The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

Presents a workshop on

"There and Back Again": The Complicated Relationship
Between Manuscript and Print in the Islamic Tradtion

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Abstracts

Arabic Publication Design: Balancing Conventional Page Setting with Contemporary Technology.

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Books are the result of the interaction between intellectual thought, aesthetics, innovation, and reproduction techniques. The printing press and publishing in the Arab world, in the modern sense, flourished with secular and technical/scientific publications, and became a tool for mass public education, cultural reform projects, and economic progress—a tool for building a truly modern society. The first aspects of the printing press, standardization, had technical, aesthetic as well as lasting effects on the Arabic language and culture. In its inherent ability to fix knowledge across a wide geographic (and demographic) spread, through the exact reproduction of content and its dissemination, it unified the classical Arabic language and writing styles, reviving old literary forms and preserving historical accounts and traditional mythologies. Printing and printed publications became the binding agents of Arab culture.

The first influential printing presses in Beirut in the late nineteenth century, who were also independent publishers, were primarily motivated by religious ideology. The majority of the books they produced however, were educational tools and their designs were conceived to be acceptable to the local tastes and established visual conventions. Book design innovation concentrated mainly on technical inventions; namely on how to adapt the handset typographic technology (originally conceived for the Latin script) to the handwritten cursive and complex Arabic script and its rich calligraphic tradition. The design of the printing types presented the biggest challenge and many efforts were put into the making of Arabic fonts that facilitated the speed of typesetting and minimized errors, while remaining legible to the educated Arab readers. On the level of page layout, another way of balancing traditional page setting conventions with modern technology, was to use the handwritten manuscript as a model for layout design. This lend the early printed books the trusted authority of the original handwritten texts and helped make printed Arabic books more culturally acceptable and more 'authentic-looking.' Effectively, these early presses laid down the basic design foundations for printed Arabic publications for the generations that followed.

This paper will illustrate the elements and design conventions that have defined the aesthetics of printed Arabic books and publications, and will present key cases

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studies starting from the nineteenth century to the present day. The paper will analyze the layout and typographic conventions and their relation to the manuscript tradition, the

reasons that have prompted some designers to emulate older manuscript designs and the way these conventions were subverted in the service of contemporary and secular texts. It will demonstrate that the relation between manuscript page setting and contemporary Arabic typography remains motivated by an unbroken cultural connection and a revived interest in asserting Arabic and Islamic cultural identity.

Technology and Chronology: Re-examining the Transition from Manuscript to Print Culture in Northern Nigeria
SANI YAKUBU ADAM, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria

Despite the availability of the print technology in the early colonial northern Nigeria (1903-1960), the manuscript culture is still predominant. Instead of the emergence of the modern book in the market after the introduction of the printing technology, offset lithography has been the dominant means used to reproduce the local manuscripts, with little change from their original form. In addition, manuscript copies of the Qur'an are still produced and sold in the market while other books are mainly produced through the printing technology. This has raised a number of Questions: Was there any linear transition from the manuscript to the Print Culture in northern Nigeria? Why is the manuscript culture still predominant? To what extent has the new technology impacted on production and circulation of the Islamic text? To understand some of these questions, I am currently developing a framework with which I seek to understand the whole trajectory of the production and circulation of the Islamic text in the 20th century northern Nigeria with a particular reference to Kano. This framework is centred on the primacy of the different communities of readers in determining the nature of the Islamic books in circulation. The paper therefore argues that the pervasiveness of the manuscript culture despite the accessibility to the printing technology can be better understood taking into consideration of the availability of the community that venerates and prefers using manuscripts and printed books with predominant manuscript features to the modern literature. Institutions produce reading communities that share certain aspirations and world view which shape the nature of their demands for literature. The transformation of the book market is the reflection of such demands.

