The Book and the Silk Roads

is a project generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through the University of Toronto, focused on mapping connections between parts of the premodern world by describing the technology of the book.

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INFO: https://booksilkroads.library.utoronto.ca/
Karin Scheper was trained as a Book and Paper conservator in Amsterdam and she heads the Leiden University Library’s conservation studio. She completed her PhD (The Islamic Bookbinding Tradition. A Book Archaeological Study) in 2014. For this research into the developments of Islamic book structures she received a scholarly honour (the De la Court-prize), awarded by the KNAW (the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) (2017). She was a Bahari Fellow and studied the Persian collections in Oxford, and teaches the materiality of books & book history.

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The Written Heritage of the Muslim World = An enormous cultural heritage beyond reckoning

- al-Maktaba al-Shāmila https://shamela.ws (7,000 books)
- Noor Digital Library http://www.noorlib.ir (35,169 books)
- PDF Books Library http://alfeker.net (4,355 books)
- Arabic Collections Online (ACO) http://dlib.nyu.edu/aco/about/ (15,131 volumes)
- Shia Online Library http://shiaonlinelibrary.com (4,715 books)
- al-Maktaba al-Waqfiyya https://waqfeya.net (some 10 million pages of published books)
Page from a lithograph print, Tabrīz 1877, of Ja‘far b. al-Ḥasan al-Muḥaqiq al-Ḥillī’s (d. 1205–6) *Sharā‘i‘ al-Islām*, with several layers of commentaries in the margin
Islamic Manuscripts Studies –
Manuscript catalogues online,
curated by Evyn Kropf (University of Michigan Library, Research Guides)

https://guides.lib.umich.edu/islamicmsstudies/onlinecatalogues

Ms. Paris, BnF, arabe 5847, fol. 5v, illustration of a library in al-Ḥāʾīrī’s *Maqāmat*, copy dated 1237
“Arabic traditional literature is probably the largest body of literature in the world”.


Fuat Sezgin’s copy of Brockelmann’s GAL with notes (photograph: Hilal Sezgin, de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:FsezginLitKomm.jpg)
A specimen of a Chinese Qur’ān commentary

(source: http://answering-islam.org/Books/Zwemer/Translations/pic1.jpg)
Primary languages of the Islamic world

(source: https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/2ecu7a/primary_languages_of_islamic_world_84186346/)
Entrance to the Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul

(source: http://emedrese.tv/suleymaniye-kutuphanesi-1/)
Worldwide distribution of Islamic manuscripts

(source: María Mercedes Tuya)
Textiles in manuscripts from the Islamic world

**Thread & Fabrics**

- The unsupported link-stitch sewing
- The spine-lining (when not made of leather)
- The endband tiedowns
- The endband weaving
- Lining of (parts of) the cover and exterior covering
Endbands:

Chevron pattern and varieties

Southeast Asian endband type
Endbands:
Chevron pattern and varieties
Southeast Asian endband type
Spine-linings:
Integral part of the sewing structure
Doublures:

Technically, the application is different from leather doublures (and later, paper)
For comparison:
cloth doublures from neighboring
cultures & the leather turn-ins

Or. 5526 - Armenian
Or. 20.981 - Ethiopic
Peshita Inst. 4 - Syriac
AKM 824, China 19th c.

(late examples of cloth doublures)
Covering:
(often mentioned in catalogue)

UBL Or. 12.384
UBL Or. 12.446
UBL Or. 11.066
- Covering
- Spine-lining
- Lining fore-edge flap & lining envelope flap
- Covering
- Spine-lining
- Lining fore-edge flap & lining envelope flap
Lining of the fore-edge flap (instead of the more traditional leather)
Lining of the fore-edge flap (instead of the more traditional leather)
Bodleian Ms Or. 716

Pagemarkers attached to interleaves, positioned adjacent to every painting
Faḍl Allāh al-Rāwandī al-Kāshānī (alive in 571 [1176–77]) as a transmitter of al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā’s (d. 436 [1044]) *K. al-Ghurar wa-l-durar*

Ms San Lorenzo, El Escorial 1485
(completed on 15 Muḥarram 567 or 569
[18 September 1171 or 26 August 1173])
محفظة النجاح والفرحة

عن الغد الأول

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Enclosures:

UBL Or. 1335
UBL Or. 25.418
UBL Or. 12.452
Enclosures:

