Arabic Calligraphy and the “Herbal” of al-Ghâfiqi: A Survey of Arabic Manuscripts at McGill University

by Adam Gacek

Rare book collections in the McGill University Libraries house a significant number of Oriental books, in addition to Western European works. Among them there are over 650 Islamic manuscripts. This is a brief survey of those manuscripts written in Arabic, irrespective of their provenance. The present article includes a list of signed calligraphs and a description of the “Herbal” of al-Ghâfiqi, two outstanding features of the Arabic collections.

En plus des ouvrages venant de l’Europe de l’Ouest, les collections de livres anciens des bibliothèques de l’université McGill comptent un nombre assez important de recueils orijentaux. Parmi ceux-ci figurent plus de 650 manuscrits islamiques. Cet article donne un bref aperçu des manuscrits rédigés en arabe, quelle que soit leur provenance. La liste des calligraphies signées et une description de l'"Herbier" d'al-Ghâfiqi, deux fleurons des collections arabes, en font d'ailleurs partie.

The McGill University Libraries house four collections of Islamic manuscripts. The languages represented are Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish and Urdu. These collections are located in McLennan Library, Islamic Studies Library, Osler Library and Blacker-Wood Library. Until now these manuscripts have received very little attention from scholars of Islamic studies. A large number of them have remained in obscurity since the 1920s due to insufficient cataloguing data. All together there are over 650 handwritten codices, 280 of which are in Arabic or Arabic and Persian. The Arabic manuscripts form a collection of approximately 290 individual compositions covering almost all of the traditional Islamic disciplines such as Qur’anic Studies, Tradition, Jurisprudence, Philosophy, Theology, Philology, Natural History, Medicine, Mathematics and Astronomy. In addition to the manuscripts, the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections in McLennan Library possesses a valuable collection of over 200 Arabic calligraphs and fragments (usually single leaves), some 82 of which are signed.

THE COLLECTIONS

1. Osler Collection

The Osler collection, which consists mainly of Arabic and Persian manuscripts, was obtained from Sir William Osler (1849-1919), a famous McGill professor, and from the ophthalmologist and ornithologist, Dr. Casey A. Wood (1856-1942), a McGill graduate. The manuscripts donated by Sir William Osler were acquired mainly from a great admirer of his, a certain Dr. M. Sa’eed of Hamadan (Iran). From the point of view of provenance, the manuscripts donated by Dr. Wood fall into two groups. The first group constitutes manuscripts originally collected during the period 1926-1927 by the Russian scholar Wladimir Ivanow (1886-1970), then cataloguer of Persian manuscripts at the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal and formerly Curator of Persian manuscripts in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburgh. The second group is made up of the manuscripts acquired from the German physician and Arabist Dr. Max Meyerhof (1874-1945), who spent some thirty years practising medicine in Egypt.
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The Arabic manuscripts in the Osler collection number some 58 individual works (79 with copies thereof) and, with the exception of one codex, all are broadly within the field of medicine. There are two dated manuscripts going back to the 7th/13th century and one from the 8th/14th century. The most famous is the illustrated "Herbal" of al-Ghafiqi (ms 7508) described below. The collection also counts among its other rare items a copy of al-Mu'atta' al-buqratiyyah (ms 225) of Abū al-Hasan Ahmad al-Ṭabarī (fl. 4th/10th century) dated Shawwāl 611/1215 and a copy of the commentary by Nasīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī (d. 672/1274) on Ibn Sīnā's al-Ishārāt wa-al-Tanbihāt (ms 478). This manuscript transcribed in the months of Shaban through Ramadān 761/1360 was copied from the exemplar containing numerous marginal glosses by the scribe's teacher and his teacher's teacher, thus bringing it very close, if not to the very time when the original was compiled. There is also an old codex, going back to the 6th/12th century or earlier, entitled Sharb Fuszil Buqrat (ms 7785/66) by Ibn Abī Sādīq, known as Buqrat al-Thānî (d. after 460/1068).

