

Texts as Objects of Value and Veneration

Islamic Law Books in the Indian Ocean Littoral

Mahmood Kooria

Leiden University, the Netherlands

m.kooriadathodi@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Abstract

For the Islamic communities, the Quran is not the only sacred text or object, but most religious texts is sacred and valuable for their comparative connectivity with the text and contents of the Holy Book. The phenomenological discourses on Islamic textuality are very much centered on Sufism. The legal texts have hardly been acknowledged as part of religious signs, symbols or rituals, whereas those are considered the most important for the majority of Muslims in the Indian Ocean littoral who identify themselves as Sunnī and Shāfiʿī Muslims. The texts of the Shāfiʿī school have played a crucial role in disseminating and sustaining ideas and notions of Islam in the littoral from the age of the manuscripts until the present age of print and new media. As sources of this knowledge and their faith systems, those texts have found significant places in their religious imaginations and performances with varying meanings and functions as objects of sacralization, conservation, and commodification. This article analyses multiple forms of intentionality and temporal and spatial awareness in the making and keeping of these legal texts as valued and venerated objects.

Keywords

legal texts – phenomenology – Indian Ocean world – Islamic law – Shāfiʿī Muslims

Introduction

The texts in the Islamic world are considered to be objects of high value and veneration among the learned classes as well as the laity. The *kitāb*, as the religious texts are called in Arabic and in vernacular languages influenced by Islamic culture, is more than just a book. It reflects and represents ‘the *kitāb*’,

that is the Quran, in terms of its recognition, reception, value and related socio-cultural and religious discourses. It is often a precious artefact that provides its possessor with social status, a sacralized aura, economic benefits and religious authority. The kitāb is valuable not only for the knowledge communities for its contents and as a source object of wisdom, but for the Muslim community at large, which honors it in different modes of sociality, economy, and polity. Historically such an aura as that of the kitāb surrounded the manuscripts in the Islamic world but it also spilled over to the age of the printing press and mass produced books.

The growing literature on the history of the book and written culture in the Islamic world has centered very much on the Middle Eastern socio-political and cultural terrains.¹ In the last decade, however, the scholars have tried to look at the book cultures among Muslims of Sub-Saharan Africa, Central, South and East Asia.² If the studies on the Middle Eastern contexts have explored many genres of Islamic books and have identified various levels of production, genres, contents, transmission methods, impact, etc. the works on Islamic environments outside the Middle East have yet to analyze such aspects. A large number of texts produced in Islamic Africa and Asia are law books and this article explores the ways in which such texts are read, reread, revered and archived. Brinkley Messick, Ghislaine Lydon and other scholars have shed light on the production and dissemination of legal texts and documents in the respective Yemeni and African contexts (Messick 1993; Lydon 2009). My focus here therefore is on the socialization, commodification, and conservation of legal texts in the contemporary coastal areas of South and Southeast Asia and East Africa, with a close attention to the Indian Ocean littoral that binds these regions historically and culturally.³ Since the majority of Muslims in this coastal belt follow Shāfiʿī school of Islamic law, I zoom into the nuances of this school's texts by taking three interconnected texts as cases: the canon of the school, *Minhāj al-ṭālibīn* (hereafter *Minhāj*) by Yahyā bin Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 1277); its commentary *Tuḥfat al-muḥtāj* (hereafter *Tuḥfa*) by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 1561); its indirect summary *Faṭḥ al-muʿīn* (hereafter *Faṭḥ*) written by Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī (d. 1583?).⁴

1 The most seminal studies in the field are Rosenthal 1947; Pedersen 1984; Atiyeh 1995. The most recent works are Hirschler 2016, 2012; Gacek 2009; Pfeiffer and Kropp 2007.

2 For a recent survey, see Quenzer, Bondarev and Sobisch, 2014. Cf. Pfeiffer 2014; Jeppie 2014: 94–104; Krätli and Lydon 2011; Lydon 2009; Benite 2005.

3 There have been a few recent attempts to look into the textual circulations across the Indian Ocean world (see Bahl, 2017; Kooria 2017; cf. Sood, 2016; Ricci 2011; Feener and Sevea 2009).

4 On the importance of these texts in the Islamic legal tradition, see Kooria 2016.

Keeping these Shāfiʿī texts in background of my analysis, this article explores the ways in which Islamic legal texts operate among its possessors, disseminators, teachers, students, producers and consumers as objects of value and veneration that helps them accumulate and sustain Islam which otherwise would have been absent or distant to them. The techniques and practices of conservation, veneration and commodification of particular texts in and around the Indian Ocean littoral embody their existential subjectivity as religious groups of particular elite and sectarian clusters vis-à-vis extra-religious cosmopolitan communes. Their uses of these texts in their meaning-making processes as Sunnī-Shāfiʿī Muslims in several forms and phases of prayers, studies, talismans, rituals of remembrance, social gatherings or religious etiquette thus open up a whole terrain of phenomenological possibility that has been neglected in scholarship. Scholars have acknowledged and analyzed the social place of sacred texts and scholarly commentaries in Islamic communities, but the focus has always been on mystical and literary traditions, that too in the Middle East.⁵ The legal texts has hardly been acknowledged in this identification processes of religious signs, symbols or rituals, whereas those matter the most for the majority of Muslims in the Indian Ocean littoral who identify themselves as Sunnī and Shāfiʿī Muslims vis-à-vis their coreligionists such as the Ibādī or Shīʿī and Sunnī Ḥanafī Muslims inside and outside the littoral. Therefore, I move away from the Sufism/mysticism-oriented phenomenological interpretations of Islamic textuality in order to demonstrate how the oceanic Muslim community perceive, preserve, imagine, express and circulate their legalistic existence in their religious everyday rooted in a historical consciousness of the Shāfiʿī textual *longue durée*. The selection and circulation of a particular text, law school, educational stream, and thought-pattern are choices of their intentionality entangled with self-awareness informed from a historical cosmopolitanism of the Indian Ocean world in which innumerable ideas, texts and scholars have crisscrossed several centuries and collectives. This motivates us to explore the survival and sustenance of these legal texts as historical forces, other than historical sources, relevant in the everyday lives of their keepers, circulators, producers, mediators, and admirers and consumers.

