

# Kodex

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Book Studies and Islamic Studies in Conversation

Edited by Marta Dominguez



Harrassowitz Verlag

Kodex 8 · 2018

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Herausgegeben von  
Christine Haug und Vincent Kaufmann

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# Book Studies and Islamic Studies in Conversation

Edited by  
Marta Dominguez

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## A Note on Transliteration

For the transliteration of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words in this issue, we have adopted the system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Terms and place names that are commonly used in English (e.g., Damascus, imam, sultan) have not been italicized or transliterated.





## From the General Editors

Dear *Kodex* readers,

with *Kodex* 8, the Yearbook of the International Society for Book Studies (IBG) might celebrate a new premiere, like two years ago with *Kodex* 6, devoted to Chinese book culture. As announced by its title (*Book Studies and Islamic Studies in Conversation*) *Kodex* 8 represents an attempt to familiarize readers interested in book studies with the Islamic world or, more exactly, with the very diverse Islamic cultures. It is the goal of this new issue of *Kodex* to account on the one hand for this diversity, and to explore on the other hand in a more precise way the essential relation the Islamic world maintains with the book. Everybody is probably aware that Islam, as the third branch of monotheism, has fundamentally established itself as a book culture. But it often remains unclear how this culture has been shaped in its diversity and what its main differences with the Judeo-Christian book cultures are. It is our hope that *Kodex* 8 might close a gap here.

By doing so the editors of *Kodex* keep following an editorial strategy that can be considered successful with regard on the one hand to the sales numbers and on the other hand to the numerous reviews devoted to former issues of *Kodex*. Alongside with the discussion of topics such as the digital library (*Kodex* 1), plagiarism (*Kodex* 4) or censorship (*Kodex* 7) which are very relevant in terms of interdisciplinary research in the field of book studies in our own cultural spaces, the IBG is clearly committed to the opening of areas of dialogue with other cultures as well as to the internationalization of book studies. The internationalization we aim at is not only a matter of content but also institutional: the scholars involved in this issue don't come from the German speaking area only, but also from Turkey, Israel, Tunisia, France, the United Kingdom and the USA. In linguistic terms this issue follows the same strategy of internationalization since most of the contributions are written in English.

Another innovation implemented in *Kodex* 8 is that a substantial part of the issue no longer consists of scientific articles but of interviews with experts. We hope that this innovation makes our journal more attractive to an audience that we wish to be broader than just academic. *Kodex* 8 has been edited by Professor Marta Dominguez, Chair of Islamic Studies at the University of St. Gallen. We would like to thank her warmly for her enthusiastic commitment. *Kodex* 8 offers a first-hand insight in the very rich, diverse and fascinating Islamic book culture in which for most of the time we move like strangers. Dear readers, we hope that you too will find *Kodex* 8 fascinating, and that you will keep supporting its international orientation. We would also like to thank you warmly for your confidence.

Prof. Dr. Christine Haug  
Prof. Dr. Vincent Kaufmann

## Vorwort der Herausgeber

Liebe *Kodex*-Leserinnen und Leser,

Mit *Kodex* 8 darf das Jahrbuch der Internationalen Buchwissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft (IBG) wieder eine Premiere feiern, wie vor zwei Jahren mit dem der chinesischen Buchkultur gewidmeten *Kodex* 6. Wie durch den Titel von *Kodex* 8 angekündigt, entsteht mit *Book Studies and Islamic Studies in Conversation* der erste Versuch, die islamische Welt oder genauer die sehr vielfältigen islamischen Kulturen Leserinnen und Lesern mit buchwissenschaftlichen Interessen näher zu bringen. Ziel dieses Bandes ist es, einerseits dieser Vielfalt gerecht zu werden, andererseits den für die Islamische Welt unentbehrlichen Bezug zum Buch genauer zu untersuchen. Jedermann ist sich bewusst, dass sich der Islam als dritter Zweig des Monotheismus grundsätzlich als Buchkultur etabliert hat, aber wie diese Kultur in ihrer Vielfalt konfiguriert wurde und wie sie sich von den jüdisch-christlichen Buchkulturen unterscheidet, bleibt oft unklar. Es ist unsere Hoffnung, dass mit *Kodex* 8 diesbezüglich eine Lücke geschlossen wird.

