

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) cordially invites
you to a workshop on

**Rulers as Authors in the Islamic world.
Knowledge, Authority and Legitimacy**

Hamburg, 18 – 19 December 2017
Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures
Warburgstraße 26, Room 0001
20354 Hamburg

organized by Sonja Brentjes (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin),
Maribel Fierro (ILC-CSIC, Madrid), Tilman Seidensticker (CSMC)

Programme

MONDAY 18TH DECEMBER 2017

9:00-9:30 *Registration and introduction*

I. The early period (1)

Chair: Tilman Seidensticker (CSMC/University of Jena)

9:30-10:00 Teresa Bernheimer (SOAS, London)

Alī b. Abī Talib and other imams.

10:00-10:30 Adam Gaiser (The Florida State University)

Eloquent Exchange: Asceticism and Shirā' in the Poetry of Qaṭarī b. al-Fujā'a.

10:30-10:50 Discussion

10:50-11:15 Coffee Break

I. The early period (2)

Chair: Stefan Heidemann (University of Hamburg)

11:15-11:45 Sean W. Anthony (Ohio State University)

Authors of piety, poets of blasphemy: caliphal authorship in the construction of the Umayyad past.

11:45-12:15 Letizia Osti (University of Milan)

Monarchs, kuttāb, orators, epistolographers, land-tax officials, heads of bureaux. Abbasid rulers and their standing as authors.

MONDAY 18TH DECEMBER 2017

12:15-12:35 Discussion

12:35-13:30 Lunch

II. Caliphs and Messianic figures (1)

Chair: Kenneth Garden (Tufts University)

13:30-14:00 Olly Akkermann (Freie Universität Berlin)

The Bohras and the making of the Neo-Fatimid Library.

14:00-14:30 María Luisa Ávila (CSIC-Granada) & Maribel Fierro (CSIC-Madrid)

Do caliphs write? The view from the Islamic West.

14:30-15:00 Angelika Hartmann (Philipps-University Marburg)

Authority, ijtihād and politics: caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh's 'Kitāb Rūḥ al-`ārifin' (13th century, Baghdad)

15:00-15:30 Discussion

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break

II. Caliphs and Messianic figures (2)

Chair: Sonja Brentjes (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin)

16:00-16:30 Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk (Qatar University)

The Pen and the Sword: The Case of the Sudanese Mahdi (1844-1885).

16:30-17:00 Todd Lawson (University of Toronto)

An Author as Ruler: The Bāb and his Qayyūm al-asmā'.

17:00-17:20 Discussion

TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2017

III. Emirs and sultans (1)

Chair: Michael Friedrich (CSMC)

9:00-9:30 David Durand-Guédy (Independent scholar)

The Seljuks

9:30-10:00 Jürgen Paul (CSMC)

Epigrammatic quatrains: Versifying Khwārazmshāhs.

10:00-10:20 Discussion

10:20-10:45 Coffee Break

TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2017

III. Emirs and sultans (2)

Chair: Sabine Panzram (University of Hamburg)

10:45-11:15 Petra Schmidl (Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt)

The Rasulids in Yemen and the science

11:15-11:45 Maribel Fierro (CSIC)

What and why non-caliphal rulers wrote in al-Andalus and the Maghrib.

11:45-12:15 Christian Mauder (Göttingen University)

Legitimizing Sultanic Rule in Arabic, Turkish and Persian– Late Mamluk Rulers as Authors of Religious Poetry.

12:15-12:45 Discussion

12:45-13:45 Lunch

IV. The great empires: Timurids-Mughals, Ottomans, Safavids

Chair: Alejandro Rodriguez de la Peña (CEU-San Pablo)

13:45-14:15 Christiane Czygan (Federal Forces University of Munich)

Premodern Ottoman Communication: The Sultanic Poem Collections of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent and Sultan Selim I.

14:15-14:45 A.T. Sen (Leiden University)

A Scholar-Prince in Defiance of Ottoman Practice: The Politics of Şehzade Korkud's Intellectual Output.

14:45-15:05 Discussion

15:05-15:30 Coffee Break

Chair: Alejandro Rodriguez de la Peña (CEU-San Pablo)

15:30-16:00 Matthew Melvin-Koushki (University of South Carolina)

Timurid-Mughal Philosopher-Kings as Sultan-Scientists.

16:00-16:30 Hani Khafipour (University of Southern California)

Dreams of a Sufi King: Shah Tahmasb and Visions of the Sacred.

16:30-16:50 Discussion

Discussants: Sonja Brentjes, Alejandro Rodríguez de la Peña, Tilman Seidensticker.

