
TEXTS AND MANUSCRIPTS: DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH

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SCRIBES, AMANUENSES, AND SCHOLARS. A BIBLIOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF PUBLISHED ARABIC LITERATURE FROM THE MANUSCRIPT AGE ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF PENMANSHIP, BOOKMAKING, AND THE TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE

Introduction

The Arabic literature of interest to manuscript studies and produced in the manuscript age is quite extensive. Apart from numerous statements and passages scattered in Qur'ānic and *Ḥadīth* literature, biographies, and historical accounts, there are substantial chapters of works and complete compositions, rich in technical vocabulary, on various aspects of bookmaking and penmanship [1]. This should not be surprising as Islamic civilization is, for all intents and purposes, a civilization of the book. The vast intellectual output, which has emerged from the manuscript age, is a testimony to this phenomenon. This literature constitutes a written tradition that is very important for the overall picture of manuscript making in the Islamic context.

Although a good number of relevant works has survived, albeit some in one copy only, a substantial amount of compositions are known to us only by name. Some of them may still be hidden in unexplored public and private collections and others in brief or rare catalogues, while yet others are certainly lost.

A cursory look at the present scene reveals, for instance, that some of the more interesting works may not have survived. These include: *Kitāb al-qalam*, *Tuḥfat al-wāmiq fī al-khaṭṭ*, and *Risālah fī al-khaṭṭ wa-al-kitābah* by Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Barbarī al-Muḥarrir (d. early 4/10th c.) [2], *Kitāb fī qalam al-thuluth* by 'Umar Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ghulām ibn Kharnaqā (d. 552/1157) [3], *Urjūzah fī al-khaṭṭ* and *Ṭabaqāt al-khaṭṭātīn* by 'Awn al-Dīn Abū al-Muzaffar Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad ibn Hubayrah al-Wazīr (d. 560/1165) [4], *Kitāb al-khaṭṭ wa-ādābuh wa-waṣf ṭurūsih wa-aqlāmih* and *Ṭabaqāt al-khaṭṭātīn* by Kamāl al-Dīn 'Umar ibn Aḥmad ibn Hibat Allāh 'Uqaylī al-Ḥillī al-Ḥalabī, known as Ibn al-'Adīm (d. 660/1262) [5], *Risālah fī al-khaṭṭ* by Abū al-Durr Yāqūt ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Musta'simī al-Baghdādī (d. 698/1298) [6], *Kitāb al-qalam wa-al-dawāh* by Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Madā'inī (7/13th c.) [7], *Waraqāt*

fī al-wirāqah by Jamāl al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh ibn Yūsuf ibn Hishām (d. 761/1360) [8], *Muṣannaḥ fī qalam al-naskh* and *Kitāb al-mizān fī al-khaṭṭ* by Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Izz al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Salām (8/14th c. — ?) [9], and *Tanwīq al-niṭāqah fī 'ilm al-wirāqah* by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn Misk al-Sakhāwī (d. ca. 1025/1616) [10].

On the other hand, we are fortunate to have access to a substantial and growing number of works spanning the period between the 3/9th and early 14/20th centuries, which have either been edited or translated or analyzed in one form or another. And thus the present survey lists some 148 important extant compositions by 124 authors. Prominent among these works are administrative manuals, which contain a wealth of information on writing, writing implements, calligraphy, and paper formats. It is thanks to these compositions that we can gain a better understanding of the development of Arabic calligraphy and penmanship; for it was the chancery and its secretaries / penmen (*kuttāb*) who often initiated new reforms in this area. Calligraphy and penmanship, from the early 'Abbāsid period on, became the most important art of the book and it is not surprising that Arabic authors often refer to this field as the "science of writing" ('*ilm al-khaṭṭ*', '*ilm al-kitābah*', '*ilm al-qalam*').

Among the early chancery manuals mention should be made of *Kitāb al-kuttāb* of 'Abd Allāh al-Baghdādī (3/9th c.), *Risālat al-khaṭṭ wa-al-qalam* of Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889), *Adab al-kuttāb* of al-Ṣūlī (d. 335/946), *Kitāb al-kuttāb* of Ibn Durustawayh (d. 347/956), and *Ma'ālim al-kitābah* of Ibn Shīth al-Qurashī (d. 625/1228). Later examples include works by such famous Mamlūk writers and calligraphers as Ibn al-Wahīd (d. 711/1312), al-Nuwayrī (d. 732/1332), Ḥusayn al-Kātib (fl. 781/1379), al-Ziftāwī (d. 806/1403-4), al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418), al-Āṭhārī (d. 828/1425), Ibn al-Ṣā'igh (d. 845/1441-2), al-Hītī (d. 891/1486), and al-Ṭībī (fl. 908/1502). Indeed, the