The Press and the Pen: Calligraphic Lithographs of the Quran in Kano
ANDREA BRIGAGLIA, University of Cape Town

Through a chronological analysis of the work of five calligraphers based in Kano, whose handwritten copies of the Quran have been reproduced and marketed in the form of lithographed editions between the mid-twentieth century and today, this paper aims at showing an example of the porosity of the borders between what we normally conceive as the "traditional" and the "modern" faces of book culture. My analysis will try to show how the introduction of the modern printing press in Kano, by transforming the scribal craft into a market-oriented competitive business, pushed

the local scribes to promote (and not to abandon) the old style of writing, while at the same time developing it into new variants so as to create a niche for themselves in a burgeoning book market. In the process, the craft of the older generation of scribes morphed into the art of a new generation of calligraphers. The late-twentieth and early twenty-first century lithographed Qurans from Kano - this paper will argue - do not represent the simple vestige of collectively transmitted "local, traditional calligraphies," but a time-bound and context-bound, twentieth-century aesthetics created by the active attempt of a generation of scribes to adjust to the technology of the press and to transform it into an opportunity of growth.

Arabic and Ajami "Market Literature" in N'Djamena: An Overspill of Nigerian Book Culture and Local Publishing

Nikolay Dobronravin, St. Petersburg State University

The paper represents an overview of Arabic and Ajami Islamic "market literature", which was available to the readership in N'Djamena in October 2018. Such Arabic and Ajami publications may be seen as a continuation of Central Sudanic manuscript tradition in both Arabic and African languages.

The repertoire of Islamic "market literature" in N'Djamena includes various editions of the "Warsh" Qur'an, poetry and publications of magical character. A few works are bilingual in Arabic and Hausa. Almost all such editions were imported to Chad from Nigeria, representing an overspill from Nigerian book culture.

On the book market of N'Djamena, 11 Nigerian "market editions" were available to the readers. In addition, 3 titles without publishing data were probably printed in Kano as well. The customers were also offered some books published in Sokoto (2 titles), Gusau (1 edition, maybe a pirated copy). 4 titles, produced by the Burhāmu Ayyūb publishing house, are visually similar to the books from Sokoto. Only one work was undoubtedly published in Chad. This publication in a "mini" format is a collection of Hadiths based on the "Ṣaḥīḥ" by al-Bukhārī (*Mukhtaṣar ḥadīth Ibn Abī Jamra li'l-Bukhārī*. [N'Djamena]: al-Dār al-tshādiyya li'l-kutub al-islāmiyya Muḥammad Būbā). The Arabic script variety and graphic design are similar to those of the titles printed in Gusau. It is worth mentioning that this edition is not the first example of Arabic offset production in Chad. As early as 1920s, some official appeals to the population were duplicated in both French and Arabic, most probably on the hectograph. The Arabic version of such appeals follows the local manuscript tradition visually, but not in its content. Moreover, these colonial documents begin with the formula *al-ḥamdu lillāhi waḥdahu wa-lā yadūmu illā mulkahu*, while the basmala is missing.

Besides Hausa, a few other African languages used in today's Chad were written in Arabic script since at least the seventeenth century. Nowadays, the publication and distribution of typeset books in these languages and in the Chadian Arabic dialect (in both Arabic and Latin scripts) is supported by SIL International, the former Summer Institute of Linguistics. A typical example of such works is the recent Maba-Arabic dictionary (*Qāmūs Mabā-ʿ-bā-*. 2016. Anjimīnā: Jamʿīyat SIL). It should be noted that in the shops of N'Djamena selling Islamic literature, one can see books in French, Arabic, English, Hausa and even occasional titles in Albanian and Malay, but not in Chadian Arabic dialect nor in the "national" languages of Chad.

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Since 1982, Arabic has become an official language of Chad alongside with French. The government documents in Arabic are published in the typeset form, which has no graphic connection with the Central Sudanic manuscript tradition. The same can be said of typeset Islamic literature, which is imported to Chad from Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It seems that none (or very few) typeset Islamic works have been published in Chad. The Chadian market of Islamic literature may be described as lying at the crossroads between Middle Eastern typeset publishing and Northern Nigerian "market" print culture.