2. Blacker-Wood Collection

The Blacker-Wood Arabic, Persian and Urdu manuscripts were gathered almost exclusively by Dr. Wood. Most of the 238 volumes were collected in 1926-27 by W. Ivanow, who provided the collection with a hand-written list. The collection contains some 89 individual compositions in 75 volumes. There are 21 works on Philosophy and Logic, 15 on Grammar and Lexicography, and 12 on Theology, Sufism and Ethics. Other subjects covered are Qur'ānic exegesis, Hadith, Fiqh, Rhetoric, Prose and Poetry, Arithmetic and Astronomy, as well as Natural History and Veterinary Science.

The oldest dated manuscript is a copy of a gloss (bāsbiyyah) by Ahmad Khayllā (d. 870/1465-6) on a commentary (sharb) on al-'Aqīd al-nasafiyyah (ms 112), transcribed in 899/1493-4. This collection also includes a beautifully calligraphed and illuminated copy of a collection of prayers (ms 42), mostly by the famous Sufi master 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d. 561/1167), executed in Sha'bān 1094/1683, and a large-size leaf (44 x 28.5 cm.) from a "Kūfī" Qur'ān (ms 167), written on parchment supposedly by 'Ali ibn Ahmad al-Warrāq for Fātimah, the Zirid Princess of Qayrawān, on 10th Ramadān 410, i.e., 1020 A.D. This leaf is a gift from the former President of Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba, who visited in the Institute and its library in 1959.

3. Islamic Studies Collection

The Rare Book Section of the Islamic Studies Library houses a relatively small but quite interesting collection of 168 volumes of Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish manuscripts. Most of this collection constitute Arabic codices. There are 112 volumes embodying some 127 individual texts. In subject coverage, it is similar to the Blacker-Wood collection. With almost all disciplines represented, these two collections in many ways complement each other. The disciplines best covered are Jurisprudence (34 texts), Philosophy and Theology (27 texts) and Grammar (19 texts). Approximately 85% of the Arabic collection is of Persian provenance. The remaining 15% constitute manuscripts which were executed mostly by Turkish hands. These manuscripts were acquired in the 1960s and 1970s from Iranian and European booksellers.

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4. McLennan Collection

The McLennan collection, apart from a number of Persian and Ottoman Turkish manuscripts, contains 33 volumes of Arabic manuscripts (i.e., 16 individual works). Among
the 33 volumes there are 18 copies of the Qur’an, three works on Grammar and Rhetoric, five prayer-books and two works on Sufism. Most of these manuscripts came from Dr. Casey Wood, the others came from various private sources and book dealers, notably from H.K. Monif of New York.

The most notable items in this collection are:

1. *Kitāb al-kāmil* (ms A2) of al-Mubarrad (d. 285/998), the oldest Arabic dated codex at McGill, transcribed in Rajab 563/1171. It bears two seal impressions of the Bohora Dā‘ī ‘Abd al-Qādir with the date 1258/1184.2.


4. *Talkhis al-Miftah* (ms A3) of al-Khatib al-Dimashqi (d. 739/1338) executed in 960/1552-3 by Ramadān ibn Muhammad ibn Salmln al-Tabrizi and containing four well-drawn miniatures.

**ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY**

As mentioned earlier, the Department of Rare Books at the McLennan Library houses a collection of over 200 pieces of calligraphy and single leaves from different manuscripts. This very beautiful and valuable collection includes 82 signed calligraphs and 28 diplomas (ijāzāt) issued to calligraphers. Among the fragments there are 15 parchment leaves. Most calligraphs are of the type called *qīṭāb* (i.e., single, usually mounted and decorated piece), although there are a number of discarded leaves (*mukhraj*) and albums (*muraqqas*). They were acquired by Dr. Gerhard R. Lomer (1882-1970), former University Librarian, from Atkinson of London in the early 1920s.

The signed calligraphs represent the following names:

- ‘Abd Allāh Yādī Qulālī (Yedikuleli, d. 1144/1731-2, Huart, 159; Rado, 136-138).