UBL Or. 1335
UBL Or. 25.418
UBL Or. 12.452
Digitisation of the Yemeni mss, The Zaydi Manuscript Tradition project --
Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML) and Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

Repairs, local mends & repurposed bindings:

UBL Or. 23.446
UBL Or. 6336
UBL Or. 6328
UBL Or. 6368
Girls attending a class at their school damaged by a Saudi-led air strike, in the Red Sea port city al-Ḥudayda (Oct 24, 2017) (source: Reuters)

Yemeni children attending the first day of class in a school that was damaged by an air strike (Oct 4, 2019) (Getty Images)
Yemen proves it: in western eyes, not all ‘Notre Dames’ are created equal

Lamya Khalidi

As an archaeologist, I've seen Yemen's rich heritage. But for too many world leaders, only arms sales really matter.

Like everyone else in the world, I watched in horror last week as Notre Dame burned and its spire fell. I saw the stunned reactions of onlookers on the news, on social media and in front of television sets and phone screens on the streets of Nicos, where I live. A part of France's national identity and an international symbol of Paris was collapsing before our eyes.

This accidental burning of one of the most important French cultural and religious monuments struck a painful chord in just about everyone I knew: I was getting messages of grief from friends in Sudan, Yemen, the US and South America. The unflinching sight of Notre Dame burning evoked photographs of burning buildings during wartime, and nostalgia for all the valuable historical objects within them that had been turned to ash. One could not look at this sight without feeling grief.

And yet my mind couldn't stop questioning why the horrified reaction to the destruction of Notre Dame

The Degradation of History
Violations Committed by the Warring Parties against Yemen's Cultural Property

November 2019 Yemen
www.mwatana.org
Thwarting attempt to smuggle manuscripts and antiquities from National Museum in Yemen’s Taiz

The military police arrested on Sunday a gang while trying to smuggle manuscripts and antiquities of the National Museum in the city of Taiz, southwest of Yemen.

The military police said in a statement that they, in coordination with the security services, were able to "arrest a gang of smuggling manuscripts and antiquities at the al-Hengar Checkpoint, at the southwestern entrance to the city of Taiz."

It is noteworthy that many historical sites and monuments in the city of Taiz have been subjected to destruction and looting during the war years, in the forefront of which is the National Museum in al-Ordi area of Sada district.
Private Library in Ṣanʿāʾ, with manuscripts stored in the lower shelf (2011; anonymous photographer)

Scholars cataloguing manuscripts in the Dār al-maḥṭūṭāt, Ṣanʿāʾ (2009, photo: Sabine Schmidtke)
Yemeni operators in Ṣanʿāʾ digitizing a manuscript from a private collection (2009, photo: Sabine Schmidtke)

Inside the Maktabat al-awqāf, Ṣanʿāʾ (2010, photo: Sabine Schmidtke)
Ms. Ṣanʿā’, Maktabat al-Aqwāf 543, volume 5 of ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī’s theological summa, *K. al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-ʿadl wa-l-tawḥīd*, copied for the library of Imām al-Manṣūr bi-llāh ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza (noted on the four lines of the bottom of the page). The note in the middle of the page was added later by the library personnel of the Khizāna al-Mutawakkiliyya
Ms. Leiden, University Library, Or 8409, title and final pages.

The title page had been glued over, hiding both the title of the book and a note recording that it had been transcribed for the library of Imām al-Manṣūr bi-llāh ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza.

The final page has the scribe’s colophon, dated Shaʿbān 605 [February–March 1209], followed by a note signed by Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. al-Walīd al-Qurashī al-Anf (d. 1226) relating that he collated the transcription with a witness of the work from “ʿIrāq” (meaning ʿIrāq al-ʿajam, i.e., Iran) and that he finished doing so at the beginning of Shawwāl 605 [April–May 1209].

Ibn al-Walīd, a scholar in his own right, had studied together with ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza and led a project of transcription of manuscripts brought from Iran to Yemen at the request of the Imam.
Inside the Russian National Library
Digitisation of the Yemeni mss, The Zaydi Manuscript Tradition project -- Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML) and Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

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Textiles in Islamic Manuscripts

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TEXTILES IN MANUSCRIPTS WORKSHOP | May 4-5, 2021

Special Thanks to Textiles Scholars
Rosemary Crill, Victoria and Albert Museum
Jennifer Wearden, Victoria and Albert Museum
Clare Browne, Victoria and Albert Museum
Philip Sykas, Manchester Metropolitan University

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