Conserving and Conversing with Manuscripts

What is most remarkable about the textual production in Islamic legal history covering a millennium from the ninth to the nineteenth century is that the

5 The most phenomenal studies in this respect are Corbin 1993; Schimmel, 1994.

commentarial literature outshines any other genres. The majority of the works handed down to us from this period are commentaries, super-commentaries, super-super-commentaries, summaries, appendices, extractions or poetized versions of one or more earlier works written in the formative stages of the legal schools in the eighth to tenth centuries. The origin of this rich commentarial corpus (usually identified with an umbrella term: *hāshiyas*) owes much, among other reasons, to the manuscript practices dominating the Middle Eastern scholarly landscape following the book revolution in the ninth and tenth centuries after the fall in paper prices (Gruendler 2011; Shatzmiller 2015). In this book revolution, instead of copying a text word-by-word, students and teachers of a text added their explanations to the original by way of a new commentary and a new copy. Such new texts were circulated among a new audience which in turn produced another set of textual progenies. Even if a student or teacher did not write their commentary or summary on a textbook, the copyists made corrections or additions to the phrases or sentences, as J. Pedersen has noted (1984: 43–50). A multi-copied text thus often became a multi-distorted text. Unless the copyist made serious effort to edit and restore the original, all these practices largely hindered the survival of a text's 'original manuscript' written by the original author. Instead, what we get are the copies of an 'assumed' original, and those are plenty in number. In a way this is a disadvantage for historians who might want to study the original text as written by the author or circulated during the author's lifetime, whereas this is an added advantage for book historians and scholars of textual circulations and reading practices. For students of History, Law, Anthropology, Religious or Area Studies, this divergent availability of numerous manuscripts of the same text while the original copy is not extant provides many analytical promises to alleviate methodological problems and characteristics of transregional textual circulations, intellectualism and legalism across time and space. Thus, one could address: what are the methodological issues at stake once we endeavor to look into the diverse manuscript copies vis-à-vis their printed versions? How would a comparative and connected reading of these texts enlighten us on various pedagogical, psychological, socio-cultural and juridical existences of their producers, distributors and consumers?

The original manuscripts written by the authors are not available for all the three Shāfi'i legal texts under my focus, instead we have plenty of their manuscript copies available from East Africa to East Asia used in various periods as objects of study, trade, veneration, social status and authority. In addition, we also have printed copies of the same texts from the late nineteenth century onward circulated in the same places with further meanings and functions. In the last a few decades, the scholars of the school, internal or external to its long

textual tradition, have attempted to bring out (critical) editions by combining (some) manuscripts and earlier printed versions. In terms of the authenticity of these texts, it might be a difficult terrain to reach a clear-cut conclusion, even though some editions resolve a long-standing bibliographical crisis between *relatively corrupted* texts and *relatively reliable* texts.⁶ But these numerous manuscript copies and printed editions demonstrate complex nuances of textual circulations among the Shāfiʿī communities as each copy has peculiar features, appearances and even contents reflecting their various usages and functions as textbooks, sources of fatwas and litanies, commodities, inheritances, gifts, etc. Each manuscript would tell us different stories of its context, culture, collectives and institutions as well as of the broader stories about the transmission of Islamic/Shāfiʿī legal ideas and texts cutting across the confines. Variations in the marginalia of Asian and African manuscripts of same texts would help us also understand how members of different scholarly groups within the Shāfiʿī legal cosmopolis utilized and made sense of these texts in diverse historical and contemporary contexts, probably contextualizing them according to their concerns. Many ecological, environmental and cultural factors contributed to such an exercise.

The copiousness of the manuscripts thus indicates the wider educational practices, in which they were used as textbooks and study materials. Mahmud Yunus, an Indonesian scholar who studied the religious educational systems in the archipelago, mentions about the circulation of Shāfiʿī legal texts in manuscript form even in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The *Minhāj*, for example, was not printed in the region and was circulated only as manuscripts, therefore it was a very expensive textbook (Yunus 1979: 45). This usage of such manuscripts as textbooks is very conspicuous in the way these materials now appear as handed down to us. A manuscript of the *Minhāj*, for example, from early-nineteenth century Java now kept at the Leiden University Special Collections is filled with notes, marginalia and interlinear translations of Arabic words into Jāwī (see Image 1). This stands in sharp contrast to another manuscript copy of the *Minhāj* now kept at the Salar Jung Museum of Hyderabad, which is fresh as new, clean and clear from any student-like interventions, and tells us that it was an exclusive collector's item to be preserved and showcased.

The presence of marginalia, notes, comments and translations on such manuscripts enlighten us as to the continuity in the commentarial tradition of Islamic law. Despite the advent of the printing press into Muslim religious

6 Taking cue from McGann 1983: 4–5. Yet, scholars have pointed out mistakes in such critical editions. For example see the list of errors pointed out in the printed version of the *Minhāj* (al-Asiri 2013).



IMAGE 1 A page from a Minhāj manuscript from nineteenth-century Java with several comments and interlinear translations.

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS. PHOTO: AUTHOR

spheres and the consequent mass production of legal textbooks, the teachers and students of Islamic law preferred to write their own commentaries and interpretations on earlier texts. Not only were the margins and narrow spaces between lines the loci of their creativity, they also used additional pages and paper-pieces when the margins did not afford enough space for their comments. Such pieces and papers were pasted onto the pages or were bound with the manuscript-folios. All these emerged from a wider practice in the Islamic world usually called *taṣḥīḥ*. The *taṣḥīḥ* (Ar. ‘rectification’) literally means correcting mistakes in manuscripts, but it has a more positive meaning in the educational environs of the Muslim world. It includes correcting mistakes (widely called *taṣḥīf*), but more generally it is an exercise for students to cross-check the references in a text they are studying, and to read supplementary material on particular portions in preparation for a class, and to note down supportive or contradictory viewpoints from other texts in the margins. Each of such *taṣḥīḥ*-ized copies is thus a commentary in its own right and the good ones were widely sought out among classmates, colleagues and later generations of scholars. The marginalia and appended paper(-pieces) were variously called *kurippātt* in Malabar and *waraqāt* in the Malay world, and only a few of

such commentaries were published and currently known among the Shāfiʿī scholars widely, whereas there are many more such unpublished marginalia, glossaries, and *ḥāshiyas*.

This abundance of both published and unpublished commentaries in South and Southeast Asia thus refutes Ahmed El Shamsy's argument that the commentarial tradition of the Shāfiʿī school witnessed a decline in the twentieth century after the use of printing technology for mass production of legal texts (El Shamsy 2013: 289–315). Even after the popularity of the printing press, Shāfiʿī scholars have still continued to produce manuscripts, to write commentaries on those, and to disseminate them manually or as lithographed 'printed-manuscripts'.⁷ To put this into a concrete perspective, El Shamsy mentions only *one* commentary on the *Fatḥ* written in the twentieth century, whereas I have come across about *twenty* complete or incomplete published or unpublished commentaries on the *Fatḥ* in my fieldworks in India, Indonesia and Malaysia.