The Workshop is financed by

Anneliese Maier Award 2014, Practicing knowledge in Islamic societies and their neighbours,

IP Maribel Fierro (CSIC)

Universität Hamburg – Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC)

Abstracts

Ahmed Ibrahim ABUSHOUK (Qatar University)

The Pen and the Sword: The Case of the Sudanese Mahdi (1844-1885)

Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi (1844-1885) is the founder of the 19th century revolution that drew its strength of his charismatic leadership and the ideology of the expected, inspiring the Sudanese to revolt against the Turco-Egyptian Administration in the Sudan (1821-1881). In June 1881 the Mahdi dispatched letters from the Island of Aba on the White Nile, informing notables of the Sudan that he was the expected Mahdi who would fill the earth of justice and equity as it had been filled with oppression and tyranny. He claimed that his Mahdship was declared in a prophetic assembly attended by the Prophet Muhammad, the four Guided Caliphs, the Prophet Khidir, and princes of the faith. He supported his claim by Ibn al-'Arabi who says in his commentary on the Quran that "the knowledge of the Mahdi of the Hour and that Hour none knowth but Allah Most High." Indicating that his nomination lies outside the scope of human capacity, and the previous Mahdi-claimants were illegitimate due to Ahmad b. Idris' prophesy that the Mahdi will come forth from a place that nobody knows and in a condition which the people will refuse to acknowledge. Based on his claim, he declared the jihad as an effective means for the overthrow of the "infidel Turkish rulers", and for the reformation of Islam on puritanical lines, not only in the Sudan, but throughout the Muslim world. The Mahdi's written propaganda was produced in forms of letters of warning, proclamations, legal rulings, teaching sessions, sermons, and prayers. During the short period of the revolution (1881-1885) that culminated in the capture of Khartoum and killing of Charles Gordon, the Mahdi issued more 1000 letters of warning and proclamations. In 1990s, Muhammad Ibrahim Abu Salim (d. 2007) collected and edited the Mahdi's written propaganda in seven volumes under the title of *Al-Athar al-Kamila lil-Imam al-Mahdi (The Complete Works of the Imam al-Mahdi)*.

The purpose of this paper is threefold: The first objective is to examine the epistemological background of the Sudanese Mahdi. The second objective is to discuss the socio-political context in which the Mahdist revolution broke out in 1881. The third objective is to give a textual analysis of the Mahdi's writings that motivated the Sudanese to revolt against the Turco-Egyptian administration and laid down the foundation of the Mahdist state in the Sudan.

Oily AKKERMAN (Freie Universität Berlin)

The Bohras and the making of the Neo-Fatimid Library

The Bohras, a small but vibrant Muslim Shia community in India that is almost entirely closed to outsiders, hold a secret Arabic manuscript culture, which is enshrined and preserved in royal archives or *khizānāt*.

As Ismailis, the Bohras were one of the few communities to survive the fall of the Fatimid Caliphate in North Africa in the late twelfth century, having established an independent community well before its demise. Unlike Persian Ismaili Islam, which reached the Indian subcontinent during the ninth century over land, the Arabic Ismaili tradition travelled from Yemen to Gujarat via Indian Ocean trade several centuries later. In the new social, political, and historical reality of medieval Gujarat Bohra clerics reworked and enshrined their Fatimid heritage from North Africa in *khizānāt* under the supervision of local sacerdotal families, bringing into being a new sacred literary canon and manuscript culture with a local South Asian touch.

In my paper I argue that, from the fifteenth century onwards, a narrative was constructed in which these sacerdotal families were depicted as the direct spiritual heirs of the Fatimid intellectual heritage: only the highest clerics could access, comment upon, and transmit the sacred knowledge of the Fatimid Imams. The invention of the secret royal *khizānāt* in particular played a vital role in strengthening the community's "Neo-Fatimid" identity and hierarchical structures, a practice that is continued to the present time. Additionally, this paper will shed new light on the multi-lingual, scriptural, and scribal contexts of transmission and reception of Bohra *bāḥinī* knowledge in Yemen and Gujarat.

Sean W. ANTHONY (Ohio State University)

Authors of piety, poets of blasphemy: caliphal authorship in the construction of the Umayyad past

Historians of Arabic literature tend to place the Umayyad caliphs (r. 661-750) at the very fount of the Arabic literary tradition, yet more often than not, the Umayyads' role has been portrayed as limited to that of patrons and commissioners of early written works rather than pioneers of literary composition in their own right. Two famous exceptions to this general statement stand out among the Umayyad caliphs: 'Umar II ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 717-20) and al-Walīd II ibn Yazīd (r. 743-44). However, it is also there that the two caliph's commonalities end; their literary and authorial personas otherwise offer a compelling study in contrasts. Whereas 'Umar II gains a reputation in posterity as the paragon of caliphal piety, portrayals of al-Walīd II cast him as an ungodly debauch who shamelessly blasphemes God and the prophets. This study interrogates the role played by the compositions attributed to these two caliphs – theological and legal epistles in the case of 'Umar II and poetry in the case of al-Walīd II – in constructing the image of the two rulers in the literary and historical imagination of belletrists and scholars of the subsequent Arabo-Islamic literary tradition.

