Recenzje

Two new catalogs of manuscript collections in the Egyptian National Library

(A) ᶜAbd as-Sattār al-Ḫalwaǧī (taḥrīr wa-murāǧaᶜaᵗ), *Fahras al-maḫṭūṭāt al-ᶜarabiyyaᵗ bi-Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyaᵗ* (*al-maǧāmīᶜ*), Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Waṯā'iq al-Qawmiyyaᵗ, Al-Qāhiraᵗ – Mu'assasaᵗ al-Furqān li-t-Turāṯ al-Islāmī, Markaz Dirāsāt al-Maḫṭūṭāt al-Islāmiyyaᵗ, Landan 1432 h./2011 m. "Manšūrāt al-Furqān: raqm 129". / Abd al-Sattar al-Ḫalwaji (ed.), *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Egyptian National Library (Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah). Collections (Maǧāmīᶜ)*. Egyptian National Library and Archives, Cairo – Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, Centre for the Study of Islamic Manuscripts, London 2011. "Publications No: 129". Vol. I–IV: 12+617+5 p., 743+5 p., 649+7 p., 857+7 p.

(B) Aḥmad ᶜAbd al-Bāsiṭ (taḥrīr wa-murāǧaᶜaᵗ), *Fahras maǧāmiᶜ al-maktabāt al-ḫāṣṣaᵗ bi-Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyaᵗ*. Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Waṯā'iq al-Qawmiyyaᵗ, Al-Qāhiraᵗ – Mu'assasaᵗ al-Furqān li-t-Turāṯ al-Islāmī, Markaz Dirāsāt al-Maḫṭūṭāt al-Islāmiyyaᵗ, [Landan] 1436 h./2015 m. "Silsilaᵗ fahāris al-maḫṭūṭāt" / Ahmed Abd El Baset (ed.), *Catalogue of the Private Collections of Manuscripts in the Egyptian National Library*. Egyptian National Library and Archives, Cairo – Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, Centre for the Study of Islamic Manuscripts, London 2015. "Manuscript Catalogue Series". Vol. 1–8: 14+848+4 p., 860+4 p., 845+7 p., 821+7 p., 852+4 p., 831+5 p., 871+5 p., 834+6 p.

The Egyptian National Library was set up in 1870 with an edict by the khedive Ismāᶜīl, grandson of Muḥammad ᶜAlī, who entrusted ᶜAlī Bāšā Mubārak, the then director of the Schools Office (Dīwān al-Madāris), with a mission of "collecting precious manuscripts which remain unavailable and dispersed, confined by sultans, emirs, scholars and authors in mosques, mausoleums and learned institutes, so that those scattered objects become a nucleus of a general library". The library started to function in Cairo under the name of Al-Kutubḫānaᵗ al-Ḫidīwiyyaᵗ, or the Viceregal Library, as the earliest national library in the Arab World. Its first catalogue of both manuscripts and printed books appeared very quickly; it was: *Fihrist al-kutub al-ᶜarabiyyaᵗ al-maḥfūẓaᵗ bi-Al-Kutubḫānaᵗ al-Ḫidīwiyyaᵗ*. Vols. 1–8. Al-Maṭbaᶜaᵗ al-Wahbiyyaᵗ, Bāb aš-Šarᶜiyyaᵗ bi-Miṣr [Cairo] AH 1301–1308 [AD 1883–1891].

The collection developed rapidly to take its present form and name. Now its holdings include roughly 57,000 manuscripts, the biggest number in the country, the second biggest being the Al-Azhar Library with nearly 50,000 manuscripts. Both libraries are located in Cairo, thus making it the biggest world depository of Islamic written heritage in the world, the second in row being İstanbul with its biggest aggregate collection of over 67,000 manuscripts in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi.

Over the time, the manuscripts in the National Library collection were catalogued, but one problem remained unsolved until recently. Volumes containing more than one written work under one cover, or at least sewn together (if without a cover), called *mağmūᶜ* or *mağmūᶜaᵗ* (also *maḥṭūṭ mağmūᶜ* or *maḥṭūṭaᵗ mağmūᶜaᵗ*),[1] were only registered under the title and author of the first manuscript, leaving the other works unnoticeable and therefore unavailable to possible readers. For obvious reasons it was detrimental to the full use of the collection's historical heritage and appreciation of its intellectual value.

In compliance with modern requirements of information storage and retrieval, a new scheme for cataloguing the Library's manuscripts was conceived and on that occasion it was decided to examine all collective volumes (*mağāmīᶜ*) to find out all individual works and to put systematized information about them in one data base.