Ahmād Jāwūsh zādah, a pupil of Husayn Afandi Khāffār zādah. – No. AC88 (*qīṭāb*, n.d.).

Ahmād Khālīl Bāšā zādah. – No. AC3 (*qīṭāb*, n.d.).

Bahrs Ahmad. – No. AC95 (single leaf, dated 1161/1748).

Darwīsh Ahmad (d. 1129/1715, Rado, 122; Huart, 138). – No. AC84 (*qīṭāb*, n.d.).


Darwīsh Ibrāhīm ibn Sha‘bān Khānāh-i Safarli. – No. AC85 (undecorated *qīṭāb*, n.d.).


Hāfīz Ibrāhīm (possibly the same as Ibrāhīm al-Shawqi, q.v.). – No. AC17 (*qīṭāb*, n.d.).


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‘Abd Allâh, a pupil of al-Anis, Ahmad al-Mukhlis, Sulaymân, a pupil of al-Diyâ‘î and Muḥammad Najib Sûyûlî zâdah.\(^5\)


Ḥusayn ibn Râmadîn (d. 1157/1744, Râdo, 145 or 1152/1739; Huart, 162-163). - No. AC37 (qî‘âb, ad.).

Ibrâhîm al-Shawqî (also known as Ḥâfîz Ibrâhîm, d. 1245/1829, Huart, 192; Râdo, 202). - No. AC165 (Sûrâb 78-114, dated Shâwâb, 1235/1820).

Ibrâhîm ibn Ismâ‘îl al-Mu‘nis. - Nos. AC72 (11 unmounted leaves, dated 1257/1841-2 and 1262/1845-6); AC70 (unmounted muraqqâ‘ of four leaves, dated 1261/1845).


Ismâ‘îl al-Zuhdî II (d. 1221/1806, Râdo, 186-188, Huart, 188). - Nos. AC47 (qî‘âb, dated 1205/1790-1); AC135 (two leaves, dated 1200/1785-6).

Ismâ‘îl al-Zuhdî (either I or II). - Nos. AC44-AC46, AC49-AC50, AC160, all undated.

Ismâ‘îl ibn ‘Alî. - No. AC98 (qî‘âb, n.d.).

Khayr al-Dîn. - No. AC94 (unmounted qî‘âb, dated 1303/1885-6).


Muḥammad Amin Afandi. - No. AC157 (Sûrâb 77, followed by two ijâzât, given by Muḥammad Nûrî and Muḥammad al-Sa‘îd Mustaqîm zâdah, dated 1183/1769-70) (Figure 1).

Muḥammad ‘Arab zâdah (d. 1127/1715, Huart, 151). - No. AC90 (qî‘âb, n.d.).

Muḥammad Bayâzîd zâdah. - No. AC96 (unmounted qî‘âb, n.d.).

Muḥammad Fâkhri Afandi. - Nos. AC31 (qî‘âb, with two ijâzât given by Muḥammad al-Khulûsî and al-Sâyyîd Ḥamdî, dated 1263/1846-7) (Figure 3); AC32 (qî‘âb, with two ijâzât granted by Muḥammad al-Wâṣﬁ Dâ‘î Ahmad, dated 1263/1846-7) (Figure 2).

Muḥammad Ghalîb Fawżî Afandi. - Nos. AC58 (qî‘âb, with three ijâzât given by Muṣṭâfâ al-Hilmî damâd al-Sukûtî, ‘Alî al-Hamdî and Ḥâfîz Ḥusayn al-Lutfî, a pupil of Muṣṭâfâ al-Hilmî, dated 1258/1842-3) (Figure 5); AC59 (qî‘âb, with three ijâzât given by Muḥammad Tâhir, known as Khalîfât Muṣṭâfâ al-Hilmî damâd Ibrâhîm al-Sukûtî, Muḥammad Amin al-Dîhînî, a pupil of Kabîlî ‘Alâî and Ya‘qûb Ḥakkî, a pupil of Muṣṭâfâ al-Hilmî. All dated 1258/1842-3) (Figure 4).