For the sake of argument even if we agree that the advent of printed versions that the texts did restrict the practice of writing commentaries, for the possibility that a manuscript can survive from the nineteenth or eighteenth century is less than if it were written in the immediate past, i.e. in the twentieth century, we are ignoring a creative way that the students of these Shāfiʿī texts developed and deployed them in order to advance the commentarial tradition. Indeed, in my ethnographic surveys I did not come across students writing marginalia and commentaries in their printed textbooks as a way of *taṣḥīḥ*. Most of them try to keep the books as neat and clean as possible without writing anything onto those. Instead, they keep a separate notebook to write down word translations, commentaries with extra information, legal issues, further sources and related quotations. This notebook can definitely not be described as marginalia, but there is nothing that makes it less of a commentary. Even so, there indeed are students who provide interlinear translations and glosses for technical or unfamiliar terms in the printed text itself. The broadly conceived commentarial tradition is therefore only seeking more creative platforms and methods to advance the long textual genealogy of the school with such an additional object as a notebook, thanks to the printing technology.

Both formal and informal manuscript collections across Asia, Africa and Europe preserve manuscript-copies of these texts from different places and periods. While the ones preserved in Asia and Africa are mostly locally produced manuscripts, it is not always the case. Through the maritime networks of the Indian Ocean world these have travelled several distances as items of trade, gifts, plunders, acquisitions and auctions, before ending up where they are

7 On the phenomenon of 'printed manuscripts', see Witkam 2014: 141–170.

now. To illustrate this through just one example, a manuscript of an Egyptian Shāfiʿī law book now kept at the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta tells us that one Sulaymān bin ʿAbdullāh Taytalī finished copying it in the early nineteenth century ‘aboard a ship of Sayyid Ḥusayn of Bombay anchored at the Calicut sea.’⁸ This person must have been on his way from the Middle East, but he copied the text while taking a rest in the Indian coast and his manuscript would finally end up in Jakarta as an inherited object. In contrast to this, the copies of the *Tuḥfa* we see now at the Salar Jung Museum of Hyderabad were written in the Middle East and were acquired in the early-twentieth century by the bibliophile Mīr Yūsuf ʿAlī Khān Salar Jung III (d. 1949). These are not any exceptional cases, rather they represent the larger pattern in the multi-sited production and transregional dissemination of Islamic manuscripts. This situation becomes rather apparent for most manuscript copies of these texts in European collections. Many major collections in Europe have more than one copy of the *Minhāj*, *Tuḥfa* and/or *Fath* and each of these copies have long stories of their lives and travels across continents and centuries from the local sites of production to the multi-layered and multi-handed occasions of transmissions before becoming objects of national and international heritage of Europe. Although the colonial past has been distanced or silenced by the post-imperial Western regimes, the objects accumulated through colonial channels continue to be ‘heritagized’ as part of national historical narratives projected through their state and public libraries, museums, archives and universities.

The manuscripts in the organized collections in Asia, Africa and Europe are primarily targeted at academic researches and scholarly initiatives. The formal archives are accessible to students and scholars without many hassles, and the digitalization projects at many of these places widen the access without having to take the risk of travelling to those collections to consult the documents physically. Apart from these officially preserved copies, there are many more manuscripts kept in the private and informal possessions, be it along with a collection of many similar texts or independently as a sacred, inherited and/or heritage property.

Researching and consulting manuscripts become a marginal activity in many informal, private collections where preservation of manuscripts is an expressive site of power relations and identity assertions. The informal collections exist today either as property inherited by the descendants of a local scholar or as the collection of a bibliophile who took efforts to acquire book-treasures as much as possible. The contemporary owners, even though

8 The manuscript is a copy of Zakariyā al-Anṣārī’s *Tuḥfat al-ṭullāb bi sharḥ taḥrīr Tanqīh al-ṭullāb* (Mss. CCLIX, Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia Jakarta).

they might not realise the knowledge-value of those texts, keep them for a number of different values surrounding the texts. Thus, getting access to those texts becomes a Pandora's Box for researchers. The Dār al-Iftā' al-Azhariyya Library in Malabar would provide us the best example. It houses about two thousand manuscripts and rare books collected by the Shāfi'ī jurist Aḥmad Kōya Shāliyyātī (d. 1954) in the early-twentieth century. After his demise, the library was passed down to his descendants, who now take care of it. The collection has manuscripts of the three texts under our focus, as well as many other rare and unpublished works of Zayn al-Dīn al-Malaybārī and Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī. But it is not easily accessible for researchers or even for fuqahā, who do not meet the strict sectarian expectations of its present possessor as well as the past endower. A billboard in its gateway declares that the Wahhābīs and Mawdūdīs [the followers of Abū al-A'la Mawdūdī (1903–79), an Islamist scholar who upheld many unconventional views on Islam, politics, and tradition] are not allowed to even enter the premises of the library (see Image 2), because the Sunnī-Shāfi'īs in the region consider them as heretics. But, they are not the only ones who are barred from its premises. More narrowly, those among the Sunnī-Shāfi'īs, the fuqahā and followers of particular groups are also not directly allowed, as an unwritten rule, to use the collection even though it



IMAGE 2 *Entrance Gate of the Dār al-Iftā' al-Azhariyya Library, Cāliyaṃ, Malabar. It says the Wahhābīs and Mawdūdīs are not allowed to enter.*

PHOTO: NIYAS HUSSAIN

is not publicly mentioned anywhere.⁹ This restriction applies to not only the members of one group, but even the indigenous researchers are scrutinized when seeking permission to access the library to identify organizational affiliations of their kin and relatives. A researcher based in a university in Delhi told me about his experience of how he was screened by the manager of the collection only to be turned down even after repeated pleas. Being aware of this complexity at some Indian manuscript collections, I personally had to keep my family's organizational or sectarian inclinations undisclosed to access manuscripts for research. In contrast to this, an inadvertent exposure of my religious affiliation (more particularly with its Shāfi'ī school of law) proved to be very useful in a governmental archive in Indonesia, where the archivist provided me unlimited and exclusive access to all the digitalized documents free of cost.

These two instances demonstrate the ways in which sectarian affiliations entangle with the power structures and access privileges in the manuscript collections of the Indian Ocean rim: through the exclusive possession and ownership of these materials, each group asserts their authority and authenticity in protecting textual knowledge from the deviant and rival groups and disseminating it exclusively among those who fall into their sectarian expectations. Interestingly, all this happens in the cosmopolitan terrains of the Indian Ocean where several religious communities and sects have been historically coexisting and sharing the same or similar intellectual, cultural and social resources. Such exposure to a cosmopolitan atmosphere may not mean much for the participant communities and individuals and the very circumstance could make them more insular and identity-conscious unless they make an effort.