The two catalogues under review result from that search and investigation of collective volumes that are now a part of A: the general fund of the Library (*ar-raṣīd al-ᶜāmm*, 4 volumes) and B: the attached libraries (*al-maktabāt al-mulḥaqaᵗ*, 8 volumes).

In the course of time many private collections of books and manuscripts were donated or bequeathed by their owners for the enrichment of the National Library. Many of them were absorbed by the general fund. Several of them were not directly incorporated into the general fund of the library but, in appreciation of their exceptional contents and historical value, were only attached to the main library and preserved as separate units.

In the years 1876–1934, as was the case, several rich private libraries collected by some outstanding personalities of Egypt, and specifically mentioned in the Prefaces (*Muqaddimaᵗ*) to catalogue A and catalogue B, came into the possession of the National Library. They were:

1. *Maktabaᵗ Muṣṭafá Fāḍil* – a library of the prince Muṣṭafá Fāḍil (1832–1875), brother of the Khedive Ismāᶜīl; entered the National Library in AH 1293/AD 1876;

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[1] The Arabic terms have several counterparts in European codicological terminology, like: *miscellanies, collection, collective volume, collected volume, collected block, composite manuscript, composite book block, multiple-text manuscript, manuscript of mixed contents* e.a. It is actually an issue where almost everyone comes up with his own terminology (occasionally equivocal: "collection" of volumes ≠ "collection" of works under one cover). The style of approach may also differ when a manuscript is treated either as a repository of meaningful texts or a physical object that was produced and used in its own right. To this particular issue a debate was devoted at a conference in Hamburg in 2010 and on several other occasions, cf. *One-Volume Libraries – Composite and Multiple-Text Manuscripts*. Ed. by Cosima Schwarke and Michael Friedrich. "Studies in Manuscript Cultures" 9. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016. I thank Dr. Alessandro Gori of Copenhagen and Dr. Ewa Balicka-Witakowska of Uppsala for their help in elucidating this complex question.

2. *Maktaba^t aš-Šinqīṭī* – a library of Muḥammad Maḥmūd Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad at-Tarkazī aš-Šinqīṭī, a reputed scholar of Mauritanian (Bilād Šinqīṭ) origin, from the tribe of At-Tarākiza^t; entered the National Library in AH 1322/AD 1904;

3. *Maktaba^t Qawala^t* – a library belonging to Muḥammad ᶜAlī Bāšā (1769–1849), founder of the new Egypt, who was born in the Ottoman city of Qawālā^h (now Kavala in Greece); entered the National Library in AH 1347/AD 1929;

4. *Maktaba^t Ḥalīm* – a library of the prince Ibrāhīm Ḥalīm Ibn Muḥammad ᶜAbd al-Ḥalīm Bāšā, grandson of Ibrāhīm Bāšā; entered the National Library in AH 1347/AD 1929.

5. *Maktaba^t Ḫalīl Aġā* – a library of Ḫalīl Afandī Aġā, a courtier of Hūšyār Qādīn, wife of Ibrahīm Bāšā; entered the National Library in AH 1347/AD 1929;

6. *Maktaba^t Ṭalᶜat* – a library of Aḥmad Ṭalᶜat Bak, son of Aḥmad Talᶜat Bāšā; entered the National Library in AH 1347/AD 1929;

7. *Maktaba^t Taymūr Bāšā* – a library of Aḥmad Tawfīq Taymūr Bāšā (1871–1930), an Egyptian writer and historian, who spent his large inherited fortune mostly on books and scripts, and bequeathed his library of more than 20,000 books to public use; entered the National Library in AH 1348/AD 1930.

Additionally, the Preface to catalogue A places in this group also a private library (named Zakiyya^t) of Aḥmad Zakī Bāšā (1867–1934), an Egyptian philologist, called the Dean of Arabism (Šayḫ al-ᶜUrūba^t), and longtime secretary of the Egyptian Cabinet, as well as "other libraries" (*wa-ġayri-him*). However, they were not explicitly mentioned or explained in the catalogue B. Their names do not appear as attributes in the manuscripts' descriptions (see below), leaving this question unclear as to whose libraries the works originally belonged.[2]

Both of these large catalogs of manuscripts from the collections of the Egyptian National Library, despite their alternate English cover and bibliographical descriptions, are published entirely in Arabic.

