

# Arabic Calligraphy and the "Herbal" of al-Ghâfiqî: A Survey of Arabic Manuscripts at McGill University

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*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-Ghâfiqî, 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 orientaux. 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-Ghâfiqî, 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. Petersburg. 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.<sup>1</sup>

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-Ghâfiqî (ms 7508) described below. The collection also counts among its other rare items a copy of *al-Mi'âlajât al-buqrâtiyah* (ms 225) of Abû al-Hasan Ahmad al-Tabarî (fl. 4th/10th century) dated Shawwâl 611/1215 and a copy of the commentary by Naşîr al-Dîn al-Tûsî (d. 672/1274) on Ibn Sînâ's *al-Isbârât wa-al-tanbîhât* (ms 478). This manuscript transcribed in the months of Sha'bân through Ramaḍân 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/13th century or earlier, entitled *Sharḥ Fusûl Buqrât* (ms 7785/66) by Ibn Abî Şâdiq, known as Buqrât al-Thânî (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.<sup>2</sup> 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'anic 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 *al-Kasbsḥâf* (ms 170) of al-Zamakhsharî (d. 538/1144) transcribed in Dhû al-Ḥijjah 785/1384. Three other dated manuscripts come from the 9th/15th century. These are *al-Rawd al-fâ'iq fî al-mawâ'iz wa-al-raqâ'iq* (ms 189) of Abû Madyan Shu'ayb al-Ḥurayfîsh (d. 801/1398), dated Muḥarram 817/1414; *Sharḥ Isâghūjî* (ms 202) by an unknown author, executed in Şafar 873/1468; and *al-Tabdhîb fî*

*sharḥ al-Tabdhîb* (ms 208), being a commentary by 'Ubayd Allâh al-Khabîsî on *Tabdhîb al-mantiq wa-al-kalâm* of Mas'ûd al-Taftâzânî (d. 791/1389), transcribed in Jumâdâ al-Ûlâ 877/1472. This collection, put together in Northeastern India, chiefly at Lucknow, is of great importance for the study of Arabic Indian palaeography.

## 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.

The oldest dated codex is a copy of a gloss (*ḥâshiyah*) by Ahmad Khayâlî (d. 870/1465-6) on a commentary (*sharḥ*) on *al-'Aqâ'id 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-Qâdir al-Jîlânî (d. 561/1167), executed in Sha'bân 1094/1683, and a large-size leaf (44 x 28.5 cm.) from a "Kûfî" Qur'an (ms 167), written on parchment supposedly by 'Alî ibn Ahmad 'al-Warrâq for Fâtimah, the Zirid Princess of Qayrawân, on 10th Ramaḍân 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.<sup>3</sup>

## 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

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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. *Kitâb al-kâmil* (ms A2) of al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898), the oldest Arabic dated codex at McGill, transcribed in Rajab 563/1168. It bears two seal impressions of the Bohora Dâ'î 'Abd al-Qâdir with the date 1258/1842.

2. *Kalîlah wa-Dimnah* (ms A1) of Bidpai, dated Rabî' al-Thânî 1055/1645 and containing 95 well-executed miniatures.

3. *Jawâbir al-anwâr wa-nasamât al-azbâr* (ms A4), a collection of prayers by Mûsâ al-Maghribî, calligraphed by an Ottoman calligrapher, Ibrâhîm al-Rudûsî in 1165/1751-2.

4. *Talkhîṣ al-Miftâḥ* (ms A3) of al-Khatîb al-Dimashqî (d. 739/1338) executed in 960/1552-3 by Ramadân ibn Muḥammad ibn Salmân al-Tabrizî 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 (*ijâzât*) issued to calligraphers. Among the fragments there are 15 parchment leaves. Most calligraphs are of the type called *qiṭ'ab* (i.e., single, usually mounted and decorated piece), although there are a number of discarded leaves (*mukbraj*) and albums (*muraqqa'*). 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 al-Ghaffâr Baydâ'î Khâvarî. – Nos. AC39 (panel in *thuluth*, dated 1258/1842-3), AC40 (panel in *nasta'liq*, dated 1258/1842-3).

'Abd al-Halîm Amîr Afandî zâdah (d. 1169/1755, Huart, 167-168; Rado, 157-158). – No. AC100 (*qiṭ'ab*, n.d.).<sup>4</sup>

'Abd al-Qâdir al-Ḥamdî Imâm zâdah (d. 1190/1776, Rado, 174 or 1210/1795-6; Huart, 187). – No. AC15 (single leaf, n.d.).

'Abd al-Rahmân al-Ḥilmî (d. 1220/1805, Huart, 188; Rado, 187; Inal, 130-131). – No. AC12 (*qiṭ'ab*, n.d.).

