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Histories of Circulation – Sharing Arabic Manuscripts across the Western Indian Ocean, 1400-1700

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Abstract

My doctoral dissertation studies the historical phenomenon of text circulation that connected communities across the early modern Western Indian Ocean. A focus on the mobility of manuscripts and scholarship enables me to link social spaces and cultural practices from the Red Sea region to the South Asian subcontinent. Thereby, I argue for the cultural integration of this transregional space along an Arabic connection from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The thesis interrelates three lines of argumentation: Firstly, a diachronic perspective indicates a pluralisation of Islamicate texts. Secondly, the analysis of these manuscript versions exhibits a differentiation in cultural practices of Arabicised communities who peruse these texts. Thirdly, this cultural differentiation is mirrored in a social diversification of the communities among whom these texts circulated. My source base consists of multiple manuscript versions of the same texts and their marginalia, each version transmitted, collected, physically modulated, read, inscribed and commented on in a different socio-cultural context. I collected reproductions of these manuscripts across India, the Middle East and Europe. Methodologically, I start with the material traces of the texts that travelled. I analyse histories of circulation as they were inscribed on manuscripts from the period, using approaches developed recently in the literary study of paratexts and manuscript notes. This allows me to look at a transregional field of cultural exchange in a new way and from different perspectives: travails of itinerant scholars and their interactions with cosmopolitan rulers, centres of patronage and their overlap with places of scholarly transactions, frameworks of transmission and their importance for different textual genres, as well as changing cultural practices and their pursuit across various learned sociabilities. Arabic functioned in complex and often different ways in the Red Sea region and South Asia. Across the early modern Western Indian Ocean Arabic increasingly served to connect communities in cultural pursuits.

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Notes on Transliteration

The transliteration of names and terms in Arabic and Persian is generally based on the system used in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, THREE, published by Brill. Commonly occurring names and terms have been spelled according to their usage in the secondary literature.

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Introduction

This dissertation is about the mobility of texts and people. Text circulation is a historical phenomenon that has linked people, practices and places in forms of cultural pursuits and exchanges. This research takes as its case study the circulation of Arabic Islamicate texts across the Western Indian Ocean to advance an argument on intensifying socio-cultural connections between the Red Sea region and Western India during the early modern period, i.e. fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Regions from Egypt, to the Hijaz, Yemen, and further on to Gujarat and the Deccan across the Sea in the subcontinent became ever more interconnected along an Arabic cultural connection during a period which saw the integration of the Western Indian Ocean along the lines of global empire building, trade and travels. By building on a growing field of global and transcultural historical research I will set this phenomenon of text circulation into its various social and cultural contexts. Such histories of circulation reflect on a variety of textual practices, mobile agents, codes of cultural exchange and social networks. Through a focus on the mobility of texts and people it becomes possible to link social spaces and cultural practices across the regions of the Western Indian Ocean.

Shaping the transregional framework of inquiry

The notion of *mobility* is conceptually grounded in recent scholarship which generated a plethora of approaches to global historical phenomena.¹ These can usually be assigned to either a comparative perspective or the search for connections. Both approaches are major ways of dealing with historical objects of research that transcend political, cultural and geographical boundaries.² Yet the comparative approach is deemed to be a highly complicated operation due to the difficulty in grasping the sense and the exact level of comparability between two historical objects of research.³ In this project, I am generally not intending to compare forms of text circulation across different regions. Instead, to study the transregional circulation of texts it is crucial to transcend seemingly natural boundaries and to conceptualise a level of interaction. Scholarship has elaborated on this by using different labels, each with its own subtle implications. Under the heading of *histoire croisée* a toolbox was assembled suggesting a

¹ For a recent survey of this field cf. O'Brien 2006.

² O'Brien 2006: 4-7.

³ *Ibid.*, 5.

reconstruction of histories through a relational approach.⁴ Accordingly, the focus on intercrossings makes it necessary to observe a variety of levels that interact dynamically in the investigation of different elements of a historical process. Nevertheless, the idea of *translocality* conceptualised on a descriptive level, and as a paradigm for research, the sum of phenomena with an interactive portfolio.⁵ U. Freitag and A. von Oppen emphasised the notions of ‘mobility, flows and transition’ as important qualifiers of connectivity.⁶ Conforming to the *histoire croisée*, the idea of the translocal opens up a new spatial perspective to examine the historical object of research within dynamic and historically contingent environments.⁷

In a similar vein, S. Subrahmanyam elaborated on the concept of *Connected Histories* as a global framework for historical inquiry.⁸ His numerous empirically embedded exemplifications demonstrate the various modes in which abstract cultural constructs – flows of ideas – can be reconstructed from transregional and transcultural perspectives, relating their global spread and dissemination to regional adaptation and reformulation. These processes are set against the historical background of the fifteenth to seventeenth century Western Indian Ocean. J. Richards and S. Subrahmanyam have argued for the emergence of an early modern condition beginning in the fifteenth century, which they locate in an intensification of global connections and the merging of global trends, for example regarding the ideological construction of ‘Universal Empire’ and ‘Voyages of Discovery’ across Eurasia.⁹ The notion of the early modern is thereby linked to quantitative changes in human movement and material shifts on a global scale leading to qualitative redefinitions in various spheres of human societies.¹⁰ By tracing change in symbolic and ideological constructs in the context of South Asia and the subcontinent’s wider links with the regions of Early Modern Eurasia, the notion of *Connected History* provides a heuristic for the investigation of interrelated social and cultural processes across time and space. Most importantly, it is the emphasis on individuals and communities in the way they transcend and encompass a variety of regionally fixed histories which offers an angle to explore the historically contingent connections.

⁴ Werner/Zimmermann 2006: 31-33.

⁵ Freitag/Oppen 2010: 2-5.

⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁸ Subrahmanyam 1997: 736-745. For the elaboration see in particular the two volumes with essays on ‘connected histories’ in Subrahmanyam 2005a and 2005b. He expanded on a concept that Fletcher 1985: 1, called ‘integrative history’.

⁹ Subrahmanyam 1997: 736f. and Richards 1997.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Relating the common origin of abstract cultural constructs, however, can be a difficult task, especially when causality and correlation remain diffuse and hypothetical. It seems reasonable to buttress a notion of connectedness through a more definitive point of departure: the transregional circulation of Arabic Islamicate texts and their manuscripts. I will argue in the following that the transregional transmission of texts represented a fundamental connective trajectory that correlated various social agents through cultural practices. ‘Travelling Texts’ linked cultural and social processes between Islamicate societies of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries across the Western Indian Ocean and thereby offer a possibility to trace different historical practices on multiple levels.¹¹ Thus, the circulation of texts across these diverse cultural areas provides for an empirical and conceptual starting point within a transoceanic Arabic cultural connection.

With a focus on text circulation, this dissertation speaks directly to a growing field of studies on knowledge exchanges across the Indian Ocean worlds.¹² A recent volume by S. Sivasundaram, A. Bashford and D. Armitage on *Oceanic Histories* has set a research agenda to engage with the historical and historiographical pasts of the world’s oceans and relate them to a vision of ‘the world ocean’ as a ‘singular sea’.¹³ They aspire to integrate the study of oceans and their communities into the framework of world history via their transoceanic passageways of the past, and suggest ‘plac[ing] alongside each other a series of terraqueous zones which have not previously been brought together’.¹⁴ With specific regard to the Indian Ocean, S. Sivasundaram develops S. Bose’s *a hundred horizons* further to argue for a ‘revisionist pluralism’ that opens our view on the Indian Ocean’s many pasts and historiographies.¹⁵ He also points to knowledge formation and exchanges which have been the focus of some studies on the early modern Indian Ocean in particular.¹⁶ Most recently, M. Kooriadathodi’s PhD thesis on the circulation of Islamic legal texts and ideas across the Eastern Mediterranean and Indian Ocean contributed to our understanding of the spread of the Shāfiī legal school among societies of the medieval to early modern Indian Ocean.¹⁷ With a methodological approach to the ‘textual *longue durée*’ of legal compendia and their commentarial

¹¹ This term has also been used by Ho 2006.

¹² The field of Indian Ocean studies is vast and diverse. For a recent synthesis on exchanges across the Indian Ocean from the perspective of world history cf. Alpers 2014.

¹³ Armitage et al. 2017: 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁵ Cf. Bose 2006 and Sivasundaram 2017.

¹⁶ Sivasundaram 2017: 53-54. He refers to Ho 2006 and Ricci 2011, whose studies will be introduced in the course of this introduction.

¹⁷ Kooriadathodi 2016. Only the introduction was available to me. For a recent article cf. Kooria 2018.

elaborations over the centuries he analyses their local application by communities from Damascus to Cairo, Mecca to Zanzibar, Yemen to the Malabar Coast and further on to Aceh and Java.¹⁸

Departing from this, this dissertation will contribute to the growing scholarship on these exchanges with a focus on the historical practices of Arabic text transmission and manuscript circulation over the early modern period and the cultural transfers that this enabled. In line with the previous programmatic suggestions I will delineate shared and connected histories among communities of the Western Indian Ocean region, which encompasses the Red Sea region and specifically Egypt, the Hijaz and Yemen and parts of the South Asian subcontinent, in particular Gujarat and the Deccan. Recent scholarship has stressed the significance of maritime networks for Arabic exchanges and placed the Red Sea into the wider maritime networks of the Western Indian Ocean.¹⁹ This is where my research builds on to explore social and cultural mobilities of texts and manuscripts to interrogate their *histories of circulation* across transoceanic connections. Thereby, I am not intending to carve out a separate transregional space and impose new cultural boundaries. Instead, my research will argue that it makes sense to study these seemingly disparate regions as a transregional space of Arabic cultural exchange over the early modern period because of the heightened mobilities that linked its communities.

Thus, the *transregional* assemblage from the Red Sea region to the South Asian subcontinent has been chosen because there is a strong argument to be made about the Arabic connected histories of these regions during the early modern period. This will be set out in the course of the first chapter. What is more, research has repeatedly pointed out these transoceanic connections. N. Green refers to a historically contingent circuit with his reference to ‘Arabophone’ cultures that brought the Deccan and Gujarat closer ‘to the arenas of Arabic learning just across the sea to the west than to Hindustan or northern India, with its closer ties of texts and persons to Khurasan and Central Asia.’²⁰ The social world of the Western Indian Ocean during the late medieval and early modern periods can be conceived as a space that inhabited various shared Islamicate cultural trajectories. For the sixteenth century historically contingent manifestations of cultural exchange have been investigated in terms of commensurabilities as they

¹⁸ Kooridathodi 2016.

¹⁹ Cf. Gommans 2015: 202-205, Kooridathodi 2016 and Miran 2017: 168.

²⁰ Green 2012: 12.

were present in cultural encounters of this time.²¹ In particular, S. Subrahmanyam refers to 'Eurasian states and empires', such as the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals, that 'were obviously genealogically related or belonged to overlapping cultural zones' and, even more so, 'formed a single sphere of elite circulation for calligraphers, painters, Sufi mystics, warriors, and poets.'²² This notion builds on F. Robinson's idea of 'shared knowledge and connective systems' between the three above-mentioned empires.²³ Robinson chiefly focuses on scholarly exchange between Safavid Iran and Mughal India in the seventeenth century. Thereby, he also points to scholarly exchanges between Western India and the Red Sea region.²⁴ For the nineteenth century, S. Alavi elaborates on Muslim transnational networks, originating in the subcontinent and spanning the Hijaz, Istanbul, Burma and Aceh and how these connections were derived from older forms of 'Islamic connectivity'.²⁵ However, as set out previously, scholars are only beginning to explore early modern forms of cultural exchanges within the early modern Western Indian Ocean region and this is where I intend to contribute a case study.

Cross-reading historiographical fields

The transregional approach in this dissertation aims to cross-read different historiographical traditions of the Middle East and South Asia with regard to Islamicate cultures. Approaching the transregional setting of the *Western Indian Ocean* region requires the entanglement of different academic historiographies. While a vast field on Mamlūk Studies and a discipline of Ottoman studies generally remain separate due to the persistent '1517-watershed',²⁶ medieval and early modern South Asia represent another distinct area of historical research.²⁷ Altogether, these historiographical

²¹ Subrahmanyam 2012: 2-6, 23; Carey 1997.

²² Subrahmanyam 2012: 6. S. F. Dale examined the emergence of the Ottoman Empire, the Safavid state and Mughal India in a comparative perspective, demonstrating similarities between all three imperial formations. See Dale 2010.

²³ Robinson 1997. With regard to South Asia S. Pollock recently edited a collected volume with articles which deal with 'Forms of knowledge in early modern Asia' marking directions for future research in this area; cf. Pollock 2011.

²⁴ Robinson 1997. An important case study with respect to Islamic learned culture was advanced by J. Malik focusing on the region of Awadh in North India from the early modern to the colonial period. The first part of his monograph comprises several interesting lines of investigation relating to the *qasbah* as the focal space of urban learned Islamic culture, in addition to the analysis of curricula and traditions of learned Islamic culture as well as its proponents. Cf. Malik 1997.

²⁵ These networks were mainly used by Muslim outlaws who fled to the fringes of imperial formations in the aftermath of the 1857/58 uprising in India. Cf. Alavi 2011 and 2015.

²⁶ Cf. Hirschler 2013: 163.

²⁷ For the continuing expansion of the field of Mamlūk studies cf. for example the articles in Conermann 2013. For a concise survey of Ottoman studies with a special focus on the cultures of

traditions translate into a principal political chronology for the aforementioned regions. In the fifteenth century the area encompassed Mamlūk Egypt and Syria with only a varying degree of sovereignty over the Meccan Sharifate and the Medinan Amirate in the Hijaz, the Gujarati sultanate and the Bahmani Empire in the Deccan, among multiple regional political formations after the break-up of the Delhi Sultanate.²⁸ This political landscape was crucially redrawn at the beginning of the sixteenth century with the incorporation of Mamlūk Egypt and Syria as well as the Hijaz within the rapidly expanding Ottoman Empire, the formation of the regional sultanates in the Deccan, and the integration of South Asian regional states into an expanding Mughal Empire from Gujarat to Bengal, and incorporating the Deccan over the seventeenth century.²⁹

A conceptual approach to text circulation has to go beyond political histories and be situated within wider changes in socio-cultural configurations during the later medieval period. The study of the Middle Period (11th-16th centuries) in the central Arabic lands has been recalibrated to argue against the paradigm of purported cultural decline.³⁰ On the one hand, a look at the spread of the written word and reading skills in the societal contexts of Egypt and Syria revealed a ‘drastic reconfiguration of cultural practices’ observable along the lines of a growing ‘textualisation’ and ‘popularisation’.³¹ A more widespread and intense cultural affinity for the circulation and enactment of textual materials emerged across Islamicate societies into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. On the other hand, the argument of a much broader participation of social groups in literary activities was advanced in terms of a process of the ‘adabization of the *‘ulamā*’ and the *‘ulamā*’ization of the *udabā*’.³² This social pluralisation was reflected in the higher degree of occasionality, meaning the diversification of the use of literature beyond the more courtly, and panegyric literature of the formative period. Pragmatic communication was one such social use of literary idioms employed by educated groups in Islamicate societies which had a lasting effect on content and style of literature composed in this period. Diverse forms of paratexts, intertextual

Empire, cf. Mikhail/ Philliou 2012. For a collection of recent work on medieval India see the two volumes by Bhargava 2010a and 2010b.

²⁸ The following references also provide an overview of the general academic literature for the research topic. For Mamlūk Egypt and Syria see the selection of ‘state of the art’-articles in Conermann 2013; Hijaz: Meloy 2010, Mortel 1987 and 1994a; Deccan: Eaton 2005, Sherwani 1985, Asher/Talbot 2006.

²⁹ On the Ottoman expansion: Dale 2010: 48-62, Imber 2009: 25f., and chapter 5; Hijaz: Meloy 2010; Deccan: Eaton 1978 and 2005, Chapter 3 and 4, Fischel 2012. Gujarat: Sheikh 2010.

³⁰ Cf. Hirschler 2012:2.

³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 3-5.

³² For this and the following cf. Bauer 2013: 23-25, 52.

references and practices epitomise this literary communication with a pragmatic purpose and thus its greater societal relevance during the Mamlūk period. Within the framework of these research paradigms, text circulation and related practices can incorporate both the perspective of the composer and the audience. These paradigms serve as a valuable tool to analyse transregional textual transmission and circulation embedded in complex societal worlds, which have so far been studied separately in their late medieval and early modern contexts.

Besides moving beyond these regionally embedded histories of the Middle East and South Asia, this dissertation also endeavours to cross the chronological divide in these different historiographies. Analogously, the diachronic perspective of this study will not follow the important political caesurae of this period. Instead, the post-Timurid epoch (d. 1405) and its regional political formations of the fifteenth century followed by the sixteenth century long-term and diverse processes of early modern state formation represent a preliminary framework for the exploration of the transregional connections that facilitated the transmission of Islamicate texts.³³ Essays in a recent volume by F. Orsini and S. Sheikh establish the view of a ‘long fifteenth century’ (1398-1555) in North India *after Timur left* and reveal the diversity of vibrant cultures in a period of political decentralisation along various lines of cultural production.³⁴ The perspective of a ‘multi-lingual’ environment and the more inclusive consideration of literary texts as elements of historiographical production enabled the writing of a thicker and more nuanced social history that takes into account a broader spectrum of groups while simultaneously defying notions of cultural decline in this period.³⁵ In a similar vein, the research on the Persianate world in the Eastern Islamic lands has been revitalised in order to challenge the long-held preconception of the decline paradigm.³⁶ In a collected volume of case studies on the city of Tabriz, the late medieval and early modern periods are bridged to look at a transitional phase in which a ‘multi-cephalous Islamicate commonwealth’ proliferated.³⁷ Altogether, recent revisionist approaches argue against a ‘cultural decline’ during this period. The principal aim of the current project is to muster these new cultural trends in the regionally specific historiographies and link aspects pertinent for a transregional framework of textual transmission. This

³³ See the introductory notes in Dale 2010. Cf. also Subrahmanyam 1997: 736f.

³⁴ Cf. Orsini/Sheikh 2014: 1-12. See also detailed contributions, each concerned with one of the several 15th century regional political formations: Eaton 1993 and 2005, Fischel 2012, Sheikh 2010.

³⁵ Cf. Orsini/Sheikh 2014: 1-12.

³⁶ Cf. Pfeiffer 2014: 1-2.

³⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 4-5.

will in turn open up further perspectives to unearth shared social and cultural histories which are not solely framed by political imperatives.

While linking recent social and cultural historical trends in these historiographies, it makes sense to ground them in the growing field of premodern Indian Ocean studies. For a long time this field has been dominated to a great extent by a focus on trade and pilgrimage with narratives of a cosmopolitan commercial seascape and the *longue durée* of economic structures and transactions.³⁸ Accordingly, three interlinked subsystems structured forms of human interaction from Cairo to Aden, to the West coast of India and its hinterland, northwards through western Asia, into eastern Anatolia.³⁹ Within the boundaries of the Indian Ocean region K.N. Chaudhuri concentrated on economic issues of the 'long chain of oceanic trade' stretching across the diverse regions of the Indian Ocean from the rise of Islam until the eighteenth century.⁴⁰ A. Wink looked at the medieval period of the Indian Ocean region from a geographical perspective in order to define changing material conditions that accompanied the emergence of the 'Indo-Islamic world.'⁴¹ Seminal studies by M. Pearson and S. Faroqhi emphasised the early modern pilgrimage (*hajj*) as a crucial transoceanic link.⁴² Most recently, S. Prange has zoomed into the workings of merchant communities on the Malabar Coast in South India, their transoceanic endeavours and local interactions with other communities.⁴³ *Monsoon Islam* aspires to capture the socio-cultural histories of merchant communities by looking at four spaces of activity: the port, the mosque, the palace, and the sea.⁴⁴ In sum, these diverse studies emphasise the point that the Indian Ocean should be seen as an area of maritime connections, which existed as a complementary structure to the well-established overland routes between the Middle East, West, Central and South Asia.⁴⁵ From the Eastern Mediterranean on one side to China and the archipelago of Southeast Asia on the other, trade and exchange in all kinds of goods were continuously practised from ancient until modern times. Since these findings then suggest a constant circulation of humans and objects, the basic material preconditions existed for cultural exchange. Thus, at this point it

³⁸ For a recent synopsis of the field Indian Ocean History cf. Prange 2008 and Sivasundaram 2017.

³⁹ Abu-Lughod 1991: 32-35.

⁴⁰ Cf. Chaudhuri 1985.

⁴¹ Cf. Wink 1997. For studies concerned with trade networks and diasporas in the modern period see Clarence-Smith/Freitag 1997; Dale 1994 on Indian merchants in the wider early modern Eurasian context; and Aslanian 2014 for Armenian networks across the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

⁴² Cf. Pearson 1996 and Faroqhi 1994.

⁴³ Prange 2018.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Cf. Wink 2002: 420-426.

seems reasonable to go beyond the history of trade and pilgrimage in order to uncover and study networks of individuals and groups that established connections through which the travels of texts were channelled.

Creating an empirical field of inquiry: Locating Arabic in a sea of cultural exchanges

One main objective of this research is to embed historiographies of the Middle East and South Asia in a growing field of Indian Ocean cultural history. Scholarship over the past decade has increasingly turned to Persianate cultural exchanges in transregional flows. Contributions to this field have dealt with a multitude of issues ranging from political institutions and ideas, to painting, music and literature, among others.⁴⁶ The historical development is usually understood as a succession of dynastic periods beginning with the Ghaznavids and Ghurids, continuing through the Delhi sultanate of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and followed by political decentralisation and the rise of regional sultanates during the fifteenth century, which all elaborated on these Indo-Persian traditions.⁴⁷ Indo-Persian culture reached its apogee with the Mughal dispensation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, although the fact that the majority of sources survived from this later period certainly bolstered this view.⁴⁸ M. Alam stressed the importance of Persian as a lingua franca among the elites and literati of Northern India from at least the fourteenth century onwards.⁴⁹ The full establishment of Persian as a dominating cultural idiom was then attributed to a ‘convergence of factors’ leading to the long-term patronage by the Mughal court.⁵⁰ In particular, Alam argued for an intellectual engagement and spread of Perso-Islamic traditions based on a variety of Persian *akhlāq* texts in the post-Mongol period. This *akhlāq* literature transcended the legalistic horizon of the *sharīʿa* in the articulation of norms of conduct in the field of ‘statecraft, political culture, and philosophy’, which had an enduring effect on the political application of Islamic law in early modern North India.⁵¹ Implicit in this argument are sustainable connections among political elites, scholars and groups of other literati across Western, Central and South Asia, which participated in the evolution of a complex Indo-Persian idiom that became thoroughly rooted in the socio-cultural fabric of the subcontinent.

⁴⁶ Alam et al. 2000.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 23-25 and Asher/Talbot 2006 on regional formations in South Asia.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 26. Cf. Alam 2004.

⁴⁹ Alam 2010: 39-40.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 39-41.

⁵¹ For this and the following cf. Alam 2004: 12-13, 61-68 and 75-80.

One objective of this dissertation is to demonstrate in what ways Arabic complemented Persian and formed an additional transregional idiom across the Western Indian Ocean. While the importance of Arabic is evident across the Red Sea area, its usage in early modern South Asia was uneven and varies from region to region. Studies on Gujarat have pointed out the use of Arabic among Sufi communities.⁵² In a more religiously connotated context, M. Ishaq offered an overview of what he called the ‘renaissance of ḥadīth learning in India’ during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which was based on transregional networks of scholarship linking South Asia with the Hijaz.⁵³ In addition, surveys of manuscript holdings and literary contributions in Arabic put this idiom on the map empirically as a cultural medium.⁵⁴ Most significantly, Z. Ahmad’s bibliographical surveys of Arabic writings from various regions of the subcontinent went beyond the religious spheres and indicated the extent of intellectual pursuits in Arabic across various genres, such as history, literature and philology.⁵⁵ This provides a significant starting point for the explorations in this thesis. However, altogether the picture is still far too fragmentary. Therefore, my historical research focuses on the use of the Arabic cultural idiom in its various local and regional configurations across South Asia. The transmission of texts from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, as studied in this dissertation, reveals historically contingent connections with the Red Sea region. In consequence I argue that Arabic constituted a vital medium for transregional cultural exchange particularly between the Hijaz and South Asia during this period – an exchange that was sustained by the movement of texts and people as significant connective trajectories in their transregional and local dimension.

Scholarship has opened up new venues to integrate Arabic literary traditions in the cultural histories of the Indian Ocean beyond the central Arab lands. R. Ricci honed the concept of an *Arabic Cosmopolis* based on S. Pollock’s model of a transregional space in which Sanskrit’s ‘political aesthetic’ constituted a ‘communicative system’ during the first millennium.⁵⁶ While Pollock paid close attention to the nexus of the cultural production and political dimension, especially through the genres of *kavya* (‘poetry and literary prose’) and *prashasti* (‘inscriptional royal panegyric’),⁵⁷ Ricci argues for an

⁵² Cf. Balachandran 2012.

⁵³ Cf. Ishaq 1955: 80-101.

⁵⁴ Cf. Ahmad 1968 and al-Kilānī 2009.

⁵⁵ Cf. for example Ahmad 1968: 168-194, on historical literature.

⁵⁶ Pollock 2006: 12-19 and Ricci 2011: 4.

⁵⁷ Pollock 2006: 2 and 13.

Arabic Cosmopolis as ‘a translocal Islamic sphere constituted and defined by language, literature and religion.’⁵⁸ Multiple dimensions of Arabic culture provided a cosmopolitan framework of interaction, ‘as in South and Southeast Asia both Sanskrit and Arabic have served, in closely parallel ways, as generative cultural nodes operating historically in conflated multilingual, diglossic, and ‘hyperglossic’ environments.’⁵⁹ Whereas the *Sanskrit Cosmopolis* was superseded by a vernacular order of regional languages, Arabic percolated into local contexts and became a ‘vernacularised’ language itself with a whole set of cultural and literary traditions transferred along the lines of conversion from Arabic into regional vernaculars.⁶⁰ Though the analysis of Arabicised aspects across languages in South Asia will be important in the study of the multilingual configuration of the early modern subcontinent,⁶¹ the study of Arabic Islamicate texts in their transmission has to be approached first through a micro-historical perspective of diachronic change. Building on Ricci’s work, this project will concentrate on cultural practices of transregional Arabicised communities in the ways they are inscribed on Arabic manuscripts and textual transmission within a transoceanic connection from the Red Sea to Western India.

With the term *Arabicised* I build on Ricci’s definition to refer to communities beyond the Arab Middle East who acquired Arabic to participate in the reading of such texts.⁶² Throughout this dissertation, the term Arabicised will serve as a shorthand for locally grounded and transregionally mobile communities of scholars, scribes, sultans and others who contributed to the perpetuation and proliferation of Arabic by sharing cultural practices, such as transcribing texts, patronising commentaries, teaching reading sessions, studying texts and preserving manuscripts. Textual circulation had the capacity to draw together different social and professional groups.⁶³ Members of these communities interacted in various and complex ways amongst each other, yet, importantly, they become a textual community through their common cultural pursuits.

Recently, M. al-Musawi’s *Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters* synthesised a new view on the cultural production in Arabic across the Islamicate world from the twelfth

⁵⁸ Ricci 2011: 4.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 13-15.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 15-17; Pollock 2006.

⁶¹ Orsini/Sheikh 2014: 12-16.

⁶² Ricci 2011: 14-16.

⁶³ The idea that ‘circulation can also contribute to the making of that community’ has recently been stated in Eaton 2014:112.

to the eighteenth centuries.⁶⁴ He assembles elements that generated, sustained and transformed the synchronic and diachronic conversations of Arabicised communities over these centuries, such as itinerant intellectuals, cosmopolitan rulers, textual genres, sociabilities and ‘epicentres’. These made up a communicative sphere in which composers contributed to the proliferation of commentaries. While al-Musawi based his analysis on the interactions of scholars, their Islamicate texts and the debates which were sparked by their compositions, I will take his referential framework as a point of departure for a different empirical approach. I assembled a corpus of such Islamicate texts in their manuscript varieties, which were transmitted transregionally, with a view to study historical practices in their circulation. A similar approach has been applied successfully by F. Flood in his investigation of ‘Muslim-Hindu encounters’ through the framework of translation.⁶⁵ He stressed the importance of concentrating on ‘the circulation of objects and processes of transculturation’ to transcend the ‘textual paradigm’ that dominated research on South Asian histories over the last decades.⁶⁶ He emphasises the need to read the ‘semantic content’ of texts together with their materiality as objects of circulation.⁶⁷

Departing from this, I am studying manuscript versions of Islamicate texts to explore social and cultural significances in their circulation. My source base consists of multiple manuscript versions of the same texts and their marginalia, each version transmitted, read and commented upon in a different socio-cultural context. I focus on Islamicate texts from the philological disciplines, such as grammar, lexicography and rhetoric, as well as history writing. The term ‘Islamicate’ stresses the cultural aspects of the Islamic heritage and its encounters with other cultures beyond but not excluding religious pursuits.⁶⁸ While artefacts of intellectual traditions in their own right, works from the philological fields of study also constituted the ‘auxiliary disciplines’, meaning those texts which were of fundamental importance to the study of the Quran, prophetic traditions, the exegesis of Islamic core texts, and thus a whole variety of other texts.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ For this and the following see al-Musawi 2015.

⁶⁵ Cf. Flood 2009: 9-10.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ The term ‘Islamicate’ was originally coined by M. G. S. Hodgson as part of a new vocabulary for the study of ‘Islamdom’, and principally denotes a ‘culture centred on a lettered tradition (...) shared by both Muslims and non-Muslims’ which distinguishes it from ‘Islamic’ as pertaining to the sphere of religious belief. Thus, the term emphasises the cultural elements of the Islamic traditions. Cf. Hodgson, 1974: 56-60.

⁶⁹ The term ‘auxiliary disciplines’ is taken from Ghorbal 1958: 59, and its application in this dissertation builds on readings of Hirschler 2012 and 2016, and Kohlberg 1992 on the composition of libraries.

Works from different genres of the Islamic and Islamicate disciplines often travelled together and were transmitted along similar pathways of circulation.⁷⁰ At the same time, philological texts were categorical not only for the acquisition of linguistic skills in literary Arabic, but they also encapsulated wider Islamicate cultural traditions.⁷¹ While they can function as a representative template for the larger Islamicate traditions that Arabic was entangled with at this point, they can also supply a broader socio-cultural perspective on Arabised groups and their intellectual endeavours beyond the fields of theology (*kalām*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and Quranic commentary (*tafsīr*) and specific to those intellectual pursuits which are synonymous with the sphere of Arabic philology. The essays in a volume edited by D. Gilmartin and B. Lawrence on Islamicate identities in South Asia demonstrate how complex processes of religious identity formation can be analysed within the framework of the *Indic* and the *Islamicate*, both denoting ‘a repertoire of language and behaviour, knowledge and power, that define broad cosmologies of human existence’.⁷²

At the same time, the generic category of the Islamicate will also be useful for framing the spatial and temporal parameters for this study. G. Sood has recently demonstrated how the idea of Islamicate Eurasia as a regional constellation within the early modern world serves as a research paradigm in order to engage with the ‘arena of circulation and exchange’ in the eighteenth century.⁷³ He stresses the ‘collective of structures’ that connected the Middle East and South Asia on different levels during this time.⁷⁴ Sood privileged writings of everyday lives such as ‘personal and business correspondence’ because these purportedly offer ‘the most unfiltered access to the vernacular thoughts’, in contrast to ‘court annals, dynastic chronicles, travel accounts, scholarly treatises’, which ‘are pitched at several removes from the arena’s quotidian reality’.⁷⁵ This research project, however, will not comply with this distinction for two reasons: First of all, the source base problem of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries across the Islamicate societies of the Western Indian Ocean dictates an approach that indiscriminately fathoms the whole variety of literary products in circulation. Secondly, and more importantly, vernacular correspondence will be conceptualised as one type among many communicative practices. Socio-cultural

⁷⁰ This point will be exemplified empirically in the first chapter.

⁷¹ See for example Gully 1995.

⁷² Cf. Gilmartin/Lawrence 2000: 2f.

⁷³ Cf. Sood 2011: 113-121.

⁷⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 118.

functions are constituted not solely by genre but instead through the actual enactment in socio-cultural contexts, the moments of historical practice. At the same time, this historical practice drew together various social groups into transregionally connected communities that shared a cultural idiom and textual pursuits.

Sources: a transregionally assembled corpus of manuscripts

In this dissertation the three aspects practices, people and places will be traced across different narrative and normative sources and, most importantly, in documentary elements on manuscripts. Narrative sources in Arabic and Persian are primarily biographical dictionaries which were compiled from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries in Egypt, the Hijaz, Gujarat and the Deccan. Important examples are the extensive works composed by al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) in Mamlūk Egypt and the Hijaz,⁷⁶ and a compilation of biographies and important events for Islamate South Asia in the sixteenth century by ‘Abd al-Qādir b. Shaykh al-‘Aydārūs (d. 1036/1627).⁷⁷ While the corpus of Persian *tadhkiras* from South Asia can offer an abundance of hagiographical writings, further research is necessary to assess the pertinence in the context of Arabic circulations.⁷⁸ Here, selected Persian biographical works will be presented in the respective chapters, where such prosopographical works mainly serve to contextualise case studies of particular scholarly figures in South Asia. A particularly important narrative source is the Persian biographical-geographical treatise, *Haft Iqlīm* of Aḥmad Rāzī, which imagined the cultural connections across the Indian Ocean. Normative sources that will be dealt with in this dissertation are treatises on manuscript production and reading practices, which have been studied by different scholars and which will be introduced in the relevant sections.⁷⁹

Significantly, the argument of this dissertation builds on an empirical objective and intends to go beyond narrative sources to study the significance of Arabic circulations through the survival of manuscripts. Therefore, the central focus will be on Islamate texts and their manuscripts which circulated during the early modern period together with the notes which were inscribed on them.⁸⁰ Several of these Islamate texts have been studied with regards to their intellectual contribution to

⁷⁶ Al-Sakhāwī 1934-37.

⁷⁷ Löfgren 2013. See al-‘Aydārūs 2001. Other examples will be introduced in chapter one. For a recent evaluation cf. Balachandran 2012.

⁷⁸ For an introduction to this genre see Hermansen/Lawrence 2000: 149-175.

⁷⁹ Cf. for example Rosenthal 1947 and El-Rouayheb 2015a.

⁸⁰ For a recent example of the study of manuscript circulation see for example Hirschler 2016, Liebrecht 2016 and Schwarz 2010.

Islamicate cultures. However, what I am doing differently is that I am bringing together a transregionally assembled corpus of Arabic manuscripts to study them in a transoceanic framework of circulation. The corpus of sources was assembled during several fieldwork trips to libraries across South Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Arabic manuscripts from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries of the Common Era, as they survive in these collections, are at the centre of this project. Each library had its own restrictions of access to the manuscripts regarding the possibility of studying the manuscripts in situ and acquiring reproductions. At the same time, due to the vast amount of potential specimen I had to delineate a corpus of manuscripts which could be studied in the framework of this dissertation.

The main objective was to bring together manuscripts which circulated among communities that inhabited the Western Indian Ocean from the Red Sea to Western India (Egypt, Hijaz, Yemen, Gujarat, Deccan). Egypt, as part of the Red Sea region, and the Deccan in the subcontinent represent the core regions for this study due to the availability of sources and their prominent position within this transoceanic framework. Hence manuscript collections from these areas have been surveyed more intensively. Since Arabic texts and manuscripts are of significance to this project, the general method was to begin with a survey of manuscript collections across South Asia, where Arabic texts are significant per se. This helped me to gain an understanding of the profiles of these libraries in terms of textual quantities and diversity of genres. Moreover, it made it possible to trace pathways of transmission from regions across the Western Indian Ocean into South Asia. Then links were identified which were forged between the subcontinent and the places across the Red Sea region. However, today the surviving evidence is not necessarily found in these areas of historical investigation. Therefore, it became necessary to combine findings from various potential libraries across Europe and the Middle East in order to reconstruct a fragmentary counterpart on the Red Sea side that could be brought into conversation with Western India.

The Asar Mahal (or Bijapur) collection among the holdings of the British Library offered a crucial starting point to engage with forms of manuscript circulation to and across the South Asian subcontinent.⁸¹ This collection is particularly rich in manuscripts with various paratextual profiles which enable the study of transoceanic histories of circulation. The crucial point is that this manuscript collection provided

⁸¹ This manuscript collection was meticulously catalogued by Otto Loth in the 19th century, who provides extensive details on manuscript notes on these Arabic manuscripts. See Loth 1877.

the sole extant historically grown corpus of Arabic Islamicate texts in South Asia for the current project and period and this point will be further elaborated in chapter three. More significantly, the profile of this corpus makes it most conducive to the reconstruction of histories of circulation, since both colophon and library notes furnish these manuscripts with a start and an end point in their movements. In the following this corpus will be referred to as the *Bijapur corpus*. The corpus itself consists of the entire spectrum of the Islamic and Islamicate disciplines: Koranic Sciences (43 titles), Prophetic Traditions (28), Principles of ḥadīth (4), ḥanafī law (37), shāfiī law (9), Principles of Jurisprudence (24), Prayers and Charms (16), Scholastic Theology (58), Philosophy (51), Sufism and Ethics (76), Biography and History (3), Mathematics and Astronomy (13), Medicine (1), Poetry and Elegant Prose (11), Grammar (34), Rhetoric (20), Lexicography (5), Encyclopaedia (1) and Miscellanies (6).⁸² These will offer a variety of case studies to exemplify different forms of circulation across the Deccan and beyond.

The sheer amount of surviving manuscripts across the South Asian archives and collections made it impossible to survey the entire stock of books. In a second step, I approached several modern collections in the Deccan and the wider subcontinent to distil an early modern corpus of Arabic philological manuscripts based on material aspects and dateable colophons. I conducted surveys in two collections in Hyderabad, India: the Arabic manuscript collections of the Salar Jung Museum Library (SJML) – previously the manuscript collections of Nawab Mir Ali Yusuf Ali Khan, Salarjung III – and the holdings of the former Asafiya Library (and former Hyderabad State Library) – founded in 1885 by the 6th Nizam Mir Mahboob Ali Khan –, which are today integrated into the Andhra Pradesh Oriental Manuscript Library (APOML).⁸³ This was important in order to bring the *Bijapur corpus* into conversation with other crucial collections in the Deccan. Due to the political trajectory of Hyderabad since the eighteenth-century takeover of the Asaf Jahī dynasty both institutions had a centralising function with regards to manuscripts in the Deccan and India, but they also contain manuscripts from the wider Western Indian Ocean world.⁸⁴

I focused on philological texts adhering to the disciplines of grammar (*naḥw*), rhetoric (*balāgha*) and lexicography (*luḡha*). It meant that after treating Bijapur as an

⁸² Cf. Quraishi 1991 and Loth 1877.

⁸³ For general information about these libraries cf. Khan 1991, Burhanuddin/Taher 1991 and Venkatappaiah 1991.

⁸⁴ For a historical background cf. Faruqi 2009.

exemplary case for the broad spectrum of Islamicate disciplines I was able to narrow the survey down to Arabic philological texts. In the *Bijapur corpus* the following number of manuscripts survived: grammar (34 titles), rhetoric (20), and lexicography (5).⁸⁵ Of these 59 manuscripts in total, 6 manuscripts can be dated conclusively to the fifteenth, 6 to the sixteenth and 6 to the seventeenth century.⁸⁶ In the SJML, the quantitative amounts for each discipline can be broken down accordingly: grammar (85 titles), rhetoric (45), lexicography (13) and mixed manuscripts (6).⁸⁷ Of these 149 manuscripts in total, 8 date to the fifteenth, 12 to the sixteenth and 48 to the seventeenth century.⁸⁸ The APOML holds 154 Arabic manuscripts of grammar and 23 in morphology, 93 in rhetoric and 65 in lexicography.⁸⁹ Since the collections of the APOML have not been fully catalogued I conducted a survey of all these manuscripts. Based on their colophons and material aspects I narrowed them down to an ‘early modern corpus’, i.e. 15th-17th century specimen: 86 for grammar (*naḥw* and *ṣarf*), 38 for rhetoric and 32 for lexicography. Of these 156 manuscripts, the following can be dated conclusively: 4 to the fifteenth century, 11 to the sixteenth century, 46 to the seventeenth century.⁹⁰

In contrast to Bijapur, the collections of both libraries do not represent a historically grown corpus of manuscripts in one location and more research regarding the histories of these collections is necessary to assess the profile and different temporal layers of acquisitions of these libraries. Yet, as the catalogues and the manuscripts show, many of the philological texts from both libraries (SJML and APOML) were transcribed and collected by a wide variety of sultans, courtiers and scholarly figures over the early modern period, both from within South Asia and beyond. When it is possible and of significance to the argument, the provenance of the respective manuscripts will be determined in more detail. For the current focus, the early modern collections of these libraries can mirror manuscript circulations across the subcontinent and its transregional links with the Red Sea region, Western and Central Asia over the centuries. Especially because these modern collections reflect on a variety of textual practices by different social and professional groups over the centuries, their manuscripts can furnish a substantial empirical base to advance arguments on text transmission and manuscript circulation. Together with the *Bijapur corpus*, the

⁸⁵ Loth 1877 and Quraishi 1991.

⁸⁶ These dateable versions are listed in table 4 in the Appendix.

⁸⁷ These numbers are based on the catalogue by Ashraf 1993.

⁸⁸ Cf. table 5 in the Appendix.

⁸⁹ These numbers are based on the handlist of the Asafiya, which is available at the APOML. This handlist gives the name of the author, title category, language, volume and shelf mark.

⁹⁰ Dateable manuscript versions are listed in tables 6 a, b, c and d in the Appendix.

manuscripts of the Salar Jung and the APOML will be studied as the *Deccan corpus* and can provide a broader view on the circulation within the region of the Deccan and its links with the wider Western Indian Ocean. The profile of the famous Rampur Raza Library in Rampur, UP, provides a complementary view from North India in chapter five to contextualise the numbers of the *Deccan corpus*.

As will become clear over the different chapters of this dissertation Gujarat played a crucial role as a nodal point in the transoceanic circulation of texts and also as a hub for itinerant scholars and mobile elites. In terms of manuscript collections, I had to restrict myself to the collections of the Pir Muhammad Shah Dargah library, Ahmedabad, because other collections were either not accessible, or they have a very specific sectarian profile.⁹¹ For the Dargah Library in Ahmedabad the catalogues give a general overview.⁹² I also collected a few specimens during a visit to the library and complemented this with reproductions provided by the Noor Microfilm centre in the Iranian culture House in New Delhi. Apart from these individual cases, however, Gujarat will mainly feature as a connective link in the transregional circulations of manuscripts and texts and I am not going to advance larger arguments concerning the Arabic manuscript cultures of this region.

To have a corrective for the manuscripts of the philological disciplines, I also collected historical texts from several collections across India. In comparison to other disciplines and fields only a minor amount of historical texts which have been copied on manuscripts survives for the period under consideration. These were brought together to form an *Arabic history corpus*, which will be studied as part of chapter one of this dissertation. Specimen were brought together from the SJML and the APOML in Hyderabad, the Rampur Raza Library, Rampur, UP, the Pir Muhammad Shah Dargah Library in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library in Patna, Bihar, the National Library in Kolkata, West Bengal, and the Bengal Asiatic Society, Kolkata.⁹³

Similar to the Deccani collections the collections of the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library evolved until the second half of the nineteenth century (the library was opened to the public in 1891) from a variety of South Asian contexts and manuscripts

⁹¹ For an important collection of Arabic manuscripts from the Bohra Ismaili community in Baroda see the doctoral dissertation by O. Akkerman 2015, which was recently submitted at the Freie Universität Berlin. I thank Olly for pointing this out to me.

⁹² Cf. Hazrat Pir 1992.

⁹³ For some general background about these libraries cf. Gupta 1991, Kabir 1991 and Sood 1991.

are still added today.⁹⁴ As later biographers of Khuda Bakhsh (1842-1908) pointed out, parts of the Arabic manuscript holdings developed due to extensive collecting practices across the Middle East in this period. However, the Khuda Bakhsh Library also offers specimen which were copied and circulated in South Asia over the early modern period and these are the manuscripts which will be used in selective case studies.

In contrast, the collections of the Rampur Raza Library, Rampur (Uttar Pradesh) were arguably derived to a great extent from the Imperial Library of the Mughals, also called the Delhi collections.⁹⁵ While some parts of the Delhi collections ended up in the collections of the Nawabs in Awadh over the eighteenth centuries, others were looted during the uprising of 1857 and thereby partly made their way to the Nawabs of Rampur.⁹⁶ Many manuscripts of this collection initially came from early modern libraries across the Eastern Mediterranean, the Red Sea region and South Asia.⁹⁷ They were collected by courtiers and scholars. Since it can be assumed that most of these collections circulated in early modern South Asia, historical texts of the Rampur Raza Library will be included in the *Arabic History Corpus* to exemplify the dissemination of Arabic historical works over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in South Asia.

Leaving the South Asian collections, the next step was to bring the *Deccan corpus* into conversation with a survey of collections from the other side of the Western Indian Ocean, namely with manuscripts from the al-Azhar mosque library, in Cairo, Egypt, and individual specimens from the Dār al-Kutub collections of the National Museum of Egypt, also in Cairo. The collections of both institutions are too numerous to survey in their entirety for this kind of project. Therefore, I restricted myself to the sample of those texts and titles which I had located in India and which became significant for my argument in chapter four and five. While restrictions on access limited my research at the Dār al-Kutub to a few dozen specimens, the online research facilities at al-Azhar mosque library made it possible to survey and reproduce large amounts of digitised philological manuscripts. This assembled corpus of important philological texts will be referred to as the *Cairo corpus* and will be included in chapter five for a comparative perspective.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ For this and the following cf. Bukhsh 1981: 35-38. For the catalogue of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts Cf. the Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore. This was accessed online.

⁹⁵ Ibid. For this collection cf. the handlist in the British Library in MSs IO Islamic 4604-4606, British Library, London.

⁹⁶ Siddiqi 1998: 10-19.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ See table 7a and b in the Appendix.

In order to build a tangible case study around one scholar and his texts, I traced manuscripts of Muḥammad al-Damāmīnī's grammar commentaries, initially written at the beginning of the fifteenth century in India, in collections across India, Cairo, Istanbul and libraries in Europe. Details of these manuscripts will be dealt with in chapter two and especially in chapter four and will be provided in full as part of the appendix.⁹⁹ To give an idea of the prominence of his texts and their suitability for an in-depth study of textual transmission and transregional Arabic scholarship, manuscripts were brought together from the *Deccan corpus*, the collections in Cairo, as well as libraries in Ahmedabad, Rampur, Patna and Kolkata. Importantly, a research trip to Istanbul uncovered dozens of manuscript versions from different holdings in the Süleymaniye library collection.¹⁰⁰ The manuscripts of al-Damāmīnī's texts in Istanbul circulated between the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea region and have their origins in circulation histories that began in fifteenth century South Asia. Together, these specimens form the transregional *al-Damāmīnī corpus*.

Histories of Circulation – a methodological approach

In the following, I will study *histories of circulation* of texts on different empirical levels to shed light on changing forms of textual transmission, their social contexts and cultural significances. The main methodological approach is to analyse the social and cultural mobilities of texts. Therefore, I developed a combined approach to study and cross-reference manuscript notes with normative and narrative sources, which allowed me to look at a field of cultural production from a new empirical perspective. The transoceanic framework of text circulation is thereby constituted through the interrelation of practices that are performed by people across different places. As set out in the previous section these three aspects of practices, people and places will be traced across different narrative, normative and documentary sources. Social actors registered instances of text circulation in chronicles and biographical dictionaries of the period. They reflected on forms of text transmission across a variety of genres. Most significantly, a vast amount of manuscripts survives that circulated during the late medieval and early modern periods with documentary markers of circulation inscribed on their folios.

⁹⁹ Cf. al-Damāmīnī Corpus in tables 1, 2 and 3 of the Appendix. These tables differ in the details they provide because I am employing manuscript versions of each text in chapter 4 to advance a different argument.

¹⁰⁰ This search was conducted through the online catalogue at the Süleymaniye, Istanbul.

These documentary markers are paratexts and, according to G. Genette, can be seen as culturally signifying additions made to the main text of a work.¹⁰¹ With his studies of *paratexts* and *palimpsests* Genette provided a toolbox for the historical analysis of text circulation. First of all, the spread of texts can be traced by examining hypertextualities, which reveal complex intellectual relationships between different texts.¹⁰² They are defined as all kinds of relationships that exist between different texts.¹⁰³ Secondly, epitextual and other hypertextual references which refer in various ways to specific texts through other texts, such as bibliographies, are located in the wider socio-cultural surroundings of a text and can provide crucial clues of its dissemination.¹⁰⁴ Thirdly, the most direct signs of a text's circulation are the paratextual elements (Genette calls these peritexts), which can be found inscribed in its immediate surroundings with the purpose of presenting a written text. More specifically, paratextual elements are appendices (fr.: *franges*), such as titles, chapter-names, dedications and prefaces, which constitute a set of discourses and practices that present a written text.¹⁰⁵

'Cette frange, en effet, toujours porteuse d'un commentaire auctorial, ou plus ou moins légitimé par l'auteur, constitue, entre texte et hors-texte, une zone non seulement de transition, mais de transaction: d'une action sur le public au service. Bien ou mal compris et accompli, d'un meilleur accueil du texte et d'une lecture plus pertinente – plus pertinente, s'entend, aux yeux de l'auteur et de ses alliés.'¹⁰⁶

Significantly for the current context, this 'zone of transaction' acted as a threshold (*seuil*),¹⁰⁷ which was constituted by a varying combination of paratextual elements reflecting on their circulation, perusal and reading by a diverse local and transregional community.

In a subsequent step, these analytical categories will be applied to the study of a transoceanic Arabic manuscript culture across the early modern Western Indian Ocean. While it will be important to look at narrative sources, the main objective is to analyse histories of circulation as they were inscribed on the manuscripts using methodologies developed recently in the literary study of paratexts and manuscripts

¹⁰¹ Genette 2001: 9-21. His conceptualisation of 'intertextuality' is conducive to the study of reading notes, corrections and other glosses on the *matn* (text) and will be considered in a different step of the examination, since these literary palimpsests produce different aural effects. Cf. Genette 1993. For another application of Genette in the context of 19th century Javanese manuscripts see Ricci 2012b.

¹⁰² Genette 1993.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

¹⁰⁴ Genette 2001: 12 and *Ibid.* 1993: 14-18.

¹⁰⁵ Genette 2001: 9-13.

¹⁰⁶ Genette 1987: 8.

¹⁰⁷ Genette 2001: 12.

notes. Of axiomatic importance in this respect is the multiplicity of manuscript versions together with the documentary character of manuscript notes that accompany them.¹⁰⁸ The contributions in A. Görke's and K. Hirschler's *Manuscript notes as documentary sources* offer an important and singular overview of different specificities and analytical uses of *muṭāla'āt* ('reading notes') and *samā'āt* ('certificates of transmission'), as well as other forms of glosses and marginal notes.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, *ijāzāt* ('licences for transmission'), *tamlīkāt* ('ownership statements') and *waqfiyāt* ('endowment attestations') provide markers to trace the dissemination of manuscripts and their texts.¹¹⁰ All in all, these manuscript notes together with the crucial paratextual elements of colophons and prefaces will constitute the primary point of departure in order to track transmission and perception of travelling texts. In the introductions to the chapters of this dissertation, this methodological approach to the paratexts will be elaborated on to analyse specific forms of textual circulation.

Scholarship on various Islamicate textual traditions has shown the fruitfulness of reconstructing complex transtextual environments to achieve a historical understanding of a text. S. Leder offered a case study on how notes on manuscripts document the social practice of transmission and how these may contribute to an understanding of a manuscript's main text (*matn*).¹¹¹ By concentrating on Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's contribution to the Islamicate commentary tradition, the *Fatḥ al-bārī*, J. Blecher analysed the political and social circumstances which framed the composition of such commentaries beyond normative preconceptions.¹¹² A plurality of perspectives that cross-link the participation of students in al-ʿAsqalānī's composition, the relationship with his patrons and rivalries with scholars illuminate the various social contingencies in the significances linked to a text. With respect to the genre of *ḥadīth* compilations, S. Mourad and J. Lindsay provided a meticulous study of Ibn ʿAsākir's *The Forty Hadiths for Inciting Jihad* by building up a multi-intertextual environment.¹¹³ Other than the author's background, the textual tradition and historical context, it is the close reading of the manuscript notes, in particular the various colophons and ownership statements on the extant copy of the singular unique manuscript, which helps to determine the impact of this work and the respective social environments.¹¹⁴ Recent

¹⁰⁸ Görke/Hirschler 2011.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹¹ Leder 2011: 59, 62-72.

¹¹² Blecher 2013: 264.

¹¹³ Mourad/Lindsay 2013.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 82-99.

work on different manuscript corpora and library collections in the Middle East by T. Heinzlmann, B. Liebrecht and K. Hirschler has repeatedly shown that expanding the textual genres of inquiry in combination with subtle readings of manuscript notes can grant access to more complex understandings of social and cultural histories of libraries and reading communities.¹¹⁵

Importantly for the current purpose, paratextual profiles shed light on different social and cultural significances that were attached to travelling texts and how they changed over time. Colophons, prefaces, ownership notes, seals, reading notes, transmission statements and other marginalia provide a record of the movement, perusal and enactment of texts on a manuscript. They document how people made use of the manuscript and its inscribed texts and thereby offer a view on how a text was disseminated and read among changing audiences, the functions it could have in a community and on the different historical meanings that were attributed to it. Significantly, by looking at the reproduction and transmission of texts over a longer period of time it becomes possible to discover singular uses as well as to discern patterns in their circulation. A wider contextualisation of changing patterns can then provide a view on diachronic change in the dissemination of texts, frameworks of transmission, cultural practices of manuscript perusal and the social composition of readership audiences. Texts produced different significances along various pathways of their circulation and important cases of this variety will be introduced and studied separately in the chapters of this dissertation. Since each chapter presents a specific perspective on histories of circulation, the methodological approach will be refined and focused at the beginning of each chapter to offer a methodological variation to the main approach discussed here.

A transoceanic arena of manuscript circulation as a *field of cultural production*

In order to link textual practices of Islamicate texts to their social world, Bourdieu's notion of *the field of cultural production* can provide for a heuristic framework. His concept can interrelate the production, transmission and interpretive local reading of Islamicate texts through the intertextual nature of these cultural processes.¹¹⁶ This abstraction is understood as a 'radical contextualization' which focuses on the 'set of social conditions of the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods' (i.e.

¹¹⁵ See Heinzlmann 2015, Liebrecht 2016 and Hirschler 2016.

¹¹⁶ Bourdieu 1993.

Islamicate texts) by including all constituents of the process at the same time.¹¹⁷ As a theory it redefines the analytical category of intertextuality by ultimately relating the study of texts to the structure of their field and its agents, providing an overall relational framework for the suggested investigation of the material and symbolic production, dissemination and perception of Islamicate texts.¹¹⁸ However, while the thematic scope of a text will be considered, in this project the production of texts will not be understood in terms of assembling a history of ideas as the background to a literary composition. Instead the research will focus on the afterlife of a text and how meaning was produced in the course of its circulation, signified by various social and cultural environments.

Departing from the tripartite conceptual formulation of Bourdieu's field of cultural production and the overlapping and commensurable cultural zones across the Western Indian Ocean this study will have to analyse the movement and itineraries of transregional agents as they correspond to and complement textual exchange. This venue of investigation will be pursued along the lines of prosopographical studies mainly based on the biographical dictionaries from the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which will reveal scholarly networks, their participants, workings and spatial dimensions connecting the Arab Middle East, the Hijaz and Islamicate South Asia.¹¹⁹ Important examples are the extensive works composed by al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) during the Mamlūk period,¹²⁰ and the compendia of al-Fāsī (d. 832/1429) in the case of the Hijaz,¹²¹ and a compilation of biographies and important events for Islamicate South Asia in the sixteenth century by 'Abd al-Qādir b. Shaykh al-'Aydārūs (d. 1036/1627).¹²² E. Ohlander, in particular, demonstrated in a study of prosopographical materials relating to the Sufi Shaykh Bahā' al-Dīn Zakarīyā of Multān how 'encoding memory in culturally relevant terms' can grant access to hagiographical accounts for the analysis of transregional networks.¹²³ For the critical analysis of these biographical compilations M. Cooperson presents a general account on their *modus operandi* and conceptual framework.¹²⁴ K. Hirschler provides a survey concerning their encyclopaedic elaboration in the Ayyubid and Mamlūk period, stressing a potential of

¹¹⁷ Johnson 1993: 9-11.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹¹⁹ The entries in these biographical compilations often list academic acquaintances (*mashyakha*) and writings, which will have to be cross-checked in order to reconstruct scholarly relationships.

¹²⁰ Cf. al-Sakhāwī 1934-37.

¹²¹ Cf. Meloy 2010: 25-31. See al-Fāsī, 1959-69.

¹²² Cf. Löfgren 2013. See al-'Aydārūs 2001.

¹²³ Cf. Ohlander 2012: 43-44.

¹²⁴ Cf. Cooperson 2000 and 2005.

these texts that goes beyond their use as ‘repositories of social and or cultural facts’.¹²⁵ Simultaneously, they signify historical agents and articulate ‘intersubjective cultural patterns.’¹²⁶

Relating to the performative aspects of such biographical works, E. Ho provided a specific case study that looked at the interrelation of mobile people and their texts. His analysis of itinerant Ḥaḍramī groups focused on the corpus of their diasporic literature.¹²⁷ By simultaneously following the movement of Ḥaḍramī *sayyids* over several centuries across the Indian Ocean and closely reading their ‘hybrid’ texts that combine annalistic history and genealogy, Ho was able to show how diasporic space is constituted in textual composition.¹²⁸ These *sayyids* created a transregional sacred geography for their community through the continued articulation of their prophetic descent as prophetic genealogy.¹²⁹ Thus, these transregional people interpreted and inscribed the cultural meaning of their religious and diasporic identity within these literary works. This exemplifies how circulating texts in general, and transregional biographical works in particular, can be examined with respect to their significance as agents in historical processes.

These prosopographical materials interpret socio-cultural relationships among individuals and groups, an aspect which makes them suitable for the study of networks in their historically contingent transregional dimension. A volume edited by R. Loimeier introduces current academic venues that use a qualitative network approach in order to explain correlations and transactional activities between individuals, groups and institutions.¹³⁰ Although the analysis of networks mainly serves as a heuristic equipment for qualitative research, it can make micro-structures clear in their global correlation.¹³¹ In a compilation of essays on *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop*, M. Cooke and B. Lawrence introduce the notion of networks as ‘similar to institutionalized social relations [...] connected across recognized boundaries’.¹³² With Arabic and Persian as *linguae francae* they contend the elite character of ‘premodern networks’

¹²⁵ Hirschler argues that compositional features of biographical dictionaries can give insights as to how their information was conceptualised at the time. Hirschler 2013: 166, 175-180. This might in turn reveal how networks were perceived. Additionally, cf. Hirschler 2011a for the idea of using ‘reading certificates’ of manuscripts as prosopographical sources.

¹²⁶ Hirschler 2013.

¹²⁷ Cf. Ho 2006.

¹²⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 116-118.

¹²⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 128-130.

¹³⁰ Cf. Harders 2000: 19-26.

¹³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 18.

¹³² Cf. Cooke/Lawrence 2005: 1.

and underscore the importance of looking at how networks opened up spaces of contestation and flows of knowledge.¹³³ According to them, ‘networked exchanges reinforce established norms and orthodoxies even as they submit them to constant scrutiny and challenge’.¹³⁴ This ‘connective epistemology’ ‘pluralizes individuals’ and offers a perspective on a ‘multiplicity of contexts’.¹³⁵ These issues are important for the consideration of historical continuity as well as the change of networks and how this was determined by different forces such as the agency of transregional actors.

In sum, this project contributes a new historical perspective on the complex and different ways in which Arabic functioned across the Middle East and South Asia. In the multilingual environment of early modern South Asia, its importance as a transregional idiom increased. More significantly, the Western Indian Ocean became ever more integrated along such an Arabic cultural connection. Apart from narrative and normative sources, the manuscript notes as well as the tracing of histories of circulation make it possible to dig deeper and study conditions and workings of this integrated transoceanic field of cultural production. This field was sustained through learned pursuits and textual transactions in the circulation of Islamicate texts. It was entangled with the Persian idiom, but academic transactions were conducted in Arabic. It followed the flows of trade and courtly patronage, but it had multiple rationales of its own. More importantly, it encompassed a larger community of scholars, scribes, Sufis, sultans and slaves, who all engaged with texts and manuscripts in different and changing ways over time.

Lines of argumentation and chapterisation

Building on these different venues of research the following set of interrelated questions will structure the approach of this study. What Islamicate texts were disseminated across the Islamicate cultures of the fifteenth to seventeenth century Western Indian Ocean region? How was this transmission of texts conducted and which groups were crucial in this form of cultural exchange? What significance was attached to these Islamicate texts in their respective socio-cultural environments and how were they consumed or enacted in a way that produced a specific meaning in their subsequent social and cultural contexts? How can these aspects of textual exchange contribute to an understanding of local cultural processes and their transregional

¹³³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 5-9.

¹³⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 9.

¹³⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 27.

dimension in the sense of a historically contingent Arabic cultural connection that linked communities in their cultural practices across the Western Indian Ocean?

While advancing the thesis of a multi-layered Arabic connection across the Western Indian Ocean during the early modern period, my dissertation interrelates three lines of argumentation. Firstly, a diachronic perspective indicates a pluralisation of Islamicate texts across the Western Indian Ocean from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Itinerant scholars developed new textual formats and narrative strategies to render their texts mobile among a growing transregional audience. Secondly, the analysis of the manuscript versions exhibits a differentiation in cultural practices of Arabicised communities who peruse these texts. Islamicate texts circulated in various social contexts, from courts to mosques and other learned sociabilities according to specific frameworks of text transmission, which changed over time. Thirdly, this cultural differentiation is mirrored in a social diversification of the communities among whom these texts circulated. By the seventeenth century a broader readership across the subcontinent participated in these textual practices and their motivations go beyond religious and high scholarly pursuits and have to be understood within the context of newly emerging professional scribal groups in this period.

A specific historiographical elaboration will set the scene for each chapter, which will then provide different perspectives on Arabic histories of circulation and cultural exchange. The arguments will be elaborated as follows: **(Chapter 1)** The dissertation sets out with a delineation of an emerging Arabicised cultural connection between Egypt, the Hijaz and Yemen with Gujarat and the Deccan. This will be based on narrative and normative sources as well as the *Arabic History corpus* of manuscripts. A close reading of Arabic biographical works from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries reveals an intensification of transoceanic connections in terms of people who travelled for learned pursuits across this transregional space. I argue that the sixteenth century witnessed the proliferation of Arabic history writing across Western India, and thereby the emergence of an Arabic historiography that focuses on the Western Indian Ocean building on previous models from the Red Sea region. By the seventeenth century scholars began to imagine this transoceanic Arabic connection as a culturally commensurable space. **(Chapter 2)** The case study of the fifteenth century scholar Muḥammad al-Damāmīnī's transregional peregrinations and academic transactions will then provide a micro-historical perspective on scholarly and textual mobility. Looking at the changing composition of al-Damāmīnī's social networks based on

narrative texts will highlight the importance of courtly patronage and access to scholarly sociabilities, which shaped his textual compositions while travelling. These compositions will be studied based on their different manuscript versions from the *al-Damāmīnī corpus*. Through the analysis of changing frameworks of textual transmission, I will exemplify a form of mobile Arabic transregional scholarship. **(Chapter 3)** The unique royal collection from the Deccan, the *Bijapur corpus*, which today survives among the holdings of the British library, can offer a view on forms of courtly, scholarly, and local circulation. The entanglement of these different spheres demonstrates the changing social uses and cultural significances attached to Arabic Islamicate texts in an Indo-Persian environment, highlighting the function of the library as a *cultural entrepôt*, a place which served the preservation, reading and copying of manuscripts through in- and outgoing texts. The transformation of this royal library into an educational institution during the seventeenth century provides a view on the growing participation of a broader social group in the studying of texts in situ. **(Chapter 4)** Conditions of human and textual mobility will then be examined based on the transoceanic proliferation of *al-Damāmīnī*'s grammar commentaries from the Deccan to Istanbul, on the basis of the *al-Damāmīnī corpus*. This will make it possible to identify changing patterns in the circulation of Arabic manuscripts, the emergence of new textual formats and layouts, forms of reading and their expansion into scholarly sociabilities. The emergence of new paratextual elements such as tables of contents point to larger transformations in studying strategies which can be linked empirically from the Red Sea region to the Deccan. **(Chapter 5)** A study of three corpora of Arabic philological manuscripts from the Deccan (*Deccan corpus*) forms the basis for a twofold diachronic argument: the intensification of manuscript circulation across seventeenth century South Asia, and the related rise of Arabic philology as a cultural practice that linked South Asia with the wider Western Indian Ocean region. A historical view on manuscript circulation sheds light on the variety of reproduced texts, which created changing Islamicate textual canons over time. New textual practices become evident in the modulation of manuscripts that consolidated Arabic philology as a significant field of scholarly pursuits in South Asia. Finally, this line of argumentation takes into account the rise of new scribal groups and the diversification of Arabised communities who participated in textual practices. Arabic philology became locally engrained into the multilingual landscape of South Asia and thereby exemplifies a long-term process of cultural exchange with the wider world of the Western Indian Ocean region.

Chapter 1 – Cultural connections through circulation – The emerging *Arabic cosmopolis* across the Western Indian Ocean, 15th-17th centuries

Oceans divide continents, but they also connect their shores. Studies of the early modern Western Indian Ocean region have highlighted the multi-layered configuration of networks, connections and exchanges that spanned its waters.¹³⁶ Spices were traded from Malabar to Yemen with the eventual terminus in Cairo.¹³⁷ Trade went hand in hand with political ambitions and both created crucial dynamics across a sea of exchanges otherwise so determined by the monsoon.¹³⁸ Slaves from East Africa were shipped across the Ocean to serve in the armies of the subcontinent.¹³⁹ Muslim pilgrims from around the Indian Ocean basin and beyond congregated in the Hijaz for the annual *ḥajj*.¹⁴⁰ The story of the Western Indian Ocean is multifaceted with regards to its historical processes and prone to partial analysis since its sheer scope defies an all-encompassing narrative. Instead of a *histoire totale*, recently formulated agendas of research into a ‘new thalassology’ have identified ‘the spread of ideas and practices’ as one among many promising future pathways of research.¹⁴¹ Historical studies – for example Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic* – have stressed specific political, economic, social and cultural activities that traversed oceans at a particular time.¹⁴² Similarly, ideas and practices were articulated and performed in changing socio-cultural transoceanic contexts.

The choice of language and idiom for cultural practices can be a crucial marker of belonging, social background and political aspirations. What is more, it is historically contingent. During the early modern period, Persian was one crucial transoceanic idiom of prestige.¹⁴³ The Persianate world was one dominant context across the Indian Ocean. Through Persian a diverse set of intellectual traditions from historiography to belles-lettres was articulated and described a ‘significant geography’ of cultural conduct from Southeast Asia to the Persian Gulf.¹⁴⁴ This fits into recent studies which

¹³⁶ Prange 2008, Vink 2007, Sivasundaram 2017.

¹³⁷ Prange 2011.

¹³⁸ Subrahmanyam 1992, Casale 2010, Prange 2018.

¹³⁹ Eaton 2010.

¹⁴⁰ Faroqhi 1994, Pearson 1996.

¹⁴¹ Vink 2007: 61.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 60. See for example Gilroy 1993.

¹⁴³ The field of early modern Persianate studies is vast. For this and the following cf. Alam et al. 2000, Alam 2004, Green 2012, Subrahmanyam 2012.

¹⁴⁴ The term ‘significant geography’ is taken from Francesca Orsini’s paper on “‘Significant geographies”, in lieu of “world” literature”, presented in Paris on 5th February, 2016. I thank her for

established a Persianate framework of most things cultural across the Western Indian Ocean region. M. Alam's examination of Persian *akhlāq* texts on ethics and statecraft in the context of adaptations of the *sharī'a* in the subcontinent implies the dissemination of political and cultural norms across the Persian Gulf region, Central Asia and Northern India.¹⁴⁵ At the same time, other parts of this Persianate world were linked to the Mughal realm of Northern India. Persian became the political language at Muslim courts throughout the medieval and early modern periods. Moreover, Persian was a crucial medium of transoceanic communication sustaining contacts between different communities across the early modern Indian Ocean world. Work on intra-Asian elite migration has demonstrated how Iranian groups combined the skills of trade and state-building to move between Iran and several courts in the Deccan during the seventeenth century.¹⁴⁶

The notion of an overarching cultural idiom that permeated and connected different spheres of human societies at particular times continued to inform further approaches. Recent scholarship has historicised the political and cultural role of idioms through the concept of *cosmopolis*.¹⁴⁷ As mentioned in the introduction, Sheldon Pollock initially used this term to interrogate the dominant transregional discourse in Sanskrit that shaped political and cultural formations in South Asia during the first millennium.¹⁴⁸ R. Ricci honed this concept further to argue for an *Arabic Cosmopolis* as 'a translocal Islamic sphere'.¹⁴⁹ Through this cosmopolitan framework of interaction she studied the percolation of Arabic into local contexts along processes of translation and religious conversion.¹⁵⁰

Thus, the Indian Ocean region accommodated a range of at times competing and at times complementing *cosmopoli*. Building on this research, I want to focus on the emergence of an Arabic cosmopolis that connected Egypt, the Ḥijāz and Yemen in the Red Sea region more intensively with Gujarat and the Deccan across the Sea through the practice of Arabic history writing. Arabic emerged as a significant idiom of scholarship and textual practices across the Western Indian Ocean during the fifteenth

allowing me to quote this as yet unpublished paper. For a recent assessment of Persianate studies cf. Kia/Marashi 2016.

¹⁴⁵ For this and the following cf. Alam 2004.

¹⁴⁶ Subrahmanyam 1992.

¹⁴⁷ Though this term *cosmopolis* is problematic because it can imply notions of cultural homogeneity, it nevertheless constitutes a useful concept to study the interactive spaces created by languages and to bring cultural practices across transregional contexts into conversation.

¹⁴⁸ Pollock, 2006:12-19.

¹⁴⁹ Ricci, 2011:4.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 13-17.

to early seventeenth centuries. While Arabic had served and continued to serve in commercial ventures, religious practices and literary exchanges for a long time,¹⁵¹ a host of connective transregional processes centred on Arabic as a cultural idiom from the Red Sea region to Western India in the early modern period. It was increasingly used as a scholarly idiom in mobile transoceanic contexts not only as a form of social communication, but to express the past of its cultural condition: a Western Indian Ocean Arabic historiography reflecting on the growing cultural connectedness in Arabic across its shores brought about through an increased mobility between its shores.



Map data: Google, My Maps

Map 1 – Arabic cultural connection across the early modern Western Indian Ocean – from Egypt to the Hijaz, Yemen and to Gujarat and the Deccan across the sea.

Building on previous transregional historical research, I will argue that, based on the intensification of transoceanic human and textual mobilities from the fifteenth century onwards, the sixteenth century witnessed the proliferation of Arabic history writing across Western India, and thereby an Arabic historiography emerged that focused on the Western Indian Ocean and built on previous models from the Red Sea region. By the late sixteenth century scholars began to imagine this transoceanic Arabic connection as a culturally commensurable space.

Over the medieval and early modern periods, the Red Sea region and the Western Indian coast were connected by various Arabic networks. For the thirteenth

¹⁵¹ Cf. Hourani/Carswell 1995.

century Elizabeth Lambourn has shown how ‘*khuṭba* networks’ (political allegiance expressed through the inclusion of a ruler’s name in the Friday prayer) emerged as formalised expressions of religious and political allegiance, which enabled smaller polities in Western India to sustain their own political autonomy by forging strong ties with the Rasūlid sultanate in Yemen.¹⁵² Importantly, she argues that these *khuṭba* networks developed along existing trading connections.¹⁵³ During the fourteenth century, culturally curious figures such as the well-known Ibn Battuta travelled across the Western Indian Ocean and explored a mobile world of learned endeavours that was shared with merchants, pilgrims and military slaves throughout these periods.¹⁵⁴ However, not only people travelled; texts were crucial for the creation of literary networks as well. In a recent study on the transmission of *The Book of One Thousand Questions* from Arabia, via South India to Southeast Asia, R. Ricci analyses the pertinent issues of translation and conversion linked to this Arabic text in its transregional dissemination with ‘tellings’ produced in Tamil, Malay and Javanese.¹⁵⁵ The overarching notion of the *Arabic cosmopolis* frames her view on the emergence of a shared canon of texts through the workings of literary networks from Arabia across South India to Southeast Asia during the early modern period.

More specifically for the current purpose, it is paramount to focus on how exchanges became concentrated in specific pockets of the Indian Ocean. Recurring circuits of movement describe the intensity of certain connections. E. Ho exemplified this in terms of an ‘Islamic ecumene’ with the rise of the Ḥaḍramī Sayyids, in particular the al-‘Aydarūs kinship group, as a mobile community within the fifteenth century reconfiguration of the Indian Ocean.¹⁵⁶ He relates this to intensified commercial activities, the realignment of trading networks that now centred on the Hijaz and Yemen, and the rise of new Muslim polities, such as the Gujarātī and the Bahmanī sultanate in the subcontinent. While they created a definitive locality of return through their place of burial of their eponymous ancestor – Tarīm in the Ḥaḍramawt – during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their social endeavours brought succeeding generations to India, East Africa and Indonesia. While doing so they created a corpus of Arabic texts, travelling texts which mirrored all the things that mattered for such highly exclusive and mobile communities: the tool of genealogy which accommodated

¹⁵² Lambourn 2008: 55-98.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Faroqhi 1994, Pearson 1996.

¹⁵⁵ Ricci 2011.

¹⁵⁶ For this and the following see Ho 2006: 99-105.

new family ties, courtly patronage in faraway places and learned affiliations through scholarly circles.

E. Ho's work provides a crucial starting point for the emergence of a Western Indian Ocean historiography in Arabic.¹⁵⁷ His seminal analysis of the diasporic texts, especially the *Nūr al-sāfir 'an akhbār al-qarn al-'āshir* by 'Abd al-Qādir al-'Aydarūs in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, emphasises two crucial points: on the one hand, how a scholar composed a social history of the sixteenth century Western Indian Ocean that was focused on learned interactions, but also incorporated the life-stories of its family members; on the other hand, how employing the centenary biographical dictionary as a model made manifest an intellectual genealogy that stretched from Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's *al-Durar al-kāmina* in the fourteenth century, via al-Sakhāwī's *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, to al-'Aydarūs. Thus, 'the shift in East-West trade routes, from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, [which] brought Hadramawt and Aden into greater contact with Egypt, the Hejaz, and India',¹⁵⁸ was paralleled by a spread in ideas and cultural practices in the Arabic idiom from the Red Sea region to Gujarat. As Ho argues, scholarly authorities were brought together under one umbrella in al-'Aydarūs' work, namely as a transoceanic community sharing a common canon of 'reference books' and the 'legal-educational curriculum' of the shāfi'ī *madhhab*.¹⁵⁹

The story from the perspective of the al-'Aydarūs extended family network and their texts is, however, only one partial way to tell it. While Ho stated 'a progressive intensification of contacts' from the thirteenth century onwards,¹⁶⁰ their cultural dimension and mobilities in Arabic have not been studied sufficiently. In the following, I will build on Ho's study to further explore socio-cultural configurations of the early modern Western Indian Ocean through Arabic mobilities. Departing from this, I will locate a crucial diachronic increase in connections with the beginning of the fifteenth century and study a more diverse corpus of Arabic historical works from both sides of the Sea – some of them previously studied for their own merit and others essentially untouched – to trace the emergence of an Arabic cosmopolis from the Red Sea region to Western India in which a larger group of mobile people participated.