Manuscripts in both catalogues are arranged following the alphabetical order of titles (in two separate runs in two catalogues). In compliance with the ages-long tradition of Arabic lexicography, the arrangement does not take into account the definite article *al-* (or its assimilated versions) appearing at the beginning of the title. And thus *Risāla^t Abī as-Suᶜūd…* is followed by *Ar-Risāla^t al-aḥadiyya^t* and *Ar-Risāla^t al-iršādiyya^t*, and then by *Risāla^t al-istiᶜāra^t*. However, inside the title, the same article counts (contrary to the same tradition).[3]

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[2] One more private library might be identified as that which once belonged to Muḥammad ᶜAbduh (1849–1905), a jurist and educational reformer, the founding figure of Islamic Modernism; cf. David A. King. *A Survey of the Scientific Manuscripts in the Egyptian National Library*. Winona Lake 1986, p. 3.

[3] The very question of the definite article *al-* in alphabetical arrangement of personal data was one of the main concerns in the process of computer treatment of transliterated Arabic entries in the works of an international prosopographic project *Onomasticon Arabicum* in Paris (principal office: Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes – IRHT, at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique – CNRS in Paris). It can be assumed that the editors of the catalogues under review were facing the same technical problem.

The catalogue entries – that is the titles of written works – are numbered in each volume separately but are not indexed at all. Indexes at the end of each volume include only names of authors in the given volume, with the exclusion of those of the copyists, owners or *waqf* donors.

The contents of individual volumes follow below.

The first catalogue A of the general fund includes:

Vol. I, *alif → tā'*: 893 manuscripts by 292 authors;

Vol. II, *ǧīm → rā'*: 1118 manuscripts by 401 authors;

Vol. III, *zayn → fā'*: 912 manuscripts by 383 authors;

Vol. IV, *qāf → yā'*: 1233 manuscripts by 450 authors.

The total number of catalogued manuscripts in the catalogue A is 4156.

The second catalogue B, listing manuscripts of the attached libraries, comprises:

Vol. I, *alif → tabṣira^t*: 880 manuscripts by 283 authors;

Vol. II, *tab^{c}īd → ḥāšiya^t ^{c}alā*: 876 manuscripts by 341 authors;

Vol. III, *ḥāšiya^t fī → risāla^t fī al-irāda^t*: 881 manuscripts by 301 authors;

Vol. IV, *risāla^t fī al-uṣṭurlāb → rināt*: 876 manuscripts by 269 authors.

Vol. V, *ar-raḥṣ → šarḥ manzūma^t Ibn al-Hā'im*: 873 manuscripts by 341 authors;

Vol. VI, *šarḥ manzūma^t Al-Aḫḍarī → qaṣīda^t nūniyya^t*: 811 manuscripts by 318 authors;

Vol. VII, *qaṣīda^t yaqūl → mu^{c}addal*: 895 manuscripts by 290 authors;

Vol. VIII, *al-ma^{c}din → yā'*: 860 manuscripts by 329 authors.

In both catalogues, A and B, information about division of letters by volumes does not appear, either on the spine or on the cover or title page of individual books. Consequently, a reader is obliged to check every time again and again in which of the volumes he could find titles he needs. Ordinal numbering of manuscripts is by individual volumes only and not in the complete run of a given catalogue.

The number of catalogued individual manuscripts in the second catalogue B is 6952. Therefore, the total number of manuscripts gathered in the two catalogues is 11,108 (that is about 1,000 less than the whole collection in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris).

The number of titles, however, is lower than that. Some works appear in the collection in more than one copy and some titles reappear in the two catalogues, but their exact number can only be known if and when the cumulative index is compiled and extra copies are deducted from the overall count. However, at a quick glimpse it may be observed that the titles repeated in the two catalogues are not so many as could be expected. It may possibly result from the different origins of the two collections: it gives an impression that the second catalogue B contains manuscripts whose owners were more sophisticated and selective in their choices. The total number of authors is also unknown in any of the catalogues – their number could only be ascertained after a unification of twelve individual indexes (four in catalogue A plus eight in catalogue B) and deleting repeated positions.

Structure of the printed description of each individual item follows exactly the rules adopted for the electronic data base used for cataloguing the manuscripts of the National Library, and in the two catalogues is the same. Each description is composed of the following paragraphs (not numbered in the original):

1. *Al-ᶜUnwān* – title; 2. *Ism al-mu'allif* – name of the author; 3. *Ism an-nāsiḫ* – name of the copyist; 4. *Ta'rīḫ an-nasḫ* – date of copying; 5. *Al-Waṣf al-māddī* – physical description; 6. *At-Tabṣirāt* – miscellaneous remarks; 7. *Fātiḥaᵗ al-maḫṭūṭ* – incipit or opening text of the manuscript; 8. *Ḫātimaᵗ al-maḫṭūṭ* – explicit or final formulations of the manuscript; 9. *Maṣādir at-tawṯīq* – sources of documentation, or references; 10. *At-Tamallukāt wa-al-waqf* – ownership and endowment; 11. *Ḥāǧaᵗ al-maḫṭūṭ ilá at-tarmīm* – need of conservation; 12. *Al-mawḍūᶜ* – subject; 13. *Raqm al-istidᶜā' al-maḫzanīᶜ* – call number; 14. *Raqm al-mīkrūfīlm* – number of the microfilm.