Damit verfolgen wir eine Strategie, die wir aufgrund der Absatzzahlen und der Resonanz zahlreicher Rezensionen als erfolgreich einschätzen dürfen. Neben der Aufnahme von Themen wie die digitale Bibliothek (*Kodex* 1), Plagiat (*Kodex* 4), Zensur (*Kodex* 7) usw., die sich besonders eignen, um in unseren Kulturräumen stattfindende Entwicklungen interdisziplinär zu untersuchen, setzt sich die IBG mit der Öffnung von Dialogfeldern mit anderen Kulturen auch dezidiert für eine Internationalisierung der buchwissenschaftlichen Forschungsanliegen ein. Dabei soll es nicht nur um eine inhaltliche, sondern auch um eine institutionelle Internationalisierung gehen: Die an diesem Band beteiligten Forscherinnen und Forscher stammen nicht nur aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum, sondern auch aus der Türkei, Israel, Tunesien, Frankreich, Großbritannien oder aus den USA.

Eine weitere in *Kodex* 8 vorgenommene Innovation, besteht darin, dass wir vom Prinzip von rein wissenschaftlichen Aufsätzen zugunsten einer Reihe Gespräche abkommen. Es ist unsere Hoffnung und ein uns wichtiges Anliegen, dass wir damit auch unsere nicht ausschließlich akademische Leserschaft besser anzusprechen vermögen.

*Kodex* 8 wird von Prof. Marta Dominguez, Leiterin des Fachbereiches Islamwissenschaften an der Universität St. Gallen, herausgegeben. Wir danken ihr herzlich für ihren begeisterten Einsatz. *Kodex* 8 bietet uns eine ›Ersthand-Einsicht‹ in die uns meist fremde, extrem reiche, vielfältige und zweifelsohne spannende islamische Buchkultur. Wir hoffen, dass auch Sie, liebe Leserinnen und Leser, diese Entwicklung spannend finden und der internationalen Ausrichtung von *Kodex* weiterhin zustimmen können. Auch für Ihr Vertrauen möchten wir uns herzlich bedanken.

Prof. Christine Haug  
Prof. Vincent Kaufmann

# Book Studies and Islamic Studies in Conversation: Introduction

Marta Dominguez Diaz

Over the past three decades, the emergence and consolidation of the field of book studies as a cross-disciplinary space has resulted in significant rewards, particularly in that it has brought together analyses, studies, and reflections that have previously been more circumscribed to participate in conversations within their own disciplines. Since then, the field has never stopped growing. This burgeoning interest has given rise to numerous fruits in both North America and Europe, where today a plethora of institutions have well-established teaching and research programmes devoted to issues related to books, printing culture, and the transmission of the written word. Among them, the work undertaken in North American universities (such as at Toronto and Iowa) and multiple colleges (such as Wellesley, Smith, and Oberlin), and at European universities (such as Leiden and Amsterdam, among others) is remarkable. In Europe, Germany has been a pioneer and a central scholarly locus in the advancement of these type of studies, with cases such as Leipzig, Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, and, of course, Munich (to name just few) working as the de facto engines in framing the modalities and debates that have come to define the book studies field (BSf).

One of the most appealing aspects of the BSf is its stunning diversity, both methodologically and in thematic terms, something – I just advance this here, as a note the reader can bear in mind when reading this issue – that it shares with the discipline of Islamic studies. The disciplines that have been concerned with issues that have to do with books and manuscripts, their meanings, readership, and modes of production and circulation are quite different to one another: from areas such as communication and media studies to cultural history, codicology, religious studies, literature, philology, and anthropology. As one might expect, all of them approach the BSf in markedly different manners, bringing with them not only the benefits of academic pluralism but also its challenges; namely, how to turn what runs the risk of becoming a cacophony of scholarly perspectives into a meaningful and engaging conversation? The journal *Kodex* is in this regard a magnificent platform where this joint endeavour can occur, and with this issue we are greatly pleased to join in the dialogue.