In the following I will first set out to analyse and contextualise the fifteenth century mobile transoceanic world based on a narrative source – the biographical

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 116-125.

¹⁵⁸ Ho 2006: 99.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 120.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Ibid., 100.

dictionary *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi' li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi'* ('The brilliant light concerning the people of the ninth century') written by the Egyptian scholar Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) from the Red Sea region.¹⁶¹ In the sixteenth century the practice of Arabic history writing became more widespread across the regions from Malabar to the Deccan and Gujarat. Therefore, in a second step, I will focus on scholars and their biographical and historical texts, namely Zayn al-Dīn al-Malībārī's *Tuḥfat al-Mujāhidīn fī ba'd aḥwāl al-burtukāliyyīn* ('The gem of the proponents of Jihād concerning some of the news about the Portuguese') for Malabar, Ibn Shadqam al-Madanī's *Zahr al-riyāḍ wa-zulal al-ḥiyāḍ* ('The flower of the garden and the pure water of the cisterns') for the Deccan, Ḥājī al-Dabīr al-Ulughkhānī's, *Ẓafar al-wāliḥ bi-Muẓaffar wa ālihi* ('The victory of the fervent concerning Muẓaffar and his family') and 'Abd al-Qādir al-'Aydārūs' *al-Nūr al-sāfir 'an akhbār al-qarn al-'āshir* ('The unveiled light concerning the news about the tenth century') for Gujarat.¹⁶² All these texts exhibit significant cultural references to a historical past in the Red Sea region. Additionally, this will be substantiated on a documentary level with a cumulative analysis of the circulation of Arabic historical manuscripts from South Asia which are all concerned with the history of the Red Sea region. In a third step, I will bring this Arabic historical corpus into conversation with normative elements, i.e. geographical descriptions, in a late sixteenth century narrative work in Persian. Amīn Aḥmad Rāzī, a scholar from Safavid Iran, wrote the *Haft iqlīm* ('The seven climes'), in which he imagined the Arabic connection from the Persianate world. He thereby observed the entanglement of this Arabic connection with Persian exchanges.¹⁶³

This diverse historical corpus has not yet been considered in its accumulative significance, as pulsations of a transoceanic Arabic connection across the early modern Western Indian Ocean. I am not intending to offer a deeper narratological analysis of these historical works. Instead, I will link textual practices, mobile people and recurring places which appear as textual references across these sources. Based on G. Genette's work on palimpsests and paratexts these textual references can be understood as transtextual elements which signify each other through their recording across a multitude of sources and texts.¹⁶⁴ Relating such transtextual elements from different

¹⁶¹ Al-Sakhāwī 1934-37.

¹⁶² Al-Malībārī, MS IO Islamic 2807e, British Library, London. Ibn Shadqam al-Madanī, 3 vols, Vol I: Ms 269, National Library, Kolkata. Vol II: Ms 4428, Rampur Raza Library, Rampur, Vol III: Ms Delhi Arabic 1329, British Library, London; Ulughkhānī 1910, 1921, 1928; al-'Aydārūs 2001.

¹⁶³ Rāzī 1999.

¹⁶⁴ Genette 1982 and 1987.

sources on the same conceptual level makes it possible to trace a change over time in the historical significances that are produced by people, practices and places in their transoceanic interaction. Such thickly layered, and historically contingent empirical references describe socio-cultural modalities and historicise Arabic textual mobilities across the early modern Western Indian Ocean.

This chapter explores the emergence of an Arabic *cosmopolis* in history writing and learned pursuits across the Western Indian Ocean from the fifteenth to the early seventeenth centuries in three steps. Firstly, during the fifteenth century an Arabic cultural connection was forged by people who increasingly travelled for learned pursuits across this transregional space bringing the Red Sea region and Western India closer together on socio-cultural levels of interaction. Arabic integrated the early modern Western Indian Ocean as a scholarly idiom and thereby created textual mobilities across this transregional space. Secondly, the sixteenth century witnessed the emergence of an Arabic cosmopolis in the field of history writing that linked the Red Sea region and Western India. Heightened interactions led to the proliferation of Arabic historical works, composed by people who were themselves part of these transoceanic circulations. Arabic historical works were by then composed on both sides of the Western Indian Ocean. The pursuits in Arabic history writing in Gujarat and the Deccan make obvious the growing cultural connections and intellectual exchanges with the Red Sea region. While connections existed in earlier centuries as well, the significance of the sixteenth century developments lay in the changed historical consciousness through which this connection was reflected in the texts. They sketch the rise of a transoceanic Arabic historiography by the late sixteenth century. Learned personages whose scholarly pursuits and networks were characterised by transregional mobility began to narrate the past of different Muslim groups across these regions. At the same time there is evidence of a circulation of Arabic historical manuscripts across the subcontinent which are mainly concerned with the past of the Red Sea region. Thirdly, by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries observers from the Persian cosmopolis further north testified to a growing Arabic cultural connectedness between the Red Sea and Western India. In sum, a growing transoceanic commensurability of Arabic cultural practices can be traced across different narrative sources, normative elements and documentary notes on Arabic manuscripts in circulation.

The fifteenth-century intensification of transoceanic connections

From the fifteenth century onwards, the flow of people and texts intensified between the Red Sea region and Western India, circumstances which can be analysed by approaching the Arabic narrative sources in two ways. Firstly, it is important to look at the emergence of the historical texts as meaningful in itself, and secondly, to study their content, what they recorded and how they recorded it. Transregional Arabic biographical dictionaries offer crucial, albeit fragmentary perspectives that make it possible to trace forms of cultural connections and their various actors. The analysis presented here focuses on collective biographies which were composed across the fifteenth century Red Sea region and account for an increase in learned pursuits across the Sea. The individual biographical entries draw into relief recurring nodal points of the Western Indian Ocean where people conducted their scholarly transactions and thereby signifies a historically contingent cultural connection from Egypt via the Hijaz and Yemen to Western India.

An Arabic biographical dictionary is a text consisting of a narrative collection of biographical entries (*tarjama*, pl. *tarājim*) constituting the who is who of a certain region, generation, age or profession and sometimes all of this together. As a prosopographical account they are comparable to the *tadhkira*-genre, which was prominent in the Persianate worlds.¹⁶⁵ Scholarship on Arabic collective biographies is vast, especially for the early Islamic period.¹⁶⁶ Yet, studies for the early modern period are rather scarce. Studies on the later Mamlūk period have pointed to the historical significance of these works beyond fact mining approaches for social historical inquiries.¹⁶⁷ Although certain conventions developed of how such prosopographies could be structured, biographers had a considerable agency in framing the individual entries. This means that what they recorded and how they recorded it offers important clues about socio-cultural context and world-view of the author. As collective biographies, these narrative texts represent a valuable source for the social and cultural history of a given period and region.

The Hijaz, and Mecca in particular, surfaced as a transregional hub for learned endeavours and academic pursuits in the fifteenth century. The growing scholarly importance was closely linked with its holy places and pilgrimage sites as poles of attraction.¹⁶⁸ Scholars, students and ascetics from all over the Islamicate world came

¹⁶⁵ For a recent evaluation of *tazkiras* in the context of a social history of medieval Gujarat cf. Balachandran 2012: 74-83.

¹⁶⁶ See for example Cooperson 2000, Gibb 1962.

¹⁶⁷ For this historiographical critique cf. Hirschler 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Mortel 1997 and 1998.

here to study and exchange texts, to attend reading sessions and receive teaching certificates from their peers. At the same time, structural reconfigurations in the Indian Ocean trade routes contributed to Mecca's rise as a trading entrepôt and a multicultural contact zone for scholars.¹⁶⁹ These changes propelled a growing Meccan historiography, which bore witness to increased social interactions.¹⁷⁰ More significantly, the fifteenth-century historical writing was necessarily transregional in outlook. The historians al-Fāsī, al-Maqrīzī and al-Sakhāwī showed a great interest in scholarly migrants from the subcontinent.¹⁷¹ Generations of the Banū Fahd likewise observed commercial, political and scholarly exchanges between the Hijaz and South Asia.¹⁷² In general, scholars across Mamlūk Egypt and the Hijaz developed a greater awareness of the Islamicate worlds that lay across the Ocean.¹⁷³

Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī's (d. 1497) biographical dictionary *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi' li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi'* ('The brilliant light concerning the people of the ninth century') is paramount in this respect. It contains an enormous collection of biographical entries, primarily of learned men in the fields of religion and literature (and to a certain degree women), as well as some non-Muslims, who died in the ninth century *hijrī* (approximately the fifteenth century AD).¹⁷⁴ Al-Sakhāwī was well entrenched in the networks of *ḥadīth* (sayings of the prophet) scholarship in Mamlūk Egypt, having learned from the famous *muḥaddith* Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449).¹⁷⁵ He also pursued studies in the field of history writing (*ta'riḫh*), which again related to his interest in methods of transmitting prophetic traditions, and this is where the close relationship with his former teacher is most obvious.¹⁷⁶ Yet, al-Sakhāwī's biographical dictionary followed a broader conception – initially derived from both the fields of *ḥadīth* and *ta'riḫh* – but compiled to chart the scholarly track-record of a more diverse community. His version of a transoceanic social history could integrate a greater variety of personages because the times had changed from the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries.

The transregional aspect pertains to its horizontal and synchronic outlook covering a wide geographical range from the western hemisphere (*maghrib*) to the

¹⁶⁹ See Ibid and Meloy 2010.

¹⁷⁰ Meloy 2010: 24-26.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Bahl 2017: 249-256.

¹⁷² Cf. Meloy 2010: 28-30 and Alam/Subrahmanyam 2017: 274-280.

¹⁷³ Meloy 2010: 27-36 and Bahl 2017.

¹⁷⁴ Petry 2017 and Robinson 2003: 68.

¹⁷⁵ Rosenthal 2017a.

¹⁷⁶ Petry 2017 and Ho 2006: 119.

eastern (*mashriq*) end of the Islamic world. As al-Sakhāwī stated in the work's introduction, he dealt with prominent personages who hailed from Egypt, Syria, the Hijaz, Yemen, Rūm (Anatolia) and India.¹⁷⁷ To a great extent, al-Sakhāwī's sources for composition derive from the multiple pilgrimages and lengthy stays, learning and teaching in the contact zone of the Hijaz with Mecca and Medina as the important religious and scholarly centres. This was probably one of the intended side-effects of his sojourns in the Hijaz and this is where his account appears most subjective: because of what he could see, hear and read and who he could meet there. He became acquainted with scholars from across North Africa and the Indian Ocean, issued teaching certificates and assembled students of *ḥadīth*.¹⁷⁸

Previously, I argued that – compared with the fourteenth century – al-Sakhāwī's biographical dictionary testified to a social diversification and cultural pluralisation of Indian scholars who migrated and travelled to the Hijaz during the fifteenth century.¹⁷⁹ The historical trend can be characterised in two ways. Firstly, al-Sakhāwī could list a much larger and diverse group of high-standing scholars, learned figures, students, migrants, craftsmen and eunuchs who had moved from the subcontinent to the Red Sea region. Their travels to the Hijaz also did not primarily follow the purpose of pilgrimage, but they came to study and this is how al-Sakhāwī recorded them. Indians (*Hindīs*) also featured among his growing discipleship in the Hijaz. Thereby composers of these biographical dictionaries, like al-Sakhāwī, posited themselves at the centre of emerging transoceanic connections and inscribed themselves prominently into the social fabric of their biographical works.

Secondly, the rise of regional courts in fifteenth century South Asia multiplied academic career options and invigorated academic pursuits which led people to travel to the Hijaz.¹⁸⁰ This fostered the cultural practice of exchanging texts which guided the intellectual endeavours of these mobile scholarly figures. The detailed documentation of travelling scholars collecting knowledge pervades the biographical entries in al-Sakhāwī's work. It indicates a growing community of al-Hindīs migrating to the Hijaz in search of knowledge during the fifteenth century. Among them is, for example, Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Hindī, a Ḥanafī scholar who moved between Mecca, Egypt, Syria

¹⁷⁷ al-Sakhāwī 1934–1937: I/5.

¹⁷⁸ Petry 2017.

¹⁷⁹ This approach was further elaborated in Bahl 2017 and is summarised here to demonstrate that the empirical findings can provide the starting point for a different assessment.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

and Yemen to study with colleagues.¹⁸¹ Al-Sakhāwī recorded his academic transactions in such detail that, apart from the immediate teacher, he also stated the mode of knowledge transmission, the location and the granting of a specific certificate.

Apart from the increasing East to West movements, the authors of the fifteenth century also witnessed a growing flow of people from West to East. This diachronic change becomes apparent by comparing Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s *al-Durar al-kāmina* and al-Sakhāwī’s *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’* in terms of numbers. The *Durar al-kāmina* entails only four traders and five people who were simply recorded as travellers to al-Hind (South Asia).¹⁸² In contrast, the *Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’* brought together dozens of people who not only traded and travelled, but also those who ventured out to pursue their academic careers across the Ocean and receive patronage at different courts in South Asia.¹⁸³ The political fragmentation of the subcontinent over the course of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries can explain these transoceanic pull-factors.¹⁸⁴ The politically centralised order under the Delhi sultanate was succeeded by the rise of multiple regional sultanates. This regionalisation of political power had started in the middle of the fourteenth century with the emergence of the Bahmani kingdom in the Deccan, but gained pace after Timur Tamerlane’s conquest of Delhi in 1398, which also enticed several groups to leave the capital Delhi and seek refuge further south.¹⁸⁵ While Delhi’s symbolic political power was degraded, a new set of courts and centres of political patronage accompanied a distinct regionalisation of political power from Gujarat, across Malwa, Jaunpur and further on to Bengal.¹⁸⁶ Provincial towns were transformed into courts, which began to attract and compete for service elites, artists and scholars.

Al-Sakhāwī was aware of this regionalisation of political power across the South Asian subcontinent. He mentioned scholars and travellers from South Asia not only as Indians – al-Hindī – anymore. This was the case until the fourteenth century in al-‘Asqalānī’s biographical work *al-Durar al-kāmina*, which named a few South Asian personages, who were all characterised as al-Hindī.¹⁸⁷ In contrast, al-Sakhāwī gave some

¹⁸¹ Al-Sakhāwī 1934-1937: III/137-138.

¹⁸² See respectively al-‘Asqalānī: I/401-402, III/186, III/268, VI/9 and V/150, V/227, V/346, V/509, VI/234.

¹⁸³ A search for the term al-Hind accumulates a large array of biographical entries of traders, but especially scholars. Since space is limited, only a few case studies can be presented on the following pages.

¹⁸⁴ Schimmel 1980: 36-74.

¹⁸⁵ Alam/Subrahmanyam 2007: 48-54.

¹⁸⁶ Asher/Talbot 2006: 85. For studies on the emergence of these regional states see, for example, Sheikh 2010 and Eaton 1993 and 2005.

¹⁸⁷ For example, al-‘Asqalānī: II/315,

of them local and regional affiliations (*nisbas*), which marked where they came from initially and how they related to a particular place. These *nisbas* corresponded to the emerging of courts and sultanates of the fifteenth century, their realms and major cities. Accordingly, he listed travellers and migrants with *nisbas* such as al-Aḥmadābādī for Ahmedabad and al-Kanba'yatī for Cambay in the realm of the sultans of Gujarat and al-Dakkanī for someone from the Deccan and al-Kulbarjī for people from the Bahmanī capital of Gulbarga.¹⁸⁸ At the same time, traders and learned scholars who travelled to al-Hind during the fifteenth century mainly turned towards these newly emerging centres across the Western half of the subcontinent. Biographical entries abound which refer to Calicut on the Malabar coast, Cambay in Gujarat and Gulbarga in the Deccan.¹⁸⁹

A survey of the biographical entries in al-Sakhāwī's work brings to the fore a more diverse community related to al-Hind. Scholars and learned figures with their academic practices increasingly joined traders to venture across the Ocean. Thus, an intensification in transregional connections is also sustained by a broader community from the Red Sea region. One example is 'Abd al-Raḥman who was 'originally from Egypt' (*al-miṣrī al-aṣl*) but then moved to Mecca, hence al-Makkī al-Shāfi'ī, and was known within a larger community as Ibn Zakīy.¹⁹⁰ His studies brought him to Cairo and he travelled to the subcontinent 'more than once' (*ghayra marratin*). While his biographical entry emphasises his transregional mobility, scholarly transactions are central to these pursuits. He studied al-Bukhārī (without doubt the canonical *ḥadīth* collection *al-ṣaḥīḥ*) with al-Sakhāwī both 'as a reader and as a participant in reading sessions' (*mā bayna qirā'atan wa samā'an*). He copied some of al-Sakhāwī's compositions (*taṣānīf*) and received a certificate of transmission (*ijāza*) from him. Similarly, Muḥammad Ṣaḥṣāḥ, who was also in direct contact with al-Sakhāwī, travelled to Syria and Palestine, resided in Mecca and from there travelled to al-Hind in the year 894/1489.¹⁹¹ His academic transactions are listed as defining elements of his persona in the *tarjama*.

More and more scholarly figures from the Red Sea region began to integrate sojourns across South Asia into their careers and considered teaching possibilities at the various courts. The Banū Fahd are an example both for their sustained contributions to an Arabic historiography in the Hijaz and their commercial and scholarly pursuits across the subcontinent over several generations.¹⁹² Famous for their

¹⁸⁸ Al-Sakhawī 1934-1937: III/222-223, III/232, IV/210, VI/160-161, X/156, X/203.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., IV/321, V/57, V/135, V/145, VI/97, VI/183.

¹⁹⁰ For this and the following Ibid., IV/64.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Ibid., II/187-188.

¹⁹² Meloy 2010: 28-30.

learning in matters of Islamic law (*fiqh*), they also composed several histories, especially *dhuyūl* (sg. *dhayl*, literally meaning ‘continuations, recensions’) of fifteenth-century works such as al-Fāsī’s biographical dictionary of Mecca.¹⁹³ With their transgenerational prosopographical accounts they inscribed themselves prominently in the developments of local historiography of the Hijaz during this period.¹⁹⁴ Several of their family members crossed the Indian Ocean to conduct business in conjunction with learned matters in al-Hind.¹⁹⁵ Later generations stayed in the subcontinent for some time but eventually ventured back “home” to the Hijaz. For example, al-Taqī al-Hāshimī al-Makkī, who was born in 841/1437 in Calicut on the Malabar Coast, moved with his father from the subcontinent to the Hijaz, where he established his residence.¹⁹⁶ The Banū Fahd were able to locate themselves at the nexus of these networks that linked al-Hind and the Red Sea region.

Through these intensified exchanges the significance of various places becomes validated anew. Al-Hind was not only a place where business and trade could be conducted, but also a place where scholarly pursuits were rewarded and where courtly patronage offered an academic perspective. By the fifteenth century, al-Hind had become a career option for scholars who were looking for academic posts. For example, Shaʿbān b. Muḥammad, was born in Egypt and travelled to Yemen as a poet offering his literary skills to the local dynasty.¹⁹⁷ The *aʿyān* (‘notables’) of the court welcomed him among their ranks but inevitably his criticism of them led to his fall from grace and he ventured further to al-Hind. There he gained repute and was honoured during a two-year stay. Similarly, the Egyptian scholar Muḥammad al-Damāmīnī (d. 828/1424) made his way from Egypt, via the Hijaz to Yemen and then further on to al-Hind.¹⁹⁸ He received patronage from several sultans, both in Gujarat and the Bahmanī realm, in exchange for the composition of grammar commentaries. Al-Sakhāwī recorded the learned figure Aḥmad b. al-Najm, known as Ibn Marjānī.¹⁹⁹ He went to Mecca and from there travelled to al-Hind, establishing himself in Cambay in Gujarat. There he read prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*) to the sultan, who rewarded him for this, before his death in 867/1462.

¹⁹³ Ibn Fahd 2004.

¹⁹⁴ Meloy 2010: 28–30, Ibn Fahd 1983, Ibn Fahd 2005.

¹⁹⁵ Meloy 2017.

¹⁹⁶ Al-Sakhāwī 1934–1937: IV/70–71.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, III/300ff.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, VII/184–185.

¹⁹⁹ Al-Sakhawī 1934–1937: II/105.

The increase of scholarly migrations across the *baḥr al-hind* also created a transoceanic communicational sphere. Scholars, students, traders and so forth kept each other informed about the events of the day and this newsfeed also found its way into the biographical dictionaries. Such forms of communication persisted further into the sixteenth century, as a recent analysis by M. Alam and S. Subrahmanyam of a historical work by a member of the Banū Fahd, Jārullāh, has shown.²⁰⁰ The intensity of the flow of information across this communicational sphere cannot be discerned based on the available fragmentary and subjective biographical accounts and is probably a far cry from later eighteenth-century constellations.²⁰¹ Still, it indicates a substantial exchange of knowledge between learned migrants, traders and officials and therefore an increasing awareness of the worlds beyond the Sea. This transregional community followed the news of transoceanic travels and kept its people on both shores informed about the fate of its members. For example, the scholar Rājīḥ al-Aḥmadābādī from Gujarat made inquiries into the biography of al-Damāmīnī, who had gained prominence as a grammarian in Gujarat and the Deccan by the late fifteenth century.²⁰² This was presumably intended to check the scholarly credentials of a scholar who had risen to fame at the new South Asian courts. Al-Sakhāwī also referred to ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Hindī al-Wā‘iz, ‘the preacher’, who roamed the countries from East to West.²⁰³ These included al-Hind, the Yemen and the Hijaz, where he studied *ḥadīth* with different scholars. He resided in Mecca in 834/1430 and travelled to Egypt. In Jerusalem, he attended a *majlis* (‘gathering’) on *al-wa‘z* (the art of ‘the sermon’). He is characterised as eloquent, of good manners and knowledgeable. On his return trip to al-Hind he drowned in the Indian Ocean, a fact which al-Sakhāwī records with the introduction *balaghanā* (‘it reached us’). Al-Sakhāwī can list several of these casualties and commemorates them in his work.²⁰⁴

The fifteenth century witnessed the intensified use of a pre-existing transoceanic pathway. However, the socio-cultural incentives of its transoceanic travellers were new. Both the compositional perspective and the profile of the collective biographies mark the interconnectedness of Egypt, the Hijaz and Yemen across the Red Sea region, and Gujarat, the Deccan and the Malabar coast along the

²⁰⁰ Alam/Subrahmanyam 2017. Recent scholarship has studied the larger socio-cultural implications of these early modern informational flows. Cf. Ghobrial 2013.

²⁰¹ Cf. Sood 2009.

²⁰² Al-Sakhāwī 1934-1937: III/222-223.

²⁰³ For this and the following *ibid.*, IV/103.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, VI/107 and VI/183.

Western shores of the subcontinent with regard to people who travel for learned pursuits. They indicate a diachronic change from the fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries and describe transoceanic itineraries which repeatedly traverse the same places across the Western Indian Ocean. In their clustered form, they create a transregional space of circulation based on a record of academic practices. They increasingly included academic pursuits beyond commercial and religious activities pursued by grand scholars as well as learned newcomers.

The sixteenth-century proliferation of Arabic historical writing in South Asia

Over the course of the sixteenth century learned ventures across the Western Indian Ocean took on a wider dimension. Highly mobile scholars began to use the Arabic idiom to inscribe themselves in the historiographical landscapes of South Asian communities while forging intertextual connections with the Islamicate cultures of Arabic history writing across the Red Sea region. They composed biographical works and chronicles which borrowed from both the Arabic model of collective biographies as well as the elaborate forms of Persian history writing in the subcontinent. Scholars with an affiliation to the courts in Gujarat and the Deccan, reflected on the rise of these regions as politically meaningful entities. At the same time, they used Arabic to reflect on the history of events and communities within the Western Indian Ocean region and thereby integrated the history of this region into a transoceanic Arabic historiography.

This proliferation of Arabic historical writing was the outcome of a wider transregional diffusion of Arabic scholars, their networks and mobilities, which had taken off in the fifteenth and continued during the sixteenth century. Arabic scholarship had been an integral part of medieval Islamicate court cultures and their learned spaces across Gujarat and the Deccan. For example, the sixteenth century historian Firishta of the Deccan referred to the establishment of *madāris* (sg. *madrassa*), ‘institutions of higher learning’, across the Bahmanī realm (14th-15th c.) to promote both Persian and Arabic for the teaching of a diverse set of Islamicate subjects.²⁰⁵ Various Arabic scholars contributed to the flourishing learned culture at the court of the Gujarati sultans.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, as the recent meticulous research by J. Balachandran has shown, learned groups beyond the courts in fifteenth century Gujarat employed both Arabic and Persian in their textual traditions.²⁰⁷ Thereby they anchored growing

²⁰⁵ Ansari 1988: 494-499.

²⁰⁶ Sheikh 2010: 205-206.

²⁰⁷ Cf. Balachandran 2012.

Muslim communities in a spiritual geography, erudite Islamicate tradition and sacred geography.

In contrast, I argue that the spread of Arabic historical writing during the sixteenth century had a broader transoceanic dimension. Arabic historical texts from Malabar to Deccan and Gujarat are of special significance because they transcend courtly and regional contexts to engage with the past of transregional communities. At the same time, these texts complemented a diverse Persian historiography that had taken shape over the medieval period and provided the form and means in a widely accepted transregional courtly idiom.²⁰⁸ Persian universal chronicles and histories played a central role at courts from the Mughal North, across the Deccan and further south to the principalities of South India.²⁰⁹ The elite groups at courts in the subcontinent and the wider Persianate world constituted the main audiences of these works.²¹⁰

Precedents from the fifteenth century exemplify that Arabic was used as a transregional medium of inter-courtly communication next to Persian. Maḥmūd Gāwān is a prime example.²¹¹ He was a merchant from Gīlān in Iran and arrived on the Konkan coast on the Western Indian shores in the middle of the fifteenth century. From these shores his combined intentions to pay his respects to the Sufi Shaykh at the Bahmani capital at Bidar and the sale of Arabian horses ultimately led him into the highest echelons of the Bahmani Empire. Before his arrival Bahmani sultans had already put a lot of effort into recruiting socio-cultural elites from the Persianate lands to the West to staff the administration. Strengthening this trend, Maḥmūd Gāwān's collection of Persian letters, *Riyāz al-Inshā'*, written while he was a chief minister at the Bahmanī court, were similarly meant to consolidate personal networks and lure literati from the Persian Gulf region to the realm of the Bahmanīs in the Deccan.²¹² His addressees included scholars, poets, religious dignitaries and sultans from regions in India, Iran and the Red Sea region. A closer look at the letters reveals the parallel use of Arabic for some of his correspondence. One letter at least was addressed to the sultan of Cairo and written in standard Arabic.²¹³ Persian was not an exclusive transregional idiom. Arabic functioned in similar ways with a connection to the Red Sea region. Thus,

²⁰⁸ For example, see Hardy 1960.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Hardy 1960, Conermann 2002, Nārāyanarāvu [et. al] 2001.

²¹⁰ Fischel 2015: 71-95.

²¹¹ For this and the following cf. Eaton 2005: 59-60.

²¹² For this and the following cf. Gāwān 1948. For a recent analysis of 'friendship' as constituted in the epistolary practices cf. Flatt 2017.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 376-377.

it seems possible to argue for a transoceanic Arabic connection spanning the Red Sea and Western India that complemented and at times intersected with the Persianate cosmopolis.

An accumulative view on the transoceanic history writing exercises during the sixteenth century suggests that Arabic was a conscious choice, based on the integration of scholars into transregional Arabic networks and mobilities. Their historical works were the product of intellectual traditions which featured prominently in the exchanges between Western India and the Red Sea region, and here again especially with the Hijaz.²¹⁴ The emergence of such historical works has to be correlated with the unfolding of the fifteenth century intensification of transoceanic connections. At the same time, such exchanges continued during the sixteenth century, as is evident from Jārullāh b. Fahd's history written in Mecca, which reports the comings and goings of courtly embassies, precious cargo and 'savant-migrants'.²¹⁵ In addition, the use of Arabic as a language of historical inquiry and representation is significant, because it signals a deeper entrenchment of Arabic into local communities across South Asia. Parts of these communities would have featured among the audiences of these works, turning Arabic into an idiom beyond the study of Islamic subjects. In the following, I will present cases of Arabic history writing from different regions of the South Asian subcontinent.

Malabar

The transregional spread of Arabic history writing can be traced across the regions of Western India. For the sixteenth century South Indian region of Malabar, the work *Tuḥfat al-Mujāhidīn fī ba'd aḥwāl al-burtukāliyyīn* ('The gem of the proponents of Jihād concerning some of the conditions of the Portuguese') is important.²¹⁶ Zayn al-Dīn al-Ma'barī al-Malībārī, on whom biographical information is scarce, composed it during the second half of the sixteenth century.²¹⁷ It consists of four sections: the first is a compilation of prophetic traditions with stipulations about *jihād*, the second an account of the spread of Islam in Malabar, and the third concerns the customs of the non-Muslim inhabitants of Malabar. These three parts function as an introduction to the fourth part: the 'account of the proceedings of the Portuguese' from the time of their

²¹⁴ This argument was developed with regard to the al-'Aydārūs biographical work of the sixteenth century in Ho 2006.

²¹⁵ Cf. Alam/Subrahmanyam 2017: 286-290.

²¹⁶ Cf. al-Malībārī MS IO Islamic 2807e, London. Ibid. 1833.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 1833: vii-xvi.

arrival in 1498 to 1579.²¹⁸ Scholarship over the last decades has repeatedly made use of this narrative source to study the military conflict of Malabarī polities with the Portuguese during the sixteenth century, the competition over the Indian Ocean spice trade, as well as forms of conversion and the spread of Islam across South India.²¹⁹ Most recently, Prange edited an English translation of a text from South India which bears a strong intertextual relationship with al-Malībārī's narrative, indicating a wide transcultural circulation of his text in South India.²²⁰ While Malabar was closely linked with the wider Red Sea region through trade and scholarly networks, it is nonetheless difficult to locate al-Malībārī within these activities.²²¹

Instead, his choice of language can be explained based on the historical significances of Arabic within his wider socio-cultural setting. For the recompilation of prophetic traditions on *jihād* in the first part of the introduction Arabic seemed to be the natural choice predetermined by the genre of *ḥadīth*. While his historical narrative has to be considered in its own right, his choice to compose the historical sections in Arabic was then probably a logical continuation. The use of Arabic for the composition of his historical work marks the close relationship Malabar already had and continued to have with regions and societies across the Sea to Yemen and the Hijaz in one direction and to Southeast Asia in the other direction.²²² Malabar was an important contributor to the Indian Ocean spice trade, a crucial crossing point for travellers and traders coming from West or East and therefore central to the networks of the wider Indian Ocean.²²³

At the same time, the choice of Arabic also made sense in the complex political setting of the sixteenth century Western Indian Ocean. Al-Malībārī stated his political purpose in writing this work in its introduction.²²⁴ He aimed to unite a hitherto allegedly inactive group of Muslim states from around the Western Indian Ocean to defeat the Portuguese invaders of Malabar. The political history of the early modern Indian Ocean provides a necessary context to explain the emergence of this historical text.²²⁵ The Portuguese had entered the Indian Ocean as competitors to the lucrative trade in spices from Malabar to Egypt. However, their combined military and

²¹⁸ Ibid. MS IO Islamic 2807e, London, fol. 113v

²¹⁹ Cf. Dale 1980, Prange 2011a, Ho 2009: 403-408, respectively.

²²⁰ Prange 2017.

²²¹ The introduction to a new edition of the work sadly does not back up claims of Zayn al-Dīn's transregional exploits and contacts across the Red Sea region. See Nainar 2006: xix-xxi.

²²² Cf. Ricci 2010.

²²³ Cf. Prange 2011 and Ho 2006: 101-103.

²²⁴ Cf. al-Malībārī, MS IO Islamic 2807e, London.

²²⁵ Cf. Ho 2006: 100-103.

commercial ventures were complemented by Ottoman expansionism into the Indian Ocean. G. Casale recently argued that Portuguese and Ottoman ‘discoveries’ of the Indian Ocean both built on similar interests in access to the spice trade.²²⁶ This was accompanied by the expression of similar notions of Universal Empire.²²⁷ The Ottoman conquest of Egypt and the Hijaz was therefore part of a larger strategy to take control of these commercial activities and formulate claims of a global caliphate, just as the maritime blockade of Mecca’s seaport Jidda in 1517 was a move by the Portuguese intended to encroach on these economic activities.²²⁸ This military conflict had already involved the Mamlūk Empire, forged short-term alliances between the Ottoman successors and the Sultanate of Gujarat and even reverberated as far as the neighbouring realms of Bijapur.²²⁹ The sultans of the Ottoman Empire, Gujarat, Bijapur and the Portuguese forces as well as a host of local power holders in the Hijaz and Malabar became entangled in a political power struggle over commercial prospects of the Indian Ocean trade.²³⁰ In the context of these emerging political fault lines al-Malībārī’s narrative made use of Arabic to reflect on the politics of Malabar’s past and present.

Al-Malībārī’s case shows that by the sixteenth century Arabic history writing formed part of a transregional dissemination that permeated deeply into the courtly societies in South Asia. His choice of language was particularly important in terms of the audience he envisioned. And the book had a specific addressee. He dedicated the oeuvre to ‘Alī ‘Ādil Shāh I. (r. 965/1535-987/1558) of Bijapur,²³¹ one of the Deccan sultanates, and did so by citing the sultan’s excellent track record as a just and legitimate Muslim ruler together with his military zeal in a panegyric fashion, thus making a case for an armed resistance against the Portuguese.²³² In general, this exhibits the transregional perusal of the Arabic idiom and the receptiveness of the complex Deccani court culture to Arabic scholarship in addition to Persian. More specifically, the stated purpose, introduction and structure of al-Malībārī’s work show that the objective of dedicating this work was political communication with a Muslim court and not just the addition of an Arabic book to the royal library.²³³

²²⁶ For this and the following cf. Casale 2010 and especially pp. 4-8, 23-26.

²²⁷ A similar argument has been put forward by Subrahmanyam in his two volumes on ‘Connected Histories’ 2005.

²²⁸ Cf. also Alam/Subrahmanyam 2017: 290-296.

²²⁹ Ho 2006: 101.

²³⁰ Casale 2010 and Ho 2006: 101.

²³¹ Cf. Hutton 2018.

²³² Cf. al-Malībārī MS IO Islamic 2807e: fol. 112v-113v.

²³³ Ibid.

Gujarat

In sixteenth century Gujarat, Ḥājjī al-Dabīr Muḥammad al-Nahrwālī al-Makkī al-Āṣafī Ulūghkhānī's (b. 1540) *Zafar al-wālih bi-Muzaffar wa ālihi* ('The victory of the fervent concerning Muḥammad and his family') offers a crucial case of Arabic history writing.²³⁴ Yet, there are several problems with this text to begin with. As the editor of the text D. Ross states, so far, only one manuscript of this text has been located, in the Calcutta Madrasa, and this version, incomplete at the beginning and the end, serves as the commonly used edition.²³⁵ Since an introduction and important paratextual elements are missing, not much is known about how the author presented his relationship with his text. Also, the date of composition is not clear, but conjecture puts it in the early seventeenth century.²³⁶ Based on the condition in which the manuscript was found, scholarship has speculated that it remained a draft throughout the authors life and it did not circulate widely.²³⁷

Ḥājjī al-Dabīr's biography linked his personal fortunes and background closely with the Hijaz. He was of Meccan origin and his father was responsible for the religious endowments (*awqāf*, sg. *waqf*) of the sultan of Gujarat in Mecca returning to Cambay in 1554.²³⁸ Ḥājjī al-Dabīr belonged to the scribal service elites in the sultanate of Gujarat and he worked for different nobles, among them Muḥammad Ulūghkhānī, hence the affiliation in his name.²³⁹ After the Mughal conquest of Gujarat his father was endowed with the responsibility of administering his new overlords' *awqāf* in Mecca and Medina and Ḥājjī al-Dabīr accompanied him to deliver the necessary funds. After his father's death he moved on to serve a different courtier in Khandesh, a region of the northern Deccan ruled from Burhānpūr at that time.

Thus, Ḥājjī al-Dabīr was well-established in Arabic scholarly networks in Gujarat and across the Sea. His Hijazī background made him more conducive to a continued connection with Mecca while living in Ahmedabad. While he belonged to the service elites of the sultanate of Gujarat his family could boast a long scholarly tradition. They had excelled in scholarly pursuits in Patan, where they had held offices as muftis, judges and teachers.²⁴⁰ Patan, also *al-Nahrwāla* in the Arabic and Persian sources, hence his other *nisba*, was a scholarly centre in Gujarat famous for the proliferation of learned

²³⁴ For this and the following see Ulūghkhānī 1910: I/v-ix.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.* I/viii, and II/ix-x.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ Ho 2006: 105.

²³⁹ For this and the following cf. Jackson 2017. See also Ho 2006: 122.

²⁴⁰ Ulūghkhānī 1910: II/xx-xxiv.

figures. As mentioned previously, scholars from Patan were recorded by al-Sakhāwī with their academic pursuits in the Hijaz. The sixteenth century historian Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nahrwālī hailed from an important service family in Patan and wrote both historical accounts of the Ottoman Yemen and Mecca in the Hijaz.²⁴¹ Over the early modern period these scholarly figures often travelled to the Hijaz to complete or refine their education in Islamic subjects.

It was Ḥājī al-Dabīr's transregional connection which helps to explain his choice of language for the writing of his history. As pointed out before, in the South Asian context a mature Persian historiography flourished at the courts in Gujarat, the Mughal worlds and the Deccan. Thus, the Arabic idiom was a way for him to relate to other audiences. His historical text mixes political chronologies, biographical entries of famous personages and personal information.²⁴² It is split into two *daftar*s ('sections'). The first *daftar* entails the history of the sultans of Gujarat in the form of a succession of sultans interspersed with further biographical entries and other digressions.²⁴³ The second *daftar* contains the succession of the north Indian Muslim dynasties, ending with the Mughals. Here the similarities with frameworks of universal histories in the Indo-Persian historiography are striking. These histories generally accounted for the proliferation of Muslim dynasties from Muhammad to the authors' own times.²⁴⁴ Although it is impossible to provide a thorough narrative analysis of this here, Ḥājī al-Dabīr's rootedness in an Indo-Persian court culture makes such a meaningful process of translating a historiographical model highly likely.

Significantly, with his historical digressions that pervade the larger narrative mélange of dynastic succession and biographies he cumulatively offered historical red threads of transoceanic connections to the Red Sea. His scholarly radius extended beyond South Asia. For example, he integrated into the text sections about the history of the town Zabīd in Yemen, which by the fifteenth century was a crucial transit point for scholars moving between the Hijaz and the subcontinent.²⁴⁵ In the same vein, he included a *tarjama* ('biographical entry') about Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Irbīlī al-Shāfi'ī, known as Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), the famous thirteenth-century biographer and historian from Egypt and Syria.²⁴⁶ Ḥājī al-Dabīr gave a short summary of his

²⁴¹ Blackburn 2005: xi-xiv.

²⁴² Ulughkhānī 1910.

²⁴³ For this and the following cf. Ulughkhānī 1910: I/viii-ix.

²⁴⁴ Conermann 2002.

²⁴⁵ Ulughkhānī 1910: I/88-97.

²⁴⁶ Fück 2017.

professional life and enumerated his scholarly skills, especially his qualities as a historian, which are manifest in his work *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa- anba' abnā' al-zamān* ('The deceased of the nobles and news about the sons of time').²⁴⁷ In this biographical compilation Ibn Khallikān brought together famous figures from across the Islamicate world, of whom the death dates were known, to expound their qualities, deeds and virtues.²⁴⁸ A wider cultural significance of this historical work becomes clear with Ḥajjī al-Dabīr's statement that a certain Yūsuf b. Aḥmad b. 'Uthmān produced a Persian translation of the work and presented it as a literary offering to the sultan of Gujarat Maḥmūd Bīgara commemorating the conquest of the mountain fortress of Champaner in 889/1484.²⁴⁹

Moving on to the seventeenth century, Arabic transoceanic mobilities continued to be recorded from Gujarat. The Arabic biographical work *al-Nūr al-sāfir 'an akhbār al-qarn al-āshir* ('The unveiled light concerning the events of the 10th century') provides another case for the spread of Arabic history writing from the Red Sea to Gujarat in this period.²⁵⁰ It was written in Ahmedabad in Gujarat by 'Abd al-Qādir al-'Aydārūs al-Ḥusaynī al-Ḥaḍramī al-Yamanī al-Hindī. Al-'Aydārūs was a member of the al-'Aydārūs kinship group, born in Ahmedabad in Gujarat in 978/1570, where he served as a courtier, offering his academic skills to the regional sultanate. He died in the same city in 1038/1628 after a full life of scholarship. The several *nisbas* ('affiliations') of his name point to the transregional dimension of his family lineage. It showcases how he negotiated the transoceanic dispersal of the al-'Aydārūs family and his own past as part of his persona. The Ḥaḍramī origin of the family in Yemen coexisted with his current place of personal attachment in al-Hind.

Ho's observations, which merge into a success-story of ḥaḍramī scholarship,²⁵¹ can serve as a starting point to probe the wider historiographical significance of the work for the emergence of a transoceanic Arabic historiography. He pointed out how this work 'chronicled' communities, events, scholarly genealogies and the expansion of Islamicate learning, and thereby created a transregional Islamicate space that encompassed the Indian Ocean from the Red Sea to Southeast Asia.²⁵² Still, Ho concentrated on the particular significance of the work to the family project of the

²⁴⁷ Ulughkhānī 1910: I/184.

²⁴⁸ Fück 2017.

²⁴⁹ Ulughkhānī 1910: I/32.

²⁵⁰ Cf. for this and the following the study of Ho 2006: 118-124; Löfgren 2013 and al-'Aydārūs 2001.

²⁵¹ Ho 2006: 122-124.

²⁵² Cf. in particular Ho 2006: 118-124 and Ho 2007.

Ḥaḍramī Sayyids. Building on this, I want to elaborate on significant themes of al-‘Aydarūs’ biographical work and thereby stress the more widespread rise of Arabic learned pursuits as a connective thread between the Red Sea region and Western India thereby elaborating on Ho’s observations further. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-‘Aydarūs’ biographical work has to be seen in the wider context of Arabic history writing across sixteenth century Western India. At the same time, his work was embedded in a more complex socio-cultural environment which was conducive to the composition of Arabic historical texts in seventeenth century Gujarat. The appearance of the work itself has to be considered as a historical significance beyond the confines of the family network of the al-‘Aydarūs, suggesting a larger transoceanic scholarly world that was spread out across the Ocean, combined with a local community receptive of Arabic scholarship.

Al-‘Aydarūs’ work has a strong intertextual relationship with al-Sakhāwī’s collective biography *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*. As Ho already pointed out, he used the same centennial framework for his work and he furthermore stated in the foreword that his work contained the great events and wonders of the tenth century hijrī (roughly the sixteenth century) together with the obituaries of its great men (kings, scholars, judges, men of letters and the righteous),²⁵³ ‘be they Egyptian or Syrian, Hijāzī or Yamanī, Rūmī or Indian, mashriqī or maghribī’.²⁵⁴ Thus, his idea of the Islamicate world was congruent with al-Sakhāwī’s and similarly appears in the introduction to the work. Their biographical works were shaped accordingly. Whereas al-Sakhāwī had gained scholarly prestige in the Hijaz, al-‘Aydarūs experienced the increasing transregional movements of various social groups in Gujarat. Al-‘Aydarūs structured the whole work as a chronicle, with the sequence of years from 901-1000 hijrī providing the general scheme.²⁵⁵ But while al-Sakhāwī compiled an enormous list of biographical entries, al-‘Aydarūs’ narrative is a *mélange* of events and biographies carefully crafted as a historiographical treatise that praised the pursuit of intellectual endeavours in the rhetoric of the prosopographical.²⁵⁶ These prosopographical elements, i.e. biographical entries, need to be studied further to explore the ways in which al-‘Aydarūs placed learned pursuits of individuals at the centre of a transoceanic cultural connection.

The composition of historiographical works was a way to state affiliations with peers, point to the influence of bygone authorities in one’s education and express

²⁵³ Ho 2006: 118-119.

²⁵⁴ Al-‘Aydarūs 2001: 17.

²⁵⁵ Cf. Ho 2006: 118-120

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

loyalty. With the work *al-Nūr al-sāfir* al-ʿAydārūs established a link with al-Sakhāwī, his former teacher.²⁵⁷ However, this reference goes beyond a scholarly genealogy. It embeds al-Sakhāwī in a larger collective biography. Al-ʿAydārūs gathered the life-stories and cultural significances of many great scholars of the sixteenth century arranging them within a chronology of events that stretches out geographically across the Western Indian Ocean.²⁵⁸ Yet, there are more details to this. Al-Sakhāwī is characterised as a regionally travelling scholar in al-ʿAydārūs’ work, located at the most important intersection for cultural exchange for the Islamicate societies: the Hijaz. Through his studies with the teachers of Egypt and the Hijaz, together with his extensive stays (*mujāwira*) in the cities of Mecca and Medina he became a treasury of Islamicate knowledge, solidified in his *alqāb, al-shaykh al-ʿallāma al-ruḥla al-ḥāfiẓ*.²⁵⁹ Lists of his works covering various disciplines from *ḥadīth* to *taʾrīkh* epitomise him as an authoritative repository of knowledge. Through the academic transactions that were publicised in biographical dictionaries, such outstanding scholars represented focal points that enabled transoceanic intellectual endeavours. The strong intellectual connection between scholars reflects on the existence of an Arabic cultural connection.

A strong scholarly and cultural relationship between Gujarat and the Hijaz is also clear from the choice of biographical entries in the *Nūr al-sāfir*. These exemplify that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the importance of the Hijaz rested not only in the *ḥaramān* (reference to the two holy places Mecca and Medina). Apart from being the destination for pilgrims, the significance of the Hijaz was amplified along scholarly lines as well. Al-Sakhāwī had already referred to the places Mecca and Medina numerous times in his biographical entries and a lot of these cases are set within a genuinely educational and scholarly context, especially the encounters with his own discipleship. Al-ʿAydārūs similarly offered biographies of personages who travelled from Gujarat to the Hijaz, but the emphasis is laid on the transformation in their educational background. Thus, the main entry for the year 955/1548 is the arrival of al-Khān al-Aḥmad Aṣafkhān al-Kujarati [al-Gujaratī], a vizier of the sultan (*manṣab al-wizāra*) who returned from his sojourn in Mecca, where he was sent by the Gujarati rulers.²⁶⁰ Alam and Subrahmanyam recently studied a historical text by Jārullāh b. Fahd from sixteenth century Mecca, which devotes many references to Aṣafkhān as the head

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

²⁵⁸ Ho 2006.

²⁵⁹ Al-ʿAydārūs 2001: 40-42.

²⁶⁰ For this and the following al-ʿAydārūs 2001: 325-330.

of the Gujarātī embassy in Mecca, his efforts in creating an amicable relationship with the rulers of Mecca and his extensive patronage activities among the learned communities.²⁶¹ Additionally, they also mention a reading session on al-Bukhārī, which he organised and which brought together learned people from Mecca.²⁶² Al-‘Aydārūs, however, puts greater emphasis on Aṣafkhān’s own learned pursuits.²⁶³ Early on he became well-versed in several fields of knowledge (*wa-ishtaghala bi-‘ilmi ḥattā mahara fī kathīr min al-funūn*), but even more crucial in his educational formation were his academic transactions and the social networks he forged as part of his administrative post in Mecca. Here he was an important beneficiary for the resident scholars, the students flocked to him, and through his charitable activities in the field of knowledge (*‘ilm*) they excelled in their studies. For the sixteenth century this illustrates the continued significance of the Hijaz as a place of education and the promotion of the Islamicate fields of knowledge, which ran parallel to the observance of religious rituals. Through the figure of Aṣafkhān, the importance of the Hijaz as a magnet for scholars radiated out and was observed this time from the other side of the Ocean.

The Hijaz continued to play a central scholarly role by accumulating learned figures of transregional importance in its environs. In the sixteenth century the great ‘ālim Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1567) takes al-Sakhāwī’s place as the repository of knowledge in the Hijaz.²⁶⁴ He is lauded as an authority of jurisprudence and related disciplines, whose works travelled widely and circulated along a large network of teachers and students. By noting these scholarly authorities and stating their achievements and works, the composers of these biographical dictionaries not only recorded cultural practices framed in biographical entries. They also construed academic networks that revolved around different interconnected figures. The recording of such lives and their legacies could augment one’s own social repute in the present and serve the future generations of the community. Al-Sakhāwī and al-‘Aydārūs provide a commentary, linked through a textual genealogy from the fifteenth to the early seventeenth centuries, that reflects on the continued importance of a networked, transoceanic, socio-cultural fabric made up of people who travel themselves and are travelled to for the sake of academic pursuits.

²⁶¹ Alam/Subrahmanyam 2017: 297-303.

²⁶² Ibid., 301-302.

²⁶³ For this and the following al-‘Aydārūs 2001: 325-330.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Ibid., 390-396.

Most importantly though, al-‘Aydarūs was himself an itinerant scholar, who travelled widely to study and collect books. His own entry in the book puts him on the map as a central learned figure.²⁶⁵ It showcases his educational upbringing, compositional activities and the links he forged with other scholars of repute. While in Gujarat he shared the mobile transregional world of scholars, Sufis and sultans who came to him for advice, blessings and learning. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-‘Aydarūs was also an important Sufi Shaykh and eligible to bestow the *khirqā* (lit. ‘garment’) of affiliation on new affiliates of his Sufi path (*ṭarīqa*).²⁶⁶ Learned men from across this transoceanic space approached him in scholarly and spiritual matters. Judging from the listed recipients of his *khirqā*, their *nisbas* exclusively sketch the transregional contours of the Western Indian Ocean. They represent the various regions from al-‘Allāma al-Shahīr Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Sinbāṭī al-Makkī al-Miṣrī in Egypt, to al-Sayyid al-Jalīl [...] al-Shāmī al-Makkī in Mecca, to al-Shaykh al-Ṣāliḥ al-‘Allāma [...] al-Ḥaḍramī in Yemen, to al-Shaykh al-Kabīr al-‘Allāma al-Shahīr Badr al-Dīn Ḥasan [...] al-Kawkinī al-Hindī in the South Asian subcontinent.

At the same time, al-‘Aydarūs embedded his group of peers and their ancestors within a set of wider political events and actors and again these events and people draw a map which encompasses those regions which made up the transregional arena of the Western Indian Ocean. Among the political elites it included Murtaḍā Niẓām Shāh of Aḥmadnagar, Quṭb Shāh of Golconda and ‘Alī ‘Adil Shāh of Bijapur in South Asia as well as Sultan Qāyṭbāy of Egypt and the Sharīf Muḥammad b. Barakāt of Mecca.²⁶⁷ At the same time, space was devoted to Ottoman sultans Selim I. (d. 926/1520), the defeat of the Circassian Mamlūks, and Sulaymān the Magnificent (d. 974/1566).²⁶⁸ However, these political sovereigns seem to play a less prominent role in its history compared with the scholarly figures, a point made by Ho.²⁶⁹ They usually appear with their death dates or in relation to an event. Al-‘Aydarūs never devotes a full biographical entry to these figures. They constitute political references within an interactive transoceanic community from Egypt to the Deccan while the focus lies on those regions which coalesce into a transoceanic connection through learned interactions.

²⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 447-453.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 447.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 567, 488, 478, 36, 67.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 171 and 396.

²⁶⁹ Ho 2006: 120.

Deccan

Moving further south into the sixteenth century Deccan, it was also a common phenomenon to institute a courtly affiliation and patronage through Arabic historical scholarship. Ibn Shadqam al-Madanī's biographical work *Zahr al-riyāḍ wa-zulal al-ḥiyāḍ* ('The flower of the garden and the pure water of the cisterns') presents one such effort with regard to the court of Ahmadnagar, one of the five Deccani courts which succeeded the Bahmanīs over the course of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.²⁷⁰ His peregrinations bear witness to the persistent connections between the Hijaz and the Deccan as well as the high mobility of elite groups in this period. The author, Sayyid Abū l-Makārim al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Shadqam al-Madanī (d. 999) was born in Medina in 1535 and died in the Deccan in 1590.²⁷¹ Following in the footsteps of his father he became *naqīb al-ashrāf* (chief of the ashraf) and a *mutawallī* ('custodian') of the prophet's grave.²⁷² While at the court of the Niẓāmshāhī dynasty in Ahmadnagar, he composed the three-volume work *Zahr al-riyāḍ wa-zulal al-ḥiyāḍ*. Nineteenth century biographical works conclude that he died in the realm of the ruler of Hyderabad, but his body was brought to the cemetery of Medina *al-Baqi'*, where he was buried.²⁷³ Scholarship on him and his work is limited to general references by W. Ende and Z. Ahmad.²⁷⁴ J. Sublet and M. Rouabah placed this biographical work in a larger group of texts whose authors used the model or a clear intertextual reference to Ibn Khallikan when composing recensions and continuations for their own period.²⁷⁵

Significantly for the current purpose, Ibn Shadqam exemplifies how Arabic historical scholarship could circulate and flourish based on transregional mobility that was rewarded with prestigious courtly patronage. According to the hagiographical account of his son in the *Zahra al-maqūl*, Ibn Shadqam received patronage from different Niẓāmshāhī sultans and he travelled to al-Hind several times.²⁷⁶ Firstly, he did not excel in his posts in Medina and so he left for al-Hind for the first time in 962/1554 to visit the court of Ḥusayn Niẓāmshāh. In 964/1556 he travelled further to Safavid Persia to

²⁷⁰ This work has not been edited yet. I collected one set of surviving manuscripts in 3 volumes from libraries in Kolkata, Rampur and London, see respectively, Ibn Shadqam, *Zahr al-riyāḍ*, Ms 269, National Library, Kolkata, *Ibid*, *Zahr al-riyāḍ*, Ms 4428, Rampur Raza Library, Rampur and Ms Delhi Arabic 1329, British Library, London. For the Deccani Sultanates cf. Eaton 2005, chapter 5. For a rather dated account of the Sultanate of Ahmadnagar cf. Shyam 1966.

²⁷¹ Al-Amīn 1986ff: V/175-179.

²⁷² Ende 1997: 263-348, 271.

²⁷³ Cf. al-Amīn 1986ff: V/175-179.

²⁷⁴ Ende 1997 and Ahmad 1968: 184-185.

²⁷⁵ Sublet/Rouabah 2009: 69-86.

²⁷⁶ For this and the following cf. Rajā'ī, 'Muqaddima': 3-5.

visit the grave of the eighth Imām ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (d. 203/818) in Mashhad. The Imām al-Riḍā had died in Mashhad as caliph designate, which turned the city into an important shrine centre for Shī‘ī pilgrims.²⁷⁷ During this period, he also encountered the Safavid ruler Shāh Ṭahmāsp I (r. 1533-76).²⁷⁸ On his return to al-Hind he married and established himself in a powerful position building up a close relationship with the sultan. When the sultan died, he returned to his family in Medina in 976/1568. During the reign of Murtaḍā Niẓāmshāh I. (r. 972/1565-996/1588)²⁷⁹ he returned to al-Hind and stayed there for the rest of his life, again consolidating a powerful position at the court. He died in Khībū in the Deccan in 998/1589 and his body was moved the same year to his wife’s tomb, as specified in his will. According to references in the *muqaddima* (‘introduction’) to the *Zahr al-riyāḍ*, he composed this work during the years 1580-1584 while he was affiliated to the court of Murtaḍā Niẓāmshāh.²⁸⁰

Ibn Shadqam’s biographical work is a prosopographical sequence of pearls strung on a thread of transtextual references which reach back to the Red Sea region. In the introduction, he recounts his reading (*muṭāla‘a*) of Ibn Khallikān’s prosopography as a meaningful impetus to writing his own work.²⁸¹ He thereby places himself in a transtextual relationship with Ibn Khallikān’s *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*. Many personages who feature in Ibn Shadqam’s prosopographical account are derived from Ibn Khallikān’s biographical community.²⁸² Transregionally famous and notorious figures appear such as Jingīz Khān as well as Saljuq kings, ‘Abbāsīd viziers, poets and scholars from East to West.²⁸³ Due to his overarching historical significance and political repercussions across West and South Asia, *Ṣāhib-i Qirān* Sultan Amīr Timur is listed, followed by biographical entries of his successors enshrined in a Timurid genealogy that ends in Humayun.²⁸⁴ And Deccani rulers are mentioned as well.²⁸⁵ Ibn Shadqam continues his predecessor’s idea of bringing together these figures of great importance in an imagined transregional Muslim community. However, his collective biography also goes in a different direction. Already in his introduction he indicates his Shī‘ī leanings and to a great extent his compilation features poets and scholars which were of particular

²⁷⁷ Cf. Streck 2018.

²⁷⁸ Savoury/Bosworth 2018.

²⁷⁹ Fischel 2018a.

²⁸⁰ Cf. Ibn Shadqam, Ms 269, National Library, Kolkata, fol. 7v. Cf. National Library, Būhār II, Kolkata.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Cf. the fihrist at the beginning of MS 269, Kolkata.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., fol. 96re and the following folios.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Ibid., fol. 71v.

importance to the Shīʿī communities of Iran and the Arabian peninsula.²⁸⁶ Through the composition of this biographical work and its particular orientation Ibn Shadqam was able to inscribe himself meaningfully in the cultural matrix of the court at Ahmadnagar. Shīʿī tendencies among the political and social elites have been referred to in recent studies as a political strategy by the Nizāmshāhī dynasty to foster substantial connections with the Safavid court and attract administrative elites from its realm.²⁸⁷

More significantly, Ibn Shadqam shared a wider Arabic transregional idiom with the mobile elites of the Western Indian Ocean region. While he moved between the interconnected worlds from the Red Sea region to al-Hind, Iran and back again, his Arabic background provided him with a cultural option at the Deccani court of Ahmadnagar. Here again, the choice of the Arabic idiom is important because a mature Persian historiographical tradition was a dominant feature of this Deccani court. However, his inclination towards Arabic was not only due to the intertextual relationship with Ibn Khallikān. Instead it also points to his transoceanic audience linking the Red Sea region, Iran and the Deccan in a cultural space in which Arabic functioned as a transregional idiom side by side with Persian.

The biographical compilation *Wafayāt al-a'yān* by Ibn Khallikān emerges as a model and text central to the historiographical pursuits across South Asia. On the one hand, Ḥājjī al-Dabīr's reference to Ibn Khallikān demonstrates his fame as a biographer. On the other hand, Ibn Shadqam's recension of Ibn Khallikān's biographical work shows how influential his conception of writing a collective biography was until the sixteenth century. Ibn Khallikān's *Wafayāt al-a'yān* functioned as a 'prior text' for the pursuit of Arabic history writing.²⁸⁸ This term served as a fecund concept in R. Ricci's studies of translation practices across Southeast Asia.²⁸⁹ She demonstrated how a 'documentable history of textual affinities' and the need to contextualise a textual tradition within the respective socio-cultural environments points to the idea of the 'prior text'.²⁹⁰ This intertextual phenomenon describes the process by which 'familiar stories and characters [are used] to introduce new ideas and narratives'.²⁹¹ Prior texts represent intertextual relationships and therefore can be studied in the ways they articulate shared identities and accompany the establishment of localised histories for groups and

²⁸⁶ Ende, 1997: 271. Further research is necessary to study his parameters of community building in this biographical work.

²⁸⁷ Fischel 2015.

²⁸⁸ Becker 2000.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Ricci 2010 and 2011.

²⁹⁰ Ricci 2011: 33-34 and 245-246.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 246-247.

societies.²⁹² However, tracing such prior texts is not only important in processes of translation. A recension (*mukhtaṣar*) or continuation (*dhayl*) such as Ibn Shadqam's transtextual reference to Ibn Khallikān and the borrowing of his framework similarly points out the circulation of prior texts in Arabic cultural traditions. This can help to understand the historically contingent meanings that were attached to a text in its respective social environment.

Arabic historical manuscripts in South Asian collections

A study of the circulation of manuscript versions of Arabic histories dealing with the Red Sea region can further the understanding of the deep diffusion of a transoceanic interest in Arabic historiography in the subcontinent. Ibn Khallikān also seemed to dominate the famous collections of Arabic historical works across India. Several manuscripts of his text survive in libraries in Hyderabad, Patna and Rampur.²⁹³ Their histories of circulation are difficult to pin down, because the histories of the evolution of the collections in all three cities are complex and as yet almost unstudied. But the surviving versions show that these texts were copied continuously over the early modern period. Both versions from Rampur were transcribed during the sixteenth century.²⁹⁴ The version from Patna bears the seal of the Mughal Emperor Shāh Jahān, thereby locating its circulation history in the middle of the seventeenth century.²⁹⁵ These manuscript copies indicate a wide circulation of this text over the subcontinent during the early modern period, which mirrors his fame across the lands further West. His biographical work held a prominent position across the Arab lands and even beyond, attested by the circulation of numerous copies as well as additions and continuations written during the fourteenth and right into the seventeenth centuries.²⁹⁶ Such recensions and continuations also circulated in the subcontinent such as the *Mukhtaṣar wafayāt al-a'yān* by Muḥammad b. Nājī in 999/1591.²⁹⁷ Ibn Shadqam's *Zahr al-riyāḍ* was still being transmitted in the nineteenth century as the third volume of the work – today kept in the British library's Delhi Arabic collections – indicates from an ownership note dated to 1225/1810.²⁹⁸ Ibn Khallikān's presentation of

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 248–249.

²⁹³ See for example MS Ta'rīkh 994, APOML, Hyderabad; MS Arabic 650, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public library, Patna. Cf. Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue; and two copies from Rampur MS 4424–4425 and MS 4426–4427, Rampur Raza Library, Rampur. Cf. also the respective catalogue entries.

²⁹⁴ Rampur MS 4424–4425 and MS 4426–4427, Rampur Raza Library, Rampur.

²⁹⁵ MS Arabic 650, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public library, Patna, fol. 270v. Cf. Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue.

²⁹⁶ Sublet/Rouabah 2009: 74.

²⁹⁷ MS Arabic 651, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna. Cf. Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Delhi Arabic MS 1329, British Library, London, last folio.

a favourable Muslim community and especially their exploits in the field of poetry, made for good reading across communities and societies of the Western Indian Ocean.

Yet, other Arabic historical texts were famous across the subcontinent as well, most of them are prominent works concerning the pasts of the wider Red Sea region from Egypt, to the Hijaz, Yemen and Gujarat across the Sea.²⁹⁹ Compared to other genres, not many manuscripts survive from this period, but those that survive were almost all copied from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Some of them are singular exceptions such as al-Dhahabī's biographical *Ta'rikh al-Islām* or a recension of al-Ṭabarī's chronicle *Ta'rikh al-rusūl wa-l-mulūk*.³⁰⁰ Nonetheless, the majority are famous works chronicling the history of different parts of the Red Sea region, such as the fifteenth-century work *al-Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī ta'rikh al-miṣr wa-l-qāhira* on the history of Egypt by al-Suyūṭī,³⁰¹ the history of Mecca by the aforementioned Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nahrwālī,³⁰² and the historical works on Mecca by both Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāsī and Najm al-Dīn b. Fahd al-Hāshimī.³⁰³ Al-Sakhāwī's *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'* survives in copies of the initial text as well as in the form of recensions from Gujarat to Patna.³⁰⁴ 'Abd al-Qādir al-'Aydārūs' *al-Nūr al-sāfir* was prominent across South Asia and transcriptions from the early modern period can be found in the northern and the southern parts of the subcontinent.³⁰⁵ One of the versions comes with a transoceanic history of circulation: it was transcribed in 1093/1682 in Mecca, travelled across the Sea and later ended up in Hyderabad.³⁰⁶ The cumulative transregional circulation and survival of these works marks only a general historical interest among audiences across South Asia. Still, the diverse circulation of historical texts can indicate how widely Arabic history writing on the Red Sea region was perceived in the subcontinent.

To dig deeper, a case study from the Khuda Bakhsh Library in Patna can exemplify the extent to which South Asian readers engaged with Arabic histories of the Red Sea region. The text is one of the famous fifteenth century histories of Medina

²⁹⁹ This is based on an examination of libraries in Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Patna and Rampur.

³⁰⁰ Respectively, MS 4284 and MS 4281, Rampur Raza Library, Rampur.

³⁰¹ See MS 4395, MS 4396 and MS 4397, Rampur Raza Library, Rampur and MS Arabic 1071, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna. Cf. Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue.

³⁰² For example, al-Nahrwālī, *al-I'lām bi-a'lām bayt Allāh al-ḥarām*, MS 1088, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna. al-Nahrwālī, *Ta'rikh al-Madīna al-Munawwara*, MS 4385, Rampur Raza Library.

³⁰³ MS 4376 and 4377, Rampur Raza Library.

³⁰⁴ 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ḥalabī, *al-Qabas al-Ḥawī li-ghurarī ḍaw' al-Sakhāwī*, MS Arabic 657 and 658, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna. Cf. Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, MS 700, Pīr Muḥammad Shāh Dargāh Library, Ahmedabad; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Miṣrī, *al-Nūr al-sāfi' min al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*, MS 4431, Rampur Raza Library.

³⁰⁵ For example, MS Arabic 659, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna.

³⁰⁶ MS Arabic Tarajim 91, APOML, Hyderabad, fol. 311v.

entitled *Wafā' al-wafā' bi-akhbār dār al-muṣṭafā* by 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh al-Samhūdī (d. 911/1506) and it is an abridgement of his larger work on Medina.³⁰⁷ This version preserves al-Samhūdī's initial compositional colophon and a Persian completion note at the end states that it was copied in the city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat in 1015/1606.³⁰⁸ More importantly, the same scribe (according to a similar hand) seems to have perused this Arabic manuscript thoroughly and added an abundance of informed comments and extracts from other works in the margins. Firstly, there are several correction notes and lexicographical annotations, which demonstrate traces of the readers philological encounter with the text.³⁰⁹ Secondly, *qif*-notes (the imperative of *waqafa*, meaning 'stop' and addressed to the person reading the text) which function as highlighters of sections marked for future reference. Many *qif*-notes mark references to the Prophet's Mosque in Medina and further historical information on this highly venerated place.³¹⁰ Thirdly, the reader was interested in other religious aspects of Medina as a holy Islamic city as well. Thus, for example, he marked a section with a *qif*-note which dealt with the superior quality of performing the fast (*ṣiyām*) in Medina.³¹¹ These examples of reading notes probably only represent a partial and incomplete record of the reader's engagement with the text, and more specifically one that was intended to help with future inquiries into the history of Medina. Nonetheless, this case study gives a sense of the profound interest that a reader had in the past and religious significance of the Hijaz and thereby exemplifies how deeply Arabic history writing concerned with the Red Sea region percolated across learned communities of Gujarat.

Rāzī's 'Seven Climes' – Imagining a transoceanic Arabic commensurability

By the late sixteenth century, Arabic connections between the Red Sea region and Western India were even recognised from outside the Arabic maritime network that spanned the Red Sea and Western India.³¹² Scholars who inhabited the Persianate worlds of the Western Indian Ocean imagined these cultural links in a new way and expressed them in the form of normative geographical descriptions in narrative texts. These works generally mixed social and geographical knowledge to envision the known world anew on a cultural level. The regions and communities which increasingly

³⁰⁷ Cf. MS Arabic 1091, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna. For al-Samhūdī cf. Munt 2015.

³⁰⁸ Cf. MS Arabic 1091, Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, fol. 435v.

³⁰⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, fol. 10-13.

³¹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, fol. 139re, 212v and 260v.

³¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, fol. 24v.

³¹² For a recent summary on this maritime network cf. Gommans 2015.

interacted during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were now re-signified as distinct units of cultural belonging. They now constituted an imagined transregional space which made sense to their authors because they reflected on realities experienced by contemporary mobile groups.

In 1594, Amīn Aḥmad Rāzī, a scholar from Safavid Iran, finished the composition *Haft iqlīm* ('The seven climes') after a final editing period of six years.³¹³ In this Persian composition he combined topographical, biographical and historical aspects of the world known to him.³¹⁴ He divided this world up into seven geographical zones or climes (*aqālīm*, sg. *iqlīm*).³¹⁵ The first clime included Yemen, Nubia and China. The second reached from Mecca to Hormuz, and via Gujarat to the Deccan. The third extended from Iran and Iraq to Northern India. The fourth focused on Iran and present-day Afghanistan. The fifth consisted of broader Transoxania. The sixth stretched across Turkestan and the Russian steppes to Anatolia and the seventh listed the Slavs and ended with the mythical figures Gog and Magog.

Such a sevenfold conceptual geography had its predecessor in earlier periods. Medieval Arab geographers developed different but often very persistent notions which structured their worlds.³¹⁶ In the Abbasid period, for example, when astronomers, geographers and *littérateurs* made sense of increasing interactions with ethnicities and cultures from East to West and North to South, they would establish links between a climate zone and its inhabitants.³¹⁷ According to medieval ethnographic works it was the climate zone that determined the cultural characteristics of peoples living in it and consequently structured the populated parts of the world in a hierarchical manner.³¹⁸ Such geographical works not only described the world in comprehensible ways to the author and his audiences, but they also provided a culturally commensurable version of it, reflecting on how the world was experienced and imagined based on what they knew about it.

Naturally, this was also the case with Rāzī's work; however, his mental map differed remarkably in comparison with previous geographical divisions of the world. His underlying conceptions cut across several seemingly naturally perceived areas, at

³¹³ Berthels 2018.

³¹⁴ Razi 1999. I thank Prof. Francesca Orsini for providing me with the unpublished paper in which she referred to this geographical treatise to elaborate on the notion of 'Significant Geographies'.

³¹⁵ For the following summary cf. Berthels 2018.

³¹⁶ Lewis/Wigen 1997: 46-47.

³¹⁷ Cf. Enderwitz 1979, Miquel 2017.

³¹⁸ Lewis 1990. As an example, cf. al-Suyūṭī 1995: 207.

least in comparison to geographical treatises from the medieval period.³¹⁹ Regions such as Iran and al-Hind were broken up to create new cultural zones that made more sense to him.³²⁰ Each of his climes contained a succession of entries on the cities, regions and personalities which made up the social fabric of that geographical zone. The fourth zone traditionally represented the central of the seven climes,³²¹ usually the place of origin of its author and therefore the most elevated and prestigious of the seven zones.³²² The centrality of this clime is also made clear in a quantitative way, since it is the most detailed and contains the most biographical entries taking up the entire second volume of the printed version. In Rāzī's case this fourth clime included – unsurprisingly so – his native Rayy in northern Iran, and comprised among others the region of Khurasan, and cities such as Balkh, Herat, Mashhad, Astarabad, Gilan and Tabriz. Interspersed are biographical entries on kings, poets and scholars in chronological order. His introduction to this zone begins as follows:

‘This clime has a connection with the sun. It is in the middle of the inhabited world and it is the dwelling of the nobles of the offspring of Adam’s progeny. The inhabitants of this clime are the best of mankind according to their appearance and temperament, as well as with regard to the abundance of the elegance of disposition and gracious nature, the manifestation in forms of virtue and knowledge [...].’³²³

His preference and the centrality of this fourth zone is made clear in this section. As in earlier treatises, the location of the fourth zone, its climate and its significance as the earliest habitation of mankind distinguished this area from the other climes. Temperament, nature, knowledge and virtue render its inhabitants superior to their neighbours. At the same time, this *iqīm* seemed to describe a central part of the early modern Persianate world which Rāzī and his family of literary fame inhabited.³²⁴ Judging from the enumeration of regions and cities, the fourth clime consisted of the core cultural centres in Persian history such as Khurasan and Tabriz and as well as places which became prominent due to their famous learned men, such as Astarabad and Gilan.³²⁵

³¹⁹ Miquel 2017. See for example the outline of al-Hind in medieval geographical treatises such as the *Murūj al-dhahab* by al-Mas‘ūdī, cf. Ahmad et al. 2017.

³²⁰ The author himself divided up the Arab lands in his introduction to the second clime, Razi 1999: I/29, and al-Hind was spread across the third and the second clime, generally dividing the North and the South of the subcontinent respectively, Razi 1999: I/83-515 and I/29-82.

³²¹ Miquel 2017.

³²² Razi 1999: II/518-1441.

³²³ Razi 1999: II/517. The translation is my own.

³²⁴ Berthels 2018. Cf. Razi 1999: II/518-1441.

³²⁵ Cf. Pfeiffer 2014.

Therefore, the fourth *iq̄līm* made sense as a geographical outline of the Indo-Persian cultural complex. By grouping certain places and their people within one *iq̄līm*, Rāzī ordered the world in terms commensurable to him. Each zone represented an internal cultural affinity as its *raison d'être*. Similarly, the third *iq̄līm* contained Iraq with the famous cities of Baghdad, Kufa, Basra, and stretched further into Iran with Yazd, Fars, Sistan, and from the wider Persian Gulf region to Lahore, Delhi, Lucknow and Agra in the northern part of the subcontinent.³²⁶ These regions of Iraq, Persia and Northern India formed 'shared knowledge and connective systems' and represented interconnected zones of circulation and migration by elite groups, administrators, scholars and soldiers alike.³²⁷

Rāzī's native Persian was the common language in the arts and statecraft that linked these places in Western and South Asia culturally through the movement of people, objects and ideas. He was culturally rooted in the Persian cosmopolis and probably visited India, where his first cousin served in different posts under the Mughal emperor Akbar and his successor Jahangir.³²⁸ Rāzī grew up in a social environment that was characterised by professional mobility. He provided a normative commentary to such geographical proximities and notions as they were experienced by mobile social groups during the sixteenth century.

Most importantly for the purpose of the present argument, his second *iq̄līm* imagines the Arabic connection between the Red Sea region and Western India as a discernible cultural zone. This *iq̄līm* consisted of the Hijaz with Mecca and Medina on the Arabian Peninsula and the port city of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf.³²⁹ It then moved across the *baḥr al-hind* (Indian Ocean) to link these places with the historic region of the Deccan, subdivided further into Ahmadnagar, Dawlatabad, Telangana and adding Ahmadabad and Surat in Gujarat.³³⁰ In the introduction to this section, Rāzī provided the defining outer limits of this space:³³¹ it stretched from China, across India, and Iran into Africa. It was made up of 88 cities, most of them located in the Arab lands. Due to the religious importance of Mecca, the seat of the Hijaz (*ḥūn kursī-yi Ḥijāz Makka ast*), this city provided the starting point in the Western part and connected ultimately with the towns, forts and people of the Deccan plateau. Rāzī's second geographical zone fits

³²⁶ Cf. Razi 1999: I/83ff.