Many head titles in the catalogues are in square brackets. Clarification of the meaning of such brackets is missing from the explanatory introduction. We may hypothetically assume that perhaps they were not written on the original manuscripts which were identified by the editors of the catalogues in one way or another. This guess is in need of confirmation.

When there is more than one manuscript copy of the same text in the catalogue, the title (No. 1) of the second and any other copy is replaced with just the words *nusḫaᵗ uḫrá* – another copy, and the author's name is omitted. Also remarks Nos. 9 and 12 are disregarded (not repeated) in such case.

When information mentioned in any of the paragraphs Nos. 2, 3, 4, 9 is not available, it is likewise omitted altogether, without leaving unfilled empty spaces.

Some titles in catalogue A are without a manuscript description. They only refer to another title and resend the readers to an item in another place in the catalogue. In the new place only the new title figures, without explaining the reason of such a reference and title change. It may only be a matter of guess that perhaps the "old" title was used in some older catalogues and has just been corrected during recent verification procedures. However, similar references and title changes are not found in catalogue B. And it should also be remembered that, in principle, most of manuscripts from collected volumes (*maǧāmīᶜ*), except the first one, were never catalogued before. Thus the square brackets remain obscure.

The names of the authors (No. 2) underwent the procedure of codification and standardization (*at-taqnīn wa-at-tawḥīd*), but it is hard to know what exact rules were applied. Users would certainly prefer to see the author's name spelled exactly as it is in the manuscript, with a possible identification and additional comments, whenever necessary. Then follows the author's year of birth and death expressed according to the universal calendar (AD).

The spelling of personal names is sometimes intriguing. A work on medicine titled *Ar-raḥmaᵗ fī aṭ-ṭibb wa-al-ḥikmaᵗ* was earlier erroneously attributed to as-Suyūṭī (Brockelmann, II), later on it was rectified to Aṣ-Ṣunburī or Aṣ-Ṣanawbarī (d. AD 1412, Brockelmann, S.II, Vajda 576). Catalog B, vol. 3 includes six copies of that work: nos. 515–520, and the author's name is written as Aṣ-Ṣunburī (with full vocalisation, *taškīl*, quite exceptionally) and referred to *Kašf aẓ-ẓunūn* and *Al-Aᶜlām*. A possible explanation of such a strange *nisbaᵗ* name may not be found here, but Brockelmann cites a fuller name of the author, with two other of his *nisbaᵗ* names: Al-Yamanī al-Hindī. From that

we can conclude that the man was born in India – where the place name *Ṣunbur should be searched for, and from which his name was coined – and stayed in Yemen, a common halting spot for many Indian Muslims looking for education in the Arabian Peninsula (three centuries later the same route from India was followed by Al-Murtaḍá az-Zabīdī, the famous lexicographer who authored the Arabic classical dictionary *Tāǧ al-ᶜarūs)*.

The copyist's name (No. 3), if available, is followed by a *hiǧrī* year of copying (No. 4). Regretfully, the date is not accompanied by a place of copying, frequently appearing in the manuscripts themselves and being an information of utmost historical importance – it gives first-hand knowledge of the cultural geography of the country or of the foreign origins of a given work, as the case be.

Physical description (No. 5) includes the number of folios, their ordinal numbers in a collected volume and their size.

Miscellanous remarks (No. 6) are first of all about the style of calligraphy (*nas̲h̲*, *kūfī*, *fārisī*, *maġribī* etc.) and the number of lines per page. They may further inform about the date when the text was composed, decorations, missing parts, marginal annotations, commentaries, attached prayers, holes (*h̲urūm*), and any other additional information that might be available.

Incipit (No. 7) is a short fragment from the beginning of the work, and *explicit* (No. 8), the same from the end of the manuscript.

Sources of documentation (No. 9) show – where applicable – the classical works of reference where a given author and his works are cited. These fundamental bibliographical instruments are only mentioned under their abbreviated titles: *Al-Aᶜlām*, *Hadiyyaṫ al-ᶜārifīn*, *Īḍāḥ al-maknūn*, *Kašf aẓ-ẓunūn* and *Muᶜǧam al-mu'allifīn*, without their authors' names, places or dates of publication. For a professional librarian everything might be clear. However, a less experienced user is at a loss how to find those works of reference for possible checking and verification, as well as any additional information that might be found in those books. The most common, voluminous standard works of reference, Carl Brockelmann's *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (also translated into Arabic and printed in Cairo) or Fuat Sezgin's *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, were not used for references. When a reference is made, we are not quite sure if it is to the name of the author or to precisely the work contained in a described manuscript. Theoretically, we may think that the name of the author is there with the actual title, but maybe not. The reference system is not explained.