'Abd Allâh Yadî Qulâlî (Yedikuleli, d. 1144/1731-2, Huart, 159; Rado, 136-138). – Nos. AC25 (*qiṭ'ab*, n.d.), AC99 (*qiṭ'ab* dated 1141/1728-9), AC107 (*mukbraj*, n.d.).

Aḥmad Jâwush zâdah, a pupil of Husayn Afandî Khaffâf zâdah. – No. AC88 (*qiṭ'ab*, n.d.).

Aḥmad Khalîl Bâshâ zâdah. – No. AC3 (*qiṭ'ab*, n.d.).

Bakr al-Qûnawî. – No. AC95 (single leaf, dated 1161/1748).

Darwîsh Aḥmad (d. 1127/1715, Rado, 122; Huart, 138). – No. AC84 (*qiṭ'ab*, n.d.).

Darwîsh 'Alî II (Kuçuk, d. 1128/1715, Rado, 123; Huart, 151). – No. AC18 (*qiṭ'ab*, n.d.).

Darwîsh 'Alî III. – No. AC20 (unmounted four-leaf *muraqqa'*, dated 1201/1786-7).

Darwîsh Ibrâhîm ibn Sha'bân Khânah-i Safarlî. – No. AC85 (undecorated *qiṭ'ab*, n.d.).

Fayḍ Allâh al-Lam'î, Imâm Jâmi' Sulaymân in Uskudâr. – No. AC91 (undecorated *qiṭ'ab*, n.d.).

Ḥâfiẓ Ibrâhîm (possibly the same as Ibrâhîm al-Shawqî, q.v.). – No. AC17 (*qiṭ'ab*, n.d.).

Ḥamd Allâh [al-Amâsî, known as Ibn al-Shaykh] (d. 926/1520, Huart, 108ff., 114ff., 137ff; Rado, 49-54). – No. AC155 (*mukbraj*, n.d., with a note *bû mukbraj Ḥamd Allâh al-ma'rûf bi-Ibn al-Shaykh*).

Ḥasan al-Rushdî (d. 1205/1790, Jabartî, II, 116-117). – No. AC156 (an *ijâzah*, with a chain of authorities going back to 'Alî ibn Abî Tâlib and Muḥammad, given by 'Abd Allâh al-Anîs al-Mawlawî, dated 1157/1744-5. Followed by twelve other *ijâzât* granted by Muḥammad al-Nûrî, Ismâ'îl al-Zuhdî, Ḥasan al-Diyâ'î, Aḥmad ibn Ismâ'îl al-Afqam, 'Alî al-Mâlikî, Ibrâhîm al-Riwaydî, Aḥmad Abû al-'Izz al-Shanawânî, Muḥammad al-Azharî,