³²⁷ Robinson 1997: 8-12.

³²⁸ Cf. Berthels 2018.

³²⁹ Cf. Razi 1999: I/29-82.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ For this and the following *Ibid.*, I/29.

well with the worlds of circulation, as described in this chapter, as they emerged over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Therefore, I would suggest a reading of his compilation of places and people as an expression of underlying close cultural and social ties, which made up the second geographical zone as well. The second zone cuts across the Arabian peninsula, the Western Indian Ocean and then links regions such as Gujarat with the Deccan plateau further south. While the reason for this geographical arrangement is not elaborated further, this second *iqlīm* can still be treated as an analogous case to his own fourth zone, albeit on a lower rank in his hierarchical conception. Therefore, it seems reasonable to go beyond a climatic or natural geographical link between these places, since there are no natural borders which could justify this division. Instead, while biographical entries provide a social content, the importance lies in the fact that he imagined this clime in this culturally connected way. Rāzī's observation also shows the entanglement of the Persianate sphere with an Arabic cosmopolis. His delineation makes sense as an imagined Arabic connection between the Red Sea region and Western India, grounded in a reflection of prevailing social mobilities and cultural exchanges across the Western Indian Ocean.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have brought recent scholarship on the cultural history of the Western Indian Ocean into conversation with different narratives and, to a lesser extent, documentary sources to advance an argument about the integration of the Red Sea region and Western India along an Arabic connection during the early modern period. Al-Sakhāwī's biographical work for the fifteenth century included a growing community of learned figures from both sides of the Western Indian Ocean who travelled for academic pursuits. An Arabic transoceanic connection emerged, made up of scholarly groups, academic transactions and places of personal contact in a transregional framework. Academic pursuits provided an important rationale and courtly patronage enabled scholarly mobilities across the Western Indian Ocean. As it appeared from the narrative sources, courtly patronage guided scholarly pursuits and offered frameworks of interaction. Compared to earlier times, the fifteenth century saw an intensification of this Arabic connection marked in the increase of such learned activities within the transregional space from Egypt, the Hijaz, Yemen, Gujarat, and the Deccan to Malabar.

The sixteenth century witnessed a new quality of Arabic scholarship regarding historical texts. In the context of inter-imperial tensions and processes of state-formation across the Red Sea region, Gujarat and the Deccan, Arabic historical texts emerged at the fault-lines of political reconfigurations. Throughout the sixteenth century, Arabic history writing could be traced from Gujarat, to the Deccan and to Malabar. Mobile and transregionally connected scholars such as al-Malībārī, Ibn Shadqam, al-Ḥajjī al-Dabīr and al-‘Aydarūs used the Arabic idiom to reflect on the pasts of regions and communities of the subcontinent. Additionally, these narratives displayed crucial transtextual references to scholarly authorities and their texts from across the Red Sea region such as Ibn Khallikān and al-Sakhāwī. While the sixteenth century composers across Western India inscribed themselves into growing Arabic cultural connections that stretched across the socially segmented worlds of royal courts and scholarly communities, their narratives forged transoceanic connections across the wider Western Indian Ocean. And these authors themselves built on transregional mobility, learned pursuits and shared networks that linked the Red Sea region, Iran, Gujarat and the Deccan. At the same time, their pursuits were embedded in a diverse and vivid environment of circulating Arabic historical texts on manuscripts. The thematic profile of this Arabic corpus of historical texts highlights specific places as points of reference that were limited to the Western Indian Ocean region.

By the late sixteenth century the Arabic connection from the Red Sea region to the subcontinent was so well-established and prominent that a scholar from Iran was able to imagine this transregional space as a distinct cultural zone, one of the seven climes of the larger Islamicate world. While these climes were ordered hierarchically, each one was constituted by its own cultural commensurability that worked across its geographical expanse. This observation from the Persian cosmopolis summed up the rise of a transoceanic Arabic cultural connection from the Red Sea to the subcontinent: new narrative texts of the sixteenth century constituted a transoceanic Arabic historiography, which reflected on the shared histories of communities across the Western Indian Ocean. The circulation of Arabic historical texts demonstrates forms of perception of this history which brought the shores of the Western Indian Ocean closer together over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus, for the early modern period it is necessary to ask wider questions about the social and cultural interactions of Arabised communities on both sides of the Ocean.

Chapter 2 – Mobile Arabic Scholarship - Al-Damāmīnī's fifteenth-century transregional pursuits

Leaving the broad perspective on learned pursuits of mobile groups, this chapter will dive into a case study to focus on one scholar, his travels and scholarly endeavours along the transoceanic Arabic connection. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Makhzūmī al-Iskandarānī Badr al-Dīn, known as al-Damāmīnī, was born in the northern Egyptian town of Alexandria in 763/1362.³³² After a successful life of scholarship and a less successful life in business he died in 827/1424 in the city of Gulbarga in the Deccan. His learned achievements include numerous works in the disciplines of poetry, ḥadīth and grammar.³³³ During his scholarly education he passed through prominent institutions which brought him into contact with famous teachers across the Mamlūk realm. A detour into the weaving business literally went up in flames, and after a humiliating experience in Cairo of settling his debt, he probably considered it best to start a new chapter overseas. He had honed his scholarly trades in various learned centres of Mamlūk Egypt and Syria and decided to travel to new horizons. He set sail via the common transoceanic routes of his day to the South Asian subcontinent. There, his scholarly habitus and mobility as a learned migrant offered him a successful pathway at multiple courts from Gujarat to the Deccan.

Mobile scholarship and itinerant scholars were a broader socio-cultural phenomenon across Islamicate societies during the medieval period.³³⁴ Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) moved from court to court in the Maghrib for several years until he finally ended up in Cairo.³³⁵ Another example, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 770 or 779/1368 or 1377) travelled widely and was able to make use of his scholarly skills by attaching himself to different courts such as that of Muḥammad b. Tughluq (r. 724-52/1324-51) in Delhi, where he served as a judge.³³⁶ His travel trajectory, though, differed from al-Damāmīnī's and his

³³² For this and the following cf. the two detailed biographical entries in prosopographical accounts from the Mamlūk period, see al-Sakhāwī 1934-37, VII/184-187. Al-Sakhāwī refers to him as Ibn al-Damāmīnī. Since his name appears simply as al-Damāmīnī on almost all of the manuscripts that I have seen, I will refer to him accordingly. Cf. al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya al-wu'āt fi ṭabaqāt al-lughawiyīn wa-l-nuḥāt*, I/66-67. In comparison with other biographical references, only al-Suyūṭī quoted the years 837 and 838 as possible dates of death. His reference to al-Damāmīnī's poisoning (*qatala masmūman*) has to be investigated further through a wider search for local Deccani sources. Ibid, 67.

³³³ For example, the edited version of his *Nuzūl al-ghayth*, a critique of al-Ṣafadī's *al-Ghayth al-musjam fi sharḥ Lāmiyyat al-'Ajām*, al-Damāmīnī 2010. I thank Adam Talib for providing me with an edition of this work. There is also al-Damāmīnī's commentary on al-Bukhārī's ḥadīth compilation (*Maṣābiḥ al-jāmi'*). Cf. al-Sakhāwī 1934-37, VII/184-187.

³³⁴ Al-Musawī 2015: 53-56.

³³⁵ Ibid., 23-24. For a more detailed account see Azmeh 1990.

³³⁶ For studies of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's travels, networked pursuits and his exploit in the Delhi sultanate see Conermann 1993, Cooke/Lawrence 2005 and Cornell 2005.

fellow migrant scholars of the fifteenth century. Al-Damāmīnī's transregional scholarly pursuits were part of a larger political phenomenon that opened up professional opportunities for scholars across the Red Sea region. As mentioned in the previous chapter, political power across the subcontinent became increasingly regionalised during the fifteenth century after the fall of the Delhi Sultanate. Many new regional centres offered courtly patronage. While patronage networks in the subcontinent were reshuffled in this process, scholars were also willing to sail across the Western Indian Ocean to seek these professional opportunities. Al-Damāmīnī, was part of a broader group of scholars who ventured out from the Red Sea region to receive patronage at the newly emerging courts of fifteenth century South Asia from Gujarat in the West to Bengal in the East and the Deccan in the South.³³⁷ In al-Damāmīnī's case the composition of grammar works was a successful recipe for scholars pursuing their careers across the subcontinent.

Al-Damāmīnī's life and works make him a prime case to study forms of scholarly and textual mobility during the fifteenth century. Yet, scholarship on him is still scarce. Studies so far provided overviews of his life and his textual output and detailed his scholarly writings across different fields.³³⁸ More recently, scholars have also considered his compositional activities in Mamlūk Egypt more closely, delineated his networks and began to approach the aesthetics of his scholarly habitus within the context of Mamlūk encyclopaedism.³³⁹ Departing from this, I will study his life trajectory based on prosopographical accounts and especially his compositions in the field of grammar to advance an argument on his transoceanic pursuits and forms of cultural exchange in this period. While dedicating his time to the writing of commentaries, he moved along nodal points in the transregional network that linked Egypt, the Hijaz, Yemen, Gujarat and the Deccan in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. These peregrinations and the survival of sources across the Western Indian Ocean region make him an exemplary case. I argue that al-Damāmīnī successfully created a sophisticated learned migratory network which helped him to negotiate access to different sociabilities in the Red Sea region and the subcontinent. His transoceanic endeavours followed a cultural rationale that found its expression in his scholarly compositions. In South Asia, these compositions interrelated both courtly and

³³⁷ For this phenomenon of political regionalisation see Schimmel 1980: 36-56.

³³⁸ Ahmad 1968: 195-196. 'Uthmān 2012.

³³⁹ Rosenthal 1981, Bauer 2014, al-Musāwī 2015: 236. Cf. Talib 2017. I am grateful to Adam for providing me with this draft before publication.

learned sociabilities. They provided him with access to the court which offered him subsistence and thereby helped him to pursue scholarly projects in the field of Arabic grammar among learned communities in Gujarat and the Deccan. Al-Damāmīnī was able to insert himself into this mutually beneficial relationship which served all three parties – the courts, learned communities and himself – and perpetuated his mobile scholarly endeavours.

The sources which al-Damāmīnī left behind offer a substantial empirical base to study these aspects. Prosopographical references abound in the prominent biographical dictionaries of Mamlūk Egypt and Syria.³⁴⁰ His scholarly pursuits across the Mamlūk realm and the compositional endeavours at the courts of al-Hind are well-documented. His writings cover a wide range of topics from the commentary on al-Bukhārī's ḥadīth compilation, *Maṣābiḥ al-jāmi'*, to the *Nuzūl al-ghayth*, a critique of al-Ṣafadī's *al-Ghayth al-musjam fī sharḥ Lāmiyyat al-'Ajam*, to the recension of al-Damīrī's *Ḥayat al-Ḥayawān*, entitled *'Ayn al-ḥayat*, which he also wrote while residing in Gujarat.³⁴¹ What they generally have in common is the commentarial mode of elaboration. For the current purpose, I will concentrate on al-Damāmīnī's three grammar commentaries, which he composed in South Asia. They rose to extraordinary fame across the subcontinent and the wider Western Indian Ocean during the following centuries, manifest in the numerous copies that survive in libraries in India, Egypt, Turkey and Europe today.³⁴²

The first work, written during the years 820-21/1417-18 after his arrival in the port city of Kanbāyat (Cambay) in Gujarat, is the *Ta'līq al-farā'id 'alā tashīl al-fawā'id* ('Explanation of the precious pearls on the facilitation of benefits'), a commentary on Ibn Mālik's (672/1274)³⁴³ grammar work *Tashīl al-fawā'id wa-takmīl al-maqāṣid* ('The facilitation of benefits and the completion of objectives').³⁴⁴ Up until the fifteenth century, Cambay was famous for its port that hosted diverse foreign merchant communities and served as a hub for pilgrims bound for Mecca.³⁴⁵ Although al-Damāmīnī did not give any details about his journey across the western Indian Ocean, one can presume that he boarded a merchant ship, which was guided by the winds of

³⁴⁰ See for example al-Sakhāwī 1934-37, al-Maqrīzī 2002 and al-Suyūṭī 1964.

³⁴¹ See for example al-Sakhāwī 1934-37, VII/184-187 and Sheikh 2010: 206.

³⁴² All three works survive in the Süleymaniye library, Istanbul, in the al-Azhār mosque library and in the Dār al-Kutub in the National Museum in Cairo, as well as libraries in Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Rampur in addition to the collections of the British Library. See also chapter 4 along these lines. In the following I will use a set of 'definitive versions' which I cross-checked with other manuscript copies.

³⁴³ Fleisch 2017a. For his date of arrival see MS Ragip Pasa 1326, Istanbul, fol. 2re.

³⁴⁴ Cf. MS Ragip Pasa 1326, Istanbul.

³⁴⁵ Cf. Sheikh 2010: 88-89 and Lambourn 2008.

the monsoon.³⁴⁶ Al-Damāmīnī's second work, composed while he resided in the famous scholarly centre of Nahrwāla in Gujarat in 824/1421,³⁴⁷ is entitled *Tuḥfat al-gharīb 'alā l-kalām mughnī al-labīb 'an kutub al-a'ārīb* ('Gift of the extraordinary concerning the speech of sufficient understanding on the books of declinations'), a commentary on Ibn Hishām's (d. 760/1360) treatise on syntax, *Mughnī al-labīb*.³⁴⁸ This work was further elaborated later and culminated in a final master-commentary, entitled *Sharḥ Mazj*, yet this final elaboration did not circulate to the same extent as the previous one.³⁴⁹ The third work, written while on his way from Gujarat to the city of Aḥsānābād (Gulbarga) in the Bahmanī realm of the Deccan during the years 825-826/1422-1423, is called *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy fī sharḥ al-wāfiy* ('The pure watering place in the explanation of the perfect'), again a commentary, in this case on al-Balkhī's (d. 8th /14th. c.) grammatical work *al-Wāfiy*.³⁵⁰

Two reservations have to be made here: Firstly, since I was not able to track down any autograph or draft copies of his texts, the empirical basis for an 'archaeology of scholarship', i.e. the analysis of the scholarly working process as F. Bauden exemplified it with al-Maqrīzī's notebooks, is not given at this point.³⁵¹ Instead, I base my analysis on the later copies. The manuscript versions of these works, which I gathered from Europe, the Middle East and South Asia, are almost identical on a textual level with only a few minor variations. Secondly, I am not intending to offer a thorough study of his intellectual contribution to the Arabic grammatical tradition, nor would this contribute significantly to the argument of this dissertation concerning 'Histories of Circulation'. However, based on an analysis of his prefaces, a survey of contents and an analysis of specific sections as well as the approach in his commentaries (and contemporary scholarship on their underlying grammatical treatises), I will advance an argument on the social and cultural mobility of al-Damāmīnī and his texts.

To trace histories of circulation of al-Damāmīnī and his compositional activities, I will analyse paratextual elements from his grammar works together with prosopogographical accounts. The detailed compositional prefaces of all three grammar works – the paratextual elements of his texts – will be cross-read with references to his

³⁴⁶ Alam/Subrahmanyam quote a sixteenth century chronicle with a reference to such a merchant ship that transported 'savant-migrants'. Cf. *Ibid.* 2017: 290.

³⁴⁷ Cf. colophon and preface of MS Bijapur 7, London.

³⁴⁸ Fleisch 2017b.

³⁴⁹ Cf. 'Uthmān 2012, al-Damāmīnī 2012. This edition builds on several manuscripts. During my research trips I only came across MS Nahw Taymūr 535 (2 vols), Dār al-Kutub, Cairo. Cf. *al-Damāmīnī Corpus*.

³⁵⁰ MS Nahw 108, Salar Jung Museum Library, Hyderabad.

³⁵¹ Bauden 2003, 2006, 2008.

works from the prosopographical accounts – the epitextual elements – to study al-Damāmīnī’s transoceanic networks and pursuits as well as the intended circulation and audience-focus of his textual productions. In combination, this empirical basis can disclose scholarly strategies which guided learned pursuits during his transregional travels. These paratextual and epitextual elements offer glimpses into the socio-cultural setting in which al-Damāmīnī operated. Finally, this will make it possible to approach the socio-cultural significance of his textual compositions across changing sociabilities and understand their intended circulation through his circulation.³⁵²

The line of argumentation will be pursued in three steps. Firstly, I will reconstruct al-Damāmīnī’s networks across the Mamlūk realm and their changing constituents across al-Hind to explore different forms of patronage and how they enabled his scholarly pursuits. Scholarly and courtly forms of patronage can be differentiated as they enabled the pursuit of knowledge transmission in the fifteenth century.³⁵³ I will argue that al-Damāmīnī’s transoceanic mobility depended on him changing the constituents of his social networks that underpinned his learned endeavours. After his move from the Red Sea region to al-Hind his intricate scholarly networks of peers had to be supplanted with a system of more direct courtly patronage.

Secondly, an analysis of parts of the second grammar commentary, the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*, is a particularly pertinent case to explore narrative strategies of an itinerant scholar. It will be compared to an earlier version which he wrote in Cairo and on his way to Mecca to study how he successfully negotiated access to different sociabilities in the Red Sea region and the subcontinent. In South Asia he positioned himself favourably vis-à-vis his new royal patrons and carved out a scholarly space that allowed him to successfully pursue his textual practices.³⁵⁴ Al-Damāmīnī reworked his texts substantially to make them suitable for changing learned pursuits and new audiences.

Thirdly, an examination of the frameworks of transmission in the three grammar works will reveal mobile scholarly practices and thereby illustrate the extent of his cultural agency on the move. These frameworks built on authoritative forms of knowledge dissemination in Islamicate cultures.³⁵⁵ At the same time, it will become

³⁵² This approach has been suggested by Stefan Leder in a different context and matter. See Leder 2011.

³⁵³ For an example see Berkey 1992.

³⁵⁴ Hirschler 2006: 1, elaborated on the notion of ‘room for manoeuvre’ in the context of medieval Arabic history writing building on the conceptualisation of agency as ‘the capacity of socially embedded actors to appropriate, reproduce, and, potentially, to innovate upon received cultural categories and conditions of action in accordance with their personal and collective ideals, interests, and commitments’. Quoted from Emirbayer/Goodwin 1994: 1442-3.

³⁵⁵ For studies in this vast field see for example Berkey 1992 and Hirschler 2012.

clear that he modulated forms of transmission to a considerable extent to make them suitable for his transregional compositional activities.

Changing constituents in patronage networks

Al-Damāmīnī's patronage networks were constituted at different times through a varying combination of scholarly circles and courtly patronage. Recent work on *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran* by İ. Binbaş can help to elucidate these different forms of patronage further. Binbaş studied formations in the medieval Islamic world in the context of the 'princely patronage paradigm' of the fifteenth century Timurid political dispensation.³⁵⁶ Starting from the assumptions that 'the engines of intellectual life in the fifteenth century were the Timurid princely courts', Binbaş explored Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī's 'network of peers outside the courtly' realm.³⁵⁷ His analysis then focused on the accountability of a scholar which bound him to 'princely authority' as well as 'a wider cosmopolitan network of peers who shared similar aesthetic, religious, political and ideological persuasions.'³⁵⁸ These asymmetries were the source of conflict reverberating through networks that were, according to Binbaş, constituted through elements of personal contact, communication, similar sensibilities, functioning through exchanges and encounters among peers.³⁵⁹ Building on this research, I will consider courtly formations and scholarly networks as complementary systems of patronage, which could be activated and employed to different degrees. In al-Damāmīnī's case this helped him to develop a sophisticated transoceanic migratory network along which he navigated relationships with both sociabilities, demonstrating his cultural agency in learned pursuits.

In Mamlūk Egypt and Syria al-Damāmīnī grew into an academic field dominated by endowed scholarly institutions, teaching posts and circles of teachers.³⁶⁰ Mamlūk households and courts were crucial centres for scholarly patronage. Scholarship over the last decades has shown how a tight grid of endowments across the urban landscape of cities, such as Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem, emerged.³⁶¹ This accumulation of administrative offices, teaching posts and stipends for students contributed to the

³⁵⁶ Cf. for this and the following Binbaş 2016: 3-9.

³⁵⁷ These cultural conditions are also implicit in the study of the circulation of scholars and literary salons across medieval and early modern Central Asia, Iran and North India in Szuppe 2004.

³⁵⁸ Binbaş 2016: 6.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

³⁶⁰ The field of the study of endowments is diverse. For the current purpose see especially Berkey 1992: 96.

³⁶¹ See especially Petry 1981, Lapidus 1984, Berkey 1992, Chamberlain 1994, and Hirschler 2012.

built-up of institutional arrangements, vocational settings and social networks, which mediated professional careers.³⁶² Hirschler has shown that this was mainly a horizontal landscape of networks instead of institutions and a peer-based paradigm, which channelled scholarly activities.³⁶³ Al-Damāmīnī was socialised in his learned practices by participating in a vibrant scholarly environment patronised by the court but removed from its sociabilities. Such a setting offered him a well-trodden path for scholarly promotion.

Collecting *taqārīz* (sg. *taqrīz*) – short positive reviews about a littérateur or scholar and his work – was the initial move for al-Damāmīnī to create scholarly networks among his peers. Franz Rosenthal examined a collection of such *taqārīz* – which he calls ‘blurbs’ – for the promotion of what was meant to be al-Damāmīnī’s work of initiation into the world of the Mamlūk learned elite.³⁶⁴ Thomas Bauer further compared al-Damāmīnī’s *taqārīz* to those of a contemporary scholar, al-Āthārī (d. 828/1425), and emphasised the acceleration of network-building as the main purpose of these ‘commendations’.³⁶⁵ Yet, Bauer demonstrated a wider set of motives behind the sequencing of the *taqārīz* and thereby established the parameters of ‘transregionality’, madhhab-affiliation and the student-teacher relationship as the fundamental principles of acquiring and ordering these commendations.³⁶⁶ Finally, he could even prove that al-Damāmīnī’s core peers in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria provided the blueprint for the assemblage of al-Āthārī’s *taqārīz*.³⁶⁷ *Taqārīz* were meant to showcase the socio-cultural and geographic dimension of one’s network. Linking himself with important learned figures within the wider Mamlūk realm, and in particular of its urban centres, was a crucial exercise for al-Damāmīnī and highlighted the significance of his social networks among the scholarly elite.

These different dimensions of his network of peers can be further explored by bringing together different levels of the prosopographical accounts. Firstly, there are the teachers listed in his *tarjama* (‘biographical entry’) among whom he collected his reading certificates (*sama’āt*) and who were crucial for his fundamental education, such as his relative (*qarībuhu*) ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Qarawī, Bahā’ b. al-Damāmīnī in Alexandria, al-Sirāj b. al-Mulaqqin and al-Mujidd Ismā’īl al-Ḥanafī in Cairo, as well as al-Qādī Abu

³⁶² Cf. Berkey 1992: 96-103.

³⁶³ Cf. Hirschler 2006: 3-6 and 15-18.

³⁶⁴ Rosenthal 1981.

³⁶⁵ Bauer 2014: 207-208.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 219.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 217-219.

al-Faḍl al-Nuwayrī in Mecca, all considerable scholars of their time.³⁶⁸ Secondly, there are the connections he forged while he held teaching posts at *madāris* in Alexandria at the beginning of his career and later on in Cairo, foremost at the al-Azhār mosque.³⁶⁹ Although these were not mentioned in his *tarjama*, they showed up in *tarājim* of other people where al-Damāmīnī featured among their *mashyakha* ('list of teachers'). There are dozens of biographical entries in al-Sakhāwī's *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'* in which al-Damāmīnī appears as a teacher of grammar, such as that of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-'Adanī al-Qarafī al-Qāhirī al-Shāfi'ī.³⁷⁰ In others, al-Damāmīnī is mentioned as an authority in *adab* and several students received teaching certificates (*ijāzāt*) from him.³⁷¹ Such contacts which were forged across educational and religious institutions were certainly crucial parts of one's social network in the Mamlūk period and important for scholarly communication as well as professional exchanges. Thirdly, his inclusion into the prosopographical accounts of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries showed that in the eyes of his biographers he shared similar scholarly sociabilities with them, since they were brought up in similar networked environments of the Mamlūk realm.

This last group of peers, especially al-Maqrīzī, al-Sakhāwī and al-Suyūṭī, who belonged to the scholarly elite, reflected on the learned versatility of al-Damāmīnī in their biographical entries of him. A profound education in the traditional subjects of grammar (*naḥw*), poetry (*naẓm*), prose (*nathr*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*), among others, put him on a career path that developed along transregional scholarly networks of the Mamlūk realm, including Syria, Egypt and the Hijaz.³⁷² Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), a polymath of his times, registered him in his biographical collection of lexicographers and grammarians, the *Bughiya al-wu'āt*.³⁷³ The famous historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) listed him in a similar way.³⁷⁴ More significantly, al-Damāmīnī features in multiple entries of other personages in monumental centennial biographical dictionaries by the doyen of *ḥadīth* studies, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), and by his pupil Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) (both appeared in chapter one).³⁷⁵ Altogether, this broad spectrum of prosopographical references explains his epithets *al-adīb* ('the litterateur') and *al-naḥwī* ('the grammarian') as

³⁶⁸ Cf. al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: VII/185.

³⁶⁹ Al-Suyūṭī 1964: 66 and al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: VII/185.

³⁷⁰ Al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: VII/140.

³⁷¹ For example, *Ibid.*, VII/178, XI/70, XII/23.

³⁷² Cf. al-Suyūṭī 1964: 66.

³⁷³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 66-67. For al-Suyūṭī's learned persona cf. the articles in the recently published collected volume by Ghersetti 2016.

³⁷⁴ See al-Maqrīzī 2002.

³⁷⁵ Al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: VII/184-187 and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā' al-ghumr*, III/361.

acknowledgements by his peers of his disciplinary competence,³⁷⁶ and simultaneously signifies his scholarly mastery in the study of Arabic linguistics and literature for prospective students.³⁷⁷ The prosopographical record demonstrates al-Damāmīnī's standing as a major scholar in Mamlūk Egypt based on a construction of scholarly networks and the pursuit of learned endeavours.

The incentive to leave his well-settled professional and social environment to embark on a new life in the subcontinent presumably had its roots in the failed attempt to diversify his professional portfolio. In 800/1398 he went on pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) from Damascus, but after his return soon abandoned his learned activities and went into the weaving (*hiyāka*) business in Alexandria.³⁷⁸ All that his biographers mention is that his business idea went up in flames and in order to avoid his debt payments he fled to Upper Egypt. His flight was cut short though by his creditors who brought him to Cairo in a degrading fashion (*mahānan*) and made sure that his debts were settled in the highest echelons of political power, including the *kātib al-sirr* (principal secretary and scribe) and the courtly circle of Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Shaykh (r. 815/1412-823/1420).³⁷⁹ This seemed to have marked a turning point in his life. In 819/1416, soon after these events, he went on the *ḥajj* again. From Mecca, he then continued further on to Yemen in 820/1417 in the company of 'Ibāda b. 'Alī al-Qāhirī, a member of the Banū Fahd extended family, who were famous as historiographers of Mecca and built crucial trading and intellectual links across the subcontinent.³⁸⁰ Together, they arrived in Zabīd in Yemen, where al-Damāmīnī took up a teaching position in a mosque.

The peregrinations of scholars such al-Damāmīnī across the Red Sea region was a phenomenon that did not necessitate political involvement. In the medieval chronicle of the city of Zabīd, the *Bughiya al-mustafīd fī ta'rīkh madīnat zabīd* ('The beneficiary desire of the history of the city of Zabīd'), no reference to al-Damāmīnī's arrival is given for the year 820/1417.³⁸¹ This 'rather limited interest for any inquiry into a field beyond politics' has generally been attributed to the calibration of royal chronicles across the medieval Arabic lands.³⁸² And in the *Bughiya al-mustafīd* in particular, the political history, especially for the dynasties that ruled before the author was born, certainly

³⁷⁶ Cf. al-Suyūṭī 1964: 66.

³⁷⁷ Cf. al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: VII/185.

³⁷⁸ For this and the following see *Ibid.*, VII/185.

³⁷⁹ Holt 2018.

³⁸⁰ Meloy 2017 and al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: II/16-17.

³⁸¹ Ibn al-Dayba' 1979: 103-104.

³⁸² Hirschler 2008: 99.

dominates the narrative of the chronicle and a wider social history was marginalised.³⁸³ Still, this neglect indicates another point. In a city of scholarly repute, such as Zabīd, the coming and going of scholars, and their recruitment and learned pursuits were probably not something that demanded the direct involvement of the royal domain. Therefore, al-Damāmīnī did not have to approach courtly circles to receive patronage, which is why a figure of his standing did not show up on the radar of the chronicler. While one might assume that al-Damāmīnī might not have been particularly well-known in Yemen at that time, references in al-Sakhāwī's biographical dictionary show that his activities in Zabīd were talked about in scholarly circles. Al-Sakhāwī mentioned al-Damāmīnī's scholarly transactions with special reference to Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm al-Zabīdī al-Ḥanafī, who was well-versed in the fields of grammar (*naḥw*), morphology (*ṣarf*) and lexicography (*luḡha*), and who successfully studied with al-Damāmīnī and even supported him in his dealings with legal matters in Zabīd.³⁸⁴ Scholarly circles, their institutions and peers provided the foremost opportunities and a social safety net.

As there was no opportunity for long-term employment he travelled further and sailed across the Indian Ocean (*baḥr al-hind*) to the port of Cambay in Gujarat. From this point onwards al-Damāmīnī seems to have dedicated his energies to the writing of scholarly commentaries, particularly in the field of grammar. One could speculate whether his decision in favour of a transoceanic migration was correlated with his previous contact with a member of the Banū Fahd, 'Ibāda b. 'Alī al-Qāhirī, especially given the transregional presence of the Banū Fahd in the subcontinent.³⁸⁵ Several members of this kinship group had spent longer sojourns in South Asia and were presumably well-connected in terms of travelling, local contacts and scholarly opportunities.³⁸⁶ Once in al-Hind, al-Damāmīnī seemed to have been well-received, respected for his knowledge and once again returned to a successful career in teaching and he received a great amount of wealth as well (*fa-ḥaṣala lahu iqbālun kabīrun wa-akhadhū 'anhu wa-aẓẓamūhu wa-ḥaṣala lahu dunyā 'ariḍatun*).³⁸⁷ This is a rather generic note that appears in similar form in several biographical entries of itinerant figures, such as traders and scholars. However, in al-Damāmīnī's case no specific reference is made by al-Sakhāwī to any commercial activities in al-Hind. Therefore, I would read

³⁸³ The author becomes far more detailed in the decades leading up to the year 923/1517. For an overview of the structure cf. edition's introduction in Ibn al-Dayba' 1979: 9-10.

³⁸⁴ Al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: III/134.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., IV/16-17. Meloy 2010.

³⁸⁶ Meloy 2017 and Rosenthal 2017.

³⁸⁷ Al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: VII/184-187.

this statement as a reference to his success in teaching and consider him as a recipient of courtly patronage, a point that will be substantiated in the following sections of this chapter.

The last years of his life in al-Hind (1417-1424) continued to be dominated by an extraordinary mobility, which contributed to his scholarly success, though it may also hint at a failure on his behalf to secure permanent patronage. During this period he penned at least the three above-mentioned grammar commentaries (the second one he continued to rework until the end of his life), each one dedicated to a particular sultan at the courts of Gujarat and the Bahmanis in the Deccan.³⁸⁸ Whereas his scholarly career in Egypt and Yemen had been characterised by a professional accountability towards peers in complex scholarly networks, al-Damāmīnī's scholarly life in al-Hind was marked by a closer affiliation with the courtly circles of Gujarat and the Deccan and a dependence on courtly networks of patronage. Yet, such an affiliation with and dependence on a court could take different forms. For example, al-Damāmīnī's contemporary Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Shams al-Dīn al-Hindī al-Dawlatābādī (from Dawlatābād in the Deccan) (d. 844/1440) rose to prominent and powerful positions at the court of Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Sharqī in Jawnpūr as prime judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) and 'king of scholars' (*malik al-'ulamā'*).³⁸⁹ He wrote several works in history and tafsīr, but he also composed works on Arabic grammar, for example the *Sharḥ al-Hindī*, a commentary on the famous treatise *al-Kāfiya* by Ibn al-Ḥājib, which circulated widely during the early modern period across the subcontinent and the Ottoman Empire, as well as *al-Irshād*, a treatment of Arabic.³⁹⁰ In comparison, the sources on al-Damāmīnī suggest that he probably did not belong to the inner courtly circles or the royal entourage of the sultan. Courtly posts and specific entitlements, which would also have produced a more stable professional condition, are never mentioned. Instead, one can consider him as part of a larger learned community that existed in the proximity of these courts.

Courtly patronage was a tool for scholarly recruitment and a way to expand the cultural activities of a courtly formation, which in return raised one's prestige in a transregional Islamicate world. For the late medieval sultanate of Gujarat, S. Sheikh writes that 'the sultans actively patronized learning and literature in Arabic and

³⁸⁸ These three commentaries do not all feature in the Mamlūk period biographical dictionaries, but they are all listed in Ḥajjī Khalifa's monumental seventeenth century bibliography *Kashf al-Zunūn*. See Flügel 1835: II/292, V/657, VI/419.

³⁸⁹ Nizami 2018.

³⁹⁰ Collections in London, Cairo, Hyderabad and Istanbul for example testify to the popularity of both works, which were transmitted across South Asia and the Ottoman Empire over the following centuries. For example, see Ashraf 1993 and Loth 1877.

Persian' and learned men received 'court patronage and grants of land', in turn legitimising the rule of the dynasty.³⁹¹ Sufi orders played a crucial societal role as well and were probably far more common as learned sociabilities than the scholarly circles that centred on the courts.³⁹² According to Sheikh's argument, in Gujarat these Sufis and scholars were among a larger assemblage of social groups, such as pastoralists, merchants, courtiers and soldiers – and common to the South Asian context these professional pursuits often overlapped³⁹³ – who were held together by a growing 'regional consensus' during the fifteenth century.³⁹⁴ Such an emerging regional culture was grounded in prosperity brought by trade and was facilitated by a sultanate which fostered a horizontal 'connectivity', but also through the multiplication of administrative, military and fiscal structures across the region.³⁹⁵ These institutions introduced a vertical direction and helped to establish what Sheikh calls 'a trading sultanate ruling a civic world', thereby centralising tendencies which held together and promoted 'imperial power around the charismatic figure of the sultan and his court.'³⁹⁶ While she meticulously sews together the societal components of this 'regional consensus',³⁹⁷ she generally does not portray courtly encounters from the perspective of cultural production, i.e. the scholar himself. This has a lot to do with the dominant narrative sources, which favour the view of the court.³⁹⁸

Al-Damāmīnī's case is very well documented in terms of his cultural pursuits through the details he provided in the prefaces to his works. For him the changing scene in sociabilities led to a substantial shift in the composition of his social networks. He was one of several scholars from the Mamlūk realm who were attracted to the Gujaratī court.³⁹⁹ For the court this patronage presumably was a way to expand the courtly formation to include learned communities, who could contribute scholarly expertise in various fields and serve to teach, promote the cultural outreach of the court and diversify its learned activities. For al-Damāmīnī this meant primarily that his peers did not remain the exclusive intended audience anymore, but that a dedication added a courtly patron to the equation. The prefaces of all three commentaries that he

³⁹¹ Sheikh 2010: 204.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 205 and for the most recent work on this see Balachandaran 2012

³⁹³ I thank Roy Fischel for pointing this out to me.

³⁹⁴ Sheikh 2010: 185-186.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 185-186, 197, 214.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 217.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 185.

³⁹⁸ These are mainly the Persian and some Arabic chronicles which Sheikh used for her study of medieval Gujarat. For an overview see her introduction in Sheikh 2010.

³⁹⁹ Sheikh 2010: 204-207.

wrote while residing in Gujarat and the Deccan each included an elaborate eulogy to one of the sultans of these realms. His first work, the *Ta'liq al-farā'id*, which he composed in 820/1417 after his arrival in Cambay, was dedicated to the Sultan of Gujarat, 'Aḥmad Shāh al-Sultān b. al-Sultān Muḥammad Shāh b. al-Sultān Muẓaffar Shāh',⁴⁰⁰ who ruled from 1411 to 1442.⁴⁰¹ The *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*, written in 824/1421 in the town of Nahrwāla in Gujarat was dedicated to the same sultan, Aḥmad Shāh.⁴⁰² Similarly, al-Damāmīnī's *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* was dedicated to another ruler, the sultan Aḥmad Shāh of the neighbouring Bahmanī realm in the Deccan, who ruled from 1397 to 1422.⁴⁰³ In this case, al-Damāmīnī explicitly referred to an audience that was granted to him.⁴⁰⁴

The direct form of courtly patronage for a scholarly purpose becomes visible in the preface (*muqaddima*) of each of the three commentaries. Studies on the literary device of the preface by P. Freimark and more recently by A. al-Saleh have generally focused on samples from the Abbasid period, but these observations can still serve to unpack its paratextual significance and purpose within each work as it continued to be practiced over the centuries.⁴⁰⁵ Freimark compiled a list of *topoi* which appear in prefaces of Arabic literary works in general. As a rule, the work sets out with the *basmala* (introduces the work 'in the name of Allāh') and the *ḥamdala* (generic formulae of praise to Allah), followed by the *taṣliya* (generic formulae for the praise of the prophet Muḥammad) as the standard eulogies common to all sorts of works, but the phrasing of these eulogies already offered the author a way to frame the topic of the text in a very abstract form.⁴⁰⁶ This was then fully elaborated after the *ammā ba'du*, a textual marker after which the essential purpose of the work was introduced, with reference to the reason and justification for its composition, as well as the form it was going to take.⁴⁰⁷ Expressions of modesty, formulae of servility, confessions of possible mistakes, statements of imperfection and apologetics were common *topoi* which marked the paratextual presentation of the work by the author and established his relationship with the potential reader.⁴⁰⁸ Apart from giving an overview of the 'purpose and

⁴⁰⁰ MS Ragip Pasa 1326, Istanbul, fol. 3re.

⁴⁰¹ Sheikh 2010: 199.

⁴⁰² MS Ragip Pasa 1370, Istanbul, fol. 2v. Sheikh refers to another text, entitled 'Ayn al-ḥayāt, which is a *mukhtaṣar* ('abridgement') of Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Damīrī's zoological encyclopaedia *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, which al-Damāmīnī wrote under the same patron. Cf. Sheikh 2010: 206; Kopf 2017.

⁴⁰³ MS Ragip Pasa 1374, Istanbul, fol. 3re.

⁴⁰⁴ MS Nahw 108, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fol. 4re.

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. Freimark 1967 and al-Saleh 2015.

⁴⁰⁶ For this and the following see Freimark 1967: 22-28.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁰⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

structure of the book', al-Musawi has also pointed to the 'autobiographical itinerary' that the preface provided.⁴⁰⁹

Therefore, the preface signifies the socio-cultural importance of the work as envisaged by its author and defines its *intended circulation*, meaning the readership the author had in mind when he composed his work. For all the conventions and standardisations that developed during the medieval period, the author was able to personalise the preface of his work. Al-Damāmīnī refers to each sultan in the dedicatory section of the *muqaddima* in order to express that he is indebted to him and a recipient of royal patronage. Naturally, the preface was the prime place to express one's reception of patronage. The paratextual nature of the preface as a 'threshold' (*seuil*), according to Genette, unfolds its full potential as a discourse and presents a written text.⁴¹⁰ It negotiated the purpose of the text with the potential readership and the patron belonged to this group. The patron was brought into the purview of the intended audience. Apart from inscribing his own persona favourably through formulae of humility, piety and scholarly credentials, al-Damāmīnī could also account for the wider context of his composition. These elements delineated the compositional history of his work, the process of textual transmission, and the intended audience. More specifically, the preface could mark a socio-cultural context that was meant to determine the history of circulation of the text from the point of its author.

That this paratextual *modus operandi* was specific to al-Damāmīnī's cultural pursuits in South Asia becomes clear through a comparison with his previous works. In Mamlūk Egypt, al-Damāmīnī's compositions were initially intended to circulate among his social networks, his peers, and then the wider learned spheres of society. This was presumably one of the effects his collection of *taqārīz* had, beyond the purpose of constructing a network.⁴¹¹ It was passed around by scholars engaged with his work. Similar strategies in his outreach to readers can be demonstrated with the other literary works he authored while in Egypt.⁴¹² For example, one of his earlier works, the *Nuzūl al-ghayth*, a critique of a work by al-Şafadī, sparked an academic debate in Mamlūk Egypt and shows that here again the intended audience was a rather exclusive and scholarly informed group of people.⁴¹³ Although the Mamlūk scholarly society was

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. al-Musawi 2015: 103.

⁴¹⁰ Genette 2001: 9-11. Ibid 1987.

⁴¹¹ Bauer 2014.

⁴¹² This argument will be elaborated further in the penultimate section of this chapter with another commentary that he authored on Ibn Hishām's *Mughnī al-labīb*.

⁴¹³ I thank Adam Talib for pointing this work out to me. Cf. al-Musawi 2015: 236.

organised to a considerable extent by the availability of endowments for educational activities, the actual application of this patronage was subject to a system of cultural practices among learned groups. This created a horizontal field of cultural production, which accommodated creativity, debate, consensus and conflict within far-flung scholarly networks.⁴¹⁴

Conversely, I argue that al-Damāmīnī's use of the preface in South Asia responded to preconditions of cultural production in the regional sultanates of fifteenth century al-Hind, in which courtly circles played a prominent role. This difference did not hinder scholarly mobility, but rather changed the author's strategy in approaching courts and scholarly sociabilities. Although there is not much information about the actual personal encounters between the sultan and savant, scholars such as al-Damāmīnī had to engage with the court in one way or the other, either by himself or through intermediaries. Significantly, he thereby removed himself from the terrain of endowments and intricate scholarly networks with their own forms of peer-review. The court constituted a cultural formation with a far more immediate influence through direct patronage in comparison to endowed scholarly institutions at least with regard to Islamic knowledge production.⁴¹⁵ Through the instrument of courtly patronage, which often took the form of land grants to a specific person, the royal domain added a vertical level to the intricate landscape of scholarly transactions.⁴¹⁶ However, this does not necessarily mean that these regional courtly groups were able to fully guide the direction of scholarly inquiry commensurate with their own inclinations. Scholars were able to mobilise other resources for their learned endeavours. Binbaş points out the importance of peers for the socialisation of scholars in their methods and learned activities.⁴¹⁷ At the same time, for the local context of medieval Hama in Syria, Hirschler has shown how an 'urban renaissance' offered several different resources for scholarly groups to accommodate themselves at the margins of the core civilian elite of judges and other military and non-military elite households.⁴¹⁸ Similarly, in fifteenth century South Asia al-Damāmīnī did not belong to

⁴¹⁴ This argument is elaborated in the chapters 3-5 in al-Musawi 2015.

⁴¹⁵ There is a whole complex of cultural fields built around the courtly formations of medieval South Asia. For another Indic context see for example the recent work by Busch 2011.

⁴¹⁶ In a South Asian context such land grants occurred often in the context of interactions between royal authority and Sufi brotherhoods. For a meticulous study of these aspects in the fifteenth century Deccan see Ernst 2004.

⁴¹⁷ See the previous references to Binbaş 2016.

⁴¹⁸ Hirschler 2008: 100-101 and 117-120.

the groups of the high-standing courtiers, but to a wider learned community at the margins of these upper echelons of the court.

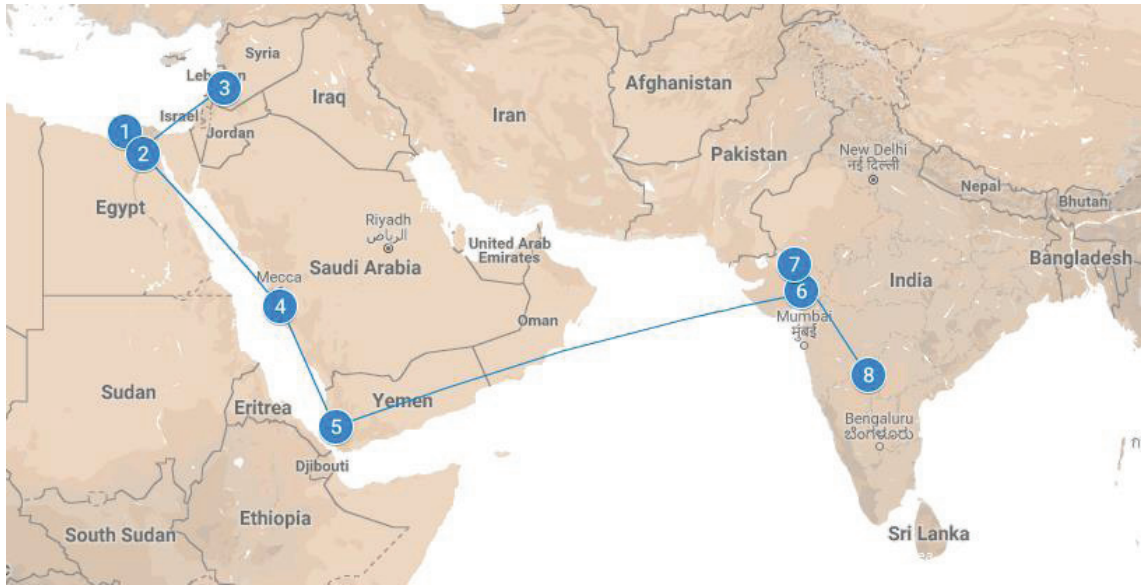
It is possible to conceive of al-Damāmīnī's eulogies as the fulfilment of a contract emphasising and interrelating the importance of both parties: the patron and the scholar. On the one hand, the sultans symbolised the guarantors of an Islamic order and offered the material means for its perpetuation. These eulogies gain even more force when read in conjunction with al-Damāmīnī's complaints that it was hard for him to get hold of manuscripts and books during his sojourn in Gujarat, as mentioned in the preface of the *Ta'liq al-farā'id*.⁴¹⁹ The sultan provided the means for these intellectual pursuits. While eulogies consisted of familiar *topoi*, for example, describing Aḥmad Shāh Bahmanī as *Imām al-muslimīn* ('the religious guidance of the faithful'),⁴²⁰ these phrases should not only be read as a hyperbole, but could also be considered as a deliberate and calculated turn to a new ruler and possibly al-Damāmīnī's abandonment of the Mamlūks due to his fall from grace in Egypt. On the other hand, the scholar acknowledged the courtly patronage that was granted to him and which allowed him to compose the work. His erudition unfolded along the lines of his scholarly expertise, which was generated outside of the court. Al-Damāmīnī's scholarly significance was due to the fact that he shared a wider social network of peers and his textual compositions therefore would have circulated among a larger local and transregional audience to whom these Islamic qualities of the sultans could be advertised. A transregional audience ultimately consisted of a range of courtly formations which were connected by scholarly groups and learned circles. This ensured that a scholarly work circulated across both courtly and scholarly sociabilities.

Al-Damāmīnī exhibits several elements which enabled him to move between networks across the Red Sea region and al-Hind. His transregional cultural mobility was a crucial precondition which gave him access to courtly patronage in the first place. The reputation he carried with him as a *homme de lettre* coming from the Mamlūk realm allowed him to quickly inscribe himself into the courtly formation of both the Gujarati and the Bahmanī sultans. He consequently offered not only a grammar commentary, but a promotional platform to his patron and, more significantly, one that only made sense given his admission to other, learned sociabilities. A courtly scholar such as al-

⁴¹⁹ Cf. MS Ragip Pasa 1326, Istanbul, fol. 2v.

⁴²⁰ MS Nahw 107, Salar Jung, 4re.

Damāmīnī was thereby a way to link both courtly and scholarly spheres in al-Hind by reaching out and promoting learned endeavours.



Map data: Google, My Maps

Map 2 – al-Damāmīnī’s fifteenth century transregional pursuits: 1– Alexandria 2– Cairo 3– Damascus 4– Mecca 5– Zabīd 6– Cambay 7– Nahrwāla 8– Gulbarga

A tale of two commentaries – textual mobility through narrative strategies

As the previous section has shown, al-Damāmīnī shifted from peer-based to court-centred networks of patronage and thereby accomplished his transoceanic movement from the Red Sea region to Gujarat and the Deccan. Yet, this re-composing of his social networks was only one part of his academic success story. Courtly patronage does not mean that the work was solely intended for the patron, which would be more akin to ‘literary offerings’ that were dedicated as ‘courtly literature’.⁴²¹ The patron became part of a larger audience for a specific purpose. A closer look at al-Damāmīnī’s texts demonstrates how he developed different narrative strategies to render his texts socially and culturally mobile, i.e. how he ensured that they became suitable for changing audiences. While al-Damāmīnī developed various socio-cultural strategies in order to inscribe himself into the courts in Gujarat and the Deccan, in this section I argue that he composed his grammar works to make them suitable for the learned communities that he encountered during his stays. Al-Damāmīnī’s audiences in al-Hind had a scholarly background that was shaped by a curriculum different from Mamlūk Egypt – a claim that will be substantiated in the following. As potential

⁴²¹ Cf. Holt 1998.

readership they had to be addressed in a distinct way. This is best exemplified with his second text, the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*, the one al-Damāmīnī wrote when he was in Nahrwāla in Gujarat, because this text is a reworked version of a commentary that he composed while teaching at al-Azhar in Cairo and it was revised into a final version again at a later stage in his life, probably in the Deccan.⁴²²

Thus, at least three trajectories of his commentaries on the *Mughnī al-labīb* can be established, namely of the *Sharḥ mughnī*, the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* and the *Sharḥ Mazj*.⁴²³ The *Sharḥ Mazj* is a culmination of the other two versions written at the end of his life and therefore an intellectual achievement that deserves a thorough study of itself. Here, I will mainly focus on al-Damāmīnī's first two versions, since a more detailed comparison of their compositional processes can shed light on the transformation of his socio-cultural pursuits during his transoceanic migration. In al-Damāmīnī's *tarjama*, al-Sakhāwī remarked on the fact that he had composed two versions of the *Sharḥ mughnī*, a Yemeni (*yamanī*) version and an Indian (*hindī*) version.⁴²⁴ And while al-Sakhāwī linked these *shurūḥ* with the existence of another commentary by al-Shummunī, he did not refer to courtly patronage under which al-Damāmīnī composed the *hindī* version of the grammar treatise. According to the biographical entry of 'Ibāda b. 'Alī Ibn Fahd al-Qāhirī, 'Ibāda had accompanied al-Damāmīnī into the Yemen, where he received al-Damāmīnī's *ḥāshiya* ('marginal comments') of the *Mughnī al-labīb* before they went separate ways, as he did not join al-Damāmīnī on his journey onwards to Gujarat.⁴²⁵ The *ḥāshiya* which he took from al-Damāmīnī was the *yamanī* version of the commentary, which he wrote before travelling to al-Hind. This *yamanī* version then probably circulated further in the Red Sea region and thus al-Sakhāwī became aware of it. When al-Damāmīnī arrived in Gujarat he reworked the *Sharḥ al-Mughnī* into the *hindī* version, which was now entitled *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*, and dedicated it to the Gujaratī sultan in order to receive patronage.

Here, I will use the entangled history of circulation of the *yamanī* and the *hindī* versions to analyse al-Damāmīnī's use of narrative strategies, which enabled him to navigate his texts across different courtly and scholarly sociabilities. Recent scholarship has shown how marginal commentaries became sites of intellectual debate, social contestation and cultural innovation. By concentrating on Ibn Ḥajar al-

⁴²² Cf. 'Uthmān 2012.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Cf. for this and the following al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: VII/184-185.

⁴²⁵ Cf. Ibid., IV/16-17.

‘Asqalānī’s contribution to the Islamicate commentary tradition, the *Faḥ al-bārī*, J. Blecher analyses the political and social circumstances which framed the composition of such commentaries beyond normative preconceptions.⁴²⁶ A plurality of perspectives that cross-linked the participation of students in al-‘Asqalānī’s composition, the relationship with his patrons and rivalries with scholars illuminate the various social actors which contributed to the cultural significances of commentary traditions. In a similar vein, A. Ahmed studied post-classical philosophical glosses from South Asia as textual spaces of ‘interpretive growth’ in the rationalist disciplines.⁴²⁷ This played out both on a synchronic level through the commentator’s engagement with contemporary teachings, and diachronically as a proliferation of hypertextual exercises that drove the studying of master texts and their thickly-layered curricular commentaries in *madrassa* settings.⁴²⁸ C. Minkowsky, R. O’Hanlon and A. Venkatkrishnan promoted ‘varieties of contextualism’ as another promising venue for social historical research on intellectual cultures in the subcontinent.⁴²⁹ They analysed textual productions within their intertextual frameworks as ‘interventions of individual authors’ in their socio-cultural settings. Departing from these studies, tracing the social, cultural and political circumstances of a textual composition can yield crucial insights into how an author created an audience-centred framework for his composition. It can show how al-Damāmīnī responded to his immediate socio-cultural environment and reconciled scholarly frameworks of text transmission with the requirements of his students and intended readership.

Building on these studies, I will concentrate on how al-Damāmīnī employed narrative strategies to render his texts socially and culturally mobile. Writing for a transregional audience also meant that he had to render his compositions commensurable to the respective local context. And here I am going to focus on three narrative techniques. Firstly, changing the preface to inscribe himself into networks of courtly patronage and thereby I am linking this argument to the point about al-Damāmīnī’s changing social networks in the first section of this chapter. Secondly, reworking the explanatory remarks to make them suitable for a new audience, one that was marked hitherto by the absence of the work he explicated. Thirdly, adding a different colophon to claim the scholarly authority of the commentary.

⁴²⁶ Blecher 2013: 264.

⁴²⁷ Ahmed 2013: 317-324.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁹ Minkowski et al. 2015: 1-3.

The first narrative strategy relates to the changing of the preface. Both the *yamanī* and the *hindī* version differ most prominently in terms of their prefaces. While the *yamanī* version does not contain any reference to a patron, the reception of patronage was fully elaborated in the *hindī* version. Naturally, al-Damāmīnī's sense of obligation and show of obedience towards his patron Aḥmad Muẓaffar Shāh became a recurring theme that seems to dominate his transactions in Gujarat. In a highly floral language structured in rhymed prose (*saj'*) al-Damāmīnī reports that he was given an audience (*muthūl*) with the sultan, and was already prepared to travel back to his homeland (*bi-qaṣḍi l-wadā'i al-waṭari min riḥlati ilā l-waṭani*), when Aḥmad Muẓaffar Shāh commanded him to return to Nahrwāla to disseminate knowledge and “publicise” it (*'alā baththi l-'ilmi wa-nashrihi*) for the benefit of the learned communities.⁴³⁰ Al-Damāmīnī complied obediently (*fa-mtathaltu dhalika bi-l-sam'i wa-l-ṭā'a*).⁴³¹ He composed the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* as an abridgement with a focus on important issues (*fa-katabtu hādha al-sharḥa muqtaṣiran 'alā l-umūr al-muhimma*) that were meant to ease the instruction of complicated issues in the Arabic language.⁴³²

As mentioned briefly before, al-Damāmīnī included long praises on the sultan of Gujarat in the preface to the *hindī* version. This sultan was showered with flattering titles: Aḥmad Muẓaffar Shāh became the *Amīr al-mu'minīn* ('leader of the faithful'), the *Sayyid al-Sadāt al-Salāṭīn* ('the master of the masters among the sultans'), the *Wā'iḳ bi-Allāh al-musta'ān nāṣir al-dunyā wa-l-dīn* ('the defender of Allāh, who makes use of him as the protector of the world and the faith').⁴³³ He was made to shine as an Islamic star in a country dominated by the darkness of unbelief, a recurring theme in al-Damāmīnī's descriptions of al-Hind.⁴³⁴ This striking contrast in terms of patronage delineates the different intentions of al-Damāmīnī in composing these commentaries which I will elaborate on in the following. The *yamanī* version was meant to be a scholarly essay and the *hindī* version a form of knowledge transmission to the learned communities of Gujarat patronised by their sultan.

The *yamanī* version constituted an intellectual exercise by which al-Damāmīnī inserted himself into the learned community in the Red Sea region and proved his scholarly credentials. He introduced the work after the *basmala* with his own voice: 'yaqūlu al-'abd al-faqīr [...] – 'it says the slave and beggar', followed by his name

⁴³⁰ 'Uthmān 2012: 47 and MS Carullah 1941, Istanbul, fol. 2re.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ MS Ragip Pasa 1370, Istanbul, fol. 2v.

⁴³⁴ Cf. the prefaces of all three grammar works.

Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. ‘Umar al-Makhzūmī al-Damāmīnī al-Mālīkī.⁴³⁵ After a short *ḥamdala*, he defined the objective of this composition as a *ta’līq* (‘explanatory remarks’) on the *Mughnī al-labīb* of Ibn Hisham. Al-Damāmīnī elucidates further that he wrote this *ta’līq* in order to facilitate (*tayassara*) this ‘wondrous purpose’ (*al-amad al-gharīb*), meaning the *Mughnī*, whose citations (*īrād*) were transmitted to him through the process of *qirā’a* (a recitation by which a student reads out a copied text to his teacher, who corrects him). He then explains that he initially intended to write a *sharḥ ṭawīl* (‘extensive commentary’) covering all fields of investigation of the Arabic language. However, he realised that this was too burdensome a task. A ‘sudden inspiration’ (*mubādara*) impelled him to write a *mukhtaṣar* (‘abridgement’) instead. Thus, he contended himself with a limited treatment (*majāla muqtaṣira*). At this point the preface ends and the preface of Ibn Hishām’s treatise begins (*dībāja al-kitāb*).

In contrast, the *hindī* version sets out with a discourse on the importance of the Arabic language and how it provides access to the understanding of the book of Allah and the tradition of the prophet:

‘[...] Thanks to God, who granted the Arabic language the superior authority and made it the treasure [trove] of eloquence; for it is the enriched understanding [mughnī al-labīb] of all that he had made equivalent in languages, and its investiture is a staircase by which one gains access to the understanding of the book of Allāh and the tradition of the prophet [...] and those who start with opening the chapter on the governing syntax [will] be raised in rank.’⁴³⁶

While the introductory statement in the *yamanī* version sets out a scholarly commentary by which he ought to prove his credentials in the field of grammar, the *hindī* version framed the commentary as part of larger cultural mission. His *yamanī* version contributed to the flourishing commentary cultures that redefined the parameters of scholarly communication especially in Mamlūk Egypt.⁴³⁷ Yet, while al-Damāmīnī composed his *yamanī* version amidst a vibrant field of cultural production, as al-Musawi characterised it,⁴³⁸ his *hindī* version had particular objectives in South Asia which are removed from the exclusive scholarly domains of Mamlūk academia. Here, his commentary was meant to provide access to the knowledge of the syntax that governed the higher Arabic Islamicate idiom. It is first and foremost through the Arabic language that the seeker on the path of Allah can approach the holy Quran and the corpus of prophetic traditions. Al-Damāmīnī presents Arabic grammar as the necessary

⁴³⁵ For this and the following cf. MS Hamidiye 1286, Istanbul, fol. 1v.

⁴³⁶ MS Fatih 5045, Istanbul, fol. 1v. and MS IO Bijapur 7, London, fol. 1v.

⁴³⁷ Al-Musawi 2015: 126-135.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

requirement and even a precondition to the complex world of the Islamic core texts, which should be at the heart of every righteous seeker's pursuits. He packaged the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* as an auxiliary study book.

Al-Damāmīnī's commentary dealt with an elaborate and prominent grammar treatise, the *Mughnī al-labīb* by Ibn Hishām. It was held in high esteem during this period with several commentaries written to engage with it and generally meant to enhance a primarily scholarly Arabic idiom 'that functioned as the vehicle of expression for the sunna'.⁴³⁹ With reference to the initial treatise, A. Gully argued 'that Ibn Hishām was possibly reviving a long-standing tradition of hermeneutics, but through the eyes of a grammarian'.⁴⁴⁰ Ibn Hishām's two main aims were 'to correct errors of interpretation' and to 'instruct students of Arabic on how to reach the most acceptable interpretation of the language based on the application of sound grammatical and semantic principles' and these were elaborated through the use of Quranic and poetic references.⁴⁴¹ In turn, al-Damāmīnī's commentary was meant to explicate these grammatical conventions, thereby spreading the knowledge about Ibn Hishām's intellectual heritage. By reading these grammar treatises and later commentaries students were introduced to various facets of the wider Islamicate cultural complex, such as Quranic verses and prophetic traditions. Al-Damāmīnī underscores this initial purpose in the introduction to his commentary. It was through the analysis of these core texts that a didactic purpose, namely the development of the students' grammatical knowledge, ought to be achieved.

The second strategy was based on reworking the explanations in his commentary to make it suitable for a different audience. Here, I use a contrastive approach again. In Cairo, he wrote the *yamanī* commentary to inscribe himself into larger debates of his field. In Gujarat he instead revised his commentary to make it fit the needs of a reader not acquainted with grammatical debates. It is impossible to cover the larger work at this point. Therefore, I will focus on three sections, two in al-Damāmīnī's commentary on terms in the introduction of the *Mughnī* and a last one in the main body of the commentary on the *Mughnī* which deals with a grammatical phenomenon.

⁴³⁹ Gully 1995: 8-9, 14-15 and, quoted through him, Carter 1991. See for example the critical edition of another of these commentaries by al-Shummuni, *al-Munsif min al-kalām*, partially analysed in al-Mubarak 2006. Cf. 'Uthmān 2012a: 41-44.

⁴⁴⁰ Gully 1995: 4.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

In the *yamanī* version, he began by explaining the significance of the phrase *al-ḥamdu li-llāh* ('praise to God') at the beginning of Ibn Hisham's treatise.⁴⁴² Firstly al-Damāmīnī stated that the phrase *al-ḥamdu li-llāh* was well-known among the people. He then went on to differentiate between the terms *al-ḥamd* and *al-shukr*. There is an overlap between these two concepts, which at this early point in the text might have been used to serve as a theological prompt.⁴⁴³ Then comes an explication of the terms, which are again laid out on a theological level. *Al-ḥamd* is the praise in the language for the beauty of the received blessing and so forth, whereas *al-shukr* is an action which serves the aggrandizement of the benefactor. Al-Damāmīnī elaborated on this further and after a few more lines he began to quote the reasoning of al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) and the explications of al-Subkī (d. 773/1371-2) in this matter.⁴⁴⁴ Both scholars were well-known grandees by al-Damāmīnī's times, especially in places such as Cairo. By quoting them al-Damāmīnī could exhibit his knowledge and demonstrate that he followed a highly erudite scholarly regime.

A comparison with the same section from the *Tuhfat* shows that the *hindī* version was elaborated for a different purpose. In the *hindī* version al-Damāmīnī quoted Ibn Hisham's words and then simply explained that *al-ḥamdu li-llāh* was the praise in the language with the goal of aggrandizement, disregarding a connection with the blessing.⁴⁴⁵ Apart from being much more succinct, the statement also left out the differentiation between the terms *al-ḥamd* and *al-shukr*. The phrase *al-ḥamdu li-llāh* stands on its own and is accordingly explained to make its meaning and application comprehensible on a semantic level. More significantly, no authorities were mentioned, presumably because both al-Zamakhsharī and al-Subkī would not have been part of the scholarly canon among the learned audiences of Gujarat at that point.

These two different *modi operandi* were further developed in the course of both commentaries, emphasising that they were written for different purposes and ultimately different audiences of students. In the *yamanī* version al-Damāmīnī continued with Ibn Hishām's next term in this line, *afdālihi* (lit. 'his merits').⁴⁴⁶ Again he focused on showcasing a variety of conventions and the semantic background of the

⁴⁴² For this and the following see MS Hamidiye 1286, Istanbul, fol. 1v.

⁴⁴³ I thank Asad Ahmed for pointing this out to me.

⁴⁴⁴ With these two nisbas al-Damāmīnī was probably referring to Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, who wrote famous works on grammar, rhetoric and lexicography as well as Quranic commentary, and Bahā' al-Dīn Abū Ḥamīd Aḥmad al-Subkī, who was a famous judge in fourteenth century Damascus and wrote several works in the disciplines of rhetoric and philology in general. See respectively Versteegh 2018 and Schacht/Bosworth 2018.

⁴⁴⁵ Cf. MS Ragıp Pasa, 1370, Istanbul, fol. 1v.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. MS Hamidiye 1286, Istanbul, fol. 1v.

word as elaborated by previous scholars. He quoted the authority on lexicography al-Jawharī (d. beg. 11th century) through his major work *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* in order to define the meaning of *al-afḍāl* as synonymous to *al-iḥsān* ('performance of good deeds') and so forth.⁴⁴⁷ Compared to the *yamanī* version, the *hindī* version just provides the lexicographical statement that *al-afḍāl* is synonymous with *al-iḥsān* and then continues with the next term. In sum, while in the *yamanī* version short textual units were quoted and then elaborated on extensively by providing a commentary on the multifaceted cultural background of the term that built on a diverse canon of scholarly authorities from different fields of Islamicate scholarship, the *hindī* version offered a short semantic explanation aimed at making the treatise intelligible on a lexicographical level.

Al-Damāmīnī composed the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* as an auxiliary tool that could serve a learned community in Gujarat in the acquisition of Arabic grammatical knowledge and to that goal he reworked the scholarly ductus to render it more didactic in style. Changes to the commentarial fabric are not restricted to the *muqaddima* of Ibn Hishām's treatise, but they also appear in other sections which focus on specific grammatical issues and terms and therefore constitute the main purpose of the *Mughnī al-labīb*. First of all, al-Damāmīnī intervenes in the textual fabric of Ibn Hishām's work by abridging and paraphrasing sections instead of quoting Ibn Hishām's words followed by an explication. For example, the section in the *yamanī* version which defines the purpose of *al-'irāb* (principles of grammatical declension) is quoted as the original starting point of the *Mughnī al-labīb* (*wa-aṣlu dhalika 'ilmu l-'irābi*) followed by al-Damāmīnī's definition that the purpose of *al-'irāb* is the knowledge of the syntactical structures, i.e. grammar (*'ilm al-naḥw*).⁴⁴⁸ In contrast, he stated in the *hindī* version that 'the intention of the science of declensions was the knowledge of the syntactical structures, the research into the Arabic language by considering its declensions and its structures' (*al-murādu bi-'ilmi l-'irābi 'ilmu l-naḥwi al-bāḥithu 'ani l-kalimi l-'arabiyati bi-'tibār 'irābihā wa-binā'ihā*).⁴⁴⁹ This statement reads more like a fully-fledged definition for the instruction of a student into the field of Arabic grammar and therefore rather didactic compared with the previous equation of the science of declension with the science of grammar. Here, al-Damāmīnī had to elaborate more extensively to explain the principles on which Arabic grammar was based.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid. Cf. Kopf 2017a.

⁴⁴⁸ Cf. Ms Serez 3265, Istanbul, fol. 4re.

⁴⁴⁹ Cf. Ms Atif Efendi 2555, Istanbul, 2v.

The crucial point is that al-Damāmīnī changed the character of his commentary quite substantially to make it suitable for a new audience with a different cultural and scholarly background. In other words, he reworked the *yamanī* version to make a *hindī* version socially and culturally mobile among a new readership in the subcontinent. For this readership al-Damāmīnī thought that presenting them with a comprehensible lexicographical explanation of Ibn Hishām’s work was more important than to acquaint them with a wider philological debate and its theological discussions elaborating on scholars who at this point would not have had the same canonical status as in the Red Sea region. At the same time, the *hindī* version also covered the foundational elements of the field of grammatical inquiry for an audience less acquainted with the Arabic language.

The third narrative strategy concerned the supplementing of a detailed colophon at the end to claim a specific intellectual authority for the work. The colophon of the *yamanī* version, the *Sharḥ mughnī*, detailed the *qirā’a* (‘recitation’, usually to a teacher) against the *aṣl* (‘original’) version of a first draft in the al-Azhar mosque in Cairo in 817/1414, and a process of revision, which lasted until al-Damāmīnī had reached the *balad al-ḥarām* (Mecca) the following year.⁴⁵⁰ It was then probably finished in Zabīd in Yemen.⁴⁵¹ Comparing the information from both colophons shows that the composition of the *yamanī* version took place in the context of a peer-review through the practice of *qirā’a* and in scholarly settings from Cairo to Mecca and finally Zabīd.

In contrast, al-Damāmīnī wrote the *Tuḥfat* as an elaboration of this work, based on his own intellectual judgement and independent of wider mechanisms of scholarly accountability:

‘[...] the composition of this commentary consisting of three parts took place in the city Nahrwāla of Gujarat in India during five months and fourteen days [during which] I executed its composition (*kitābatahu*) and the writing of this final version (*al-mubayyaḍa*) and the beginning of the period was Thursday, the first day of the month Rabī’ al-awwal of the year 824 [1421] and its completion was again on a Thursday, the fourteenth of Sha’bān, the venerated, of this year.’⁴⁵²

Al-Damāmīnī finished the *hindī* version, the *Tuḥfat*, by stating that this was a new commentarial elaboration - as set out previously. This underscores that he responded to his immediate circle of students and their cultural background when he rewrote the commentary *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*. He used his scholarly authority to rewrite the

⁴⁵⁰ Cf. MS Hamidiye 1286, Istanbul, last folio.

⁴⁵¹ Cf. ‘Uthmān 2012: 46.

⁴⁵² Cf. MS IO Bijapur 7, London, last folio.

commentary for a new audience with a didactic objective in mind. Al-Damāmīnī wrote this commentary in the manner of an abridgment that focused on the important issues raised by Ibn Hishām.⁴⁵³

A final version, entitled *Sharḥ Mazj* ('The blended commentary') – so-called because it blended the *Mughnī al-labīb* with his elaborations – followed a few years later in 824/1421.⁴⁵⁴ Later commentators such as Ḥajjī Khalīfa praised this to be his most successful and elaborate commentary on the *Mughnī al-labīb*.⁴⁵⁵ The editor of the printed edition considered it as a scholarly attempt at polishing his previously hastily composed *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* under the orders of the Gujarātī sultan.⁴⁵⁶ It points to a tension in al-Damāmīnī's transactions with the court, on the one hand, and his scholarly habitus and pursuits, on the other hand. While he had to satisfy the wishes and orders of his patron – underlining that he was probably fully dependant on this royal patronage – he remained conscientious about the quality of his compositions and obligated to a scholarly ideal that he had become accustomed to over the years. The successful negotiation of both positions will be further analysed in the next section with an accumulative view that takes into account the other commentaries that he wrote in the subcontinent.

Changing frameworks of textual transmission – Al-Damāmīnī's transregional scholarship

As previously indicated, al-Damāmīnī's cultural agency in al-Hind was enabled through courtly patronage, but it unfolded in his scholarly conversations with the learned communities of Gujarat. His intended audience did not consist of the sultans and their courtiers in particular, but he aimed at the students of Arabic who are also mentioned briefly in the preface. With the royal patronage and the service to the learned communities in Gujarat he combined two sociabilities. Here I want to use this divergence between the formal dedication of all three commentaries on the one hand, and the ultimately targeted readership to develop my argument for the last section of this chapter: while the works were composed in a courtly context they were mainly intended to circulate in scholarly milieus of the subcontinent. As he moved from Gujarat to the Deccan he used textual compositions to inscribe himself in the respective

⁴⁵³ Cf. MS Ragip Pasa 1370, Istanbul, fols. 2v-3re.

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. 'Uthmān 2012 and al-Damāmīnī 2012.

⁴⁵⁵ Cf. 'Uthmān 2012.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

courts. He had to navigate his scholarly pursuits by adhering to different forms of comportment across changing socio-cultural contexts. This mobile transregional Arabic scholarship unfolded by adapting procedures in the transmission of texts. More specifically, al-Damāmīnī made use of the royal patronage to create a space in which he followed his own scholarly rationale conditioned by the wider cultural circumstances across scholarly sociabilities that he adhered to.

In the current context, I propose to study the changing frameworks of transmission, i.e. how this mobility structured the histories of circulation of al-Damāmīnī's texts. These changing frameworks of transmission are the outcome of his complementary access to courtly and learned sociabilities. Apart from the statement of patronage, the prefaces to all three grammar commentaries together offer extensive details on the mechanics of textual transmission in the form of a commentary (*sharḥ*).⁴⁵⁷ At the same time, the compositional colophons, meaning those initial colophons which mark the completion of a work, provide ample information on the framework of transmission as well. Altogether, the paratextual elements of preface and colophon can shed light on al-Damāmīnī's mobile cultural agency and the socio-cultural conditions which allowed him to pursue his mobile transregional Arabic scholarship from Gujarat to the Deccan.

Al-Damāmīnī's textual compositions in al-Hind were geared towards the dissemination of Arabic grammatical knowledge. While in Egypt he operated within a larger set of networks of peers, where he inscribed himself into debates of his times, in al-Hind his compositional pursuits were not primarily intended to contribute to an exclusive scholarly discourse. Broadening again from the analysis of his second commentary, the *Tuḥfat*, I will argue that the general ductus of all three commentaries unfolds mainly on an explicatory level which intended to refine the knowledge of Arabic grammar among learned communities. His aim was to instruct students in the teachings of crucial scholarly figures from across the Islamicate world. This corresponded with the intentions of his patron. Yet, al-Damāmīnī had already articulated the purpose of knowledge dissemination in his first commentary, written after his arrival in al-Hind under the patronage of Aḥmad Muẓaffar Shāh of Gujarat. When al-Damāmīnī stepped ashore in Cambay in 820/1417 he learned that the *Tashīl al-fawā'id* of Ibn Malik was not known by anyone,⁴⁵⁸ neither the treatise (*aṣl*) nor a

⁴⁵⁷ For recent scholarship on commentaries see Ahmed 2013.

⁴⁵⁸ This paraphrase is based on the following Arabic section in the preface: 'Wajadtu fihā [al-Hind] hadhā al-kitāb majhūlan lā yu'rafu wa-nakiratun lā ta'tarifu'. Cf. MS Ragip Pasa 1326, Istanbul, fol. 2re.

commentary (*sharḥ*) of it,⁴⁵⁹ and he intended to change this with his *Ta'liq al-farā'id*. Similarly, his third commentary, the *Manhal al-ṣāfiy*, which offered a prose explanation to a treatise in verse by al-Balkhī, represented explanatory marginalia for a learned community whose members, according to al-Damāmīnī's phrasing in the preface, encountered serious difficulties in their reading and studying of this text.⁴⁶⁰ This is not to say that his grammar works were intended for absolute beginners of the Arabic language; on the contrary, a basic understanding was certainly a precondition. His commentaries have to be considered as a companion for the refinement of Arabic grammatical knowledge, which could ultimately serve in the perusal of Islamicate texts.