Names of earlier owners and endowers (No. 10) are extracted from the manuscripts, but are not listed in any index, similarly to the names of copyists (No. 3). Neither are mentioned places of possession or endowment, even if they appear in the manuscripts themselves.

Remark No. 11 says that the manuscript in question needs conservation (binding). Almost all manuscripts have the same remark. More detailed information about the state of preservation is not available.

Remark No. 12 informs us about the subject of the work. We should expect some kind of a standardized list of identifying expressions so as to have a clear picture of the contents. Instead, we find a plethora of over one hundred expressions (keywords), often

nonprecise, unclear or duplicated: *uṣūl al-fiqh / al-fiqh – uṣūl*; *ᶜulūm al-Qur'ān / al-Qur'ān – ᶜulūm*; *al-fiqh / al-fiqh al-islāmī*; *az-zaydiyyaᵗ – fiqh zaydī*; *al-luġaᵗ / al-luġaᵗ al-ᶜarabiyyaᵗ / fiqh al-luġaᵗ al-ᶜarabiyyaᵗ / al-luġaᵗ al-ᶜarabiyyaᵗ – an-naḥw / an-naḥw*; *at-taṣawwuf / at-taṣawwuf al-islāmī*; *ṣarf / taṣarruf*; *at-taġwīd / al-qirāʾāt*; *tafsīr / at-tafsīr / Al-Qur'ān – tafsīr*; *faḍā'il / faḍā'il al-mudun wa-al-buldān / faḍā'il al-aᶜmāl / al-aᶜmāl*; *al-balāġaᵗ / al-balāġaᵗ al-ᶜarabiyyaᵗ*; *ᶜilm al-kalām / ᶜilm al-kalām – al-milal wa-an-niḥal / naḥl islāmī*; *al-madā'iḥ an-nabawiyyaᵗ / Muḥammad ṣallá Allàh ᶜalay-hi wa-sallam / as-sīraᵗ an-nabawiyyaᵗ / al-isrāᶜ wa-al-miᶜrāǧ*, etc. Apparently, a list of definitions of categories was not set in advance and subsequently was never coordinated. There are altogether well over 100 categories of subjects describing manuscripts in the two catalogs.[4] Some works bear more than one attribution to a category, and that may be of help to users.

Sometimes an attribution to a certain category may seem surprising: out of eight copies of *Risālaᵗ al-Ays wa-Al-Lays* by Ibn Kamāl Bāšā, seven are marked *ᶜilm al-kalām* and one *al-luġaᵗ*.[5] Perhaps it was just a mistake.

Manuscripts belonging to one collection, or collected volume, *maǧmūᶜ*, are not referred to each other. Any knowledge about it may be acquired only through direct inspection of individual works. However, it could shed, if available, additional light on librarian habits in the past. We know well from European practice about such collected volumes, composed of either manuscripts or printed works, that in many cases the main criterion of putting them together was simply their matching size. However, some librarians or collection owners were more careful in composing such volumes and we may learn not only about their own taste and predilection, but also on the wider habits in this field in changing times.

The biggest value of the painstaking work on meticulous searching and identifying hundreds of collected volumes lies in bringing to light many new authors (which had perhaps never appeared yet in earlier printed catalogues and reference works) and titled works. It presents the Egyptian Islamic written heritage in a new perspective and opens wide horizons for new research. For that we should be most thankful to the compilers, the editors and the publishers of the two catalogs.

We would also very highly recommend publishing one more volume, completing this series of two catalogs, giving in addition to the bulk of information contained in the twelve existing volumes, a cumulative index of all authors with their works, and a union alphabetical index of all titles with their authors. Copyists, donors, endowments and places should also be listed separately, if possible. The value of information lies in greater part in its accessibility and the informative value of this particular publication may be largely enhanced in a comparatively easy way. Especially if we take into account that all required data are stored in a computer system and may be retrieved and arranged without further delay. The Egyptian and foreign researchers will be grateful.

Bogusław R. Zagórski

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[4]   To compare, *Index général des manuscrits arabes musulmans de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Pari*s by Georges Vajda, Paris 1953, pp. 6–7, lists only 35 categories and that number seems to be quite satisfactory.

[5]   Catalog B, vol. 3, nos. 562–572.