Sacralized Texts: From Manuscripts to Printed Books

The division of kitābs as religious and non-religious texts may not have existed in the Indian Ocean littoral until the advent of the European colonial regimes and the printing technology which both introduced many bureaucratic, governmental, and legal texts and documents into the everyday lives of the Muslim subjects. The popularization of the printing press among Muslims widened this potential division, as the early printing of Islamic 'religious' texts in Europe

9 The Sunnī-Shāfi'īs in Malabar are organizationally divided as two predominant groups: the E.K. group and A.P. group, named after the initials of two leaders of each group, E.K. Abū Bakr Musliyār and AP Abū Bakr Musliyār respectively. They both were the leading members of Samasta Kerala Jam'iyat al-'Ulamā', a Sunnī-Shāfi'ī organization established in 1926, until it was split in 1989 over some political, organizational and legalistic issues.

full of grave mistakes and carelessness had motivated Muslim scholars to restrict the use of this technology for printing religious texts (Mahdi 1995: 1–15). In the subsequent development, the printed religious texts became very popular and the Indian Ocean Muslims often sacralized those too as *kitābs*. Once the Quran was printed for lower prices in such places as Bombay, Singapore and Malabar, it became the most commonly printed *kitāb* available in Muslim houses. A few litanies, religious poems, stories, pamphlets, etc. followed the Quran as common sacred religious texts in the everyday lives of Muslims. Only those who ventured to acquire more education in religious sciences beyond primary studies had access to the larger textual corpus of Islam, be it manuscripts or printed books. General unavailability and high cost of manuscripts to the laity as much as to the religious elites who did not have capital to buy them led to the making of the only available manuscripts as a part of sacred regalia. Sacralization of the texts was thus hierarchical: if the Quran stood at the top of the list of sacred texts, the prophetic traditions, Quranic exegeses and other scholarly writings of law, mysticism, ethics, language, logic, history, story, philosophy, literature and grammar variously came in the following levels of hierarchy. Which one came above which was influenced by temporal and spatial priorities and availability and the jurists hierarchized the status of the texts depending on discipline, contents, authors, periods and recognition and required believers to arrange the books in shelves and storage places with higher-status texts at the top (al-Malaybārī 2012: 63–66). This hierarchization of texts was directly connected to the sacralized ideas regarding the religious contents of the materials and personae of the authors in which the Quran and ḥadīth-texts always got better positions while poetry and prosody got the lowest ranks.

The *Minhāj*, *Tuḥfat* and *Fatḥ* all belong to the category of *kitab kuning* ('yellow books') in Indonesian religious spheres. The *kitābs* were yellow because of the tinted papers brought from the Middle East in the early twentieth century, but the color tone was also comparatively identical to the existing manuscript papers. The publishing industry utilized this continuity in color even after the availability of non-tinted white papers in order to generate an object-quality for authenticity and sacrality with 'yellowness'. This distinction was maintained for religious books in Arabic and Arabic script throughout the twentieth century while non-religious books in Roman script were printed on white paper. The *Minhāj* and *Tuḥfat* are neither widely transmitted in manuscript-forms in the Malay world, nor printed and circulated widely, as we mentioned above. However, the *Fatḥ* and its commentaries were printed several times in the archipelago and today are very popular in the *kitab-kuning* sections of many publishing houses and bookstores. The re-assertion of the qualifying factors in texts like the *Fatḥ* in terms of color, category/genre, perception and

reception attribute to the framing of centuries-old legal texts as ‘objects of religious internality’ in the textual tradition of the Malay archipelago. The Dutch Orientalists L.W.C. van den Berg (1845–1927) and Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) have pointed out the uses of manuscripts and some printed books in the educational textual cultures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (van den Berg 1886; Hurgronje 1906). Van den Berg in particular surveyed and analyzed the majority of these texts by demonstrating their roles as sources of religious authority, sacrality and knowledge. Three decades ago, the Dutch scholar Martin van Bruinessen followed in the footsteps of Van den Berg to explore the continuities and ruptures in this textual tradition and found that manuscripts were almost non-existent in the region and that the printed yellow books have dominated the religious educational scenarios (van Bruinessen 1990: 226–269).

For the knowledge-communities such as *fuqahā*, the legal texts are definitely objects of their everyday production and dissemination of ideas, as much as their own societal and religious existences. They are a product of their ‘religious economy’, and they create their authority with constant reference and usage of the texts publicly.¹⁰ If legal scholars teach the text at educational institutions or public domains such as mosques or conference halls, they put it in front of them even if they know it by heart. If they deliver a fatwa, again they have it in front of them, and they occasionally look at it in order to confirm and be convinced of the rulings delivered, or to be delivered. In the same lines, if popular preachers use the legal ideas in the public sermons, they too hold this text in front of them, and read it occasionally, and deliver the lecture as its interpretation. On all these occasions, the text is an object that asserts authority to its possessor, and it mediates the knowledge distribution between the producer and consumer: be it a *muftī* (fatwa-giver), *mustaftī* (fatwa-seeker), teacher, student, preacher, or follower. The popularity of new media in disseminating religious knowledge and the availability of soft copies of premodern texts now influence this realm and have been creating new textual manifestations: the teachers, scholars and/or students depend on the soft copies in their e-readers, smartphones, notepads or laptops and these devices have become new *kitābs* in the reading circles, classrooms, fatwa sessions, etc. Consequently the sacrality of these devices, if they store the Quran and other religious texts, has become the topic of several fatwas.

For the laypersons, who are not that educated in the Islamic disciplines including law, the texts are close but distant objects are interconnected with a notion of reverence. The possessors of the texts attributed various connotations

10 On the concept of ‘religious economy’ and its application in the Muslim global historical contexts, see Green 2011, 2015.

