

Materials for the Intellectual History of Imāmī
Shīʿism in the Safavid Period
A Facsimile Edition of Ms New York Public Library, Arabic
Manuscripts Collections, Volume 51985A

Prepared for publication and introduced by
Sabine Schmidtke

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Introduction..... | vii |
| Bibliography..... | xv |
| Facsimile Edition of Ms New York Public Library, Arabic Manuscripts Collections, Volume 51985A | 1 |
| Arabic Table of Contents | i |

INTRODUCTION

In 1934 the New York Public Library (NYPL) purchased a sizable collection of 250 volumes of Arabic manuscripts through the fund for Semitic literature that had been provided by Jacob Heinrich Schiff (b. 1847, d. 1920).¹ While the collection is known to have been bought in Baghdad, no further details are available about the transaction as the “records of that acquisition have been lost”.² Kūrķīs ‘Awwāḍ (b. 1908, d. 1992), who had inspected the collection during a UNESCO-sponsored trip to the US in 1950 to review the holdings of Arabic manuscripts in US American libraries, had suggested that it might have formed part of the former personal library of Ibrāhīm Faṣīḥ b. Šibghat Allāh al-Ḥaydarī al-Baghdādī (b. 1235/1820, d. 1299/1882), a member of the prominent Ḥusaynābādī/Ḥaydarī-family that goes back to Aḥmad b. Ḥaydar al-Kurdī al-Ḥusaynābādī (d. 1080/1669–70).³ This suggestion is based on

¹ Schiff hailed from a Jewish family in Frankfurt am Main and had emigrated to the US in 1865 (and again in 1875). His philanthropic engagement included, among other fields, Semitic and Oriental studies—he supported the foundation of the Semitics Museum at Harvard (see Cohen, *Jacob H. Schiff*, pp. 75ff.), endowed the chair for Oriental Studies at Frankfurt University in 1914 (see Hanisch, *Die Nachfolger der Exegeten*, p. 51; for the fate of the Schiff foundation in Frankfurt after 1939 when it was dissolved, see <https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/38416280/stiftungen1> [consulted November 21, 2017]), and set up the fund for Semitic literature at the New York Public Library for the acquisition of Jewish and Islamic materials in 1898. See *Bulletin* 2 i (January 1898), p. 3; *Bulletin* 3 x (October 1899), pp. 385f.; *Bulletin* 6 x (October 1902), pp. 396f.; *Bulletin* 7 x (1903), p. 366. See also *Bulletin* 25 iv (April 1921), pp. 193f. and 224f., containing a brief summary of Schiff’s gifts to the library during his lifetime and following his death as laid down in his will. Cf. also *Guide to the Research Collections*, pp. 29–34 on the history of the “Oriental Division” in the NYPL. See also generally, Dain, *The New York Public Library*, pp. 115ff.

² Schmitz, *Islamic Manuscripts*, p. xx.

³ On Ibrāhīm Faṣīḥ, see Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʿallifīn*, vol. 1, p. 40 (with further references). Among his writings, mention should be made of his polemics against Shīʿism, *al-Nukat al-shanīʿa fī bayān al-khilāf bayn Allāh taʿalā wa-l-shiʿa* (published). On this work, see also Fattah, “Islamic Universalism”. See Schwarz, “Writing in the Margins of Empires” for an analysis of the scholarly activities of the earlier members of the family during the 17th and 18th centuries and a survey of the remains of the Ḥusaynābādī texts that are dispersed all