- ‘Abd Allâh, a pupil of al-Anîs, Aḥmad al-Mukhlîṣ, Sulaymân, a pupil of al-Ḍiyâ’î and Muḥammad Najîb Ṣûyûljî zâdah).<sup>5</sup>
- Ḥusayn al-Jazâ’irî (d. 1125/1713, Murâdî, II, 55-56; Zabîdî, 94). – Nos. AC51 (*qiṭ‘ab*, dated 1131/1718-9!); AC52 (undecorated *qiṭ‘ab*, dated [I]119/1707-8); AC53 *qiṭ‘ab*, dated [I]114/1702-3).
- Ḥusayn ibn Ramadân (d. 1157/1744, Rado, 145 or 1152/1739; Huart, 162-163). – No. AC37 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.).
- Ibrâhîm al-Shawqî (also known as Ḥâfiẓ Ibrâhîm, d. 1245/1829, Huart, 192; Rado, 202). – No. AC163 (*Sûrab* 78-114, dated Shawwâl, 1235/1820).
- Ibrâhîm ibn Ismâ‘îl al-Mu’nis. – Nos. AC72 (11 unmounted leaves, dated 1257/1841-2 and 1262/1845-6); AC70 (unmounted *muraqqa‘* of four leaves, dated 1261/1845).
- Ismâ‘îl al-Zuhdî I (d. 1144/1731, Huart, 160; Rado, 135-136). – No. AC43 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.).
- Ismâ‘îl al-Zuhdî II (d. 1221/1806, Rado, 186-188; Huart, 188). – Nos. AC47 (*qiṭ‘ab*, 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 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.).
- Khayr al-Dîn. – No. AC94 (unmounted *qiṭ‘ab*, dated 1303/1885-6).
- Maḥmûd Jalâl al-Dîn (d. 1245/1829, Rado, 199-200; Huart, 191-192). – Nos. AC26 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.); AC27 (one leaf, n.d.); AC29 (large panel in *thuluth*, n.d.); AC30 (large panel in *thuluth*, n.d.).
- Muḥammad al-Ḥilmî. – No. AC13 (undecorated *qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.).
- Muḥammad al-Nûrî [al-Maqdisî] (d. 1162/1748-9, Kurdî, 251; Zabîdî, 94 or Rajab 1163/1750, according to a marginal note on AC35). – Nos. AC33 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.); AC34 (*qiṭ‘ab*, dated 1128/1715); AC35 (*qiṭ‘ab*, 1163/1749-50).
- Muḥammad Amin Afandî. – No. AC157 (*Sûrab* 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 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.).
- Muḥammad Bayâzîd zâdah. – No. AC96 (unmounted *qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.).
- Muḥammad Fakhri Afandî. – Nos. AC31 (*qiṭ‘ab*, with two *ijâzât* given by Muḥammad al-Khulûṣî and al-Sayyid Hamdî, dated 1263/1846-7) (Figure 3); AC32 (*qiṭ‘ab*, with two *ijâzât* granted by Muḥammad al-Waṣfî Dâ‘î Aḥmad, dated 1263/1846-7) (Figure 2).
- Muḥammad Ghâlib Fawzî Afandî. – Nos. AC58 (*qiṭ‘ab*, with three *ijâzât* given by Muṣṭafâ al-Ḥilmî damâd al-Sukûti, ‘Alî al-Ḥamdî and Ḥâfiẓ Ḥusayn al-Luṭfi, a pupil of Muṣṭafâ al-Ḥilmî, dated 1258/1842-3) (Figure 5); AC59 (*qiṭ‘ab*, with three *ijâzât* given by Muḥammad Ṭâhir, known as Khalîfat Muṣṭafâ al-Ḥilmî damâd Ibrâhîm al-Sukûti, Muḥammad Amin al-Dhihni, a pupil of Kabâjî zâdah and Ya‘qûb Hakkî, a pupil of Muṣṭafâ al-Ḥilmî. All dated 1258/1842-3) (Figure 4).
- Muḥammad ibn Maḥmûd. – No. AC42 (unmounted three leaves, dated 1113/1701-2).
- Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad. – No. AC101 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.).
- Muḥammad Mu’nis zâdah (d. 1318/1900, Azzâwî, 290). – Nos. AC64 (unmounted *qiṭ‘ab*, dated 1286/1869-70); AC68 *qiṭ‘ab*, dated 1286/1869-70).
- Muḥammad Qâsim Tabrizî. – Nos. AC60 (panel in *nasta‘liq*, dated 1282/1865-6); AC61 (panel in *nasta‘liq*, n.d.); AC62 (panel in *nasta‘liq*, n.d.); AC158 (seven leaves from a *muraqqa‘*, dated 1284/1867-8).
- Muḥammad Râghib Afandî. – No. AC97 (*qiṭ‘ab*, with an *ijâzah* given by Muḥammad ‘Aṭâ’, a pupil of Waṣfî Afandî, dated 1201/1786-7) (Figure 7).
- Muḥammad Râsim (d. 1169/1755, Rado, 155-156; Huart, 168). – No. AC87 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.).
- Muḥammad Shakar zâdah (d. 1166/1752, Rado, 151-152). – Nos. AC36 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.); AC54 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.); AC55 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.).
- Muḥammad Shahrî (d. 1153/1740, Rado, 141; Zabîdî, 94). – Nos. AC14 (*qiṭ‘ab*, n.d.); AC21 (*qiṭ‘ab*, dated 1115/1703-4).