of blessings (*baraka*) to those texts with regard to their piety and religiosity. A Syrian family who inherited the *kitābs* of Nawawī, the author of the *Minhāj*, is said to have kept two of them ‘for blessings (*li al-tabarruk*)’ (Chamberlain 1994: 137). This association of talismanic power with the texts is not an exceptional case from a premodern Middle Eastern family; instead it represents a wider pattern in the sacralisation of texts in the Islamic world. William Cummings (2001: 559–86) has demonstrated how the texts are revered among the early modern Muslim community of Makassar in South Sulawesi where possession of spiritually potent Islamic manuscripts and uttering Arabic had great appeal for ‘shaping Islam’s spread, reception, and structure’ as they made distant places and times connected with the Quran, the Prophet Muhammad and his teachings, manifest in the present. Arfiansyah (2016) talks about similar notions in the Gayonese community in the contemporary Aceh where the keeper of a manuscript prohibited anyone from reading it as it could lead to immediate disaster: ‘The earth will severely shake, water will flow from the soil, the sky will go dark, wind will violently blow and thunders will strike.’ Similar sacralization of texts is a continual process entangled with the fear, reverence, myths, miracles, all of which appear in varying levels and capacities. In most non-Arabic speech communities, such notions of sacredness have been associated with any text written in Arabic or Arabic script, although the practice in the Arabic-speech communities is rather constrained, if not sophisticated. The script as such thus plays a role (even if the language is vernacular) among them, especially if they cannot read it: it represents the script of the Quran, hence the text it carries represents the Quranic text which has to be respected even if it has nothing to do with the Quran. This goes further with the assumption that there is a high chance that the Arabic script-documents contain the names of the God, the Prophet Muhammad and other holy persons of Islam. All these names are sacred and consequently the materials that carry these names are also sacred and should be respected. Some learned Shāfi‘ī jurists from the Indian Ocean littoral themselves played a vital role in the gradual introduction of such venerational notions, as they reasserted those conceptions in their writings. In a sixteenth-century fatwa-compilation, a Malabari scholar discussed the idea that all the Sharia-related texts and any documents or papers with the holy names should be respected: one should not set them on the ground without following particular rules and instructions; one should not place any objects like gold, silver, coins, clothes and shoes above them (al-Malaybārī 2012: 61–65, 145). This fatwa-compilation was collected by the same author as that of the *Fath* and it has been printed many times and circulated inside and outside Malabar, an aspect that indicates the circulation of its ideas on the textual sacralities among its readers.

A particular layer of sacralization concerning the three texts in my study lies in the mediation process between the fuqahā-estate and laypersons. Once the laypersons listen to the lectures of the fuqahā at the mosques, public events, learning circles, or get a legal clarification, their later reference-points start with such signposts as ‘the ustād’/‘the shaykh’ has said such and such *on the basis of the kitāb*. For them, the particularity of the kitāb, its title, author, chapter, page number, etc. as such does not matter. Instead, only a reference to the whole genre of kitāb is provided and that is given with a sacralized authenticity with no loopholes for further questions or doubts. Thus, the ustād’s/ shaykh’s words are to be obeyed as the kitāb requires, be it rituals, everyday issues, or individual problems. For the laity, the question of which text is referred by the fuqahā for lectures, fatwas, etc. does not matter much. But if we look at the usage of particular Shāfi‘ī texts inside and outside the walls of educational institutions in particular places, we can understand the three texts in my study are the major textbooks used in the intermediate, higher and advanced levels of Shāfi‘ī legal education in the Indian Ocean rim.

Commodification: With(out) Sacrality?

If the fuqahā used the texts as products to sell their authenticity, the same texts also have a real economic aspect surrounding those. The commoditized *kitab-kuning* in Southeast Asia, as well textbooks for religious institutions across the Islamic world, is a broad market of production and consumption. The publishing industries developed in Cairo, Singapore and Bombay by the end of the nineteenth century catered for the necessities of increased religious educational centers for textbooks (Ngah 1980: 9–12; 1983). Islamic educational institutions established since the early centuries of Islam had become crucial players in the dissemination of legal schools to such an extent that the ‘the colleges of law’ (*madrasas*) were inseparable from the ‘schools of law’ (*madhabs*) (Makdisi 1981: 1–4). By the late-nineteenth century, there was an enormous increase in the Islamic colleges across the Muslim world which all accorded equal importance to legal education over mastering any other discipline (Ahmed 2015: 524–31). Although there were different historical trajectories in prioritizing the core curricula and disciplines of particular colleges, law always has been a foundational component in the Islamic educational institutions and legal textbooks were in high demand and circulation both in the age of manuscripts and in the age of printed books. The popularization of the printing press contemporaneously with the increase in the ‘colleges of law’ thus benefitted each other. In the Shāfi‘ī world of the Indian Ocean littoral, the situation was

not different and all the three texts were soon found their published forms to the curricula.

The quality/rank of the text as introductory, intermediate, or advanced is inversely proportional to the quantity of production. Thus, the *Fatḥ* was produced and consumed in enormous quantities, compared to the production and consumption of the *Tuḥfa*.¹¹ It has been printed in various editions all over the Islamic world including Delhi and Istanbul, the major centers of Ḥanafī legalism where Shāfiʿī texts are published only rarely. Its one edition from the 1930s alone was printed in several places in India, Indonesia, Egypt and Lebanon. This stands in stark contrast to the printing of the *Tuḥfa*, whose only one edition has been standardized with few changes in its form and design. An edition printed in Cairo in 1938 was continuously reproduced in the Middle East and South Asia throughout the century, until another edition appeared from Beirut only two decades ago with a new layout, editing, and typeset.¹² Particular editions have defined the identity of a text itself among the fuqahā-estate, as it is clearly seen in the case of the *Tuḥfat*: the edition printed in Cairo with two *ḥāshiyas* of Sharwānī and Ibn Qāsim, stretching the original four-volume manuscript-forms into a text of ten volumes. These days, the fuqahā usually refer to the *Tuḥfat* as a ten-volume text in their statements and citations. Once we look into the fatwas or other legal discussions we see they cite their sources with references to volumes and page numbers, but without giving the date and place of publication or the publisher. We therefore have to be aware of the editions circulated and used most commonly in the production locales of these legal discussions and rulings. Even though an exclusive edition of the *Tuḥfa* without these two commentaries was published in Egypt in the 1860s (Ibn Ḥajar 1865), it has hardly been acknowledged in the citationary practices which have standardized the text as the one with ten volumes.

Many old publishing houses have been shut down due to their inability to problematize and address the supply-side according to the changes in demands.¹³ However, many publishers emerged towards the end of the last century, especially after the replacement of lithograph presses with offset printing, and those have been successful by producing good qualities of textbooks with new designs, formats, and high-quality paper providing more ease

11 On how these kitābs were studied and taught in the Islamic institutions, see Hattori 2012: 47–70; Hooker 2008: 85–128.

12 For the widely-circulated old edition, see al-Sharwānī and al-ʿIbādī, 1938; for the new edition, see *idem*, 1996.

13 On the decline of the printing press in Singapore and Malaysia, see van Bruinessen 1990: 231–34.

of readability, usage, etc. While these publishers specialise in printing religious books in general (such as prayer books, moral codes, and religious stories), they also traded in other sacred and religious paraphernalia varying from prayer mats to amulets, *miswāk* (teeth-cleaning twig made from the arak tree), kohl and perfumes. For example, an advertisement in a ḥadīth text through a legal perspective published in the early-twentieth century in Madras in the Coromandel Coast addressed the Sri Lankan Tamil Muslims in particular by saying that the publisher-cum-bookseller would send these objects as 'book-post' along with Qurans in different styles, exegeses, legal texts of Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī schools, Islamic stories and other books (Naynā Maraykār 1912). This advertisement is not exceptional for its time or later, instead the commercial distribution of religious texts was widely intertwined with other commodified objects of piety and sacrality. From large-scale traders to small-scale vendors sold such ordinary objects of piety without demarcating between books and tools, cosmetics and tracts.