Muḥammad ibn Mahmûd. - No. AC42 (unmounted three leaves, dated 1113/1701-2).

Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad. - No. AC101 (qî‘âb, n.d.).

Muḥammad Mu‘nis zâdah (d. 1318/1900, Azzâwî, 290). - Nos. AC64 (unmounted qî‘âb, dated 1286/1869-70); AC68 qî‘âb, dated 1286/1869-70).

Muḥammad Qâsim Tabrizî. - Nos. AC60 (panel in nasta‘lîq, dated 1282/1865-6); AC61 (panel in nasta‘lîq, n.d.); AC62 (panel in nasta‘lîq, n.d.); AC158 (seven leaves from a muraqqâ‘, dated 1284/1867-8).

Muḥammad Râghîb Afandi. - No. AC97 (qî‘âb, with an ijâzâb given by Muḥammad ‘Āṭâ‘, a pupil of Wâṣﬁ Afandi, dated 1201/1786-7) (Figure 7).

Muḥammad Râṣîm (d. 1169/1755, Râdo, 155-156; Huart, 168). - No. AC87 (qî‘âb, n.d.).


Muḥammad Shâhri (d. 1153/1740, Râdo, 141; Zabîdî, 94). - Nos. AC14 (qî‘âb, n.d.); AC21 (qî‘âb, dated 1115/1703-4).
Figure 1. Two diplomas awarded to Muḥammad Amin Afandi (AC157).
Figure 2. Two diplomas granted to Muḥammad Fakhri Afandi (AC32).
Figure 4. Three diplomas granted to Muḥammad Ghālīb Fawzi Afandi (AC59).

Figure 5. Three diplomas awarded to Muḥammad Ghālīb Fawzi Afandi (AC58).
Figure 6. Calligraphic panel with two diplomas granted to Muhammad Tawfiq Afandi (AC57).
Figure 7. Calligraphic panel with a diploma given to Muḥammad Rāghib Afandi (AC97).
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Figure 8. Folio 277a from the Osler codex depicting two kinds of *kabīkaj* (*ranunculus asiaticus*).
Figure 9. Folio 277b from the Osler codex depicting two additional kinds of *kabikaj* (*ranunculus asiaticus*).
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Muhammad Tawfiq Afandi. – Nos. AC57 (qirah, accompanied by two ijzāt granted by Muhammad Rashid Shāliji zādah and Husayn al-Ḥusnī, dated 1265/1884-9) (Figure 6).


Muṣṭafā ʿIzzat (d. 1393/1911). – Nos. AC16 (qirah, n.d.); AC41 (four unmounted leaves, dated 1382/1865-6). [AC85 (qirah, dated 1382)].

Muṣṭafā Muʿādhdhin zādah (a pupil of ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥāshimi). – No. AC92 (qirah, n.d.).

Muṣṭafā Nūri. – No. AC104 (unmounted leaf, n.d.).


Sulaymān Hikmatī (Inal, [372-373]). – No. AC93 (qirah, n.d.).

Tahsin al-Ḥusnī. – No. AC165 (large panel in thuluth, n.d.).

Tawfiq (a pupil of ʿUthmān Afandi). – No. AC162 (four-leaf muraqqā, dated 1225/1810).


‘Uthmān ibn Darwīsh Muhammad Aghā al-Ārd Rūmī [of Erzurum]. – No. AC164 (Sūrab 18, n.d.).

Yahyā Afandi (possibly al-Sayyid Yahyā, d. 1198/1783). – No. AC9 (qirah, n.d.).