The sum of academic disciplines that constitute what has traditionally been referred to as area studies has not been absent from the scholarly rendezvous proposed by the BSf, and this makes a lot of sense, because, since its inception, the learning of languages and the study of texts were the key facilitators, it was understood, the disciplines within area studies had, to understand ‘other cultures’. Not surprisingly, Alan Tansman, Professor of Modern Japanese Literatures at Berkeley, speaks of area studies as particular ‘translations’

– translations of texts.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, the understanding of what constitutes a ‘text’ has changed over time and does now surpass the limits of the traditionally understood ‘text’; i.e., the written word. Today (and now I am particularly speaking about Islamic studies), we have significantly broadened the object/subject of study, and consider the category of ‘text’ more inclusively and relate it to a variety of other social and cultural products, such as radio and TV programmes, digital materials, speeches, social and religious gatherings, and so forth. Nonetheless, intensive language acquisition is still one of the pillars of the academic training of Islamic studies scholars. If we add to this that an existing overwhelming tendency of language programmes is to prioritize the study of the written over the oral, it is understandable that the field is still primarily dominated by an interest in ‘culturally translating’ written, rather than non-written ‘texts’. Books, manuscripts, and the cultures that produce them are of a centrality to Islamic studies that certainly plays against our understanding of other forms of cultural expression.

Yet, to be fair, two observations deserve to be made in this regard. The first is that interest in non-written forms of culture is increasingly common and the number of studies in this direction have mushroomed over the past decade. This interest, it seems, is alive and well, and will keep going. The second (perhaps more of relevance to the common interests of *Kodex* readers and authors) is that the study of written texts has been transformed in fundamental ways: hermeneutically, theoretically, and thematically, coming to incorporate an attempt to understand our object of study in broader terms, looking at the structures, the historical dynamics, the social contexts, and the meanings and the effects. The current issue of *Kodex* aims to give a comprehensive overlook of some of the most relevant among these novelties, and hopes to be a window through which the state-in-the-art of the BSf within Islamic studies may be viewed. This issue is designed as tool for people in the field, as well as those less familiar with it, to use to get a glimpse of some of the most cutting-edge methods and topics most recently developed by scholars of Islamic studies on issues related to books and book culture(s).

The volume is selective by nature. Although we would have liked to develop a much more overarching panorama of our field, the amount of research conducted on issues related to the production, circulation, preservation, and meaning and reception of written texts in Muslim cultures is endless, and, thus, the task of having a volume that fairly represents the diversity and richness of the BSf within Islamic studies becomes impossible. For this reason, we consider this volume as an initial contribution to open up the conversation – a form of envisaging some of the key lines of scholarly debate that develop from the encounter of the BSf and Islamic studies, and which sets up a conversation that will certainly deserve further

1 Alan Tansman: Japanese studies. The intangible act of translation. In: David L. Szanton (ed.): *The Politics of Knowledge. Area Studies and the Disciplines*. Berkeley: University of California Press 2004.

exploration. There are a number of consolidated fields of study that are very important within the BSf/Islamic studies interplay, and which are not represented in this volume. This has to do also with the fact that what we know as Islamic studies, if understood as the interdisciplinary study of anything related with the cultures of the Muslim world and its diasporas, is so ambitiously overarching in scope that becomes disappointing because the Muslim world, as such, is a concept that needs substantial re-evaluation and holds little relevance and meaning other than as a colonial and postcolonial gaze.

The field of Islamic studies, I would argue, can not really be about the study of the Muslim world, because, as Cemil Aydin<sup>2</sup> has recently reminded us, 'it is a misconception to think that the world's 1.5 billion Muslims constitute a single [...] entity.' The Muslim world, as he explains, emerged in the nineteenth century as an idea that signified the antithesis of Western Christian civilization, when European empires ruled the majority of Muslim-majority regions in the world. The notion was, since its inception, Orientalist, and served as a legitimizing tool for theories of white supremacy, even though Muslims themselves have played a role in keeping it alive by developing pan-Islamic cultural utopias to reclaim Muslims' racial and civilizational splendour, of which they often felt deprived.