Early Ethiopian Islamic Printed Books: a First Assessment with a Special Focus on the Works of *šayḫ* Ǧamāl al-Dīn al-Annī

ALESSANDRO GORI, Københavns Universitet

Muslims of Ethiopia (and of the Horn of Africa in general) have a relatively old and still alive manuscript tradition. As a major turning point in the intellectual history of the Muslim communities of Ethiopia, at the beginning of the 20th century, Islamic books authored by Ethiopian learned men started to be printed in Cairo at different printing presses.

In my paper, using the data collected during a recent research project on the Islamic literature of the Horn, I will sketchy describe the main phases of the history of the production of Ethiopian Islamic printed books and of their diffusion in the country. I will then focus on the case of the works of *šayḫ* Ǧamāl al-Dīn al-Annī (d. 1882), a revered scholar, teacher and head of one of the branches of the Qādiriyya brotherhood in the Horn of Africa, trying to give a first, tentative assessment of the impact printed texts had on the manuscript tradition of the local learned élite.

Spotlights on the Technological Evolution of Arabic Type

TITUS NEMETH, University of Reading, UK

Technological progress is commonly seen to represent improvements and advances, and newer techniques are generally assumed to produce better results: Mechanical means outdo manual production, electronic machines are better than purely mechanic ones, and digital devices have the edge over all precursors.

Yet, a critical review of different techniques used for Arabic type-making and typography yields a more nuanced picture, in which newer is not always better. Looking back over the past 150 years, this talk presents a selection of case studies that demonstrate how evolving techniques brought different constraints and opportunities. It challenges the assumption that evolving means automatically resulted in better results, and identifies specific areas of advancement, as well as aspects that saw stagnation and regress. Using the lens of technological advances, this talk also touches on motivations behind changing techniques, and discusses drivers and beneficiaries of technological change.

Scribal Design and Typographic Guidelines: Exploring Script Styles as Markers of Content in Ottoman Practice

J.R. OSBORN, Georgetown University

Contemporary designers work with a toolbox of instruments, standards, styles, and forms. These include a wide variety of fonts as well as predesigned templates and style sheets. This paper suggests that Ottoman scribal practice may have operated similarly. Ottoman scribes also had a toolbox of styles and templates from which to choose, and they applied appropriate styles to the message at hand. Religious, literary, scientific, royal, and administrative documents are not the same: their contents request visual differences of scribal style and formal differences of layout. Whereas digital designers weigh choices of hardware, software, and fonts, Ottoman designers weighed choices of paper, pen, and style of script. Different sizes and finishes of paper, different widths and cuts of the reed pen, and different styles of script performed cultural, textual, and practical work.

Drawing a parallel with movable type, the paper examines styles of Arabic script (e.g. *thuluth, naskh*, *muhaqqaq, talik,* and *diwani*) as visually distinct and identifiable "types." It describes the dominant Ottoman styles, their uses, and their textual connotations. The paper then analyzes Ottoman scribal practice by applying guidelines and suggestions found in Robert Bringhurst's *Elements of Typographic Style*. By drawing these connections, the paper reframes the visual output of Ottoman scribes as functional design. Much like professional typographers, scribes certainly beautified texts and made them more aesthetically appealing. But only a small fraction of scribal production was specifically designed for artistic or "calligraphic" appreciation. The vast majority of scribal texts were functional and operational. Scribes, like typographers, designed pertinent information for pertinent audiences, while remaining faithful to content, source, and sponsor.

