

A weaver's notebook: Context, content, and history

We present here the edition of a heretofore unrecognized untitled Arabic fragment of great historical value. It is preserved in a single autograph manuscript in the Forschungsbibliothek Schloss Friedenstein in Gotha under the shelfmark MS orient. A 114. The 63 folios contain notes written through the years 997 and 998/1588 and 1589 by a Sunnī male weaver, cloth merchant, and poet named Kamāl al-Dīn, living and writing in Aleppo.⁽⁵⁾ It represents the earliest known Arabic notebook of an artisan or merchant.⁽⁶⁾

Codicology and provenance

The 63 folios measure 15 by 11 centimeters. The number of lines per page varies widely. The folios are mostly in order with two possible exceptions. In the first, folios 1r-2v form a single folded bifolium,

(5) The most recent print catalogue of Gotha's Oriental manuscripts [Pertsch: *Die orientalischen Handschriften, Teil 3.1*, 197] lists 62 folios. However, a leaf between folios 8 and 9 was overlooked, but has been foliated as 8a-r and 8a-v.

(6) The only other similar and roughly contemporary work from the region is the 17th-century journal of the Armenian silk merchant Zakaria of Agulis, who recorded his travels between Iran and Amsterdam. His writings, composed in Armenian, span the years 1057/1647 to 1102/1691 and mostly treat the subjects of local currencies, trade routes, and accounting matters; see *The Journal of Zak'aria of Agulis*.

Beirut, where its director Stefan Leder and the editor of its prestigious series *Bibliotheca Islamica* have agreed to undertake this edition and to include a study of the work longer than what is the usual policy of the series.

Leipzig and New York, July 2017.

on many of his notebook's pages, yet it did not reach his doorsteps. Sadly, as our own project continued to flourish, our weaver's hometown suffered in the cruel reality of the Syrian civil war. As this reality inevitably made obsolete any wish to explore the archives and family libraries of this town, it has most certainly also destroyed some of the places and structures that had remained throughout the centuries since Kamāl al-Dīn laid eyes on or even mentioned them in his notebook.

We owe thanks to several individuals and institutions that lent their help. Christoph K. Neumann (Munich) has taken a look at the passages in Ottoman and suggested readings. Alev Masarwa (Münster) has explained the peculiarities of a chronogram by the poet Māmayya. Amanda Phillips (Virginia) kindly suggested readings and techniques for entering into the study of Ottoman textiles; Vivek Gupta has been a generous host at the American Numismatic Society, where we visited to see the coins our weaver so often writes about in his text. We were able to see the volume in Gotha to check uncertain readings and the codicological features and our research met with the open support by the director of the Forschungsbibliothek, Dr. Kathrin Paasch, and the then curator of Oriental manuscripts, Mareike Beez. We presented aspects of this work before audiences at the Université de Paris-Sorbonne, the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg at Universität Bonn, the ALEA seminar headed by Thomas Bauer at Universität Münster, the Orient-Institut Beirut, the MESA Annual Meeting in Boston, Rutgers University—New Brunswick, Barnard College of Columbia University, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and we are grateful for the encouragement, critiques, and suggestions from our listeners.

We are particularly happy about the interest of the Orient-Institut

its features, especially the interconfessional perspectives the author offers, so much unlike his contemporaries. The unusual appearance and content of this volume stuck with both of us and when by chance we met on a conference in 2015 the idea was born to edit the text and accompany this edition with a study of its value and some of its peculiarities. This edition would not have come to fruition or even been undertaken without the mutual encouragement and support of both of us.

This edition is the product of a fruitful collaboration and has profited from our respective expertise. Both the transcription cum annotation as the preceding study bear traces of both contributors in all its parts, even though each has concentrated on specific topics. As a result, the product of one's labour would have been less accurate were it not for the other's many and substantial interventions.

The many references to manuscript notes throughout the following observations are based on Liebreiz's systematic collecting of them over the last years that have been made possible through funding by the German Research Association (DFG)⁽³⁾ and the European Social Fund (ESF).⁽⁴⁾ Richardson's research was funded by a European Commission-funded Marie Curie fellowship at Universität Münster from 2012 to 2014, a research fellowship at the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg for Mamluk Studies at Universität Bonn in 2014-2015, and a Scholar Incentive Award from Queens College of The City University of New York.

Kamāl al-Dīn lived through uncertain times and war was a topic

(3) In 2008-2013, the Refaiya-project enabled Liebreiz to catalogue several collections and publish data from Leipzig online (<http://www.refaiya.uni-leipzig.de>).

(4) In 2013-2014, the ESF-project "Wissensrohstoff Text" helped collect the manuscript notes from Gotha.