

QATAR

by

Bakri Musa Abdul Karim

1990

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the librarian of the library concerned for providing the necessary information. Thanks are also due to Mr V.K.G. NAIR for his useful remarks throughout the preparation of this survey.

INTRODUCTION

In the State of Qatar only one library has a manuscript collection. It holds about 1,800 MSS.

As far as it has been possible to ascertain, there is a considerable number of MSS scattered in individual hands. The library is currently persevering in efforts to identify and collect as many as possible of these MSS.

DOHA

The National Library of Qatar (Dār al-Kutub al-Qaṭarīya)

National Library of Qatar, PO Box 205, Doha, Qatar.

Date of establishment: 1962

Total number of Islamic MSS: 1,821 (1,734 Arabic; 22 Persian; 65 Turkish).

Description of collection: The National Library of Qatar, which is affiliated to the Ministry of Education, can be said to be one of the best developed national libraries in the Gulf. Apart from its role as a centre of legal deposit for all materials published in Qatar, the library caters for the collection and preservation of rare books and MSS.

Awareness of the importance of manuscripts goes back to 1962 when the Library first initiated a special department for their acquisition and preservation. At the present time the stock amounts to more than 1,800 titles. About 87 MSS (5 per cent of the collection) are in foreign languages: 65 in Turkish and 22 in Persian.

The collection is kept in a purpose-built room with adequate air conditioning and ventilation facilities. The room temperature is set in the range of 18° to 23°C and relative humidity is between 50 and

60 per cent. All windows are fitted with curtains to prevent direct sunlight from entering the MSS area. The volumes, which are all bound, are kept vertically on metal shelving and are regularly treated with insect killers.

The following table is a listing of the subject categories and the number of MSS in each of them:

Subject	Number of MSS	%
Generalities	2	0.1
Philosophy	91	5
Qurʾān	78	15.1
<i>Ḥadīth</i>	136	7.5
Islamic theology	89	4.9
Sources of <i>fiqh</i>	17	0.9
Islamic duties	52	2.9
Mālikī <i>fiqh</i>	7	0.4
Shāfiʿī <i>fiqh</i>	61	3.3
Hanafī <i>fiqh</i>	228	12.3
Hanbalī <i>fiqh</i>	20	1.1
Sufism	238	13.1
Sermons	67	3.7
Biography (Prophet)	132	7.2
Theology (Christian)	21	1.1
Arabic language	190	10.4
Mathematics	5	0.3
Astronomy	14	0.8
Chemistry	2	0.1
Zoology	2	0.1
Medicine	13	0.7
Arabic literature	110	6
History & biography	40	2.2
Geography & travel	2	0.1
Total	1817	100

The chronological index of the collection is also extremely useful in giving a clear picture of the historical coverage of the collection. An examination of 974 titles of the collection for which dates of copying were provided shows that the MSS range from 632H (1235) to the present century. The oldest work in the Library, which is a collection by the famous ʿAbbasid poet AL-MUTANABBĪ who died in 354H (965), is estimated to have been copied around 324H (935).

As is evident from the following chronological table, the majority of MSS in this collection relate to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Century CE	Number of MSS	%
13th	2	0.2
14th	16	1.6
15th	44	4.5
16th	75	7.7
17th	201	20.6
18th	252	25.8
19th	315	32.2
20th	69	7.1
Total	974	100

The library also has an important collection of microfilms of Arabic MSS.

See:

1983. Al-makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿArabīya wa-fahārisuhā fi ʿl-Khalīj wa-shibh al-jazīra al-ʿArabīya. By ʿABD ALLĀH AL-JUBŪRĪ. *ʿĀlam al-Kutub* 3 iv, 1403/1983, pp. 692–706.

Dawlat Qaṭar: Dār al-Kutub al-Qaṭariya, pp. 702–703.

Published catalogues:

1963–1964. Al-makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿArabīya fī Dār al-Kutub al-Qaṭariya. By ʿABD AL-BADĪʿ ṢAQR & MUḤAMMAD MUṢṬAFĀ AL-AʿZĀMĪ. *Majallat Maḥad al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿArabīya* 9, 1963, pp. 3–46; 10, 1964, pp. 3–36; 195–222.