Al-Damāmīnī adhered to intricate frameworks of textual transmission, a field that he had been socialised to through a larger transregional educational upbringing. To establish himself as a learned authority he had to prove his scholarly credentials and demonstrate their practical applicability in the field of grammar. And this can be traced back to his first commentary. Firstly, immediately after the introductory religious formulae in the *Ta'liq al-farā'id* he presented himself as the didactic authority through the following commonplace: 'says the slave and the beggar to the master of the plentiful, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. 'Umar al-Makhzūmī al-Damāmīnī al-Mālikī'.⁴⁶¹ He situated himself right at the beginning of the text to mark the commentary as his own intellectual contribution. Secondly, in order to promote the quality of the initial treatise, after the signal word *amma ba'du* he introduced Jamāl al-Dīn Abī 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Malik as the 'King of grammarians' (*malik al-nuḥāt*).⁴⁶² He was the well-known author of the *Tashīl al-fawā'id*, a work which is praised extensively in the preface for its superior qualities.⁴⁶³ Al-Damāmīnī clarified from the beginning that he was discussing a superior example of Arabic scholarship. Furthermore, he embedded this discussion in the historical context it had derived from, referring to far-flung places that some of his students might have heard about already. Thus, thirdly, towards the end of the preface he quotes a *tarjama* of Ibn Malik with details of his birthplace *al-Andalus* (on the Iberian peninsula) (b. 600/1201) and his travels to Ḥamā in Syria. The geographical explanation for Ḥamā is a crucial 'vignette of textual mobility' since it points to a Gujaratī audience among whom Hamā was probably considered to be less

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ MS Nahw 107, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fol. 2re.

⁴⁶¹ MS Ragip Pasa 1326, Istanbul, fol. 1v: 'yaqūlu al-'abd al-faqīr ilā al-mawlā al-ghanī Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. 'Umar al-Makhzūmī al-Damāmīnī al-Mālikī'.

⁴⁶² Cf. Ibid., fol. 1v-2re.

⁴⁶³ Cf. Ibid., fol. 2re.

known than Damascus, where Ibn Malik had settled afterwards. He died in 672/1273 and was buried on the Jabal Qasyūn. Poetry in praise of Ibn Malik by his master Shaykh al-Imām Bahā al-Dīn Ibn al-Naḥḥās al-Ḥalabī is cited, as well as his *mashyakha* ('list of teachers') and the *taṣānīf* ('list of works').⁴⁶⁴ Then again the focus is drawn to his *Tashīl al-fawā'id*, which is applauded for its advancements in the field of grammar, summed up in the congratulatory verses of the famous Sufi Ibn 'Arabī and other learned authorities.⁴⁶⁵ Finally, the transition from preface to the main literary work is achieved through a teaching certificate (*ijāza*) which connects the *shāriḥ* (commentator) al-Damāmīnī via two intermediaries with the grammatical authority Ibn Malik.⁴⁶⁶ Al-Damāmīnī claimed that he had acquired the certificate to transmit this work in the mosque of al-Aqmar in Cairo through the authority of his Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ibn Aḥmad Ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Ḍarīr al Shāmī, who had held a post there.⁴⁶⁷ In the process of his textual transmission in Gujarat he showcased the initial authority of Ibn Malik in the field of *naḥw* and his own proximity to him to boost his own scholarly and textual credentials that he had formally acquired in Cairo.

The learned communities of Gujarat that al-Damāmīnī encountered had not been aware of the grammatical works that he taught highlighting the different Arabic scholarly libraries and traditions between the Red Sea region and the subcontinent in the fifteenth century. Thereby, al-Damāmīnī inserted himself as the purveyor of grammatical knowledge among the local learned circles of Gujarat. After his arrival in Cambay (Kanbāyat) he had heard about the absence of Ibn Malik's work,⁴⁶⁸ and he could not find a single person who was in possession of the text (*aṣl*) or its commentary (*sharḥ*).⁴⁶⁹ Yet, al-Damāmīnī was accompanied (*ustuṣḥibat minhu*) on his travels (*safar*) by a manuscript (*nuskha wāḥida*) which he had taken for perusal (*naẓar*).⁴⁷⁰ Presumably students and other scholars in Cambay asked him to explain this book with a commentary to open its 'gates' (chapters) and overcome its difficulties.⁴⁷¹ It is not clear though, whether his scholarly interactions also took place in Cambay or in Nahrwāla, the place where he taught and composed the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*, since he mentions in the

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, fol. 3v-4re.

⁴⁶⁵ MS Ragip Pasa 1326, Istanbul., fol. 4re.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 2re: 'wajadtu fihā hādihā l-kitāb majhūlan lā ya'rif wa-nakiratun lā tata'rrafu qillatun man yash'aru bi-ismihī aw musammahu'.

⁴⁶⁹ MS Ragip Pasa 1326., Istanbul, fol. 2re.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 'fa-sālanī (sic!) fī an ashraḥa hādihā l-kitāba sharḥan yaftuḥu abwābahu wa-yudhallilu ṣī'ābahu [...]'.

preface to this second commentary that the sultan had ordered him to ‘return’ to Nahrwāla to teach the second commentary.⁴⁷² Nonetheless, he framed his scholarly pursuits by employing the same commonplaces such as his insufficient skills (*lastu min rijāli hadhihi al-ṣinā’atin*) and his yearning for home (*ghurba*), which caused him hardship.⁴⁷³ Finally, whilst there were possibly other scholars at the court, who he could have approached in scholarly matters, he emphasised the dearth of commentaries in al-Hind.⁴⁷⁴

These statements are similar to other *topoi* of humility in his preface. ‘Students’ (*ṭulāb*) who press the author to enlighten them and help them in their studies appear as rhetorical devices across several genres of Arabic literature. However, al-Damāmīnī presumably referred to existing socio-cultural conditions at this time. In the context of Sufi hagiography Ohlander has shown, how rhetorical commonplaces such as the air travel of a shaykh from South Asia to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage combines factual truth with rhetorical hyperbole rooted in the traditional framework of presentation of a Sufi’s faculties.⁴⁷⁵ The point is that a Shaykh could only be presented to an audience with the skill of air travel. Consequently, this hyperbole does not necessarily contradict the fact that he *actually* made the pilgrimage – in whichever way. In al-Damāmīnī’s case this means that a crucial part of his sociabilities would in fact have been students or more broadly, ‘seekers of knowledge’ of different walks of life, who gathered around him to study Arabic grammar and other subjects. All the same, the manuscript he brought with him, his longing for Egypt and the absence of commentaries in al-Hind presumably indicated real circumstances. In his preface, these aspects fulfilled the rhetorical function to enhance the presentation of his scholarly efforts by contrasting them with a variety of impediments he faced in al-Hind. He draws a picture of his socio-cultural environment to communicate the conditions under which he pursued his scholarship as an ‘alien’ in a far-away place.⁴⁷⁶

Given this limited social record of al-Damāmīnī’s teaching sessions and scholarly encounters it is not possible to assess the socio-cultural profile of the learned community that formed around him in Gujarat.⁴⁷⁷ A more contextual view is highly

⁴⁷² Cf. MS Carullah 1941, Istanbul, fol. 2re.

⁴⁷³ MS Ragip Pasa 1326., Istanbul, fol. 2re-2v.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., fol. 2v: ‘bi-fiqdāni l-shurūḥi fī hadhihi l-bilād wa-‘izzatun mā aḥtāju ilayhi min al-kutub al-lattī ufdī (sic!) bayāḍa ayādi bihā bi-l-sawād’.

⁴⁷⁵ Ohlander 2012.

⁴⁷⁶ For scholarship on such cultural encounters in the early modern period cf. Subrahmanyam 2011.

⁴⁷⁷ Scholarship has advanced crucial arguments concerning the diversification of reading groups in the Middle period. See for example Hirschler 2012.

speculative but could nonetheless consider learned communities studied recently in more detail by Balachandran on the basis of *tazkiras* (biographical and hagiographical accounts) and *malfuzāt* (teachings and utterances of a Sufi Shaykh).⁴⁷⁸ These communities formed around the spiritual and scholarly migrants (*‘ulamā’*, *mashā’ikh*, *awliyā’*) from North Africa to the Arabian Peninsula and West Asia and were part of a larger effort of the Sultanate of Gujarat to create conducive environments of learning in their realm during the fifteenth century.

For al-Damāmīnī’s case it is at least possible to assess the general impact that his scholarly pursuits had on the local communities. Al-Sakhāwī mentioned Aḥmadābād’s scholarly groups in his biographical work *al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’*, and some of them became known more widely across Mamlūk Egypt and the Hijaz at least by the end of the fifteenth century.⁴⁷⁹ The *Ḍaw’ al-lāmi’* recorded an encounter between al-Sakhāwī and the *‘ālim* Rājīḥ b. Dāwud al-Aḥmadābādī, who had arrived in Mecca in 894/1489 with several learned figures from Gujarat.⁴⁸⁰ Born, raised and educated by recognised teachers in Aḥmadābād in subjects ranging from grammar to theology, Rājīḥ had set out to perform the pilgrimage together with his brother and their paternal uncle.⁴⁸¹ After their return from a visit of the prophet’s grave at Medina, they studied the greater part of al-Sakhāwī’s recent commentary on the *Alfiyya* with him. Rājīḥ praised al-Sakhāwī in several verses and received an *ijāza* by al-Sakhāwī. Most significantly, al-Sakhāwī was able to corroborate (*athabtu lahu*) the *tarjama* of al-Damāmīnī for Rājīḥ in matters concerning al-Damāmīnī’s death in al-Hind, by giving him the full biographical entry (*min jumlatihā*). Al-Damāmīnī probably became known across Aḥmadabad through his transactions with Aḥmad Shāh who had founded the city and his new capital in 816-17/1413-14.⁴⁸²

Al-Damāmīnī’s main sociability continued to be students when he shifted to the city of Nahrwāla to work on his second composition, the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*, and which – as set out in the previous section – was dedicated to the same Sulṭān Aḥmad Shāh.⁴⁸³ Nahrwāla (*Anhalwāra*, derived from Anhilvada, modern Paṭan) was the main Muslim urban centre in Gujarat until Ahmadābād to the south became the capital.⁴⁸⁴ In

⁴⁷⁸ For this and the following cf. Balachandran 2012: 10-16.

⁴⁷⁹ Al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: VII/207 and X/148 for additional examples.

⁴⁸⁰ For this and the following cf. al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: III/222-223.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, VI/180.

⁴⁸² Hardy 2017.

⁴⁸³ Cf. MS Ragip Pasa 1370, Istanbul, fol. 2v.

⁴⁸⁴ Cf. Sheikh 2010: 26. Cf. Hardy 2017. See also the example of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Nahrwālī, who composed a chronicle of Mecca during the 16th century and again advertised the prominence of scholars from Nahrwāla across the Red Sea region. Cf. Blackburn 2005.

conjunction with the previous cases from Ahmadābād, this shows that al-Damāmīnī was able to move among a transregional learned Islamicate environment from whom he drew inspiration and for whom he produced his compositions. Since the same limitations with regard to sources apply here, the prosopographical accounts from this period can again provide a possible contextualisation. Al-Sakhāwī included a *tarjama* of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Hindī al-Ḥanafī who was certified in the teaching of *iftā'* ('issuing of legal opinions') by his teachers and given a post by Sulṭān Maḥmūd I. Bigāra (r. 1458-1511) in his realm.⁴⁸⁵ Aḥmad was among the first of his family to have settled in Nahrwāla and had numerous progeny there, a reference which implies a superior scholastic quality of this city for Islamicate scholarship. He spent some time in Mecca and when he left in 902/1497, he had acquired several books and teaching certificates by al-Sakhāwī, which he brought back home. This indicates that al-Damāmīnī presumably moved among learned communities, which were constituted through migratory movements to Gujarat – as demonstrated by Balachandran⁴⁸⁶ – but who continued to develop a transregional profile that linked them to the larger transregional world of the Western Indian Ocean.

Stitching together al-Damāmīnī's trail based on his textual practices provides a horizontal transregional perspective of scholarly pursuits. This can function as a corrective to the vertical courtly hierarchies which dominated the descriptions in the chronicles. Modern scholarship has too often focused on Islamicate and Indic chronicle traditions in which the court represented the focal point of contact and the centre from which power and patronage emanated.⁴⁸⁷ This paradigm dominates in the research on the medieval and early modern periods. Accordingly, royal courts operated as crucial points of contact for 'peripatetic courtier[s]' in all their variations.⁴⁸⁸ However, scholarship on peripatetic scholars remains scarce and has to be approached from a different perspective.⁴⁸⁹ Al-Damāmīnī's case related to a transregional world of scholarly pursuits where courtly patronage was a cultural expediency. After reducing the rhetorical extravagance to an acknowledgement of courtly patronage, his eulogies can be read as a scholar's necessity which opened doors to a host of learned endeavours. Yet, these were not determined by courtly obligations, but instead directed towards

⁴⁸⁵ Cf. Sheikh 2010: 199. Cf. for this and the following al-Sakhāwī 1934-37: II/166-167.

⁴⁸⁶ Balachandran 2012.

⁴⁸⁷ This is implicit in several recent studies such as Flatt 2009 and Subrahmanyam 2012.

⁴⁸⁸ Flatt 2009: 55-56. Sufi dargahs, (*dargāh* can also refer to a royal court) fulfilled a similar function and offered different forms of affiliation by outsiders. See Eaton 2005: 47ff, and Alam/Subrahmanyam 2007.

⁴⁸⁹ Cf. al-Musawi 2015: 53-56, who even considered 'vagrant intellectuals' as 'dissenters and destabilisers of absolutism'.

requirements in an educational and religious field that defined its cultural parameters outside of the courtly realm. Al-Damāmīnī seemed to belong to a scholarly world which was far less connected with the intricacies of Gujarati and Deccani court culture, such as courtiers and other figures, for example the famous Bahmanī vizier Maḥmūd Gāwān. Al-Damāmīnī paid his respect to the royal authority but was at home in other learned sociabilities.

Al-Damāmīnī navigated these learned sociabilities by framing each composition accordingly. To do so, he operated with a diverse set of transmission techniques. As al-Musawi pointed out recently, ‘terms of exchange’ could generally follow two lines in the transmission of texts, mainly set out in prescriptive treatises.⁴⁹⁰ On the one hand, scholars often conducted an ‘authoritative *riwāya*’ (‘transmission’) based on an *ijāza* (‘license to transmit’).⁴⁹¹ On the other hand, they could also pursue a *dirāya*, meaning an individual intellectual exercise ‘basically grounded in understanding and reasoning’.⁴⁹² In practice, however, there developed a whole range of frameworks of transmission deriving from a combination of the two and the fact that scholars kept arguing over the legitimacy of certain approaches seems to stress this further. A recent study by G. Davidson has shown how, due to the coexistence of a ‘stable written ḥadīth corpus’, the oral ‘chains of transmission’ in post-canonical ḥadīth created new social opportunities for scholars.⁴⁹³ A new ideology re-affirmed ḥadīth transmission as an act of piety and rendered it applicable for scholarly networking.⁴⁹⁴ One’s chain of transmission became a source of social capital and therefore generated new genres which could showcase this social and religious prestige.⁴⁹⁵ While I am not intending to assume the congeniality of ḥadīth transmission with the dissemination of other forms of knowledge, I will consider frameworks of transmission as cultural practices that respond to direct social circumstances. For the current context, elements of these frameworks such as *ijāzāt*, colophons and other transmission statements can be analysed to study al-Damāmīnī’s mobility. This mobility was a successful outcome in the application of different frameworks of transmission, which responded to changing socio-cultural contexts of his scholarly pursuits.

⁴⁹⁰Cf. al-Musawi 2015: 121-122. Other scholars in Mamlūk Egypt shifted to a text-based inquiry in their learned pursuits, such as al-Suyūṭī, because they considered this tradition more reliable than a dependence solely on oral sources. Cf. Sartain 1975: 30ff.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Cf. Davidson 2014: v-vi.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

While the cultural background of al-Damāmīnī's audiences differed from place to place, he also presented each commentary according to his own previous engagement with that audience. By comparing the paratextual elements of preface and colophon in the *Ta'līq al-farā'id* and the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* it becomes clear that his transmission of knowledge and the intended audience in Cambay were of a different learned background than the one he encountered in Nahrwāla. In the *Ta'līq al-farā'id* al-Damāmīnī pointed out several elements such as a *tarjama* on Ibn Malik, the *ijāza* that al-Damāmīnī had received in Cairo allowing him to teach this work, as well as his complaints about the unavailability of commentaries in al-Hind and the lack of knowledge regarding the work by the local students. All these elements indicate a social environment in which he had to present his *Ta'līq al-farā'id* through a complex framework of transmission which focused on his relationship as *shāriḥ* with the *muṣannif*, i.e. Ibn Malik. While Ibn Malik's *tarjama* and praise of his work seemed to justify al-Damāmīnī's choice of scholarship for his teaching sessions, his *ijāza* expresses his claim towards his students and other resident scholars that he had the credentials in the form of a concrete certificate to teach this text. At the same time, this scholarly identification filled a void regarding this particular grammatical tradition. In contrast, such an *ijāza* is absent from the preface of the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*. Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Hishām is introduced as the author of the *Mughnī al-labīb* and the seal of grammarians of Egypt (*khātima al-nuḥāt bi-l-diyār al-miṣrīya*).⁴⁹⁶ However, a full *tarjama* is missing at this point. It seems as though al-Damāmīnī directed this work towards an audience in Nahrwāla which was familiar with Ibn Hishām's work. Given this intended audience al-Damāmīnī did not have to be as informative as in the previous work.

With the *Tuḥfat*, he concentrated more on framing the transmission of his own contribution. In contrast to the *Ta'līq al-farā'id*, which ends in formulae of humility without providing compositional details,⁴⁹⁷ the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* finished with a detailed compositional colophon and transmission note, as elaborated previously. I will sum up the main points once more for the current purpose: al-Damāmīnī inscribed the modes, stages and the time period into the finishing lines of his composition. In the absence of an *ijāza* he took full control of the transmission of his composition based on his own reasoning and intellectual capacity (as suggested in the *dirāya* framework). At the same time, while scholarly objectives were recalibrated from the *Ta'līq al-farā'id* to the *Tuḥfat*

⁴⁹⁶ MS Ragip Pasa 1370, Istanbul, fols. 2v-3re.

⁴⁹⁷ MS Hekimoglu 888, Istanbul, fols. 444v-445re.

al-gharīb regarding their differing audiences, they did not alter the terms of patronage in the preface. More specifically, the terms of patronage did not seem to have affected the scholarly framework of these textual operations. Al-Damāmīnī became the paramount authority on the text in his commentary and emancipated himself in the process from rigid frameworks of text transmission that he had adhered to previously.

After writing the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* he headed to the Deccan and *en route* composed his third grammar commentary. This compositional activity again gave him the means to inscribe himself into a courtly formation, this time at the Bahmanī capital of Aḥsanābād (Gulbarga).⁴⁹⁸ The grammar treatise *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy fī sharḥ al-wāfiy*, a commentary on Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Balkhī’s versified treatise *al-Wāfiy* (d. 8th/14th century), is probably al-Damāmīnī’s last known work. The preface gives information about the social context of its composition. He writes that he had travelled from Egypt to Gujarat (the Hijaz and the Yemen are not mentioned here), where he had encountered many students who intended to study the *al-Wāfiy*.⁴⁹⁹ Yet, they complained about insurmountable difficulties while studying it. Furthermore, they told him that there was no *sharḥ* that could help them in their studies. His composition then came as a direct response to this. However, the actual transcription and transmission of the work took place during his travels from Gujarat further on into the Bahmanī realm in the Deccan.

Even if al-Damāmīnī’s textual transaction is again phrased as a literary offering to a patron, the intended audience was not restricted to the court. To frame it as a courtly offering, common *topoi* of Islamic orthodoxy were employed in his description of Aḥsanābād, a city governed by a strong sultan.⁵⁰⁰ The sultan became the addressee of the work elaborated in a long encomium that dedicated the grammar commentary to Aḥmad Shāh Bahmanī.⁵⁰¹ The preface laid out the transmission of the text as a literary offering to the sultan. In comparison with the previous cases the similar acknowledgement of royal patronage highlighted that al-Damāmīnī perceived the courts in both Gujarat and the Deccan as culturally commensurable formations,

⁴⁹⁸ In 1424 the Bahmanī sultans moved the capital to Bidar in order to free the court from a history of political conflicts that had evolved between different courtly factions in Gulbarga. Al-Damāmīnī therefore arrived at a time when tensions were high in ‘Gulbarga’s murderously vicious political atmosphere’ and one could speculate whether al-Suyūṭī’s reference to a possible poisoning of al-Damāmīnī was made possible in that context. Cf. al-Suyūṭī 1964: I/66-67. Eaton 2005: 63.

⁴⁹⁹ For this and the following see Nahw 108, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fol. 2r: ‘lamma qadamtu min al-diyāri al-miṣrīyati ilā al-kujarāti al-hindīyati wajadtu li-kathīri min ṭalabatihā shaghafan bi-l-mukhtaṣari al-naḥwiyyi al-musammā bi-l-wāfiy’.

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. MS Nahw 107, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fols. 2re-3re.

⁵⁰¹ MS Nahw 108, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fols. 3v-4re.

although socio-cultural conditions were quite different in both regions.⁵⁰² Still, the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* was intended for a ‘student audience’ in Gujarat and the Deccan and thereby also related to a wider transregional learned readership, who knew al-Balkhī’s work and its difficulties all too well.

In the third commentary, al-Damāmīnī had specified the form of transmission of al-Balkhī’s *al-Wāfiy* in the preface to his *sharḥ* after the eulogy to the sultan

‘Upon the arrival at his illustrious gates I collected the noble sections and the lofty particularities and I wrote this composition comprising excellent subjects in their quotation [ingoing] and publication [outgoing] [...] and I called it ‘The pure watering pond in the explanation of the perfect [al-wāfiy]’. I mixed my interpretation with the interpretation of the original [text] so I was balanced in the means and the soundness of the beauty in the composition’s methods. I covered the commentary in a distinguishing feature of blackness and in lecturing I performed the virtues of this book’.⁵⁰³

In all three commentaries, the intertextual elements of main text and gloss signify the textual transactions of a circulating scholar. Although hitherto no autograph of this *sharḥ* could be found, all the surviving copies exhibit similar characteristics. They are either written as a red-black alternating text-block or the shape of the script is changed to mark the switchover from *matn* to *sharḥ* visually.⁵⁰⁴ This visual division of al-Balkhī’s *aṣl* (‘initial text’) and al-Damāmīnī’s *sharḥ* (‘commentary’) was thus an intertextual interplay of treatise and gloss which structured his scholarly approach. His commentary dissects each part of al-Balkhī’s work to provide an overall explication including lexicographical details, grammatical phenomena and elucidations of socio-cultural as well as religious conventions.⁵⁰⁵ For example, the prose commentary of the first verse which sets out with the *basmala* followed by the *ḥamdala*, develops an explication concerned with the conventions of beginning a text accordingly, i.e. by mentioning the name of Allah and adding praise in his name. As in case of the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*, here again the commentary had to do without the complex reference apparatus of the Islamicate canon. At this point, al-Damāmīnī detached himself even further from earlier scholarly conventions. The idea of a verbatim quotation followed by his personal research in this matter substitutes the necessity for an *ijāza* which he did not have, since according to his remarks in the

⁵⁰² Compare Sheikh 2010 and Eaton 2005.

⁵⁰³ Cf. MS Nahw 108, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fol. 4re read together with MS Nahw 107, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fol. 4re.

⁵⁰⁴ See also Messick 1993 with his studies of forms of *matn-sharḥ* alternating textblocks.

⁵⁰⁵ Cf. MS Nahw 108, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fols 4v.; MS TC 169 Vol. I, Asiatic Society Bengal, Kolkata, fol. 5v.

preface he encountered the *al-Wāfiy* in Gujarat for the first time. His approach centred on his individual efforts in clarifying al-Balkhī's treatise without a previous studying experience.

Al-Damāmīnī's commentary was written in prose, explaining al-Balkhī's versified treatise, which presumably had reached the Deccan through its links with the erstwhile Delhi sultanate further north. Only a few versions of al-Balkhī's text survive today in the British Library in London.⁵⁰⁶ Due to the paucity of manuscripts and studies of this grammar work it is hard to trace the dissemination and circulation of this text. Since al-Damāmīnī did not provide a teaching certificate for the text of al-Balkhī or details concerning his wider biographical background, one can presume that al-Damāmīnī engaged with this text for the first time and without prior education in its complexities. In the *muqaddima* right after the dedication to the Bahmanī Sultan Aḥmad Shāh of Gulbarga he specified his compositional process in the verbose style that was commonplace in these introductions underlining his own personal academic efforts. In this context, his cultural agency was altered again. The commentary *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* exemplified how he used his transferable skills to explicate al-Balkhī's text *al-Wāfiy* to a learned audience.

The compositional colophon of the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* can underline his modulating of scholarly conventions further.⁵⁰⁷ Accordingly, al-Damāmīnī wrote this commentary on the island of Muḥā'im in al-Hind during a time period that started at the end of Ramaḍān in 825/1422 and lasted until the 21st of Dhū l-Ḥijja of the same year. The transmission (*naql*) of the work into a fair copy (*al-mubayyaḍa*) was begun in the city of Aḥsanābād on the 23rd of Ṣafar in 826/1423 and the transcription was completed in the same year. In his third commentary, al-Damāmīnī verified his compositional activity by substituting earlier conventions in the frameworks of knowledge transmission. He authorised both his last commentary and the transmission of its *matn*, the *al-Wāfiy*, based on his own scholarly judgement. The absence of any form of peer-review in both transactions might be the main distinguishing marker from his scholarly and compositional pursuits back in Mamlūk Egypt, which had been guided by close interactions with scholars and peers.

In sum, al-Damāmīnī was able to navigate a complex and individually applicable cultural agency after his arrival in al-Hind and during his peregrinations from Cambay

⁵⁰⁶ See Loth 1877: 269.

⁵⁰⁷ For this and the following cf. MS TC 169 Vol. II, Bengal Asiatic Society, Kolkata, last folio.

via Nahrwāla further on to Gulbarga. While the courtly affiliation provided al-Damāmīnī with an umbrella of patronage, he elaborated on the framework of scholarly authority from one composition to the other, indicating how he had to become creative and flexible with his transmission of texts in changing socio-cultural environments. These changes were already recognisable in the different applications of *ijāza* and colophon in the *Tashīl al-fawā'id* and the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* respectively. His claim of a scholarly authority over his compositions changed. All three grammar commentaries challenged him in different intellectual ways and thereby they produced different scholarly approaches in their transmission. At the same time, his transregional trail of Arabic scholarship revealed local scholarly exigencies. However, from the developing make-up of his commentaries there seems to emerge a common trend which departs from a more rigid confirmation of scholarly credentials through certification, as in his first commentary. A framework of transmission unfolded that recreated its own parameters of verification, which were then fully articulated in the colophons of the two later commentaries.

Conclusion

Al-Damāmīnī's case of human and textual mobility was a wider phenomenon during the fifteenth century. His case shows the different hazards that such a life could be subjected to: the need to search for new scholarly opportunities in faraway places and the necessity to employ scholarly skills repeatedly to satisfy different patrons. On the one hand, his life exemplified the instability that accompanied the pursuit of mobile scholarship. On the other hand, his case demonstrated the ease with which a scholar could move between places from the Red sea to the subcontinent. And al-Damāmīnī was not an exceptional case, but just an exceptionally well-documented example. His move from Mamlūk Cairo to al-Hind marked a shift in patronage networks and highlighted his ability to negotiate these changes between scholarly and courtly formations. While his career in Mamlūk Cairo was supported by a scholarly world of endowed institutions, courts were the main points of contact during the peregrinations across al-Hind.

As shown in more detail and with a view on the textual operations in his second commentary, al-Damāmīnī exhibited several elements of a cultural agent who moved between networks across the Red Sea region and al-Hind. His transregional cultural mobility was a crucial precondition. It gave him access to courtly patronage in the first place. The reputation he carried with him as a *homme de lettre* coming from the Mamlūk realm granted him access to the courts in Gujarat and the Deccan. But he also reached

out and promoted scholarly endeavours among learned communities. This can be traced through the narrative strategies he employed with regards to prefaces, colophons and the elaboration of commentaries. By navigating both courtly and scholarly sociabilities through the employment of these narrative strategies, he not only offered a grammar commentary, but also a promotional platform for his patron. More significantly, he elaborated his commentaries quite considerably to make them suitable for new audiences.

To straddle both courtly and scholarly sociabilities, his cultural agency, visible in the composition of his texts, was of paramount importance. While it was enabled through courtly patronage, it unfolded in line with the conventions and sociabilities he had been socialised to in the Mamlūk scholarly field. More significantly, his frameworks of textual transmission varied from one composition to the other. This progression circumscribed the diversity of his own scholarly approaches to changing scholarly contexts. His compositional activity constituted a succession of individualised knowledge transfers between the Red Sea region and the subcontinent, where he applied different modes of transmission in accordance with the circumstances of his changing socio-cultural environments.

Chapter 3 – The Asar Mahal Manuscripts – From a Royal Library to a Cultural Entrepôt

After studying the transoceanic travels and travails of one scholar, this chapter will shift the focus to one locality to study the changing socio-cultural significance of travelling texts: an early modern collection of Arabic manuscripts from the Deccan. More specifically, this concerns the surviving manuscript collection of the royal library (*kitābkhāne-yi ma'mūra*) of Bijapur.⁵⁰⁸ This royal library collection from Bijapur was accumulated in tandem with the 'Ādil Shāhī dynasty in the Deccan from the late fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.⁵⁰⁹ Today mainly Arabic and a few Persian works survive from a variety of genres which had belonged to different rulers and officials of Bijapur and had been brought to the court by courtiers, scholars and through various other means.⁵¹⁰ The histories of circulation and subsequent collection within an expanding library provide a crucial historical perspective on forms of cultural exchange of a transregional world with a dynamic early modern court.⁵¹¹

The royal library of Bijapur, also called “Asar Mahal collection”, is a treasure trove for research into early modern manuscript cultures. It contains an, albeit fragmentary, historically grown corpus of manuscripts assembled in one place with clear markers of institutional affiliation.⁵¹² Several manuscripts exhibit notations that state the entry of the manuscripts into the royal library of Bijapur. This is not to say that there are no other manuscript collections from earlier periods still intact, especially when considering holdings of the Süleymaniye complex in Istanbul.⁵¹³ Yet, the royal library of Bijapur is a specific case, more so in South Asia, because it offers insights into collecting practices of an early modern court. The collection was

⁵⁰⁸ This is the reference to the royal library that was inscribed on most of the manuscripts that were integrated into this library.

⁵⁰⁹ Quraishi 1991.

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Loth 1877.

⁵¹¹ The ‘transregional precedent’ with regard to the Bijapur collections has recently been exemplified by Overton with regard to the movement of Iranian migrants between Iran and the Deccan. Cf. Overton 2016: 116.

⁵¹² Housed in the “Asar Mahal” since 1055/1646 the manuscripts survived the Mughal conquest of Bijapur in 1097/1686 under Aurangzeb and were inspected by one of his officials, Qābil Khān. After another investigation under the first Nizam of Hyderabad, Āṣaf Jāh (r. 1724-48) in 1146/1733, the library endured the Maratha period (1760-1818) and was shifted to England. Known as the “Asar Mahal” or the “Bijapur Collection”, a total of about 434 Arabic and 17 Persian manuscripts are now stored in the British library as part of the Oriental manuscript collections of the India Office Records. Cf. Loth 1877: v-vi, Overton 2011: 52-53 and Quraishi 1991: 171-172.

⁵¹³ Collections of the Süleymaniye Library will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 4. Most other libraries surveyed during my research continued to evolve over the 18th and 19th centuries and thus mirror a later stage in the ongoing reconstitution processes of libraries. Cf. Hirschler 2016: 39-40. These are the Salar Jung Museum Library and the Asafiya Library in Hyderabad, the Khuda Baksh in Patna, the Rampur Raza Library, the Dar al-Kutub and al-Azhar Libraries in Cairo.

meticulously catalogued by Otto Loth in his catalogue published in 1877.⁵¹⁴ A summary article by S. Quraishi put the importance of this library on the map more generally.⁵¹⁵ According to him, the majority of the Arabic manuscripts was acquired between 992/1584 and 1055/1645 during the successive reigns of ‘Alī, Ibrāhīm II and Muḥammad ‘Ādil Shāh.⁵¹⁶ Works on the exegesis of the Quran (*tafsīr*), prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*), sciences of tradition (*‘ilm al-ḥadīth*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), scholastic theology (*kalām*), philosophy (*falsafa*), mathematic and astronomical treatises, grammar (*naḥw*), rhetoric (*‘ilm al-balāgha/ ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī wa-l-bayān*) and Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), among others, epitomise the build-up of established traditions in the Islamic sciences and their related disciplines.

The previous scholarship also hinted at a general characteristic of these Arabic manuscripts: they were not the product of courtly literary compositions in Arabic, as was the case with Persian poetry, chronicles and scientific treatises as well as with other regional languages, such as Dakhnī.⁵¹⁷ In comparison to the ‘Mughal Library’, which combined a workshop character with a site of collection and a library staff that developed a complex system of storing, validating and preserving manuscripts,⁵¹⁸ Bijapur’s royal library had a different historical trajectory. As most of the colophons of these manuscripts demonstrate, the court in Bijapur was not the place of their reproduction. Therefore, the source of this manuscript collection must lie elsewhere. The existence of this corpus of Arabic manuscripts encapsulates the transregional connections of the Deccan with the Western Indian Ocean and the role of Bijapur within it on a textual level.

A closer look at the texts reveals certain idiosyncrasies of the corpus, namely that the majority of the manuscripts represent late medieval and early modern commentary cultures across the Islamicate disciplines,⁵¹⁹ which can also be found in libraries in Cairo, Hyderabad and Istanbul with some variations during the same period. First of all, there is only one Quran copy, which seems unlikely to reflect on the earlier holdings, but can be explained by later looting or the movement of books. Among the

⁵¹⁴ Cf. Loth 1877. This catalogue is a crucial guide for further engagement with this corpus of Arabic books. I relied on this helpful starting point to navigate the manuscript collection and some of their marginalia in this chapter.

⁵¹⁵ Cf. Quraishi 1991.

⁵¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 165. Furthermore, it mainly expanded during the reigns of ‘Alī I. (r. 965-988/1558-80) and his successor Ibrāhīm II (988-1037/1580-1627). Cf. *Ibid.*, Eaton 1978: xi.

⁵¹⁷ Cf. Flatt 2011 for the *Nujūm al-‘Ulūm* and Overton 2016 for the *Nawras*.

⁵¹⁸ This argument was developed in Overton 2011 and 2016: 113. For a meticulous study of ‘inspection’ and ‘valuation’ notes cf. Seyller 1997.

⁵¹⁹ This overview is based on catalogue entries in Loth 1877.

Quranic commentaries are the prominent works such as al-Zamakhsharī's *al-Kashshāf* and al-Bayḍāwī's *Anwār al-tanzīl* as well as later commentaries on these works. Apart from al-Bukhārī's canonical collection *Ṣaḥīḥ*, the section of *ḥadīth* is dominated by later recom compilations. The works on *fiqh* only include treatises from the Ḥanafī and the Shāfi'ī schools of law. While the prayer books do not have any particular emphasis, both *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *kalām* are dominated by the same names: al-Taftāzānī, al-Jurjānī and al-Siyālkūtī, among others. And the same names reappear in the sections of philosophy and rhetoric as well. In the former al-Jurjānī's was important and the latter prominently featured al-Taftāzānī's elaborate commentaries on the *Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ*. The field of *taṣawwuf* included a large corpus of works by Ibn 'Arabī, namely his *Futuḥāt al-makkīya*, in addition to al-Ghazālī's famous *Iḥiyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*. Mathematics, Astronomy and Poetry are again quite diverse. With regards to grammar works, mainly commentary traditions were collected, such as the ones by al-Fālī, Ibn 'Arabshāh al-Isfarā'inī and 'Abd al-Ghafūr Lārī. A few dictionaries and *majmū'āt* (multiple-text documents) are among the holdings as well. It was through these commentary cultures and their intertextualities that earlier treatises were commonly transmitted over the centuries in Bijapur.

Apart from Loth and Quraishi, it was especially K. Overton's doctoral dissertation and subsequent article on the sub-collection of Ibrahim II's (1580-1627) manuscripts which demonstrated the historical value of this collection for researchers.⁵²⁰ She put forward larger arguments about the inner courtly circulation of books, and thereby studied the relationship between the individual collections of different sultans which later became part of the royal library. In particular, she examined Ibrahim II's marks of ownership, Persian scribal notations, the *nawras* seal,⁵²¹ value, reception and refurbishment statements to locate Ibrahim's intellectual tastes among his manifold expressions of a syncretic culture which also accommodated prerogatives of Islamicate kingship. More significantly, she was able to show how he participated 'in connected systems of sovereignty between Iran and the subcontinent'.⁵²² The 'chief prerogative of Perso-Islamic kingship' and the close ties with the Persianate worlds represented the basis for the 'formation of a coveted and comprehensive library'.⁵²³ According to her, the collections of the Asar Mahal were built

⁵²⁰ For this and the following cf. Overton 2011: chapter 2, and 2016 respectively.

⁵²¹ The *nawras* inscription is a symbol of Ibrāhīm II's striving for a syncretic court culture that brought Indic and Islamicate elements into conversation. Cf. Overton 2011.

⁵²² Cf. Overton 2016: 93.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 117.

through transregional connections, tastes and precedents made possible by the movement of Iranian migrants, the ‘peripatetic *gharībān*’ (‘Foreigners’), such as Shāh Nawāz Khān.⁵²⁴ Additionally, she mentions figures from the Qādirīyya Sufi order and other religious officials which donated manuscripts to the Royal Library,⁵²⁵ while stressing the fact that today’s collections do not reflect a historical version of the Royal Library.⁵²⁶ I will refer to some of her case studies over the course of this chapter and thereby elaborate and expand the argument about the transregional entanglement of Bijapur by delineating different spheres of circulation.

The numerous Arabic manuscripts of the Asar Mahal collection have so far not received adequate attention as empirical evidence for the importance of Arabic as an idiom of transoceanic communities and learned cultures. In the following, I will build on Overton’s scholarship to further explore the socio-cultural significances of this Arabic manuscript collection starting in but also going beyond the prerogatives of Islamicate kingship.⁵²⁷ The library was the locus of reception for Arabic manuscripts, articulated through the Persian scribal notations. While Persianate groups were important for building up the canonical book cultures of Bijapur, this chapter shows that there is yet another story to tell. I will study the historical evolution of the library’s manuscript collection to shift the attention to a different cultural significance: the growing entanglement of Bijapur with the Red Sea region in the transregional flows of Arabic manuscripts during the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth centuries. It was brought about by a scholarly field which extended far beyond the Deccan. Although the present holdings of the library certainly do not represent an earlier historical version of the Royal Library of Bijapur due to possible plundering, destruction and movement,⁵²⁸ the survival *en masse* in the form of canonical Islamicate texts allows a study of Arabic as a transregional scholarly idiom. The circulations and changing historical significances of the corpus of Arabic manuscripts can offer glimpses into the workings of early modern courtly book cultures and the communities that participated therein.

⁵²⁴ Overton 2016: 94 and 116. For scholarship on these courtly groups cf. Eaton 1978 and 2005, as well as Fischel 2012. They represented a courtly faction often rivalling the local Deccani groups at the courts of the Deccan.

⁵²⁵ Cf. Overton 2011: 63, and *Ibid.* 2016: 115.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.* 2016: 98.

⁵²⁷ Cf. Overton 2016: 116-117.

⁵²⁸ This especially because the small amount of Persian manuscripts seems peculiar, a point made by Overton 2011, 2016: 98, and Quraishi 1991. Persian constituted a cosmopolitan cultural complex that prevailed across the Deccan during this period and linked it with the Safavid and Mughal Empires. See Hutton 2006: 4, and Fischel 2015.

Conceptually, such a historical perspective has to look beyond the framework of a library as a place for storing and consulting books. Here I am intending to depart from Overton's exploration of 'knowledge systems that permeated Bijapuri culture' as well as 'patterns of intellectual taste and circulation in Bijapur'.⁵²⁹ Instead, I will analyse the history of this Arabic manuscript collection through the category of the *cultural entrepôt* and thereby I build on the economic historiography that emphasised the role of trading entrepôts for commercial activities.⁵³⁰ With the term *cultural entrepôt* I am referring to a more vivid place of textual exchange, the incoming, outgoing, storing, in short, the circulation of manuscripts on different levels. All these levels and textual practices re-signified the accumulated manuscripts beyond their intellectual contents. Such practices turned the manuscripts into an integral component of the local courtly and scholarly culture over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and forged transregional links with the wider Western Indian Ocean world, from where most of these manuscripts hailed.

Methodologically, this is possible through the analysis of the paratextual elements, notes and marginalia on the Arabic manuscripts. G. Genette in his pioneering work on paratexts, offered several analytical categories through which manuscript notes can be considered as culturally signifying additions made to the main text of the work.⁵³¹ As set out in the introduction, paratextual elements are appendices (fr.: franges), such as titles, chapter-names, seals, ownership statements, dedications, prefaces, which constitute a set of discourses and practices that present a written text.⁵³² Significantly for the current context, this 'zone of transaction' acted as a threshold (*seuil*),⁵³³ which was constituted by a varying combination of paratextual elements reflecting on their circulation, perusal and reading by a diverse local and transregional community. While these paratextual elements can have contingent effects on an audience, I will focus on their aspects of historical documentation regarding notions of time, space, material conditions and functionality.⁵³⁴ In line with recent scholarship on *Manuscript notes as documentary sources*,⁵³⁵ the documentary character of paratextual elements opens up the possibility of historical analysis, examining the socio-cultural meaning attached to travelling texts.

⁵²⁹ Cf. Overton 2016: 98.

⁵³⁰ For an example of this scholarship see Margariti 2007.

⁵³¹ Cf. Genette 2001: 9-21, 1993.

⁵³² Cf. Genette 2001: 9-13.

⁵³³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵³⁴ Cf. Genette 2001: 12.

⁵³⁵ Cf. Görke/Hirschler 2011.

In this chapter, I will study the paratextual elements of the Arabic manuscripts to trace their circulation across three discernible, complementary spheres, namely the courtly realm, a scholarly field and a local sphere of book exchange. Firstly, the development of this library unfolded within a courtly realm, with its own modes of reception, circulation and expressions of prestige conducted in Persian – points exemplified by Overton with regards to Ibrāhīm II.⁵³⁶ Secondly, this transregional entanglement was sustained through the existence of a scholarly field on the margins of the court consisting of itinerant scholars and local learned groups beyond the high-ranking courtiers. This scholarly field was constituted by its own frameworks of transmission and academic practices conducted in Arabic. But as I will argue, both courtly realm and scholarly field changed over time, interacted with each other and thereby they assimilated while retaining their own markers of authority. Thirdly and finally, the seventeenth century offered examples of a third form of circulation which occurred among Bijapur's learned Arabicised communities. A local exchange of manuscripts, which was not documented by representational frameworks of transmission and transfer, seemed to have been a common practice. Although there are no paratextual markers of circulation in this case, such local forms of circulation can be discerned by cross-reading prosopographical data about learned figures that were active in textual exchanges in Bijapur together with the delineation of their individual manuscript holdings that ended up in the Asar Mahal.

To study the conditions of the courtly realm, the scholarly field, and the local circulations within Bijapur, I will introduce a long-term historical perspective. I will look beyond the personal collections of sultans in order to examine the development of the Asar Mahal over a longer period of time, including fifteenth century antecedents and a final shape of this library in the seventeenth century at the dawn of the Mughal conquest. At this point in time the library became more than a royal asset and was turned into a place of educational pursuits. Therefore, it is crucial to study the wider effects of this library. Due to the continued circulation of manuscripts, the library itself became a vivid place of textual exchanges and transactions.

To demonstrate this the chapter is divided into six parts. The first section will trace the Arabic idiom within the multilingual environment of the Deccan in order to shift the focus away from Persianate transregional elites towards Arabicised communities. The second section will consider the emergence of the Persian scribal

⁵³⁶ Cf. Overton 2016.

notations on the Arabic manuscripts as a historical sign pointing to changes in the reception of manuscripts at the court. This will make it possible in the third and fourth sections to trace histories of circulation in a courtly realm and a scholarly field respectively. The fifth section will then discuss the transformation of the library into a *cultural entrepôt*, which will provide the context for local forms of manuscript circulation within Bijapur in the final section.

Historiographical background – Arabic in the Deccan’s transregional links

Closely intertwined regional and transregional historical processes shaped the evolution of the Deccan during the late medieval and early modern periods. The supra-regional political formations of the Bahmanī and Vijayanagara kingdoms gave way to the emergence of the regional Deccan Sultanates in the late fifteenth and into the sixteenth centuries, namely Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda, besides the smaller principalities of the Imad Shahis, Barid Shahis and Nayakas in the South.⁵³⁷ While exhibiting continuities with models from the previous polities, regional languages such as Marathi, Telugu and Dakhani received stronger patronage in these new political realms.⁵³⁸ The amplification of vernacular cultures was deeply enmeshed with a Persianate culture which served as a mode of courtly expression, but also trickled down into local administrative and fiscal procedures. Bilingual administrative practices were characteristic of all the Deccan Sultanates, featuring Persian side by side with one of the regional languages.⁵³⁹

On a transregional level, Persian served to sustain wider connections with the early modern Indian Ocean world. In its double role as a local language and a transregional idiom, Persian exemplified the crucial aspect of immigration from the Middle Eastern regions, which carved out the social composition of the Deccan Sultanates during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵⁴⁰ The movement of elite groups from Western Asia to the subcontinent underscored that the refinement of Persian was important as a communicative medium at the Deccani courts and a vehicle for transregional communication at the same time.⁵⁴¹ The rulers of the Deccan had made efforts to attract Persianate elite groups from various professional backgrounds

⁵³⁷ For this paragraph cf. Asher/Talbot 2006: 163-175; cf. Fischel 2012: 1-8.

⁵³⁸ Cf. Eaton 2014.

⁵³⁹ These bilingual practices can be observed on the Arabic manuscripts themselves which feature Marathi notes in Modi script. Cf. Quraishi 1991 and Loth 1877.

⁵⁴⁰ Cf. Overton 2016, Fischel 2012, Flatt 2009: 55ff, Subrahmanyam 1992.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. Flatt 2009.

in Western Asia from the first half of the fifteenth century onwards.⁵⁴² The ‘Peripatetic courtier’, best exemplified in the Bahmanī vizier Maḥmūd Gāwān,⁵⁴³ captured the various aspects that facilitated transregional professional travels, such as the creation of ‘intersecting familial, mercantile, scholarly, and patronage networks. [...] [which] allowed individuals to travel from place to place in search of employment, knowledge and remuneration’.⁵⁴⁴ This continued throughout the following centuries with the migration of Persian literati and intellectuals from Iran.⁵⁴⁵ They were crucial in sustaining merchant networks but also drove processes of regional state formation by offering their skills in exchange for patronage at the Deccani courts.⁵⁴⁶

The importance of the Persianate elite groups has to be contextualised within a framework of competing identities in the early modern Deccan. At this point, a focus on networks seems particularly expedient since political elites were divided into several socio-cultural identities which contributed to a constant shift in alliances and power-struggles. Recent scholarship on the Deccan has demonstrated that delineating the diachronic evolution of ‘group identities, their spatial and political manifestations, and their relations with each other’ is necessary to address larger questions of society and state in the Deccan.⁵⁴⁷ Horizontal networks among transregional and local groups dominated over vertical hierarchies across society.⁵⁴⁸ Factional divisions were partly due to the immigration of various elite groups, mainly from the Persian Gulf and the wider Middle East, that had started under the Bahmanīs (1347-1528), whose famous above-mentioned vizier Maḥmūd Gāwān (fl. 1466-1481) was particularly successful in bringing merchants, literati and administrators to the court of Bidar.⁵⁴⁹ These constituted the faction of the ‘Foreigners’ (*gharībān*), mainly sailing from Iran, and building on Persian as a cosmopolitan language and simultaneously an established cultural idiom that was supposed to guide personal ‘comportment’ and the arts of ‘statecraft’.⁵⁵⁰ Factional rivalries and struggles of influence often occurred between these Persianate Foreigners and the groups of the Deccanis, the majority of which were

⁵⁴² Cf. Eaton 2005: 60-63.

⁵⁴³ Cf. Flatt 2009: 342-343; Eaton 2005: 59-77.

⁵⁴⁴ Cf. Flatt 2009: 55-56.

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. Overton 2016.

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. Subrahmanyam 1992.

⁵⁴⁷ Cf. Fischel 2012: xi.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 227-240.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. Eaton 2005: 63-64 and 74-76.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 76. See Fischel 2012, 180 Fn4 for the preference of the term ‘Foreigner’ rather than ‘Westerner’ as translated by Eaton.

locally rooted Muslims, who communicated in the Dakhnī language.⁵⁵¹ This prominent fracture among the political elite persisted after the break-up of the Bahmanī kingdom into the Deccan Sultanates at the end of the fifteenth century.⁵⁵²

The emergence of the Deccan Sultanates multiplied the court factionalisms and produced ‘rapidly changing political situations’ that were conducive to shifting alliances.⁵⁵³ Nevertheless, these shifts were not always linked to specific courts, and instead, elite mobility was characteristic of this period. The repeated movement of elite groups between different realms of political power can be exemplified by the career of Rama Raya during the sixteenth century, who moved between Vijayanagara and Bijapur.⁵⁵⁴ His case again underlines the importance of horizontal connections.⁵⁵⁵ P. Wagoner’s analysis of two cases concerning hermeneutics of cultural interpretation among different ethnicities in the Deccan further corroborates the notion of the Deccan as ‘a single transcultural social formation’ that was inhabited by a diverse group of elite military-political personnel.⁵⁵⁶ The Deccan thus constituted a politically fractured terrain inhabited by groups with overlapping cultural identities in this period.

While scholarship on the socio-cultural significance of Dakhnī is still in its infancy, the focus on Persianate elite groups stemmed from a preference given to the Persian narrative sources of the period. The *gharībān* found their special place in Persian chronicles, which exhibited a general tendency to record political elites close to the sultan.⁵⁵⁷ Additionally, several of these chronicles were also written by members of these elites such as Rafī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī and Tabātābāī, who both had a Persianate background, which manifested itself clearly in the ideological underpinnings of their historical works.⁵⁵⁸ However, looking beyond the narrative sources can provide a view beyond the Foreigner-Deccani divide. Both groups participated in different ways in practices related to the circulation and perusal of manuscripts, but the materiality of these manuscripts did not account for the political divisions as portrayed in the chronicles. They were not marked as members of one or the other faction in the paratextual profiles of the manuscripts. Instead, these paratextual profiles point to a

⁵⁵¹ Cf. Eaton 2005:67-70, 76. Cf. Fischel 2012:7. For additional views on these rivalries, cf. Kruitzer 2009: 74ff.

⁵⁵² Cf. Flatt 2009: 19-20.

⁵⁵³ Cf. Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Cf. Eaton 2005: 80 and 103-104.

⁵⁵⁵ Fischel 2012: 227-240.

⁵⁵⁶ Cf. Wagoner 1999: 247, 258.

⁵⁵⁷ See for example Fischel 2012.

⁵⁵⁸ Cf. for this and the following Fischel 2015: 74, 76 and 82.

much broader Arabicised community of sultans, courtiers, librarians, slaves, scholars and Sufis who participated in the circulation of Arabic manuscripts.

Apart from the over-reliance on narrative sources, it was the overemphasis on Persian sources which led to a concentration on a Persian Islamicate court culture. Corresponding to the Persian pre-eminence in the field, studies that have investigated the role of Arabic in South Asia generally relegated this cultural idiom to the sphere of religious rituals and as a tool for the purpose of studying Islam.⁵⁵⁹ This was reinforced by juxtaposing Arabic's allegedly sole religious significance with the secular and cultural importance of Persian. Arabic as a cultural idiom has generally been ignored as an element of the multilingual equation across the Deccan. A starting point for its empirical re-integration can be found in M. Konkani's work, who provided a general survey of the scholarly and literary relevance of Arabic in the Deccan from the Bahmanīs to their successors.⁵⁶⁰ What stands out in his investigation is the prominence of Islamicate groups, such as Sufis and *'ulamā'* among the transregional agents, their literary productions in the various fields of Islamicate commentary traditions, as well as the continuous link with the Hijaz.⁵⁶¹

Such Islamicate groups also became more visible in narrative sources by the seventeenth century. R. Eaton's studies of Persian prosopographical materials asserted a rising influx of Sufis and Muslim scholars in Bijapur.⁵⁶² The Qādiriyya order with its connections to Baghdad is of special importance during the reign of Sultan Muḥammad (1037/1627-1067/1656). Their growth can be attributed to intensifying Islamic orthodox trends in his realm.⁵⁶³ Additionally, two members of the al-*'Aydarūs* family, Shaykh *'Abd Allāh* (d. 1631-32) and Muḥyī al-Dīn *'Abd al-Qādir* (d. 1038/1627) were of seminal importance. They constituted parts of the West Indian extension of a complex network of Ḥaḍramī scholars throughout the Indian Ocean.⁵⁶⁴ Whereas Muḥyī al-Dīn settled in Ahmedabad in the Sultanate of Gujarat after his 'travels for the sake of study and collecting books',⁵⁶⁵ Shaykh *'Abd Allāh*, who had earlier sojourned in Mecca and Medina, continued his peregrinations after a short stay in Ahmedabad, to offer his services to the court in Ahmadnagar, as well as later on in Bijapur, playing a crucial role

⁵⁵⁹ Cf. Qutbuddin 2007.

⁵⁶⁰ Cf. Konkani 1973: 1-15.

⁵⁶¹ Cf. Ibid.

⁵⁶² Eaton 1978.

⁵⁶³ Cf. Eaton 1978: 125-127 and Ho 2006: 97ff.

⁵⁶⁴ Cf. Eaton 1978: 127-129.

⁵⁶⁵ Cf. Löfgren 2013.

as courtly official until his death in Daulatabad.⁵⁶⁶ Their travels and travails sketch a crucial pathway along one of Ho's 'two arms of Cambay', which linked the Red Sea region with Gujarat, from where the second arm continued along the coast further south to the Deccan and Malabar going further still to Southeast Asia.⁵⁶⁷ During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this first arm emerged as the standard route for several itinerant communities including the Ḥaḍramīs, pursuing their economic, religious and cultural transactions.

In the current context, the intensification in Arabic exchanges with the Red Sea region can be studied on the basis of paratexts which were inscribed on the Arabic manuscripts. Most significantly, by looking at the paratextual profiles of the Arabic manuscripts and beyond the narrative sources, these Islamicate groups become part of a larger Arabicised community. This Arabicised community pursued a variety of textual practices across entangled courtly and scholarly fields. And these practices were not necessarily anchored in Islamic rituals, but they encompassed a variety of cultural pursuits that centred on the circulation and perusal of Arabic manuscripts, for example the study of Arabic philology. The court of the 'Ādil Shāhī dynasty in the Deccan represented one among multiple salient settings in local and transregional links, which provided a platform that brought different forms of manuscript and text circulation into conversation. Simultaneously, it provided a contact zone through Arabic networks with the Red Sea region.

The emergence of the Persian scribal notations

Histories of circulation of these Arabic manuscripts can be reconstructed based on notes as written traces of engagements with them. Of particular importance for the delineation of a courtly sphere of circulation are the Persian scribal notations.⁵⁶⁸ In general, they were inscribed on the manuscripts by members of the royal entourage – 'librarians' – who documented the reception of a manuscript at the court. These manuscripts were then kept in the royal library and inspected on different occasions. Although the Persian scribal notations do not survive on each and every manuscript in this library collection, there are 77 specimens, which can serve to analyse a systematic

⁵⁶⁶ Cf. Eaton 1978: 127-129.

⁵⁶⁷ Cf. Ho 2006: 102-103.

⁵⁶⁸ For this and the following cf. Overton 2011: 45. She uses this term to refer to the library's entry notes on Ibrahim's manuscripts. This term can as well be applied to the entry notes on the other manuscripts which are of similar significance. In general, these scribal notations are exceptional and an outstanding source to study the evolution of this royal library. Seyller 1997 has shown how an elaborate system developed in the Mughal context.

handling by different courtly groups.⁵⁶⁹ Overton summarised the main elements of these Persian scribal notations for Ibrāhīm II.'s manuscripts.⁵⁷⁰ Accordingly, 'the contents are formulaic and typically contain the following information: the title of the book, the name of the scribe (when known), the type of script, a description of the binding (*jild*), an indication of a specific seal's (*sikka*) presence, a comment on provenance (*bābat* [item] and/or *Pīshkash* [gift] followed by a type of institution or proper name), and the date on which the book was collected (*jam* 'shoda) into the "royal library" (either *kitābkhāne-yi 'āmira* or *kitābkhāne-yi ma'mūra*'.⁵⁷¹ Significantly, the reference to the title was often followed by a classification of the work according to a specific discipline or subject, indicating the librarians' engagement with the intellectual contents of the manuscripts.

The Persian scribal notations perform a double function in line with the characteristics of manuscript notes, namely that they document textual transactions and present each manuscript to a potential readership. This can be exemplified with the work *al-Muṭawwal* by al-Taftāzānī on rhetoric (B 251).⁵⁷² On the lower half of the title-page, there are the two 'arzāt ('inspection notes') of Aurangzeb's and the Nizam's officials with a seal as a later marker of acquisition after the Mughal conquest and the political takeover of the Nizam respectively.⁵⁷³ Another 'arzat with an almost illegible seal is dated 11th Sha'bān 1003/1595, which, in combination with the nawras inscription at the head of the folio, clearly locates the previous acquisition of this manuscript in the reign of Ibrāhīm 'Ādil Shāh II (987-1035/1580-1627).⁵⁷⁴ An Arabic ownership note attributes the work to a previous collection of books, '[...] 'Ibād Allāh Dhū al-Luṭf al-Ḥafī Muḥammad b. Mūsī al-Mudarris al-Ḥanafī'. These notes clearly outline the transmission of the book from a Ḥanafī scholar to the personal collection of a Deccani sultan. According to the Persian notation, Shaykh 'Abd al-Sallām conducted this transmission by offering the manuscript as a gift (*pīshkash*), whereupon it entered into the Royal Library. Yet, this Persian scribal notation at the centre gives more details: accordingly, the work is the famous commentary of al-Taftāzānī on al-Qazwīnī's *Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ* called *al-Muṭawwal*. Thus, the book was characterised as belonging to the sciences of

⁵⁶⁹ Cf. Loth 1877.

⁵⁷⁰ Overton 2011: 54-55.

⁵⁷¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 54.

⁵⁷² For this and the following cf. MS IO B 251. In the following all references to the Bijapur manuscripts will be given with this shorthand corresponding to the shelf-mark e.g. here MS IO B 251. The manuscripts are listed according to the shelf-mark in the bibliography.

⁵⁷³ Cf. Overton 2011: 51-52.

⁵⁷⁴ These forms of expressing ownership were discussed in Overton 2011.

rhetoric and written in the Shikaste script with a variously decorated paper binding. The inscription of these data on the manuscripts functions as a complex procedure of reception at the court.

While Overton analysed these notations in order to advance an argument about the particular book cultures of Ibrāhīm II and to identify his manuscripts, I will focus on their cultural significance in the context of the wider historical development of the library here and throughout this chapter. The earliest surviving notation goes back to 880/1475 and is inscribed on the grammar book *al-Lubāb* ('The Quintessence') by Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd al-Sīrāfī al-Fālī, copied in 832/1428, and presented to the court by a certain Shaykh Aḥmad Khunjī.⁵⁷⁵ It falls into the very early phase of the 'Ādil Shāhī sultanate and according to Quraishi possibly has its antecedents in similar practices during the Bahmanī period.⁵⁷⁶ Similar notations appear on the Arabic manuscripts of the Bijapur library from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,⁵⁷⁷ and, in combination with various other paratextual elements on the first folios, describe their circulation within the scholarly field and the courtly sphere. Their more regular appearance from the sixteenth century onwards signifies the growing entanglement of Bijapur in the transregional flows of Arabic manuscripts.

The Persian scribal notations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are more elaborate than earlier notations. A comparison with a notation from the Bahmanī period (14th-15th centuries), the predecessor state, shows that they signify a historical change. The manuscript MS IO B 7 is a copy of the grammar commentary *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* ('The wondrous gift') by the Egyptian scholar Muḥammad al-Damāmīnī on Ibn Hishām's *Mughnī al-labīb*, originally written in 824/1421 – as discussed in chapter two –, copied in 849/1445 and then inspected (through an 'arzat-notation) in the same year.⁵⁷⁸ Two seals and another review-notation were identified by Loth and mark the reception and ownership of this manuscript as that of Maḥmūd Gāwān in 876/1471.⁵⁷⁹ He was the chief minister of the Bahmanī realm from 1458 to 1481.⁵⁸⁰ Similarly to ownership statements,

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. MS IO B 12 and Quraishi 1991: 165. He sees this as a remnant of an earlier Bahmanī library.

⁵⁷⁶ Cf. Quraishi 1991: 165.

⁵⁷⁷ Specimens from the fifteenth century are different and will be treated later on. One manuscript in the Salar Jung Museum library, Hyderabad, comes with a similar notation and could therefore be linked to the collection of the royal library. See the Quranic commentary *al-Kashshāf* by al-Zamakhsharī, MS Taf 59, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fly-leaf.

⁵⁷⁸ Cf. MS IO B 7, fol. 1re. This manuscript was briefly mentioned in Overton 2016: 115. Yet, she gives the date of copying for this manuscript as 1421 instead of 1445. For more details about al-Damāmīnī's text see chapter 2 of this dissertation.

⁵⁷⁹ Cf. Loth 1877.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. Eaton 2005: 59-77.

the seal represents a transtextual appropriation that worked through the impression of property rights. This earlier scribal notation from the fifteenth century is much more rudimentary in form since it only refers to an inspection which took place on a particular date. However, already a few years later, in 1475, there is a far more nuanced notation which pays attention to a variety of material characteristics and textual contents of the manuscripts.⁵⁸¹ At the same time, the transmitter is mentioned, and the written artefacts are categorised with respect to the title and the contents of the work. The shift from a rudimentary to a more complex receptive format suggests that this Deccanī court had to deal with an intensifying inflow of written artefacts over the centuries. The royal library received more books and therefore refined its system of manuscript reception. Simultaneously, this refined system also reflects on the growing intellectual interests in these Arabic manuscripts and their texts.⁵⁸²

The movement of books constituted textual transactions, which were important forms of cultural exchange among courtly and transregional groups. The Persian scribal notations provide a record of these transactions, categorising each manuscript along the lines of its particular features in order to integrate them into a growing courtly library. These notations document cultural practices of Arabicised communities and more specifically the intertextual signification of an Arabic idiom as a cultural artefact that was used to creatively negotiate the transregional relations of the court. While I am elaborating on this argument with respect to Arabic manuscripts I have not studied the circulation and transmission of Persian manuscripts sufficiently to compare both. At this point, one can conclude that the pervasive use of the scribal notations confirms Persian as the main language of royal conduct in Bijapur, which nonetheless integrates Arabic cultural and scholarly artefacts into the purview of the court.

The Royal Library as a courtly realm of circulation

In this section I will elaborate on previous scholarship to emphasise that the courtly realm of circulation in Bijapur signified the circulation of manuscripts through the use of *external paratexts* such as scribal notations and seals. Recent scholarship on Islamicate book collections has pointed to the multiple layers of significance which a library could accrue. Libraries represent the outcome of different collection incentives

⁵⁸¹ Cf. the previous example MS IO B 12.

⁵⁸² While Overton made this point with regard to the intellectual tastes of Ibrāhīm II it would be interesting to analyse the intellectual engagements of the wider courtly formation with these book collections.

and provide a complex record of their socio-cultural environment. Most recently, K. Hirschler reconstructed the history of the organisation, sourcing, stocking and workings of the Ashrafiya library and its books, based on a unique library catalogue from medieval Damascus.⁵⁸³ This documentary source material allowed him to approach questions of textual diversity, spatial dimension and socio-cultural context of an endowed library.⁵⁸⁴ B. Liebreuz sketched the history of the Rifā'iya library from Damascus in its nineteenth century context through an analysis of *secondary references* ('Sekundäreinträge') on the surviving manuscripts (now in Leipzig), the rich prosopographical source materials and archival documents on its acquisition process over the course of the nineteenth century.⁵⁸⁵ Through this cross-reading of sources he studied canonicity, readership and cultural significance of the library within its wider urban social environment.⁵⁸⁶ Both studies also surveyed the wider field of book and library history with special reference to the Arabic lands and the wider Middle East during the medieval and early modern periods, in order to evaluate its heuristic contribution to the study of social and cultural history in this region. Here, libraries are an institutional phenomenon of the widespread textualisation and popularisation of the written word during the Middle Period.⁵⁸⁷ Libraries were the outcome of regionally extensive and locally intensive patronage activities by local rulers and the civilian elites.⁵⁸⁸ They could therefore serve diverse social groups in their reading practices.⁵⁸⁹ While the circulation of and access to manuscripts took on different dimensions at both ends of the Western Indian Ocean, royal libraries presumably fulfilled similar functions across this region, providing access to books for socially more exclusive groups.

At the outset, the significance of the royal library of Bijapur has to be located within the courtly realm as a form of Islamicate prestige among the sultan's highly exclusive entourage. For the early modern South Asian context the keeping of Islamicate libraries was a preserve mainly of the courtly elites, among a few others, such as scholarly and Sufi communities.⁵⁹⁰ S. Alavi and M. Alam argued for the cultural importance of royal libraries in the Indo-Persian worlds in general, and for their

⁵⁸³ Hirschler 2016.

⁵⁸⁴ cf. *Ibid.*, 17-51.

⁵⁸⁵ Liebreuz 2016.

⁵⁸⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁷ Hirschler 2016: 2-3. See also Hirschler 2012.

⁵⁸⁸ Hirschler 2016: 13-14.

⁵⁸⁹ Compare 'Royal Libraries', Local endowed Libraries and questions of access in Hirschler 2016 and 2013.

⁵⁹⁰ See Overton 2011: 51, and 2016. Notes referring to the Qādiriyya library of Bijapur appear on Arabic manuscripts as well. Cf. MS IO B 3 fly-leaf; see also MS IO B 21 and B 142. Cf. Loth 1877.

significance for rulers during that period in particular.⁵⁹¹ ‘Maintaining large libraries of precious literary, scientific and historical manuscripts appeared to be a hallmark of high aristocratic life in the region’ up to the eighteenth century, since it conveyed the image of power and social standing which stemmed from the ‘social signification attached to books and manuscripts.’⁵⁹² Libraries and manuscripts expressed both wealth and cultural refinement and were therefore important elements of courtly culture and a means of framing political representation for rulers. Overton demonstrated that a variety of manuscript holdings existed in Bijapur during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, among them the Qādirīya library, the libraries of several rulers, i.e. the personal wardrobes (sg. *jāmadārkhāna*), the royal library (*kitābkhāna-yi ‘āmira/ma‘mūra*) and sub-collections within these holdings, such as *jam‘ aval* (first class collection) and *jam‘ nauras* (the Nauras collection of Ibrāhīm II).⁵⁹³ The individual libraries of the sultans ‘Alī (d. 988/1580), Ibrāhīm II (d. 1037/1627) and Muḥammad (d. 1067/1656) can be traced through the impression of different seals on the respective manuscripts of the library.⁵⁹⁴ With specific reference to Ibrāhīm II, Overton expounded how these catered to his individual tastes and contributed to the self-fashioning of a particular Muslim sovereign.⁵⁹⁵ Through the use of elaborate seals, marks of ownership and additional dedicatory notes, Ibrāhīm II and other sultans visualised the ownership of their manuscript holdings and communicated their intellectual interests.⁵⁹⁶ Collecting works in Arabic and Persian was a way of rooting oneself within ‘the royal prerogatives of Islamic kingship.’⁵⁹⁷

The image of refined Islamicate prestige also circulated in the narrative texts of the period among the courtly elites. The topos of the “reading sultan” can be found in anecdotal form in the Persian court chronicle *Tazkīrat al-mulūk* of Rafi‘ al-Dīn Shirazī (d. 1030/1620).⁵⁹⁸ Here the court historian elaborated on ‘Alī ‘Ādil Shāh’s passion for reading by describing how he became very angry when, while travelling, his private book collection was mixed up with the Royal Treasury and separated from him.⁵⁹⁹ With general reference to the Royal Library, Shirazī wrote: ‘The Sultan was very fond of

⁵⁹¹ Cf. Alam/Alavi 2001: 32-36.

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, 32, 34-35.

⁵⁹³ Cf. Overton 2011: 60. She also provides helpful categorisations of the different scribal notations and seals on Ibrāhīm’s fifty Asar Mahal manuscripts, cf. *Ibid.*, 53.

⁵⁹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 61. See in that order MS IO B 185; B 203,234; B 148.

⁵⁹⁵ Cf. Overton 2011: 44-46.

⁵⁹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 45-46.

⁵⁹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. Ernst 2015.

⁵⁹⁹ Cf. Quraishi 1991: 166.

books and reading. He had collected numerous books relating to all types of subjects, so much that his library had become completely full. He employed nearly sixty people, including calligraphers, gilders, book-binders, and illuminators, who were busy all day in looking after the books in the library'.⁶⁰⁰

To exemplify a ruler's intellectual endeavours, the image of the reading sultan from a narrative source can be combined with the cultural significance of the Arabic manuscripts. It signals the wider ramifications of his cultural refinement. Based on the diverse architecture and visual arts, such as miniature painting, of the court of Bijapur, D. Hutton advanced an argument on its vibrant court culture that created dynamics which were conducive to 'intercultural exchange' among a larger courtly community.⁶⁰¹ Circulating Arabic manuscripts established Arabic as an integral part of royal prestige at this Indo-Persian court. Rulers and royal households were centres for the reception of Arabic during the medieval and early modern periods. They became the focus for literary offerings and gifts,⁶⁰² which necessarily developed cultural links with transregional Arabicised communities as well. The perpetuation of an Arabic idiom at the court in Bijapur opened up opportunities for transregional groups who could use the venue of offering Arabic works according to a courtly etiquette to inscribe themselves into the courtly formation, whereby they further reinforced the courtly circulation.

The wider importance of the manuscripts can be analysed by moving beyond the orbit of each ruler and decentralising the notion of the court. Building on the work of D. Ali,⁶⁰³ Flatt studied 'patterns of habitual and ritual behaviour in the daily interactions between members of the court' in the Deccan from the beginning of the fifteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries.⁶⁰⁴ By concentrating on 'subtleties of interpersonal communications', examined on the basis of a variety of narrative and normative sources, such as court chronicles and ethical treatises, it was possible to decentralise the perspective and focus on other actors around the ruler, such as the courtier and the service elites.⁶⁰⁵ The study of groups entangled with the courts across the political terrain of the Deccan Sultanates, and the ways in which they produced

⁶⁰⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 166. Quoted from: Shirazi, *Tazkīrat al-mulūk*, British Library, Persian manuscript. Rieu: Add. 23, 883, fol. 158r.

⁶⁰¹ Cf. Hutton 2006: 1-4.

⁶⁰² As Overton pointed out, most of these manuscripts can be considered as gifts. Cf. Overton 2016: 113.

⁶⁰³ Cf. Ali 2004.

⁶⁰⁴ Cf. Flatt 2009: 15.

⁶⁰⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 16, 35, 40-50.

Islamicate knowledge systems from letter-writing to garden culture,⁶⁰⁶ centred the discussion on the complex calibration of and practices within courtly networks.⁶⁰⁷ Courtly actors were embedded within a complex set of intersubjective human relationships, in which ‘cultural artefacts’ such as manuscripts were employed to negotiate social standing and prestige.⁶⁰⁸

There is clear evidence that a royal library of Bijapur functioned within such a broader courtly institutional setting by providing the logistic means to ensure the reception and courtly circulation of Arabic manuscripts. Besides the agency of individual rulers, private collections of each wardrobe (*jāmadārkhāna*) often ended up in the ‘royal library’ (*kitābkhāna-yi āmira/ma’mūra*), as is attested by the aforementioned scribal notations.⁶⁰⁹ Furthermore, two governmental orders (*ruq‘as*) survive that provide at least fragmentary evidence for the institutional setup of the library.⁶¹⁰ They are dated 975/1567-1568 and 983/1575-76, stamped with a seal for the ‘Nād-i-‘Aliyā’ prayer and both written in Persian and in Marathi (Modi script), corroborating bilingual administrative practices and demonstrating the ambiguous nature of Sunni and Shi‘i boundaries in Bijapur.⁶¹¹ In sum, both documents show the appointment of librarians specifically for a ‘royal library’ and the precautions that were taken, including guarantees by several members of the courtly elite, to safeguard the manuscripts and the working of the library in a courtly context.⁶¹²

Arabic manuscripts were highly valued written artefacts in Bijapur exemplified in the diverse human figuration that enabled the circulation of these items at the court by recording in detail their handling and provenance. The circulation of books within a courtly realm was conducted as a book-transfer and expressed in reception and ownership statements. Overton already exemplified how the coexistence of three different dated scribal notations shows a discernible process of the inner courtly movement of books.⁶¹³ Accordingly, a procedure existed, at least during ‘Alī’s and Ibrāhīm II’s times from the middle of the sixteenth to the first quarter of the

⁶⁰⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 33-35.

⁶⁰⁷ From a more anthropological perspective S. Leder argued for an understanding of courts as ‘complex organisms [...] creating specific expressions of their inner constitution by various means.’ Thus, ‘the creation of spatial structures, [...] as well as the semantics of formulaic speech can all be considered manifestations of the court and agencies producing the image of the court’. Cf. Leder 2011a: 359-360.

⁶⁰⁸ Cf. Flatt 2011: 29-30.

⁶⁰⁹ Cf. Overton 2011: 58.

⁶¹⁰ Cf. Overton 2011: 48.

⁶¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 49 and Joshi 1954: 1-12.

⁶¹² Cf. Joshi 1954: 1-12.

⁶¹³ Cf. Overton 2011: 56-60 and 2016: 108-109.

seventeenth century, according to which a library staff handled the reception, integration and movement of the Arabic manuscripts. To highlight this, I will present a case study which was analysed by Overton previously and which I traced again on the basis of the manuscript.⁶¹⁴ This case study is important in order to provide a basis for comparison between the courtly circulation and the scholarly sphere of circulation later. Various patterns of an institutional working are reflected in the paratextual notes of a supra-commentary on logic (*manṭiq*) written by Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī (d. 816/1413).⁶¹⁵ A previous owner noted in Arabic that the work was written by a certain Taqī al-Dīn al-Ḥuṣnī, who died in 881/1476.⁶¹⁶ At the first stage, this work entered the personal collection (*jāmadārkhāna*) of Ibrāhīm II as a gift presented by a certain Mīr Zāhid in 994/1586.⁶¹⁷ The scribal notation referring to this was decorated in an ornament and written in Persian.⁶¹⁸ The impression of his nawras seal makes it clear that it was among his personal books.⁶¹⁹ A subsequent inspection in 1003/1594 is evident from a ‘review-notation’ (*arḻat*).⁶²⁰ In 1024/1615 the work was finally integrated into the ‘royal library’ (*kitābkhāna-yi ‘āmira*) and transported to this place by a page and minor (*khursāla*), Farrukh Aqā.⁶²¹

Book transfers could also take on a more political dimension. A set of procedures was concerned with the movement of several Arabic books from the former Bahmanī capital Bidar to Bijapur after its conquest in 1028/1619.⁶²² These manuscripts assumed a political dimension, since they were part of the plundering carried out by Ibrāhīm II’s troops under Āqā Rizā Dābulī, who led the military expedition against the Barīd ruler Mīrza ‘Alī at Bidar.⁶²³ Under the umbrella of ‘imperial assurances’ granted by the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr (d. 1037/1627), the Barīdī realm was annexed and thus the kingdom of Bidar ended in 1619,⁶²⁴ epitomised in the acquisition of the precious Arabic manuscripts. The shift of at least five different manuscripts, among them dictionaries

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Cf. MS IO B 181A, fol. 3r. The supra-commentary is a commentary on Quṭb al-Dīn Ṭaḥṭānī’s commentary of a compendium by al-‘Urmawī. Cf. Loth 1877.