María Luisa ÁVILA (Escuela de Estudios Arabes-CSIC, Granada) and Maribel FIERRO (Institute of Languages and Cultures of the Mediterranean-CSIC, Madrid)

Do caliphs write? The cases of the Cordoban Umayyads, the Hammudids and the Mu'minids

The Umayyad 'Abd al-Rahman I famously wrote a poem remembering the eastern lands he had to leave never to return. Poetry was composed by many members of the Umayyads who settled in al-Andalus and their descendants. By the time the Cordoban Umayyads proclaimed themselves caliphs (4th/10th century), the ability and the willingness to do so still continued. 'Abd al-Rahman III was a man of the sword, not of the pen, while his son al-Hakam II was trained since his youth to become a 'wise ruler', to the extent that a later Andalusí scholar referred to him as 'one of our own' (i.e. the *`ulama`*). Al-Hakam II is mostly famous for his patronage of the arts and sciences, less known is the fact that he himself is credited with having written a number of works, as well as some verses. The case of the Cordoban Umayyads who were Sunnis will be contrasted with that of the other two caliphal dynasties that ruled in al-Andalus, the Hammudids (Hasanids) and the Mu'minids (Zanata Berbers), both of which had 'Shi'i' leanings.

Teresa BERNHEIMER (School of Oriental and African Studies, London)

Alī b. Abī Tālib and other imams

The talk will consider the ways in which 'Ali b. Abi Talib and other Shi'ite Imams, in particular from the Twelver tradition, are reported to have transmitted their knowledge. The central question is what kinds of knowledge 'Ali and the other imams are supposed to have transmitted, and in what form: the Twelver tradition preserves a great number of works about the Imams, including material ascribed to the imams themselves, such as works on Qur'anic exegesis, on the miracles and supernatural signs of the imams, collections of traditions, and of course the Imams' answers to legal questions. But to what extent are the Imams the authors of such works?

Of the works are ascribed to 'Ali b. Abi Talib—such as a recension of the Qur'an, a *kitāb 'Alī* which reportedly included discussions of a great variety of topics (cf. list of early citations in Modarressi, *Tradition and Survival*, pp. 8-12), possibly even a *dīwān*—perhaps the best known is the *Nahj al-Balāgha*, a collection of sermons and testimonials traditionally ascribed to the first Shi'ite imam. While there is still some controversy regarding its authenticity, it is clear that it was not compiled into a book before the fourth/tenth century. Similarly, the *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-kāmila*, a book of supplications ascribed to the fourth imam 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, seems to have been collected in the sixth/twelfth century at the earliest. The talk will examine the extent to which the Sunni and Shi'ite traditions differ about the Imams' role as 'authors', and examine the historical context in which the collection of the Imams' works became an important preoccupation of the Twelver community.

Christiane CZYGAN (Federal Forces University of Munich)

Premodern Ottoman Communication: The Sultanic Poem Collections of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent and Sultan Selim I

At a time when political loyalty was extremely fragile and a large number of Ottomans in Anatolia were attracted by Persian Safavids, the Safavids succeeded in creating a bond in Anatolia among Islamic sects, but also by promoting their version of Islam in ruler poetry recited in Ottoman-Turkish. The conflict between the Safavid-inclined population and the Ottoman state exploded in bloody uprisings in Anatolia.

Sultan Süleyman shared a predilection for poetry with his subjects and created thousands of poems under the pen name Muhibbi, the lover or God lover. With this pen name in the last distich of each poem, he provided his poems with a signature. Muhibbi was widely associated with Sultan Süleyman. In the Hamburg manuscript poem collection earthly love is related to power, but a large quantity of poems is related to spiritual love, and aspects of the Prophet Muhammed's life are alluded to as well.

The second poem collection is of Selim I Sultan Süleyman's father. It was produced in 1904. It was a gift from the German emperor Wilhelm II to Abdulhamit II. It is a critical edition of seven manuscripts of Selim I undertaken by Paul Horn, a German orientalist. It contains 305 poems of Selim I.

In the following paper I would like to shed light on the transformation of poetry as a means of communication in its highly artistic setting of imagery, rhyme and meter.

David DURAND-GUÉDY (Independent scholar)

The Seljuks

While many Iranian rulers have remained famous for their mastery of Persian or Turkish letters – one thinks of the 11th c. Ziyarid king Kay-Kāvus b. Iskandar (the author of *Qābūs-nāma*) or the founder of the Safavid dynasty Shah Ismā'il (whose quatrains of Sufi inspiration echoes those of his Ottoman foe), this is not the case of the Saljuqs, the first Turkish dynasty of nomadic origin to have ruled over the Iranian world in the 11th and 12th centuries. "They are steppe dwellers and are ignorant of the customs of kings ..." says one of their contemporaries after he visited the court of Sanjar, the greatest Saljuq ruler of the 12th century, conqueror of Ghazna, but also allegedly illiterate. The fact that no Saljuq has sponsored official historiography (in clear contrast with the Buyids, but also from the Mongols) is in this respect eloquent.

Indeed all the Saljuqs were warriors and in this sense they are typical of the militarization of Islamic states and societies from the 10th century onward, but unlike their Buyid and Samanids predecessors (10th c.), they had because of their origin but also their way of life a more complex relationship with the mainstream Persian culture which held sway in this part of the world. The Saljuq court was quite different from what the classical Iranian court, if only because it remained itinerant and was set apart from the cities which were the cradle of the Irano-Islamic civilization. It is only in the last third of the 12th century that a real

learned Saljuq king can be identified. While he was still very active on the battle field, and connected to the nomads, he is famed for having been versed in calligraphy and produced quatrains. However, his death sealed the fate of the dynasty in Iran and it is in the Anatolian branch, which enjoyed a far greater longevity, that the authentic literate Saljuq kings can be found.