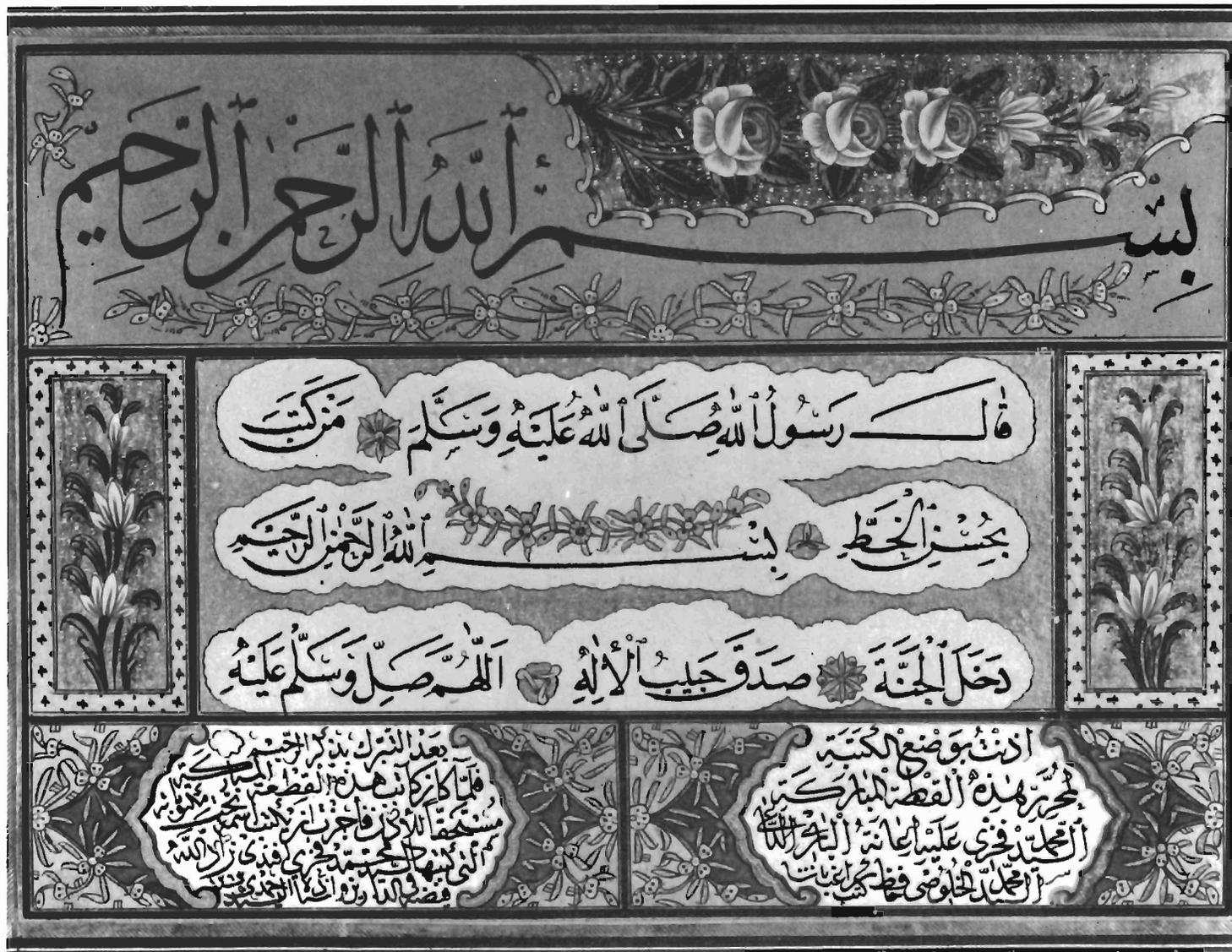


Figure 2. Two diplomas granted to Muhammad Fakhri Afandi (AC32).