Textual products of the manuscript era operate as communicative objects with form, function, and practical insight. Reframing scribal practice—and perhaps Arabic calligraphy more broadly—as textual design allows us to reassess relationships of technology, design, and textual production. Looking back, these insights help untangle sticky historical questions, such as the perceived delay in Arabic printing. Looking ahead, they point toward future possibilities. Ottoman scribal tradition was incredibly durable, with a deep understanding of visual, graphic, and textual design. As we now digitize the Arabic, Ottoman, and Islamic legacy, how can we retain, remember, and reinvigorate scribal practices? And how might historical techniques inform contemporary communication? Scribal designs offer useful strategies and functional solutions. And they may even point towards alternative visions of design literacy.

"The Ink of Understanding": The Complicated Relationship between Manuscripts and Print within the Islamic Written Tradition of East Africa and the Horn

SCOTT REESE, Northern Arizona University

In 1920, after four years of self-imposed exile in Egypt, the Somali `alim Abdullahi al-Qutbi returned to his natal home carrying 500 copies of his *magnum opus*, *al-Majmu'a al-Mubaraka* (*The Blessed Collection*). Written during his years at al-Azhar in Cairo. A set of four pamphets, composed by an obscure scholar from the Horn of Africa; printed by one of Cairo's oldest family publishing houses–Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi & Sons

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and; endorsed by a prominent Lebanese cleric–Yusuf Isma'il Nabhani, the *Majmu'a* is exemplary of an important shift in Muslim learning and scholarly interactions that gained momentum during the years between the two world wars.

By the late nineteenth century, African Muslims were avid consumers of "Islamic" print and –as the case of al-Qutbi illustrates–active producers of it by the first decades of the twentieth. Theological texts, newspapers, travel accounts, poetry collections and saintly hagiographies, among other genres, became staples of an emerging literary scene. Far from ephemeral, printed matter provided a platform for Muslim intellectuals to both bring matters of local importance to the attention of their constituents while also engaging in debates with an increasingly globalized *umma*.

The so-called Arabic print revolution is generally talked about as an innovative new medium made possible through European developments in lithography and moveable type, as well as, imperial networks of transport and communication. But less recognized is the fact it was also an extension of an Islamic written manuscript tradition that dated back more than a thousand years. This paper begins to examine the social, intellectual and material ramifications of the print's development. However, in doing so, it challenges the idea that mechanical print represented a sharp break with the past naturally and inevitably displacing handwritten texts.

This paper considers the continuing influence of the Arabic manuscript tradition in early print. Taking up material issues such as layout and format as well as less tangible matters such as discursive tropes and concepts regarding the proper form of knowledge and discursive authority, I also explore the continuing significance and presence of the manuscript tradition in the age of print.

Print, Self-Awareness, and the State: The Rise of a New Type of Arabic Treatise in Cairo, c. 1870

KATHRYN SCHWARZ, UMass, Amherst

Approximately fifty years after Mehmed 'Ali's (r. 1805-1848) introduction of printing to Egypt in service to his developing state, a new form of text emerges from the private presses of Cairo: the personal treatise. This form by no means represented a rampant trend, as examples of these treatises are few and far between. They are most often indicated by the terms '*nubdha*' or '*risāla*' in their title, and consist of not more than one hundred pages. What distinguishes them is that they revolve around subjective accounts of a given topic, such as the experience of training in the government's schools, embarking upon the pilgrimage to Mecca, suffering from poverty, or losing a legal battle.

These treatises differ from earlier forms of writing in manuscript and print because they are personal – yet intended for strangers, and because they do not rigidly subscribe to wider traditions within Arabic writing. That they are printed, but printed not on presses directly owned by the government, is also significant. The figures who composed these treatises lacked established authority for speaking to, or on behalf of, society at large. While their writers were no doubt elite given their levels of education and social capital, they were not celebrated shaykhs at al-Azhar or powerful officers of the government, for example, even though they had access to such men, or were the very products of these institutions. Yet despite the relative lack of standing of those

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who wrote these treatises, they still offered their own stories for consumption by the wider public. And a main protagonist of their accounts, if not the main interlocuter with whom they engaged, was the state. The treatises were printed on private presses, instead of governmental ones, because their contents did not officially represent the views of government. Rather, their contents were directed at the state.