But the most important mode of commodifying religious texts comes in the form of textbooks for educational institutions. The textbook-market is usually tricky due to the possible changes in curricula at individual institutions functioning at a high level or trend shifts in particular regions. The *Faṭḥ* has always been there in the curricula; thus it has been printed again and again in large quantities. However, the *Minhāj* was printed in Southeast Asia only twice for a long time as it was taught infrequently there, although the situation is changing now as a new trend among the Shāfi'ī students motivates them to learn and specialise in the text competing with the global trends in the Shāfi'ī cosmopolis. The *Minhāj* was never printed in Malabar, whereas it was printed several times in Yemen, Beirut, Syria and Egypt. The *Tuḥfa* has been marginally printed in Southeast Asia, but not these days; in Malabar, it has begun to be printed. The fluctuations in the curricula thus determine the demand, and consequently the production and printing and the publishers have to identify and comply with these variations in order to ensure their better survival.

The import and export of the texts across the Indian Ocean littoral shows it to be an intriguing arena of commodity flow. As much as there was a huge interest in and market for the manuscripts in the premodern littoral, the printed books too found a good consumer base. While the *Faṭḥ* was locally produced in almost all areas across the Shāfi'ī world, the *Minhāj* and the *Tuḥfa* were usually imported to South and Southeast Asia. The Dutch Orientalist and colonial advisor Snouck Hurgronje mentioned a copy of the *Minhāj* he collected from Sumatra and it was printed in Cairo (Hurgronje 1883: 531–44). Hence, the usual editions of these texts circulated there were/are printed in Cairo, until the *Tuḥfa* recently began to be printed in South Asia and Malaysia. Scholars have

shown how booksellers in this oceanic littoral ordered and imported books between the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia and East Africa.¹⁴ Several Jāwī books (Malay written in the Arabic script) were printed in Cairo, Mecca and Bombay. The Ottoman printing press established in Mecca in the mid-1880s was headed by Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Zayn al-Faṭānī, a literary scholar and publisher from Pattani (present-day Thailand), who had significantly contributed to the production of several Malay works in the city.

Once the commodification of these texts intensifies, the perceptive changes are interesting to notice as someone's sacred objects become pure commodities for others. The publisher too might have religious interests or sacred notions regarding the texts, but it would not be as deep as of the usual layperson's. To exemplify this point, let me take an anecdote from the field: a leading publisher of religious texts in Malabar appointed a non-Muslim employee who changed his name and attire, giving the customers the impression he was a Muslim: he used a Muslim name in the bookstore, wore a skull-cap, and greeted the Muslim customers with the usual Islamic greetings. While I asked him about the reason behind this, he said that the employer had told him that a non-Muslim is not allowed to touch many Islamic texts like the Quran or Hadith books, and that the customers would be offended if they saw a Hindu like him touching the sacred texts to sell them. This episode explicates how commercial interests of a publisher in the Islamic texts disentangle them from the sacred notions among the community on the same texts, yet being careful to the sacrality through pretensions and intentional manifestations.

The commodification of the same texts is further demonstrated with regard to the issue of copyright. In the printing history of the *Fath*, for example, we could see that an earlier edition prepared in Cairo was printed not only there, but also in Delhi, Bombay, Singapore and many other parts of Indonesia for free circulation. Such an old edition still continues to be reprinted across the Shāfi'ī world and sold for nominal prices. However, a few publishers have come up with different editions registered with copy-rights. The question of how they could reserve copyright of a premodern text which is internationally accepted to be exempt from copyright is tackled by the publishers on the basis of the rights regarding the layout, format, structure, etc. The cooperation of the fuqahā with the publishers, in preparing annotations, critical editions or translations, also naturally helps them to acquire copyright on such editions.

Violation of such copyrighted materials however usually remains unnoticed or ignored by the actual publisher. I asked one such copyright-violator

14 For example, see Proudfoot 1993; 1994: 1–20; Sadgrove 2004: 151–178; Fathurahman 2012: 31–46; Krätli and Lydon 2011.

why he does that and how he does not get into trouble. He said that the *‘ilm* (literally any knowledge, but here he connoted the Islamic knowledge) should not be kept as the property of a privileged group through such copyright measures. Hiding *‘ilm* is a sin and he is doing a service to the community by disseminating the knowledge to a large audience for cheap prices. Furthermore, most of these Arab publishers do not care about their books being printed and sold by someone else. Yet, his predecessors have often got into trouble, not from the Arab publishers, but from local publishers themselves challenging them to a serious legal battle. A remarkable case happened with the first known Malayalam-translation of the *Faḥḥ* by P.K. Kuñṅu Bāva Musliyyār Pāṭūr, published by Amina Bookstall. The translation became a success in the market, the publisher claims, by giving the number of thousands of copies they sold over the years.¹⁵ At this time a scholar called Ibrāhīm Puttūr Fayḍī complained that this translation contained many mistakes and errors, and therefore he came up with a new translation, which was printed by the Bayāniyya Bookstall. The first publisher found this accusation offensive and defamatory of his efforts and business. He took Fayḍī and the Bayāniyya Bookstall to the court. He also sued two other publishers who violated the copyrights by publishing this translation either completely or in part (Makhdūm 1998: 27–31).

Similar to the commodification of the texts through copyright, there is another trend among Muslims to own these texts and their authors. In the organizational factionalist discourses among the Sunnī-Shāfi‘ī followers, various Islamic organizations try to claim legitimate succession, interpretative authenticity, guided commandship over the epistemology, and proper dissemination of knowledge on and of these texts. At the same time, another group expresses their legitimacy and sectarian identity through a stated disownment of the same texts and traditions in order to strengthen their arguments against their opponents. Across the littoral, for example, the Salafis have refused to use any written texts by the Shāfi‘ī scholars such as Nawawī, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī and al-Malaybārī. On the other hand, the Sunnī-Shāfi‘īs (with all their factions) strongly followed these scholars and venerated their texts. If this was the general trend since the early-twentieth century, the Salafis have recently begun to use the texts like the *Minhāj* for validating their claims against the Shāfi‘īs/Sunnīs through polemical writings.¹⁶ Taking particular excerpts from the *Minhāj* and other texts, they claim that the very Shāfi‘ī textual tradition

15 They printed 25600 copies within thirty years and it is a remarkable number for an Islamic text in Malabar (Makhdūm 1998: 6, 8).