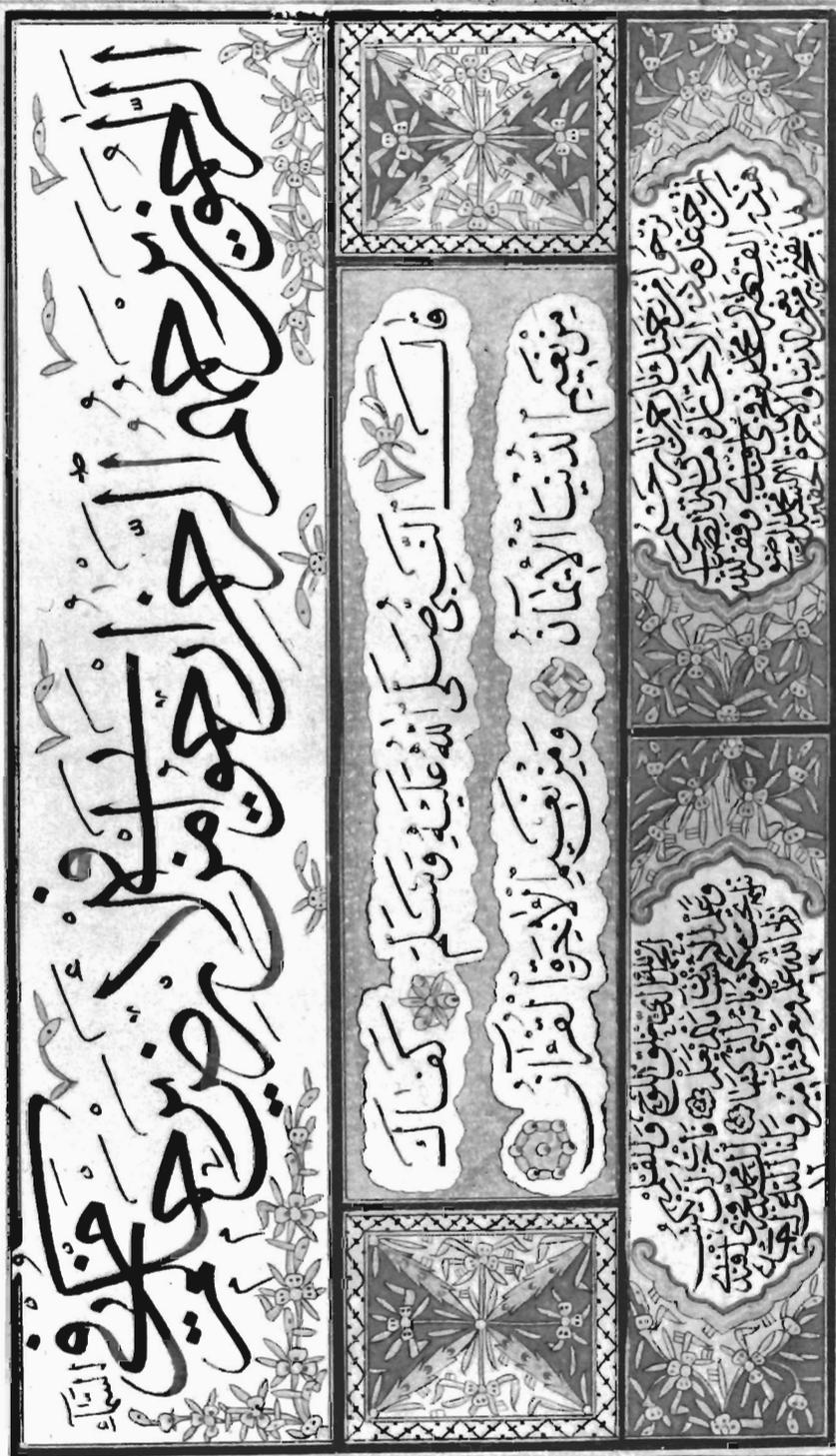


Figure 3. Two diplomas awarded to Muhammad Fakhri Afandi (AC31).

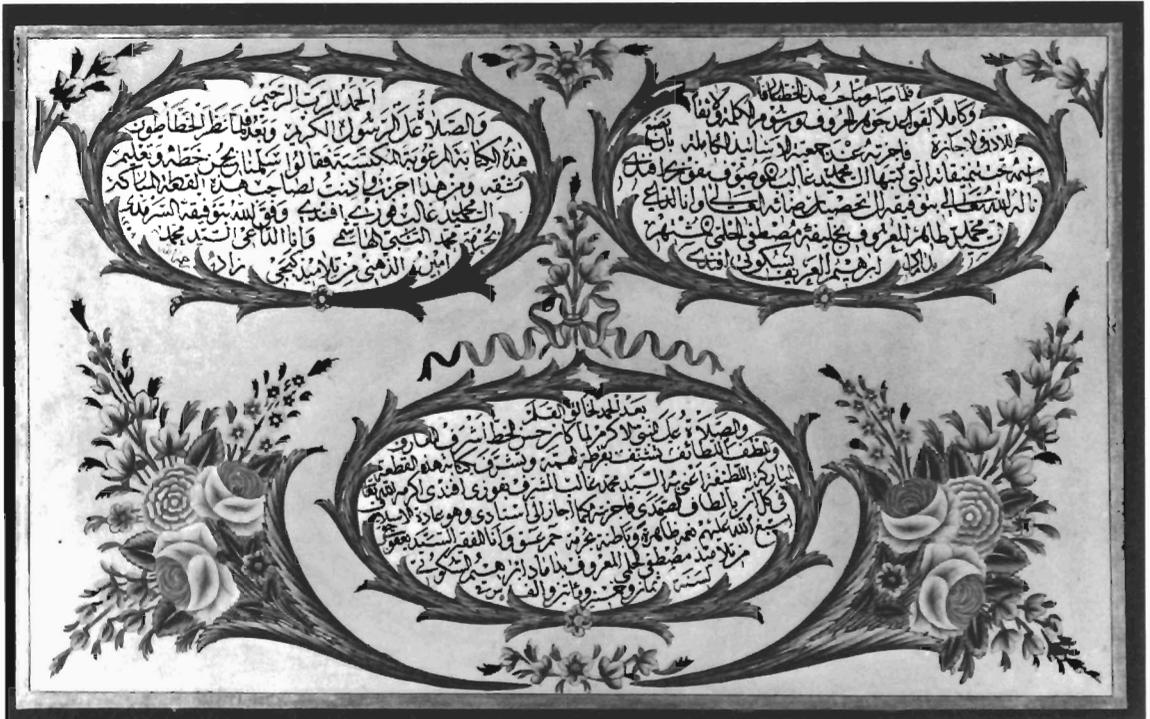


Figure 4. Three diplomas granted to Muḥammad Ghâlib Fawzi Afandî (AC59).



Figure 5. Three diplomas awarded to Muḥammad Ghâlib Fawzi Afandî (AC58).