Descriptions of 553 MSS giving full title and author, date and name of scribe.

1985. *Fihris makḥṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub al-Qaṭariya 1962–1985*. Doha: Dār al-Kutub al-Qaṭariya. 2 vols.

The catalogue contains detailed codicological information about each entry, such as the full name of the author and the date of his death, the name of the scribe and date of copying as well as other physical descriptions of the work concerned. Each author is entered under the part of name by which he is most commonly known, followed by other parts of the name. The catalogue is divided into two parts. The first of them is the main entry section which lists all the 1,821 MSS titles. The second part contains indexes to the collection by author, title, scribe, as well as a chronological index.

The subject headings followed in the catalogue are adapted from the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme. Hence, instead of the conventional Islamic subject layout the following structure was followed:

1. Generalities
2. Philosophy
3. Islam
4. Arabic language
5. Pure sciences
6. Applied sciences
7. Literature
8. History, geography and biography.

Each of the above subjects is further divided into sub-classes. The MSS are arranged under these sub-classes in alphabetical order by the title of the work.

1986. *Al-muntakhab min makhtūṭāt Dār al-Kutub al-Qaṭariya* / Markaz al-Khadamāt wa-'l-Abḥāth al-Thaqāfiya. Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub. 184pp.

Unpublished catalogues:

The Card Catalogue provides access to the collection by subject, title and author with the necessary cross-references and call numbers that will assist in locating MSS on the shelves.

1972. *Qā'imāt asma' al-makhtūṭāt al-Turkiya al-mawjūda bi-Dār al-Kutub al-Qaṭariya*. Dawlat Qaṭar, Wizārat al-Tarbīya wa-'l-Ta'lim, Dār al-Kutub. 4 pages each of Arabic and English. Deposited in the Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul. A rather poor short listing of 24 Turkish MSS, bound with a list of Turkish MSS at Amman. The two lists, typewritten carbon copies donated by the Arab League and now bound together, are preceded by a pencilled "title page": *Ürdun [ve] Katar ülkeleri kütüphanelerinde bulunan Türkçe yazma eserlere ait liste*. Geldiği tarih 14.9.1972. (The Süleymaniye call mark is: Basma Bağışlar no. 4155.)

Source: Birnbaum, p. 703.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX

'Awwād, Kūrķis. *Fahāris al-makhtūṭāt al-'Arabīya fī 'l-'ālam*. Kuwait: Ma'had al-Makhtūṭāt al-'Arabīya, 1984. 2 vols.

Birnbaum, Eleazar. Turkish manuscripts: cataloguing since 1960 and manuscripts still uncatalogued. Part 3: USSR, Iran, Afghanistan, Arab Lands (except Palestine), Israel and Palestine, India and Pakistan, China. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 103, 1983, pp. 691–707.

Dalīl fahāris al-makhtūṭāt fī 'l-Majma' al-Malikī li-Buḥūth al-Ḥaḍāra al-Islāmīya. 2nd ed. Amman: Al-Majma' al-Malikī li-Buḥūth al-Ḥaḍāra al-Islāmīya, Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt, 1986. Al-mulḥaq al-awwal, 1987.

Qaṭar, p. 87, nos. 287–289.

Huisman, A.J.W. *Les manuscrits arabes dans le monde: une bibliographie des catalogues*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967. 84pp.

Jubūrī, 'Abd Allāh al-. *Al-makhtūṭāt al-'Arabīya wa-fahārisuhā fī 'l-Khalīj wa-shibh al-jazīra al-'Arabīya*. *Ālam al-Kutub* 3 iv, 1403/1983, pp. 692–706.

Dawlat Qaṭar, pp. 702–703.

Mikhaïlova, I.B. and Khalidov, A.B. *Bibliografiya arabskikh rukopisei*. Moscow: Nauka, 1982. 302pp.

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

Bibliotheken und Sammlungen arabischen Handschriften.