This conference will provide us with the opportunity to revisit the corpus of sources concerning the Saljuqs in order to see how the question of the relation of the Saljuqs to the Persian letters (in terms of access and production) can help us both their domination over the local society and their integration to it.

Maribel FIERRO (Institute of Languages and Cultures of the Mediterranean-CSIC, Madrid)

What and why non-caliphal rulers wrote in al-Andalus and the Maghrib

In my paper I will offer an overview as complete as possible of rulers - who were not caliphs – to whom writings are attributed in the territories corresponding to al-Andalus (Muslim Iberia) and what are now Morocco, Algeria and Tunis, from the times of the conquest up to the eighteenth century CE. The analysis of the context in which such endeavour on the part of rulers took place will shed light on the extent to which it is to be linked to specific personalities or it needs to be integrated into specific conceptions of authority and rulership.

Adam GAISER (Florida State University)

Eloquent Exchange: Asceticism and Shirā' in the Poetry of Qaṭarī b. al-Fujā'a

The poetry of the Azraqite-Khārijite leader Qaṭarī b. al-Fujā'a presents an interesting case of a "ruler as author" insofar as his poetry lauds death on the battlefield – specifically the Khārijite practice of *shirā'*, "exchanging" one's life for paradise – as the highest virtue that an Azraqī Muslim can practice. This world-denying ethos seemingly stands in tension with the more worldly implications of the titles *khalīfa* (Caliph) and *amīr al-mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful), both of which are bestowed upon Ibn al-Fujā'a and other Azraqite imams in Islamic textual sources. In addition, Ibn al-Fujā'a name, flanked by Caliphal titular, appears on Azraqite coins from his era, indicating with a greater degree of certainty that the Azraqites associated him with recognizable Muslim forms of leadership. By simultaneously clarifying what purposes his poetic messages of asceticism and *shirā'* might have served, along with the contexts in which they might have operated, and by examining how the Azāriqa might have conceptualized governance (as both succession to the Prophet Muḥammad and military leadership), this paper will argue that Ibn al-Fujā'a and the Azraqites appear to be idealizing the austere aesthetic the Muslim Conquests (*futuḥāt*), with the figure of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb providing a tacit model of exemplary guidance for such conditions. This last point – that the Caliph 'Umar functioned as a (if not the) exemplar of the Azraqite Caliph – is much harder to prove given the state of the evidence. Nevertheless, enough evidence exists to make this contention compelling.

Angelika HARTMANN (Philipps-University Marburg, Germany)

Authority, ijtihād and politics: caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh's 'Kitāb Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn' (13th century, Baghdad)

The aim of my presentation is to answer the question: How did al-Nāṣir, a caliph of the 13th century, claim to represent the highest grade of scholarly authority (mujtahid) in complete succession to the prophet? His written work, 'Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn', received a lot of attention and was widely known in his time. It was commonly cited until the 15th century and its title was still known by the 17th century, after which it was believed to be lost. I was able, though, to retrieve two manuscript copies at the British Library London in an annotated version called 'Futūḥ al-waqt'. This was written by a famous contemporary of the caliph, 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī. In 2001, 'Rūḥ al-ʿārifīn' was then edited in Jordan by Badrī Muḥammad Fahd. With the help of his written work and other parallel activities as a transmitter of prophetic sayings, the caliph was able to create an extraordinary and complex monopoly of power in the political and educational sphere of his time.

Hani KHAFIPOUR (University of Southern California)

Dreams of a Sufi King: Shah Tahmasb and Visions of the Sacred

The genre of "true" autobiographies (self-analytical with varied degree of psychological complexity and sophistication) long held to be the domain of the European literary tradition, a general assumption dating back to the eighteenth century, exacerbated by the imperial-orientalist intellectual heritage of the later two centuries (e.g. Georges Gusdorf, Roy Pascal, and Georges May), and inadvertently extended by pioneering works of such figures as Georg Misch (e.g. *Geschichte der Autobiographie*) and Franz Rosenthal (e.g. "Die arabische Autobiographie"), and more recently Marvin Zonis (e.g. "Autobiography and Biography in the Middle East: A Plea for Psychopolitical Studies") to name a few. The views expressed in these classic studies continue to exert considerable influence though have in recent time been accurately critiqued by Nuha Khoury, Dwight Reynolds, Shawkat Toorawa, Jamal Elias, *et al.*

The criticism of the traditional view regarding the dearth and narrowness of Islamicate autobiographical literature in pre-industrial Middle East has for the large part been based on exploration of Arabic language sources with little attention paid to the other two major languages of the region, namely Turkish and Persian, thereby inhibiting the emergence of a more holistic pattern of the genre (e.g. the edited volume, *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* that explicitly excludes Turko-Persian tradition is a case in point). Added to this limited scope, fewer studies have engaged in examining "dream narratives" within autobiographies, thereby concealing from our view one of the most important dimensions of the region's intellectual tradition. Dream was a mysterious realm where the corporeal and the spiritual met, where sinners and saints conversed, and often than not was a dominion in which religio-political authority was sanctified.