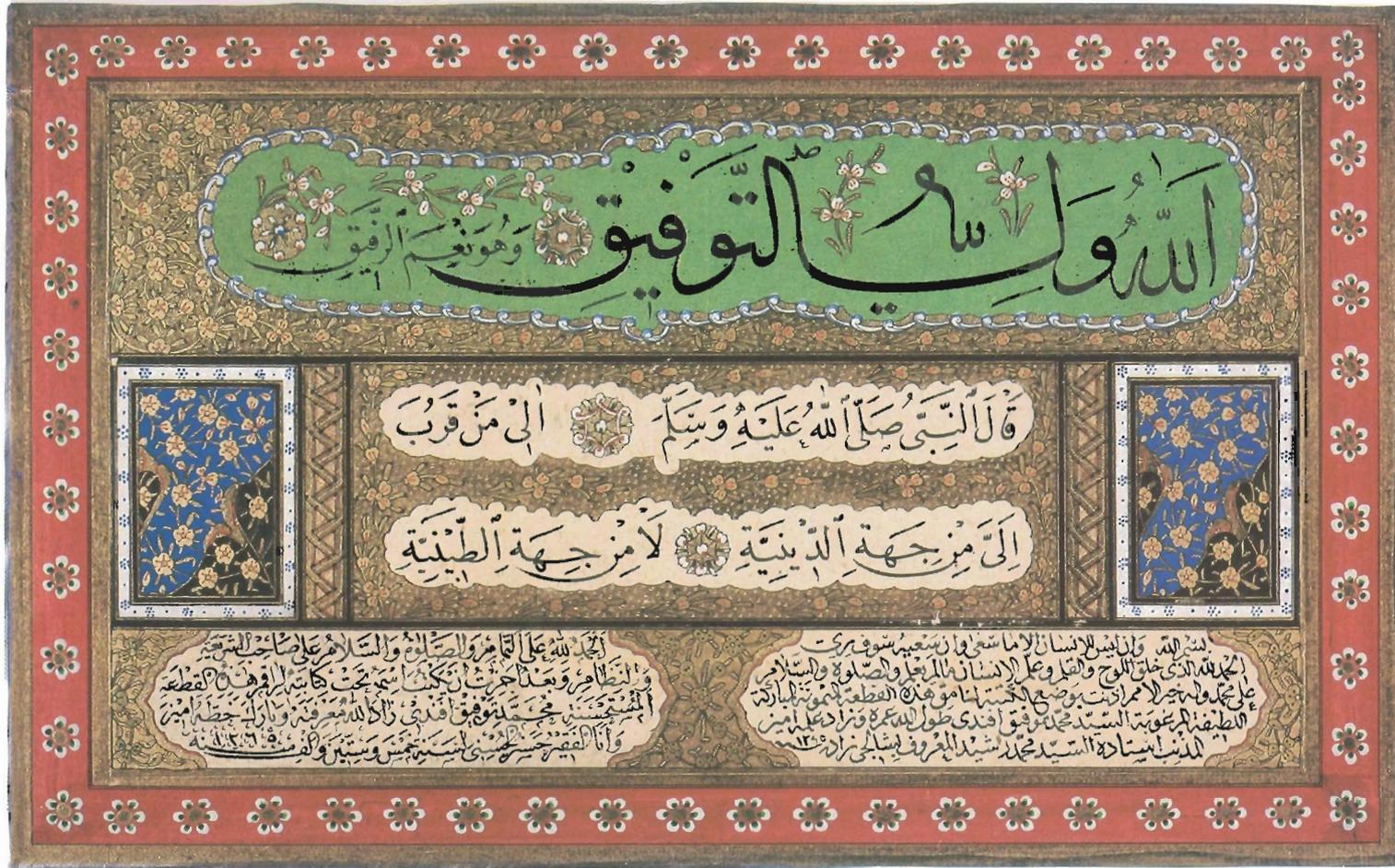


Figure 6. Calligraphic panel with two diplomas granted to Muhammad Tawfiq Afandi (AC57).



Figure 7. Calligraphic panel with a diploma given to Muhammad Rāghib Afandī (AC97).



Figure 8. Folio 277a from the Osler codex depicting two kinds of *kabikaj* (*ranunculus asiaticus*).



Figure 9. Folio 277b from the Osler codex depicting two additional kinds of *kabikaj* (*ranunculus asiaticus*).