THE “HERBAL” OF AL-GHAFIQI

The illustrated Arabic codex, the ‘Book of simple drugs’ or Kitāb fi al-adwiyah al-muṭrada, was compiled by the Andalusian pharmacologist and botanist Abū Jaʿfar Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Ghafiqi (d. 560/1165). Not much is known about the author’s life except that his family came from the region of Cordova where he is likely to have practiced medicine and pharmacology. His father Muhammad ibn Qassim was a scholar and oculist. According to Ibn Abī Uṣaybi’ah, a historian of Arabic medicine, al-Ghafiqi was the greatest scholar of his time in this domain. His book of simple remedies is a unique encyclopedia.9

The manuscript, originally believed to be part of an Arabic translation of De Materia medica of Dioscorides, was purchased in Iran for Sir William Osler, then Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University, in 1912. It was acquired together with a copy of the work of Dioscorides and the price paid for the two manuscripts was 25 pound sterling, only five pounds more than the offer made by the British Museum. Osler intended to give this manuscript to the Bodleian Library, but when Dr. W.W. Francis, a cataloguer of the Osler collection and later the first Osler Librarian, discovered that it was not the work of Dioscorides, he successfully claimed it for the Osler Library. Osler had his whole library catalogued before he bequeathed it to McGill University.8

The present volume constitutes part one (al-juz‘ al-awn) of the original work, in which all entries (mainly names of plants, but also some drugs and animals) had been arranged in alphabetical order. As was the practice in those days, the author used the alpha-numeric notation (abjad). It is important to bear this in mind as the sequence of letters in this notation is not only different from the present day arrangement of the Arabic alphabet but also varies in places from its eastern (mashiqi) version. Our manuscript, being the first volume of al-Ghafiqi’s work, covers the letters alif through kaf, but having in between bā’, jinn, dāl, ḫā’, waw, zay, hā’, tā’, and yā’.9

The ‘Herbal’ of al-Ghafiqi is an example of a well-planned piece of work. Since it is based on the works of Dioscorides (Disqūridis) and Galen (Jalīmūs), he refers to these two main sources by using abbreviations: dāl for Dioscorides and jim (unpointed) for Galen. These abbreviations (rumuz) are followed by the number of the chapter (maqālah) from which a given piece of information was obtained. Thus,
for example, dāl bā’ means Dioscorides chapter 2 and jim wāw, Galen chapter 6. Other, later sources are also mentioned, usually by referring to the name of the author. Each letter sequence, which forms a chapter (bāb) is followed by a summary giving meanings (sharb), etymology and synonyms of the plants.10

As far as we know, only three or four other copies of this work are extant.11 This manuscript, preserved in the Osler Library, is a rare example of Arabic art. It numbers 284 folios (including two fly leaves) and its measurements are approximately 25 x 18 cm. (20.5 x 13.5 cm., for the written area) and 23 lines per page. It is written on thick Oriental paper of wove texture, in a very elegant hand, which can be characterised as Old Naskh (al-Naskh al-Qadīm), similar to the al-Naskh al-Faddāb or al-Waddāb, known as an “all revealing,” clear Naskh.12 The text is partly vocalized and the unpointed letters (al-burzif al-muhmalah) are distinguished either by a small caret (v) or a miniature version of the same letter (e.g., bd’ and ‘ayn). Some of the main features of this hand are: a flat and thick stroke of the final ldm, the “tail” on the alif of prolongation, the serif (tarwis) on such letters as alif, ldm, dāl, nūn (particularly in chapter headings), and the occasional lack of a bar over the letter kāf. The presence of tarwis is unusual for in most cases a Naskh hand is devoid of it. The codex contains 475 entries and 367 coloured drawings, mainly of plants, but also of animals and some drugs. Among the plants we find four unique drawings of Ranunculus Asiaticus (“little Asiatic frog”) called Kabikaj (fols. 277a and 277b, Figures 8, 9.) This plant, and later just its name, was used for the preservation of manuscripts.13 The volume is richly rubricated and its chapter headings and lemmata executed in black ink in bold letters (taghlīz). The end of a paragraph or section is indicated either by bā’ and yā’ (for intābā, i.e., literally “it ended”) or an open circle with a dot in the middle or three shaded cares in the form of a triangle or all three marks together (as e.g. on fol. 53b).