My paper attends to these two gaps by analyzing a memoir written in Persian by the Azeri-Turkish speaking ruler of Iran, Shah Tahmasb (r. 1524-1576), the second ruler of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722) with a special focus on his dreams, which he recounts in vivid detail. Although, the Shi'i Safavid rulers of Iran were for the most part great patrons of art and literature, they did not personally engage with the written word. The two exceptions, however, were Shah Ismail the founder of the dynasty who left behind a large collection of folkloric/mystical poetry (*Divan-iKhata'i*), and his son and successor Tahmasb who penned a short memoir known as *Tazkirah-yi Shah Tahmasb* which covers some of the major events of his life occurring roughly between the years (1523-1561). While Shah Ismail's *Divan* has been subject of several thorough studies, Tahmasb's memoir has not shared a similar fate.

The Safavid followers (or disciples) believed that the reigning shah was a Sufi shaykh, a perfect spiritual master (*murshid-ikamil*) as well as the belief that they were descendants of Imam 'Ali and Fatimah, a conviction that secured for the shahs great veneration and religio-political legitimacy. In this paper, I examine this perception of a "Sufi king" through a close reading of the Sufi king's self-perception as revealed through a series of dreams that he experienced and retold to his inner circle. I will discuss the extent to which his dream-revelations correspond to (and differ from) the larger pattern of dream-revelations of medieval and early modern Sufi shaykhs as reported in various hagiographies.

I argue that Tahmasb's dream-revelations (self-interpreted) while conforming to certain patterns found in Sufi hagiographies, his visions of Imam 'Ali, Imam Mahdi, and even "the Divine Light" precisely at times of grave political crises create a dialectic between an interventionist transcendent power (i.e. Shi'i Imams' power of intercession) and their supposed progeny (i.e. Tahmasb as a supplicant king) in which kingship extends beyond the corporeal into the spiritual where power can be negotiated through exchange of "favours" (*ni'ma*). This paper, by closely examining Shah Tahmasb's dreams as interpreted in his own words sheds a rare light on the neglected inner world of a Shi'i king and Perso-Islamic dream narratives of the early modern era.

Todd LAWSON (University of Toronto)

An Author as Ruler: The Bāb and his Qayyūm al-asmā'

The Bābi religion dates its own beginning to the composition of an unusual work by its founder, Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad Shīrāzī, known to history as The Bāb (1819-1850). This presentation will explore the way in which this work challenges existing worldly or *dunyavī* authority, both royal and clerical, and invokes the authority of the hidden Imām of Ithnā-'ashariyya Shi'ism. Such authority entails a complex and interdependent cluster of notions of loyalty, guardianship, love, covenant, friendship and intimacy in the Arabic word *walāya*. This distinctive notion of authority is invoked at every level of the composition, whether from the point of view of form, which is that of a "new" Qur'ān, complete with *sūras*, *āyas*, and disconnected letters, or from the point of view of content which is a constant proclamation of the imminent appearance (*ẓuhūr*) of the hidden Imām, the long awaited eschatological savior of 12er Shi'ism. In the course of this proclamation (or Islamicate "annunciation"), forms and motifs of ancient - what some have called "primitive" -

Shi'i discourses of authority are invoked. The work is entirely in Arabic and its author was condemned in a *fatwa* issued by a combined court of Sunni and Shi'i ulama in Baghdad shortly after it began to be circulated in late 1844 (1260 AH). Nonetheless, the work acquired an active and committed readership who eventually came to be known as the followers of the Bāb and whose activities left an enduring imprint on Iranian Shi'ism.

Christian MAUDER (University of Bonn)

Legitimizing Sultanic Rule in Arabic, Turkish and Persian– Late Mamluk Rulers as Authors of Religious Poetry

During the last fifty years of the existence of the Mamluk Sultanate, its rulers were not only confronted with the consequences of a severe economic crisis, recurrent outbreaks of the plague and troop mutinies. They also had to compete with their Ottoman, Safavid and AqQoyunlu rivals who thanks to their military successes and exalted lineages not only effectively countered Mamluk claims for regional supremacy, but also raised doubts about the very legitimacy of Mamluk rule itself. In their attempts to overcome this late Mamluk crisis of legitimacy, the Sultans Qāyṭbāy (r. 1468-1496), Muḥammad b. Qāyṭbāy (r. 1496-1498) and Qāniṣawh al-Ghawrī (r. 1501-1516) broke new grounds in Mamluk political culture by producing sizeable collections of primarily religious poetry in Arabic, Turkish and Persian. In their verses, these Mamluk Sultans presented themselves as not only pious, but also divinely chosen sovereigns who thanks to their linguistic competences and otherworldly insight were predestined to rule the Islamic world. Building on in part unpublished and largely neglected material, the study outlines the multilingual poetic production of these three Mamluk Sultans, explores the religious and political significance of their writings and sheds light on their reception by contemporaries and posterity.