16 For example, see Caññāliri 2012. The same author has also published books in similar style citing the works of al-Shāfi‘ī against the Shāfi‘īs in Malabar.

supports the Salafī arguments against the customary practices of Sunnī-Shāfi‘īs. The Shāfi‘īs retaliate by questioning the knowledge bases of the Salafī debaters and claim their inability to interpret the premodern texts authentically and correctly. They accuse that the Salafīs are misquoting and misrepresenting the Shāfi‘ī textual corpus.

Once we come to the internal dynamics of the Shāfi‘ī clusters, we find even more harsh but intriguing accusations among themselves. An individual jurist of Malabar or the group he represents accused his rival of textual forgeries, fraudulence, theft, and misappropriation of premodern texts. Such allegations against opponents are supplemented with assertions of proper conduct and claims of an ethical heritage of the premodern texts, and more importantly of the authors. This factionalism among the Shāfi‘īs is thus rooted in each faction’s ability to display a *louder ownership* of these texts and authors through constant public debates and polemics with rival Shāfi‘ī jurists whose illegitimacy and disinheritance too have to be indicted repeatedly. The commemorations, *mawlid*s, popular preaching, workshops and community gatherings organized by these groups concerning the author explicate this conflict. Establishment of institutions (or other ventures) named after these scholars or texts, awarding of degrees or chains of transmissions (*sanad* or *silsila*) connected to them are also arenas of ownership-contestations. All these demonstrate various ways in which the text gets incorporated into the Islamic discursive traditions as an object of contestation. It should be noted that such power-contest over the ownership is more related to the content and aura as objects: the ideas are objects, that is to say, the abstract/intangible objects are, similar to the tangible commodities.

Conclusion

For the Islamic communities, the Quran is not the only sacred text or object, but several texts of religion are sacred and valuable for their comparative connectivity with the text and contents of the Holy Book. The legal texts of the Shāfi‘ī school of law have played a crucial role in disseminating and sustaining ideas and notions of Islam in the Indian Ocean world from the age of the manuscripts until the present age of print and new media. As sources of this knowledge and their faith systems, these texts found a significant place in the religious imagination and performance of the Indian Ocean Muslims with varying meanings and functions as objects of sacralization, conservation, and commodification. The above discussions show multiple forms of intentionality and temporal and spatial awareness in the keeping of these texts as valued and venerated objects. The social, cultural and religious context across the

Indian Ocean littoral from the moment that they were introduced to Islam to their decision to follow its ideas and scholars through particular frameworks have been fostering the survival of these texts as objects of more respect and value. The initial sacralizations have occurred because of to the unavailability and expensiveness of the manuscripts, but those were not the only reasons as the later sacralization of the same objects in the ages of print and new media demonstrate. Along with sacrality and commodification, the texts found their knowledge-based veneration in the educational centers of Islam, where numbers have been increasing dramatically in the Muslim world since the late nineteenth century.

In the changing circulatory mechanisms of education, communication and information exchange, the same texts found, and continue to find, more meanings and relevance in any of their transformed structures and styles, be it manuscripts, printed editions or digital copies. This is a remarkable aspect in the long historical genealogy of Islamic texts. The cases of the *Minhāj*, *Tuḥfa* and *Fatḥ* and related law books of Shāfiʿī school demonstrate their rootedness in the long history on the basis of textual genealogies going back to the ninth century: to the *Umm* of al-Shāfiʿī and its summary by his student Muzanī. If both these texts were written at a time when the book revolution was just beginning in the Middle East following the fall in paper prices, it is interesting to note how the same texts are now being converted into new digital forms where paper does not matter at all, to boost the hyper dissemination of the text through diverse online platforms. At both ends of this long history over a millennium in the redundancy of paper (from its being cheap in the ninth century to its being no longer needed in the twenty-first century), the textual genealogy of the school found and continues to find a larger audience than in previous stages. In the changes of the media and objects of dissemination from the utmost necessity of paper in the age of the manuscript cultures and book revolution through printing technology to the stage where paper is not necessary, the textual corpus still remains in circulation with varying possibilities of commodification, veneration and preservation through new vistas of dissemination and meaning-makings. In this textual *longue-durée*, the same texts appeal to the ideational and legalistic architecture of Islamic law and stand at the center of Islam's survival as a reservoir of historically, hermeneutically and phenomenologically important materials.

Acknowledgments

The author owes a debt of gratitude to Omar Anchassi, Nijmi Edres, Eirik Hovden and Mervyn Richardson for their comments and suggestions on an earlier

version of this article. The research for and writing of this article was enabled through supports from several libraries and archives discussed above and generous grants from the HERA-funded project 'Uses of the Sharia: Past Perfect, Present Imperfect' and the IBIES Program of the Erasmus-Mundus.

References

- Ahmed, Shahab (2015). *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- al-Anṣārī, Zakariyā (d. 1520). *Tuḥfat al-tullāb bi sharḥ taḥrīr Tanqīḥ al-tullāb*, Mss. CCLIX, Jakarta: Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia.
- al-Asiri, Abu Ihsan (2013). 'Corrections to Dar al-Minhaj's Minhaj al-Talibin', <http://islamclass.wordpress.com/2013/03/29/corrections-to-dar-al-minhaj-minhaj-al-talibin/>. [January 28, 2018].
- Arfiansyah (2016). 'From Past to Present: The 45 Articles of Linge Lord (450H/1115) and Public Morality in Gayo Society, Aceh, Indonesia.' Paper Presented at the international conference: *Ocean of Law 11: Islamic Legal Crossings in the Indian Ocean World*, Leiden University, The Netherlands.
- Atiyeh, George N. (ed.) (1995). *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Bahl, Christopher D. (2017). 'From the Centre to the Margins: The Transfer of Books across the Early Modern Western Indian Ocean,' DYNTRAN Working Papers no. 24. Available from: <http://dyntran.hypotheses.org/1852>. [January 28, 2018].
- Benite, Zvi Ben-Dor (2005). *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Caññalīri, S.S. (2012), *Sunnī Ācārāññal Imām Nawawīyūṭe Vikṣaṇattil*. Palakkad: Satyasandēśam Publications.
- Chamberlain, Michael (1994). *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Corbin, Henry (1993). *History of Islamic Philosophy*, trans. Liadain Sherrard. London and New York: Kegan Paul International.
- Cummings, William (2001). 'Scripting Islamization: Arabic Texts in Early Modern Makassar,' *Ethnohistory* 48 (4): 559–86.
- Fathurahman, Oman (2012). 'Kitabs from Cairo: An Overview of the New Collection of Southeast Asian Kitabs at Sophia University.' In Sugahara, Yumi (ed.) *Comparative Study of Southeast Asian Kitabs. Papers of the Workshop held at Sophia University, Tokyo*, pp. 31–46. Tokyo: Institute of Asian Cultures, Center for Islamic Studies.
- Feener, R. Michael and Terenjit Sevea (eds.) (2009). *Islamic Connections: Studies of South and Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