The name of the copyist is not given and the date reads most probably Shābān 654, i.e., August 1256.14 According to Prof. M. Meyerhof, who was the first to study this manuscript in some detail, the handwriting and drawings can almost without doubt be attributed to an artist from the Baghdad school which flourished in the first half of the thirteenth century until the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258 A.D. “A Baghdad,” says Meyerhof, “on en a certainement écrit une ou plusieurs copies calligraphiées pour des personnes de marque et on les a ensuite fait illustrer par des artistes ‘irāqjins. Le manuscrit de Montréal est très probablement un des premiers ou même le premier en date – et à cause de la catastrophe de Baghdad aussi un des derniers – exemplaires du Gāfiqi illustré.”15 This, and the fact that the other surviving manuscripts appear to be inferior, adds to the importance of the Osler manuscript.

Looking at the text itself one soon notices that the manuscript was collated. The marginal corrections constitute mainly omissions/insertions. They are indicated by placing a stroke, between the words in the body of the text, which curves upwards in the direction of the margin where the omission is placed. If the omission consists of one or two words it is written on the level of the line from which it is missing. If, however, it is longer, it descends or ascends from the line of omission. The end of an omission is indicated by the word sabba, meaning it is correct, followed, sometimes, by the next word in the text, which is then crossed out. Only a few variants are to be found in the margins. They are indicated by writing the number two above the relevant word in the text and the same number plus the letter khab (nuskhāh ukhrā, another copy) above the word in the margin.16

The red leather covers with on-laid medallions and pendants are of a more recent date. In view of the fact that there is no envelope flap (lisān) and the fly leaves are made of European wove paper, the present binding is likely to have been supplied at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is at this stage also that the first eight leaves were added. A number of illustrations are damaged, mainly due to the offsetting of ink. There is also some loss of text caused by trying to separate the leaves which got stuck together. Furthermore, as a result of mindless rebinding, many folios are out of order. According to Professor Meyerhof, who examined a photostat of this manuscript, the sequence should be as follows: fols. 2-9, 10-11, 19, 12-18, 20-41, 42-43, 44-110, 120, 112-119,
111, 121-122, one or two folios missing, 123-141, 143, 142, one leaf missing, 144-147, 149, 148, 151-253, 274-277, 254-267, 271, 273, 279, 278, 268-270, 282, 280-281, 283. He does not mention, however, fols. 148 and 271 respectively. One of the reasons for this confusion may have been the fact that the original catchwords were placed only at the end of each quire of 10 folios.

The original manuscript must have existed in an acephalous form for some time. This can be inferred from the title on fol. 10a in the head margin; it reads: Tibb-i Qâfiqî (The medicine of al-Ghâfiqi). The name Ghâfiqi is written with and unpointed qâf (pronounced in Persian as ghā'). This, and the lack of the definite article before the name is a good pointer to the manuscript’s Persian connection. If we accept Professor Meyerhof’s theory that it originated in Baghdad, then it must have travelled to Iran, where it stayed for several centuries, before it was shipped to Oxford and later to Montreal. The same folio bears two seals: one oval with the legend wa-saldm ‘a12 Ibrdhim (and may peace be upon Ibrahim), dated 1051 A.H., i.e., 1641 or 1642 A.D. and belonging to someone called Ibrâhim or ‘Ali Ibrâhim; the other, placed in the left hand margin and repeated on fol. 283a reads Muhammad Jamâl al-Dîn al-Husaynî with a date 1080(?) A.H., i.e., 1669 or 1670 A.D. These two names being typical of the Shi‘ite milieu place us firmly on the Persian ground. Of two other seals found in the manuscript one (fols. 119a, 127b and 128a) has an inscription tawakkaltu “âid Allâh (I have put my trust in God) and the other (fol. 283a) has been entirely erased. In addition, fol. 283b bears a note recording several historical events around 815(?)/1412 involving three important cities: Samarqand, Herat and Baghdad. Beneath this note there is a chess score (hisâb al-shatranj) and in the lower end of the folio there is a barely visible date 868(?)/1463 or 1464, which could refer to the writing of the above-mentioned statements.