Matthew MELVIN-KOUSHKI (University of South Carolina)

Timurid-Mughal Philosopher-Kings as Sultan-Scientists

The successors of Amir Temūr (r. 1370-1405), supreme Lord of Conjunction (*ṣāhib-qirān*), developed a distinctive form of saint-philosopher-kingship without precedent in Islamic history. Most notably, as part and parcel of their universalist-imperialist quest to transcend binaries political (caliphate vs. sultanate) and epistemological (*ẓāhir* vs. *bāṭin*) in equal measure, they fashioned themselves absolutist *astrocrats*, capable of talismanically marrying heaven to earth, by means of a personal mastery of astronomy-astrology. Of manifest political utility, the science of the stars had attracted the perennial interest of ruling elites since antiquity, to be sure; but these Timurid ruler were the first to pursue it within an explicitly *lettrist-neopythagorean* framework—whence the dual astrological-lettrist platform undergirding Timurid claims to imperial universalism, which definitively timuridized the very title *ṣāhib-qirān*; and whence the mathematization of astronomy by the members of the Samarkand Observatory, a revolutionary development much feted by historians of science. Thus institutionalized, this same (occult-)scientific platform remained an effective means of performing a specifically Timurid mode of sovereignty throughout the Persianate world until at least the mid-17th century, and especially in Mughal India.

This paper discusses the personal scientific output and patronage programs of two Timurid philosopher-kings: Iskandar Sulṭān b. ʿUmar Shaykh b. Temür (r. 1409-14), hugely ambitious (if soon foiled) patron of the sciences of stars and letters, who authored the preface to a state-of-the-art manual of mathematical astronomy (and perhaps the manual itself), the *Sultanic Compendium* (*Jāmiʿ-i Sulṭānī*); and his more successful cousin Ulugh Beg b. Shāhrukh b. Temür (r. 1409-49), founder of the Samarkand Observatory and Madrasa complex and co-author of the crucial *New Sultanic Star Tables* (*Zīj-i Jadīd-i Sulṭānī*), who was hailed by his astronomer and lettrist patronesses as messianic *sultan-scientist* (*al-sulṭān al-faylasūf*). Intriguingly, while the intellectual-imperial projects of both men are indeed unprecedented in the Islamicate context, they may be said to islamize—perhaps consciously—the classical model of Archytas (Arkhūṭas, d. 347 BCE), ruler of the powerful Greek city-state Tarentum and leading pythagorean philosopher, who too was a mathematician-astronomer king. Nor do they seem to have had true successors: no subsequent Turko-Mongol Perso-Islamic sovereign is known to have personally authored scientific texts in the quest to mathematize the cosmos.

Nevertheless, the model established by Iskandar Sulṭān and Ulugh Beg ensured that astronomy-astrology and lettrism in particular would continue to be heavily patronized by subsequent Timurid, and Indo-Timurid, dynasts (as well as their Safavid and Ottoman competitors). This includes in the first place Emperor Akbar's grandson Shāhjahān (r. 1628-57), self-proclaimed Second Lord of Conjunction (*ṣāhib-qirān-i ṣānī*), who commissioned upon his accession the *Zīj-i Shāhjahānī*, an updated and corrected version of Ulugh Beg's star tables of two centuries prior; tellingly, it features the first preface in the Arabo-Persian astronomical tradition to be explicitly lettrist in tenor. The same feature is shared by the preface to the *Supreme Secret* (*Sirr-i Akbar*), a much-celebrated Persian translation of the Upanishads, the first, by Shāhjahān's son Dārā Shukūh (d. 1659), concordist author of a number of other works. This famed but ill-starred saint-prince, who was executed by his more politically and militarily astute brother Awrangzēb after a failed succession bid, did prefer sufism to astral science; but his casting of Hindu *tawḥīd* in lettrist terms was similarly calculated, I argue, to signal his performance of Timurid sovereignty.

Such authorial evidence suggests that the neopythagorean worldview of our royal actors must be taken far more seriously than it has been to date; that they held the cosmos itself to be a mathematical text to be riddled by scientists of stars and letters alone explains the contours of their remarkable intellectual-imperial projects. And if the world is indeed a text, it also demands to be *written*, preferably in marble: may we thus not style Shāhjahān himself *author* of the unparalleled cosmographical logograph (*muʿammā*)—which poetical genre was made a mainstay of lettrist practice precisely by Timurid scholars—that is the Tāj Maḥal?