⁶¹⁶ Cf. MS IO B 181A, fol. 3r.

⁶¹⁷ Cf. Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Cf. Ibid. Transcription: Sayyid Sharīf Mīr - Ḥāshīya bar sharḥ-i Quṭbī bar Maṭālī‘ al-anwār al-Urmawī dar manṭiq – tamām be-khaṭṭ-i shikaste – muḥashshā bā sikka-yi be-many-i nauras-i ‘ālampanāh – khallada Allāh mulkahu abadan – peshkash-i Mīr Zāhid – 21 Dhī l-Hijja, sana 994.

⁶¹⁹ Cf. MS IO B 181A, fol. 3r. Cf. Overton 2011: 53-54. Eaton 1978: 89-101.

⁶²⁰ Cf. MS IO B 181A, fol. 3r.

⁶²¹ Cf. Ibid., fol. 2r.

⁶²² Cf. MS IO B 203 and B 234, fol. 4r. These examples are pointed out in Loth 1877 and were used by Overton to exemplify the circulation between courts in the Deccan. Cf. Overton 2011: 65.

⁶²³ Cf. Joshi/Sherwani 1973: 346-348.

⁶²⁴ Cf. Ibid.

and compendia relating to jurisprudence and scholastic theology, were mentioned in the scribal notations of Bijapur manuscripts.⁶²⁵ These notations contain similar generic formulae, for example, '[this] item was integrated into the royal library (*kitābkhāna-yi 'āmira*) [after] the conquest (*fath*) of the city of Muḥammadābād, known as Bīdar on the 9th Sha'bān, 1028 [1619]'.⁶²⁶ With their removal after the conquest of the former capital at Bidar, their importance as a symbol of victory was eternalised in a paratextual note and placed before potential readers as a political message. The transfer of Arabic books was a cultural practice that formed part of symbolic strategies to epitomise political victories, underscoring the constitutive effect of Arabic manuscripts to the workings of Deccani court culture.

While these manuscripts accumulated within the royal library as a depository of books, their Persian scribal notations demonstrate how transregional elites used these manuscripts to inscribe themselves in the court at Bijapur and thereby enabled their circulation. A prominent example was Shāh Nawāz Khān, an emigrant from Shīrāz and high-standing court official in Bijapur, who brought several books with him from Iran, arriving in the subcontinent in 1589.⁶²⁷ At least eight Arabic manuscripts can be attributed to him or his son as offerings to the court.⁶²⁸ Also among the group of benefactors is Aṭā' Allāh, who offered several Arabic works, in particular a commentary by al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390) on his compendium of metaphysics in 992/1585.⁶²⁹ At the same time, paratextual notes reveal the active acquisition of a work and its later presentation for the collection of manuscripts at the court: Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥīm bought a commentary by al-Iṣfahānī in Aḥmadābād in 992/1585.⁶³⁰ This item was brought to the court by a certain judge, Qāḍī Khushḥāl and was later integrated into the royal library.⁶³¹

According to these instances Arabic books served as cultural artefacts which were exchanged among the courtly and transregional elites and the ruler as part of their courtly transactions. E. Fetvacı in her book *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court*

⁶²⁵ Cf. MS IO 605, British Library, London; MS IO B 323; B 203, B 234; B 38; B 37. Cf. Loth 1877.

⁶²⁶ Cf. MS IO B 203,234, fol. 4r.

⁶²⁷ Cf. Overton 2011: 61-62. And again Overton 2016: 93-95.

⁶²⁸ Cf. MS IO B 320; B 197; B 205; B 243; B 220; B 181B; B 210; B 140. Cf. Loth 1877. These literary offerings, in the form of the presentation of books as gifts to the sultan, demonstrate how Arabic written artefacts gravitated around the figure of a ruler in the Deccan during this period.

⁶²⁹ Cf. MS IO B 185, fol. 3r. and cf. Overton 2011: 57.

⁶³⁰ Cf. MS IO B 223, fol. 1r.

⁶³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, fol. 1r. He represented a crucial learned figure from the period of Muḥammad's reign. In total, he brought seven Arabic books to the court. MS IO B 19; B 23; B 178; B 223; B 333B; B 337; B 350. Cf. Loth 1877.

advanced an argument for the importance of book circulation in the creation of a common court society with the Topkapi Palace at the centre.⁶³² She studied the ‘formation of courtly identity’ by examining ‘the social use of books and Ottoman elite book culture’.⁶³³ Books and manuscripts were ‘objects of communication’ which fulfilled a social function through their performative deployment, acquired value and cultural authority in their circulation.⁶³⁴ Similarly in Bijapur Persian scribal notations have demonstrated the diversity of the human figuration that was involved in such transactions. While the ruler remained an important figure, courtly officials and librarians were active agents in these processes.⁶³⁵

By fathoming the Persian scribal notations, it is possible to delineate a courtly realm of circulation marked in the acquisition, handling and enactment of these Arabic manuscripts. Most significantly, I argue that this circulation became visible through *external paratexts*, meaning notes of ownership, reception and review. These corresponded to different occasions for the movement of Arabic books, such as courtly offerings, transregional travels, royal impression, active acquisition and plundering. Arabic manuscripts across a range of Islamic and Islamicate disciplines functioned as artefactual templates, which could be signified differently. Each occasion referred to a book transfer which produced a different cultural meaning that could be attached to an Arabic manuscript. These manuscripts were gifts, trophies, advertisements of intellectual endeavours and media for the articulation of Islamicate royal aspirations. The reconstruction of the different pathways in the circulation of the Bijapuri books and manuscripts exemplifies, on the one hand, how the creation of a courtly culture of the ‘Ādil Shāhīs was shaped by the accumulation of transregional cultural practices and, on the other, how such a court culture established ways of further engaging with transregional actors to integrate them into the purview of the court.

Finally, these practices reveal a specific entanglement of Arabic and Persian registers. While the works under consideration were examples of different Islamicate commentary traditions composed and transmitted in Arabic, Persian nonetheless remained the general mode of paratextual presentation. Both the terminology for the different libraries and the procedural details were stated in Persian, displaying the administrative dominance of this cosmopolitan language at the court of Bijapur. Still,

⁶³² Cf. Fetvaci 2013: 25-27.

⁶³³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶³⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁶³⁵ Although, as Overton pointed out, librarians in Bijapur remained largely anonymous compared to their Mughal contemporaries. Cf. Overton 2011: 55.

in a local courtly context the external paratextual notes reveal the perpetuation of an Arabic idiom through the circulation of various genres of Islamicate texts, simultaneously reaching out to establish links with other regions in the Deccan and beyond.

Histories of circulation across the scholarly field

Moving beyond the realm of the court, the Arabic manuscripts from the Bijapur library can also be traced across a scholarly field in the Deccan. Mobile agents enabled this transregional outreach and thereby forged connections with regions of the Western Indian Ocean. While the courtly circulation was marked by book transfers expressed in *external paratexts*, I argue further that the entangled scholarly field worked through the inscription of *internal paratexts* enacting the transmission of texts. With internal paratexts, I am referring to prefaces, colophons, reading notes and transmission certificates which are concerned with frameworks of transmission through reproduction, dissemination and other transtextual appropriations of a text, in contrast to the more artefactual perusal of manuscripts in the previous section. Although not a fully standardised scheme, frameworks remained relatively stable over the centuries. They document various technicalities of academic transactions among learned individuals and groups. For the current purpose, they can show how a transoceanic Arabicised community transacted cultural exchange by conducting textual transactions amongst its own members. At the same time, they also engaged with centres of patronage such as the early modern court in Bijapur.

Scholarly transactions as they were recorded in internal paratexts appear self-reflective. They were intended to hold participants of textual transactions accountable to a scholarly code of transmission. Most importantly, the fact that technicalities of transmission remained stable over a long period of time and space and conformed to each other in general terms provided the structural conditions for a commensurable field of cultural interaction. And this was a field with its own cultural rationale, forms of prestige, comportment and access. Nevertheless, interactions between the courtly and the scholarly realm also show that as transactions between the two became more entangled, forms of comportment assimilated and re-signified paratextual elements to serve new purposes. Thereby, frameworks of transmission were transformed to accommodate changing realities in cultural exchange and I will chart this process in the following.

To begin with, the transactions of the scholarly field reveal forms of interaction among learned groups and with the court that go beyond the level of high-ranking royal entourage and courtiers. A transoceanic scholarly field engaged with the court of Bijapur in different cultural encounters. The histories of circulation of several manuscripts illustrate the transregional ties of the ‘Ādil Shāhīs with the Red Sea region. Among these is the copy of the commentary *Sharḥ al-muṭawwal* by Yaḥya b. Yūsuf al-Sīrāmī (d. 833/1429) on the famous compendium of rhetoric called *al-muṭawwal* by al-Taftāzānī (itself a commentary on al-Qazwīnī’s *Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ*).⁶³⁶ According to the information provided in the colophon, the work was finished in 830/1426.⁶³⁷ The colophon stated that the present copy was derived from a transmitted manuscript (*nuskha manqūla*), which was based on a version in the handwriting of the judge Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Sa‘dī al-Ḥanbalī, who was the overseer of the sharī‘a courts in the administrative unit of Egypt (*bi-l-diyāri l-miṣrīya*), so presumably during the Ottoman period.⁶³⁸ The actual copying of the Bijapur manuscript took place in the year 986/1578 in the city of Aḥmadnagar, in the realm of the Niḏām Shāhī sultanate in the Deccan, by Yaḥyā b. Shams al-Dīn b. Aḥmad for the owner al-Ḥurānī, whose seal and ownership note is also inscribed on the title-page.⁶³⁹ In this period, Aḥmadnagar was the flourishing capital of the Niḏām Shāhī sultanate and, like Bijapur, attracted a large number of courtiers and scholars from other parts of the subcontinent, as well as Iran and the Hijaz. Patronage networks of the court and *madāris* in the urban environment of the city provided a vibrant setting conducive for the flourishing of learned cultures during the sixteenth century.⁶⁴⁰

In this case, the colophon documents a path of a textual transmission between learned individuals in a transoceanic constellation. The history of circulation across this scholarly field stretched from Egypt to the Western Deccan, from where the Arabic work ultimately ended up in the royal library.⁶⁴¹ It shows how commensurabilities extended across the Ocean, enabling such forms of transmission in the first place. Authoritative frameworks guided and inscribed the agents in these operations in the colophon.⁶⁴² The modalities of this transfer rendered the procedure legitimate through

⁶³⁶ Cf. MS IO B 254, for the details cf. Loth 1877: 245-246.

⁶³⁷ Cf. MS IO B 254, fol. 568v.

⁶³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁶³⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, and fol. 1r.

⁶⁴⁰ For this background on the Sultanate of Aḥmadnagar cf. Fischel 2018.

⁶⁴¹ Unfortunately, though, there are no scribal notations explicitly stating the integration into the library.

⁶⁴² For background on transfer of knowledge cf. Hirschler 2011b.

the use of transmission terminology and the reference to all parties involved. The original authority in Egypt, the scribe in Aḥmadnagar and the owner of the written version all emerge as crucial interrelated elements.

Cultural practices of textual transmission thereby signified connections among places that made up this scholarly field. They functioned as repositories of knowledge and locations for the composition and the reproduction of Arabic Islamicate texts. Examples from a whole cluster of works, which were copied in the holy city of Mecca in the Hijaz, can epitomise this aspect. The following cases provide evidence for highly technical reproduction processes of manuscript versions in the Hijaz. In the case of a commentary on the *al-Muṭawwal* from the field of rhetoric by Ḥasan al-Jalabī, the colophon registered the scribe Sayyid Muḥammad b. Sayyid Ni‘matullāh al-Badakhshī, who transcribed the work in 901/1495 in *makka al-musharrifa* (‘honourable Mecca’).⁶⁴³ A treatise on the foundations of Common Law by Ḥasan Qurashī al-Isnāī (d. 772/1370),⁶⁴⁴ and a treatise on grammatical elements of jurisprudence by the same author, both represent manuscripts originally produced and authorised as standard versions in fourteenth century Mecca, with numerous *ijāzāt* (‘certificates of transmission’) attesting to this.⁶⁴⁵ Similarly, the glosses on Dawwānī’s commentary by Mullā Yūsuf Muḥammadshāhī (d. 1030/1620), which were finished in Samarqand in 1000/1591, were then transcribed by Sayyid Zayn al-‘Abidīn b. Sayyid ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Ḥusaynī in Mecca in 1052/1642 and can now be found among the holdings of the royal library in Bijapur.⁶⁴⁶ Mecca as an important locus, the main Muslim pilgrimage centre and an extraordinary contact zone for scholars, emerges as a crucial place for the reproduction and exchange of manuscripts and as a location from where Islamicate texts were disseminated to South Asia. The manuscripts then continued to circulate through transoceanic channels of textual transmission and eventually reached the sultanates of the Deccan. It is not possible to ascertain, though, how most of these manuscripts made their way across the Indian Ocean to the Deccan in practical terms.

In those cases where a transregional agent was documented, the transfer assigned him a considerable form of scholarly prestige. A manuscript version of the shāfi‘ī compendium *Tuḥfat al-muḥtāj* typifies this aspect.⁶⁴⁷ First of all, the paratextual notes state the institutional integration of the book into the royal library in 1034/1624

⁶⁴³ Cf. MS IO B 256, fol. 418r.

⁶⁴⁴ Cf. MS IO B 325, fol. 118v.

⁶⁴⁵ Cf. MS IO B 325 and B 326.

⁶⁴⁶ Cf. MS IO B 213, fol. 127r.

⁶⁴⁷ For this and the following cf. MS IO B 367.

with all the additional details that were deemed necessary in this procedure. The colophon also indicates the date of completion and refers to the title. Most importantly though, the attribution of the title to the Meccan scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī is communicated as part of the ownership statement, inscribed by ‘Abd al-Raḥman b. Sayyid ‘Alawī b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abdallāh al-‘Aydarūs al-Ḥusaynī, a member of the extensive al-‘Aydarūs kinship network.⁶⁴⁸ This case demonstrates the transmission of a commentary in the field of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) through the hands of a transregional itinerant actor, whose signature testifies both to the composition by a prominent scholar and the previous ownership of the manuscript.

Several manuscripts indicate that over the course of the seventeenth century the courtly realm and the scholarly field became ever more entangled and thereby assimilated their forms of comportment. Among the groups responsible for the increased flow of Arabic manuscripts to Bijapur was the al-‘Aydarūs kinship group, which rose to prominence during this period. Ownership statements provide crucial insights into the travels of Arabic Islamicate texts at the hands of these transregional itinerant groups and their subsequent courtly circulation in Bijapur. The trajectory of the composition *Taḥrīr* on the principles of Ḥanafī jurisprudence by Ibn al-Humām (d. 861/1457), an Egyptian scholar, from the Hijaz to the Deccan brings various threads together:⁶⁴⁹ As the scribal notation on the first folio states, the book was bought out of the inherited property of ‘Alam Allāh and was integrated into the royal library in 1023/1614. Furthermore, the colophon at the end gives the name of the scribe, the date of transcription and the provenance of the manuscript: a certain Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad finished this transcription in the month Dhū l-Ḥijja, 988/1580 after the afternoon prayer in front of the Ka’ba (*tujāha al-ka’ba*) in Mecca. Finally, an ownership statement discloses the full name of the previous owner as ‘Alam Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Makkī al-Ḥanafī al-‘Aydarūsī.

This last example again revealed the transregional agent, who moved along the nodal points of the Western Indian Ocean connection, while marking the origin of the manuscript in even more detail. The technical term that was used in this case was *fāza*, meaning to achieve or obtain something, combined with the expression of ownership and the name of the owner. No other transmission notes relating to him can be found on the manuscript. His ownership note, together with the Persian note from the royal

⁶⁴⁸ This kinship group was thoroughly studied in Ho 2006.

⁶⁴⁹ Cf. for this and the following, MS IO B 330A.

library, describe the transfer of this manuscript from a scholar to a court. The differentiation between the external and the internal paratexts becomes blurred at this point, indicating that the member of the al-‘Aydarūs kinship group substituted the transtextual appropriation with a mark of ownership that served as a sufficient marker of textual transmission. This manuscript is among fourteen specimens from the fields of *ḥadīth*, *shāfi‘ī fiqh* and *taṣawwuf* signed by either of the two different members of the al-‘Aydarūs kinship group which ended up in the royal library in this way.⁶⁵⁰

While this is a relatively small corpus within the collections of the Bijapur library, these book transfers can indicate a different variety of manuscript circulation. In this form of transmission individual scholarly prestige was constitutive for the circulation of the manuscript. It was solely conducted through the impression of ownership, but it did not involve a highly regulated framework of textual transmission in an internal paratext such as a colophon or transmission note. External paratextual elements provided the connective trajectory between the composers and the copyists across the Red Sea region while the court in Bijapur presented its own mark of acquisition completing the chain of transfers.

Consequently, the seventeenth century developments point to a changing framework of transmission in the interactions between the courtly realm and the scholarly field. Here, it is possible to tie various threads together through a comparison. The flow of manuscripts intensified from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. This intensification could be traced in the changing use of paratextual elements. As shown in chapter two for the fifteenth century, al-Damāmīnī operated with a complex framework of transmission in his preface and colophon, which articulated the transfer of his three grammar works to the sultans in Gujarat and the Deccan.⁶⁵¹ Eventually, his compositional activity was directed at the sultan while students of Arabic were part of the larger audience of the work. Both the textual transmission among students and the literary offering for the sultan were expressed as part of the internal paratexts, but already delineated different spheres of comportment. The seals and review notations of the courtier Maḥmūd Gāwān mentioned earlier in this chapter then demonstrated a rudimentary form of courtly reception. The impression of a seal accompanied by a review notation and a date were sufficient for a courtly realm to claim the acquisition of a book. This form of collecting was developed further with the detailed sixteenth and

⁶⁵⁰ Cf. MS IO B 195; B 382; B 228; B 449; B 88; B 370; B 371; B 366; B 367; B 82; B 87; B 330A; B 363; B 260. Cf. Loth 1877.

⁶⁵¹ This was elaborated on in the previous chapter on al-Damāmīnī’s transregional Arabic scholarship.

seventeenth century Persian scribal notations. They suggest an institutionalisation through a more complex procedure in the reception of manuscripts.⁶⁵²

Such a management could be seen as a necessity due to the growing number of incoming books, which was accompanied by a multiplication of circulating communities, learned figures who inscribed themselves into the court. The previously elaborated cases of book presentations at the court and their reception, for example by the al-‘Aydarūs kinship group, Qādī Khushḥāl and several others who appear in the Persian scribal notations, show that the route of movement from the Red Sea region to the Deccan remained the same while the flow of manuscripts intensified. At the same time, in the scholarly field the paradigm of a textual transmission with a host of technical aspects prevailed. Learned communities on the margins of the court continued to account for the frameworks of textual transmission in learned encounters.

New frameworks of transmission were reflected in the different interplays of the paratextual elements and their re-signification for new purposes: The qualitative change lies in the differentiation of transfers. In the courtly realm, the book transfer became sufficient in the appropriation through seals and ownership notes. The code of exchange was externalised as it moved from colophons and prefaces to ownership notes and seals simplifying the practice of transferring books. The transmitter himself only provided the missing link through a reference in the Persian scribal notation and his ownership statement as seen in the case of al-‘Aydarūs. Significantly, book transfers of the al-‘Aydarūs constituted an anomaly, a hybrid form that appropriated forms of courtly comportment for the purpose of textual transmission.⁶⁵³ Their manuscripts assimilated frameworks of circulation of the courtly realm to the effect that the ownership note, together with the name, became sufficient as markers of textual authority as inscribed on the manuscript. This means that scholars such as the al-‘Aydarūs could also appropriate texts through means of external paratextual acquisition, i.e. ownership notes.

The emergence of the Asar Mahal as a Cultural Entrepôt

After looking at fifteenth century antecedents, the emergence of the Persian scribal notations in the courtly realm and forms of transmission in the scholarly field,

⁶⁵² This would also have to be cross-checked with Persian manuscripts from the Bijapur library.

⁶⁵³ The case of the al-‘Aydarūs ownership note needs further attention, because with his scholarly background it is possible that a form of collective transmission certificate substituted the individual *ijāza*.

I will now focus on developments in the second half of the seventeenth century. This is important, because, as I will argue, the royal library was turned into a more accessible scholarly institution and potentially a *cultural entrepôt*, where books were not only received, but were also enacted as texts, circulated among learned groups and left the library again. Since 1646 the Asar Mahal, ‘Palace of the Relic’ housed the manuscripts together with hairs of the Prophet’s beard, hence the term *asar*.⁶⁵⁴ Based on the designation of the building as ‘maḥal’ Overton considered it to be the ‘inner library’ of the palace during the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century, similar to the common practice under the Mughals.⁶⁵⁵ A report by the British commissioner H. B. E. Frere to the Chief Secretary to Government, Bombay in December 1849, when the library was housed under the auspices of the princely state of Satara before being sent to Britain, provides some additional information about the function of this library in the second half of the seventeenth century.

‘This establishment [the Asar Mahal] was a kind of ecclesiastical corporation, founded to guard a Tubrook (some precious relics of the Prophet), consisting, I believe, of some hairs of his beard. They had been previously enshrined in the citadel or royal palace, in a building which was burned down, and in lieu of which the Assur Mahal was built by king Mahomed Adil Shah [Muḥammad b. Ebrāhīm II. (r. 1037-67/1627-56)], without the palace walls, but connected with the palace by a bridge. Large assignments of land and revenue were made for the support of the establishment, which comprised a species of college, and theological school. It was probably to this branch that the establishment owes its library, which consists chiefly of theological and philosophical works; but the collegiate establishment exists now only in name, and the endowment has long since dwindled down to a miserable pittance, not sufficient to keep the building clean, or afford any surplus for defraying the expenses of the annual Ooroos [‘Urs], when the relics are produced to public view.’⁶⁵⁶

This report describes a crucial development of the royal library and its manuscript collections which can be corroborated by looking at the material history of this site.⁶⁵⁷ First of all, with the building of the Asar Mahal the former royal library and its collections changed sites. They were not part of the inner citadel anymore. Books and manuscripts were moved outside of the palace. This is still visible today with the Asar Mahal building standing outside of the ruins of the royal complex, but close to the citadel.⁶⁵⁸ In the report, the Asar Mahal is identified as an element of the wider courtly

⁶⁵⁴ Overton 2011: 50-51.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶⁵⁶ This report was traced through Quraishi 1991. Cf. *Extracts from the Proceedings of the Bombay Government*, 215.

⁶⁵⁷ Cf. *Extracts from the Proceedings of the Bombay Government*, 215, which refer to Zubayrī’s chronicle *Basātin-i salāṭin* that mentions the foundation of a theological school.

⁶⁵⁸ Cf. Hutton 2006: xvi-xvii for a map of this site.

fabric. Prior to 1646 it had been located spatially within the palace citadel and post-1646 it was turned into an educational institution with regulated financial means outside of the citadel. The mentioned bridge illustrates the continued connection with the citadel, as the centre of political power and patronage of the 'Ādil Shāhīs. However, while the library remained affiliated with the courtly realm, I argue that it became more accessible for scholarly groups coming from outside.

This architectural branching out of the Asar Mahal library was charged as a holy Islamic space containing both a grown corpus of diverse Arabic textual traditions and the relics of the Prophet. An investigation of the ruins of the city of Bijapur from the second half of the nineteenth century conducted under the authority of the archaeological survey of Western India is on par with the previous report and confirms the architectural link between the royal court and the library.⁶⁵⁹ It stated that the bridge was a viaduct built across the moat that granted access to both floors of the Asar Mahal building, with the manuscripts stored on the lower level. Moreover, it is recorded that the building itself was earlier intended as the hall of justice (Dad Mahal), however, due to the intervention of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan – the 'Ādil Shāhīs had accepted Mughal suzerainty in 1636 – it was turned into the holy storehouse.⁶⁶⁰ The relics of the Prophet were specifically brought from Mecca to Bijapur by a certain Mīr Muḥammad Hamadānī.⁶⁶¹ The relocation of the collection of Arabic works therefore presented a symbolic act that positioned an Islamicate intellectual heritage in a religiously calibrated environment which was more accessible to learned groups from beyond the royal entourage.

The construction of the Asar Mahal as a decidedly Islamic space that recycled the materials of an earlier library of the 'Ādil Shāhī sultans has to be situated within the wider political context of the first half of the seventeenth century. R. Eaton argued that the transition of power from Ibrāhīm II. to his successor Muhammad was marked by a clear shift from the 'communal accommodation' represented by Ibrāhīm II's syncretic court culture and patronage, to a more assertive discourse of 'Islamic orthodoxy'.⁶⁶² Departing from Ibrahim II's policy, Muḥammad's reign saw the emergence of 'clerical auxiliaries', the group of the *'ulamā'*, as a more powerful force at the court.⁶⁶³ This reconfiguration of political influence in Bijapur materialised in the form of financial

⁶⁵⁹ For this and the following cf. Cousens 1889: 89-92.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., 90-91.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., 90.

⁶⁶² Cf. Eaton 1978: 90-95 and 193-196.

⁶⁶³ Cf. Ibid., 193-194.

provisions and patronage for various elements of the ‘religious establishment’, such as judges (*al-quḍāt*, sg. *al-qāḍī*), preachers (*khuṭṭāb*, sg. *khaṭīb*) and lawyers (*muftīs*), paid through extensive military campaigns in Karnataka.⁶⁶⁴ These changes were complemented with a new set of government regulations penned in the *Dastūr al-‘Amal* which reflected the new political circumstances in a set of normative prescriptions.⁶⁶⁵

The Asar Mahal emerged during this period as an educational facility clothed in an institution of Islamic representation. The collection of works in the major Islamicate disciplines could serve these practical educational matters, especially given the fact that the majority of works were in the philological disciplines, theology and *taṣawwuf*.⁶⁶⁶ The historian Muḥammad Ibrahim Zubayri mentioned the appointment of two teachers under Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm II (r. 1037-67/1627-56), thereby pointing out the use of the Asar Mahal as a theological educational institution.⁶⁶⁷ Most probably, this selection of works from the Islamicate sciences served as instructional materials in the training of candidates for religious posts in different institutions. It thereby marked an increasing interaction between the court and learned communities of Bijapur and beyond through a reformulated relationship that accommodated scholarly and professional groups.

Apart from these later descriptions it is also possible to study the new function of this library collection based on the manuscripts and this can elucidate more far-reaching developments. For the current purpose, it is of special importance to analyse the rising scholarly significance and perusal of manuscripts in the environment of the Asar Mahal. Returning once again to al-Damāmīnī’s text *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* in the Deccan during the seventeenth century, a broader dissemination of manuscript versions is detectable with new significances. These significances emerged and were solidly anchored within the scholarly field of the Asar Mahal. Two transcriptions of al-Balkhī’s initial treatise *al-Wāfiy* survive in the Royal Library of Bijapur with a changed intertextual relationship between al-Balkhī’s *matn* and the *sharḥ* of al-Damāmīnī.⁶⁶⁸ This means that the textual format is different to the dense textblocks from the earlier period.⁶⁶⁹ For example, on folio 2v and 3re *al-Wāfiy*’s *matn* is written in large letters.⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁴ Cf. Ibid., 194. Quoted from Bilgrami, *Tarikh-i Dakan* III/541.

⁶⁶⁵ For further references to the *Dastūr al-Amal* of Muhammad ‘Adil Shāh cf. Eaton 1978: 194-195.

⁶⁶⁶ Cf. variety of works from Loth 1877.

⁶⁶⁷ Cf. reference in Zubayrī’s *Basātin-i salātīn* to the foundation of a theological school in Quraishi 1991: 161.

⁶⁶⁸ Cf. MS IO B 2 and B 3. Cf. Loth 1877.

⁶⁶⁹ This will be elaborated in a chapter 4.

⁶⁷⁰ Cf. MS IO B 3, fol. 2v-3re.

Since each page only contained five lines, the scribe deliberately created space for later additions. Numerous comments were added between the lines and in the margins. Among these marginal comments is also the commentary *al-Manhal* by al-Damāmīnī.

The significance of these changes will be examined and contextualised further in chapter 4. Here, it is important to locate the enactment of the work at a greater distance from the royal scene. Based on studying notes this version can be situated within the scholarly purview of the higher learned communities of the subcontinent. In the top left-hand corner on the second folio recto is a note in Persian which identifies the student and copyist of this compilation of commentaries. Accordingly, the marginal notes were inscribed by Makhdūm Qāḍiy Kabīr al-Milla wa-l-Dīn b. Qāḍiy al-Kābulī.⁶⁷¹ He was a judge (Qāḍī) and thus generally expected to be familiar with judicial works in Arabic. Al-Kābulī can be considered among Eaton's larger communities of 'ulamā', judges and other professional backgrounds who attached themselves to the wider courtly formation of the 'Ādil Shāhī dynasty and shaped the perpetuation of manuscript cultures in this context.

Most importantly, these manuscript versions show that the studying enactment took place in the new educational setting of the Asar Mahal. A second copy of the same work survives which predates the other version. Together, both versions can exemplify the role of Bijapur as a *cultural entrepôt*. The earlier version, B2, entered the Royal Library in 1003/1594, according to the Persian notation on the first folio.⁶⁷² Al-Kābulī's transcription, B3, entered the Qādiriyya, a Sufi library in 1075/1664 and then made its way from there to the Royal Library in 1091/1680.⁶⁷³ A comparison of the textual format and the marginal notes strongly suggests that al-Kābulī's copy was derived from B2, as can be seen at the beginning of both treatises.⁶⁷⁴ Both manuscripts have the same textual format and a comparison reveals that the exact same sections of commentaries appear in the margins. Furthermore, the same abbreviations have been used, but while a list of these survives in B3 it went missing in B2.⁶⁷⁵ Presumably, al-Kābulī had access to B2 and produced a transcription of the text with a few different layout features. This could have happened in the Asar Mahal. The book was then brought to the Qādiriyya by a person named Tāj Muḥammad and later on returned to the Asar Mahal.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Cf. MS IO B 2, fol. 1re.

⁶⁷³ Cf. MS IO B 3, fol. 1re.

⁶⁷⁴ Cf. the first folios on both MS IO B 2 and B 3.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ The fact that the manuscript returned to the Asar Mahal illustrates the strong relationship between the court and the Sufi communities that, according to Eaton, developed during the second half of the

This case study illustrates the workings of the royal library post-1646 as a vivid place of manuscript circulation, where texts were studied, copied, received and transmitted to other places in Bijapur. During the seventeenth century, the royal Arabic manuscript collections of the ‘Ādil Shāhī dynasty were physically moved to serve a growing professional and scholarly community at the margins of the court. These texts were thus re-signified to serve in the study of Arabic Islamicate cultural traditions.

Local circulations beyond courtly and scholarly representations

Generally, the large number of codices in the field of Sufism that survive among the Asar Mahal collection is a testimony to the strong ties between several Sufi orders and the courtly elite in Bijapur.⁶⁷⁷ As R. Eaton has shown, the urban fabric of Bijapur was dominated by ascetic and landed Sufi groups, who maintained relationships of varying intensity with the court.⁶⁷⁸ The political, social and economic bonds between Sufism and royal authority come up in sources and secondary literature time and time again, because such collaboration constituted an uncomfortable and contentious topic, especially for the self-understanding of some Sufi orders which eschewed contacts with worldly leaders.⁶⁷⁹ Others, such as the Qādiriyya order, maintained an intense contact with different rulers, and profited accordingly through land grants.⁶⁸⁰ These close relationships were strengthened during Muhammad’s reign.⁶⁸¹ Several Arabic manuscripts from the Qādiriyya library ended up in the royal library and later the Asar Mahal collections.⁶⁸² Beyond that, seventy-eight of the surviving codices directly relate to the field of *taṣawwuf*.⁶⁸³ The sheer amount of works on *taṣawwuf* suggests a lively circulation of manuscripts between Sufis and the court in Bijapur. Yet, this circulation has to be traced in a way different to the previous arguments. While the Persian scribal notations only represent a highly regulated receptive framework that enabled outside elites to approach the court, the works from the field of *taṣawwuf* can show the intensive connections between shaykhs and the court in a locality such as Bijapur. Such close relationships could have facilitated the *local exchange* of books which was not conducted

seventeenth century in Bijapur with the issuing of more substantial land grants by the court to the Sufi groups.

⁶⁷⁷ This has been pointed out in Quraishi 1991.

⁶⁷⁸ Cf. Eaton 1978: 203-205.

⁶⁷⁹ Cf. Digby 2003. Political tensions that could arise from these interactions between royal authority and Sufi Shaykhs are discussed in Ernst 2004 with a special reference to Khuldabad in the Deccan.

⁶⁸⁰ Eaton 1978: 210-215.

⁶⁸¹ Cf. Ibid.

⁶⁸² Cf. for example MS IO B 3, B 21 and B 142. Cf. Loth 1877.

⁶⁸³ Cf. references in Loth 1877: 164-199.

through highly regulated frameworks of transmission and not inscribed by representative notations.

The paratextual profiles of the manuscripts are less promising when it comes to tracing the precise connections and ways of local exchanges between individuals. The absence of manuscript notes on transmitted manuscripts seems rather peculiar, given that learned groups generally accounted for such transactions in a detailed manner. Still, such local exchanges, which were probably guided by similar intellectual incentives, took place and can be traced by cross-reading prosopographical data with information on discernible sub-collections from the Asar Mahal collections. A cumulative argument in this regard can be advanced based on the huge amount of texts on Qādirī hagiography and doctrine, in particular works on the life and deeds of its founder ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166).⁶⁸⁴ For example, the *Kitāb ghanīyat al-ṭālibīn* (‘Book on the wealth of the seekers’) is a work on religious obligations by al-Jīlānī, which survived in a version copied by Muḥiy al-Dīn al-Qādirī b. Aḥmad in the royal library.⁶⁸⁵ Presumably, the transfer of Qādirī works between the Qādiriyya and the royal library was one crucial link. However, while there are several manuscripts which open the gates of speculation about textual exchanges, they do not offer conclusive evidence as to the frameworks of the local textual circulation within Bijapur.

A more promising venue of research comes with the delineation of the personal book collection of one Sufi, Sayyid Zayn b. ‘Abdallāh al-Muqaybil (d. 1130/1718),⁶⁸⁶ among the Asar Mahal collection. Richard Eaton mentioned Zayn al-Muqaybil among the ‘landed elites’ of Bijapur’s Sufis, but in his study he never referred to Zayn’s manuscripts which survived among the Asar Mahal collections.⁶⁸⁷ These manuscripts consist of transcriptions of various Islamicate texts from the second half of the 11th/17th century. Apart from seven monographs, there are three *majmū‘āt* (multiple-text-manuscripts).⁶⁸⁸ In Loth’s ‘Catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in the India Office Library’, the *majmū‘āt* are listed under the category ‘miscellanies’.⁶⁸⁹ These constitute selections of several Islamicate texts across various disciplines, but with a general focus on *taṣawwuf*, which he copied, revised and compiled for himself.⁶⁹⁰ Studying Zayn’s

⁶⁸⁴ Cf. MS IO B 117; B 408; B 413; B 414; B 424; B 464. Cf. Loth 1877. Cf. Braune 2018.

⁶⁸⁵ Cf. the colophon in Al-Jīlānī, *Kitāb ghanīya al-ṭālibīyīn*, MS IO B 117 and the notes in Loth 1877.

⁶⁸⁶ Cf. Eaton 1978: 241.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁶⁸⁸ For this term and the most recent scholarship see the introduction to Friedrich/Schwarke 2016.

⁶⁸⁹ Cf. Loth 1877.

⁶⁹⁰ Other works copied by Zayn, including parts of the *Dīwān* by Ibn ‘Arabī, can be found in the MS BN 2348 (Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris). I thank Julian Cook for pointing this out to me.

textual transactions on the basis of manuscript notes can broaden our understanding of historical practices among Sufi communities and thereby highlight forms of local circulation in Bijapur.

A biographical reference in the *Tazkirat Rawzat al-Awliyā'*, an important prosopographical account of Sufis in Bijapur, establishes both the migrational background of Sayyid Zayn b. 'Abd Allāh al-Muqaybil and a close connection with the court of the 'Ādil Shāhī dynasty in the Deccan sultanate of Bijapur.⁶⁹¹ Accordingly, Zayn was born in the city of Tarīm in the Ḥaḍramawt (Yemen).⁶⁹² During the reign of Sulṭān Muḥammad 'Ādil Shāh he made his way from Tarīm to the court of Bijapur where he submitted (*istakānat*) himself to serve for the greater good of the realm (*balad*).⁶⁹³ The second half of the seventeenth century was a transformational period in Bijapur, characteristic of high levels of elite migration and the integration of different professional groups into the political administration of the realm, but at the same time, the sultanate lost its political authority, which led to the emigration of elite courtiers.⁶⁹⁴ Zayn belonged to the first group. Based on the *Rawzat al-Awliyā'* Eaton already pointed out that he received a grant (*in'ām*) of several villages sometime between 1035-1083/1626-1672.⁶⁹⁵ Moreover, the *Rawzat al-Awliyā'* relates a tradition, according to which Sultan 'Alī II brought him to court to pray for the sultanate of Bijapur during one of the offensives by the Marathas, a crucial political formation that consolidated political power under their leader Shivaji.⁶⁹⁶ Zayn al-Muqaybil in his function as a *pīr* offered a *ta'wiz*, which in the context of 'popular Sufism', as Eaton described it, denoted a 'kind of talisman or magical charm'.⁶⁹⁷ It consisted 'of a piece of paper with a prayer written on it, which the sultan was instructed to attach over the muzzle of the city's cannon before firing at the Marathas'.⁶⁹⁸ Eaton concluded that 'this episode quite clearly illustrates the harnessing of degenerate Sufism to state interests'.⁶⁹⁹ Yet, such a negative evaluation of Zayn's socio-cultural environment based on a prosopographical analysis elicits only a one-dimensional view of his cultural practices. Based on an

⁶⁹¹ Eaton 1978: 241-242.

⁶⁹² For this and the following see Zubayri, *Tazkirat Rawzat al-Awliya*, MS Tazkira 266, APOML, Hyderabad, fols. 99re-100re. I thank Azam Nawaz at the APOML for providing me with reproductions of the folios of this manuscript.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁴ Eaton 1978: 186-194, and Hutton 2017.

⁶⁹⁵ For this and the following Eaton 1978: 126 and 242.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 242 and MS Tazkira 266: fols. 99re-100re.

⁶⁹⁷ Eaton 1978: 242.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

analysis of his manuscripts, firstly, his scholarly transactions and secondly, a local circulation can be exemplified in the following which provide a different picture.

Zayn al-Muqaybil can be characterised as a highly bookish figure who invested much time and resources into the accumulation of a personally transcribed corpus of Islamicate texts.⁷⁰⁰ Although this personal library does not represent an absolute and complete account of his requisitions and transcriptions it can nonetheless offer important insights into his scholarly life. As the chart I shows, the dates of transcription for each individual manuscript – the 7 monographs and the 3 *majmū'āt* – span the period from 1073/1663 to 1098/1687, ending roughly with the conquest of the sultanate by the Mughal armies.⁷⁰¹ Except for two manuscripts, each manuscript is dated, showing Zayn's approach to keeping track of his textual reproductions. Together these dates constitute a timeline for the composition of his personal library. The *majmū'a* B 459B, which contains 24 different sections with 39 texts and extracts, reveals several notes that expand the compilation process to at least 3 years.⁷⁰²

⁷⁰⁰ For a discussion of some of his texts cf. Bahl, forthcoming.

⁷⁰¹ The sultanate of Bijapur fell to the Mughals in 1097/1686. Cf. Hutton 2017.

⁷⁰² Compare for example the transcription notes on fols. 52v., 65v., 91v., in MS IO B 459B. Among his surviving manuscripts this is the oldest transcription.

B459B	<i>majmū'a</i> (24 sections, 39 texts)	-	1073-1076
B388	Concluding parts of <i>Kitāb al-futūḥāt</i>	Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638)	7 th Jum. I., 1076 – 10 th Dhu l-Ḥ. 1077
B90	<i>Kitāb 'awārif al-Ma'ārif</i>	al-Suhrawardī (d. 632)	Rabi' II, 1077
B420A	<i>majmū'a</i> (6 texts)	-	2nd Dhu l-Qa'da, 1084
B396	Commentary on the <i>Mawāqif</i> of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār	'Afīf al-Dīn Tilimsānī (d. 690)	14 th Jum. I, 1087
B69	<i>Ashraf al-wasā'il ilā fahm al-shamā'il</i>	Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī (d. 973)	9th Rajab, 1088
B385	<i>al-rub' al-thānī min Kitāb al-futūḥāt al-makkīya li-l-shaykh al-akbar</i>	Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638)	1st Jumādā I, 1091
B85	<i>majmū'a</i> (2 texts)	-	14th Jumādā I, 1095
B386, 387	Later chapters of <i>Kitāb al-futūḥāt al-makkīya li-l-shaykh al-akbar</i>	Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638)	10th Rabi' I, 1097
B122	<i>Sharḥ al-mu'allaqāt al-saba'a</i>	Ibn Kaysān (d. 299)	14th Rabi' II, 1098
B399	<i>Kitāb sharḥ manāzil al-sā'irīn</i>	al-Kāshānī (d. 730)	2nd half 11th c.
B400	Commentary on parts of <i>al-Insān al-kāmil</i> of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī	Aḥmad al-Madanī (d. 1071)	2nd half 11th c.

Chart: The transcriptions by Zayn al-Muqaybil from the Bijapur collection, London, based on the descriptions in Loth's catalogue.

At the same time, the building up of these personal writings draws a map that demonstrates Zayn's academic transactions across a larger transregional terrain. The accumulation of his manuscripts highlights networks connecting important centres of manuscript transmission across the Western Indian Ocean from the Red Sea region with the crucial cultural contact zones of Mecca and Medina in the Hijaz, Tarīm and Aden in Yemen, to Ahmedabad and the cities of the Deccan sultanates.⁷⁰³ According to the prosopographical data given in the *Tazkirat Rawzat al-Awliya*, Zayn migrated from the Ḥaḍramawt to the sultanate of Bijapur. Again, colophons on his manuscripts can indicate complexities involved in this transregional movement. Among the first 4 sections of his earliest surviving manuscript B 459B, which were not written by himself personally, is a reproduction of a table showing the entrance of the sun into the

⁷⁰³ For an overview of these early modern intellectual connections see for example Ho 2006.

successive signs of the Zodiac, which was initially derived from Aḥmad b. ‘Umar Bā Muzāhim, a pupil of Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-‘Aydārūs.⁷⁰⁴ Meticulously analysed by Engseng Ho, the extended family network of al-‘Aydārūs originated in Tarīm in the Ḥaḍramawt and created a vast web extending from East Africa over the Red Sea region, to South Asia and into Southeast Asia.⁷⁰⁵ Manuscripts of descendants of Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh al-‘Aydārūs that were copied by other scribes can also be found in the collections of the Asar Mahal.⁷⁰⁶ This table was probably made in the Ḥaḍramawt, and reached Zayn through his social networks, as presumably he was well aware of the larger familial and learned networks of the al-‘Aydārūs. According to the transmission note on Ms B 400, the ‘mother copy’ (*al-umm*) of the manuscript was revised in 1056/1646 in Medina and served as the basis for his own collation (*al-muqābala*) of the text, which connects him to the Hijaz during the middle of the seventeenth century.⁷⁰⁷ Moving on geographically, several sections of the multiple-text manuscript B 459B were written in ‘Bāghnaqar’, which was the new capital of the Quṭb Shāhī dynasty of Golkonda founded by Sultan Muḥammad Quṭb Shāh in the 1590s.⁷⁰⁸ Bāghnaqar (‘city of gardens’) was a different name used by the wider population for the city of Hyderabad.⁷⁰⁹ It was linked with the port of Masulipatnam on the Coromandel coast, which connected Golkonda with the wider world of the Western Indian Ocean, especially during the seventeenth century.⁷¹⁰ Presumably, this was where Zayn arrived by ship. From there he made his way further into the Deccan. Finally, B 386 and 387 locate Zayn in the ‘realm of well-known Bijapur in the land of the Deccan’ (*bi-balad bidjafūr al-ma‘rūfa min arḍ al-dakan*).⁷¹¹

The creation of Zayn’s personal textual corpus can be reconstructed as an active social engagement across the wide transregional space of the Western Indian Ocean and within the local environment of Bijapur. He made contact with a variety of social and professional groups in this process. His continuous pursuits of a learned career in the Islamicate disciplines with a focus on texts of the sphere of *taṣawwuf* did not take

⁷⁰⁴ See MS IO B 459B, fols. 12v-13r and Loth 1877: 291-294.

⁷⁰⁵ Ho 2006.

⁷⁰⁶ See MS IO B 195; B 382; B 228; B 449; B 88; B 370; B 371; B 366; B 367; B 82; B 87; B 330A; B 363; B 260. They all include signatures of one of two different members of this extended family network, either ‘Alam Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Makkī al-Ḥanafī al-‘Aydārūs or ‘Abd al-Raḥman b. Sayyid ‘Alawī b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abdallāh al-‘Aydārūs al-Ḥusaynī, underscoring the continued peregrinations of members of the al-‘Aydārūs to the Deccan. Cf. Loth 1877.

⁷⁰⁷ See MS IO B 400, fol. 50r.

⁷⁰⁸ See MS IO B 459B, fol. 52v. This probably refers to ‘Bāghnagar’. Cf. Subrahmanyam 1988: 505.

⁷⁰⁹ Cf. Sherwani 1967: 27 and 145.

⁷¹⁰ Cf. Subrahmanyam 1988: 505.

⁷¹¹ MS IO B 386/387, fol. 12re-13v.

place within a self-contained and isolated Sufi community. On the contrary, he engaged with different individuals across a variety of sociabilities, and while the extent of his travels before his migration to the Deccan is not entirely clear from the manuscript notes, his social networks linked him with Sayyids in the Hadramawt, to scholars in Medina to urban areas and cultural centres of Sufism in South Asia. B 399 was a transcription that he received from a ‘sailor’ (*rajul min al-nawātī*).⁷¹² More importantly, given the chronology of his transcriptions they mostly took place in South Asia, and especially the Deccan, which underscores the textual and intellectual potential of cultural centres in the subcontinent and the opportunities for learned figures to get their hands on specific Islamicate works.

Zayn adhered to a scholarly field and followed its conventions of transmission. The paratextual grain of Zayn’s compilation process provides a chronology that documents the accumulation of his textual corpus. The colophons include more details about the technical framework that he adhered to in his transcriptions. B 69, 85, 122 and 385, as well as several sections in B 459B were first copied with a statement of completion in the colophon.⁷¹³ Subsequently, they were all ‘collated’ (*balagha muqābalatan [...]*) with other manuscripts and revised in this process, again a practice which was usually marked with a collation note next to the colophon.⁷¹⁴ The beginning of the collation statement was standardised, but the remaining section individually specified the condition and provenance of the manuscript with which Zayn’s transcription was compared. The colophon, which generally stated the completion of the transcription, was separated from the collation note, which was added afterwards. Revision notes abound throughout the texts and accompanied this process of collation, thus showing Zayn’s great efforts in creating this corpus of books.

As the previous elaborations have shown, Zayn’s manuscripts originated in a scholarly field, but finally ended up among the Asar Mahal collections through an undocumented and unrepresented form of book circulation. While the fact that several transcriptions of Zayn were deposited in the collections of the Asar Mahal further corroborates his proximity to the ruling elite, the circumstances of this transfer to the Asar Mahal also suggests the existence of more flexible and fluid forms of textual transactions between groups in Bijapur. Most of his transcriptions are clearly signified

⁷¹² See MS IO B 399, last folio.

⁷¹³ See the last folios of these manuscripts.

⁷¹⁴ See MS IO B 85. The revision notes and collation statements can be found on the last folio of this manuscript.

by a form of scholarly transmission, but none of the manuscripts were marked by scribal notations from the courtly realm. They all ended up among the Asar Mahal collections, but they lack an authoritative framework of reception.

At this point, Zayn's exemplary case offers a perspective on forms of textual transmission beyond the courtly realm and the scholarly field. It shows that locally and transregionally mobile groups were crucial agents in the circulation of Arabic manuscripts in Bijapur. Additionally, their movement between different loci of textual transaction, such as the Asar Mahal, the Qādiriyya library and other places, brought about a local exchange and flow of manuscript copies. Significantly, these local forms of circulation seemed to adhere to the post-1646 period when the Asar Mahal was established as an educational institution. The transformation of the royal library was accompanied by a larger proliferation of circulation, which presumably also had its influence on the world of reading and writing.

Unfortunately, it is exactly at this point where forms of transmission are less regimented and more fluid that our ability to study them becomes restricted or entirely impossible, due to the absence of documentary notes on the manuscripts. In contrast to the higher idioms of courtly reception and scholarly transfer, which were representational, socially segmented and hierarchical in character, these local forms of exchanges and circulation were less dominated by such frameworks of transmission. Manuscripts could change hands in local contexts and beyond, be read and copied without a complex framework of transmission. On the basis of the presented source materials it has been possible to show that this happened in the educational environment of the Asar Mahal, which offered a less restrictive access to these texts, as the case of B2 and B3 have shown in the previous section. The absence of documentary evidence also means that it is not feasible to prove the absence of such a local form of circulation during the previous centuries, in order to demonstrate a change over time. However, as Zayn's case has demonstrated it is possible to argue for a particular intensity of such local exchanges during the second half of the seventeenth century due to the general make-up and calibration of the Asar Mahal, which presumably amplified these book transfers, especially between the courtly realm and the Sufi establishments.

Conclusion

The main idea of this chapter was to argue for the existence of two discernible spheres of circulation inscribed on the Arabic manuscripts of the royal library, in addition to a local sphere of book exchange. The first was a history of circulation within

an Indo-Persian courtly environment, the second a textual transmission conducted through the Arabic idiom in the scholarly field, and the third a more personal form of book circulation among Bijapur's Arabicised communities that did not necessitate a representational framework. The two representational fields were constituted through different sociabilities: the courtly realm through changing markers of reception, ownership and paratextual presentation of the books for a potential readership and the scholarly field through strategies of transmission, modes of authority and learned encounters. Both, however, interacted with each other and became complementary fields, because, as I argued, the scholarly field began to enter the courtly realm. Scholars looked for royal patronage and settled at the margins of the courtly formation. They did not appear with the same prestige and rank as the courtiers who used book transfers to gain access to the court. And for these courtiers who were inscribed in the Persian scribal notations, it was more about the book transfer than the transmission of the text. Thus, different paratextual elements served for different purposes in the end: ownership notes and Persian scribal notations remained markers of authority in the courtly realm. Prefaces, colophons and transmission statements were the instruments of scholarly transactions.

At the same time, changes in the scholarly field could be observed as well. The continued circulation of al-Damāmīnī's work transformed it from an initial work of courtly patronage into a work of scholarly reference. At this point it is important to keep in mind the asymmetries in the social use of this Arabic work across the cultural zone from the Red Sea region to the subcontinent. According to recent scholarship on reading practices in the central Arabic lands during the late medieval period, many different social and professional groups participated in the reading of scholarly works there,⁷¹⁵ a situation which is very different from the subcontinent. Arguably, this situation had changed by the seventeenth century when these Arabic works circulated across a broader range of social groups such as the scholarly communities in the Deccan. Thereby, they entered new spheres of exclusivity and social use, a point which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

While the influx of manuscripts increased during this period, the librarians of the royal library refined their system of reception and storage with the more detailed Persian scribal notations. This new system facilitated the subsequent conversion of the royal library into an educational institution with broader access and a new function.

⁷¹⁵ Cf. Hirschler 2012.

The library was turned into a cultural entrepôt, which also served the scholarly needs of the professional elites. It became a sociability which was now conducive to the copying of texts and their circulation beyond the court. Scholarly enquiries became the main *raison d'être* of this institution serving a larger Arabicised community in their learned pursuits. This fracturing of a previous courtly significance into broader learned pursuits and a local form of exchanges became visible with the Asar Mahal transformation and the delineation of a book circulation without receptive frameworks.

Although these are preliminary results from a much larger corpus of source materials, the transformation of the royal library into a cultural entrepôt and the diachronic differentiation of these spheres of circulation can indicate a wider historical trend. They signify trajectories of a broader trickling down of an Arabic idiom across the subcontinent during the early modern period. These are accompanied by changes in the modes of transmission and enactment, which point to larger transformations occurring in the field of learned encounters. The study of these manuscript cultures then allows to identify the expansion of an Arabic cultural sphere in South Asia and the growing community that participated therein. Simultaneously, such historical transformations are brought into a crucial conversation with cultural processes across the Western Indian Ocean. Such a transoceanic dimension of Arabic manuscript circulation will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 - A transoceanic community of readers -

The circulation of al-Damāmīnī's works across the Western Indian Ocean

This chapter will move from the perspective of one library collection to a transregional view of manuscript circulation between the Deccan and Istanbul. The differentiation into courtly, scholarly and local spheres of circulation will be elaborated further by tracing the movements of texts across the Western Indian Ocean on the basis of surviving manuscripts. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, al-Damāmīnī's three grammar commentaries rose to fame from the Eastern Mediterranean to the South Asian subcontinent. I will explore textual practices this involved by examining the circulation of al-Damāmīnī's grammar works, as outlined in the *al-Damāmīnī corpus* in the introduction. The histories of circulation of these manuscripts relate to Egypt and the wider Ottoman domains of the early modern period, the Hijaz and South Asia. A focus on the written objects of this transmission makes it possible to dig deeper and analyse the historical practices of transoceanic textual flows.

The dissemination of Arabic texts among a growing readership was brought about by human mobilities of the period. Itinerant courtiers and scholars transmitted the works from place to place. Copyists and scribes reproduced al-Damāmīnī's texts across nodal points. Royal and scholarly libraries preserved the manuscripts and made them accessible to readers. It is impossible to consistently reconstruct these chains of transmission. Not every manuscript gives a full account of its history of circulation. Paratextual profiles differ from case to case. However, by looking at multiple cases one can see patterns emerge. These patterns pertain to practices in the reproduction and circulation of manuscripts. Since they were inscribed on the manuscripts, they can be recovered and brought into conversation with each other to elucidate frameworks of transmission and reading. This provides an incomplete but valuable account of how audiences reproduced, re-appropriated and read these texts in their very own ways. A complex and diverse set of text-centred practices offers a view on entangled social and cultural histories from South Asia to the Red Sea.

Conceptually, these social and cultural histories have to focus on the reception side of al-Damāmīnī's texts. I am building on recent scholarship that has shown a growing interest in the study of reading practices during the late medieval and early modern periods in the Middle East, South Asia and beyond. Studies by L. Jardine and A. Grafton argued that active scholarly reading of a 'single text could give rise to a variety

of goal-directed readings'.⁷¹⁶ Concentrating on the 'activity of reading' significantly changes the way in which one can determine the significance of a text at a particular point in time.⁷¹⁷ In a different context but with a similar purpose of tracing changes in reading practices, K. Hirschler reconsidered cultural engagements with texts across the medieval Arabic lands to look at the spread of the written word and reading skills in the societal contexts of Egypt and Syria.⁷¹⁸ This revealed the changes in the perusal of written artefacts observable along the lines of a growing 'textualisation' and 'popularisation' of the written word.⁷¹⁹ Of particular importance were the study of 'reading certificates' from medieval Damascus in the field of *ḥadīth*, which enabled Hirschler to reconstruct the social and cultural profile of reading communities and their change over time.⁷²⁰ Recent advances in the study of reading communities in the medieval period have elaborated on these approaches by focusing on text circulation through surviving manuscript cultures. N. Gardiner collected and studied the manuscript variety of the thirteenth century Sufi Aḥmad al-Būnī's texts to shed further light on his life.⁷²¹ On the basis of this manuscript corpus he delineated manifold processes of transmission of al-Būnī's works from the field of *'ilm al-ḥurūf* ('occult science of letters'). This demonstrated the proliferation of his texts and revisited a long-held belief in modern scholarship regarding al-Būnī's contemporaries' disregard for the "putative" magician'.⁷²² The study of manuscript versions of al-Būnī's texts offered a deeper understanding of the historical significance of his works. Simultaneously, it exemplified how the changing perception of a text can be traced historically among a large and diverse reading community from the Maghrib to the Mashriq.

Thus, historicising the transmission of texts through the study of manuscript versions constitutes the main focus of this chapter. While chapter two exemplified the narrative strategies of mobile scholarship, I will now shift the focus to study textual practices that rendered texts socially and culturally mobile among reading communities. In addition to the narrative strategies expressed by al-Damāmīnī in his compositions there is the interface of his readership. This concerns the transmission of al-Damāmīnī's texts across different socio-cultural environments. Sociabilities of reading and cultural approaches to the study of texts structured such circulations

⁷¹⁶ Jardine/Grafton 1990: 31.

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁸ For this and the following see Hirschler 2012.

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, 32-81.

⁷²¹ Gardiner 2012.

⁷²² *Ibid.*, 5.

according to specific frameworks of transmission. Audiences developed different strategies to appropriate his texts. These in turn were embedded in wider learned cultures of a period.

To analyse social and cultural mobilities I will build on al-Damāmīnī as a case study. The success of his mobile scholarship over the following centuries is evident in the transregional circulation of its manuscript versions. I will argue that al-Damāmīnī's grammar works circulated widely across courtly and scholarly sociabilities from the Deccan to Istanbul over the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Yet, while the courts and royal spheres remained important loci of interaction, the wide geographical dissemination was shaped in profound ways through scholarly channels of communication and learned sociabilities. A vibrant world of scholarly encounters developed in which a transoceanic community generated a diverse set of strategies to modulate manuscripts and thereby appropriate al-Damāmīnī's texts. A connected transformation in cultural practices regarding the appropriation of manuscripts (e.g. reading strategies) evolved from Ottoman Istanbul to the Red Sea region and the South Asian subcontinent. Importantly, these diverse strategies signified new forms of transmission in a highly innovative field of scholarly pursuits and they were practiced in similar ways on both sides of the Western Indian Ocean region.

From a methodological point of view, one has to start by identifying social and cultural mobilities of texts. In this chapter, I intend to conceptualise frameworks of reception and strategies of appropriation and reading as recoverable instances in the enactment of texts. The notion of *enactment* (an instance of acting something out)⁷²³ serves as an analytical category to examine the engagement with written artefacts from a historical perspective. This notion builds on scholarship in the field of 'Rezeptionsaesthetik' such as *The Act of reading, A Theory of Aesthetic Response* by W. Iser.⁷²⁴ Iser generally argued for 'a dialectic relationship between text, reader, and their interaction', which he called 'aesthetic response'.⁷²⁵ Accordingly, the reading of a text has an effect on a reader, and the reading process produces significances which can change from reader to reader. Each significance is thereby produced through a reading enactment. Analogously, different manuscript versions can elicit different responses depending on the social environment in which they are read or reproduced. However, the aim here is neither to elaborate on approaches in literary theory, nor to 're-enact'

⁷²³ Cf. *Oxford Living Dictionaries, English*.

⁷²⁴ Iser 1978.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, x. I thank Rebecca Sauer for pointing this work out to me.

performative or reading experiences. Instead, I will examine different enactments of a text, such as reading, studying, transmitting and storing, which are traceable on manuscripts through marginal notes. In other words, it concerns any form of engagement with a text that produced historically contingent meanings, which are ideally recoverable through traces left by the audiences of the text, those who enact the texts.

There are several limitations to this approach. One can neither trace all instances of perusal by readers or owners of manuscripts, nor reconstruct the entire spectrum of significances that such a text produced in its circulation. Yet, it is possible to examine several *documentary* instances of textual enactment which have a *representational* value. Thereby I am referring to lasting and significant engagements with a manuscript version and to those instances in which readers left traces that were intended to be picked up by later readers as well, including a second enactment or a reading by the same person for the purpose of corroboration and so forth. Such representational documentary notes, for example reading certificates, transmission notes and colophons are audience-focused per se and justificatory in nature. They are meant to be seen and referred to again; they are meant to do something. They thus illustrate the multiple significances that users of these objects ascribed to them across different socio-cultural environments.

Studying such histories of circulation is possible through an analysis of enactments of al-Damāmīnī's texts. Such traces of transtextual appropriation include all types of witnesses to his texts, in the form of textual references and manuscript versions. Here I will apply three of Genette's ideal types to study transtextual appropriations which are different forms of enactments: epitexts, paratextual elements and hyper-/intertextual relationships.⁷²⁶ Firstly, epitextual elements are references to a text or the author of a text in another text.⁷²⁷ Different media in the medieval and early modern periods contributed to the proliferation of knowledge about texts and scholars. In the following I will focus on biographical dictionaries and their entries (*tarājim*, sg. *tarjama*) as well as bibliographies (*fihris* and *fihrisīya*) and suggest reading them as epitextual elements. They are among a variety of textual genres, such as *mashyakha* ('list of a student's teachers'), which explicitly refer to textual practices and the circulation of manuscripts. These works not only functioned as a sign for

⁷²⁶ Genette 1987 and 2001.

⁷²⁷ Genette 2001: 12-13.

professional merit, but also as a publicising platform that articulated and disseminated information about scholarly transactions.⁷²⁸ While modern scholarship often employs them to corroborate information, one could also focus on those aspects through which these media are linked empirically, i.e. promoting the circulation and reading of texts. Both bibliographies and biographical dictionaries offer an intrinsic perspective on the formation of scholarly networks, professional career patterns and textual practices, and thereby shed light on the circulation and transmission of texts. Secondly, paratextual elements are additions which create a transtextual relationship with and present the main text of work. They can be appendices such as colophons and transmission certificates, reading statements and ownership notes.⁷²⁹ With regard to manuscripts, they signify instances of engagement and thereby social and cultural traces of enactment, which create different manuscript versions. Thirdly, hypertextual relationships consist of all kinds of references to a text through another text, starting with the simplest intertextual relationship of quoting a text as part of a commentarial composition.⁷³⁰ This means, for example, that a commentary started to circulate as a marginal comment in other manuscripts or was elaborated on further in an abridgement. The proliferation of commentaries can thereby be examined from a historical perspective, documenting forms of enactment in the dissemination of a text on manuscripts.

These aspects will be elaborated on as follows. Firstly, I will begin with a focus on forms of textual mobility and enactments across courtly contexts in both East and West. Secondly, while al-Damāmīnī's texts moved from courtly realms to other learned sociabilities, I will demonstrate that the main channels of transmission were scholarly interactions. Scholarly mobilities ensured the proliferation of his texts from East to West. Thirdly, I will concentrate further on the scholarly field of circulation to show how seemingly rigid frameworks of transmission were consciously reconfigured in the creation of manuscript versions. These reconfigurations were entangled with broader transformations in learned encounters of the early modern period. The diversification of textual practices will set the scene for the analysis of related 'text-centred' cultural

⁷²⁸ While bibliographies offer snapshots of available works and scholarly activities in a given period, collective biographies narrate the past and present of a community through the cultural transactions and social interactions of its members. For a general introduction to the field of such prosopographical accounts see chapter 1 of this dissertation.

⁷²⁹ Genette 2001: 9-11.

⁷³⁰ Genette 1987: 10-11, 14-15.

practices that emerged across the Western Indian Ocean.⁷³¹ Here, I will delineate three major patterns: 1) the creation of personalised copies and related forms of scholarly contextualisation, such as adding a biographical note of al-Damāmīnī; 2) the practice of *marginalisation*, which refers to applying al-Damāmīnī’s commentary in manuscript margins of his commentaries initial *matn*; 3) *fhristisation*, which refers to an emergence of the ‘table of contents’ as a major reader-centred device that highlights new forms of textual appropriation. Finally, this will demonstrate how al-Damāmīnī’s texts circulated at both ends of the Western Indian Ocean in very similar and connected ways – thus creating a truly transoceanic community of readers.

The transregional dissemination of al-Damāmīnī’s texts – courtly realms

Histories of circulation which focus on the enactment of al-Damāmīnī’s texts can be differentiated according to the sociabilities of their circulation. A focus on the reproduction of different manuscript versions and their various perusals allows what I. Kopytoff in his work on commodification has called the reconstruction of biographies of things.⁷³² Using his concepts as a heuristic in the current context I will consider different biographical possibilities of a text and how they materialised in manuscript versions.⁷³³ In other words, one could ask about varying forms of social and cultural textual mobilities in a transregional manuscript culture. I will argue that the reading of al-Damāmīnī’s texts in different socio-cultural contexts produced different “careers” of his texts. These changes occurred in the course of their circulation when texts were transmitted from one socio-cultural environment to another, when they were perused differently, adapted and transformed by various communities.

As a general pattern, manuscript versions of al-Damāmīnī’s texts were reproduced in similar forms across the shores of the Western Indian Ocean. This highlights the existence of a transregional manuscript culture with its consolidated codes of reproduction, frameworks of transmission, forms of preservation and modes of reading, which facilitated the circulation of his texts and their spread across different sociabilities.⁷³⁴ These characteristics are evident from the manuscripts across the collections of the al-Damāmīnī corpus, i.e. the Süleymaniye collections, as well as the

⁷³¹ This term was elaborated on in El-Rouayheb 2015 and will be discussed further at a later stage in this chapter.

⁷³² Kopytoff 1986: 66–68. I would like to thank Jo Van Steenberg for pointing his work out to me.

⁷³³ Throughout this chapter I will use the terms ‘version’ or ‘copy’ interchangeably when referring to a manuscript that contains one of al-Damāmīnī’s texts.

⁷³⁴ For a general introduction to aspects of Arabic manuscript cultures see Gacek 2012. For a discussion of techniques and skills in the reproduction of manuscript copies see Rosenthal 1947.

collections in Cairo and the South Asian subcontinent. The textual mobility was enabled by reproductive processes, which repeatedly turned al-Damāmīnī's texts into different manuscript versions. The notion of manuscript version underscores the history of circulation of one text in the form of different manuscripts. In the process of copying from a previous version (*aṣl*), the principle paratextual elements of preface, alternating *matn-sharḥ* structure (alternation between the initial treatise and the commentary) and compositional colophon were reproduced. This does not mean that manuscripts were fully identical. Versions from Istanbul to the Deccan often differ in terms of script, for example, through the use of *naskh* and *nasta'liq* variations. The textual layout was amended to fit the idiosyncrasies of the scribe's hand. The new manuscript version would be marked by a scribal colophon stating the reproduction of the work. Copyists usually added these scribal colophons directly after the compositional colophon, and in line with common characteristics and expressions. They stated details regarding the copyist, the form of transcription, express humility on behalf of the scribe, specify date, place, a possible purpose or owner and end in religious formulae of praise.⁷³⁵ Scribal colophons represented the socio-cultural marker of transmission, often documenting the details of transcription. The text appears in a new manuscript version through a new enactment by a scribe, but previous scribal colophons were not always preserved in this process.⁷³⁶

Such reproductions of texts can be considered as manuscript variations of different degrees, because the earlier textual features continued to be present, but they were shaped to different extents. On the one hand, this implies that all manuscript copies were empirically linked with each other, although this cannot be consistently reconstructed due to the loss of manuscript versions, i.e. missing links and the dispersal of manuscript collections. The empirical connectedness of manuscript versions is crucial for the argument of this chapter, since a common textual ground also provides the conceptual basis for the emergence of connected transregional textual communities and the connected transformation of strategies of textual appropriation that I will focus on towards the end of this chapter. Although it is impossible to consistently reconstruct the chain of transmission for each manuscript, one can study those witnesses which survive. On the other hand, variations in manuscript versions have to be seen as conscious modulations that reflect on conditions in the respective

⁷³⁵ For a general overview see Gacek 2012: 71-76.

⁷³⁶ At least this is what the evidence in the al-Damāmīnī corpus suggests.

socio-cultural context. Individual cases of this differentiation of manuscript versions could point to changing political expediencies, social preferences and cultural tastes. Most importantly, the empirical link between all these versions makes it possible to consider diachronic changes in the reproduction of manuscript versions as broader changes over time in the frameworks of transmission of a learned culture.

Al-Damāmīnī's commentaries in the field of Arabic syntax contributed substantially to the perpetuation of an Arabic idiom at the Deccani courts through a variety of manuscript versions enacted and read by the royal entourage. As outlined in chapter two, in the fifteenth century al-Damāmīnī dedicated his grammar commentaries to the sultans of Gujarat and the Deccan. His texts were initially framed as courtly offerings. Presumably, these courts preserved manuscripts of his texts from this point onwards, although there is no concrete evidence for it. Over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries al-Damāmīnī's commentaries continued to circulate at the courts of the Deccan. Scribes within the courtly environment reproduced copies of the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* as manuscript variations. Scribal colophons allow the localisation of these versions at the courts of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur, two of the Deccani sultanates that succeeded the Bahmanīs. Versions at both courts exhibited similarly formatted textual interplays. They were both copied in the format of the *matn-sharḥ* alternating textblock. In Ahmadnagar, a sixteenth century transcription was prepared by marking this alternation visually with the use of red and black ink.⁷³⁷ Scribes copied it during the reign of Murtaḍā Niẓām Shāh I (972-97/1565-88)⁷³⁸ in 984/1576 at Ahmadnagar and the added scribal colophon at the end preserved al-Damāmīnī's earlier colophon.⁷³⁹ A similar transcription from 993/1585 survives from the court in Bijapur in the Asar Mahal collection.⁷⁴⁰ Here the alternation was elaborated through the use of different scripts, bold and thin. Again, the copyist left the original colophon intact and stated the completion of his version in a mix of Arabic and Persian formulae.

Scribal interventions could create changing political significances in reproductive processes, which were particularly significant in courtly contexts. Such modified versions held a significant message even if only minor changes were introduced. Two versions of the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* and the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* – the *Ta'liq al-farā'id* is missing here – were preserved in the royal library of Bijapur, demonstrating

⁷³⁷ MS Nahw 108, Salar Jung, Hyderabad.

⁷³⁸ Martin 2017.

⁷³⁹ MS Nahw 108, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fol. 390re.

⁷⁴⁰ For this and the following cf. IO MS B 4, London, fol. 337v.

examples of scribal creativity that attained a political dimension. The preface of the *Tuḥfat* comes with a considerable lacuna, leaving out the eulogy to the Sulṭān Aḥmad Shāh of Gujarat, one of the Bahmanī's rival sultanates.⁷⁴¹ Such elisions could articulate larger political affiliations and preclusions. Since the reproduction of such manuscript versions was an arduous and lengthy process, scribal interventions were meaningful and had a representational purpose. Therefore, they can be read as political statements. More significantly, the ongoing competition between the Gujarātī and the Bahmanī sultans at the time of reproduction in 849/1445 might have induced the scribe to erase the erstwhile purpose of this work as a literary offering to the sultans of Gujarat. In contrast, the preface of the *Manhal* in the royal library of Bijapur from 993/1585, which praised Aḥmad Shāh Bahmanī, was fully reproduced.⁷⁴² Here the scribe kept alive the memory of the Bahmanī sultans and their efforts in patronising scholarly groups, a sponsorship of learned activities which was continued under the 'Ādil Shāhīs.⁷⁴³

The courtly circulation of al-Damāmīnī's texts shows a discernible pattern of manuscript transmission and enactment. As mentioned previously, courtly reproductions of al-Damāmīnī's texts were created as *matn-sharḥ* alternating compact textblock versions. The initial grammar work was generally quoted in red ink and al-Damāmīnī's commentary is provided in black ink.⁷⁴⁴ This textual format, together with interlinear Persian notes, suggests that the work was meant to be recited and studied from front to back as an auxiliary tool for the Arabic language acquisition at the courts. Persian explanations of termini from the *matn* can be found on numerous folios. These Persian notes add another lexicographical level to the text and offer explanations of key terms. Importantly, the intention was not to give a full translation. Their purpose was to provide a semantic support for the reader, who was supposed to comprehend the Arabic text. The transcription of the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* from Bijapur contains the *matn* and marginal comments in Arabic. Additionally, interlinear Persian explanations worked in different ways to explicate the text. For example, on folio 2v. the term *al-amalīn* ('those who have hope') is referenced with the term *omīd*, Persian for 'hope'.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴¹ Cf. the blank section in MS IO B 7, London, on fol. 2re.

⁷⁴² Cf. the first folios of Ms IO B 4, London.

⁷⁴³ This point was elaborated in the discussion of the royal library of Bijapur in chapter 3.

⁷⁴⁴ Cf. for example the manuscript versions of the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy*, MS TC 169 Vol I, Bengal Asiatic Society, Kolkata, fol. 5v and MS IO B 4, London. In other manuscript versions the contrast between *matn* and *sharḥ* was achieved through thickening or the thinning of letters (bold and thin scripts). See for example *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*, MS IO B 7, London.

⁷⁴⁵ IO MS B 4, London, fol. 2v.

On the same folio, the *ta'rif* ('composition') of the work is translated with *jam' kardan* ('to assemble').⁷⁴⁶

Such translation practices for the purpose of linear study occurred across a variety of courts in the Deccan. Reading enactments of al-Damāmīnī's texts were conducted through Persian, the lingua franca and scholarly language at the courts of the Deccan, demonstrating the entanglements of both Arabic and Persian idioms in learned pursuits. In all these cases, the Persian interlinear notes were inscribed in hands different from the *matn* and point to a transfer of the manuscript from the initial scribe to a subsequent reader, possibly another scribe or member of the court. This reader studied the work through the medium of Persian. For example, the Bijapur version of al-Damāmīnī's *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* was brought to the royal library in 1026/1617 by the son of the famous courtier Shāh Nawāz Khān.⁷⁴⁷ Interlinear Persian notes on this version of the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* suggest a reading enactment similar to the previously discussed cases.

Reading enactments through Persian were common at the Deccani courts and, as one would guess, rather a rarity across the Red Sea region. However, when it occurred, the *modus operandi* of scholarly enactments in Persian shows similarities with courtly practices. The collections of the al-Azhar mosque can provide a rare but crucial example that puts the courtly Persianised reading enactments into perspective, since it was a prominent institution that hosted students from all over the Islamicate world. While the decoding of Arabic grammar works through Persian was not common and enactments across the Red Sea region were mostly conducted in Arabic,⁷⁴⁸ one version of the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* in al-Azhar was inscribed with such Persian explications.⁷⁴⁹ A later seal places this version in the region of Egypt (*bi-miṣr*); the name of the initial owner, however, could not be deciphered conclusively. All we know is that he was a certain Ḥāfiẓ 'Abd al-Karīm [...] Muḥammad al-Alf[...].⁷⁵⁰ There is no marker of transmission which would locate its provenance outside of Egypt. Presumably, the circulation of this version can be situated within the Red Sea region, given the centralising function of the collections in the al-Azhar in Cairo. And while this version seems to be a rarity in this corpus compared to its common-place in the subcontinent,

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁷ See the Persian scribal notation in MS IO B 7, London, fol. 1re.