In trying to escape this conundrum, we face a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, and in contesting the scholarly tradition I have just described, we have concentrated on the study of the Muslim Middle East while at the same time being aware of the clear porosity of these two categories: in the case of 'Muslim', because, as several contributions suggest, concepts such as 'Islamization', 'Islamic and Muslim identity' are never clear-cut, instead implying a wide variety of things, and – in not few cases – manifesting processes more than actual fixed, ended, phenomena. Equally, in the case of 'Middle East', the term has a similar colonial and civilizational underpinning to that of 'Muslim' or 'Islamic world', yet I would argue it has, over time, come to define an academic canopy under which the Persian, Turkish, and Arabic worlds are represented.

Nonetheless, the more precise umbrella term we have used to define the scope of this issue, we argue, has significant coherence and hermeneutical consistency. And because we see this rationale as applicable to the peoples who are related to the aforementioned cultural niches, the definition of the Persian, Turkish, and Arabic spheres in this volume is not strictly geographic but cultural, thus incorporating contributions that deal with the diasporas of these three (broadly defined) cultural groups in Western Europe.

On the other hand, the term 'Islamic world' retains nevertheless, surprisingly perhaps, a significant saliency within scholarly circles worldwide. If we had replaced the term with something more specific, such as 'Middle Eastern Studies', a significant part of our content could have been evaluated differently. The *mashriq* centrality often associated with the term 'Middle East' means that Turkish and North African cultures are sometimes forgotten,

2 Cemil Aydin: *The Idea of the Muslim World. A Global Intellectual History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2017.

and so even readers potentially interested in these regions might have overlooked those contributions related to these areas. The geographical adscription of 'Middle East' also implies that those who are part of their diasporas or the study of those actors that relate to them are similarly disregarded. Therefore, it is for these reasons, and in light of trying to reach the widest number of interested audiences as possible, that we have preserved the term 'Islamic world' in the title, despite our reservations.

Yet, while a more precise definition of 'Islamic world' gives more meaning and purpose to the academic dialogue, it also means that some of the most salient existing research areas within the interplay between BSf and Islamic studies has had to be excluded. Among these, we think that special attention is deserved by two large research platforms: one concerning the study of the Cairene Genizah collection of Jewish manuscripts and the other the collection of manuscripts from Timbuktu.

Even after the more precise definition of the field we are concerned with, the reader will notice the wide array of themes, motivations, and methods employed by the contributors to this volume. We understand the discipline as the expanding scholarly area, which comprises the history of the book, past and present, and its relevance and significance in societal and cultural terms. We see the book both as a vessel for the transmission of text and image and as evidence of material culture. In its broadest sense, book studies is perceived here as the analysis of any aspect related to written communication, of which the 'book' is only one, but a central part. It provides a framework to understand the social, cultural, economic, and political trends responsible for the emission, divulgation, and reception of written, printed, and digital texts. The scope is interdisciplinary in nature and explores subjects from historic, anthropological, and literary perspectives, to name just a few.

Yasemin Gökpinar's contribution critically assesses several editions of Arabic manuscripts and shows how the use of editorial software facilitates the implementation of professional critical editions. Bruno De Nicola introduces the reader to the European Research Council (ERC) project 'The Islamisation of Anatolia, c. 1100–1500', discussing the scope and reach of the project, the challenges faced by the team, methodological considerations, and results. Rebecca Sauer's article reviews the manifold functions ascribed to books in the Arabic-writing Middle East of the manuscript era, up to the nineteenth century. As she explains, books were produced in order to express religious concerns and support political claims; they also quite often were essential media to memorize the past. Houssein Eddine Chachia develops a historical analysis of an Egyptian Morisco manuscript authored by Aḥmad ibn Qāsim al-Ḥajārī, shedding light on how the use of texts like this gives us insights into the language used to enunciate a variety of Middle Eastern cultural and religious cross-pollinations and ambiguities, and its resulting anxieties. Necmettin Gökçir studies several Ottoman *muṣḥaf* printings of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century to explore the relationship between Ottoman and European powers at the time. He demonstrates how *muṣḥaf* printings were used to gain power and authority over Muslims during the clash between the Ottoman Empire and European powers. Marta Dominguez Diaz

researches the proselytizing role certain religious literature has in converting non-Muslims to Islam by giving special attention to the ambiguous relationship developed between *da'wa* literature and two of the most salient proselytizing Islamic movements operating in Europe today: the Tablighī Jamā'at and the Qādiriyya Būdshīhiyya. Manar Makhoul analyzes the first Palestinian novel to be published in Israel after the 1948 war, Tawfiq Mu'ammār's *Mudhakkarāt lāji' aw Ḥayfā fī al-ma'raka* (1958), and reflects on the initial transformations in Palestinian discourse as well as the political motivations that underpin them. In his contribution, Constantin Wagner examines German textbooks concerning Islam-related identity constructions. Whereas there is an established non-Muslim master narrative about Islam as the 'other' (with some shifts in the last decade), German Islamic textbooks, he argues, are in the process of adopting this master narrative.