Letizia OSTI (University of Milan)

Monarchs, kuttāb, orators, epistolographers, land-tax officials, heads of bureaux. Abbasid rulers and their standing as authors

This paper will look at how 3rd/9th and 4th/10th century historical and literary sources assess Abbasid rulers as scholars, poets and authors, and whether and how such assessment is tied to their legitimacy. Starting from the authors and works recorded in the *Kitāb al-fihrist* by Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 380/990) and surveying works of *adab* and historiography, we shall review the production of specific caliphs and rulers, investigating several questions: whether a ruler's works are assessed with the same criteria as other scholars'; whether there are subjects which are deemed more appropriate for a ruler to master and write about than others; whether prose and poetry are valued differently; how rulers' written works were collected and preserved; and whether being an author, as opposed to being learned, is linked explicitly to being a better ruler. Notwithstanding the importance of culture for good rulership, is there a difference between admiring scholars and poets, learning from them, and being one?

Jürgen PAUL (CSMC)

Epigrammatic quatrains: Versifying Khwārazmshāhs

In °Awfi's anthology of Persian poets *Lubāb al-albāb*, the first chapter is devoted to princely poetry. Among the authors presented, some belong to the Anūshteginid dynasty of Khwārazmshāhs. In historiographic sources as well, some poems allegedly composed by Khwārazmshāhs are on record. Beyond that, Khwārazmian court poets and their contemporaries (e.g. at the

Seljuqid Sanjar's court) lent their pen to direct political contest alongside their masters and patrons. Often, the texts come in pairs, responding one to the other. The quatrain (*rubā'ī*) was the favoured form for both shah and court poet in this context: a short form, easily improvised and even more easily memorised, it served well its purpose in political propaganda and in contests for fame and legitimacy. Moreover, the memory of some figures became widely "romanticised" through reports of exchange. My paper will present this (rather small) corpus and discuss some ways in which to use it as a source for the history of 12th and early 13th century Iran and Central Asia.

Petra G. SCHMIDL (Exzellenzcluster *Normative Ordnungen*, Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt)

The Rasūlids in Yemen and the Science

The Rasūlids, a dynasty of most probably Kurd, or Turk descentance, at first in the service of the Saljūqs and the Ayyūbids, eventually ruled over Yemen, or most parts of it, from 13th to 16th century. Their interest in promoting and patronizing arts and architecture, learning and scholarship is reflected in artefacts and buildings, instruments and texts accrued during their reign. Aside from this commitment, the Rasūlids emerge also as authors of scholarly texts in different fields of knowledge. Most creative and productive was al-Ashraf ʿUmar (d. 1296), the third sultan, but some of his predecessors and successors also either wrote texts themselves or were closely related to their emergence. After shortly introducing the Rasūlids, this talk will first introduce these examples, and second use them to address the topics of this conference, in particular knowledge, authority, and legitimacy.

A.T. SEN (Leiden University)

A Scholar-Prince in Defiance of Ottoman Practice: The Politics of Şehzade Korkud's Intellectual Output

Although the House of Osman produced a great deal of poets and composers of classical music, it is a rare find to see a royal member of the Ottoman dynasty devoting himself/herself to authoring scholarly works in the established fields of Islamic learning. Prince Korkud (d. 1513), one of the eight sons of Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512), presents such a precious example of a scholar-prince, who wrote, in anticipation of an imminent succession struggle, several works that can be classified as theological and legal treatises. In these texts that have mostly survived as single copies, Prince Korkud not only reveals the extent of his scholarly formation but also, and more importantly, addresses and indeed challenges various contemporary issues related to Ottoman administrative practice that he considers incompatible with Islamic principles. With an eye toward situating Korkud's intellectual production into the immediate politico-historical context of the time during which a fierce succession struggle between the living sons of Bayezid was expected to occur, this presentation aims at revisiting, in light of the recent growing scholarship on Prince Korkud, some of the themes recurring in his extant works, such as the anxiety experienced due to the struggle between establishing an effective rule and living a pious life.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Ahmed Ibrahim ABUSHOUK (Qatar University) is Professor of Modern and Contemporary History, and received his PhD in History from Bergen University, Norway, in 1998. His publications include *The Public Treasury of the Muslims: Monthly Budgets of the Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1897* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997); *The Sudan National Elections 2010: A Study of their Preludes and Results* (Doha: Aljazeera Centre for Studies, 2012) and *The Hadrami Diaspora in Southeast Asian: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2009).

Oily AKKERMAN (Freie Universität Berlin) is a university lecturer in Islamic Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Her forthcoming monograph, titled *The Alawi Bohras and the Making of a Neo-Fatimid Library: A Study in Social Codicology*, focusses on the material culture of Bohra archives, and the archival and codicological practices that surround it.

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María Luisa ÁVILA is Senior Researcher at the School of Arabic Studies-CSIC, Granada. Her research focuses on Arabic historiography (especially biographical dictionaries of scholars) and the social and intellectual history of al-Andalus for which she has used digital methodologies since her first book published in 1985 (*La sociedad hispanomusulmana al final del califato: aproximación a un estudio demográfico*). She is the director of the *Prosopography of the scholars of al-Andalus (Prosopografía de Ulemas Andalusíes = PUA)*, a digital repertory of ca. 11,600 Andalusí scholars accessible online <http://www.eea.csic.es/pua/>

Teresa BERNHEIMER is Senior Lecturer at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Educated at SOAS (BA) and Oxford (M.Phil, D.Phil), she has published on the history of the Prophet Muhammad's family in early Islam (*The 'Alids: The First Family of Islam*, EUP 2013), and on Islam's place in the study of Late Antiquity (with Adam Silverstein (eds), *Late Antiquity, Eastern Perspectives: Studies on the Persian World from the Sasanians to Early Islam*, Oxford 2012). She is very interested in the use of material culture in early Islamic historiography, and on approaches to the teaching of early Islam (elaborated in *Early Islamic History, Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*, ed. with Tamima Bayhoum-Daou, 4 vols, London 2013). She is currently working on a project on colours in early Islam.