⁷⁴⁸ This became clear from a survey of al-Damāmīnī's texts and other works from the discipline of grammar which circulated prominently across the Red Sea region. See examples from Cairo in the *al-Damāmīnī corpus*.

⁷⁴⁹ MS Nahw 310, Dār al-Kutub, Cairo.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 330v.

and especially in the Deccan, the form of enactment is strikingly similar to the Persian enactments at the Deccanī courts. For example, on folio 3re. the term *nuzzām* ('regulators') is explained as *jam' nāzim* (plural of 'regulator') and *fā'il* (reference to the active participle of root *fā'ala* in classical Arabic.).⁷⁵¹ This Persian enactment is comparable to the ones from the Deccan, because they show how a lexicographical dialogue is created between the Arabic term and the Persian explication. The aim was to make the text intelligible to the reader, but not to present a full translation of the Arabic work in Persian.

Scribes across the Deccan also provided decoratively sophisticated manuscript copies as they acted within court contexts and produced them for patrons seeking such lavish objects. Moreover, with the decorative aspect they differ fundamentally from reproductions in more scholarly sociabilities. An undated copy of the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* from the Asafiya collection in Hyderabad comes in such an embellished form.⁷⁵² Firstly, the frontispiece on folio 1v. is multicoloured and such decorations with a highly artefactual appeal were found mainly among courtly groups.⁷⁵³ Secondly, the text was written in a very well executed *naskh* with golden decorations and red markers to distinguish between textual sections. Much time was invested into the making of this copy. Finally, the *matn* of the entire version was framed in red, gold and blue.

Courtly spheres of circulation were not sealed off from other sociabilities. Such courtly manuscript versions would also find their way out of the royal realm and could be transmitted to other socio-cultural groups. The same courtly manuscript copy of the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* from the Asafiya collection found its way into the hands of a Sufi, once again underscoring the close relationship between the royal sphere and Sufi brotherhoods, as discussed in chapter three. At the end of the compositional colophon a transmission note followed in a hand different from that of the manuscript's scribe. This *balagha*-note stated the reading of this 'delightful book' (*al-kitāb al-mustaṭāb*), which was collated (*muqābala*) through the practice of a *qirā'a* ('reading to someone').⁷⁵⁴ An abundance of marginal notes across the first few folios suggests an intensive engagement with the grammar work. As the transmission note suggests, a certain Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn who is further identified as the al-Faqīr Ghulāmshāh b. al-Sayyid Fāḍilshāh enacted this manuscript version in a reading session. It can be presumed that

⁷⁵¹ Ibid, fol. 3re.

⁷⁵² For this and the following cf. MS Nahw 132, APOML, Hyderabad.

⁷⁵³ See for example Deccani specimen of Persian works belonging to Sultan Ibrāhīm 'Ādil Shāh as analysed by Overton 2016.

⁷⁵⁴ Cf. MS Nahw 132, APOML, Hyderabad, last folio.

the abundant marginal notes in Arabic derive from the reading enactments of this new owner of the book. Since here the term *al-faqīr* is not used as a submissive expression or part of a formula of humility, which often occurs in colophons on behalf of scribes, I would suggest reading this as a marker of a Sufi-affiliation. As it became clear with the example of a local circulation within Bijapur, such instances of text transmission between courts and Sufi *khānqāhs* ('hospices') were not uncommon in early modern South Asia.

While it is almost impossible to trace the exact chain of transmission of al-Damāmīnī's texts across the Ocean, their travels from the East to the West across the Ocean can be detected through epitextual references. As mentioned before, al-Damāmīnī had been a crucial scholarly figure across the Mamlūk realm, underscored by the fact that biographical entries appeared in the many biographical dictionaries of his peers in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria.⁷⁵⁵ His grammar works also circulated among the courtly communities of the Ottoman Empire. In the absence of concrete references about inter-courtly textual transmissions, epitextual references corroborate the wide dissemination of al-Damāmīnī's texts at the Ottoman court. In the fifteenth century, al-Damāmīnī's grammar works were already listed in the library catalogue of the Ottoman Sulṭān Meḥemmed II (r. 848-50/1444-6 and 855-86/1451-81), according to a later transcription from 1847.⁷⁵⁶ They continued to circulate at the Sublime Porte over the following century. While none of his commentaries feature in the royal library catalogue of Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 926-74/1520-66)⁷⁵⁷ from the sixteenth century, the MS Laleli 3438 and MS Laleli 3439, volume one and two of the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* (today in the Süleymaniye collections) both contain a *waqf* ('endowment') seal of Sultan Süleyman on the first folio.⁷⁵⁸

The transformation of one of al-Damāmīnī's titles in the royal book list can show that his works were treated as definitive works of grammar at the courts. In Meḥemmed II's library the work was referred to with the full title *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy fī sharḥ al-Wāfiy li-l-Damāmīnī*. The *Ta'liq al-farā'id* instead was listed as *Sharḥ al-Tashīl li-l-Damāmīnī*. Particularly, it was the name of the author which was used as a reference to the grammar work and not necessarily the title under which it was composed. As an epitextual element this points to the development of a functional shorthand. The

⁷⁵⁵ See the beginning of chapter 2 for an elaboration of this prosopographical record.

⁷⁵⁶ See the catalogue no. 46 in Flügel 1865. For the date cf. İnalçık 2018.

⁷⁵⁷ Cf. Veinstein 2018.

⁷⁵⁸ See Catalogue no. 47 in Flügel 1865. Cf. MS Laleli 3438 and MS 3439, Istanbul, fol. 1re.

functionalisation of the title suggests the growing popularity of the work with an indication of its practical purpose, namely an explication of Ibn Malik's *Tashīl* that served as a definitive work of reference. The work became famous for its author and was perused by readers of the court for the study of Arabic grammar.

To sum up, al-Damāmīnī's grammar works circulated at the courts in the Deccan but also further afield in the Ottoman Empire over the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. The courtly circulations occurred in discernible patterns of transmission as *matn-sharḥ* alternating compact textblocks while the reading enactments were pursued through Persian, especially in South Asia. As I will show in the following, al-Damāmīnī's works were also disseminated along scholarly channels of cultural exchange from the subcontinent to the Red Sea region and further on into the Ottoman worlds. In contrast to the courtly realm, I argue for a different and more diverse circulation of his texts across scholarly sociabilities, attesting to the vibrant culture of scholarly encounters during the early modern period.

Transregional scholarly transmission

As we have seen, al-Damāmīnī's works became highly mobile over the centuries following their composition and travelled far beyond their initial areas of production. Numerous manuscript versions in the collections of the Süleymaniye mosque library in Istanbul, the holdings of the Dār al-Kutub as well as those of al-Azhar in Cairo, underscore the general prominence of his texts.⁷⁵⁹ Even if the routes of these textual travels are usually not detailed in the manuscript notes, it can be presumed that they circulated along various channels from the subcontinent to the Ottoman Empire, which were linked by 'shared knowledge and connective systems' during this period.⁷⁶⁰ The previously outlined transoceanic networks and scholarly mobilities that connected the Red Sea and Western India also suggest the flow of books across the Western Indian Ocean. This was strengthened by political developments in this period. As recent studies by G. Casale and H. Pfeifer have shown, the Ottoman conquest of Egypt and Syria in the early sixteenth century intensified the flows of people and texts across the Eastern Mediterranean, for example between Istanbul, Cairo and Damascus.⁷⁶¹ This ultimately interlinked the Eastern Mediterranean with the wider Western Indian Ocean more intensively. Since both Cairo and Istanbul were magnets for itinerant scholars

⁷⁵⁹ See the *al-Damāmīnī corpus*.

⁷⁶⁰ Robinson 1997.

⁷⁶¹ Casale 2010 and Pfeiffer 2015.

during the late medieval and early modern periods – as centres of political and cultural significance – they can offer an important perspective on the circulation of manuscript versions.

By the seventeenth century, the works had already gained fame beyond the courtly realms of the Ottoman Empire. A transtextual reference in the form of an epitext circulated among the scholarly and learned audiences of that period. The prominent scholar, historian and geographer Kātib Celebi (1017-67/1609-57) – also known as Ḥājjī Khalīfa, due to his post in the Ottoman bureaucracy – listed al-Damāmīnī's commentaries in his famous work *Kashf al-ẓunūn*.⁷⁶² The *Kashf al-ẓunūn* is a bibliographical work written in Arabic which starts with an introduction to the fields of knowledge and an extensive list of entries on the works that were deemed important across all sciences by the seventeenth century. Significantly, Kātib Celebi's *Kashf al-ẓunūn* is a summary of the Arabic Islamicate cultural heritage and its continued elaboration across the Ottoman worlds. References to al-Damāmīnī's grammar works offered the possibility of identifying the work as a crucial commentary of Arabic grammar among the Arabised scholarly communities of the Ottoman world, for whom the *Kashf al-ẓunūn* was presumably intended. Kātib Celebi included information about the three commentaries ranging from details concerning the compositional process to the work's transmission and the first line of the commentary.

Taken together, the different epitextual references to al-Damāmīnī in the biographical dictionaries, library catalogues and bibliographies can be considered as a new form of representation. It elevated the significance of his commentaries to a canonical status among both courtly and scholarly communities. But the effects are twofold. Firstly, those epitexts were embedded in textual traditions which constituted a publicising platform that articulated and disseminated information about scholarly transactions. Secondly, this epitextual density functioned as a sign for professional merit. As a vehicle for the perpetuation of knowledge they contributed to the canonical rank of al-Damāmīnī's works across the transregional scholarly field.

Manuscript versions of al-Damāmīnī's texts circulated along scholarly channels of the wider Eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea region as well. 19 versions of the *Ta'liq*, 28 of the *Tuḥfat* (only two versions of the yamanī version, the *Sharḥ mughni*) and 4 transcriptions of the *Manhal* survive among the manuscript collections of the

⁷⁶² For this and the following cf. Şaik Gökyay 2018 and Flügel 1835: Vols II/292, V/655, VI/419.

Süleymaniye in Istanbul.⁷⁶³ Importantly, all these versions produced the crucial paratextual features which characterised the versions across South Asia.⁷⁶⁴ This means that there are the long eulogies to the sultans of Gujarat and the Deccan, the context of al-Damāmīnī's travels from Egypt to al-Hind and the explanation of the different methodological approaches he chose to compose these commentaries. Regarding the third commentary, the *Manhal*, the initial compositional colophon including the technical details of the transmission process was reproduced as well, for example in the version which dates to 964/1557.⁷⁶⁵ Al-Damāmīnī's mobile Arabic scholarship informed learned circles and pursuits across a wide geographical range.

This transregional proliferation of al-Damāmīnī's texts did not occur equally across all the regions of the Western Indian Ocean and the quantitative survival of texts can indicate preferences among his readership. While al-Damāmīnī's transregional scholarship seemed to have only reached a smaller audience in South Asia, especially his first and second commentary were highly successful across the Eastern Mediterranean. Judging from surviving manuscript versions, the *Ta'liq* never became famous across the subcontinent, but was widely copied and read in the Red Sea region. Corresponding to the corpus in Istanbul, both *hindī* and *yamanī* versions of his *Sharḥ al-mughnī* are preserved in al-Azhar and in the Dār al-kutub. Both versions were arguably written with different purposes in mind, the *hindī* version as an introduction to the eminent work of Ibn Hishām for students in Gujarat and the *yamanī* versions as a scholarly voice contributing to the intellectual debates in the field of grammar (*nahw*) across Mamlūk academia, which al-Damāmīnī taught at al-Azhar.⁷⁶⁶ The *hindī* version became far more popular in Istanbul than the *yamanī* version.⁷⁶⁷ In South Asia, only the *hindī* version can be found. In Cairo, both a dated version of the *Tuḥfat* from 1053/1643 and an undated version were defined by the copyist as *kitāb al-ḥawāshī al-hindiyya* ('book of the Indian marginalia'), suggesting that readers and copyists continued to distinguish between the two versions with a paratextual shorthand.⁷⁶⁸ The *al-Manhal al-*

⁷⁶³ These numbers are based on a search in the Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul. For details of all these manuscripts see the tables 1, 2 and 3 in the Appendix of this dissertation.

⁷⁶⁴ For this and the following see for example MS Atif Efendi 02573-001, Istanbul and MS Sehid Ali Pasha 02535.

⁷⁶⁵ The scribe of MS Sehid Ali Pasha 02535 was a bit more creative in that respect and shortened the version, leaving out the details about an initial draft and the final transcription when he copied this manuscript in 990/1582.

⁷⁶⁶ See chapter 2 in this regard.

⁷⁶⁷ See table 2 in Appendix.

⁷⁶⁸ See the title-pages of MS Nahw Taymūr 535 and MS Nahw Taymūr 292, Dār al-kutub, Cairo.

ṣāfiy survived on both sides of the Western Indian Ocean in only a few copies.⁷⁶⁹ While it cannot be found in al-Azhar, this text survived in the Dār al-Kutub, though with neither compositional nor scribal colophon.⁷⁷⁰ In general, all three texts were copied to a larger extent in the Red Sea region than in the South Asian subcontinent. The argument in chapter two – that his commentarial elaborations were rendered socially and culturally mobile through a reworking on a mainly lexicographical level – could provide an explanation for this. His commentaries on important grammar treatises was highly successful because they transcended local and specific scholarly traditions, thus making his mobile scholarship suitable for a wide range of changing transregional audiences. This also explains why the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* (hindī version) on the *Mughnī al-labīb* became more successful across the Ottoman Empire than the *Sharḥ Mughnī*.

The location of the various manuscript collections and references to places in paratextual elements on some of the manuscripts can give a general – if necessarily incomplete – view of the geographical spread of al-Damāmīnī’s works. As the tables 1, 2 and 3 of the al-Damāmīnī corpus in the Appendix show, manuscript versions were reproduced in Ahmadnagar and Bijapur during the sixteenth century, while others were preserved in Kolkata, Patna and Rampur over the following centuries. Due to its numerous copies in the subcontinent, the *al-Manhal* seems to have been the more popular commentary and consequently the *al-Wāfiy* the more sought after text to be studied. As colophons of manuscript versions in the Cairo and Istanbul collections suggest, al-Damāmīnī’s works were continuously reproduced over the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, more specifically in Cairo, Mecca, Istanbul, and also further afield in minor towns of the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁷¹

Due to the political and cultural importance of Istanbul and Cairo, numerous manuscripts from across the Red Sea region and beyond came to be preserved in these two cities. Further research is necessary to better understand how these manuscripts ended up in these various collections of al-Azhar, Dār al-Kutub and the numerous Süleymaniye holdings. It is evident from the profile of the manuscript collections that both Cairo and Istanbul exercised strong gravitational forces in scholarly patronage and learned sociabilities. For example, the multitude of places in which al-Damāmīnī’s texts were copied can be exemplified with four manuscript versions of the *Ta’līq*, which

⁷⁶⁹ See table 3 in Appendix.

⁷⁷⁰ Cf. MS Nahw 310, Dār al-Kutub, Cairo.

⁷⁷¹ For these references see the list of the manuscript versions of the al-Damāmīnī corpus in the Appendix.

can be pinpointed geographically. One version was copied in Constantinople in 959/1552,⁷⁷² two others were transcribed in al-Azhar mosque in Cairo in 984/1576 and 1095/1684 respectively,⁷⁷³ and another version was produced in Mecca in 972/1565.⁷⁷⁴ These paratextual notes put the cultural centres of Istanbul, Cairo and Mecca on the map as places of textual transactions in the wider Ottoman domains. These places seem to have functioned as ‘epicentres’ – a term taken from al-Musawi – or go-to places for learned groups: a cultural-contact zone where texts were exchanged among travelling scholars bound for different regions of the Islamic world.⁷⁷⁵

Importantly for the current argument, the transmission of texts and the flow of manuscripts was a socio-cultural phenomenon that depended on scholarly mobilities of the period. A survey of ownership notes on manuscripts in the Süleymaniye collections shows that the great bulk of these manuscripts was preserved in libraries and through endowment procedures (*waqf*). However, beforehand they were owned by learned personages and reproduced by scribes for scholars.⁷⁷⁶ For example, manuscript versions of the *Ta’līq* demonstrate these scholarly dynamics of circulation. As the table 1 in the appendix shows, colophons and ownership marks on these manuscripts are not marked with a courtly context of reproduction.⁷⁷⁷ Manuscripts moved around with their scholarly owners and were read and studied across scholarly sociabilities. The manuscript versions of the *Tuhfat al-gharīb* exhibit a similar pattern.⁷⁷⁸ Ownership notes point to active circulation processes among learned communities. The *waqf*-notations mark the preservation in the endowed institutions, often of royal provenance.

While the dissemination of manuscripts was the product of an extensive textual transmission across the Western Indian Ocean region, transregional forms of textual mobility generally ended with institutions of preservation, such as *waqf*-foundations (pl. *awqāf*) and scholarly libraries. Scholarly libraries presumably guaranteed the proliferation of manuscript reproductions in local contexts. Whereas sociabilities of courts, mosques and *madāris* functioned as the loci of reproduction, the preservation over the following centuries was often guaranteed through the instrument of the royal *waqf*, which did not necessarily restrict the social and cultural mobilities of texts. Based

⁷⁷² MS Murad Molla 1675, Istanbul, fol. 248re.

⁷⁷³ MS Yeni Cami 1071, Istanbul, fol. 493re and MS Fatih 4910, Istanbul, fol. 274v.

⁷⁷⁴ MS Hekimoglu 888, Istanbul, fol. 445re.

⁷⁷⁵ See al-Musawi 2015: 5-7, 11.

⁷⁷⁶ A different picture might emerge from the collection of the Topkapi Serai since they were closer to the royal sphere. Cf. for example Tanindi et al. 1986.

⁷⁷⁷ See Table 1 in Appendix.

⁷⁷⁸ See Table 2 in Appendix.

on the existing scholarship, these *awqāf* would be considered as the counter-institutions to courtly and scholarly sociabilities, since they restricted the social and cultural mobility of the texts.⁷⁷⁹ In al-Damāmīnī's case this is evident from the waqf seals which mark the title-pages of the manuscript versions in Istanbul. For example, both Cairo versions of the *Ta'liq* were turned into *awqāf*, the first one is not further specified but the second was endowed by Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617),⁷⁸⁰ son of Sultan Mehmed.⁷⁸¹ By the eighteenth century all three grammar works, but especially the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* are among the numerous *awqāf*, instituted by different members of the political and cultural elite all across Istanbul.⁷⁸²

In sum, versions of all three commentaries similar to the South Asian transcriptions travelled from al-Hind to the Ottoman domains and were reproduced there from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Although not all these trajectories can be traced in detail, this means that substantial operations of cultural exchange took place across this transoceanic space. Scholarship by F. Robinson has shown how an Arabo-Persian Islamicate madrasa curriculum as well as a Persianate imperial idiom forged and sustained links between the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals and turned Eurasia into a culturally commensurable space of circulation for elite personnel.⁷⁸³ As al-Damāmīnī's texts exemplify, these cultural commensurabilities extended with different accentuations and preferences from the Deccan to Istanbul, too. At the same time, they included a broader learned community beyond the elites. More importantly, they were driven by mobile scholarly groups. Since a considerable number of manuscript versions survive, historical practices of these cultural exchanges and the connected histories in reading practices that these forged can be examined for the early modern period.

Transregional text transmission – Diversifying frameworks of transmission

The histories of circulation in the previous sections have shown that al-Damāmīnī's texts were transmitted through many scholarly networks and across different sociabilities from the Deccan to Istanbul. Empirically, the following cases of

⁷⁷⁹ For example, this is implicit in the studies of endowed libraries by Hirschler 2012 and 2016. Nevertheless, access to these *awqāf* for scholars and individual readers probably differed from case to case and has to be studied further.

⁷⁸⁰ Mantran 2018.

⁷⁸¹ See the title-pages of both Cf. MS Yeni Cami 1071, Istanbul, and MS Fatih 4910, Istanbul.

⁷⁸² See the names of the different collections that were brought together under the umbrella of the Süleymaniye library. For a selection see the variety of manuscripts from Istanbul in the al-Damāmīnī corpus in the bibliography.

⁷⁸³ Cf. Robinson 1997.

manuscript enactments and textual appropriations will be referenced according to their specific location and situational context. Conceptually though, they are the products of the culturally interactive space of the Western Indian Ocean. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries al-Damāmīnī's works were at home among a transoceanic community of readers and the different forms of transmission and enactment they developed reflect on this cultural integration.

Explaining how al-Damāmīnī's texts became socially and culturally mobile directs the analysis towards the profile and practices of his transoceanic audience. A large body of work has been produced concerning questions of orality and literacy, and how these modes of communication impacted on forms of textual transmission, especially across Arabic Islamic and Islamicate traditions.⁷⁸⁴ According to these studies, especially scholars in the fields of *ḥadīth* and *tafsīr* perpetuated intricate forms of knowledge transmission over the centuries. Recently, al-Musawi pointed to scholarly groups from Mamlūk Egypt and their awareness of substantial transformations in procedures of knowledge transmission during the fifteenth century.⁷⁸⁵ While lamentations about declining standards in the educational curriculum were commonplace in this period,⁷⁸⁶ they also indicate a constant debate about appropriate forms of knowledge dissemination, including text transmission. Various models of teaching and frameworks of transmission existed across the Islamicate world and they were constantly reworked against a general normative corpus of writings that was intended to regulate such learned encounters.⁷⁸⁷

The reconfiguration of frameworks of learning and knowledge transmission in certain fields had as much a scholastic as a social purpose. As Davidson has shown, *ḥadīth* scholars of the post-canonical period re-interpreted the notion of 'chain of transmission' (*isnād*) to amplify its social significance.⁷⁸⁸ Beyond an initial intent to guarantee reliability in the transmission of the prophet's utterances it came to underscore scholarly prestige in the medieval and early modern periods. It was part of a scholarly habitus and self-understanding which also manifested itself in the proliferation of writings in post-canonical genres of *ḥadīth*. While these writings on *ḥadīth* could showcase the scholarly prestige among the religious community, they also

⁷⁸⁴ This field is vast. Cf. a general overview in Hirschler 2012. See also Schoeler 2006.

⁷⁸⁵ Al-Musawi 2015: 121-122.

⁷⁸⁶ Berkey 1992.

⁷⁸⁷ See for example the extensive comments in the autobiographical writings of the fifteenth century scholar al-Suyūṭī. Al-Suyūṭī 1975.

⁷⁸⁸ For this and the following see the most recent study by Davidson 2014.

consolidated text-centred and book-based approaches to Islamicate knowledge transmission.⁷⁸⁹

Although such reconfigurations did not necessarily affect all spheres of knowledge transmission to the same extent and at the same time, they foreshadow a general trend towards text-centred forms of knowledge transmission in the early modern period. K. El-Rouayheb argued for ‘a more formal and text-centred model for the transmission of knowledge’ for the scholarly centres of the Ottoman world during the seventeenth century.⁷⁹⁰ ‘Deep reading’ practices replaced the ‘student-teacher interaction’, which he traced in the re-evaluation of reading strategies in didactic handbooks and related to the introduction of ‘centralized examinations’ in the Ottoman bureaucracy.⁷⁹¹ While El-Rouayheb acknowledges that the notion of deep reading could be traced back to the Timurid period, he argues that this practice was further conceptualised and theorised in the Ottoman period.⁷⁹² ‘Manuals on the acquisition of knowledge’ stressed the importance of instrumental and rational sciences, such as syntax and rhetoric and the discipline of dialectics (*ādāb al-baḥth*).⁷⁹³ According to one scholar, Aḥmed b. Lūṭfullah Mevlevī Mūneccimbāṣī (d. 1702),⁷⁹⁴ the ‘verification’ of a text could be achieved through its close examination (*muṭāla‘a*), an approach that he divided up into different techniques of reading.⁷⁹⁵ Acquiring knowledge through the ‘proper manner of perusing books’ (*ādāb al-muṭāla‘a*) became more acceptable for particular learned purposes and at specific stages of one’s scholarly trajectory. Forms of not necessarily secluded, but highly personal and individualised studying and reading enactments became more common ways of knowledge transmission.

Such reconfigurations in procedures of knowledge transmission indicate larger transformations in the scholarly field. A stronger text-centeredness in learned pursuits has implications for the circulation of texts among readers and the manipulation of manuscripts in practice. I argue that the outlined reconfiguration of intellectual approaches to the reading of texts were complemented by new forms of textual appropriation. These textual appropriations and reading strategies become evident in the enactment of manuscript versions. Frameworks of transmission and thereby forms

⁷⁸⁹ For an example by the scholar al-Suyūṭī from Mamlūk Egypt that combined the fields of *ḥadīth* with other forms of history writing to create a historical tradition of the Abyssinians cf. Bahl 2016.

⁷⁹⁰ El-Rouayheb 2015a: 224. For an elaboration of his argument see his monograph Ibid. 2015.

⁷⁹¹ El-Rouayheb 2015a.

⁷⁹² Cf. El-Rouayheb 2015: 125.

⁷⁹³ Ibid., 97-98.

⁷⁹⁴ Ibid., 99.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid., 112-114.

of enactment and appropriation were modulated through individual interventions, which point to larger transformations of scholarly conventions among reading communities who perused al-Damāmīnī's texts. Textual practices were not always rigidly pursued in accordance with a presupposed authoritative framework. Textual transmission has to be understood in its situational context. Most importantly, manuscript versions which did not conform to normative models of text transmission should not be considered as defective copies, but as consciously created textual artefacts that reflected on the socio-cultural world of their production. Scribes, copyists and other readers had a considerable agency in processes of text transmission. Ultimately, such individual bookish pursuits could create a new consensus concerning viable reading strategies and forms of transmission.

Each reproduction an individual enactment – Personalising manuscript versions

This section will deal with the first discernible pattern of textual appropriation among al-Damāmīnī's transoceanic readership, i.e. creating personalised copies. The context of transregional manuscript transmission created specific circumstances for reading communities. Whereas localised scholarly circles in a city, at a court or a mosque could develop a particular repertoire of texts and teachings among a learned community – the reading sessions of Ibn 'Asākir's *History of Damascus* is a case in point⁷⁹⁶ – transregional text transmission and scholarship found disciples over wide distances. The manuscripts of al-Damāmīnī's texts exhibit various forms of copying and reproduction, on the basis of different previous manuscript copies.⁷⁹⁷ However, these manuscripts are generally not furnished with explicit transmission notes or even authorised chains of transmission that reach back to the initial authority of al-Damāmīnī, as practiced by himself in the composition of the *sharḥ* on Ibn Mālik's *Tashīl al-fawā'id*.⁷⁹⁸ Readers and students had to actively seek scholars and learned sociabilities to verify, collate, contextualise and approach their texts in different ways. Treading on this path of textual verification they often became the main authority of the texts themselves and specifically with regard to their own manuscript version. Many manuscript versions in the *al-Damāmīnī corpus* represent elaborate written artefacts with complex layers of textual engagement.

⁷⁹⁶ Cf. Hirschler 2012: 32-81.

⁷⁹⁷ Cf. *al-Damāmīnī corpus*.

⁷⁹⁸ Cf. chapter 2 of this dissertation.

The fact that al-Damāmīnī's grammar books were the product of mobile scholarship, and that therefore his works circulated across different transregional networks from the South Asian subcontinent to Egypt, was clear to his readership. His readers reflected on the transoceanic circulation of his texts. A version of the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*, copied in 994/1586, was further inscribed in 996/1588 with a paratextual note after the title-page.⁷⁹⁹ This short paratext referred to the wide effects and circulations of the *Tuḥfat*, the fact that al-Damāmīnī had written and taught one such text in al-Azhar and had then composed scattered (*mutafarriqa*) versions in al-Hind which are today present in *al-Qāhira* (Cairo) as well. This note presumably presented the outcome of active research by the reader or owner of the manuscript, adding another layer of compositional information and epitextual reference to the manuscript version. It showed knowledge of the peregrinations of al-Damāmīnī, his texts as well as their compositional details, and thereby highlighted the awareness of readers concerning this transoceanic sphere of cultural exchange.

Paratextual elements served to articulate particularities of text transmission. As markers of scholarly authority and textual soundness they are crucial in this regard. In general, reproducing the compositional colophon of the author lent a scholarly authority to the reproduced copy. The compositional colophon would be followed by a scribal colophon that clearly designated the version as a later copy. While the compositional colophon of both the *Ta'liq al-farā'id* and the *Manhal al-ṣāfiy* appeared in almost all the surviving and complete manuscripts, only one version of the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* in the *al-Damāmīnī corpus* preserved a compositional colophon and this version is from the royal library of Bijapur.⁸⁰⁰ Presumably, the history of circulation of this version was restricted to the subcontinent, since the scribal colophon stated the transcription of the text in the month of Rabī' al-Awwal in 849/1445, i.e. around 24 years after the composition of the work.⁸⁰¹ I could find only one other version of this text in Indian libraries, a copy from the Khuda Bakhsh library in Patna dated to 901/1495, but this version does not come with al-Damāmīnī's compositional colophon.⁸⁰² Neither do the copies from the collections of Cairo and Istanbul.⁸⁰³ Instead, they end in the religious

⁷⁹⁹ For this and the following see MS Nahw 971, al-Azhar, Cairo, fol. 1re.

⁸⁰⁰ MS IO B 7, London, last folio.

⁸⁰¹ MS IO B 7, London, last folio. It was then reviewed (*'arzat*) in 872/1467 according to a note below the scribal colophon and again in 876/1471, when it entered the collection of the famous Bahmanī Vizier Maḥmūd Gāwān and possibly the library of the madrasa he founded that same year in Bidar. This case was referred to in chapter 3.

⁸⁰² MS 2120, Khuda Bakhsh, Patna, fol. 412v. Cf. Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue.

⁸⁰³ Cf. table 2 in the Appendix.

formulae and supplications which preceded his colophon. One can only speculate about why this compositional colophon was not preserved in other versions. Possibly scribes at some point in the chain of transmission simply did not include it because they considered it redundant given the detailed information about al-Damāmīnī's scholarly transactions in the preface. Importantly, once the colophon was deleted, the text continued to circulate further as an authoritative commentary. The preface marked a connection with the initial text and the scribal colophons substituted an early compositional colophon to guarantee the soundness of the copy. In any case, while unintentional intrusions, such as copying mistakes or damages to the manuscript, could alter the overall structure of the version, they did not necessarily preclude a further transmission of the text.

Interventions in the textual fabric modulated texts to create very personal renderings of a manuscript version. This can reveal how a copyist inscribed his individual preferences and purposes into the manuscript version. One example might sound rather abstruse and minor, but it can serve as exemplification to provide a starting point for further elaborations. Al-Damāmīnī's third commentary, the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* included an elaborate section praising the city of Aḥsanābād, where al-Damāmīnī travelled to from Gujarat. Here, the Bahmanī sultan Aḥmad Shāh ruled in a truly Islamic environment, as the *kāshif al-karb* ('remover of distress') and the *malādh salāṭīn al-ʿajam wa-l-ʿarab* ('the refuge of the Sultans of the Persians and the Arabs').⁸⁰⁴ This reference to the sultans of the Persians and the Arabs is a common trope that appears across different genres, also by substituting the term *mulūk* ('kings') for *salāṭīn*. All the studied copies of the *Manhal* across South Asia preserved this reference in the preface.⁸⁰⁵ Additionally, three copies from Istanbul do the same.⁸⁰⁶ Yet, there is one manuscript version that was copied in the year 990/1582 by a certain Jalāl al-Dīn b. Ḥusayn b. Mufliḥ b. Kamāl b. Mufliḥ [--], who introduced several minor modifications.⁸⁰⁷ Here, the text refers to 'the sultans of the Arabs and the Persians' – the Persians and Arabs have been switched around. This possibly indicates that he was aware of this formula but applied it in the form that he was used to coming from a different – Arabic – cultural background. Moreover, he shortened the compositional colophon by al-Damāmīnī as well, and only referred to the place and time of composition but left out

⁸⁰⁴ Cf. for example MS B 4, London, fol. 1re.

⁸⁰⁵ MS Nahw 107 and MS Nahw 108, Salar Jung, Hyderabad, fol. 2v.; MS Nahw 50 and MS Nahw 132, APOML, Hyderabad, fol. 3v.

⁸⁰⁶ MS Haci Selim Aga 1170, MS Atif Efendi 2573 and MS Ragip Pasa 1370, Istanbul.

⁸⁰⁷ MS Sehid Ali Pasa 2535, Istanbul, fol. 2re.

details about the stages of al-Damāmīnī's compositional process.⁸⁰⁸ The clue can be found in his scribal colophon, which specified that he copied this work for himself (*katabahu li-nafsihi*).⁸⁰⁹ All these idiosyncrasies exemplify how manuscript versions with a self-referential purpose could be altered to turn them into a scholar's personal copy.

A more significant intervention by readers and copyists was the paratextual inscription of a biographical entry about the author of a text. Several manuscripts show how their readers and owners used available biographical information selectively to elucidate the biographical background of an author. Evidence for this practice comes from both the Red Sea region and South Asia. While this can appear to be commonplace, I argue that the addition of a *tarjama* was a pertinent way in a transregional field of text circulation to contextualise a work of scholarship with regard to its author and his wider scholarly tradition. In the absence of clear chains of transmission (*ijāzāt*), and often the missing student-teacher interface, inscribing the *tarjama* could signify a practice that situated a work socially and culturally. Many versions of al-Damāmīnī's works contain his biographical entry (*tarjama*) from one of the standard collective biographies, usually on the fly-leaves at the beginning or the end of the manuscript.⁸¹⁰ Readers and copyists made an effort to provide a biographical and professional background of the author to accompany the study of the text. For example, al-Damāmīnī's *tarjama* appeared on different copies of his grammar books to provide information about his wider scholarly achievements and larger oeuvre. Additionally, it could locate the author within a certain intellectual tradition and epoch. All the same, the immediate effect for a reader would be a contextualisation of the respective grammar book within al-Damāmīnī's scholarly transactions, which in consequence could lend his compositional activities and that specific grammar book a greater scholarly authority.

The inscription of biographical entries was possible because famous biographical dictionaries were widely available, i.e. there was a considerable flow of such biographical information in different textual forms that could cater to the needs for contextualisation by readers. Commonly, these *tarājim* were transcribed from the famous biographical dictionaries by al-Sakhāwī's (*al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'*) and al-Suyūṭī's (*Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*).⁸¹¹ Both biographical dictionaries circulated widely in the Red Sea region

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid, fol. 263re.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁸¹⁰ Cf. for example MS Hekimoglu 888, Istanbul, and MS Laleli 3176, Istanbul.

⁸¹¹ Both were mentioned in chapter 1.

where they were composed initially. At the same time, they can be found across the South Asian subcontinent. Al-Sakhāwī's work is preserved in manuscript collections from Gujarat to Patna and into the Deccan.⁸¹² Similarly, al-Suyūṭī's *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara* survives today in Patna, Rampur and the Deccan.⁸¹³ This extensive circulation can also explain why inscribing a biographical entry was similarly practised in the subcontinent. Starting in the West, for example, the biographical entry on a sixteenth century version of the *Ta'līq* from Mecca is almost identical in wording to the *tarjama* in one of al-Suyūṭī's works on grammarians.⁸¹⁴ The scribe even referenced the *naql* ('transmission') of this biographical information from al-Suyūṭī's *Ṭabaqāt al-nuḥāt* probably meaning his *Bughiya*.⁸¹⁵ Moving to the East, a version of the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* from Patna included references to al-Damāmīnī's other works on the title-page right next to the title itself.⁸¹⁶

Al-Damāmīnī's readership personalised manuscript versions by deliberately selecting biographical information. The aforementioned version of the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* from Patna reveals an intricate history of circulation. It contains transmission and ownership notes which located the version in Sana'a in Yemen. Thus, the text first travelled from the subcontinent to the Red Sea region, but then made its way back and ended up in Eastern India. The title-page enumerates al-Damāmīnī and his scholarly titles.⁸¹⁷ A list of his other works was added in a separate hand juxtaposed to the title and corresponds to al-Suyūṭī's enumeration. Similar to other versions which pick specific aspects from his *tarjama*, this suggests a textual practice which was intended to modify and supplement the manuscript copy in a meaningful way. The shortened epitextual reference to al-Damāmīnī seems to have been added for the specific purpose of locating this commentary within his larger oeuvre.

In sum, these textual practices show how scholars and learned figures created manuscript versions as individualised copies, preparing the texts for their own personal pursuits and contextualising al-Damāmīnī's scholarship in a transregional field of manuscript circulation.

⁸¹² See the *Arabic history corpus*.

⁸¹³ See the *Arabic history corpus*.

⁸¹⁴ al-Suyūṭī 1964: I/66-67.

⁸¹⁵ MS Hekimoglu 888, Istanbul, fol. 4v.

⁸¹⁶ MS 2120, Khuda Bakhsh, Patna, fol. 1v. Cf. Khuda Bakhsh Catalogue.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Marginalisation – From a courtly offering to a marginal explanation

This section will focus on the second major pattern in the textual appropriation of al-Damāmīnī's works and what I call *marginalisation*, a text-centred practice that further processed his commentarial elaborations for specific reading strategies. Learned communities developed a range of strategies to appropriate and thereby access al-Damāmīnī's texts in new ways. The seventeenth century offers manuscript versions with a new cultural significance relating to the way in which readers engaged with al-Damāmīnī's texts. Thereby, the idea of scribal interventions can be pursued further. Versions which learned figures created in the South Asian subcontinent show a growing circulation among scholarly milieus removed from the courts. Although I am analysing these with reference to South Asia – and more research is necessary to trace the pursuit of similar practices in the Red Sea region – I argue again that these transformations in enactments did not take place in isolation but that they are congenial to other developments in the complex move to text-centred models of text transmission. Particularly, in these scholarly sociabilities, readers transformed al-Damāmīnī's grammar commentaries from courtly offerings and mobile scholarship to works of scholarly reference. They became part of the learned curricula in the subcontinent and were enacted in studying sessions of related grammar works. More technically, readers began to visually rearrange al-Damāmīnī's commentary in its entanglement with the *matn*. They inscribed the commentary in the margins of other manuscripts which in turn only contained the *matn*. Thereby they changed the intertextual relationship between the initial work and the commentary of al-Damāmīnī. This means that al-Damāmīnī's commentary was now deliberately inscribed into the margins of a manuscript to study its initial *matn*, highlighting a text-centred reading strategy that processed his commentary in a new way.

An example can highlight the specifics of this enactment process which implied a new form of textual appropriation. The following case comes from the sultanate of Bijapur and represents a transcription of al-Damamini's third commentary, the *Manhal al-ṣāfiy*. I analysed it in chapter three already to exemplify the function of the royal library as a cultural entrepôt. I argued that it was most likely transcribed in the socio-cultural environment of the new Asar Mahal Library in Bijapur. Here, I will refer to the same characteristics of the manuscripts again to make a different, but related point. Two transcriptions survive in the Royal Library of the 'Ādil Shāhī sultans and the Qādiriyya library and each one comes with this different intertextual relationship

between al-Balkhī's *matn* and the *sharḥ* of al-Damāmīnī.⁸¹⁸ As explained in chapter three, the *matn* of the *Wāfiy* is written in large letters, each page containing only five lines.⁸¹⁹ This purposefully creates space for later additions which have been amply made in the interlinear sections, as well as in the margins. Among these marginal comments is also the commentary *al-Manhal* of al-Damāmīnī, added in sections which directly related to the passage of the *matn*. Visually this created a new relationship, since the work *al-Wāfiy* was placed at the centre and the commentary of al-Damāmīnī was relegated to the interlinear sections and margins with other extracts of commentaries. This studying enactment of the *al-Wāfiy* made more conscious use of al-Damāmīnī's commentary as a textual appropriation.

There are more aspects which exhibit that the work *al-Wāfiy* and the *sharḥ* of al-Damāmīnī have been enacted very differently from the previously discussed manuscript versions. The entire anatomy of this manuscript suggests a different kind of studying enactment. Firstly, the preface of al-Damāmīnī's work was not transcribed. Thereby, the context of compositional genesis, transmission and transcription was deleted from these pages, even though scholars might still have been familiar with it. In consequence, the dedication to the Bahmanī sultan, and therefore the context of royal patronage is also missing, as is a colophon marking the continued reproduction in a courtly context. The first folio verso of MS IO B 3 – the later version of the two reproductions, which entered the royal library in 1074/1664 – contains a *fihrist* (table of contents) for this work, including the page number and the grammatical phenomenon that is treated at this point in the *Wāfiy*.⁸²⁰ This is a new reading device which will be analysed as a form of textual appropriation in the next section of this chapter. Here, it suffices to say that it provides a quick overview of the work, which would have been helpful to a reader as a preliminary way to approach the text. The second folio recto entails a table of abbreviations in Persian listing prominent grammatical commentaries with a related symbol corresponding to their inscription on the following pages.⁸²¹ Among these commentaries ranks al-Damāmīnī's *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy*. It is listed with an abbreviation that corresponds to the instances on the following folios in which al-Damāmīnī's commentary has been inscribed in the margins. Importantly, his commentary has been used partially. Only specific extracts were

⁸¹⁸ MS IO B 2 and MS IO B 3, London.

⁸¹⁹ For this and the following cf. first set of folios of Ibid.

⁸²⁰ MS IO B 3, London, fly-leaves.

⁸²¹ MS IO B 3, London, fol. 2re.

transcribed from his *sharḥ* to provide an explanation for a given term or issue treated in the *al-Wāfiy*.⁸²² Al-Damāmīnī's work was now used selectively to explicate specific sections of al-Balkhī's work and thus disentangled from its initial composite elaboration with the *al-Wāfiy*.

Additional references underline that this manuscript version served as a studying enactment. As the Persian list of grammar works suggests, his commentary was also supplemented with other grammar commentaries,⁸²³ meaning that the reader employed a larger library of works to engage with the text in front of him – a text-centred approach to the studying of grammar. The seventeenth century presented a very different corpus of Arabic philological texts in circulation compared to the fifteenth century when al-Damāmīnī complained about difficulties in finding texts from the field of grammar in Gujarat. By using a selection of commentaries, the readers created a studying enactment based on a complementary set of marginalia from a variety of textual sources. The commentaries are listed in an inherently methodological fashion. The first group of works are treatises and commentaries which became famous in their circulation. Apart from al-Damāmīnī's commentary on the *al-Wāfiy*, there are also his other commentaries, the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* on the *Mughnī al-labīb* and the *Ta'līq*. Furthermore, the reader had recourse to their initial treatises, i.e. the *Mughnī al-labīb* and the *Tashīl*. The list grows even longer: there is the famous work *al-Kāfiya* and one of its commentaries, the *Rāḍī* of al-Astarābādī as well as the *ʿUbāb* of al-Saghānī (d. 650/1252) in the field of Arabic lexicography.⁸²⁴ In sum, these all referred to transregionally established texts in the field of Arabic philology – a point which will be discussed in more detail in the last chapter.

Additionally, al-Damāmīnī's commentary was distilled further into a compilation of 'essential teachings', highlighting another level of textual appropriation. A second group of references in the Persian list consisted of a further elaboration of these treatises and commentaries in the form of individual re-compilations and extractions – another level of marginalisation. At least this is what the addition of the prefix *maḥṣūl* to the same range of titles suggests. It generally means 'outcome, produce' and in its Persian connotation also 'collection'.⁸²⁵ Correspondingly, the second part of the list makes reference to such texts as *Maḥṣūl-i Manhal*, *Maḥṣūl-i ʿUbāb*, *Maḥṣūl-i Kāfiya*,

⁸²² Cf. Ibid, fol. 2v.

⁸²³ For this and the following see MS IO B 3, London, fol. 4r.

⁸²⁴ Cf. Baalbaki 2018.

⁸²⁵ Cf. Cowan/Wehr 1979 and Steingass 2011.

Maḥṣūl-i Raḍī and so on and so forth. Presumably, these texts represent the individual studying efforts of a person and possibly a digest of important sections of the initial works. Even if the Persian titles suggest these digests to be Persian translations of the respective works, their individual citations over the following folios are in Arabic and therefore underscore an Arabic recompilation of sections of these works. Their quotability in the framework of such a list of titles indicates that such re-compilations could themselves become meaningful textual entities.

In sum, in the seventeenth century Deccan readers employed a variety of text-centred practices to read and study grammar works. They developed different stages in the marginalisation of commentarial works. At the same time, they created further processed collections (*maḥṣūl*) on the basis of these commentaries to engage with other works. Readers appropriated the commentaries of al-Damāmīnī specifically to read and study the *al-Wāfiy*, transforming it from a courtly offering into a scholarly work of reference and a participant in an active studying of the original text. In the following section, this instrumental use of texts in learned encounters will be brought into conversation with similar text-centred practices of knowledge transmission that emerged across the Western Indian Ocean.

***Fihristisation* – The emergence of a new reader-centred textual device**

In this last section I will focus on textual practices which demonstrate the emergence of new enactment strategies that served readers on both sides of the Western Indian Ocean in the reading of al-Damāmīnī's texts. I argue that by the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the *fihrist* ('table of contents') emerged as a new reader-centred device applied by Arabicised communities to enact al-Damāmīnī's grammar works. Although the problem of manuscript survival for the earlier period causes an imbalance in the corpus, the absence of 'tables of contents' for the fifteenth century, and their appearance throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, has to be correlated with the emergence of a variety of new text-centred reading practices. The *fihrist* forms part of a larger transformation in the world of learned encounters, fuelled by the greater availability and denser circulation of manuscripts in the early modern period. This change over time is even evident from the wider field of Islamicate, and especially Arabic philological texts. Evidence comes from a wide survey of manuscripts of the disciplines grammar (*naḥw*), lexicography (*luḡha*) and rhetoric (*balāgha/ al-ma'ānī wa-l-bayān*), as they survive from the fifteenth to seventeenth

centuries in collections across India, in Cairo and Istanbul.⁸²⁶ Several manuscript versions from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but none from the fifteenth century come with a *fihrist* that was attached to the finished transcription of the respective text.⁸²⁷ This *fihristisation* can be situated within the larger shifts towards the previously outlined text-centred modes of knowledge transmission over the early modern period and this has not been studied in this context yet.

The term *fihrist* comes with a variety of forms and meanings stretched out over a considerable period. Here, I want to distinguish between two types of *fihrists*, the internal and the external. The internal *fihrist* refers to the authorial table of contents and constitutes an intertextual feature that often appears at the end of the *muqaddima* ('introduction' or 'preface') to a work. Internal *fihrists* form crucial textual elements of transition in an introduction after outlining authorial intention, reason, method and purpose of a work, framed in religious formulae and the localisation in a scholarly genealogy. They offer a road map for the reader, locking the successive evolution of ideas of the work into a set of succinct terms or phrases. Thereby they precondition the reading of a text by previewing how the larger argument is going to unfold. A relevant example comes from the current field of inquiry. Ibn Hishām's *Mughnī al-labīb* represents a canonical work in Arabic grammar which was furnished with a list of chapters (*abwāb*, sg. *bāb*) in the *muqaddima*. A version from the Salar Jung Museum library shows the internal *fihrist* as part of the *matn*, marked *yaḥṣuru* ('it is arranged') at the beginning in red ink followed by eight numbered chapters in red ink complemented by a short description of its contents in black ink.⁸²⁸ A version from 939/1533 reproduced the *fihrist* with a different format.⁸²⁹ The structuring of the text and script comes in the form of chapter details written in black and an elongated second *bā'* in the term *bāb* ('chapter'). In all these cases, the *internal fihrists* sprang from the pen of the authors, although the layout could later on be changed by the scribes.

There are necessary variations in the field of lexicography, where dictionaries functioned as referential devices *per se*. In a dictionary, the internal *fihrist* was an inherent browsing device and natural to its purpose. Due to practical considerations, the *fihrist*-function was incorporated into the whole textual structure of the *matn*, again

⁸²⁶ For manuscript versions with *fihrists* see all tables in the Appendix. See especially versions from the Asafiya collection, where I first discovered this phenomenon, cf. for example MS Naḥw 67, MS Naḥw 373, MS Balāghat 167, MS Ta'rīkh 994, APOML, Hyderabad.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸²⁸ Ibn Hishām, MS Nahw 103, Salar Jung, fol. 2re-v.

⁸²⁹ Ibn Hishām, MS Nahw 2, APOML, fol. 2re.

through structuring of the text and script. In versions of the *Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* by al-Fīrūzābādī the chapters (*abwāb*) and sections (*fuṣūl*) are highlighted throughout the dictionary in red ink and bold script, which is often repeated in the margins to offer an additional supportive device for browsing terms.⁸³⁰ Similarly, this technique was applied in the *Ṣiḥāḥ al-luġha* by al-Jawharī (d. 400/1009-10).⁸³¹ The *matn* is sectioned according to the succession of terms marked with red ink, bold letters, and marginalia.⁸³² Overall, specific textual features were introduced to facilitate the search for terms. A *fihrist* would have been unnecessary in the introduction since the reader would have traced a term through the alphabetical order of the dictionary, following the highlighted words to arrive at the intended word.

In contrast to the internal *fihrist*, I want to focus on the use of the external *fihrist* in al-Damāmīnī's grammar commentaries to exemplify its functioning as a reader-centred device. The external *fihrist* essentially has the same function as the internal *fihrist*, with the main difference that it is a paratextual element that was added later on by a manuscript user. While the different forms of authorial internal *fihrists* indicate potential perusals of a text, manuscript notes in the form of paratexts, marginalia and other reading statements partially document the historical enactment of a text by a reader. They register time and place, when and where a reader intervened or engaged with the text. Needless to say, this does not provide a full account of a reader's intellectual encounters with an oeuvre, as already set out in the introduction to this chapter. Nevertheless, these manuscript notes can indicate changing cultural engagements through their own emergence or alteration over time. Most importantly, the focus on the intertextuality of *matn* and paratexts provides a perspective that goes beyond the interpretative exercise of a text. It encompasses its appropriation by a reader and thereby the historical significances it had in its perusal at a particular point in time. Texts could be appropriated in various ways indicating differing enactment approaches or similarities showing the consolidation and transformations of cultural practices among communities.

In line with this, I argue for the emergence of an external *fihrist* during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century reflecting on similar textual practices on both sides of the Western Indian Ocean. Readers introduced this device to render the texts more accessible. Therefore, this innovation could serve text-centred models and

⁸³⁰ See for example the version of MS Lughat 11, Salar Jung, fol. 2v-3re.

⁸³¹ Kopf 2017a.

⁸³² Cf. for example, MS Lughat 8, APOML, fol. 1v-3re.

muṭālaʿa practices. Thereby, I refer to the external *fihrist* that does not spring from the pen of the author but was added by a reader at a later stage. I base this argument on an extensive survey of al-Damāmīnī's texts and their manuscripts.⁸³³ Such a survey reveals a period of relative absence, relative because there might have been individual cases where such a *fihrist* was added to the manuscript but did not survive because it would have been located among the most vulnerable fly-leaves, which could have easily been torn away. Still, with the absence of tables of contents for the fifteenth century, and their appearance during the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century, there is a diachronic argument to be made.

The more common appearance of external *fihrist*s suggests a historical trend that takes off during the early modern period in the wider field of Arabic philology from the Red Sea to the South Asian subcontinent.⁸³⁴ Individual readers began to appropriate his texts by applying such forms of enactment. The process of *Fihristisation* was not an all-encompassing phenomenon though. Altogether, thirty-seven transcriptions of either al-Damāmīnī's *hindī* or *yamanī* commentary on Ibn Hishām's *Mughnī al-labīb* survive among the Süleymaniye collections. Only one transcription of the *hindī* commentary, the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*, comes with a *fihrist*, and this version was copied in 1092/1681.⁸³⁵ Of the four transcriptions of the *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy* in Istanbul again only one version has a *fihrist*; however, it is not dated.⁸³⁶ The previously mentioned manuscript of the *al-Wāfiy* from Bijapur was enacted with al-Damāmīnī's commentaries and a *fihrist* at the beginning of the manuscript.⁸³⁷ Most importantly, of the nineteen copies of the *Ta'liq al-farā'id* in Istanbul, eight versions entail a *fihrist* and these versions date to the second half of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century.⁸³⁸ Two versions from the collections in Cairo come with a *fihrist* as well.⁸³⁹ Two of these versions can be pinned down to a circulation within Istanbul and from Mecca to Istanbul, and thus the wider Ottoman world of the mid-sixteenth century.⁸⁴⁰

⁸³³ This was based on a survey of the *al-Damāmīnī corpus*. Cf. tables 1, 2 and 3. Further research did not produce any helpful studies in the secondary literature to develop this argument.

⁸³⁴ Cf. the list of manuscripts in the Appendix for examples from other texts in South Asian manuscript collections.

⁸³⁵ MS Carullah 1941, Istanbul, fly-leaves.

⁸³⁶ MS Haci Selim Aga 1170-001, Istanbul, fol. 1v-2re.

⁸³⁷ Cf. MS IO B 3, London.

⁸³⁸ See MS Hekimoglu 888, MS Murad Molla 1675, MS Murad Molla 1676, MS Murad Molla 1677, MS Sehid Ali Pasha 2413, MS Sehid Ali Pasha 2414, MS Laleli 3176, MS Fatih 4909, all in the Süleymaniye, Istanbul and listed in the *al-Damāmīnī corpus*.

⁸³⁹ Cf. MS Nahw 1009, Dar al-Kutub, Cairo and MS 1057, al-Azhar, Cairo.

⁸⁴⁰ MS Murad Molla 1675, Istanbul, fol. 248re and MS Hekimoglu 888, Istanbul, 445re, respectively.

Most importantly, external *fihrists* come with their own colophons underscoring their addition to the individual manuscript as a separate process from the transcription of the *matn*. A version of al-Damāmīnī's *Ta'liq al-farā'id* contains a *fihris*t that stretches over three folios, with a colophon stating its completion at the end.⁸⁴¹ This comes before the title-page, which led the scribe to refer to the title of the work in the shorthand *sharḥ tashīl li-l-Damāmīnī* ('commentary of the *Tashīl* by al-Damāmīnī') again on the very first folio. The differentiation between the reproduction of the *matn* and the subsequent creation of the *fihris*t explicitly marks this paratext as a reader-centred device. In this example, the table of contents is very detailed, distinguishing between sections and chapters and adding folio numbers. The scribe enhanced its readability through the combined use of black and red ink which also introduced a hierarchical relationship into the *fihris*t, marking the transition from chapter to subsection and the respective description of its contents. By adding folio numbers, the readability was significantly enhanced. The foliation broke up the text and made it more accessible. According to the documentary evidence, this addition happened at a later stage. This manuscript version of the *Ta'liq* was prepared in Mecca on the 14th of Ramadan in 972/1565.⁸⁴² The *fihris*t was prefixed to the finished transcription on the 19th of Rabi' al-awwal in 973/1566.⁸⁴³ The later date in colophon of the *fihris*t emphasises two different processes. The transtextual enactment was separated from the transcription processes.

Paratext and text were transcribed by two different scribes. The manuscript was reproduced by Muḥammad Radī al-Dīn b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qazānī.⁸⁴⁴ He also accounted for the framework of the transcription process, i.e. he referred to the manuscript versions that he used to reproduce the text. The scribe of the *fihris*t inscribed himself at the end of the *fihris*t's colophon, but only with his *laqab* ('title') Quṭb al-Dīn.⁸⁴⁵ At this point, one could speculate whether this distinction between the two processes of transcription and transtextual enactment was signified differently. On the one hand, the copying of this commentary in the month of Ramadan was certainly a highly symbolic act, pursued by a person who would assure the soundness of the copy. On the other hand, the scribe of the *fihris*t provided a new writing enactment. The *fihris*t documents his personal engagement with the text, which did not affect the soundness of the main text itself. Furthermore, he did not account for a specific framework of

⁸⁴¹ For this and the following see MS Hekimoglu 888, Istanbul, fly-leaf 4re.

⁸⁴² Ibid, fol. 445re.

⁸⁴³ Ibid, fly-leaf 4re.

⁸⁴⁴ Cf. MS Hekimoglu 888, Istanbul, last folio.

⁸⁴⁵ Cf. Ibid, fol. 4re.

textual transmission, meaning that this individual engagement was not as highly regulated as the reproduction of the *matn*.

Readers introduced this device in various shapes and forms to render the texts more accessible. The external *fihrist* helped them to approach the text and served them in studying enactments. The overall location among the fly-leaves defined the paratextual characteristics of the external *fihrist* as a meaningful written elaboration of a hypertextual appropriation of a text. In general, they functioned as practical guides and provided a condensed overview of a work's contents. They were added to the manuscript at a later stage and appear before the title-page and the introduction to the text. This and the fact that scribes signed them with their own colophons furthermore suggests that they had not become a standard feature of books in this period. For example, in one of the Istanbul versions of the *Tuḥfat al-gharīb* the *fihrist mā fī al-kitāb* ('index of what is in the book') goes over one and a half folios before the start of the *matn*'s foliation and was marked as completed with the symbol *tamma* at the end.⁸⁴⁶ Chapters, sections and important terms and phenomena were often referred to with a particular folio number. Chapter names were written in red and section titles in black. They were specified with a folio number and corresponded with their counterparts in the *matn* in red ink. In other cases, *fihrist*, *matn* and marginalia seem to be written in the same hand, yet the *fihrist* still was a final addition, because the numbers given in the table of contents had to conform with the foliation of the work.⁸⁴⁷ In contrast to this, a version of the *Manḥal al-ṣāfiy* entitled *fihrist hadhā al-kitāb* ('index of this book') is produced without foliation.⁸⁴⁸ The *fihrist* only offers a bullet-point summary of grammatical terms and phenomena covered in this commentary.

Most significantly, a *fihrist* marks a singular and individual engagement with a text by a reader. A specific intertextual relationship between the *matn* and the *fihrist* was created and recreated for each individual manuscript version. Since each manuscript is a unique reproduction of a work, each *fihrist* had to be elaborated based on the structural particularities of the version, such as the length of chapters or sections, which would produce different sets of folio numbers. The manuscripts of the al-Damāmīnī corpus also show that the contents of the *fihrists* were elaborated in different ways. A version from the Dār al-kutub in Cairo from 1091/1680 featured a *fihrist* that was attached before the title-page and structured in accordance with the

⁸⁴⁶ MS Carullah 1941, Istanbul, fly-leaves.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁸ MS Haci Selim Aga 1170-001, Istanbul, fol. 1v-2re.

respective manuscript version, i.e. the specific set of folio numbers and the allocation of chapters to their respective folio numbers.⁸⁴⁹ Even among the nine versions of the *Ta'liq* which accumulated in Istanbul, no version is similar to another one. For example, MS Laleli 3176, MS Hekimoglu 888 and MS Fatih 4909 show that there was no specific template for this text, but that each *fihrist* represented an individual reading enactment by the scribe who produced it, i.e. each creation of a *fihrist* depended on the expertise of the respective scribe and his familiarity with the text.⁸⁵⁰ MS Murad Molla 1675 is distinguished from the other versions by not providing a foliation.⁸⁵¹ Here the *fihrist* simply functioned as a summary of contents. A version of the *Ta'liq al-farā'id* from al-Azhar again has no foliation, but the scribe provided a colophon at the end.⁸⁵² Finally, this implies that each *fihrist*-creation represented a singular enactment of the text, producing its own hypertextual relationship with the main text, since not only the manuscript version would be different, but also the *fihrist* could be conceptualised differently.

By extension, the fihristisation exemplifies how copyists and scribes became part of the wider readership of grammar texts. As the previous examples have shown, finished manuscript versions were sometimes given to scribes for the creation of a *fihrist*. They marked the completion of the table of contents with a colophon. Since these enactments constituted individual engagements with the textual structure of a manuscript version, scribes had to familiarise themselves with the textual contents of al-Damāmīnī's grammar commentaries. Although this does not necessarily represent a thorough *muṭāla'a* or 'deep reading' of the work, one can assume that a scribe became acquainted with the overall structure and treatment of the topic in a commentarial elaboration or actively sought another manuscript version from which to copy the *fihrist*, thereby engaging with a wider readership. Importantly, the textual practice of fihristisation shows how text-centred practices could also draw in a wider professional and learned community of readers in scholarly pursuits.

Conclusion

Judging from the wide dissemination of al-Damāmīnī's grammar books, his mobile scholarship was successful among a growing transoceanic readership from early

⁸⁴⁹ MS Nahw 1009, Dar al-Kutub, Cairo, fly-leaves.

⁸⁵⁰ See the *al-Damāmīnī corpus*.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵² MS Nahw 1057, al-Azhar, Cairo, fly-leaves.

modern Istanbul to the Red Sea region and the Deccan. The study of manuscript circulation provides an empirical basis to trace connected histories in transregional text transmission. Manuscript versions, epitexts and paratexts made it possible to trace the spread of his works. The reproduction of manuscript versions across major nodal points in this transregional space exemplifies the spread of knowledge about major works in Arabic grammar. Learned figures at courts and across scholarly sociabilities read, copied and taught his commentaries in different ways. While al-Damāmīnī's grammar commentaries became a mainstay of courtly libraries, his compositions and fame travelled with the movement of scholars East and West. Scholarly movements constituted the main social mobility of his texts.

Transregional histories of circulation could be studied by tracing textual practices among the reading communities of the Western Indian Ocean world. These histories of circulation bring together seemingly distant cases of reading and studying enactments. The transregional dissemination created specific dynamics in cultural exchanges and a transoceanic readership diversified textual practices. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed the emergence of new cultural mobilities of texts: the diversification of frameworks of transmission and new forms of text-based engagements with al-Damāmīnī's scholarship. The process of text circulation was accompanied by the development of new forms of enactment of his grammar works. This highlighted the emergence of reading strategies that were intended to render his works accessible to individual learned aspirations. Copyists and owners of manuscripts intervened to personalise their copies. Paratextual elements such as biographical entries elaborated the scholarly appeal of manuscript copies and contextualised transregional scholarship in the absence of other chains of transmission. The marginalisation of al-Damāmīnī's commentaries in manuscripts of other texts and *maḥṣūl* digests demonstrates the further engagement with his text across South Asia and the employment of his scholarship in the study of Arabic grammar. Learned figures modulated texts in manuscript versions to create new studying enactments. These manuscript versions represented a commentary's transformation by a learned community from a courtly offering to a definitive work of reference. Most significantly, the emergence of the *fihrist* from Istanbul to the Deccan during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is the strongest example of new text-based forms of learned encounters and engagements in knowledge transmission. Instead of portraying the elaboration of frameworks of transmission as a deviance from established models of authority, I read this variety in the reproduction of manuscripts as individual,

intellectual efforts that perpetuated grammatical knowledge in Arabic. Readers and scribes had a considerable agency in how knowledge and texts came to be perpetuated. They thereby contributed to a differentiation of cultural practices across the scholarly field, moving away from the student-teacher interface to individualised forms of reading and studying.

As scholarship by El-Rouayheb has shown, learned encounters across the early modern Islamicate world were re-configured in new text-centred ways over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The text-centred practices of scholarly contextualisation through the paratextual additions, fihristisation and marginalisation, can be seen as interrelated developments that accompanied these transformations. Manuscripts from the period make it possible to study these transformations in reading strategies in terms of historically documented textual practices. Not every manuscript of this period exhibits enactments through these new practices. Yet, the fact that the textual practices were conceptually interrelated and that they appeared from the Ottoman lands to South Asia over this period, provides evidence for the slow unfolding of a transregional trend in scholarly pursuits. Learned figures not only theorised about this in prescriptive treatises, but manuscripts show how such text-centred models of knowledge transmission were practiced. More importantly for this research, communities from Istanbul, via Cairo, Mecca and to Bijapur were part of these ‘shared knowledge systems’ in Arabic philology – a term taken from F. Robinson.⁸⁵³ Tracing the circulation of texts can show how readers developed new frameworks to peruse and study important works. Since these frameworks suited very similar scholarly needs in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the subcontinent, it demonstrates how communities on both sides of the Western Indian Ocean were connected in cultural flows.

⁸⁵³ Robinson 1997.

Chapter 5 - Seventeenth Century Manuscript Circulation and Arabic Philology in South Asia

Following the discussion of the transformation of reading and transmission practices across a transoceanic field of manuscript circulation, this final chapter will focus on the ‘consolidation’ of Arabic philology in the subcontinent based on the study of seventeenth century manuscript circulation.⁸⁵⁴ For this purpose I will expand the source corpus to include manuscripts of texts from the disciplines of Arabic philology – ‘ilm al-naḥw wa-l-ṣarf (grammar and morphology), ‘ilm al-balāgha/‘ilm al-ma‘ānī wa-l-bayān (rhetoric) and ‘ilm al-lughā (lexicography) – from manuscript collections in the Deccan. I will investigate the cultural practices of a wider social spectrum of an Arabised community among whom these texts circulated and analyse how social interrelations and their dynamics enabled and transformed the pursuit of Arabic philology. With the term Arabised community I am referring to a community that was primarily constituted by common cultural practices pertaining to the transmission of Arabic Islamicate texts in all its various forms.⁸⁵⁵ These practices could be performed by important scholarly figures, students or humble copyists. Since they all shared – to different degrees – access to and forms of engagement with circulating Arabic manuscripts, they were all constitutive of an Arabic philological field, its transmission of knowledge and learned sociabilities. The aim is to look at the wider social and cultural constitution of an Arabic philological field in South Asia as a localised and growing cultural pursuit along transregional connections that were forged across the seventeenth century Western Indian Ocean.⁸⁵⁶

Over the last years, Philology has been a prominent venue of research across cultural arenas of the early modern world. A volume on *World Philology* brings together case studies from across the globe which consider ‘the lowest common denominator of philological practice’ [...] ‘to make sense of texts’ over time and space.⁸⁵⁷ This very general understanding of philological inquiry captures the socio-religious significance of the Arabic philological disciplines grammar, rhetoric and lexicography in a specific

⁸⁵⁴ The term ‘consolidation’ was used by Arthur Dudley to frame a collective investigation into *Philology in Asia* on a panel at the *Making of the Humanities Conference* in Somerville College, Oxford, 2017, and I am grateful to Arthur and all panellists for their inspirational spirit.

⁸⁵⁵ With the term Arabised community I am borrowing a term from Ronit Ricci’s study of translation practices and literary networks across South and Southeast Asia over the early modern period when Arabic linguistic elements entered ‘tellings’ in Javā, Malay and Tamil. Cf. Ricci 2011.

⁸⁵⁶ Bourdieu’s notion of a ‘field of cultural production’ that is constituted by different elements serves as a general heuristic background for this argument. Cf. Bourdieu 1993.

⁸⁵⁷ Cf. Pollock 2015: 1. For an example of a growing engagement with this field see the new journal *Philological Encounters*.

way. They were instrumental across Islamicate scholarship from East to West as auxiliary tools, employed to make sense of texts from the Quran, *ḥadīth*, poetry, *fiqh* and others. A. Talib incorporates this auxiliary purpose into a more holistic view and defines it as ‘an attention to language and language practice that is based on the putatively ideal and uncorrupted form of Arabic known from the earliest recorded Arabic text’.⁸⁵⁸ He considers Philology as a ‘cognitive model’ and ‘pillar of an Arabo-Islamic scholarly habitus’ that was pursued with ‘eclecticism’ and ‘encyclopaedic scope’ during the Middle period (1000-1500).⁸⁵⁹ Ultimately, he is concerned with the evaluation of a new aesthetic approach to Arabic commentarial culture within the current revisionist framework of Arabic literary study.⁸⁶⁰ However, in this chapter I am not pursuing an inquiry into intellectual history approaches of this kind. Building on the recent scholarship I am more interested in the social and cultural processes that shaped and were shaped by Arabic philological pursuits across socio-historical contexts, and again they will be studied based on textual practices, as they are inscribed on surviving manuscripts. Especially because Arabic philology was such a fundamental practice, one might say omnipresent in learned pursuits, it can provide a crucial perspective on socio-cultural histories of the subcontinent and their enduring connections across the wider Western Indian Ocean.

The focus on philological practices in this chapter also provides an important way to situate Arabic within the cross-cultural processes of the subcontinent’s ‘multilingual’ landscape.⁸⁶¹ This means placing Arabic next to Persian and considering them as two complementary idioms of Islamicate learning. For South Asia, M. Alam, K. Chatterjee and S. Subrahmanyam have shown how Persian functioned as a multisided cultural idiom.⁸⁶² Knowledge of its higher written idiom represented an increasingly lucrative and sought-after career path for scribal communities of different cultural and religious backgrounds. R. Kinra provided a meticulous case study of Persianate philological and literary cultures that sustained an intellectual efflorescence at the seventeenth century Mughal court.⁸⁶³ A. Dudney’s revision of the eighteenth-century intellectual decline narrative through the works of the philologist Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Khān

⁸⁵⁸ I am grateful to Adam Talib for providing me with the as yet unpublished version of an article entitled ‘al-Ṣafadī, His Critics, and the Drag of Philological Time’, based on a presentation that he delivered at an international conference on *Arabic-Islamic Textual Practices in the Early Modern World* at the Freie Universität, Berlin, 2017.

⁸⁵⁹ For this and the following cf. *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁰ Cf. Bauer 2013 and al-Musawi 2015.

⁸⁶¹ Cf. Orsini/Sheikh 2014.

⁸⁶² Cf. Chatterjee 2010 and Alam/Subrahmanyam 2011: 311-339.

⁸⁶³ Cf. Kinra 2010 and 2015.

(1687/8–1756), Ārzū, strengthened the view of Persian as a highly interactive cultural medium in the multilingual context of South Asia, not only in its relationship with Sanskrit – exhibited for example in translation movements from Sanskrit to Persian in the seventeenth century⁸⁶⁴ – but also with vernacular literary cultures such as Urdu.⁸⁶⁵ This is precisely because recent scholarship has shown how Indo-Persian court culture was able to act as a unifying medium of cultural belonging for a variety of social and professional groups at the same time and thus functioned as a platform for transcultural exchanges.⁸⁶⁶ Through this Persianate sphere Arabic philological practices can also be brought into conversation with developments across other spheres of learning.

The seventeenth century was a period of heightened mobilities and cultural transformations, which can be discerned in philological practices across the subcontinent. Arabic has to be studied as part of these newly emerging practices in a variety of cultural arenas and sociabilities. Yet, at this point it is not possible to directly link developments in Arabic philology with pursuits in other South Asian languages and fields of learning. However, recent scholarship on developments in the spheres of Sanskrit and other vernacular cultures can highlight wider social and cultural transformations of the early modern period in South Asia that can be brought into conversation with Arabic philology by association. According to this scholarship, forms of knowledge transmission, professional identities and social communities were shaped in fundamental ways during this period. Studies by S. Pollock have pointed to the new developments in the conceptualisation of knowledge in Sanskrit cultural production which accompanied the rise of new scholarly pursuits in the seventeenth century.⁸⁶⁷ E. Fisher investigated the growing ‘public’ nature of philological inquiry which was linked with the ‘embodiment of religious identity’ in sixteenth and seventeenth century South India.⁸⁶⁸ Sanskrit Philology as scholarly practice became crucial to justify theological prescriptions in Hinduism which delineated one’s affiliation to a ‘sectarian community’ in daily interactions – what she calls ‘bodily displays of identity’.⁸⁶⁹ This sparks the question whether the more public demarcation of sectarian belonging occurred in a context of increased social interactions among different communities, which made

⁸⁶⁴ Cf. for example the recent study by Martin 2017.

⁸⁶⁵ Cf. Dudley 2013.

⁸⁶⁶ Alam 2004 and Kinra 2015.

⁸⁶⁷ Cf. Pollock 2001.

⁸⁶⁸ Cf. Fisher 2015: 52 and 62.

⁸⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

such markers necessary. In a different context, R. O’Hanlon made clear the increasing importance of textual practices for subcontinental social identities in general, and for scribal communities (*kāyasthas*) in particular.⁸⁷⁰ She analyses how Brahmin discussions about the ritual purity of *kāyasthas* signify an increased professional competition among social groups for scribal employment in the early modern states of Western India.⁸⁷¹ Concomitant scribal migrations across the subcontinent then highlight the expansion of textual practices across a larger community.⁸⁷²

Building on these studies throughout this chapter it is possible to integrate the pursuit of Arabic philology into the wider arena of philological pursuits across the subcontinent and see its consolidation as correlated with processes that underpinned such transformations in other languages and cultures: the increase in manuscript circulation, the pluralisation of cultural practices in the engagement with texts and the growth and social diversification of scribal communities. For the field of Sanskrit Pollock pointed out that far more research is necessary to answer the question of why these transformations took off at this point. Still, the congenial nature of transformative developments in these different spheres elucidates two larger arguments in this chapter: First of all, I will trace the historical specifics of the diachronic constitution of Arabic philology in South Asia as a connecting link to the wider Western Indian Ocean. Secondly, I will consider this field as deeply enmeshed with and localised in socio-cultural processes of the subcontinent.

Arabic philology has to be considered as an important aspect of South Asian contexts since it is repeatedly referred to as a requisite for the cultural refinement of the learned elites across early modern Islamicate cultures.⁸⁷³ However, while scholarship has explored the multifaceted terrain of Arabic philology over earlier periods, especially the disciplines of grammar (*‘ilm al-naḥw*), rhetoric (*‘ilm al-balāgha*) and lexicography (*‘ilm al-lughā*), research into later commentarial traditions is only in its infancy.⁸⁷⁴ At the same time, these studies mainly focus on the Arabic scholarship from the medieval central Arab lands and Persia, but often do not acknowledge contributions from learned centres across other regions such as the South Asian subcontinent. Yet, it is precisely in the area of philological enquiry – beyond but not excluding Islamic pursuits in *fiqh* (law) and *ḥadīth* (prophetic traditions) – that durable

⁸⁷⁰ Cf. O’Hanlon 2010 and 2015.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.* 2010.

⁸⁷² *Ibid.*

⁸⁷³ This is implicit in Alam 2004 and Kinra 2010.

⁸⁷⁴ See for example Ba’labakkī 2004; Bauer 2005 and 2007; Gully 1995; Owens 1988; Simon 1993.

connections with the wider Middle East were forged and mattered to a larger group of people in the subcontinent, Muslim and non-Muslim. This field comprises a plethora of untold stories regarding texts, intellectual encounters and scholarly debates.

In this chapter, I will argue that from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries cultural practices in the field of Arabic philology constituted a significant cultural pursuit and sociability across a wide range of groups beyond the courts of South Asia – with a particular focus on the Deccan and its connections with the wider subcontinent. Manuscripts were preserved, reproduced and modulated in greater numbers and new ways. They thereby served as a crucial medium of communication in terms of scholarly achievements, professional skills and cultural belonging. These cultural processes were connected with changing approaches to texts, as practised by readers across the transregional assemblage of the Western Indian Ocean. At the same time, the proliferation of Arabic manuscripts over the seventeenth century meant that a social diversification among reading communities unfolded.