In an interview with Ömer Özsoy, the professor for the exegesis of the Qur'an discusses how far *the* Muslim book, the Qur'an, can be understood as a 'book'. He speaks about the relationship between orality and scripturalism and argues that it should be consequently distinguished between the Qur'an as a cultic asset and as a source for norm derivation. Özsoy argues that for the latter, textual criticism is necessary and he thereby understands a contextualizing reading as genuinely Islamic. Michael Marx and Tobias J. Jocham elaborate on how methods developed by natural scientists can enhance philological perspectives on Qur'anic manuscripts. In their studies they make use of the so-called 14C method to date the oldest scripts, and they discuss it with us in their interview. Meltem Kulaçatan deals with the propaganda of the so-called Islamic State (IS). She explains how IS literature relates to broader Muslim thought and how young Europeans are attracted to this propaganda. In a short interview, Abdullah Takım explains what kind of religious literature is read by Muslims in German-speaking countries nowadays, and observes a trend of significant diversification, looking retrospectively at previous decades. Hala Auji has given an interview to *Kodex* à propos of the publication of her book, *Printing Arab Modernity: Book Culture and the American Press in Nineteenth-Century Beirut* (2016), based on her pioneering research into the nineteenth-century American Mission Press in Beirut. Last, but not least, *Kodex* has the pleasure to present an article introducing key research on the BSf/Islamic studies interplay, *Sufism, Literary Production and Printing in the 19th Century* (2015), by one of its authors, Rachida Chih. The book, she explains, examines the interface between Sufism and printing in the nineteenth century, a window through which to explore the networks of religious scholars and dissemination of ideas in the premodern and modern Islamic world.

Overall, we understand that the thematic scope of this issue is comprehensive, as are the historical periods it covers. The issue is markedly cross disciplinary, something we purposely planned with the intention to give proof of the multiplicity of areas within the field that have been concerned with issues related to the BSf. We hope that this volume will shed light on the richness of the latest developments within the field and build bridges to establish lines of debate with other academics interested in the study of books and book cultures.





# (Not at Once) A Love Relationship: Arabic Manuscripts and Their Editions

Yasemin Gökpınar

Although there are critical editions of Arabic texts, a large proportion of essential Arabic text corpora do not meet the requirements of modern critical editions. Hence, the creation of more critical editions of Arabic manuscripts will be argued for as an essential basis for further studies, whether they are content-related or palaeographical or codicological. The use of editorial software will be briefly discussed, since it facilitates the implementation of professional critical editions while at the same time having functions that are adapted to the new conditions of online publishing.

No other culture in the world has preserved so many manuscripts as has the Arabic. The Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin in Germany alone possesses around 11,100 volumes.<sup>1</sup> Other libraries with oriental manuscripts in Germany, such as Munich and Göttingen, each add several hundreds of Arabic manuscripts – a complete list is available in the Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts in Germany (VOHD).

As far as I know, no worldwide count has ever been performed, but there must be hundreds of thousands, and still some are waiting to be discovered in private libraries or in family homes kept as part of their heritage. Only a fraction of this large text corpus has been edited so far. Mere text editions for scholarly use are rarely funded, so most editions of Arabic texts are published embedded within or accompanying studies about these texts.

In the following I will try to explain the reasons for the existence of such an astounding number of Arabic manuscripts from the history of the letterpress with Arabic types. I will highlight the importance of editions in general as a precondition for further studies and give an account of the types of editors, past and present, who are typically associated with Arabic texts. It will become clear from the argument that more critical editions of Arabic texts are needed, because only these make it possible to document the origin of their corresponding manuscripts in a consistent and scientific way; this, in turn, is paramount for creating and upholding a system of scholarly reviewing and improvement. This will be illustrated by an example from a contemporary edition of a text about musicians, which I will compare with the three available manuscripts. Finally, I will consider the technical environment which editors of modern critical editions of Arabic manuscripts may avail themselves of, and discuss the standards that ought to be observed.