 I propose that these treatises are significant, despite their small number, not just because they articulate a distinctive moment in the modern history of Egypt, but because they illuminate a key junction in the history of the Egyptian experience of print. They connect state-led printing initiatives to the rise of a printed public sphere, initiating a strain of writing concerned with how the state shaped individual lives. This outcome did not arise merely from the genesis of the modern state, which aspired to make each person legible to it. Rather, it was also the product of Egypt's distinctive print history, in which the state communicated its authority to the public via print – therefore encouraging members of the public, in turn, to communicate with the state through this medium, too.

Calligraphic Masterpiece, Commercial Commodity: Early Qur'an Printing in North India

ULRIKE STARK, University of Chicago

Recent scholarship has begun to shed light on the neglected history of early Muslim printing in South Asia, where the first printed Qur'an was produced as early as 1828. The advent of lithography in India in the early 1820s has received special attention as a watershed in the history of print in South Asia. Lithographic printing led to a rapid expansion in Islamic book production in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu; for some time, it largely replaced printing with movable type. At the same time, Qur'anic texts continued to be produced in manuscript form.

This paper will examine the coexisting and competing modes of Islamic textual production in nineteenth-century North India through the example of Lucknow, the capital of the Mughal successor state of the Nawabs of Awadh. A vibrant cultural metropolis, Lucknow was also a seat of both Sunni and Shia scholarship. Printing in the city began in 1817, when King Ghaziuddin Haidar (r. 1814–27) set up the Matba'-e Sultani, the first Muslim-owned printing press in the Indian subcontinent. There was a brief flourishing of movable-type printing at the royal press, but printing in Lucknow only really took off with the coming of lithography in 1830, which gave rise to a number of private commercial businesses. The first part of the paper will explore how early Muslim printers exploited the aesthetic abilities of lithography in producing Qur'anic texts and examine to what extent these texts emulated manuscript books in their graphic features and layout. The second part will look at the commercialization of Qur'an printing in colonial Lucknow after 1857. Focusing on the mass-produced lithographed Qur'an editions of the city's famous Naval Kishore Press (est. 1858), I will trace the nature of shifting production technologies and their various socioeconomic, cultural, and aesthetic implications.

Cermin Mata („Spectacles"): A Missionary Journal from Singapore 1858-1859
Holger Warnk, Goethe-University Frankfurt

Cermin Mata ("Spectacles") was a unique missionary effort to convert Muslim Malays in 19th-century Singapore and Malaya. Alltogether 7 volumes were published in lithographic print and beautifully coloured in the Malay *Jawi* script by the so-called Bukit Zion Press of Benjamin Peach Keasberry (1811-1875) who became famous due to his co-operation with the well-known Malay author and intellectual Abdullah bin Abdulkadir Munsyi (1796-1854) who perhaps also prepared two first volumes of this journal which then was printed posthumously.

The Library of Southeast Asian Studies at Goethe-University Frankfurt is happy to have a complete set of this journal found in the collection of the Methodist missionary Emil Lüring. It formerly belonged to a certain S. Ismail, former pupil of missionary Keasberry and in the late 1880s Malay language teacher of the well-known Methodist missionary-scholar William G. Shellabear.

Besides light readings and texts for general education (e.g. an ethnographic description of the Iban in Sarawak, the story of Napoleon Bonaparte's war in Russia, the tale of Robinson Crusoe or an article on astrology) the journal also contains texts clearly intended missionary purposes (e.g. "The story of a Haji who entered Christianity" or "About the Son of the Raja of Lahore who entered Christianity"). This paper examines the role of the diverse texts played for the (unsuccessful) attempts of converting Muslims in Singapore and Malaya, but also the great impact they had on later colonial schoolbooks in the Malay language.