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- Muḥammad Tawfiq Afandî. – Nos. AC57 (*qiṭʿab*, accompanied by two *ijâzât* granted by Muḥammad Rashîd Shâlijî zâdah and Ḥusayn al-Ḥusnî, dated 1265/1848-9) (Figure 6).
- Muṣṭafâ ʿAlî zâdah (a pupil of Shughlî Dadah). – No. AC89 (*qiṭʿab*, dated 1137/1724-5).
- Muṣṭafâ ʿIzzat (d. 1293/1876, Rado, 216-218). – Nos. AC16 (*qiṭʿab*, n.d.); AC41 (four unmounted leaves, dated 1282/1865-6 and [12]83/1866-7).
- Muṣṭafâ Muʿadhdhin zâdah (a pupil of ʿAbd Allâh al-Hâshimî). – No. AC92 (*qiṭʿab*, n.d.).
- Muṣṭafâ Nûrî. – No. AC104 (unmounted leaf, n.d.).
- Muṣṭafâ Râqim (d. 1241/1826, Rado, 196-199; Huart, 191). – No. AC63 (*qiṭʿab*, n.d.).
- Sulaymân Hikmatî (Inal, [372-373]). – No. AC93 (*qiṭʿab*, n.d.).
- Taḥsîn al-Husnî. – No. AC165 (large panel in *thuluth*, n.d.).
- Tawfiqî (a pupil of ʿUthmân Afandî). – No. AC162 (four-leaf *muraqqaʿ*, dated 1225/1810).  
ʿUmar al-Waṣfî (d. 1240/1824, Rado, 195-196; Huart, 190). – No. AC159 (nine-leaf *muraqqaʿ*, dated 1220/1805-6).
- ʿUthmân damâd Ibrâhîm al-ʿAfif (d. 1120/1805, Rado, 185). – No. AC102 (single leaf, n.d.).
- ʿUthmân Hâfiz al-Qurʾân (also known as Hâfiz ʿUthmân, d. 1110/1698, Rado, 109-114; Huart, 143-144). – Nos. AC73 (*qiṭʿab*, n.d.); AC74 (panel in *thuluth*, n.d.).
- ʿUthmân ibn Darwîsh Muḥammad Aghâ al-Ard Rûmî [of Erzurum]. – No. AC164 (*Sûrab* 18, n.d.).
- Yaḥyâ Afandî (possibly al-Sayyid Yaḥyâ, d. 1198/1783, Rado, 175). – No. AC9 (*qiṭʿab*, n.d.).

pharmacologist and botanist Abû Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghâfiqî (d. 560/1165).<sup>6</sup> 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 Muḥammad ibn Qassûm was a scholar and oculist. According to Ibn Abî Uṣaybiʿah, a historian of Arabic medicine, al-Ghâfiqî was the greatest scholar of his time in this domain. His book of simple remedies is a unique encyclopedia.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup>

The present volume constitutes part one (*al-juzʿ al-awwal*) 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 (*mashriqî*) version. Our manuscript, being the first volume of al-Ghâfiqî's work, covers the letters *alif* through *kâf*, but having in between *bâʿ*, *jîm*, *dâl*, *ḥâʿ*, *wâw*, *zây*, *bâʿ*, *ṭâʿ*, and *yâʿ*.<sup>9</sup>

The "Herbal" of al-Ghâfiqî is an example of a well-planned piece of work. Since it is based on the works of Dioscorides (Disqûridis) and Galen (Jâlinûs), he refers to these two main sources by using abbreviations: *dâl* for Dioscorides and *jîm* (unpointed) for Galen. These abbreviations (*rumûz*) are followed by the number of the chapter (*maqâlah*) from which a given piece of information was obtained. Thus,

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The illustrated Arabic codex, the "Book of simple drugs" or *Kitâb fî al-adwiyah al-mufradab*, was compiled by the Andalusian

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for example, *dâl bâ’* means Dioscorides chapter 2 and *jîm wâw*, 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 (*bâb*) is followed by a summary giving meanings (*sharh*), etymology and synonyms of the plants.<sup>10</sup>

As far as we know, only three or four other copies of this work are extant.<sup>11</sup> 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-Qadîm*), similar to the *al-Naskh al-Faddâh* or *al-Waddâh*, known as an ‘‘all revealing,’’ clear *Naskh*.<sup>12</sup> The text is partly vocalized and the unpointed letters (*al-hurûf al-muhmalah*) are distinguished either by a small caret (v) or a miniature version of the same letter (e.g., *hâ’* and ‘*ayn*). Some of the main features of this hand are: a flat and thick stroke of the final *lâm*, the ‘‘tail’’ on the *alif* of prolongation, the serif (*tarwîs*) on such letters as *alif*, *lâm*, *dâl*, *nûn* (particularly in chapter headings), and the occasional lack of a bar over the letter *kâf*. The presence of *tarwîs* 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 *Kabîkaj* (fols. 277a and 277b, Figures 8, 9.) This plant, and later just its name, was used for the preservation of manuscripts.<sup>13</sup> The volume is richly rubricated and its chapter headings and lemmata executed in black ink in bold letters (*taghlîz*). The end of a paragraph or section is indicated either by *hâ’* and *yâ’* (for *intabâ*, i.e., literally ‘‘it ended’’) or an open circle with a dot in the middle or three shaded carets 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 Sha‘bân 654, i.e., August 1256.<sup>14</sup> 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 ‘irâqiens. 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 Ghâfiqî illustré.’’<sup>15</sup> 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 *ṣahḥa*, 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 *khâ’* (for *nuskah ukhrâ*, another copy) above the word in the margin.<sup>16</sup>