Even though used extensively by Ibn al-Baytîr for the compilation of his Jâmî and abridged by Abû al-Faraj, the work of al-Ghâfiqi has never been edited, and only a few illustrations from the Osler codex have been reproduced. Yet this particular work and its copy preserved at McGill surely deserves a much greater attention on the part of historians of medicine and art.

CONCLUSION

This brief survey of Arabic manuscripts in the collections of McGill University shows a great diversity of texts, many of which have never been explored by researchers. The Arabic calligraphy and the book of al-Ghâfiqi have been selected as outstanding examples of beauty and rarity to be found in these collections. There are other treasures and a host of, what some might term as, ordinary codices: copies of well-known works which do not add much to our knowledge of different Islamic disciplines. They illustrate, however, a tradition of copying and correction, learning and teaching. Their beauty lies not in the variety of colours but often in the neatness and clarity of the hand.

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Notes

I am grateful to Dr. Richard Virr, the Manuscript Curator in the Department of Rare Books, McLennan Library, Dr. Faith Wallis, Head, Osler Library and Miss Eleanor MacLean, Head, Blacker-Wood Library, for their assistance.

1. A description of the four collections of Islamic manuscripts at McGill University can be found in Thomas J. Martin's North American Collections of Islamic Manuscripts (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1977): 86-90. The information, however, is inaccurate. A complete and more accurate picture of these collections will only emerge once they have been properly cataloged. A Union Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts is now being planned for future publication by Adam Gacek. Some of the manuscripts in the Osler collection were originally described in Bibliotheca Ostoriana, a Catalogue of Books Illustrating the History of Medicine and Science Collected, Arranged, and Annotated by Sir William Osler, Bart. and Bequeathed to McGill University (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1969), i.e., mss 449, 450, 462, 465, 466, 465, 478, 7508, and 7571, as well as 7785 which is a list of Persian, Arabic and Hindustani medical manuscripts presented in 1927 by Dr. Casey A. Wood and taken from a tabulated list drawn up by W. Ivanow.

2. The original descriptions of these manuscripts, complete with an introduction and indexes, are preserved in the Blacker-Wood Library under the no. ZE.W852. There is also a typescript of 36 pages entitled Annotated Catalogue of the Casey A. Wood Collection of Persian, Arabic and Hindustani Manuscripts by Wladimir Ivanow (Bombay: 1927) by Dr. Casey A. Wood and taken from a tabulated list drawn up by W. Ivanow.

3. A Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Islamic Studies Library, McGill University prepared by the author of this paper is available for consultation in the library.

4. For biographical details of calligraphers see the following references:
   Rado, Şevket. Türk battatları. İstanbul: Yayın Matbaacılık Ticaret, n.d.

5. For an analysis of this work, see my "The diploma of the Egyptian calligrapher Hasan al-Rushdī," Manuscripts of the Middle East 4 (1989- forthcoming).


8. This information has been extracted from the letters written by W. Osler, A. Cowley (of the Bodleian Library), J. H. Bill (an official in the British Residency in Bushire, Iran, who acted as a link between A. Cowley and the owner of the manuscript, Dr. M. Saeed), W. W. Francis and appended to this volume. The description of the manuscript of Dioscorides can be found in B. Robinson and Basil Gray, *The Persian Art of the Book*, catalogue of an exhibition held at the Bodleian Library to mark the Sixth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology, (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1972): 9-10, pl. 1.


14. The reading of the date is by no means certain. A note on fol. 1a states: "Sir Denison Ross interpreted the difficult date of this ms as 654 A.H. = 1256 A.D. I took it to him to the Oriental School in London. W.W.F." Another way of reading this date would be 504 A.H. = 1110 A.H. Someone certainly read it this way for it is written in European figures at the bottom of the same folio. The year 504, however, could only be interpreted as the date of composition and not of transcription, unless the author did not die in 560 A.H. but earlier.


17. Professor Meyerhof's letter of 7.07.1938 and a note by W. W. Francis on fol. 284b.