Sonja BRENTJES (Max Planck Gesellschaft) is researcher at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin. Her fields of specialization are the history of science in Islamicate societies, mapmaking in the Mediterranean and western Asia, as well as institutions and cross-cultural encounters. She has published widely on Euclid's *Elements* in Islamicate societies, medieval maritime charts, early modern maps of western Asia, Ottoman transformations of W. Blaeu's *Atlas Maior*, the sciences at madrasas, European visitors of the Ottoman and Safavid empires, and other topics. Her new research project concerns the visualization and material cultures of the heavens in Eurasia and North Africa in cooperation with Dagmar Schäfer.

Christiane CZYGAN works on a volume on Premodern Ottoman poetry and prepares a project of the Third Divan of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. She teaches at The Federal Forces University of Munich. She received her Master in Turkish Studies, History and French Literature from the University of Hamburg and studied in Istanbul Ottoman History and Literature. She finished her PhD at the University of Hamburg, where she taught Ottoman History and Ottoman Literature. She published *Zur Ordnung des Staates. Jungosmanische Intellektuelle und ihre Konzepte in der Zeitung Hürriyet* (Klaus Schwarz 2012). A number of her articles on the Young Ottomans and Sultan Süleyman's poetry have appeared. Her field of research is premodern Ottoman history and poetry, conceptual history and history of the press.

David DURAND-GUÉDY (Ph.D. 2004 Aix-en-Provence) is an independent scholar based in Tehran, Iran. He has published extensively on the Saljuqs and pre-Mongol Iran, including the award-winning *Iranian Elites and Turkish Rulers, A History of Isfahan in the Saljuq Period* (Routledge 2010).

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Adam GAISER (Ph.D. '05, University of Virginia, History of Religions) teaches courses in Islamic studies at the Florida State University. His research mainly focuses on the early development of the Kharijites and Ibadiyya. His first book (*Muslims, Scholars, Soldiers: The Origin and Elaboration of the Ibadi Imamate Traditions*, Oxford, 2010) explores the issue of the Ibadi imamate, while his second (*Shurāt Legends, Ibādī Identities: Martyrdom, Asceticism and the Making of an Early Islamic Community*, University of South Carolina Press, 2016) investigates early Ibadi identifications with the Muhakkima and *shurat* through the medium of martyrdom and asceticism literature. He is currently working on an introduction to Muslim sectarianism (*The Umma Divided: Muslim Sects and Schools*, Cambridge, contracted). Dr. Gaiser also teaches courses on Shi'ism, Islam in North America, Islamic Law, the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an.

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Todd LAWSON (PhD 1987, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University) is Professor Emeritus of Islamic Thought, University of Toronto. He has specialized in Qur'ān commentary, Islamic philosophical theology, Islamicate literary apocalypse and the early modern period of Shi'i history including the rise and development of Shaykhī, Bābī and Bahā'ī thought, particularly as this relates to the Qur'ān. He edited, with Sebastian Günther, the recent comprehensive 2-volume study of Islamic eschatology, *Roads to Paradise* (Brill 2016). His *Qur'ān, Epic and Apocalypse* was published in November 2017 from Oneworld Publications and his *Intimacy and Ecstasy in Tafsīr* is now in press with Brill.

Christian MAUDER is a junior research fellow at the Annemarie-Schimmel-Centre for Advanced Studies of the University of Bonn, Germany. His research focuses on the intellectual, religious and political history of the late Islamic middle period and the interaction between the Arabic-speaking world and Europe in early modern times. His publications include the monograph *Gelehrte Krieger: Die Mamluken als Träger arabischsprachiger Bildung nach al-Ṣafadī, al-Maqrīzī und weiteren Quellen* (Hildesheim 2012) and the co-edited volume *Koran in Franken: Überlegungen und Beispiele für Koranrezeption in fremden Kontexten* (Würzburg 2016).

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Petra G. SCHMIDL. After studying history, history of science, ethnology, and physics, as well as learning Arabic, Petra G. Schmidl received her doctoral degree in 2005 for her work on three folk astronomical treatises from 11th-Hijaz and 13th-century Yemen. Since working in several research projects related to her research interests in history of pre-modern astronomy, astrology, instruments and related disciplines in Islamic societies, she is currently postdoctoral research assistant at the Cluster of Excellence "Normative Orders" at Frankfurt University. Her project "Sultan and the Stars. Al-Ashraf ʿUmar and his *Kitāb al-Tabṣira fī ʿilm al-nujūm*" is closely related to the conference's topics.

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