1 Cf. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (eds): Oriental Department, Arabic Manuscripts homepage. In: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin website, <http://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/die-staatsbibliothek/abteilungen/orient/bestaende/handschriften/arabische-handschriften/> (January 19, 2017).

## 1. Arabic Manuscripts and the Letterpress

The history of letterpress printing with Arabic types started in Europe and not – as might have been expected – in the Arabic world. Why is this so? And why was it not until the nineteenth century that the letterpress became accepted, albeit reluctantly, in the Middle East?

A brief sketch of the history of letterpress with Arabic types up until the establishment of the first Arabic letterpress<sup>2</sup> will enable us to fathom possible answers to these questions.

Precursors of letterpress with Arabic types are found in Italy from around 1600 up until the end of the seventeenth century. Already in 1498, the Venetian printer Democrito Teracino had applied for a licence to print exotic letters, among which Arabic was included. But he never put his plans into action. Another Venetian, Gregorio de Gregorii, was the first to print an Arabic book with movable types. A prayer book for Christians living in the Arabic world, it appeared in Fano in 1514. According to Bobzin, its typeface was not very clear, nor was it regular.<sup>3</sup> In fact, if one has a look at the title page<sup>4</sup>, the impression of a crude and clumsy caption is confirmed. Especially, the ligature *lām-alif* is not connected in every case, and, while there are good realizations of *kāf* otherwise, there is one *kāf* on the title page (9th line on the right side) which rather looks like a hook. The second Arabic book, a polyglot psalter in three columns, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, was printed in Genoa in 1516. Bobzin evaluates it in the following way: 'Leider ist der arabische Text sowohl aus philologischer als auch aus typographischer Sicht sehr schlecht.'<sup>5</sup> The text was edited by bishop Agostino Giustiniani (1470–1536) and was printed by Pier Paolo Porro, who used types that show influences of North African script style. Around ten years later, in 1537 or 1538, Alessandro Paganino printed the famous so-called 'Venetian Qur'an', which is littered with orthographic mistakes. The dentals *dhāl* and *thā'*, for instance, are invariably printed as *dāl* and *tā'*. Furthermore, its vocalization is a disaster: all short vowels were marked by *fatha* (= 'a'). This Qur'an was supposedly destined for sale in the Ottoman Empire. As it is the Muslims' divine book, the Sublime Porte was not amused,

2 For the history of letterpress with Arabic types, see above all Hartmut Bobzin: Imitation und Imagination. Bemerkungen zu einigen frühen europäischen Drucken mit arabischen Lettern. In: Ulrich Marzolph (ed.): *Das gedruckte Buch im Vorderen Orient*. Dortmund: VÖ 2002, pp. 29–49. Translations are my own.

3 Cf. Bobzin, Imitation und Imagination (footnote 2), p. 32.

4 Lehrstuhl für Türkische Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur, Universität Bamberg/Staatsbibliothek Bamberg (eds): *The Beginning of Printing in the Near and Middle East: Jews, Christians and Muslims*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2001, p. 21.

5 'Unfortunately, the Arabic text is both philologically and typographically poor workmanship.' Bobzin, Imitation und Imagination (footnote 2), p. 32.

and we are indeed told in the *Colloquium Heptaplomeres* from the sixteenth century that Paganino lost his hand as punishment for his bad Qur'an, while his books were burned.<sup>6</sup>