- Gacek, Adam (2009). *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers*. Leiden: Brill.
- Green, Nile (2011). *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840–1915*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Green, Nile (2015). *Terrains of Exchange: Religious Economies of Global Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gruendler, Beatrice (2011). 'Book Culture before Print: The Early History of Arabic Media', *Occasional Papers*. Beirut: The American University of Beirut.
- Hattori, Mina (2012). 'Tradition of Kitab Learning at Pondok Pesantren in Indonesia: Focus on its Learning Style.' In Sugahara, Yumi (ed.) *Comparative Study of South-east Asian Kitabs. Papers of the Workshop held at Sophia University, Tokyo*, pp. 47–70. Tokyo: Institute of Asian Cultures, Center for Islamic Studies.
- Hirschler, Konrad (2012). *Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Hirschler, Konrad (2016). *Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library: The Ashrafiya Library Catalogue*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Hooker, M. Barry (2008). *Indonesian Syariah: Defining a National School of Islamic Law*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Hurgronje, C. Snouck (1883). « Le guide des zélés croyants » *De Indische Gids* 5: 531–44.
- Hurgronje, C. Snouck (1906). *The Acehnese*, trans. A.W.S. O'Sullivan. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Ibn Ḥajar, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad (1865). *Tuḥfat al-Muḥtāj*, 4 vols. Cairo: Publisher [?].
- Jeppie, Shamil (2014). 'Writing, Books, and Africa,' *History and Theory* 53(1): 94–104.
- Kooria, Mahmood (2016). 'Cosmopolis of Law: Islamic Legal Ideas and Texts across the Indian Ocean and Eastern Mediterranean Worlds'. PhD dissertation, Leiden University.
- Kooria, Mahmood (2017). 'Towards a Book History of the Indian Ocean World', *Leiden Islam Blog* March 20. Available from: <http://www.leiden-islamblog.nl/articles/towards-an-islamic-book-history-of-the-indian-ocean-world>. [January 28, 2018].
- Krätli, Graziano and Ghislaine Lydon (eds.) (2011). *The Trans-Saharan Book Trade: Manuscript Culture, Arabic Literacy and Intellectual History in Muslim Africa*. Leiden: Brill.
- Lydon, Ghislaine (2009). *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mahdi, Muhsin (1995). 'From the Manuscript Age to the Age of Printed Books.' In Atiyeh, George N. (ed.), *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, pp. 1–15. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Makdisi, George (1981). *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Makhdūm, Ahmad Zayn al-Dīn (1998). *Faṭḥ al-Mu'īn Islam Niyama Samhita*, trans. P.K. Kuññu Bāva Musliyār Pāṭūr. Thrissur: Amina Book Stall.

- al-Malaybārī, Zayn al-Dīn (2012). *al-Ajwibat al-ʿAjība ʿan al-Asʿilat al-Gharība*, ed. ʿAbd al-Naṣīr Aḥmad al-Shāfiʿī al-Malaybārī. Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyāʾ.
- McGann, Jerome J. (1983). *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Messick, Brinkley (1993). *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Naynā Maraykār, Muḥy al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Qādir bin Muḥammad (1912). *Jawāhir al-Ḥadīth al-maʿruf Zawājir Sharif*. Madras: Matbaʾ Karīmī.
- Nghah, Mohd Nor bin (1980). 'Some Writing of the Traditional Malay Muslim Scholars Found in Malaysia.' In Khoo Kay Kim (ed.), *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia*, pp. 9–12. Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia.
- Nghah, Mohd Nor bin (1983). *Kitab Jawi: Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Pedersen, Johannes (1984). *The Arabic Book*, trans. Geoffrey French, ed. with an intro. Robert Hillenbrand. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pfeiffer, Judith (2014). *Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz*. Leiden: Brill.
- Pfeiffer, Judith and Manfred Kropp (eds.) (2007). *Theoretical Approaches to the Transmission and Edition of Oriental Manuscripts*. Würzburg: Ergon Verlag.
- Proudfoot, Ian (1993). *Early Malay Printed Books: A Provisional Account of Materials Published in the Singapore-Malaysia Area up to 1920, Noting Holdings in Major Public Collections*. Kuala Lumpur: Academy of Malay Studies and the Library University of Malaya.
- Proudfoot, Ian (1994). 'Malay Books Printed in Bombay: A Report on Sources for Historical Bibliography,' *Kekal Abadi* 13(3): 1–20.
- Quenzer, Jörg; Dmitry Bondarev and Jan-Ulrich Sobisch (eds.) (2014). *Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Ricci, Ronit (2011). *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rosenthal, F. 'Taṣḥīf,' *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition.
- Rosenthal, Franz (1947). *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship*. Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum.
- Sadgrove, Philip C. (2004). 'The Press, Engine of a Mini-renaissance in Zanzibar (1860–1920).' In Sadgrove, Philip (ed.), *History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East. Journal of Semitic Studies. Supplement 15*, pp. 151–178. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schimmel, Annemarie (1994). *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- El Shamsy, Ahmed (2013). 'The Ḥāshiyā in Islamic Law: A Sketch of the Shāfiʿī Literature,' *Oriens* 41 (3–4): 289–315.

- al-Sharwānī, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd; al-‘Ibādī, Aḥmad bin Qāsim (1938). *Ḥawāshī Tuḥfat al-Muḥtāj*, 10 vols. Cairo: Maṭba‘a Mustafā Muḥammad.
- al-Sharwānī, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd; al-‘Ibādī, Aḥmad bin Qāsim (1996). *Ḥawāshī al-Sharwānī and Ibn Qāsim al-‘Ibādī*, 10 vols. Beirut: Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī.
- Shatzmiller, Maya (2015). ‘An Early Knowledge Economy: The Adoption of Paper, Human Capital and Economic Change in the Medieval Islamic Middle East, 700–1300 AD’, Working Paper. Utrecht: Utrecht University.
- Sood, Gagan (2016). *India and the Islamic Heartlands: An Eighteenth-Century World of Circulation and Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- van Bruinessen, Martin (1990). ‘Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu; Comments on a New Collection in the KITLV Library,’ *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 146 (2–3): 226–269.
- van den Berg, L.W.C. (1886). ‘Het Mohammedaansche godsdienstonderwijs op Java en Madoera en de daarbij gebruikte Arabische boeken,’ *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 31: 518–55.
- Witkam, Jan Just (2014). ‘Some Arabic Textbooks from Kerala.’ In Gleave, Robert (ed.), *Books and Bibliophiles: Studies in Honour of Paul Auchterlonie in the Bio-Bibliography of the Muslim World*, pp. 141–170. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Yunus, Mahmud (1979). *Sejarah Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Mutiara Sumber Widya.