Empirically, this chapter builds on manuscripts of the Arabic philological disciplines as brought together in the *Deccan corpus*.⁸⁷⁵ This means that I am looking at Arabic texts in the disciplines of grammar, rhetoric and lexicography which were copied and preserved in manuscript form over the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries (9th-11th hijrī). The profile of the surviving collections sketches only an incomplete picture of the diachronic processes of manuscript dissemination. Manuscript versions endured due to a host of contingencies. Moreover, it is difficult, indeed impossible at times, to trace the spatial circulation of most of the manuscripts in both corpora. An unbroken chain of transmission cannot be reconstructed for the philological and possibly also not for other fields. Therefore, changes in cultural practices emerge as pulsations in these surveys. They only become recognisable through a long-term perspective and across a wide geographical field. At the same time, contextualisation within a larger field and the commonality of changes across a larger corpus make it possible to circumvent arguments of precedent. Developments in cultural practices can be traced through dominant features which appear in larger clusters and throw into relief patterns of manuscript perusal and their social agents.

Methodologically, this translates into a twofold approach to the sources. Firstly, I will study the engagements of Arabised communities with Arabic philological texts, i.e. cultural practices inscribed on the manuscripts which shed light on the

⁸⁷⁵ The composition of the Deccan corpus is outlined in the introduction to this dissertation.

proliferation and the circulation of Arabic philological texts by individuals and groups across the subcontinent and the Western Indian Ocean. Again, this means studying paratextual profiles of manuscripts and here I will focus on colophons, transmission and transfer statements and ownership notes to capture the human and the technical component of textual mobility. Secondly, at the same time, such larger patterns and an understanding of their historical trajectory make it possible to study consequences of these social engagements with a variety of manuscript versions of a particular text. Individual cases offer a window into the diversity of human engagements with texts. Tracing larger patterns provides a view on wider continuities and changes in social interactions that centred on texts and manuscripts.

Recent scholarship has demonstrated how written cultures can be contextualised along their constitutive social historical processes. For the medieval European context, M. Irvine advanced arguments on the shaping of a ‘textual culture’ of ‘grammatica’.⁸⁷⁶ While grammatica were concerned with the initiation into the field of Latin literacy, their foundational texts performed a larger ‘social function’ in the perpetuation of an entire cultural complex.⁸⁷⁷ The wider institutional practice around these texts defined the terms of access to the written word as well as its interpretation and structured the matrix of sociabilities in learned encounters. In a similar vein, al-Musawi provided a framework for inquiries into an Arabic field of textual compositions, scholarly debates and cultural innovation.⁸⁷⁸ S. Nichols offered a helpful outline to translate these conceptual groundworks into an approach to a reproduced variety of manuscripts.⁸⁷⁹ Instead of considering manuscripts as the ‘archaic precursors of printed books’, he argues for a fresh look at the ‘dynamics of the parchment page’ to understand what manuscripts meant over time to different people. I will build on this heuristic to study how Arabic philological manuscripts became sites of social interaction that brought together learned groups from different walks of life: scribes, owners, as well as occasional readers of the early modern period.

The argument will be elaborated in four stages. Firstly, I will further show how the seventeenth century in the Deccan witnessed an increase in the circulation of Arabic manuscripts elicited through increased reproduction and forms of institutional preservation. This growing amount of manuscripts in circulation provided for a

⁸⁷⁶ Irvine 1994.

⁸⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁸⁷⁸ al-Musawi 2015.

⁸⁷⁹ For this and the following cf. Nichols 2014.

considerable proliferation of cultural practices, i.e. the inscription of manuscripts with notes showing how a manuscript had been perused and a text enacted. Thus, this line of argument will be based on a quantitative as well as a qualitative assessment of manuscripts from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries in the Deccan.

Secondly, the process of transcribing certain works and neglecting others sustained textual survival as well as dissemination, but also paid tribute to and confirmed the popularity of certain texts over others.⁸⁸⁰ As the profile of manuscript collections will show, continuing transoceanic connections and local intellectual currents led to the emergence of distinct textual corpora in different places in the Deccan. Within these regional idiosyncrasies certain works became *definitive texts* and stood out not only due to their more numerous appearance across the whole socio-cultural spectrum, but due to the extent of their circulation and their continued commentarial elaboration. With 'definitive texts' I mean works which were considered as foundational to the acquisition of knowledge within a certain discipline and superior in their potential to spread the word among future students. Similar to another more common and parallel usage of the term 'standard text',⁸⁸¹ I am referring to a work in its wider discursive field of a discipline that becomes central to the perpetuation of this field.

Thirdly, I will analyse the spread of Arabic philology through a study of new engagements with philological texts during this period. Manuscripts were turned into works of reference for a particular field. Sections from a variety of other textual traditions and commentaries were inscribed on flyleaves and additional folio pages to engage with the wider field of study. This can demonstrate the degree to which Arabic philological inquiry became an important text-based cultural pursuit during the seventeenth century and was sustained by an increasing circulation of texts. Specific paratextual traits became commonplace by the seventeenth century and demonstrate that cultural practices had spread across the Western Indian Ocean with the circulation of texts and the movement of people.

Fourthly, the analysis of a corpus of manuscripts provides a prime view on the social interactions of owners and the manuscripts' proliferators, i.e. copyists, scribes and transcribers. A larger output of manuscripts was related to a growth in scribal

⁸⁸⁰ Chartier 2007.

⁸⁸¹ At a conference in Islamic Manuscript Conference in Cambridge in 2016, Carl Ernst used the term 'definitive text' which I then defined myself to use it as an analytical category in the current context. I thank him for his inspiration.

communities and a reconfiguration of their standing across communities. Texts were copied among scholars and *munshīs* (scribes), reproduced for courtly libraries and princely households and sometimes circulated among many learned individuals and for several generations. The study of ownership notes will demonstrate how a high velocity of manuscripts created new temporary learned sociabilities.

Building on the analysis of colophons, the final section will show how scribes used their professional signatures to inscribe themselves into such larger socio-cultural formations. Together with section four, these two lines of inquiry make it possible to argue for the social diversification of Arabicised communities based on the participation in shared cultural engagements with texts.

The seventeenth century increase in manuscript circulation: a view from the Deccan

The seventeenth century witnessed a substantial increase in Arabic manuscript circulation across the Deccan, which transformed the cultural engagement with texts across different sociabilities. From a material point of view this can be correlated with the proliferation of paper use and scribal practices in growing bureaucracies of the Mughal dispensation and beyond.⁸⁸² O'Hanlon's recent study of the early modern reshaping of Brahmin identity in the subcontinent has considered the wider availability of paper as central to an 'all-India discursive activity', which complemented forms of oral transmission and expanded the circulation of puranic manuscripts.⁸⁸³ In turn, these 'discursive fields' represented 'effective platforms both for the histories of the mobile and the identities of the settled'.⁸⁸⁴ For the current study of Arabic manuscripts, I argue that the greater availability and affordability of paper across the Western Indian Ocean similarly enabled the spread of writing practices in the field of Arabic philology, and, more importantly, that this affected transmission practices and the constitution of learned sociabilities across the subcontinent by the seventeenth century.⁸⁸⁵

Such cultural arguments presume quantitative changes which are often difficult to prove. Important concerns have been voiced regarding the possibility of analysing an increase in manuscript production across the Middle East and especially the Ottoman Empire during the seventeenth century. Here, the available quantitative data

⁸⁸² Cf. O'Hanlon 2013: 89, Eaton 2014: 112. These arguments are based on a wider scholarship concerned with paper use in this period. See for example Bloom 2001.

⁸⁸³ O'Hanlon 2013: 92-93.

⁸⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 97-98.

⁸⁸⁵ There is no point in exploring the origins of economic causation at this point. The spread of writing practices certainly drove the production of paper so that cultural demand and commercial procurement were mutually dependent and reinforcing.

is shaky at best, yet recent scholarship indicates ways to circumvent this. While N. Shafir mainly carved out an analytical framework to investigate the spread of ‘pamphleteering’ in the early modern Ottoman Empire and the cultural transformations brought about by this circulation of pamphlets (cheap manuscripts), he also made the point that ‘the moment of preservation for many manuscripts neatly coincides with the period identified as the one of increased book production and consumption’.⁸⁸⁶ Yet, since collecting practices beyond the court took off during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Ottoman world with an inclination towards ‘long, rare, and old books’,⁸⁸⁷ such new preservation practices can signal ‘a changing attitude in reading and book production’.⁸⁸⁸ Citing further scholarship and anecdotal evidence that consider the emergence of new groups of readers, he concludes with an assessment of balanced probability that favours change over time,⁸⁸⁹ and this is what I will build on for my current argument: a diachronic change in the attitude of readers of Arabic philological texts is recognisable based on the transformation of cultural practices in the field and this unfolded with an increase in manuscript circulation during the seventeenth century across the Deccan.

To begin with, the *Deccan corpus* of Arabic philological texts backs this up in terms of numbers. A survey of three manuscript collections from the Deccan, namely the Royal Library of Bijapur, the Salar Jung Museum Library in Hyderabad and the former Asafiya Library, Hyderabad (APOML), shows that these libraries hold more manuscripts of the Arabic philological disciplines that were copied during the seventeenth century in comparison to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This is only built on manuscripts which can be clearly dated on the basis of the colophon, which principally states the completion of a manuscript copy.⁸⁹⁰ In the Salar Jung Museum 8 manuscripts survive for the fifteenth, 12 for the sixteenth and 48 for the seventeenth century.⁸⁹¹ The Asafiya Library collection holds 4 manuscripts dated to the fifteenth, 11 to the sixteenth and 46 to the seventeenth century.⁸⁹² The Bijapur collection shows an odd balance of 6 manuscripts for each century.⁸⁹³ The historical

⁸⁸⁶ I am grateful to Nir Shafir for providing me with his as yet unpublished PhD dissertation. Cf. Shafir 2016: 107.

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 96.

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 108.

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 108.

⁸⁹⁰ This was outlined in the introduction.

⁸⁹¹ These numbers are based on the catalogues of the Salar Jung Museum Library, Ashraf 1993. Cf. table 5 in Appendix.

⁸⁹² For details cf. tables 6a, b, c, d in Appendix.

⁸⁹³ These numbers are based on the references and details in Loth 1877. Cf. table 4 in Appendix.

development of the collections of the former Hyderabad principality has not been studied systematically yet,⁸⁹⁴ and I am only building here on the manuscripts from the Arabic philological disciplines. Nevertheless, since the profiles of these collections cover important socio-cultural contexts of Arabic Islamicate text circulation, this quantitative data can suggest important trends for further inquiries. Furthermore, quantitative data from an important manuscript collection in the North of the subcontinent paints a similar picture. A survey of the Arabic manuscript collections of the Rampur Raza Library, Rampur, produces the total numbers of 19 manuscript copies of the philological disciplines dated to the fifteenth, 23 to the sixteenth and 82 to the seventeenth century.⁸⁹⁵ In sum, except for Bijapur, all these collections show a significant increase in manuscript copying processes from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century.

Departing from Shafir's previously mentioned points about a diachronic change in manuscript circulation, there are important caveats in this quantitative argument. Firstly, as has been pointed out before, many manuscripts are not conclusively dateable regarding their transcription date. This means that the bulk of the manuscripts cannot be fitted into the supposed timeline of manuscript growth. Moreover, the odd balance in the Bijapur collection can be taken as an indicator that time alone cannot explain the increase in numbers. Instead, the profile of collections and qualitative markers on manuscripts have to be examined to back up the purported diachronic increase. Secondly, the survival rate of manuscripts from the early modern period poses a general problem to such lines of investigation. And since this survival rate is contingent on a variety of different factors, it is also impossible to calculate an error rate which would substantiate the existing data. At the same time, the highly uneven increase of manuscript reproduction from the fifteenth to the sixteenth compared with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as shown by the numbers of these collections, points to the fact that loss because of time cannot explain everything. Thirdly, even if a manuscript was copied in the seventeenth century this does not mean that it created any further cultural significances beyond the transcription process, i.e. that it circulated, was read and studied or used for a further transcription. Nevertheless, these numbers point to a significant transformation in the seventeenth century and can be backed up by further analysing the profile of the *Deccan corpus*, which shows various

⁸⁹⁴ See the discussion in the introduction to this dissertation. O. Khalidi provided an important overview of Arabic, Persian and Urdu manuscript collection in India in Khalidi 2002-2003.

⁸⁹⁵ These numbers are based on the catalogue of Islahi and Nadwi 2014 and 2015.

qualitative characteristics that accompanied this proposed transformation. The quantitative data suggests trends which can be substantiated with qualitative transformations that occurred in the field of text transmission, learned encounters and the spread of bookish sociabilities across South Asia.

At this point it makes sense to continue with the argument from chapter three of this dissertation concerning the transformation of the Royal Library of Bijapur into a cultural entrepôt, a place of manuscript preservation that became accessible for learned groups. This institutional transformation of the Royal Library into the Asar Mahal highlighted the role of seventeenth century Bijapur as a textual hub and cultural magnet for learned endeavours. Scholars moved to and fro, regionally and transregionally, but most importantly, these learned groups included figures beyond mobile courtly elites. Apart from Sayyid Zayn al-Muqaybil, other scholars and judges also frequented the court. This is borne out by evidence from manuscripts that were brought to the court of Muḥammad ‘Adil Shāh over the first half of the seventeenth century. For example, Qāḍī Khushḥāl contributed a considerable corpus of Arabic Islamicate texts to the growing library at Bijapur and several of them are grammar books.⁸⁹⁶ MS IO B 223 is Iṣfahānī’s *sharḥ* on the *Ṭawālī*, which, according to the paratextual profile, was initially bought by a certain ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Muḥammad in Ahmadabad in 992/1584 and through untraceable ways fell into the hands of Qāḍī Khushḥāl who presented the manuscript to the court of Muḥammad ‘Adil Shāh.⁸⁹⁷ There are several other texts which entered the Royal Library in the same way. One of his manuscripts contains a list of 24 books on the last folio which he had with him while he resided in Burhānpūr, a city and court in the North of the Deccan.⁸⁹⁸ Qāḍī Khushḥāl’s manuscript transfers draw a map of interconnected places of manuscript circulation in seventeenth century South Asia. More importantly, he was not alone in these endeavours but shared this practice with a variety of other professional scholars and ‘ulamā’.

While more itinerant professionals beyond the courtier approached the court in Bijapur, the proliferation of their manuscripts was sustained by scribes who copied Arabic texts in a wider array of places in the subcontinent over the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Several manuscripts preserved in Bijapur were reproduced in

⁸⁹⁶ Cf. for example MS IO Bijapur 8, 19, 23, 223, 337, British Library, London, which all belong to the discipline of Grammar. Cf. details provided in Loth 1877.

⁸⁹⁷ MS IO Bijapur 223, British Library, London, fol. 1r.

⁸⁹⁸ MS IO Bijapur 178, British Library, last folio. Cf. entry in Loth 1877.

new cultural centres across the subcontinent during this period. A copy of the glosses of Ḥasan Jalabī on the famous rhetoric commentary *al-Muṭawwal* by al-Taftāzānī was transcribed in 983/1575 in Sikrī.⁸⁹⁹ The copy was then brought to Bijapur where it was bought from the left property of Shaykh Alam Allāh al-ʿAydārūs and integrated into the library in 1023/1614.⁹⁰⁰ Furthermore, the scribe Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Sharīf finished a version of the *al-Muṭawwal* in 1003/1595 in Qannawj in modern day Uttar Pradesh.⁹⁰¹ Another set of glosses on the *al-Muṭawwal* by Abū l-Qāsim b. Abū Bakr Laythī al-Samarqandī was copied in a madrasa in Gujarat in 1009/1600, but, since the fly-leaves have been lost, the transmission to the court cannot be retraced with any detail.⁹⁰²

Cultural pursuits in Arabic philological inquiry drew scribes and itinerant scholars together and these learned communities found new scholarly destinations to approach. With the mid-seventeenth century transformation of the Royal Library into the Asar Mahal the Arabic manuscripts became more accessible and could now serve as a basis for further transcriptions of specific texts. Readers coming from outside used the Asar Mahal collections to study and to selectively inscribe textual sections into the margins of other manuscripts. The previously mentioned example of the transcription of MS IO B3 on the basis of B2 is one case in point. Furthermore, this enhanced studying and textual enactment activity is also evident from the general profile of the manuscripts' layout. F. Daub's recent study of a large corpus of prayer books has shown how changing textual layouts and formats on manuscript versions point to diverse reading enactments of the manuscripts.⁹⁰³ According to her, this also had implications for their wider significance and purpose in different social and cultural contexts. In the Bijapur collections, nine versions of the 59 philological texts constitute studying enactments rather than reading enactments which suggest a more interactive circulation among readers.⁹⁰⁴ The reading enactment is dominated by a dense compact *matn* textblock with only little space in the margins to comment and explicate certain sections. In contrast, the studying enactment, as previously mentioned, has only a few lines of the *matn* ('main treatise') and a dense inscription of interlinear and marginal comments reflecting the process of a learned engagement with the *matn*. As argued in

⁸⁹⁹ Cf. MS IO Bijapur 260, British Library, London, fol. 267r. Fatihpūr Sikrī was built as a new courtly capital under the Mughal emperor Akbar next to the village of Sikrī in around 1571-73 and next to a Sufi shrine complex of the Chistiyya *ṭarīqa* which was enlarged in this process. Cf. Asher 2018.

⁹⁰⁰ Cf. MS IO Bijapur 260, British Library, London, fol. 1r.

⁹⁰¹ Cf. MS IO Bijapur 253, British Library, London, fol. 254r.

⁹⁰² Cf. MS IO Bijapur 260, British Library, London, fol. 243v.

⁹⁰³ Cf. Daub 2016.

⁹⁰⁴ For the total number see the details in the introduction. This differentiation has been argued for in chapter 4.

chapter four of this dissertation, this studying enactment format is more conducive to a detailed engagement of a reader with the *matn* of a manuscript. The focus is on the centrality of the *matn*'s treatise, which is explicated and further elaborated on step by step through comments in the margins and interlinear sections.

Several manuscripts of 'definitive texts' of the philological disciplines grammar and rhetoric were formatted for such studying enactments. Among the studying enactments in the Asar Mahal, there are three versions of the *al-Kāfiya fī l-naḥw* by Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 646/1249).⁹⁰⁵ Also among the collections are a transcription of al-Sakkākī's (d. 626/1229)⁹⁰⁶ *Miftāḥ al-'Ulūm* and a copy of the *al-Irshād*, the important grammar commentary by Shihāb al-Dīn al-Dawlatābādī (d. 848/1445) on the *al-Kāfiya*.⁹⁰⁷ These texts were prepared in a way that allowed multiple readers to engage in the same reading procedure of each grammar and rhetoric book, guided by an elaborate commentary in the margins. It is important to add that both the *al-Kāfiya* and the *Miftāḥ* can be considered as textbooks of the period, for which an entire library of later commentaries, recensions and abridgements existed, which could be used to elaborate in the margins – a point that will be discussed further in the next section.⁹⁰⁸

At the same time as more manuscripts started to circulate across the subcontinent, existing versions were also better preserved in institutions such as the Asar Mahal. The preservationist profile of the Bijapur collection thereby emphasises the effect of the Asar Mahal Library in making an established corpus of Arabic texts available for new instances of transmission. Since the copying of manuscripts was a time-consuming and costly business, such manuscripts were well-preserved by the librarians of the Bijapur and other collections. Review procedures, as outlined by J. Seyller for the imperial library of the Mughals and K. Overton for the collections of Ibrāhīm 'Adil Shāh II in the Royal Library of Bijapur, attest to these efforts of securing the Arabic intellectual and cultural heritage in courtly contexts.⁹⁰⁹ Such copies could naturally provide the basis for future transcriptions of the texts. Among the philological manuscripts six manuscripts can be dated to the sixteenth century, but also six manuscripts were copied in the fifteenth century. Moreover, Loth considered at least six other manuscripts with different degrees of evidence and certainty as fourteenth century copies, among them the combined rhetoric treatises *Talkhiṣ al-*

⁹⁰⁵ Cf. MS IO Bijapur 14, 15 and 30c, British Library, London. Cf. Fleisch 2018.

⁹⁰⁶ Cf. Heinrichs 2018.

⁹⁰⁷ Cf. MS IO Bijapur 266 and 30b, British Library, London. Cf. Nizami 2018.

⁹⁰⁸ For the work *Miftāḥ al-'ulūm* cf. Smyth 1993: 115.

⁹⁰⁹ Overton 2011 and 2016; Seyller 1997.

Miftāḥ and *al-Īḍāḥ* by al-Qazwīnī, a fragment of the grammar book *al-Lubāb* (finished in 799/1396 according to the colophon) by Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Isfarā'inī al-Fāḍil and a version of the dictionary *al-Sāmī fī al-Asāmī* by Abū l-Faḍl Aḥmad al-Maydānī (copied in 762/1360).⁹¹⁰

By the seventeenth century, a web of libraries had formed with an active pursuit in manuscript collecting across the Deccan and the wider subcontinent that extended beyond courtly formations. This spread of bookish institutions provided a crucial foundation for further text transmissions and manuscript reproductions. Court libraries such as the Asar Mahal, the royal book collections of Golkonda,⁹¹¹ but also the imperial library of the Mughals constituted learned sociabilities, which to different degrees were opened up to learned groups beyond the courtly elites.⁹¹² The seventeenth century also saw the continuing existence of royal domains, as well as the shrine library of the Sufi saint Gisu-Daraz in Gulbarga and the Qādiriyya library in Bijapur, and in the early eighteenth century the foundation of the Pīr Muhammad Shāh Dargāh Library in Ahmedabad by a Sufi from Bijapur.⁹¹³ These and other institutions were able to contribute a fair share of texts in Arabic philology and other Islamicate disciplines and traditions to the subcontinental flow of texts. Furthermore, there are also seventeenth century cases of scholarly book collections, such as the previously mentioned ones by 'Alam Allāh al-'Aydarūs, Zayn b. 'Abd Allāh al-Muqaybil and Qāḍī Khushḥāl, which exemplify the velocity of Arabic philological texts.⁹¹⁴ Moreover, the increasing establishment of scholarly libraries during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, funded by scholars such as the Khuda Bakhsh collections in Patna, indicates a dynamic and dense market of Arabic manuscript transmission with the easy opportunity to re-appropriate and re-distribute texts over the early modern period.⁹¹⁵

Consequently, a continued circulation of fifteenth and sixteenth century copies during the seventeenth century suggests an accumulative growth of manuscript

⁹¹⁰ Cf. respectively MS IO Bijapur 248; MS IO Bijapur 32; MS IO Bijapur 36. Cf. the catalogue entries in Loth 1887.

⁹¹¹ I thank Hunter Bandy for pointing this library out to me during our research trips to Hyderabad in 2015. For references to the royal library of Golkonda cf. Overton 2016.

⁹¹² While the argument of a greater accessibility during the second half of the seventeenth century has been made for the Asar Mahal, further research is necessary to study the library of the Quṭb Shāhīs in Golkonda and the circulation of the Imperial Library in Delhi.

⁹¹³ This is based on a visit to the library in the shrine complex of Gisu-Daraz during a research trip across the Deccan in 2015 and a conversation with the local librarians. There, I only saw some printed books. For the Qādiriyya Library see for example MS IO Bijapur 3, British Library, London. Khalidi 2002-2003: 27. For the Pir Muhammad Shah Dargah Library cf. the catalogues mentioned in the introduction and the short overview in Khalidi 2002-2003: 41-42.

⁹¹⁴ Cf. chapter 3 and this chapter respectively.

⁹¹⁵ Cf. the contributions in Gupta 1991 and the overview of different institutions in Khalidi 2002-2003.

circulation, even if many manuscripts from the earlier periods were lost or destroyed over time. While I am arguing for an increase in manuscript circulation due to an increased transmission of texts, it is important to point out that such an increase built on continued but not necessarily regionally balanced and regular manuscript reproduction and preservation.

‘Definitive Texts’ in Arabic Grammar, Rhetoric and Lexicography

An intensified circulation of Arabic manuscripts led to a greater variety of philological texts available to Arabised communities. Cultural tastes developed among Arabised communities in the Deccan based on textual availability, scholarly excellence, personal familiarity or teachers’ guidance. Such tastes are an additional indicator for the consolidation of Arabic philological practices. Developing tastes favoured particular texts over others and influenced the development of curricula and library collections that differed from other regions in the subcontinent and beyond.⁹¹⁶ Here I am building my argument on manuscript collections from the Deccan which evolved at different times from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries and whose histories remain largely unstudied. This broad survey of Arabic philological manuscripts does not claim that the particularities of the corpora are specific to the Deccan, but rather that the profile of the *Deccan corpus* and its constituents showcases the entanglement of this region with the circulations across the wider subcontinent and Western Indian Ocean.

Taking this a step further, I argue that transregional circulations generated ‘definitive texts’ across the wider field of Arabic philology over the early modern period, which were then preserved in different layers in the Deccan. This is mirrored in manuscript numbers and epitextual references. More importantly, for the current purpose of historicising cultural tastes of Arabised communities across a transregional terrain, it is reflected in the fact that a large array of commentaries in circulation also refers back to that text. Hereby I mean ‘commentarial genealogies’,⁹¹⁷ i.e. obvious hypertextual links between works in the form of diachronically created layers of commentaries which, by the seventeenth century, circulated synchronically among learned communities. In many cases it was the commentarial elaboration, which incorporated the initial treatise that was commented on, that often became even more

⁹¹⁶ See the curricula and tables in Robinson 1997.

⁹¹⁷ Kooria refers to such progressive textual relationships as ‘textual genealogies’. Cf. Kooriadathodi 2016.

prominent in these circulations than the initial treatise, for example the *al-Muṭawwal* by al-Taftāzānī on the *Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ* by al-Qazwīnī.

Old, recent and current scholarship has already established the centrality of these works either in terms of their seminal contribution to the intellectual development of the respective field or with regard to the scholarly recognition the particular work received in terms of continued references by scholars throughout the ages.⁹¹⁸ However, what I am proposing here is to look at the distribution of these works across different localities and regions in terms of their actual circulation and transtextual referentiality, including the larger corpus of the commentaries that circulated with them. Although it is not possible to assess the different degrees of circulation and enactment of individual versions, and it is often difficult to pin down their exact routes of circulation, a survey of manuscript collections can shed light on historical trends. Such an approach to the circulation of texts ultimately makes it possible to historicise textual corpora as well as their geographical distribution and thereby establishes the relative predominance and fame of certain texts in comparison to others over time.⁹¹⁹ This does not mean that the library of Arabic manuscripts in South Asia is devoid of exceptional stories of textual transmission which do not conform to the discursive field of a definitive text. There are a variety of texts and these individual cases were probably just as meaningful for the scholarly purposes of individuals. Still, other works had a higher velocity and became known across sociabilities, thereby achieving a significant cultural fluency among Arabised communities in the subcontinent. On the basis of the *Deccan corpus* in the fields of grammar, rhetoric and lexicography, these works are the *al-Kāfiya* by Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 646/1249), the *al-Muṭawwal* by al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390) and the *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* by al-Fīrūzābādī (d. 818/1415).⁹²⁰ Numbers given in brackets in the following refer to the number of manuscripts of the early modern period which are preserved today in the Bijapur, Salar Jung and Asafiya collections, respectively.⁹²¹

A central grammatical text in early modern South Asia was the thirteenth century work on syntax called *al-Kāfiya fī l-naḥw* (3;5;2)⁹²² by Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 646/1249),

⁹¹⁸ Cf. for example Bauer 2005 and 2007, Simon 1993, Smyth 1993, Strotmann 2016: 66–79.

⁹¹⁹ A recent example for such a historicising approach is Bevilacqua 2018.

⁹²⁰ This assessment is based on 15th-17th century (9th to 11th hijrī) Arabic manuscripts in the *Deccan corpus*.

⁹²¹ General information about the following authors and works are partly based on Loth's 1877 extensive commentaries in his catalogue.

⁹²² See MS IO B 14, 15, 30c, British Library; MS Naḥw 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, Salar Jung; MS Naḥw 14, 46, APOML.

which established the separation between syntax and morphology (*ṣarf*), the latter being treated in his *al-Shāfiya*.⁹²³ Three minor and one major line of commentarial genealogies circulated in the Deccan: the minor ones are based on the *Sharḥ Raḍī al-Dīn* (2;3;1)⁹²⁴ by Raḍī al-Dīn al-Astarābādī (d. 688/1289) completed in 683/1284,⁹²⁵ the *al-Muṭawwasat al-wāfiya* (1;5;2)⁹²⁶ by Rukn al-Dīn al-Astārābādī (d. 715/1315-6 or 718/1318-9)⁹²⁷ (further commented on by al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) in his *al-Hāshiya al-sharīfiya* (0;1;0)⁹²⁸), as well as his *al-Wajīz* (0;2;0)⁹²⁹. The major line of commentarial elaboration was introduced via fifteenth century Persia. The polymath Mawlānā Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥman Jāmī (d. 898/1492) composed his famous commentary *al-Fawā’id al-Ḍiyā’iyya* (0;6;3)⁹³⁰ in Herat, a commentary which became prominent due to its own numerous commentarial elaborations.⁹³¹ The *Hāshiya* (‘glosses’) (2;3;2)⁹³² by ‘Abd al-Ghafūr al-Lārī (d. 912/1506), the *Hāshiya* (4;0;2)⁹³³ by ‘Iṣām al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabshāh (d. 943/1536) and the *Hāshiya* (0;2;1)⁹³⁴ by Wajīh al-Dīn al-Gujaratī (d. 998/1589) stand out among the commentaries. The commentary of al-Lārī was later famously elaborated on by the Shāh Jahān’s courtier and scholar ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Shams al-Dīn al-Siyālkūtī (d. 1067/1657) in his *Hāshiya ‘alā ‘Abd al-Ghafūr* (1;1;3)⁹³⁵ and the *Takmila* (0;1;1)^{936, 937}.

The study of Arabic rhetoric in the Deccan centred around a particular text and its commentarial elaborations: al-Taftāzānī’s (d. 793/1390) *Sharḥ al-Talkhīṣ al-muṭawwal* (4;8;7)⁹³⁸ and to some extent also his shorter commentary *Mukhtaṣar al-ma‘ānī* (4;4;2)⁹³⁹. Likewise, his commentaries became the focus of several glosses (*ḥawāshī*, sg. *ḥāshiya*).

⁹²³ For the numbers of the Bijapur collection and the Salar Jung Museum Library collection cf. Loth 1877 and Ashraf 1993 respectively. The numbers for the Asafiya Collection are based on a survey I conducted at the APOML. The manuscripts listed here pertain to those which are not dateable to the 18th and 19th centuries and which due to material aspects can be considered as part of the early modern corpus as outlined in the introduction. For biographical background cf. Fleisch 2018.

⁹²⁴ Cf. MS IO B 17, 18, British Library; MS Naḥw 56, 57, 59 Salar Jung; MS Naḥw 6, APOML.

⁹²⁵ Cf. Weipert 2018.

⁹²⁶ Cf. MS IO B 19, British Library; MS Naḥw 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, Salar Jung; MS Naḥw 12, 47, APOML.

⁹²⁷ Cf. Mango 2018.

⁹²⁸ Cf. MS Naḥw 19, Salar Jung.

⁹²⁹ Cf. MS Naḥw 114 and 115, Salar Jung.

⁹³⁰ Cf. MS Naḥw 69, 70, 71, 73, 77, 79 Salar Jung; MS Naḥw 164, 375, 378, APOML.

⁹³¹ Cf. Ahmad 1968.

⁹³² Cf. MS IO B 27 and 28, British Library; MS Naḥw 24, 25, 26, Salar Jung, MS Naḥw 18, 179, APOML.

⁹³³ Cf. MS IO B 20, 21, 23, 24, British Library; MS Naḥw 16 and 173, APOML.

⁹³⁴ Cf. MS Naḥw 27 and 28, Salar Jung; MS Naḥw 314, APOML.

⁹³⁵ Cf. MS IO B 22, British Library; MS Naḥw 21 Salar Jung; MS Naḥw 19, 106, 334, APOML.

⁹³⁶ Cf. MS Naḥw 23/2, Salar Jung; MS Naḥw 156, APOML.

⁹³⁷ Cf. Ed. 2018.

⁹³⁸ Cf. MS IO B 249, 251, 252, 253, British Library; MS B&M 43, 44, 45, 47, 50, 51, 53, 54, Salar Jung; MS Balāghat 9, 190, 194, 199, 362, 399, 409, APOML.

⁹³⁹ Cf. MS IO B 250, 262, 263, 264, British Library; MS B&M 36, 37, 40, 41, Salar Jung; MS Balāghat 78, 418, APOML.

The *al-Muṭawwal* was commented on in the *Ḥāshiya* by Abīwardī (0;1;1)⁹⁴⁰, the *Sharḥ* by ‘Iṣām al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabshāh (1;0;1)⁹⁴¹ and the *Ḥāshiya* by Ḥasan Jalabī (4;2;0)⁹⁴², as well as the *Ḥāshiya* by al-Jurjānī (0;4;0)⁹⁴³. The *Mukhtaṣar al-ma‘ānī* circulated in a further commentarial elaboration of Najm al-Dīn al-Yazdī’s *Ḥāshiya* (0;4;0)⁹⁴⁴ and also the *Ḥāshiya* by Shaykh al-Islām (0;0;2)⁹⁴⁵.

Finally, the field of lexicography was mainly constituted by the famous dictionary *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* (0;6;8)⁹⁴⁶ by al-Fīrūzābādī.⁹⁴⁷ The *Ṣiḥāḥ* (0;0;1)⁹⁴⁸ by al-Jawharī circulated as well, but mostly in the reworked and abbreviated form of Jamāl Qarshī’s *Ṣurāḥ* (0;0;3)⁹⁴⁹, which was a Persian commentary of the work. Al-Fīrūzābādī’s work became particularly prominent after its composition in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but mostly survives in expensive and elaborate manuscript copies, as the manuscript versions from Hyderabad show.⁹⁵⁰ To an adverse effect, this might have also been the reason why no copy survived in the Asar Mahal collections. Such valuable learned texts and manuscript copies quickly fell victim to people who had access when the library’s collections were on the move or exposed under the auspices of the rulers of Satara or the British.⁹⁵¹ As a two-volume dictionary it was not particularly handy or easy to move around. Presumably, such versions assumed more of a stationary position at a court, in a scholarly library or a madrasa where they could be accessed for studying sessions and individual inquiries.

Although the corpus of manuscript versions presented here is fragmentary and sketchy, the distribution of commentarial genealogies across the different libraries can elucidate deeper layers of transregional circulation. There were crucial nuances in the directions of these flows, which were linked up with larger movements of people and political networks. While the ‘definitive texts’ *al-Kāfiya* and *al-Muṭawwal* were distributed in a rather balanced manner across the different library collections, the

⁹⁴⁰ Cf. MS B&M 55, Salar Jung; MS Balāghat 59, APOML.

⁹⁴¹ Cf. MS IO B 261, British Library; MS Balāghat 124, APOML.

⁹⁴² Cf. MS IO B 255, 256, 257, 260, British Library; MS B&M 15 and 16, Salar Jung.

⁹⁴³ MS B&M 18, 19, 20, 21, Salar Jung.

⁹⁴⁴ MS B&M 11, 12, 13, 14, Salar Jung.

⁹⁴⁵ MS Balāghat 191, 366, APOML.

⁹⁴⁶ MS Lughat 9&10, 18&19, 13, 15, 11, 14, Salar Jung; MS Lughat 59.1&59.2, 183, 229, 231, 232, 485.1&485.2, 633, 634, APOML.

⁹⁴⁷ Cf. Strotmann 2016.

⁹⁴⁸ MS Lughat 8, APOML.

⁹⁴⁹ MS Lughat 261, 233, 275, APOML.

⁹⁵⁰ Cf. for example the version of the *Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, Lughat 11, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, which comes with an elaborate frontispiece, colourful decorations, neatly written and with extensive quotes of poetry on the first set of folios. See also Lughat 15, Salar Jung Museum Library, Hyderabad and the versions Lughat 231 and 232, APOML, Hyderabad, for similarly embellished copies.

⁹⁵¹ Cf. Loth 1877: v-vi, Overton 2011: 52-53 and Quraishi 1991: 171-172.

commentarial elaborations seem to draw boundaries of circulation that reflect on the wider transregional networks that cut across the Deccan.⁹⁵² In general, Bijapur on the western half more entangled with the Red Sea region, a point which was made in chapter three of this dissertation.⁹⁵³ For example, the Asar Mahal collection holds more commentaries that originated in the Eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea regions, such as al-Jalabī's *Hāshiya* on the *al-Muṭawwal* (4;2;0) and 'Iṣām al-Dīn b. 'Arabshāh's *Hāshiya* on the *al-Kāfiya* (4;0;2).⁹⁵⁴ Golkonda and later Hyderabad had forged much stronger ties with the Persianate worlds of Iran, Central Asia and Northern India.⁹⁵⁵ Corresponding to these inclinations, the Central Asian *hāshiya* on the *al-Muṭawwal* by al-Jurjānī (0;4;0) and the *hawāshī* on the *al-Fawā'id al-Ḍiyā'iya* by 'Abd al-Ghafūr al-Lārī (2;3;2) and in turn the gloss on al-Lārī's work by al-Siyālkūtī (1;1;3) are more prominent in the Asafiya collections and the Salar Jung.

Another note on the numbers is necessary at this point. Compared to the Rampur Raza collections of Arabic manuscripts – an important collection of manuscripts from North India – these numbers seem to be very low. The Rampur Raza Library contains all three definitive texts and their commentarial layers as well.⁹⁵⁶ Moving across to Cairo in the Red Sea region further West the numbers from the *Deccan corpus* pale in comparison with the *Cairo corpus*, holding, for example, 23 versions of the *al-Fawā'id al-Ḍiyā'iya*, 6 of which are conclusively dateable to the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries; and 66 versions of the *al-Muṭawwal* across the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, 19 of which date to the early modern period.⁹⁵⁷ While this might not be too surprising given the different status of Cairo as a transregional cultural centre and continued magnet for Arabic scholarship, it still helps to grasp the general dimension of these Arabic manuscript circulations in the field of Arabic philology. The circulation of Arabic philological manuscripts in the Deccan was entangled with other regions of the subcontinent, but the preservation was much more low-key than in North India and the numbers even lower than in the Red Sea region. At least this is what surviving manuscripts would suggest. However, lower numbers do not mean that Arabic philological pursuits in the subcontinent were less significant. The fact that the

⁹⁵² I thank Roy Fischel for providing me with details of his current research which develops the notion of different political and cultural spheres of influence across the early modern Deccan.

⁹⁵³ This has also been pointed out in Green 2012: 12. For the following numbers cf. pp. 208-210 of this dissertation.

⁹⁵⁴ On the background of both authors cf. the remarks in Loth 1877.

⁹⁵⁵ Cf. Subrahmanyam 1992 and 1988 regarding the links between the port of Masulipatnam with Hormuz and the Persian merchants who monopolised the trade.

⁹⁵⁶ Cf. Islahi and Nadwi 2014 and 2015.

⁹⁵⁷ Cf. table 7 a and b in the Appendix.

same texts were being copied repeatedly over the early modern period indicates that a cultural taste and curriculum developed that underlines the significance of philological pursuits. As the following sections will demonstrate, the cultural modes of transmission and social dimensions of circulation of ‘definitive texts’ underline the profound degree to which Arabic philology and its fields of inquiry emerged as a crucial learned discipline across South Asia by the seventeenth century.

Manuscripts as ‘commonplace notebooks’ – Textual fragmentation

An increase in text-based circulations can also be traced in qualitative transformations of manuscripts in circulation, in particular in a growing proliferation of textual fragments in paratextual thresholds. Textual fragmentation and the proliferation of scrapbooks further contributed to the emergence of ‘definitive texts’ in Arabic philology. Many of the manuscripts in the Asafiya Library – and thereby the majority of the manuscripts registered for the seventeenth century – come with a thick paratextual profile, especially on the fly-leaves at both ends of the manuscript and often also the first set of folios, which are covered in transtextual references. This textual fragmentation represents a transformation in the engagement with texts and manuscripts. As an additional textual layer on manuscripts such textual fragments demonstrate the intricacies of text-based practices in Arabic philology and ultimately contributed to the proliferation of Arabic Islamicate texts during the seventeenth century. And such a proliferation of textual transmission went hand in hand with less rigid frameworks of transmission and thereby also with a shift in the understanding of authoritativeness in learned encounters among their participants.

For the current purpose, a working definition is necessary to analyse this textual fragmentation and the cultural practices that generated them. In a recent study of Ottoman multiple-text-manuscripts (MTMs) J. Schmidt has directed attention to what he considers a subcategory of MTMs including ‘notebooks, commonplace books, scrapbooks and albums compiled for personal use by an owner or, sometimes, a consecutive series of owners.’⁹⁵⁸ Building on this characterisation I want to tailor my definition of the seventeenth century paratextual phenomenon on the fly-leaves to a combination of the generally understood terms *notebook* (‘a book for notes or memoranda’) and *commonplace book* (‘a book of memorabilia’).⁹⁵⁹ *Notebooks* were a

⁹⁵⁸ Schmidt 2016: 212.

⁹⁵⁹ For the general characterisation of notebooks see Bauden 2003 and 2006 and for the definitions of both see Merriam-Webster.

prominent phenomenon across learned forums from the Eastern Mediterranean to South Asia.⁹⁶⁰ Likewise, *commonplace books* were widespread among scholars who compiled digests of important texts for themselves.⁹⁶¹ Scholarship has considered them crucial for the perpetuation of madrasa cultures and learned traditions of specific schools of thought.⁹⁶² Combining the aspects of both, I want to coin the term *commonplace notebooks*. This term will refer to manuscripts which were initially intended to contain a specific text or set of texts, such as a rhetoric treatise or a grammar work – in the form of a monograph and not an MTM – and were used in the course of their circulation to inscribe textual segments on the fly-leaves which were of significance to the respective texts and its reader.⁹⁶³

In general, these textual fragments consist of a variety of transtextual elements, snippets of texts, verses of poems and so on. Here I am not situating them in the same process as the *marginalisation* of the previous chapter, i.e. the transition of a commentary from a *sharḥ* to an explicatory comment (*ḥāshiya*) that is applied in the margins of the *matn* it is related to. Instead, these snippets of texts constitute a wider transtextual relationship with the main text of the respective manuscript without being brought directly into an exact visual relationship with the specific segment of the *matn*. The inscribed textual elements belong to the wider transtextuality and discursive field in which the respective text is anchored.

A case study from the field of *‘ilm al-balāgha* (rhetoric) can exemplify the dimensions of this process of textual fragmentation. Here, a reader created a complex personal commonplace notebook around a rhetoric treatise elaborating on the larger field of Arabic philology. The manuscript Balāghat 9 in the Asafiya Library, Hyderabad,⁹⁶⁴ contains a copy of Sa‘d al-Dīn Mas‘ūd b. ‘Umar al-Taftāzānī’s (d. 793/1390) famous commentary entitled *Sharḥ al-talkhīṣ al-muṭawwal*, usually abbreviated simply to *al-Muṭawwal*.⁹⁶⁵ Six folios of fly-leaves at the beginning of the manuscript and seven folios at the end are filled with extracts from a variety of other treatises and

⁹⁶⁰ Bauden 2003 and 2006.

⁹⁶¹ Cf. Bahl, forthcoming, and the manuscripts of Zayn al-Dīn al-Muqaybil in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

⁹⁶² Cf. Endress 2016.

⁹⁶³ From an additional perspective they can also be considered as a composite manuscript due to the several stages of supplementing textual elements. I thank Konrad Hirschler for pointing this out to me.

⁹⁶⁴ For this and the following cf. al-Taftāzānī, *al-Muṭawwal*, MS Balāghat 9, APOML, Hyderabad.

⁹⁶⁵ The commentary *al-muṭawwal* is the expansive version of the commentary of al-Qazvīnī’s *Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ*, itself a commentary on al-Sakkākī’s seminal work called *Miftāḥ al-‘ulūm*. Cf. the elaborations in Loth 1877.

commentaries.⁹⁶⁶ These works can be situated across various disciplines from grammar, via rhetoric to lexicography. The reader and owner of this manuscript – and judging from the handwriting the text served the learned endeavours of only one person after its transcription in the seventeenth century – created a diverse combination of intertextualities, which reflect on his deep and substantial engagement with the field of Arabic philology.

By placing these commonplace notes into the larger textual anatomy of the manuscript several interrelated levels of inquiry become clear. Firstly, there is a *paratextual* engagement with al-Taftāzānī's *al-Muṭawwal* regarding the overall presentation of the work, i.e. the presentation of title, author and its initial transmission through the colophon and transmission notes at the end of the *matn*. Secondly, there is the reader's more immediate engagement with the conceptual and lexicographical level of the main text, or *matn*, and this becomes apparent with the *hypertextuality* of glosses and marginalia that are applied throughout the manuscript. Thirdly, al-Taftāzānī's *al-Muṭawwal* is placed in a complex *architextual* relationship with works from the field of Arabic philology and other fields, and, importantly for the current purpose, this is traceable by looking at the reader's selection of extracts that fill the fly-leaves of the manuscript.⁹⁶⁷ Technically, this involves an elaboration of the paratextual profile, a material and visual transformation which will be dealt with at a later stage. However, for now it is important to note that this engagement shows how the reader made sense of the text by placing it in a wider field or genre and applying his personal selection of texts.

The first *paratextual* elaboration of the manuscript gives the reader and owner an opportunity to shape the work *al-Muṭawwal* for his own purpose and the interplay of various paratextual elements suggests that the reader modulated this manuscript as a highly elaborate studying device. On folio 7r. the reader inscribed the title and the author as *Mawlā al-'Allāma Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī* complemented by a long formula of praise and supplications to God for his well-being. Presumably the same reader then added further information about al-Taftāzānī below the title, which is sign-posted with a red title as *tarjama al-shāriḥ li-Mullāzāde raḥimahuma Allāh ta'āla* ('biographical note of the commentator by Mullāzāde, may God have mercy upon both of them').⁹⁶⁸ The title

⁹⁶⁶ Why there were several blank pages at the beginning and the end is not clear. A perfunctory comparison of the paper quality of the fly-leaves and the other sheets of paper in the manuscript suggests that the folios were all put together at the same time.

⁹⁶⁷ For the term *architextuality* cf. Genette 1982 and 1993: 13-14.

⁹⁶⁸ Al-Taftāzānī, *al-Muṭawwal*, MS Balāghat 9, APOML, Hyderabad, fol. 7r.

Mullāzāde possibly refers to the scholar who was also known as al-Khiṭāī (d. 900/1495) and who was another commentator in the field of rhetoric.⁹⁶⁹ Significantly, this biographical entry is primarily concerned with al-Taftāzānī's compositional activities. It lists titles of his scholarly contributions with their respective dates of completion. Among his works are not only the commentaries in rhetoric, but also his writings on *fiqh* and *tafsīr*.⁹⁷⁰ The biographical note includes specimen of al-Taftāzānī's poetry, which are again part of Mullāzāde's *tarjama* and are related through a series of transmitters that connected Mullāzāde with al-Taftāzānī. The *tarjama* finishes with the complete list of al-Taftāzānī's *alqāb*, which the reader seems to have forgotten at the beginning of the *tarjama*. All in all, these arrangements suggest an individuated manuscript serving the learned pursuits of its reader and owner.

The other part of the *paratextual* profile is located around the scribal colophon of the manuscript. The scribal colophon follows directly after the standard compositional colophon of al-Taftāzānī – he finished this composition in 748/1347 in Jurjānīya in Khwarizm – and mentions the scribe ‘Abd al-Raḥman b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaymī [...], who completed this copy in 1027/1618.⁹⁷¹ A transmission note which stands out because it was written in red ink states that this book was transmitted to the Mawlānā and his brothers in a written form (*qirā’atan*). However, another name that is mentioned cannot be identified. An additional transmission note states the memorization in written form (*qirā’atan*) and by listening (*samā’an*). The prosopographical archive that exists so far cannot provide any additional information on the scribe and owner of the manuscript and a much broader prosopographical survey of early modern manuscript copies would be necessary to even contemplate a further biographical contextualisation. Nevertheless, the analysis of this reader's textual operations enables an assessment of cultural practices and has the potential to expand the horizon of historical inquiry beyond the socially exclusive narrative worlds of court chronicles and sectarian communities, a point which will be elaborated at a later point in this chapter. Recent scholarship by M. Alam has shown how the pursuit of philological practices, more specifically the collecting of manuscript copies of Persian literary texts, their collation and redaction, and thus a form of ‘editing’ of a manuscript copy, was an important pastime of the Mughal scholarly elites.⁹⁷² The

⁹⁶⁹ Cf. El-Rouayheb 2015: 106 and MS Balāghat 367, APOML, Hyderabad.

⁹⁷⁰ Al-Taftāzānī, *al-Muṭawwal*, MS Balāghat 9, APOML, Hyderabad, fol. 7r.

⁹⁷¹ For this and the following details see *Ibid*, fol. 140v.

⁹⁷² Cf. Alam 2015.

current example thus exemplifies that such practices extended beyond the cosmopolitanism of Persian of the Mughal Empire and included a larger learned Arabised community.

The second transtextual operation conducted by Muḥammad al-Ḥaymī, a marginal note in the earlier sections of the work, can offer valuable clues about the provenance of the reader. Folio 8r, which is close to the beginning of the *matn* of the *al-Muṭawwal*, comes with a marginal note in the lower left-hand corner. Here, the city of Herat and the seat of the ruler to whom al-Taftāzānī had dedicated his commentary is defined and located in the region of Khurāsān according to a reference found in the *Qāmūs*.⁹⁷³ His own geographical explanation of the place Herat in a book that he copied and modulated for himself would suggest that he was not familiar with this place at the time of reading the *al-Muṭawwal*. Although this does not pinpoint his exact place of learned activity, with such a reference to Herat one can presume that he did not operate in Western or Central Asia, but rather outside of these northern Persianate spheres of circulation and possibly closer to the place where the manuscript was preserved – the South Asian subcontinent. Additionally, the fact that al-Ḥaymī did not specify the place of transmission in the colophon might be due to neglect or could be precisely because the book was a personal item which did not need to relate to a place but rather to the people involved in its transmission. This further fits into the overall profile of the manuscript as a personalised and individuated copy for the study of the *al-Muṭawwal*. This impression is further strengthened with the abundance of hypertextual elements in the margins in the same script as the other textual elements. They record his close and substantial engagement with different levels of the *matn*, including explanations of terms and phrases as well as elaborations through quotations from other commentaries.⁹⁷⁴

The third aspect of the manuscript's transtextuality – the architextuality – provides a view on al-Ḥaymī's complex engagement with the wider field of Islamicate traditions that relate to the *al-Muṭawwal*. In total, around 13 folios are covered in extracts of works from the disciplines of *ʿilm al-naḥw*, *ʿilm al-balāgha*, *ʿilm al-luġha* and *taʾrīkh*.⁹⁷⁵ A thorough investigation of these choices would merit a study on its own that focuses on such intellectual exercises itself, but this is not possible within the scope of

⁹⁷³ MS Balāghat 9, APOML, fol. 8r. This refers to the famous Arabic dictionary *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* by al-Firūzābādī (d. 816/1414).

⁹⁷⁴ For this point see the first set of folios which contain the *muqaddima* of the work.

⁹⁷⁵ For this and the following cf. *ibid.* the first 7 and the last seven folios.

this thesis. However, a few closer observations shed light on the frameworks of transmission for inscribing these abstracts. In terms of form, these extracts are mostly cited by giving the title of the respective work or by introducing the section with the name of an author and the phrase ‘he said’ (*qāla*) and are therefore text-based. Yet, there are generally no transmission notes, *ijāzāt* or other reading certificates attached to the extracts. It is important to note that, although these extracts appear on the otherwise blank fly-leaves of the manuscript, they are nonetheless shaped as ‘marginal notes’, meaning in a rather elongated textual form that allowed the scribe to place several extracts next to each other, running down from the upper to the lower parts of the folio. What is more, there is no discernible order to how these extracts were copied onto the fly-leaves. This seemingly random structuring of the extracts points to a slow accumulative process rather than an efficient and quick execution, which in turn indicates a learned selective procedure.

Related to this learned engagement suggested by form is the variety of content. The first set of folios brings together quotes from the *qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, and from works by al-Dhahabī, al-Khwarizmī and Yāqūt al-Naḥwī, ‘the grammarian’. Other extracts are introduced with more impersonal formulae, such as ‘know that the sciences of *adab* [...]’ (*a‘lamu anna l-‘ulūma l-adabīya* [...]) or ‘several knowledgeable people mentioned [...]’ (*dhakara ba‘ḍa l-‘arifīn* [...]). On the last folios, extracts from the work *al-Nawādir* by the famous grammarian Abū Zayd Sa‘īd b. Aws b. Thābit al-Anṣārī (d. 215/830) of the school of Basra are quoted next to his peer and lexicographer Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Durayd al-Azdī (d. 321/933).⁹⁷⁶ Ibn Khallikān’s famous biographical dictionary provided a helping hand in elucidating dates, facts and people. In sum, these fly-leaves encompass a diverse compilation of extracts taken from works which relate to the *al-Muṭawwal* and are presented in the form of a paratextual element that establishes an architextual relationship. These extracts are not part of the established commentarial genealogies of al-Taftāzānī’s work but elaborate on the wider field of Arabic philology and thereby exemplify the complex learned operations and cultural efforts of a reader in accessing and preparing Arabic philological knowledge.

Modulating the paratextual profiles to turn manuscripts into commonplace notebooks was a wider phenomenon.⁹⁷⁷ As a survey of grammar and rhetoric

⁹⁷⁶ Cf. Hämeen-Anttila 2018.

⁹⁷⁷ While I am making this argument on the basis of the Deccani collections, there are cases from the Cairo collections which register related practices. A version of the *Mutawwal* (copied 872/1468) from the Dār al-Kutub collection in Cairo exhibits similar forms of textual fragmentation on the fly-leaves,

manuscripts of the *Deccan corpus* suggests, fly-leaves of manuscripts were increasingly turned into sites of fragmented commentarial compilation. Among the grammar books are several manuscripts which indicate an intensified engagement of a reader with the main text of the manuscript through the inscription of further commentarial extracts on folios before and after the *matn*. Manuscripts from the Asafiya Library show that this seems to have been a widespread practice in this field. Naḥw 46 was copied in 1067/1657 and transmitted (*samāʿ*) twice in a scholarly context, once in 1074/1664 and again in 1075/1665 in a mosque in Ṣanaʿā (sic!) in Yemen.⁹⁷⁸ This fits into the strong connections between the Red Sea region and South Asia and especially the Yemeni-Deccani connection has been stressed as a crucial network for ḥaḍramī scholars over the course of this dissertation. Title-pages and final folios of this manuscript, Naḥw 46, are filled with textual extracts from related works, exhibiting a practice that goes beyond creating hypertextual relationships between the *matn* and a commentary in the margins. The manuscripts Naḥw 65, 70, 125 and 164 represent similar cases of textually enlarged versions. Here again, readers and scribes filled the previously blank fly-leaves and additional folios at the beginning and the end with supplementary comments, poetry and other notes that they considered constitutive of the social and cultural function of the respective manuscript version. Balāghat 63, 64, 78 and 156 are particularly pertinent cases for the field of Arabic rhetoric and showcase that this practice was widespread in philological inquiry. For example, readers filled the folios at the beginning and the end of the manuscript Balāghat 64 with verses, snippets from different works and other notes.⁹⁷⁹

The creation of commonplace notebooks which could function as reference works are also traceable in other ways. In addition to the collection of commentaries on empty folios owners sometimes also substantially manipulated the material aspects of the manuscript. They attached smaller sheets of paper at the beginning and within the manuscripts to supplement commentarial elaborations – for example folios 2r-v and 9r-v of a version of the *Kitāb al-muwashshaḥ*, a commentary on Ibn al-Ḥājjib’s *al-Kāfiya*.⁹⁸⁰ In this example the added sheets are smaller than the folios of the *matn* and

which contain notes, comments, verses of poetry and formulae of praise. Cf. MS Balāghat 60, Dār al-Kutub, Cairo.

⁹⁷⁸ Cf. MS Naḥw 46, APOML, Hyderabad, first and last folios.

⁹⁷⁹ Cf. MS Balāghat 64, APOML, Hyderabad, title-page and last set of folios.

⁹⁸⁰ For this and the following cf. MS *Kitāb al-Muwashshaḥ ‘alā l-Kāfiya Ibn al-Ḥājjib*, Naḥw 125, APOML, Hyderabad. This manuscript was copied in 1066/1656 according to the colophon on the last folio. A transmission note states the further circulation of this manuscript in 1234/1819 underscoring its longevity.

contain additional commentaries investigating the commentarial traditions of that work and traditions of the larger field. While these commentaries are not marked with a separate colophon, the handwriting matches the marginalia in the rest of the manuscript and therefore suggests that most have been added by the same scribe at a later point. Such elaborations were applied in abundance from the beginning of the manuscript to the end, demonstrating the energy and effort the respective scribe invested in modulating this manuscript physically and beyond its main textual elements.

While such an expansion of paratextual profiles for decidedly intellectual exercises allows an analysis of individual engagements it also has crucial implications for the social and cultural conditions in learned encounters. These snippets describe a learned engagement of a reader with his text. They show how he elaborated on knowledge acquired from the studied text. While the compilation of textual segments seems random at first glance, I would argue that they constitute a process of meaning-making of a larger textual corpus and scholarly field by the respective user, who turned the MS into a commonplace notebook. Note-taking of important arguments, explanations, and further elaborations of an element of study mark the individual efforts of a learned figure in the acquisition of knowledge. The choice of axiom, phrase and aphorism mattered to the person himself and therefore did not necessarily follow a rigid and regulated progression of studies but instead an individually determined discussion of scholarly debates in the field. The manuscript then also served as a creative space for the scholarly development of its owner and recorded various interconnected textual engagements as cultural practices.

The ‘textual fragmentation’, meaning that the coherence of texts was deliberately broken up, amplified the circulation of philological knowledge in a commentarial mode of presentation. It further substantiates the previously presented argument about the shift to text-centred modes of learning and instruction over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁹⁸¹ Trends of ‘textualisation’ analysed for the medieval Middle East and ‘deep reading’ practices across the early modern Ottoman world appear here in a different reincarnation.⁹⁸² They become further tangible as historical practices inscribed on manuscripts by the audience and in this case a very active reception side of Arabic philological texts. The dissemination of textual elements

⁹⁸¹ See chapter 4 for details regarding this argument.

⁹⁸² Cf. Hirschler 2012 and El-Rouayheb 2015.

in the framework of an aural performance of a text-centred reading session is replicated here through the written proliferation of textual elements. In contrast to scholarly notebooks, which served to draft larger works, such manuscripts-turned-commonplace notebooks could continue to move between sociabilities with an aura of authority due to the transcribed *matn*.

At this point it becomes possible to add this form of transmission to the increase in text circulation and delineate different lines of text transmission which were used simultaneously, but which also channelled texts across sociabilities in different ways. Firstly, there is the *vertical transmission*, referring to forms such as the *ijāza*-guided transmission of a text, such as recorded in *samāʿ*. The authoritative student-teacher encounter still continued and certainly remained important in the context of *madāris*, courts and Sufi affiliations, as could be seen in the previously discussed case study Balāghat 9, which contained a variety of transmission notes next to the colophon. Secondly, and more importantly for the current context, the textual fragmentation in commonplace notebooks makes a considerable *horizontal transmission* of texts discernible. Significantly, this growing horizontal dissemination of texts had a transformative effect in the field of Arabic philology since rhetoric handbooks and grammar treatises circulated in a selective way as textual fragments on manuscripts and thereby constituted digests of various choices, which became confirmed in their repeated circulation.

The increased use of manuscripts as commonplace notebooks became a crucial trend in the learned transmission of manuscripts in the Deccan and increased the circulation of Arabic philological texts during the seventeenth century. The amplification of textual and fragmented circulations indicates a wider availability of philological works for text-based pursuits. While scholarship by Genette has stressed the importance of the paratextual threshold for the presentation and ultimately the wider circulation and reception of a book, the visibility of the paratextual profile and the high velocity of these manuscripts accelerated the dissemination of philological knowledge in a textually fragmented form.

The social significance of paratexts: markers of learned sociabilities, record of social interaction and ‘a prosopography in circulation’

In this section I will take the thesis of an increased circulation of Arabic philological manuscripts a step further and argue that this intensification of cultural practices created a platform for a new level of social interaction and thereby new

sociabilities. Scholarship on manuscript notes has argued that paratextual elements such as transmission notes and ownership statements can constitute a prosopographical source for historians.⁹⁸³ By extension a corpus of manuscripts in circulation represents a record of social histories through textually inscribed cultural practices. More significantly for the current purpose, I suggest that this corpus is not only eligible for historical research. It also represents the constitutive elements of an interconnected social world in the past. This social world was made up of all kinds of bookish pursuits and brought together learned figures from different walks of life.

Learned communities traded substantially in Arabic philological manuscripts across the Deccan and the wider subcontinent in the seventeenth century. Apart from increased reproduction, manuscript copies also had a life-cycle that lasted several generations. Paratextual profiles make this high velocity of texts traceable. However, in this context one has to consider the circulation as a book transfer, i.e. the physical movement of an existing manuscript copy from one person to another. This means that the transmission of the text is not recorded as part of the colophon or as an added transmission statement. Instead the transfer was registered in the form of an ownership note placed on the title-page, as was common across Islamicate bookish cultures.⁹⁸⁴ Title-pages recorded the social interactions among different owners and thereby also the transfer of books within Arabised communities.

The title-page of a manuscript marks the collective representative and historically traceable social and cultural interest vested in the manuscript over its circulatory life. One could argue that title-pages were the first point of contact for any person interested in the respective book, such as the owner, another reader or a prospective student. In principal, title-pages were used to record a variety of information encoded in paratextual elements. Earlier examples have shown that scribes inscribed the book titles at the top or the centre of the page. They then added the name of the author including the range of his scholarly or other attributes, sometimes supplemented with a longer biographical note. Librarians scribbled their review notes on these folios. Scholarly and royal seals were stamped next to them and visualised the prestige and value attached to such a book. In South Asia and the wider Ottoman world statements with a talismanic purpose, such as the *yā kabikaj* phrase, often decorated these folios as well and emphasised the precariousness of these cultural

⁹⁸³ Cf. Hirschler 2011a and Lohlker 2011.

⁹⁸⁴ Cf. Gacek 2012: 173-177. For a more recent elaboration of this cf. Liebrecht 2016: 20-30.

objects and the hope of their owners for their long durability.⁹⁸⁵ Thus, the title-page was also the place most suitable for ownership notes, which linked the manuscript to a specific person and expressed authority over the book for prospective students and readers to see.

While the ownership note is a common codicological element, its usage also has to be historicised and thus be seen as a social act that locates the circulation of a manuscript in a social context. Generally, most ownership notes conform to each other in terms of terminology.⁹⁸⁶ Yet, the velocity of a manuscript becomes evident with the inscription of a diachronic sequence of such ownership notes. A few patterns for the Deccani context become clear in this regard, based on manuscripts from the Asafiya library. The possession of a book was expressed through the *ex libris* formula ‘min kutub [...]’ followed by the name of the respective person, thus simply recording that the book was among one person’s corpus of books.⁹⁸⁷ In other cases the transfer was emphasised with the phrase ‘dakhala fī nawba [...]’, thus stating that a book entered into the possession of a person.⁹⁸⁸ Moreover, the transfer of a book was often marked with the term *intaqala* (‘it was transmitted’) or the phrase *thumma ṣāra hādihā al-kitāb ilā [...]* (‘then this book became the possession of’).⁹⁸⁹ The consistency of these cases suggests that a general consensus existed concerning the formalities of such book transfers across Arabised communities of the subcontinent and beyond. Such an adherence to etiquette and formalities also indicates an awareness of the larger cultural tradition which spread with the practice of book transfers.

Books were transferred widely in the field of Arabic philology in the seventeenth century. This practice often started with the interaction between the scribe and the ultimate owner of the manuscript. A copy of the *Mughnī al-labīb* – initially written by Ibn Hishām (d. 761/1360) over the course of two sojourns in Mecca (749/1348 and 756/1355), according to the preface – circulated among various people from the first half of the 10th/16th century to the latter half of the 13th/19th century.⁹⁹⁰ In the course of this circulation it was paratextually modulated at different stages. The first fly-leaf contains grammatical explanations in Persian and the second folio is inscribed with a selection of different Arabic verses. Each set of paratexts are in a different hand

⁹⁸⁵ See Gacek 1986. I thank Olly Akkerman for pointing this phenomenon out to me.

⁹⁸⁶ For a general overview of this terminology cf. Gacek 2012: 173-177 and Liebrez 2016.

⁹⁸⁷ Cf. *Sharḥ lubb al-albāb*, MS Naḥw 112, APOML, Hyderabad, fol. 1re.

⁹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 1re.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibn Hishām, *Mughnī al-labīb*, MS Naḥw 2, APOML, Hyderabad, fol. 1re.

⁹⁹⁰ For this and the following cf. *Ibid.*, fly-leaves, fol. 1re and the last folio.

meaning that the paratextual profile was reworked over the course of its active life by different people. The colophon on the last folio states the completion of this copy in the year 939/1533 by the ‘copyist, scribe’ (*nassākh*) of the book ‘for its owner’ (*‘alā ṣāhibihā*), thus implying the interaction between two people in the making of this book. The scribe also added a ‘collation note’ (*muqābala*) in the margin disclosing a review process of the *matn* in 943/1536. He conducted this collation on the basis of ‘two correct mother copies’ (*‘alā aṣṣayni ṣaḥīḥayni*), one of which he claims had been collated with the copy of the author. A large seal below the colophon announces the owner of this manuscript as the scholar (*‘ālim al-‘alāma*) al-Mufassir Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Sharīf ‘Abd Allāh al-Shādhilī al-Ḥasanī.

Given the constituents of the owner’s name, he seems to have been both a figure of scholarly standing and social prestige, hence probably well-connected across a range of sociabilities. The title *mufassir* (‘commentator’) locates the person professionally in the field of *tafsīr* (Quranic commentary). The two *nisbas* point out the person’s affiliation with the Shādhilī Sufi brotherhood, which was particularly famous in Egypt and the Maghrib but also spread across the eastern parts of the Islamic world and became prominent across South Asia as well.⁹⁹¹ Furthermore, a prestigious social background is evident from the descent from one of the many Ḥasanid family lines, which were particularly prominent in Mecca.⁹⁹² These aspects also fit well with the overall anatomy of the manuscript. Firstly, the frontispiece is elaborate, which, one could argue, is more common for manuscripts that derive from socially exclusive contexts and marks the copy as a more expensive object. Secondly, the seal which marks the ownership makes the manuscript stand out compared with other copies where a colophon or short note sufficed to express its ownership. It also indicates a larger private library. Thirdly, the colophon and collation note emphasise that the owner had resources at his disposal to have a scribe reproduce and revise his manuscripts.

It is not surprising that such a valuable copy would circulate among a host of later owners. Even if an increasing amount of cheap manuscripts were produced across the Deccan in this period, such well-executed and reviewed copies were precious. The title-page traces the circulation of the manuscript over the following three centuries until it finally ended up in the Asafiya collection.⁹⁹³ The first ownership change took place in 1053/1643 when the manuscript became part of the collections of Fakhr al-Dīn

⁹⁹¹ Cf. Lory 2018.

⁹⁹² Cf. Mortel 1987.

⁹⁹³ For this and the following cf. Ibn Ḥishām, *Mughnī al-labīb*, MS Naḥw 2, APOML, Hyderabad, fol. 1re.

‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥusaynī, who also held the title *Amīr al-Mu’minīn* (‘commander of the faithful’). Then in 1108/1697 the manuscript was handed over to another distinguished scholar ‘alāma, whose full name is not legible. Another partly legible *ṣāra ilā* note and two more undated *intaqala* notes add at least two more owners to the immediate audience of the manuscript. Additionally, other readers seem to have accessed this manuscript, indicated by two separate notes which read *mimmā ‘abara bi-l-qisma al-ṣahīḥa* (‘transmitted through a lawful inheritance’) and refers again to Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥusaynī on one occasion in 1050/1640 and another in 1104/1693.⁹⁹⁴ While it is not clear from the paratextual notes or other references where exactly the manuscript copy initially derived from and how widely it travelled, the characteristics of the initial owner, the *naskhī* script of the *matn*, the Persian explanations of grammatical phenomena as well as the preservation in the Asafiya Library all situate the history of circulation of this version of the *Mughnī al-labīb* in the Western Indian Ocean region, between the Hijaz and the Deccan.

Text exchanges and object transfers mark a consolidated interest in Arabic philology during this period. Practices of multiple book transfers were common in the field of Arabic grammar across this transregional space. Numerous grammar books in the Asafiya collections contain multiple ownership and transfer notes. The manuscripts Naḥw 11, 93, 112 and 373 are pertinent cases. However, since space is limited, it is only possible to exemplify with one case study how learned communities practised this from Ottoman Istanbul to the Deccan and beyond. A version of the *Sharḥ Lubb al-albāb* – MS Naḥw 112 – is preserved in the Asafiya library. The title-page is marked with an ownership-note (*min kutubi*) for the year 988/1580 and a bestowal-note (*mannun min*) for the year 1094/1683.⁹⁹⁵ A note stating the ‘entry of the book into the possession’ (*dakhala fī nawbati*) of a certain ‘Umar Khān b. Muḥammad ‘Ārif [...] and another *min kutub* note and *mannun* note are not dated but underline multiple dynamics of circulation. The reference to the *nawba* is a paratext which was a common practice in the Ottoman lands.⁹⁹⁶ Together with a *waqf*-note on the title-page and a short *tarjama* relating to the author which is based on Kātib Celebī’s *Kashf* (the major bibliographical work *Kashf al-zunūn*), all these references make an Ottoman provenance of this work

⁹⁹⁴ I thank Konrad Hirschler for his help in analysing these notes.

⁹⁹⁵ For this and the following cf. *Sharḥ Lubb al-albāb*, MS Naḥw 112, APOML, Hyderabad, fol. 1re. and the last folio. Unfortunately, the author of this commentary is not legible in the paratextual notes and not explicitly mentioned on the title-page.

⁹⁹⁶ Such *nawba*-notes can be found on the manuscripts of the al-Damāmīnī corpus which are today preserved in the Süleymaniye and were discussed in chapter 4 of this dissertation. For a general assessment cf. Liebrecht 2016: 25.

highly likely. Similar to the ‘reference works’ shown for the South Asian context, which accumulated paratextual elements of an architextual quality, this manuscript version was elaborated with extracts of other works in Arabic philology, specifically of the *Ṣiḥāḥ*, the poets’ lexicon of al-Jawharī.

Book transfers were not specific to the discipline of grammar but can be found with regard to works of rhetoric as well. For example, one can return to the aforementioned version of the *al-Muṭawwal* with its highly complex paratextual profile.⁹⁹⁷ The colophon states the completion of this copy in 1027/1618 and a set of transmission notes show that the text was memorised and disseminated further by various people. The title-page also shows that this book was transferred to a new owner in the year 1097/1686.⁹⁹⁸ In the transfer-note (*thumma ṣāra fī milk*) only the new owner’s *ism*, Muḥammad, is legible in the reproduction. Another *mimmā ‘abara* note in the lower left-hand margins is not dated but indicates another aspect of transmission. Before the book entered into the collections of the Asafiya library it seems to have been transferred to yet another person in the year 1289/1872. Thus, not only precious manuscripts such as the version of the *Mughnī al-labīb* were cherished across multiple generations.

In contrast to these multiple transfers, other manuscripts are completely devoid of any ownership notes or transfer statements and suggest individual copying and reading pursuits by learned figures across the subcontinent. Again, this applies to both fields of grammar and rhetoric with examples from the Asafiya collection. For example, MS Naḥw 23 (a commentary by Mawlānā al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Qabānī), MS Naḥw 27 (a commentary on the *Sharḥ* of al-Jāmī), MS Naḥw 36 (the gloss of al-Zarqānī on the *Sharḥ* of the *Muqaddima al-‘Irāb*) and MS Naḥw 62 (a *Sharḥ* of the *Alfiya* of Ibn Mālik by the scholar ‘Abd al-Raḥman b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Aqīl) do not exhibit a change in ownership on their title-pages or in any other sections of the manuscript. The title-pages simply record the title and the colophons state the completion of the transcription. Furthermore, the general layout, script and anatomy of the manuscript is simple. Their transcribers focused on the *matn* and its elaboration through marginal notes. Still, even such a singular transcription implies a social interaction between a person or an institution that possessed the respective text and the interested reader who would

⁹⁹⁷ For this and the following cf. al-Taftāzānī, *al-Muṭawwal*, MS Balāghat 9, APOML, Hyderabad, colophon and title-page.

⁹⁹⁸ See the ownership-note next to the title in *Ibid.*, fol. 7r.

produce his copy. It highlights the importance of text-based studies in the scholarly field during the seventeenth century.

Two central observations can be made on the basis of these examples. The circulations of Arabic texts were both culturally productive and socially generative. Firstly, by the seventeenth century, the main basis for such knowledge exchanges were commentarial elaborations of earlier textbooks and treatises, a point which has been stressed in other contexts already but which can be made specifically for this period across the subcontinent and its connections with the wider Western Indian Ocean.⁹⁹⁹ Arabic philological knowledge circulated in multiple textual modes and intertextual layers among its practitioners, and its commentarial character underlined the significance of the initial *matn*, which was elaborated over the centuries, but also invited new generations to add a new commentarial voice to the textual genealogy. Secondly, these cases of book transfers and singular text-based forms of knowledge transmission have a social interaction at their core. Scholars and learned figures came together to exchange books and copy texts from each other. Each book transfer and text transmission points to the creation of a temporary sociability that made such a textual exchange possible. While ownership notes, transfer and transmission statements only mention the names of the recipients of this text-based knowledge transmission, one can imagine these exchanges in contexts of gatherings in a variety of sites and places across the transregional assemblage of the Western Indian Ocean.

Precise locations and places of these conducts are often not traceable on the manuscripts. However, when Arabic philological texts can offer details about the place of manuscript reproduction this statement of location has to be read as a significant marker. It complicates the view on places of cultural production. Not all but a considerable amount of the manuscripts in the *Deccan corpus* make reference to the place where a scribe had copied the respective text. A survey of these spatial data can never provide a full picture of sites of manuscript reproduction and therefore also sites of text transmission and learned encounters. However, the available data from the manuscripts of the Bijapur collection and the Salar Jung Museum Library – the manuscripts of the Asafiya library are extremely scarce with such references to places, a point that will be discussed later – can offer a view on a general trend.

⁹⁹⁹ Scholarship has often considered this in a rather negative light coming from a nineteenth and twentieth century perspective. Cf. Khalid 1998.

By connecting the spatial dots, it becomes possible to draw a map of important sites of learning and cultural exchange of the Western Indian Ocean – those that were considered to be important by scribes. A variety of places in the Deccan and the larger subcontinent formed sites of manuscript transmission and reproduction. Firstly, many manuscripts were transmitted along transregional networks that spanned the subcontinent and the wider Western Indian Ocean, a point that I substantiated in chapter three. Texts in Arabic philology were copied in Mecca and Medina in the Hijaz, in Ahmadābād, Burūj and Cambay in Gujarat, across Central Asia from Mashhad to Herat, from Fāteh pūr Sīkrī to Qannauj and Patna in the East, across the Deccan from Burhānpūr in the northern part to the town of Lāsūr near Dawlatābād, to Aḥmadnagar, Bijapur and Hyderabad further South.¹⁰⁰⁰ These were places of political, economic and cultural importance, including powerful courts, vibrant port cities, sites of shrines and pilgrimage, centres of learning and scholarly prestige. Moreover, these were urban areas inhabited at that time by a variety of communities. Their reference in the paratextual profile of Arabic philological manuscripts also signifies them as sociabilities for Arabised groups and thereby adds another layer of cultural activities to this landscape of political, social and religious prestige.