From the late sixteenth century on, the *Typographia Medicea* in Rome, a press founded specifically for the printing of oriental languages, set new standards.<sup>7</sup> Robert Granjon developed Armenian, Syriac, and Cyrillic types beside the Arabic ones. The director (later owner) of the *Typographia Medicea* was Giovanni Battista Raimondi (c. 1536–1614), who printed Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's<sup>8</sup> (AH 597–672/1201–1274 CE) recension of Euclid's *Elementa* and sold it with the permission of Sultan Murād III<sup>9</sup> (r. 982–1003/1574–1595) in the Ottoman Empire. Other important works included some of the treatises on medicine by Ibn Sīnā<sup>10</sup> (370–428/980–1037), *al-Qānūn fi al-ṭibb* and his *Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-shifā'*; but also al-Idrīsī's<sup>11</sup> (died perhaps 560/1165) famous book on geography, *Kitāb nuzhat al-mushtāq fi ikhtirāq al-āfāq*, known as the *Book of Roger* because it had been ordered by King Roger of Sicily; furthermore, Ibn al-Ḥājjib's<sup>12</sup> (after 570–646/after 1174–1249) *Kāfiya*, a book about Arabic grammar (syntax); as was also the *Taṣrīf al-ʿIzzī* by ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Zanjānī (d. c. 1257). This last one's title page was printed in a Persian script called *ta'liq* ('hanging'), which looks, as Bobzin has it, 'more oriental'<sup>13</sup> than those used for the aforementioned books.

Even if these books' typefaces look regular and include some fine ligatures (*kāf-lām-alif*), as well as different forms (e.g., for the final *yā'*), they contain grammatical mistakes, such as *li-Abū ʿAlī* instead of *li-Abī ʿAlī* on the title page of Ibn Sīnā's *Qānūn fi al-ṭibb*<sup>14</sup>, which Arabic readers would doubtless have frowned upon.

The art of printing in Arabic letters was continued in Italy, France, and the Netherlands, where Franciscus Raphelengius (1539–1597) and Thomas Erpenius (1584–1624) developed 'nice and readable'<sup>15</sup> scriptures. These were used at the two renowned printing shops of Platin and Elzevier.

6 Bobzin, *Imitation und Imagination* (footnote 2), p. 35.

7 Cf. Alberto Tinto: *La tipografia Medicea Orientale*. Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore 1987.

8 Cf. Hans Daiber/F. Jamil Ragep: al-Ṭūsī, Naṣīr al-Dīn. In: P. Bearman et al. (eds): *Encyclopaedia of Islam. Second Edition (EP)*, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_COM\\_1264](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1264) (January 26, 2017).

9 Cf. A. H. de Groot: Murād III. In: *EP*, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_5532](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5532) (January 26, 2017).

10 Cf. A. M. Goichon: Ibn Sīnā. In: *EP*, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_COM\\_0342](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0342) (January 26, 2017).

11 Cf. G. Oman: al-Idrīsī. In: *EP*, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_3494](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3494) (January 26, 2017).

12 Henri Fleisch: Ibn al-Ḥājjib. In: *EP*, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_COM\\_0324](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0324) (January 26, 2017).

13 Bobzin, *Imitation und Imagination* (footnote 2), p. 37.

14 Tinto, *La tipografia Medicea Orientale* (footnote 7), p. 16.

15 Tinto, *La tipografia Medicea Orientale* (footnote 7), p. 38.

The oriental guilds of the copyists and scribes (*nussākh*, pl. of *nāsikh*, also *warrāqūn*, pl. of *warrāq*, ‘bookbinder, librarian, copyist’) were influential and perhaps better organized than European scribes, who often worked in monasteries. Still, a powerful ruler would not have found it too difficult to introduce the letterpress. There also was no prohibition of the new technology; ‘Im Gegenteil! Sultan Murād III. gewährte 996/1588 venezianischen Buchexporteuren ausdrücklich seinen Schutz, als diese sich der Feindschaft lokaler Interessengruppen gegenübersehen, hinter denen man sicher die Schreiber vermuten darf’<sup>16</sup>, when they were in danger of being attacked, presumably by scribes. A lack of available technology and experts in handling it can also hardly have presented an unsurmountable obstacle, as non-Muslims within Muslim territory were already using printing presses.<sup>17</sup>

Another proposal was made by André Demeerseman 1954,<sup>18</sup> on whose idea Lutz Berger has subsequently expanded. Demeerseman pointed to the concept of *tabarruk*, which means that Muslim scribes were considered as blessed when they copied the Qur’an, the most important and therefore the most copied book. On top of this, the process of copying was perceived as establishing an unbroken connection from the scribe back to the earliest time of Islam, and ultimately to Muḥammad himself.<sup>19</sup>

