3, 1983, pp. 102–149.

Early Qurʾān MSS.

1986. *Index of Bahrain manuscripts* (parts one & two). By ʿALĪ ABĀ ḤUSAYN. Tr. B.K. Narayan. Bahrain: Historical Documents Centre / Markaz al-Wathāʿiq al-Tārīkhīya, 1986. 165pp. [Tr. of *Fihris makḥṭūṭāt al-Baḥrayn*, Bahrain 1977–81.]

INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS

MANAMA

Dr. Abdul Latif Jasim Kanoo (ʿAbd al-Latīf Jāsīm Kānū)

c/o Ministry of Housing,
Manama, Bahrain
Tel.: (973) 534443

Status: Private home library

Total number of Islamic MSS: About 200.

Conditions of access: By appointment with the owner.

Description of collection: Dr. Kanoo, a scholar and prominent collector of Islamic MSS, is the mastermind behind the idea of Bayt al-Qurʾān (see below) and is currently its Secretary-General. In 1991, a selection of about 100 rare works of his collection was exhibited in Bayt al-Qurʾān to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad (p.b.u.h.). As far as can be ascertained, most of Dr. Kanoo's collection is related to the Qurʾān. Many of the works in the exhibition are elaborately designed and are very attractive examples of the Islamic binding craft. All the volumes appear to be in their original bindings, with no serious cracks or damage to their contents. It was not possible to establish whether the collection is catalogued or not.

Mathaf al-Baḥrayn al-Waṭanī (the National Museum of Bahrain)

P.O. Box 2199

Manama, Bahrain

Tel.: (973) 292977

Telefax: (973) 293820

Date of establishment: 1976

Status: Public (affiliated to the Ministry of Information).

Total number of Islamic MSS: 435 (Arabic).

Conditions of access: Part of the collection is on display in the Manuscripts and Archives Hall in the Museum, which is open to the public Saturday to Friday, 08.00–14.00. The vast majority of the MSS are kept in a special room and are only accessible to serious researchers on approval from the Museum administration.

Description of collection: The majority of the collection is on Islamic subjects, with 47 works on the Qurʾān and related studies, 94 works of *fiqh*, 29 on *Hadīth*, 46 on *ʿaqīda*, 14 on Sufism, 18 on *Sīra* and about 45 *fatwās*. The field of Arabic language and literature comes second, with about 94 titles. Physical and applied sciences seem to be the least represented: there are 10 works on medicine and only 3 on astronomy.

The MSS were collected from various sources, both within and outside Bahrain. Many of them appear to have been donated by individual collectors. The oldest work in the collection dates back to the 7th Islamic century and is entitled *Jāmiʿ al-uṣūl fi Ahādīth al-Rasūl*.

About 45 MSS are displayed in glass cases in the Museum. These are all bound, well preserved and appear in perfect condition. The remaining 390 titles are kept in acid-free cardboard boxes. A random inspection of the collection suggested that many MSS had been affected by termites and humidity. At present, seriously affected ones are being fumigated. This process is slow; moreover, it does not help to conserve the documents, most of which need major repair work.

Published catalogues:

1976. The survey by ABĀ ḤUSAYN (see Union Catalogues above) covers 10 MSS in this collection.

1977–83. The union catalogue by ABĀ ḤUSAYN (see above) describes ca. 400 of these MSS.

Unpublished catalogues: All of the collection is fully catalogued. The catalogue, which is in card form, contains all standard MSS cataloguing information such as title, author, scribe, type of ink, dimensions, etc. At present, steps are being taken to feed this information into the computer for public access.

Mathaf al-Hayā (Museum of Life)

Bayt al-Qurʿān,
P.O. Box 2000,
Manama, Bahrain
Tel.: (973) 290101 / 290409
Telefax: (973) 292709
Telex: 8599 BN

Date of establishment: 1987

Status: Islamic trust

Conditions of access: Limited to scholars and researchers. The museum is open to the public for viewing only.

Total number of Islamic MSS: ca. 2800 (Arabic; some with Persian, Turkish or Urdu commentaries).

Description of collection: 320 of the MSS are placed on display in the museum halls. The collection is well preserved and contains many rarities, covering a wide range of historical periods. It also represents various styles of script, design and binding. Some are written on parchment in refined Maghribī style and bound with smooth fine-quality vellum. Others are less artistic, with primitive colouring and design. The MSS are housed in a purpose-built building with adequate storage and ventilation facilities.

An estimated 2500 manuscripts are kept in the museum's depository, pending classification and cataloguing. About 90% of the collection is in the field of Qurʿān and related works. The MSS are in good condition.

Published catalogues:

1987. *Nafāʾis Bayt al-Qurʿān* (the treasures of Bayt al-Qurʿān): a catalogue of the MSS exhibition organized by Dar Al Athar Al Islamiyah in Kuwait, 1987. Kuwait: Ministry of Information. 138pp.

This catalogue lists some 100 MSS. In addition to standard cataloguing details such as the author, title, scribe etc., a colour photograph of each MS. also appears at the beginning of each entry.

1991. [*Fihris*] *Mathaf al-Hayā fī Bayt al-Qurʿān*. Manama: Bayt al-Qurʿān. 50pp.

A list of some 220 titles of MSS, as well as some early printed works, which are currently displayed in the museum. Bibliographic description is mostly brief, but much attention is given to the physical details such as the style of writing, type of paper or parchment used and other artistic features.

ʿAbd al-Rasūl al-Tajir

Manama, Bahrain

Status: Private home library

Conditions of access: Requires permission from the family of the late owner.

Total number of Islamic MSS: ca. 500 (Arabic; Persian).

Description of collection: ʿABD AL-RASŪL AL-TĀJIR, teacher and founder of the first private school in Bahrain, died a few years ago. His private library is estimated to contain more than 500 rare manuscripts. A relative appears to have inherited the collection. According to Dr. ALI ABA HUSSAIN, who catalogued about 90 works of the collection, many of the manuscripts have been damaged as a result of the unsatisfactory conditions in which they were housed. The manuscripts catalogued include works on Arabic and Persian literatures, rare copies of the Qurʿān, medicine, astronomy, philosophy and logic.

The Sharjah-based newspaper *Al-Khalīj*, reported on 2 October 1991 that a team from the Library of Congress had visited Bahrain to document the collection. No further details are available about this task yet.

Published catalogues:

1976. The survey by ABĀ ḤUSAYN (see Union Catalogues above) covers 14 MSS from this collection.

1977–83. The union catalogue by ABĀ ḤUSAYN (see above) describes ca. 90 MSS from this collection.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

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Lists catalogues and publications about Arabic manuscripts all over the world. Al-Baḥrayn, Vol. 1, pp. 266–267, nos. 958–962.

Dalīl fahāris al-makhtūṭāt fī ʿl-Majmaʿ al-Malikī li-Buḥūth al-Ḥadāra al-Islāmīya. 2nd ed. Amman: Al-Majmaʿ al-Malikī li-Buḥūth al-Ḥadāra al-Islāmīya, Muʿassasat Āl al-Bayt, 1986. 509pp.

Al-Baḥrayn, p. 12, nos. 33–34.

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Al-Baḥrayn, p. 8, no. 5.

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Sezgin, Fuat. *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*. Band VI. Leiden: Brill, 1978.

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BANGLADESH

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