The reference to a particular site of manuscript reproduction has wider social and cultural implications. Ultimately it was the choice of the scribe to include a geographical reference or not. The fact that references to places were only inscribed selectively on these manuscripts sparks the question of why scribes of all ranks chose to mention (or omit) the place of transcription in the first place. While a few places of lesser importance feature in this survey as well, the accumulative view is one of imperial and regional centres. Since most textual transactions and reproduction processes are not specified with reference to a place but were constitutive because of the people involved, the deliberate decision to add such a place name in the colophon suggests a choice of individual personal importance to the scribe. Mentioning a place next to one's own name at the end of a text – the colophon – showed that one mattered professionally in a certain location.

Thus, one could consider the colophon in combination with other forms of social documentation on manuscripts – ownership notes, transmission notes and seals

¹⁰⁰⁰ Cf. Loth 1877 and Ashraf 1993 for this data. Cf. respectively MS IO B 256, British Library; MS Naḥw 47, Salar Jung; MS IO B 223, British Library; MS Lughat 8, Salar Jung; MS Naḥw 27, Salar Jung; B&M 43 and Lughat 13, Salar Jung; MS B 260, B 253, British Library; MS Fal 106/3, Salar Jung; MS Naḥw 19 and MS Naḥw 4, APOML; MS Naḥw 108, Salar Jung; MS IO B 3, British Library; and MS Naḥw 48/1, Salar Jung.

– as an epitextual form of the prosopographical record that existed in a world of mobile bookish pursuits – a prosopography in circulation. By relating their professional activity to a locus, scribes were able to insert themselves into the social and cultural history of a place. Scribal communities were made up of diverse social groups. While some of scholarly rank had developed their own media of scholarly promotion, social prestige and cultural memory, others were marginalised and excluded from the prosopographical archive.¹⁰⁰¹ The majority of scribes never appear in these exclusive biographical dictionaries. Instead, they are inscribed in a mobile world of human and textual circulation where they could showcase their expertise and skills, relate to a larger community of scholars, readers and other scribes, as well as show their cultural and professional belonging through a prosopography in circulation.

The social diversification of Arabised communities

In this final section I will further elaborate on the intensification of Arabic philological practices by demonstrating the extent of the social diversification of Arabised communities in the seventeenth century Deccan. In general, this is an accumulative argument that builds on the combination of results from the previous chapters of this dissertation. These have shown that a variety of professional and social groups from across the Western Indian Ocean participated in the circulation of Arabic manuscripts and thereby shared cultural practices. At this point, it is important to exemplify a social diversification by the seventeenth century once again with the figure of the scribe, i.e. the principal proliferator of manuscript circulation. The main empirical bases are the colophons of the *Deccan corpus* – some already mentioned in the course of this dissertation and others still to be discussed.

The colophon will be considered as the ‘professional signature’ of the respective scribe and, to develop the argument from the previous section further, the principal site of identity-making for copyists. In introductions to manuscript studies, the colophon is mainly characterised regarding its codicological attributes. As a ‘finishing stroke’ at the end of a text the colophon provides information on the title and author of a work, date, place and mode of composition or transcription, as well as a patron’s name and a reference to the copyist or scribe himself.¹⁰⁰² Recurring formulae of religious invocation and humility on behalf of the scribe framed these documentary

¹⁰⁰¹ Several exceptionally famous calligraphers who authored works themselves, for example Ḥamd Allāh al-Amāsī (d. 926/1520) for the Ottoman context, are mentioned in Gacek 2012: 43-47 and 119.

¹⁰⁰² For this and the following cf. Gacek, 2012: 71-76.

aspects, offering insights into the socio-religious prestige that derived from the cultural practice of copying manuscripts in general. As a paratext, often highlighted ‘as the tail of the text’ in the shape of a triangle or slightly removed from the *matn* (the main body of the text), the colophon carried a specific aural and visual aspect.¹⁰⁰³ Since the scribe could not always take possession of his finished product, the colophon became a way for him to take credit for his achievement and advertise his professional skill, his mastery of penmanship. At the same time, the colophon was a space to express cultural belonging and add a personal note. In addition to acknowledgements and the taking of responsibility for the material reproduction of the work, the modalities of the colophon also situated the respective manuscript in temporal and spatial terms with added layers of socio-cultural reference. The colophon entails forms of documentation that present cultural significances to an audience.

Instead of seeing the colophon only as a fundamental element of manuscript cultures and something that is just there because it always has been, I suggest historicising the colophon, to highlight its changing socio-cultural significance within a larger field of manuscript circulation and, in this case, Arabic philology. Colophons were not simply used to end a text but scribes also employed them to have a share in a larger cultural tradition and, in this current case, the Arabic Islamicate tradition. Recent scholarship by R. Ricci can be instrumental here. She argued that ‘citing as a site’ with regard to Islamic formulae and phrases created transregional cultural sensibilities and made it possible for Muslims in distant and far-flung places to imagine themselves as part of a larger ‘imagined community’, as Benedict Anderson put it for a different context.¹⁰⁰⁴ In the same way, a colophon could serve the advertisement of a scribe’s professional skills invested in the completion of a manuscript copy. In addition to that, the certainty that such finished manuscripts could travel transregionally and circulate socially made them a prime place for professional promotion and of cultural belonging. Thereby, scribes mattered locally and became part of a larger transregional sociability.

Studies on the scribal communities in early modern South Asia and in particular in the Mughal Empire have placed the *munshī* (‘scribe’) at the centre of their analysis. This was part of revisiting the initial top-down approach to the study of state formation processes aimed at including a broader set of professional groups such as scribes and their contributions to forms of imperial rule.¹⁰⁰⁵ However, these studies privileged

¹⁰⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Cf. Ricci 2012a and 2012b. Anderson 2006.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Cf. for example Alam/Subrahmanyam 2011.

courtiers and top officials of the imperial bureaucracy and therefore figures which had access to considerable scholarly resources and media of social prestige. By taking a circulating corpus of Arabic manuscripts as a starting point, it is possible to explore wider, marginalised sections of these scribal communities, not with the same amount of biographical detail in each case, but nonetheless in their individual and accumulative significance for processes of cultural exchange and learned activities in the subcontinent and beyond.

Here, to frame my argument I want to take up the point I made at the very beginning of this chapter concerning the increased circulation of Arabic manuscripts by the seventeenth century. The social diversification of a transregional Arabicised community is mirrored in the cultural diversification of their textual engagements with these manuscripts. More importantly here, this social diversification becomes tangible, especially when focusing on those groups which were paramount as the proliferators for the transmission and reproduction of texts. The increase in manuscript circulation is primarily due to an increased scribal activity. Scribes became agents in these transformations themselves since they drove the reproduction of manuscripts and are located at the nexus of demand and supply. Due to an increased reproduction of manuscripts, an increasing number of scribes are able to insert themselves into a wider set of learned sociabilities.

In principal, manuscript reproduction and circulation were an elite phenomenon during the medieval and early modern periods. Transcribers of manuscripts were often high-standing scholars who copied these texts for their learned pursuits.¹⁰⁰⁶ By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries more and more officials of the Mughal and other state bureaucracies had to acquire Arabic manuscripts to work on their proficiency in the cultural idiom for a variety of occasions.¹⁰⁰⁷ Both of these loosely defined groups of scholars and courtiers – amongst other figures of religious prestige and standing – are also represented to a high degree in the Bijapur and Salar Jung collections of the *Deccan corpus*.¹⁰⁰⁸ This comes as no surprise given the aforementioned profiles of these collections and their strategies of preserving the manuscripts –

¹⁰⁰⁶ See for example the copyist Sayyid Ibrāhīm b. Sulṭān al-Ṣāliḥīn Shāh Muṣṭafā Ḥabīb Allāh b. Sulṭān al-ʿĀrifīn of al-Damāmīnī’s al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy, MS IO Bijapur 4, British Library, London, last folio.

¹⁰⁰⁷ This was pointed out in Kinra 2010.

¹⁰⁰⁸ For details cf. details about ownership statements and seals in Loth 1877 and Ashraf 1993. Especially the manuscripts in the Salar Jung Museum come with seals of later high-ranking courtiers, for example, Ḥaydar Yār Khān and Munīr al-Mulk. Cf. MS Naḥw 109, SJML, Hyderabad and MS Naḥw 73, SJML, Hyderabad, respectively. Similar cases for the Bijapur collection, for example Shāh Nawāz Khān, were discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

precious and highly elaborate copies – and an audience of texts which belonged to the more affluent and socially exclusive groups in the Deccan, the subcontinent and Iran.

The social, cultural and professional background of scribes – even if they cannot be matched with a biographical entry from the prosopographical archive – can usually be gauged based on the components of their names.¹⁰⁰⁹ Many scribal names in manuscripts of the *Deccan corpus* come with scholarly titles (*alqāb*, sg. *laqab*) such as Shaykh, a nisba that relates to a specific place and an extensive line of descent (*nasab*).¹⁰¹⁰ When these scholarly figures appear in the colophons it is to claim ownership over a crucial work of scholarship. It showcases erudition, which comes naturally given the scholarly background of the owner. One could even speculate that inscribing one's name as a scholar was done with an eye on posterity: the manuscript would commemorate one's name and achievement through future circulations. Scribes did not always insert their names in the colophon. The instances in which they did though are crucial moments.

At the same time, the *Deccan corpus* preserves manuscripts which are derived from a greater social and cultural variety in this regard. This is true for the Bijapur collection and the Salar Jung Museum Library collections,¹⁰¹¹ but here I will focus on the Asafiya Library based on a survey of the philological manuscripts, since this collection has not been catalogued or researched to the same degree yet. The Asafiya Library holds several copies which were transcribed by scribes who did not have a courtly affiliation or a prestigious scholarly background. Again, this is based on the composition of their names in the following examples of this section. For example, Naḥw 92 is a copy of Ibn Hishām's *Mūqīd al-addhān wa-mūqīz al-wasnān* dealing with difficulties in Arabic grammar.¹⁰¹² The scribe Muḥammad b. Jār Allāh is simply mentioned with his *ism* and his father's name, but no other attributes. The colophon states the completion with the common religious supplications and Muḥammad ends with asking Allāh for the forgiveness of his sins, those of his parents and of the Muslim believers in general – again a phrase which was used in different forms by copyists.

Scribes worked for their patrons or copied texts for themselves but in both cases the colophon remained their only 'professional signature' through which they could

¹⁰⁰⁹ For studies on the Arabic name cf. Sublet 1991. For inquiries into the social and cultural history of reading communities on the basis of onomastic elements cf. Hirschler 2012.

¹⁰¹⁰ Cf. for example Loth 1877 and Ashraf 1993.

¹⁰¹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹² Cf. Fleisch 2018. For this and the following cf. Ibn Hishām, *Mūqīd al-addhān wa-mūqīz al-wasnān*, MS Naḥw 92, APOML, Hyderabad, first and last folio.

inscribe themselves into the finished manuscript. Thereby, they represent the constitutive element of any manuscript circulation. This is borne out by individual cases that were presented in other chapters of this dissertation, but here the argument only gains full force in the context of an increased circulation of Arabic manuscripts across the seventeenth century South Asian subcontinent and its transregional links with the wider Indian Ocean world – thus by taking an accumulative view. A version of al-Sīrāmī's *Sharḥ al-Muṭawwal* from Bijapur exemplifies this aspect.¹⁰¹³ The copy was derived through a complex transmission process from a judge in Egypt, but ultimately copied in the Deccani city of Ahmadnagar – according to the colophon – by the scribe Yaḥyā b. Shams al-Dīn b. Aḥmad for the eventual owner, who is named as al-Ḥurānī and who expressed his ownership with the use of an ownership note and a seal on the title-page. The name of the scribe does not exhibit scholarly titles; it is a 'simple' name based on the *ism* and a *nasab*.

Scribes were not only constitutive of the reproduction process of manuscripts during the seventeenth century, they also had a share in the dissemination of knowledge that accompanied instances of text transmission. While there is no way of recovering all forms through which scribes engaged with the texts they were tasked to copy, there are other paratextual elements which stem from these engagements apart from the obvious transcription process of the text itself. As previously pointed out, collating a text with other manuscripts and correcting the produced version represented an intensive and substantial engagement with a work. This was done in the case of the *Mughnī al-labīb* version Naḥw 2 in the Asafiya collections, where a copyist finished the version and collated it for its eventual owner al-Shādhilī.¹⁰¹⁴ Creating a *fihrist* for the finished version was another important textual enactment performed by scribes that presupposed an understanding of the textual structure and thematic breadth of a work. This point was made in the final section of chapter four in this dissertation. There, I demonstrated that finished manuscripts were sometimes given to scribes to prepare a *fihrist*, implying that they had to familiarise themselves with the text. While scribal labour was often employed for the reproduction of a manuscript, with the finished product passing over to a different owner or institution, a diffusion of philological knowledge nevertheless took place as part of this transcription process. In transcription processes scribes were part of the audience of the respective text.

¹⁰¹³ This example was discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation. Cf. MS IO B 254, fol. 1r and 568v.

¹⁰¹⁴ Cf. MS Naḥw 2, APOML, Hyderabad, last folio.

There are other cases which shed light on the depth and width of the text-based diffusion of Arabic philological practices across the Deccan performed and appropriated by scribes. An example from the Asafiya collection highlights the learned engagement of the scribe with philological texts on multiple levels. Naḥw 4 is a version of Ibn al-Ḥājjib's work on Arabic syntax, the *al-Kāfiya* copied in a studying enactment, i.e. 5-6 lines per folio page in large letters.¹⁰¹⁵ Interlinear notes are in Persian and in Arabic. In the case of the former they are translations of phrases and in the latter designations of syntactical elements, lexicographical explanations and comments from other works. Significantly, the colophon is divided into two parts by means of layout techniques. The first section on the last folio is written in the same ductus as the rest of the text and states the completion of the transcription process, common religious formulae and the name of the scribe: the 'beggar and poor, true believer' (*al-faqīr al-ḥaqīr al-ḥanīf*) Muḥammad Fāḍil b. 'Abd al-Laṭīf. This is not a name that suggests a high-ranking scholarly background. The second part of the colophon is compressed in one line and written in Persian. It states the date and place of the transcription with the finishing formula *tamām shod* ('completed') below: Muḥammad copied this text in the year 1093/1682 in a small village or town called Lāsūr in the district that was governed from Daulatābād (*dar maqām-i lāsūr ma'mūla-yi qil'aye dawlatābād*), a prominent fortress in the Deccan (present-day state of Maharashtra). Daulatabad was founded in a place initially called Devgiri by the Delhi sultans in the fourteenth century (1327) and became the second capital of the Tughluq-Dynasty, inhabited by waves of migrants from Delhi and increasingly communities from the Deccan.¹⁰¹⁶ It continued to be used as a military base over the following centuries and played an important role during the wars of the Nizām Shāhī sultanate under the commander and former *ḥabshī* slave Malik Ambar against the Mughals.¹⁰¹⁷

A look at the wider environment places Lāsūr in a multicultural landscape. Although Lāsūr might have been a small village at that time, it was located in a vibrant environment conducive to Islamicate and Arabic philological pursuits. The Sufi centre Khuldābād – both an important place of pilgrimage and shrine centre of the Chishtī brotherhood – was close by in the north.¹⁰¹⁸ Several Chishtī shaykhs – those who initially made their way southwards with the Tughluqs and their descendants – were

¹⁰¹⁵ For this and the following cf. Naḥw 4, APOML, Hyderabad, fol. 1-3 and last folio.

¹⁰¹⁶ Cf. Eaton 2005: 33-37.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid., 115-120.

¹⁰¹⁸ Cf. Ernst 2004.

buried here and in the eighteenth century it also became the burial place of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (d. 1707). Further afield were the more urbanised courtly centres of the Nizām Shāhīs, Ahmadnagar, and Aurangābād, which was founded in the 1630s by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and quickly became a centre of Islamicate learning.¹⁰¹⁹

This was the larger setting in which the scribe Muḥammad chose to acquire a proficiency in the higher cultural idiom of Arabic. The interlinear and marginal notes are similar to the handwriting of the colophon.¹⁰²⁰ Moreover, they represent not only a transcription, but a whole studying enactment. They show that Muḥammad, the scribe, conducted a knowledge acquisition process, partly through Arabic and partly through Persian, dealing with a fundamental work of Arabic grammar. The division of the colophon suggests that he intended to situate himself and his name in the Arabic sphere and record the spatial and temporal data in the Persian medium, through which he enacted the text. In addition to this, the plainness of the manuscript version in terms of the few personal details provided in the colophon, the lack of highly symbolic paratexts, such as seals or transmission notes, and the abundance of studying notes mark this manuscript version as a product of an individuated and personal studying pursuit. It was intended to be kept by the scribe. What this manuscript highlights most importantly though is that a humble scribe in a village close to the centres of learning in the Deccan had the resources and the motivation to study an Arabic philological text in the seventeenth century, exemplifying the level of social diversification of the learned community that participated in the transmission of Arabic philological knowledge.

Conclusion

The field of Arabic philological enquiry was characterised by an increase in manuscript circulation, a growing diversity of cultural engagements with texts and a social diversification of its practitioners. The different paratexts – colophon, ownership note, and seal – served different aspects of the manuscript’s circulation, but they were still constitutive of it together. The previous examples should not be treated as exceptions or precedents for a sudden transformation in text-based cultural practices among Arabised communities. In a field such diverse and complex as that of scholarly

¹⁰¹⁹ Faruqi 2012: 169-170.

¹⁰²⁰ Cf. MS Naḥw 4, APOML, Hyderabad, first folio recto. The notes on the first folio were written in a different hand in the 13th century hijrī based on the particularities of the script. The interlinear notes and the *matn*, however, converge in terms of script form. Especially the letters of the finishing touch of the colophon are very similar to the ones in the marginalia.

transactions, changes happen slowly and never unidirectionally. Texts continued to be recited and memorised. *Ijāzāt* and *samā'āt* were still issued by teachers in *masājid*, *madāris* and *majālis*. Scribes went out of their way to guarantee the soundness of their transcriptions. Yet, learned figures also exchanged works and transferred books to build up their collections and further develop their scholarship. Entire libraries were copied by individuals for patrons. Learned groups socialised in Sufi brotherhoods. Teaching circles and courtly formations increasingly created their own realms of interaction and built up their own corpora of manuscripts, small and large. These were parallel worlds of circulation.

Thus, it makes more sense to consider new modes of transfers and changes in the framework of text transmission as multidirectional ways of engaging with Arabic philological scholarship across learned sociabilities. These modes of cultural exchange varied but were nevertheless regulated in one or the other way. Apart from paratextual precedents that can mark a new revolutionary development in the field – the *fihrist* was such a case – the variety of cases for the seventeenth century shows a diversification of cultural practices within a field of intensified circulation. This field would be transformed further over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a period which is, however, beyond the scope of this dissertation.¹⁰²¹

The analysis of cultural practices also served as a basis to investigate the constitution of and interactions among Arabicised communities in this period. The engagement with Arabic philology made it possible to imagine and socialise with this community. Arabicised communities included those people who participated in the transmission of Arabic textual culture. They were acculturated in the Arabic idiom to different degrees and used it for different purposes, from copying texts to elaborating on commentarial traditions, from inscribing library notations for sultans to promoting a scholarly career and advertising erudition on the title-page of their own manuscripts and from exchanging books among learned colleagues to student-teacher-relationships.

The increase in manuscript circulation was an organic process. All manuscript versions of texts and their commentarial elaborations are related to one another be it in local or, as concentrated on above, in transregional contexts. Sultans, scholars and scribes who participated in this erudite endeavour shared a fundamental set of assumptions about these textual traditions and their perpetuation. Paratextual

¹⁰²¹ See for example Malik 1997 for scholarly cultures of colonial North India and Ogborn 2007 for the worlds of the written word created by the East India Company.

products of these assumptions, from the *basmala* to the *tamma*, the transmission statements to the book transfers, the correction notes to collation statements, and the ownership marks to the seals created a sense of cultural belonging that could accommodate a variety of professional trajectories.¹⁰²² Each one had its own paratextual element: scribes had their colophons, owners their title-page statements and (mostly) sultans their seals.

The growing text-based and manuscript-centred dimension of knowledge transmission elicited by an increase in circulation thus promoted the expansion of learned sociabilities. Moments of book exchange and copying sessions for manuscripts brought different members of learned Arabicised communities together, temporarily for cultural pursuits but with a textually documented and traceable outcome. A text-focus consolidated Arabic philological study across a range of social groups. Most significantly, a variety of examples have shown how scribes – the humble signatory of a manuscript copy – can be considered not only as proliferators of manuscript cultures but also as protagonists on the stage of Arabic philological performances. From transcriptions of texts, to the collation of manuscript versions and from the appending of *fihrist*s to the commentarial elaboration of a *matn*, scribes – high and low – participated in these cultural practices and had a share in the transmission of knowledge.

Finally, this sheds light on the extent to which Arabic philology – fundamentally related to other Islamicate disciplines but also a field of its own purposes of scholarly inquiry – spread across different sociabilities in the Deccan and the wider subcontinent. Arabic was not only a devotional idiom but represented philological practice and scholarly pursuit within the multilingual context of South Asia. While I have shown that manuscript circulation, the spread of Arabic philological practices and the social diversification of communities participating therein were related aspects, additional research is necessary to bring these developments into conversation with the transformation of cultural practices in other philological traditions such as Sanskrit, Marathi and Telugu.¹⁰²³ At this point, Arabic philology can be considered as a crucial learned pursuit and sociability in the seventeenth century subcontinent and transformations in this field did not necessarily happen in concert with other philological traditions. Nonetheless, cultural practices in Arabic constitute an

¹⁰²² Cf. Ricci 2012a and 2012b.

¹⁰²³ For important contributions in this direction cf. for example Talbot 2001.

important variation of social and cultural historical changes in early modern South Asia. What is more, a field which sprang from a transregional pool of interaction that connected the Red Sea region with Iran and Central Asia became deeply rooted in the subcontinent. This transregional transmission of texts was moulded by learned communities across the Western Indian Ocean to make it suitable for their changing textual pursuits. In the Deccan and through networks across South Asia, Arabicised communities engrained Arabic philology into the multilingual landscape of the subcontinent and thereby consolidated lasting cultural links and social flows with lands and communities across the Sea in the West.

Conclusion - Histories of circulation as global cultural history

In the course of this dissertation I have shown that text circulation was a ubiquitous historical phenomenon among learned communities of the early modern Western Indian Ocean. Related to this, I argued that the circulation of texts integrated the Western Indian Ocean region along an Arabic connection from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Based on a growing corpus of transregional and transcultural scholarship, I analysed histories of circulation of Arabic manuscripts and texts to entangle cultural practices and social spaces from Istanbul to Cairo, Mecca to Zabīd, Aden to Ahmedabad, Nahrwāla to Gulbarga and Bijapur to Hyderabad. First of all, the interrelated core argument of text circulation and cultural integration was empirically grounded in the large numbers of Arabic manuscripts that survive from this period in collections across Europe, the Middle East and South Asia. Secondly, the main methodological approach was to historicise cultural transfers through the study of manuscripts in their transregional circulation. This enabled me to pluralise histories of cultural transfers and to consider the circulation of texts and their reception along the lines of a differentiation of cultural practices and a social diversification of the communities that engaged with these texts.

The dissertation thereby combined individual stories and larger narratives of cultural exchange by advancing five main arguments. At the outset, I demonstrated the emergence of an Arabic historiography of the Western Indian Ocean from the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries that reflected on the communities and pasts of this transoceanic space. The case study of al-Damāmīnī then illustrated that such growing transoceanic connections enabled mobile Arabic scholarship from fifteenth century Egypt to the Deccan. Moving on to an early modern royal library collection, I presented the history of the Asar Mahal Library as a cultural entrepôt that entangled courtly, scholarly and local forms of manuscript circulation and text transmission, linking different social and professional groups and rendering the Asar Mahal a dynamic place of textual transactions. This was followed by an analysis of the transregional spread of al-Damāmīnī's grammar texts over the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries to explore the diversification of textual practices by a transoceanic courtly and scholarly readership in the engagement with his works. Finally, the combined study of several Deccani manuscript collections provided the empirical basis for a twofold argument: the increase in Arabic manuscript circulation in South Asia which in turn led to the

spread of Arabic philology as a significant cultural pursuit practiced by a larger and more diverse Arabicised community through a range of textual practices.

The methodological focus on paratexts and transtextual elements, as discussed by Genette, created a consistent set of analytical categories that allowed me to trace these different flows. Texts circulated in a variety of forms during this period. A crucial point of this thesis was thus to bring together a kaleidoscope of perspectives on textual mobilities. Textual models in Arabic history writing that had been elaborated in the Red Sea region were applied for new historical works across Gujarat and the Deccan, as the biographical works of al-ʿAydarūs and Ibn Shadqam have shown. Mobile scholars such as al-Damāmīnī composed and rewrote grammar commentaries on the move. Peregrinating courtiers and high-standing scholars exchanged books as courtly offerings and artefacts of erudition. Librarians preserved manuscripts and books in royal libraries. Changing functions of such textual corpora, for example in the case of the Asar Mahal, made manuscripts available again for new purposes. New paratexts such as tables of content and biographical entries were added to finished manuscripts to make works accessible for a growing transoceanic readership. At the same time, texts were broken up and textual digests inscribed into the margins of other works to serve in studying enactments. Tracing such movements through manuscripts and marginalia offers a view on the changing histories of circulation of the texts and the socio-cultural significances they elicited across a variety of environments. Manuscripts are signified in such flows and their mobilities signify histories of communities and their cultural pursuits. They provide an empirical pathway to study social and cultural histories in motion and thereby the making of global histories of textual communities.

As chapter one has shown, it is possible to argue for the emergence of an Arabic historiography that reflected on the histories of the Western Indian Ocean's communities and imagined a culturally commensurable, transregional space that linked Mecca in the West with the Deccan in the East. Here, I particularly built on Ho's studies of the al-ʿAydarūs extended family and their transoceanic pursuits, as well as R. Ricci's focus on literary networks and the diffusion of Arabic through processes of translation in an Arabic cosmopolis from South India to Southeast Asia, to explore the wider spread of Arabic history writing from the Red Sea region to Western India.¹⁰²⁴ This was advanced through a cumulative analysis of Arabic historical works and recent scholarship on them. Biographical dictionaries written across the Red Sea region, for

¹⁰²⁴ Cf. Ho 2006 and Ricci 2011.

example by al-Sakhāwī, registered the increase in transoceanic movements during the fifteenth century and provided templates for a proliferation in Arabic historical writing across the sea during the sixteenth century. Transtextual connections traversed the Ocean and provided meaningful models for scholars and historians in Gujarat, the Deccan and Malabar. Their histories made use of the Arabic idiom to reflect on the pasts of the Western Indian Ocean, with a particular focus on the Red Sea region and the Hijaz. At the same time, readers in South Asia engaged with a variety of Arabic histories that had come out of these regions and circulated in different manuscript versions across the subcontinent. The significance of Arabic connections created through circulations was also observed by the Persianate scholar Rāzī from Iran. He imagined this transregional space as culturally integrated.

As chapter two has shown, mobile transregional scholarship delivered Arabic scholarly works and commentaries from the Red Sea region to Gujarat and the Deccan. Based on a reading of prosopographical accounts, paratextual elements and commentarial elaborations, I could exemplify how the fifteenth-century scholar al-Damāmīnī expanded and diversified his social networks to become a successful scholarly migrant. He belonged to a larger group of learned migrants from the Red Sea region who sought professional careers in al-Hind. The limited details given in biographical dictionaries about such transoceanic movements betray the complex travails of learned migrants. They had to make arduous journeys, secure courtly patronage in different places and accommodate themselves among new learned communities. They led a life on the move. On their own, they were able to shape scholarly compositions in new ways, based on their own intellectual travails, in concert with cultural tastes of learned sociabilities and in reaction to the changing learned backgrounds of their intended audiences. Thereby, learned migrants created successful scholarly contributions, which, in al-Damāmīnī's case, continued to circulate over the following centuries among a readership as diverse as his initial students but even further afield.

In chapter three, we could see how such textual travels and transregional movements to the Deccan increased over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and thus shaped the manuscript cultures and textual pursuits in the environs of Bijapur's royal library and later on in the Asar Mahal. Previous scholarship by Overton meticulously analysed the manuscript collections of the famous sultan Ibrāhīm II and the Persian scribal notations which registered the integration of manuscripts into the royal library and showed how courtly circulations were entangled with the

transregional peregrinations and tastes of Iranian migrants.¹⁰²⁵ Based on this, I explored the history of the larger Asar Mahal collection further by arguing for a delineation of courtly, scholarly and local forms of manuscript circulation and the emergence of the Persian scribal notations in the context of a growing inflow of manuscripts over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. External paratexts such as scribal notations and ownership notes in Persian marked the courtly movement of manuscripts while internal paratexts such as colophons and transmission notes signified the textual transmission across a scholarly field at the margins of the court. Entanglements of these spheres led to the transformation of practices which could be seen in the use of ownership statements to claim the textual authority over a text, as in the case of one member of the al-‘Aydarūs family. Sufis in Bijapur participated in these scholarly endeavours and local forms of book transfers contributed to the build-up of an extensive corpus of Arabic manuscripts in *taṣawwuf* in the Asar Mahal. By the mid-seventeenth century the Asar Mahal became a more accessible institution for learned groups coming from outside. It developed from a royal library into what I have termed a cultural *entrepôt*, and thus a vivid place of textual interactions.

Moving from the perspective of one locality to a transregional view, chapter four charted the circulation of al-Damāmīnī’s manuscripts over the early modern period to study the textual practices among courtly and scholarly groups. Sharing manuscripts across the Western Indian Ocean led to the proliferation of new cultural practices. While Hirschler and El-Rouayheb convincingly argued for a textualisation of reading practices and the emergence of ‘deep reading’ as a new text-based form of knowledge transmission across the medieval and early modern Middle East respectively,¹⁰²⁶ I was able to trace such transformations in textual practices on the basis of transregionally circulated manuscripts and their marginalia. I studied patterns of textual enactments through a set of new paratexts inscribed on manuscripts from Istanbul, to Cairo, Mecca and Bijapur and thus demonstrated the emergence of new text-centred forms of knowledge transmission. Forms of scholarly contextualisation, marginalisation of commentarial elaborations, and the *fihristisation* are such textual enactments. Thus, moving away from the court opened up a view on the vivid and dynamic cultural environment in which Arabic textual practices could flourish across the Western Indian Ocean. Texts and manuscripts changed hands in various ways, and

¹⁰²⁵ Cf. Overton 2011 and 2016.

¹⁰²⁶ Hirschler 2012 and El-Rouayheb 2015a.

thereby transformed frameworks of transmission and diversified scholarly claims to textual authority. While textual circulations of representational written artefacts such as courtly copies generally remained within the format of reading enactments, histories of circulation across scholarly sociabilities showed a proliferation of diverse engagements with texts in the form of studying enactments. Texts and manuscripts became dynamic sites of interaction between scribes, scholars and other professional groups, who used the texts for their own purposes. Studying enactments transformed the textual fabric of the works to render them more accessible. Paratextual profiles were elaborated to change the ways in which a text could be approached and the context in which it could be studied. At the same time, manuscripts were turned into personalised written artefacts that served individual readers in their scholarly aspirations and educational preferences. While it is impossible to pin down the introduction of such subtle changes and paratextual features locally, the main point was to show that these practices were connected across a wider transregional landscape. They flourished across a larger transoceanic Arabicised community and served as a new set of reading strategies in learned encounters. Textual mobilities connected communities in their cultural pursuits.

In the final chapter, the pursuit of Arabic philology in South Asia illustrated the workings of transregional textual flows and their local and regional reshaping and re-contextualisation through the proliferation of manuscript versions. While I built on studies of individual texts and scholarship on a range of philological traditions and scribal communities in South Asia, the study of the history of early modern Arabic philological traditions and manuscript cultures in South Asia is still in its infancy. The majority of the studied philological texts in Arabic grammar, rhetoric and lexicography were initially composed, elaborated and taught across the Red Sea region, the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia. Over the medieval and early modern periods, a variety of texts found their way to Central and South Asia. Over the course of time, textual canons emerged and Arabicised communities in South Asia elaborated on literary traditions and composed works which became crucial across the sea as far as the Ottoman domains. In contrast to Ricci, who focused on processes of translation into different languages,¹⁰²⁷ this research shows how Arabicised communities of the Western Indian Ocean were in a long-term cultural dialogue conducted in Arabic and

¹⁰²⁷ Cf. Ricci 2011.

through Arabic texts. They developed various cultural tastes, textual canons and ways to engage with them.

More specifically, based on an extensive study of Arabic manuscripts from Deccani collections, I argued that the increase in manuscript circulation over the seventeenth century expanded the pursuit of Arabic philology culturally and socially. These dynamics in circulation shaped the proliferation of Arabic philology in new text-centred forms. Arabicised communities engaged with Arabic manuscripts in new ways. For example, this could be seen with the commonplace notebooks as a manifestation of studying pursuits with a markedly text-centred method of knowledge transmission. Simultaneously, a vivid field of manuscript and book exchanges emerged and preserved manuscripts in circulation over generations. Books were precious objects and guarded as repositories and transmitters of knowledge. Yet, books also had the power to convey a sense of erudition and cultural sophistication on those who perpetuated them. In circulation, ownership statements, seals and colophons constituted a prosopography in circulation. They advertised learned figures and scribal groups to the wider Arabicised community who participated in these practices.

At the same time, I argued in chapter five that a social diversification of Arabicised communities accompanied the differentiation of Arabic textual practices. The increase in manuscript circulation allowed a larger group to participate in this endeavour and thereby to perpetuate Arabic philology in content, form and meaning as an Islamicate field of learning. The Arabic idiom and related forms of scholarship spread via a larger group of learned figures. While a diverse scholarship had engaged with the history of scribal communities in South Asia, I focused on those scribes who acted as copyists and were thereby central to the increased Arabic manuscript circulation across the Western Indian Ocean. In many cases, such scribes enabled the reproduction of texts and their material dissemination. They also shared processes of knowledge transmission and could contribute to them in significant ways: through the transcription of texts, their collation and the creation of *fihrist*s. Thereby, scribes were part of the audience and an active element in the proliferation of Islamicate traditions in the early modern period and its manuscript cultures. They interacted with other learned figures among Sufi communities, courtly figurations and scholarly reading sessions. At the same time, they created a space of cultural belonging through their professional signature in the colophon.

Tracing historical practices of textual engagements on manuscripts shows how Arabic philology in South Asia was shaped by changes that also encompassed other

cultural traditions across the Western Indian Ocean world. At this point, this thesis cannot offer an identifiable causal relationship. However, similar underlying material, social and intellectual reconfigurations, such as the increase in manuscript circulation, the diversification of cultural practices and the social diversification of scribal communities, seem to have transformed such cultural pursuits in Sanskrit, Persian and other vernacular languages at the same time. In turn, this meant that by the seventeenth century Arabic has to be considered as a significant learned tradition of the multilingual landscape of South Asia and one that was enduringly shaped by exchanges with the wider Western Indian Ocean world. Its pursuit was fashioned in a variety of locally and transregionally determined ways.

To sum up, several points can be identified which build on the arguments presented in these chapters. Firstly, manuscript circulation created its own segmented cosmopolitanisms. Participants generated a cultural sphere of exchange which perpetuated its own boundaries. Access to manuscripts was at times an exclusive endeavour of courtly, scholarly and other professional groups and communities which were proficient in a specific cultural idiom. The Arabic language created its own restrictions of engagement. Most strikingly, no women appeared in the sources that I presented throughout the dissertation. While a gendered history of Arabic text circulation was not at the centre of this work, it is at least evident that women were not active participants in the presented social networks of bookish pursuits. Secondly, previous scholarship has shown that the Western Indian Ocean inhabited a whole variety of commercial, religious, social and cultural mobilities that connected its shores during the early modern period. While these different flows were interrelated, they each presented their own rationales for transoceanic pursuits. Overall in this thesis and especially in chapter two, I tried to show that forms of cultural exchange were not a collateral of economic incentives. Trading connections and routes facilitated scholarly travels across the Indian Ocean, but they did not determine the rules of textual transactions. While existing maritime trading networks served as conduits for learned figures seeking patronage in the East and the West, textual pursuits and sharing manuscripts had their own cultural rationale and motivation. Transregional text circulation was constituted by its own codes of conduct and etiquette. They guided the travails of itinerant scholars in their approach of cosmopolitan rulers. Centres of patronage emerged and became entangled with places of scholarly transactions. Manuscripts were preserved, stored and made available across royal and Sufi libraries as well as in mosques and private collections. Different frameworks of transmission

channelled forms of textual circulation across courtly realms and scholarly fields and were elaborated in the Western Indian Ocean region.

Developing this further, this thesis contributes to a growing field of manuscript studies whose researchers historicise approaches to cultural exchange. This study in particular offers a view on the plurality, similarities and dissimilarities of readings, studying and elaborating on Arabic philological texts. The focus on manuscript versions demonstrates highly individualised engagements with texts – their perusal, the modulation of the manuscript and its preservation in a wide range from courtly to scholarly sociabilities. Arabic manuscripts constitute individual socio-cultural archives that register engagements with their texts. Manuscript versions highlight that texts could be significant for different reasons at the same time and in the same region as well as for the same reason at different times and in different regions. As the case of al-Damāmīnī, the human figuration of the cultural entrepôt of Bijapur and the cultural practices of manuscript perusal have demonstrated, various social groups beyond the court engaged with Arabic Islamicate texts. Learned figures from different walks of life participated in the perpetuation of Arabic in different ways, such as teaching, composing, reading and copying texts. A larger group of professionals beyond courtiers, high-standing scholars and *‘ulamā’* shaped the ways in which the study of Arabic and its Islamicate traditions were pursued over the early modern period.

More research is necessary to understand the historical development of the Arabic manuscript collections in South Asia in concert with other languages and traditions. So far, the profiles of the studied collections have shown their own idiosyncrasies, shaped by tastes and preferences of a cosmopolitan group of travelling scholars, their network of peers and points of contact from Egypt, via the Hijaz, Yemen and the Iran. Simultaneously, this build-up of manuscript collections set in motion a substantial circulation of texts across the South Asian subcontinent. Tracing textual genealogies and the distribution of commentarial elaborations of definitive texts also indicates different trends in the circulation of texts, which manifested themselves in the differentiation of manuscript corpora. From the fifteenth century onwards, al-Hind emerged as an important place for the courtly patronage of Arabic scholarship. Newly established regional courts provided a cultural space in the multilingual environment of the subcontinent to accommodate mobile scholars and their scholarly pursuits. This put al-Hind on the map for learned groups across the central Arabic lands as a country of scholarly opportunities. Courts beyond Delhi became linked with other Islamicate communities of the Western Indian Ocean world. Over the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries, the flow of texts continued, and itinerant courtiers, scholars and Sufis contributed substantially to the build-up of a variety of textual corpora across the Islamic and Islamicate disciplines. Yet, far from simply being a recipient of Arabic scholarship, regional formations with their courtly patronage and scholarly fields became prolific compositional sites that contributed to a diverse canon in Arabic philology and other fields over the early modern period. Travelling texts from al-Hind began to shape educational curricula, scholarly discussions and manuscript collections as far as the Ottoman Empire.

To conclude, histories of circulation can inform cultural histories that globalise Arabic pursuits beyond the Middle East. The interrogation of manuscript circulation provides an empirically rich archive to explore multiple stories of Arabic in South Asia. Arabicised communities who share certain cultural practices, while not necessarily excluding other pursuits, take centre stage in these investigations. A focus on manuscripts in circulation can shift the attention from origins to processes and thereby reflect on the multiple historical trajectories of cultural transfers across the early modern Western Indian Ocean.

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Appendix

Al-Damāmīnī Corpus (based on surveys conducted in libraries across Europe, the Middle East and India – as specified in the introduction)

Table 1 –Manuscript Versions of al-Damāmīnī's *Ta'liq al-farā'd*

Shelfmark	Library	Scribe	Owner	Place	Fihrist/ Tarjama	Date
Beyazid 6281	Süleymaniye	-	-	-	-	-
Beyazid 6282	Süleymaniye	-	-	-	-	-
Carullah 1890-002	Süleymaniye	-	-	-	-	1020 h./1611
Fatih 4909	Süleymaniye	-	Ḥākim Bāshā Efendi	-	Fihrist	1095 h./1684
Fatih 4910	Süleymaniye	Amīr b. Ḥasan	Ḥākim Bāshā Efendi	Cairo (al-Azhar)	-	(vol ii of 4909) -1095 h./1684
Fatih 4911	Süleymaniye	-	-	-	-	-
Fatih 4912	Süleymaniye	-	-	-	-	1021 h./1612
Hekimoglu 888	Süleymaniye	Quṭb al-Dīn	Muḥammad Raḍī al-Dīn b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Qazānī	Mecca	Fihrist	972 h./1565
Hhusnupasa	Süleymaniye	-	-	-	-	1126 h./1714
Laleli 3176	Süleymaniye	-	Aḥmad b. Ḥasan b. al-Shaykh Samān al-Sas (?)	-	Fihrist	-
Murad Molla 1675	Süleymaniye	-	Shaykh b. Ḥasan	Constantinople	Fihrist	959 h./1552
Murad Molla 1676	Süleymaniye	-	-	-	Fihrist	959 h./1552
Murad Molla 1677	Süleymaniye	-	-	-	Fihrist	-
Nuruosmaniya 4561	Süleymaniye	-	-	-	-	-

Ragip Pasa 1326	Süleymani ye	-	-	-	-	1090 h./16 79
Sehid Ali Pasha 2412	Süleymani ye	-	Several owners		-	before 1071 h.
Sehid Ali Pasha 2413	Süleymani ye	-	‘Abd al- Ḥayy Muṣṭafā al- Ḥusaynī	-	Fihrist	-
Sehid Ali Pasha 2414	Süleymani ye	-	‘Abd al- Ḥayy Muṣṭafā al- Ḥusaynī	-	Fihrist	-
Yeni Cami 1071	Süleymani ye	Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Jibrīl al- Haytamī al-Shāfi‘ī	li— Sayyidinā al-Mawlāna al-‘ālim al- ‘alāma al- Shamsī Shams al- Dīn Muḥammad b. al- Shihābī Shihāb al- Dīn Aḥmad al-ma‘rūf nasabahu al-karīm bi- qishṭa al- tājir bi-sūq al-harāmiza	Cairo (al- Azhar)	-	984 h. /1576
MS Nahw 1009	Dār al- Kutub	-	Several different owners	-	Fihrist	1091/ 1680
MS Nahw 1057	Al-Azhar	-	-	-	Fihrist	-
MS IO Islamic 999	British Library	-	-	-	-	1059/ 1649

Table 2 – Manuscript versions of al-Damāmīnī’s *Tuḥfat al-gharīb*/*Sharḥ Mughnī*/*Sharḥ al-Mazj*
Tuḥfat al-gharīb (Hindī version)

Shelfmark	Library	Scribe	Owner	Place	Fihrist/ Tarjama	Date
Carullah 01941	Süleymani ye	[-] al-Din b. Mustafa b. Ali	-	Hisarlıq, Beki- shahr	Fihrist	1092/ 1681
Corlulu Ali Pasha 413	Süleymani ye	-	Royal Waqf and ownership notes	-	-	-
Damad Ibrahim 1082	Süleymani ye	-	-	-	-	-
Fatih 5045	Süleymani ye	Ismail b. Turki al- Mughshalil (?) al-Maliki	Different ownership notes and waqf seals	-	-	926/ 1520
Hamidiye 1316	Süleymani ye	-	Royal Waqf seal and notation	-	-	-
Harput 255 (in- complete)	Süleymani ye	-	Waqf (1247/ 1832)	-	-	-
Harput 257 (in- complete)	Süleymani ye	-	-	-	-	-
Karacele- bizade 325	Süleymani ye	-	Waqf seal	-	Tarjama	-
Laleli 3438 (Vol. I)	Süleymani ye	-	Royal Waqf seal and notation, ownership notes	-	-	Reign of sultan ?
Laleli 3439 (Vol. II)	Süleymani ye	-	Royal Waqf seal and notation, ownership notes	-	-	1021/ 1612
Laleli 3440 (part of previous?)	Süleymani ye	-	-	-	-	-
Murad Buhari 267	Süleymani ye	Muhammad b. Isma’il (...) b. Ibrahim (...)	Waqf notations	-	-	844/ 1441
Pertevni- yal 658	Süleymani ye	-	Several 11 th century ‘min kutub’ notes	-	-	862/ 1458

Reisulkutt ab 1055 (Vol. I)	Süleymani ye		Waqf-seal			-
Reisulkutt ab 1056 (Vol. II)	Süleymani ye		Waqf-seal			1026/ 1617
Serez 3266	Süleymani ye		Waqf-seal			1054/ 1644
Sehid Ali Pasha 2350	Süleymani ye		Waqf-seal			977/ 1570
Sehid Ali Pasha 2351	Süleymani ye		Waqf-seal			888/ 1483
Yeni Cami 1088	Süleymani ye		Waqf-seal		Tarjama and poetry	-
Yeni Cami 1089	Süleymani ye		Royal Waqf- seal			851/ 1447
Yeni Medrese 236	Süleymani ye		Waqf-seal			-
Nuruos- maniye 4606	Süleymani ye		Royal Waqf- seal			1002/ 1594
Mehmet Sefayihi 54 (frag- ment)	Süleymani ye		-			-
Ragip Pasa 1370	Süleymani ye		Ownership note Waqf- seal			-
Serez 3263	Süleymani ye		Waqf- notations			-
Serez 3259 (frag- ment)	Süleymani ye		Ownership notes and Waqf-seal			-
Serez 3260 (frag- ment)	Süleymani ye					-
Serez 3261(frag- ment)	Süleymani ye					-
Serez 3262(frag- ment)	Süleymani ye					-
Atif Efendi 2555	Süleymani ye		Waqf-seal and ownership note		Tarjama	1003/ 1595

Kilic Ali Pasha	Süleymaniye		Waqf-seal and ownership note		Tarjama	963/1556
MS Naḥw 76	Dār al-Kutub	-	-	-	-	-
MS Nahw Taymūr 292	Dār al-Kutub	-	-	-	-	-
MS Nahw Taymūr 291	Dār al-Kutub	-	-	-	-	-
MS Naḥw 466	Dār al-Kutub	-	-	-	-	-
MS Nahw 971	Al-Azhar	Shaykh Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Busyūnī	Several owners	Cairo	Tarjama	994/1586
MS Naḥw 3226	Al-Azhar	Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wārith [...] al-Shādhilī al-Mansāwī al-Ḥanafī	Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wārith [...] al-Shādhilī al-Mansāwī al-Ḥanafī	-	-	1013/1605
MS Naḥw 3225	Al-Azhar	Zayn al-‘Abidīn b. Muḥammad al-Turlāwī al-Azharī al-Ḥanafī	Zayn al-‘Abidīn b. Muḥammad al-Turlāwī al-Azharī al-Ḥanafī	-	Tarjama	1006/1598
MS 2120	Khuda Bakhsh	Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Qāsim al-Nuwayrī al-Shāfi‘ī	Several previous owners – one of them is al-Mutawwaki l Ismā‘īl	-	Tarjama	901/1495
MS IO Bijapur 7	British Library	-	Seal of Maḥmūd Gāwān – library entry note referring to Shāh Nawāz Khān	-	-	849/1445

Sharḥ Muḡhnī al-labīb (Yemenī version)

Hamidiye 1286	Süleymaniye	-	Royal Waqf seal and notation	-	-	818/1415 (compositional)
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Serez 3265	Süleymaniye	-	Waqf-seal			991/1583
Yeni Cami 1090	Süleymaniye	-	Royal Waqf- seal	-	-	-
Naḥw 1757	Dār al-Kutub	-	-	-	-	-
MS Arab. d. 246	Bodleian	-	-	-	-	903/1498

Sharḥ al-Mazj (final version written in the Deccan towards the end of his life)

MS Nahw Taymūr 535 (2 vols)	Dār al- Kutub	Shāhin al- Awamanāwī al-Ḥanafī al-Ḥusaynī	Shāhin al- Awamanāwī al-Ḥanafī al-Ḥusaynī	-	-	1053/1643
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Table 3 –Manuscript Versions of al-Damāmīnī’s *al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy*

Shelf-mark	Library	Scribe	Owner	Place	Fihrist/ Tarjama	Date
MS Nahw 310	Dār al-Kutub	-	-	-	-	-
MS Atif Efendi 02573-001	Süleymaniye	-	-	-	-	964/ 1557
MS Hacı Selim Aga 1170	Süleymaniye	-	-	Mecca	Fihrist	-
MS Ragıp Pasa 1374	Süleymaniye	Manşūr b. Selīm b. Ḥasan al-Damanāwī al-Azharī	-	-	-	1052/ 1642
MS Sehid Ali Pasha 02535	Süleymaniye	Jalāl al-Dīn b. Ḥusayn b. Muflih b. Kamāl b. Muflih al-Awālī al-Ḥurānī	Jalāl al-Dīn b. Ḥusayn b. Muflih b. Kamāl b. Muflih al-Awālī al-Ḥurānī	-	-	990/ 1582
MS Nahw 50	APOML	-	-	-	-	-
MS Nahw 132	APOML	-	Shaykh Niẓām al-Dīn al-Faqīr Ghulāmshāh b. al-Sayyid Fāḍilshāh	-	-	-
MS Nahw 107	Salar Jung	-	Ḥaydar Yār Khān	-	-	Probably 11 th / 17 th c.
MS Nahw 108	Salar Jung	-	-	Aḥmad-nagar	-	984/ 1576
MS IO Bijapur 4	Bijapur	Sayyid İbrāhīm b. Sultān al-Şāliḥīn Shāh Muştafā Ḥabīb Allāh [...] al-Ḥusaynī al-Aḥmadī Abā al-Ḥusaynī al-Qādirī	Sayyid İbrāhīm Muştafā Aḥmadī	-	-	963/ 1555

MS IO Bijapur 2	Bijapur	-	-	-	-	16 th - 17 th c. (?)
MS IO Bijapur 3	Bijapur	Makhdūm Qāḍiy Kabīr al-Milla wa- l-Dīn Qāḍiy al-Kābulī	Makhdūm Qāḍiy Kabīr al-Milla wa- l-Dīn Qāḍiy al-Kābulī	Bijapur	Fihrist	17 th c. (?)
TC 169 (Vol I and II)	Bengal Asiatic Society	-	-	-	-	Proba- bly 9 th / 15 th c.

Table 4 – Bijapur Collection – Asar Mahal Manuscripts of the philological disciplines dateable to the 15th-17th centuries, British Library, London – based on Loth 1877.

Shelf-mark	Author	Title	Field	Fihrist	Place	Date
MS IO B 267	Al-Taftāzānī	Sharḥ	Rhetoric	-	-	832/1429
MS IO B 257	Ḥasan Jalabī	Ḥāshiya	Rhetoric	-	-	1010/1602
MS IO 260	Ḥasan Jalabī	Ḥāshiya	Rhetoric	-	-	983/1575
MS IO B 259	Al-Samarqandī	Ḥāshiya	Rhetoric			1009/1601
MS IO B 251	Al-Taftāzānī	Al-Muṭawwal	Rhetoric	-	-	883/1478
MS IO B 263	Al-Taftāzānī	Al-Mukhtaṣar	Rhetoric	-	-	877/1473
MS IO B 250	Al-Taftāzānī	Al-Mukhtaṣar	Rhetoric	-	-	1015/1607
MS IO B 9	Al-Muṭarrizī	Al-Miṣbāḥ	Grammar			1033/1624
MS IO B 13	Al-Sīrāfī al-Fālī	Sharḥ	Grammar			822/1419
MS IO B 12	Al-Sīrāfī al-Fālī	Sharḥ	Grammar			832/1429
MS IO B 17	Radī al-Dīn al-Astarābādī	Sharḥ	Grammar			1000/1592
MS IO B 23	Ibn ‘Arabshāh al-Isfarā’inī	Ḥawāshī	Grammar			1025/1616
MS IO B 24	Ibn ‘Arabshāh al-Isfarā’inī	Ḥawāshī	Grammar			976/1569
MS IO B 31	Al-Ḍarīrī al-Bukhārī	Al-Ḍarīrī	Grammar			960/1553
MS IO B 7	Al-Damāmīnī	Tuḥfat al-gharīb	Grammar			849/1445
MS IO B 4	Al-Damāmīnī	Al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy	Grammar			993/1585
MS IO B 3	Al-Balkhī	Al-Wāfiy	Grammar			17 th c. transcription (analysed in chapter 3)
MS IO B 35	Al-Muṭarrizī	Al-Maghrib	Lexicography			990/1582

Table 5 - Salar Jung Museum and Library Collection, Hyderabad – List of Arabic Manuscripts of the philological disciplines, dateable to the 15th-17th centuries – based on Ashraf 1993.

Shelf-mark	Author	Title	Field	Fihrist	Place	Date
MS 48/3	al-Mawṣalī	Risālat l-lamā'	Grammar	-	-	1059/ 1649
MS 97	al-Quhundazī	al-mukhtaṣar fi n-naḥw (a'ḍ-ḍarīrī)	Grammar	-	-	1090/ 1698
MS 105	al-Zamakhsharī	al-mufaṣṣal	Grammar	-	-	1079/ 1669
MS 53/1	al-Ardabīlī	sharḥu'l-unmūdhaj	Grammar	-	-	1110/ 1699
MS 120/1	Mullā Ṣādiq Ḥalwā'ī	al-ḥāshiya 'ala muqaddama al-adab	Grammar			984/ 1576
MS 64	al-Isfarā'inī	ḍaw' al-miṣbāḥ	Grammar		Burhan-pur	1053/ 1643
MS 37	Ya'qūb b. Sayyid 'Alī	ḥāshīya 'alā sharḥ dībāja al-miṣbāḥ	Grammar		Istanbul	904/ 1499
MS 81	Ibn al-Ḥājib	al-Kāfiya	Grammar			1064/ 1654
MS 82	Ibn al-Ḥājib	al-Kāfiya	Grammar			1068/ 1658
MS 83	Ibn al-Ḥājib	al-Kāfiya	Grammar			1094/ 1683
MS 84	Ibn al-Ḥājib	al-Kāfiya	Grammar			1098/ 1687
MS 85	Ibn al-Ḥājib	al-Kāfiya	Grammar			1115/ 1703
MS 56	Raḍī al-Dīn al-Astrābādī	al-rāḍī sharḥ al-kāfiya	Grammar			1088/ 1677
MS 109	Rukn al-Din al-Astrābādī	al-wāfiyah fī sharḥ al-kāfiya, (al-mutawassit)	Grammar			973/ 1566
MS 110	Rukn al-Din al-Astrābādī	al-wāfiyah fī sharḥ al-kāfiya, (al-mutawassit)	Grammar			846/ 1442
MS 114	Rukn al-Din al-Astrābādī	al-Wajīz fī sharḥ al-kāfiya	Grammar			960/ 1553
MS 115	Rukn al-Dīn al-Astrābādī	al-Wajīz fī sharḥ al-kāfiya	Grammar			974/ 1566

MS 36	ʿIsā b. Aḥmad a’s-Sūdānī	al-ḥāshiya ‘ala l-muwashshaḥ	Grammar			1035/ 1626
MS 66	Ṣafīu’d-Dīn b. Naṣīr Dīlwalī	Ghāyat al-taḥqīq	Grammar			1082/ 1672
MS 71	al-Jāmī	al-fawā’id al-ḍiyā’iya	Grammar		Hama	1063/ 1653
MS 72	al-Jāmī	al-fawā’id al-ḍiyā’iya	Grammar			1094/ 1683
MS 26	ʿAbd al-Ghafūr al-Lārī	al-ḥāshiya ‘ala l-fawā’id al-ḍiyā’iyah	Grammar			1085/ 1674
MS 23/2	al-Siyālkūtī	Takmīla ḥāshiya ‘Abd l-Ghafūr	Grammar			1072/ 1661
MS 21	al-Siyālkūtī	al-ḥāshiya ‘alā ḥāshiya ‘Abd al-Ghafūr	Grammar			1091/ 1680
MS 27	Wajīh al-Dīn al-Alawī al-Gujarātī	al-ḥāshīyah ‘alā l-fawā’id al-ḍiyā’iyah	Grammar		Cambay	1008/ 1600
MS 28	Wajīh al-Dīn al-Alawī al-Gujarātī	al-ḥāshīyah ‘alā l-fawā’id al-ḍiyā’iyah	Grammar			1008/ 1601
MS 33	Mullā Muḥammad Ṣādiq (Ḥaiwā’ī)	al-ḥāshīyah ‘alā l-fawā’id al-ḍiyā’iyah	Grammar			1033/ 1624
MS 39	-	al-ḥāshiya ‘ala l-kāfiya	Grammar			893/ 1488
MS Fal 106/3	-	al-Īdāh	Falsafa		Patna	1031/ 1621
MS 13	al-Jarābardī	Sharḥ al-shāfiya	Grammar			1046/ 1636
MS 15	Al-Nizām al-Arāj	Sharḥ al-shāfiya	Grammar			1054/ 1644
MS 16	Al-Nizām al-Arāj	Sharḥ al-shāfiya	Grammar			1065/ 1655
MS 9	al-Taftazānī	Sharḥ al-taṣrīf	Grammar			1008/ 1600
MS 10	al-Taftazānī	Sharḥ al-taṣrīf	Grammar			1075/ 1665
MS 5	Ibn Mālīk	al-Alfiya	Grammar			1068/ 1658
MS 47	Ibn ‘Aqīl	Sharḥ al-Alfiya	Grammar		Medina	884/ 1479
MS 48/1	Ibn ‘Aqīl	Sharḥ al-Alfiya	Grammar		Hydera- bad	1059/ 1649

MS 50/1	Ibn 'Aqīl	Sharḥ al-Alfiya	Grammar			1105/ 1694
MS 92	al-Isfarā'inī	Lubāb al-i'rāb	Grammar			807/ 1404
MS 94	Al-Barkūmīnī	Lubb al-albāb fī ilm al-i'rāb	Grammar			972/ 1565
MS 95	Al-Ḥaṭṭāb	Mutammima al-ājurrūmīyah	Grammar			1098/ 1688
MS 108	Al-Damāmīnī	al-Manhal al-sāfiy fī sharḥ al-wāfiy	Grammar		Ahmad-nagar	984/ 1576
MS 41	Al-Jurjānī	al-Rashād fī sharḥ al-irshād	Grammar		Kalyan	1060/ 1650
MS 3	al-Dawlatābādī al-Hindī	al-Irshād fī l-naḥw	Grammar			912/ 1506
MS 20	Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Mas'ūd	Mirāḥ al-arwāḥ	Grammar			1048/ 1639
MS 22	Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Mas'ūd	Mirāḥ al-arwāḥ	Grammar			1083/ 1672
MS 21	Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Mas'ūd	Mirāḥ al-arwāḥ	Grammar			1094/ 1682
MS 2	Abū 'Uthmān Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ	al-Bayān-wa l-tabiyīn	Rhetoric			1028/ 1619
MS 31	Al-Taftāzānī	Sharḥ al-miftāḥ	Rhetoric			817/ 1414
MS 42	Al-Jurjānī	al-Miṣbāḥ fī sharḥ al-miftāḥ	Rhetoric			849/ 1445
MS 3	Al-Qazwīnī	Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ	Rhetoric			969/ 1562
MS 43	Al-Taftāzānī	Al-Muṭawwal	Rhetoric		Herat	1003/ 1595
MS 44	Al-Taftāzānī	Al-Muṭawwal	Rhetoric			1026/ 1617
MS 18	Al-Jurjānī	al-ḥāshiya 'alā l-Muṭawwal	Rhetoric			899/ 1494
MS 19	Al-Jurjānī	al-ḥāshiya 'alā l-Muṭawwal	Rhetoric			1079/ 1669
MS 55	Aḥmad b. Abīwardī	al-ḥāshiya 'alā l-Muṭawwal	Rhetoric			926/ 1519
MS 36	Al-Taftāzānī	Mukhtaṣar al-ma'ānī	Rhetoric			1067/ 1657
MS 41	Al-Taftāzānī	Mukhtaṣar al-ma'ānī	Rhetoric			986/ 1578

MS 4	Maūlānāzāde al-Khiṭā'ī	al-ḥāshiya 'alā mukhtaṣar al- ma'ānī	Rhetoric			1056/ 1646
MS 5	Maūlānāzāde al-Khiṭā'ī	al-ḥāshiya 'alā mukhtaṣar al- ma'ānī	Rhetoric			1057/ 1648
MS 6	Maūlānāzāde al-Khiṭā'ī	al-ḥāshiya 'alā mukhtaṣar al- ma'ānī	Rhetoric			1089/ 1678
MS 11	Al-Yazdī	al-ḥāshiya 'alā ḥāshiya mukhtaṣar al- ma'ānī	Rhetoric			1095/ 1684
MS 57/1+2	Al- Samarqandī	farā'idu'l- qawā'id wa sharḥahū	Rhetoric			1078/ 1668
MS 8	al-Tha'ālibī	Fiqh a-lugha wa-sirr al- 'arabīya	Lexicography		Burūj (Gujarat)	1012/ 1603
MS 18&19	Al-Fīrūzābādī	Al-Qāmūs al- muḥiṭ	Lexicography			1064/ 1654
MS 13	Al-Fīrūzābādī	Al-Qāmūs al- muḥiṭ	Lexicography		Mashhād	1075/ 1664
MS 23	Al-Suyūṭī	al-Muzhir fī 'ulūm al- lugha	Lexicography			984/ 1576
MS 2	Muṣṭafā b. Ibrāhīm al- Kalyūbī	Zubdat al- amthāl	Lexicography			1009/ 1601

Table 6a –

Andhra Pradesh Oriental Manuscript Library (APOML), Asafiya Collection, Hyderabad
Naḥw (Grammar) – List of manuscripts dateable to the 15th-17th centuries

Shelf-mark	Author	Title	Fihrist	Place	Date of Reproduction/ Circulation
Naḥw 2	Ibn Hishām	Mughnī al-labīb	-		17 th c.
Naḥw 4	-	Kāfiya mutarajim min fawā'id shāfiya Zaynīzāde	-	Lāsūr near Dawlatabad (Deccan)	1093/1682
Naḥw 6	Radī al-Dīn al-Astārābādī	Sharḥ raḍī bar kāfiya	-	-	1048/1639
Naḥw 11	-	Īdāḥ al-ma'ānī	-	-	probably 12 th /18 th c. copy
Naḥw 19	'Abd al-Ḥakīm al-Siyālkūtī	Hāshiya 'Abd al-Ḥakīm bar 'Abd al-Ghafūr	-	Burhānpūr (Deccan)	1074/1664
Naḥw 20	'Abd al-Raḥman	Hāshiya 'Abd al-Raḥman bar Sharḥ Mullā Jāmī	-	-	Probably 9 th c.
Naḥw 33	-	Sharḥ wa matn dar naḥw	-	-	838/1435
Naḥw 43	-	Kifāya sharḥ al-namūdḥaj min kitab al-mufaṣṣal	-	-	11 th /17 th c.
Naḥw 46	al-Shaykh al-'Allāma al-Muḥaqqiq Abī 'Umar Uthmān b. Abī Bakr al-Māliki	Al-Kāfiya wa-sharḥ	-	Ṣanā'a	11 th /17 th c. transmission
Naḥw 47	Rukn al-Dīn al-Astārābādī	Wafiya sharḥ al-kāfiya al-ma'rūf bi-mutawassat	-	-	864/1460
Naḥw 49	-	Hāshiya Nūr al-ḥaqq bar Sharḥ Jāmī	-	-	898/1493
Naḥw 62	-	Sharḥ Alfiyya	-	-	1074/1664
Naḥw 67	Al-Zamakhsharī	Al-Mufaṣṣal	-	-	741/1341

Naḥw 70	-	Kitāb sharḥ al-Tashīl	Fihrist	-	-
Naḥw 92	Ibn Hishām	Mūkid al-adhḥān wa-mūkiḏ al-wasnān	-	-	1078/1668
Naḥw 93	-	al-Muwashshah ‘alā al-Kāfiya	-	-	1095/1684
Naḥw 120	-	Sharḥ laṭīf ‘alā shawāhid qaṭr al-nidā’ li-l-imām ‘Abd āllāh ibn Hishām	-	-	17 th c. circulation
Naḥw 125	-	Kitāb al-Muwashshah ‘alā Kāfiya li-Ibn al-Ḥāḓib	-	-	17 th c. circulation
Naḥw 126	Khālid b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Azharī	al-Sharḥ al-mashhūr bi-l-tawḏīḥ	-	-	1100/1689
Naḥw 132	Al-Damāmīnī	al-Manhal al-ṣāfiy bi-sharḥ al-wāfiy	-	-	-
Naḥw 139	Ibn Mālik	Alfiyya	-	-	980/1573
Naḥw 155	-	Kitāb al-namūdhaj	-	-	1079/1669
Naḥw 164	Al-Jāmī	Sharḥ Jāmī	-	-	1030/1621
Naḥw 165	-	Ghāyat al-Taḥqīq Sharḥ Kāfiya	-	-	1099/1688
Naḥw 173	Mullā ‘Iṣām	Hāshiya Mullā ‘Iṣām bar Sharḥ Jāmī	-	-	984/1576
Naḥw 294	-	Kitāb Tuḥfat al-shāfiya	-	-	713/1313
Naḥw 314	Miyān Shāh Wajh al-Dīn	Hāshiya Shāh Wajh al-Dīn bar sharḥ Mullā Jāmī	-	-	1056/1646
Naḥw 315	-	Sharḥ Alfiyya Ibn Nāḓim	-	-	1065/1655
Naḥw 316	-	al-Masā’id sharḥ tashīl al-fawā’id	-	-	996/1588
Naḥw 325	Ibn Hishām	Mughnī al-Labīb	-	-	1003/1595

Naḥw 336	Al-Suyūṭī	Munāzarāt al-Suyūṭī			1008/1600
Naḥw 373	-	Kitāb Farā'id al-Qalā'id fī Mukhtaṣar Sharḥ al-Shawāhid			16 th c. circulation
Naḥw 380	-	Sharḥ al-Namūdhaj			1095/1684

Table 6b

Andhra Pradesh Oriental Manuscript Library (APOML), Asafiya Collection, Hyderabad
Ṣarf wa-naḥw (Morphology) – List of manuscripts dateable to the 15th-17th centuries

Shelf-mark	Author	Title	Fihrist/ Tarjama	Place	Date of Reproduction/ Circulation
MS 9	Al-Taftāzānī	Sharḥ taṣrīf al-‘Izzī	-	-	875/1471
MS 54	-	Jārbardī (?)			1098/1687
MS 167	Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Muqrī [...]	Kitāb Tāj al-maṣādir			1089/1678
MS 205	-	Faṭḥ al-Laṭīf bi-sharḥ taṣrīf al-taṣrīf			1075/1665

Table 6c

Andhra Pradesh Oriental Manuscript Library (APOML), Asafiya Collection, Hyderabad
Balāghat (Rhetoric) – List of manuscripts dateable to the 15th-17th centuries

Shelf-mark	Author	Title	Fihrist	Place	Date of Reproduction/ Circulation
MS 9	al-Taftazānī	al-Muṭawwal	-	-	1027/1618
MS 15	Ḥasan b. Shihāb al-Dīn al-Shāmī al-‘Āmilī	‘Uqūd al-durar fī abyāt al-muṭawwal wa-l-mukhtaṣar	-	-	1088/1677
MS 59	Aḥmad al-Abīwardī	Hāshiya Abīwardī bar mutawwal	-	-	1063/1653
MS 63	Sayyid al-Raḥman b. ‘Īsā b. Murshid al-Ḥanafī	al-Wāfī bi-ḥall al-kāfiy	-	-	1037/1628
MS 66	-	Sharḥ al-Sāwīya	-	-	979/1572
MS 78	al-Taftāzānī	Mukhtaṣar al-ma‘ānī			1097/1686

MS 121	Al-Ḥarīrī	Sharḥ Durra al-ghawwāṣ fi awḥām al-khawāṣ			1076/1666
MS 125	Al-Ardabīlī	Sharḥ maqṣūra al-durrīya			1084/1673
MS 151	-	Miṣbāh Sharḥ Miftāḥ al-Sakkākī			1090/1679
MS 156	-	Sharḥ al-shawāhid	Fihrist		1051/1641
MS 167	al-Ḥasanī	-	Fihrist		1003/1595
MS 190	al-Taftazānī	al-Muṭawwal			107? – 17 th c.
MS 194	al-Taftazānī	al-Muṭawwal			1092/1681
MS 199	al-Taftazānī	al-Muṭawwal			1089/1678
MS 245	Shaykh Ghulām Naqshband al-Shāfiī	Sharḥ al-qaṣīda al-khazrajiyya			1095/1684
MS 318	Shaykh Ismā‘īl b. al-Muqrī	Badī‘īya al-Shaykh Ismā‘īl b. al-Muqrī wa-sharḥahā			1007/1599
MS 362	al-Taftazānī	al-Muṭawwal			Presumably 10 th /17 th ?
MS 366	Shaykh al-Islām	Ḥāshiya Shaykh al-Islām bar mukhtaṣar al-ma‘ānī			Presumably 10 th /16 th - 11 th /17 th c.
MS 367	Mullazāde Khaṭā‘i	Sharḥ mukhtaṣar al-ma‘ānī			Presumably 10 th /16 th - 11 th /17 th c.
MS 399	al-Taftazānī	al-Muṭawwal			948/1541
MS 409	al-Taftazānī	al-Muṭawwal			1074/1664

Table 6d

Andhra Pradesh Oriental Manuscript Library (APOML), Asafiya Collection, Hyderabad
Lughat (Lexicography) – List of manuscripts dateable to the 15th-17th centuries

Shelf-mark	Author	Title	Fihrist/ Tarjama	Place	Date of Reproduction/ Circulation
MS Lughat 8	Al-Jawharī	Al-Ṣaḥāḥ	-	-	1092/1681
MS Lughat 30	Al-Damirī	Ḥayat al-Ḥayawān al-kubrā, vol. 1	Tarjama		1083/1672
MS Lughat 31	Al-Damirī	Ḥayat al-Ḥayawān al-kubrā, vol. 2			1083/1672
MS Lughat 51.1	Al-Fīrūzābādī	Al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ vol. 1			1035/1626
MS Lughat 51.2	Al-Fīrūzābādī	Al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ vol. 2			Presumably also 11 th /17 th century

MS Lughat 166.1	-	Nihāya fī ni‘mat gharīb vol. 2			1071/1661
MS Lughat 229	Al-Fīrūzābādī	Al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ			1080/1670
MS Lughat 231	Al-Fīrūzābādī	Al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ			969/1562
MS Lughat 233	Jamāl Qarshī	Kitāb Ṣurāḥ mīn al- Ṣaḥāḥ			1095/1684
MS Lughat 261	Jamal Qarshī	Kitāb Ṣurāḥ mīn al- Ṣaḥāḥ			1083/1672
MS Lughat 532	Al-Suyūṭī	Kitāb al-Muzhir fī l- lugha	Tarjama		988/1580

Cairo Corpus

Table 7a – al-Jāmī – *Al-Fawā'id al-Ḍīyā'īya* – Manuscripts of 'Definitive Texts' dateable to the 15th-17th centuries collected at the al-Azhar Mosque Library – based on the online catalogue *in situ*

Shelfmark	Fihrist	Date
nahw 109	-	probably 11 th /17 th c. - 1097/1686 circulation according to title-page
Naḥw 849	-	incomplete at the end
Naḥw 1509	-	1000/1592
Naḥw 1510	-	incomplete
Naḥw 7108	-	-
Naḥw 461	-	-
Naḥw 5223	-	-
Naḥw 5293	-	-
Naḥw 448	-	1090/1679
Naḥw 5342	-	incomplete at both end
Naḥw 5979	-	957/1550
Naḥw 3212	-	-
Naḥw 5226	-	-
Naḥw 2676	Fihrist	1118/1706
Naḥw 2672	Fihrist	966/1559
Naḥw 5319	-	-
Naḥw 7726	-	-
Naḥw 5348	-	1127/1715
Ṣarf 1251	-	-
Ṣarf 1341	-	-
Naḥw 3463	-	1060/1650
Naḥw 7763	-	-
Naḥw 5334	-	incomplete at the end

Table 7b – al-Taftāzānī – *al-Muṭawwal* – Manuscripts of 'Definitive Texts' dateable to the 15th-17th centuries collected at the al-Azhar Mosque Library – based on the online catalogue *in situ*

Shelfmark	Fihrist	Date
Balāgha 587	-	-
Balāgha 677	-	-
Balāgha 1716	-	1166/1753
Balāgha 1715	-	1229/1814
Balāgha 737	-	877/1473
Balāgha 78	-	-
Balāgha 197	-	-
Balāgha 193	-	1205/1791
Balāgha 195	-	-
Balāgha 202	-	1006/1598
Balāgha 3386	-	-
Balāgha 3389	-	806/1404
Balāgha 3387	-	-
Balāgha 3390	-	-
Balāgha 3388	-	-
Balāgha 3383	-	-

Balāgha 3384	-	-
Balāgha 3385	-	1176/1763
Balāgha 148	-	-
Balāgha 166	-	-
Balāgha 141	-	1206/1792
Balāgha 730	-	1051/1641
Balāgha 729	-	-
Balāgha 95	-	-
Balāgha 69	-	1060/1650
Balāgha 1683	-	---
Balāgha 3108	-	979/1572
Balāgha 3106	-	-
Balāgha 1570	-	1230/1815
Balāgha 1684	-	incomplete
Balāgha 1685	-	incomplete
Balāgha 42	-	-
Balāgha 45	-	-
Balāgha 1620	-	incomplete
Balāgha 525	-	-
Balāgha 3082	-	-
Balāgha 1884	-	880/1476
Balāgha 2932	-	1047/1638
Balāgha 2936	-	incomplete at the end
Balāgha 2975	-	1057/1647
Balāgha 2961	-	-
Balāgha 2977	-	-
Balāgha 1535	-	988/1580
Balāgha 269	-	856/1452
Balāgha 1534	-	1090/1679
Balāgha 1536	-	1134/1722
Balāgha 2916	-	-
Balāgha 1199	-	1270/1854
Balāgha 2920	-	899/1494
Balāgha 1793	-	-
Balāgha 3024	-	1032/1623
Balāgha 2627	-	1065/1655
Balāgha 2930	-	842/1439
Balāgha 2152	-	1195/1781
Balāgha 1792	-	1293/1876
Balāgha 16	-	-
Balāgha 3691	-	1277/1861
Balāgha 2016	-	1268/1852
Balāgha 22	-	1008/1608
Balāgha 1768	-	1205/1791
Balāgha 1	-	1007/1599
Balāgha 985	-	-
Balāgha 2	-	1025/1616
Balāgha 2626	-	1119/1707
Balāgha 3714	-	1271/1855
Balāgha 3800	-	-