This connection to Muḥammad’s living time not only refers to the Qur’an, as Berger stresses, but also to the corpus of *ḥadīth*, the tradition of Muḥammad’s sayings and good deeds, and to Islamic mysticism. The process of tradition does not only imply handing down written information but combines textual tradition, in the form of written notes or copies of books, with oral tradition, established by explanations and recitations by authoritative teachers. This is particularly true for Sufi literature, whose character was often enigmatic and mysterious and only became clear if explained by a Sufi master. Had books belonging to these religious sciences been printed, not only would the blessing involved in the process of copying have been lost but also the connection to the earliest times of Islam, with its implications of unbroken oral tradition handed down from teacher to student. In the case of Sufi texts, on the other hand, printed books would not have been of any use at all when there was nobody to explain them. The possession of a handwritten book thus implied a social status that was not achieved by just owning a copy of any book, which

16 ‘On the contrary, in 996/1588, Sultan Murād III ensured the specific protection of Venetian book exporters.’ Lutz Berger: Zur Problematik der späten Einführung des Buchdrucks in der islamischen Welt. In: Ulrich Marzolph (ed.): *Das gedruckte Buch im Vorderen Orient*. Dortmund: VFO 2002, pp. 15–28; here: p. 17.

17 Cf. Berger, *Buchdruck in der islamischen Welt* (footnote 16), pp. 16–17.

18 André Demeerseman: Une Etape décisive de la culture et de la psychologie islamique. Les données de la controverse autour du problème de l’imprimerie. In: *Institut de Belles-Lettres Arabes* 17 (1954), pp. 1–48, 101–40.

19 Cf. Demeerseman, *Une Etape décisive* (footnote 18), pp. 31–32.

could have been pressed, indeed, but that was guaranteed by the chain of transmitters as proof for the transmitted and authorized knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

So the transfer of knowledge manifested itself in teacher-student relationships. On the other hand, manually copied codices could be accessed and studied in several foundation (*waqf*) libraries. These were accessible to the public and, in this way, ordinary people – as far as they knew how to read – and scientists who could not afford to buy the expensive handwritten copies could study in the libraries.<sup>21</sup> This accessibility of books in contrast to the situation in monastic libraries of Europe, which were not made available to the public before the beginning of the nineteenth century, at least not in Catholic regions, may contribute to a further explanation for the late introduction of the letterpress in the Middle East.

In Europe, printing was also important for the formation of public opinion through the distribution of pamphlets or leaflets. In the Muslim world, however, different mechanisms were at work. At a regional level, one would address personal petitions to the local rulers, while the Friday sermon (including the conversation afterwards) and – on a more general level – the annual pilgrimage to Mecca were crucial factors in shaping public opinion. Berger opines on this, saying that even though bigger events, such as revolts, may have taken place in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, people in the provinces would not have expected to be able to bring about substantial change there by publishing comments or pamphlets.<sup>22</sup>

All in all, the introduction of letterpress technique in the Islamic Middle East would not have been so much in the interest of the public than in that of a political elite. This emerges from the launch of the first Arabic letterpress during the time of the *nahḍa*<sup>23</sup> (at the latest about the second half of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century) in Istanbul and later Būlāq.<sup>24</sup> Later on, emerging political discussions about Pan-Islamism, Ottomanism, Nationalism, and religious Islamism were published in the newly founded Arabic newspapers. These, along with the production of new forms of Arabic literature (e.g., novels, free verse, and other modern poetry) and Arabic translations (e.g., of French sociological studies) finally promoted the Arabic letterpress scene.

20 Cf. Berger, Buchdruck in der islamischen Welt (footnote 16) , pp. 20–21.

21 Cf. Berger, Buchdruck in der islamischen Welt (footnote 16) , p. 23.

22 Cf. Berger, Buchdruck in der islamischen Welt (footnote 16) , pp. 24–25.

23 An Arab cultural and literary movement; lit. ‘the awakening’. Cf. N. Tomiche: *Nahḍa*. In: *EP*<sup>2</sup>, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_5751](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5751) (January 26, 2017).

24 Cf. Dagmar Glaß: Die *nahḍa* und ihre Technik im 19. Jahrhundert. Arabische Druckereien in Ägypten und Syrien. In: *Das gedruckte Buch im Vorden Orient*, pp. 50–83.