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 (*lisân*) 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 off-setting 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.<sup>17</sup> He does not mention, however, fols. 150 and 272, which should follow nos. 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-Ghâfiqî*). The name Ghâfiqî is written with and unpunctuated *qâf* (pronounced in Persian as *ghâ*). 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-salâm 'alâ Ibrâhîm* (and may peace be upon Ibrahim), dated 1051 A.H., i.e., 1641 or 1642 A.D. and belonging to someone called Ibrâhîm or 'Alî Ibrâhîm; the other, placed in the left hand margin and repeated on fol. 283a reads Muḥammad Jamâl al-Dîn al-Ḥusaynî 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 'alâ 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-shaṭranj*) 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-Bayṭâr for the compilation of his *Jâmi'* and abridged by Abû al-Faraj, the work of al-Ghâfiqî 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-Ghâfiqî 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.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 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 catalogued. *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 Osleriana, 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, 463, 464, 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). This document contains a preface and a list of rare works in the collection with references. A similar list prepared by W. J. Watson, the first Librarian of the Islamic Studies Library, can be found in *A Dictionary Catalogue of the Blacker-Wood Library of Zoology and Ornithology* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1966) 9: 681-684.

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:

Al-ʿAzzâwî, ʿAbbâs. "Al-Khaṭṭ wa-mashâhîr al-khaṭṭâtîn fî al-waṭan al-ʿarabî," *Sumer* 38. 1/2 (1982): 284-302.

Huart, Cl. *Les calligraphes et les miniaturistes de l'Orient musulman*. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1908.

Inal, Mahmud Kemal. *Son hattatlar*. Istanbul: Maarif Basımevi, 1955.

Al-Jabartî, ʿAbd al-Raḥmân. *Ta'riḫ ʿajâ'ib al-âthâr fî al-tarâjîm wa-al-akhbâr*. Beirut: Dâr al-Fâris, n.d., 3 v.

Al-Kurdî, Muḥammad Tâhir. *Ta'riḫ al-khaṭṭ al-ʿarabî wa-âdâbubu*. al-Maṭbaʿah al-Tijâriyah al-Hadîthah bi-al-Sakâkinî, 1939.

Al-Murâdî, Muḥammad Khalîl. *Silk al-durar fî ʿayân al-qarn al-thânî ʿasbar*. Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Mîrîyah al-ʿÂmirah bi-Bûlâq, 1874-83. 4 v.

Rado, Şevket. *Türk hattatları*. Istanbul: Yayın Matbacılık Ticaret, n.d.

Al-Zabîdî, Muḥammad Murtaḍâ. "Ḥikmat al-ishrâq ilâ kuttâb al-âfâq," *Nawâdir al-makḥûṭât*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salâm Hârûn. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Lajnat al-Ta'lîf wa-al-Tarjamah, 1954) 5: 50-99.

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

6. The title of this work has been taken from the preface. The colophon, however, refers to it as *Kitâb al-Ghâfiqî* (The book of al-Ghâfiqî). For biobibliographical information see C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1937-49) 1:643 and SI:891; M. Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970):276-277; "Al-Ghâfiqî," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed. 1960- , suppl., fasc. 5-6.

7. See his *ʿUyûn al-anbâ' fî ṭabaqât al-atibbâ'*, ed. Nizâr Ridâ (Beirut: Dâr Maktabat al-Hayâh, 1965):500-501.

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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. Sa'eed), W. W. Francis and appended to this volume. The description of the manuscript of Dioscorides can be found in B. W. 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.
9. "Abdjad," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., 1960-.
10. For a more detailed analysis of the contents of the work of al-Ghâfiqî see M. Meyerhof, "Études de pharmacologie arabe tirées de manuscrits inédits. III. Deux manuscrits illustrés du 'Livre des simples' d'Aḥmad al-Gâfiqî," *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* 23 (1940-41): 13-29, 3 plates.
11. Ullmann, *Medizin*: 276.
12. See Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭibî, *Jâmi' maḥâsin kitâbat al-kuttâb*, ed. Ṣalâh al-Dîn al-Munajjid (Beirut: Dâr al-Kitâb al-Jadîd, 1962): 63-67.
13. See my "The use of 'kabîkaj' in Arabic manuscripts," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 1 (1986): 49-53, as well as James W. Pollock, "Kabî:kaj to book pouches: library preservation magic and technique in Syria of the 1880's and the 1980's West," *MELA Notes* 44 (Spring 1988): 8-10.
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.
15. Meyerhof, "Études," 20.
16. For the various practices connected with the critical apparatus in Arabic manuscripts see my "Technical practices and recommendations recorded by classical and post-classical Arabic scholars concerning the copying and correction of manuscripts," *Les Manuscrits du Moyen Orient*, éd. F. Déroche (Istanbul/Paris: 1988 - forthcoming).
17. Professor Meyerhof's letter of 7.07.1938 and a note by W. W. Francis on fol. 284b.