

THE HUMAN ELEMENT BETWEEN TEXT AND READER

THE *IJĀZA* IN ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS

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The *ijāza* is the certificate of reading or hearing which is sometimes written on manuscripts, usually near the colophon or on the title page. It confers upon the recipient the right to transmit a text, or to teach, or to issue legal opinions. It also bears witness to attendance at a reading session. The *ijāzat al-tadrīs*, the licence to teach, and the *ijāzat al-samā'*, the certificate of attendance at a reading session and hence the licence to transmit the text read, should not be confused. Our attention here will be focused on the *ijāzat al-samā'*, the protocols of reading sessions which were often added to a text, as these in particular provide us with ample information on the human element in the transmission of texts.

The *ijāza* is a conspicuous feature of Arabic manuscripts and it illustrates how a text functions in an educational, scientific or cultural environment. Studying *ijāzas* increases our knowledge of the human element in the use of texts and manuscripts. For a better understanding of the *ijāza* it is also important also to be aware of the individual and personal element in the transmission of Muslim scholarship: we, therefore, deal with this subject briefly in the following section. Finally, we suggest a proposal for collecting and analysing *ijāzāt al-samā'* in Arabic manuscripts.¹

¹ There is no monograph devoted to the *ijāza*, nor is there a published corpus of texts. Some useful sources which provide a wealth of material on the subject are: 'Abd Allāh Fayyād, *al-Ijāzāt al-'ilmiyya 'inda al-muslimīn* (Baghdad, 1967) (with emphasis on the Shi'a); P.A. MacKay, *Certificates of Transmission on a Manuscript of the Maqāmāt of Ḥarīrī*, MS. Cairo, Adab 105, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, LXI/4

Personal approach and continuity in Islamic scholarship

It has often been stated that in Islam there is no hierarchic structure comparable with the church-like organisation of the Christians. Strictly speaking, this is true. Islam does not have an infallible pope nor does it have a clergy with an intricately differentiated hierarchic structure who claim to occupy a position between God and the believer and dispense sacraments and pretend to possess the monopoly of doctrine. This does not, of course, mean that clerical organisation is totally lacking in Islam. It is only that the dynamics of continuity — since organisation produces continuity — in Islam have developed in a different way. In Islam no intermediary between God and man is necessary. And just as a Muslim's relationship with God is direct and personal, so too is a man's way of procuring religious knowledge. In Islam it is the personal relationship between teacher and pupil that, through the generations of scholars, has produced a powerful driving force that ensures a continuity of its own.

Several genres of Islamic literature have developed in the course of time, which reflect this individual and personal attitude. It started very early indeed, with the emergence of Islamic tradition, *ḥadīth*. As important as the content of the Tradition is the chain of authorities, the *isnād*, which precedes each tradition. The early collections are even organised not according to subject matter but to their authorities, and hence referred to by the name *Musnad*. Half of Islamic Tradition is *ʿilm al-rijāl*, the “knowledge of the transmitters”. Only an authentic chain of trustworthy authorities validates the text of a *ḥadīth*. Without it a *ḥadīth* is suspended in space and is incomplete — at least that is the

(Philadelphia, 1971); Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, “Ijāzāt al-samāʾ fī al-makḥṭūṭāt al-qadīma”, *Majallat Maʿhad al-Makḥṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyya* (MMA), I (1375/1955), 232-51; J. Pedersen, *The Arabic Book* (Princeton, 1984), esp. 31-4; Qāsim Aḥmad al-Sāmarrāʾī, “Al-ijāza wa-tatawwuruhā al-tārikhī”, *ʿĀlam al-Kutub*, II (1981), 278-85. Many illustrations of *ijāzāt* are found in A. J. Arberry, *A Handlist of the Arabic Manuscripts of the Chester Beatty Library* (8 vols., Dublin, 1955-66). The use of the *ijāza* in the Islamic educational system has been treated by George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges. Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh, 1981), while Georges Vajda, *Les certificats de lecture et de transmission dans les manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris* (Paris, 1956), gives an analysis of the contents of a great number of *ijāzāt* in 72 manuscripts. I also wish to thank Léon Buskens for putting at my disposal a number of published *ijāzāt* or *ijāza*-related texts from his private library.

opinion of the early Muslim scholars. For practical reasons these Tradition texts and chains of authorities were written down, but, according to the old ideals, religious knowledge was best disseminated orally. The *isnads* can thus be read as protocols of successive instances and sessions in which learning was transmitted. The written form of *ḥadīth* is thus but one dimension of the Tradition: the human factor in the transmission and continuity of knowledge is as important as the recorded message itself. The saying that “knowledge is in the breasts [of men], not in the lines [of books]” (*al-‘ilm fī al-ṣudūr lā fī al-sutūr*) aptly summarises this idea.²

The rapid expansion of Islam and the enormous diversification of the different disciplines of learning made it impossible to maintain oral transmission as the only vehicle for passing on knowledge. The Word of God, the divine revelation, had to be written down, since the early carriers of the Holy Word died on the battlefields of the expansion wars. At a later stage, historical and Tradition texts were written down as well, initially in all sorts of personal notebooks³ of transmitters, later in more organised collections that were intended for a wider audience. Though, in the end, books became accepted as the ordinary medium, the individual and personal approach nevertheless remained intact. Just reading a book in order to grasp its contents, as we do nowadays, was not enough. In the classical period, it was thought, a book should be read with a teacher, preferably the author himself, or else it should be studied with an authoritative and respected professor. Reading, or rather studying, was not a solitary affair. It was also a social event, as we shall see.

Biographical literature emerged in Islam as one of the consequences of this individual and personal approach. The genre was not new around the Mediterranean. In classical antiquity biographical literature such as the “Parallel Lives” of Plutarch served historical, didactic, moralistic and sometimes ideological purposes. Some of the Islamic biographical literature had a similar purpose but there was an extra dimension. The “science of men”, or *‘ilm al-rijāl*, developed into a critical method

² See Ibn al-Akfānī, *Irshād al-qāṣid ilā asnā al-maqāṣid*, ed. J. J. Witkam (Leiden, 1989), 446, no. 191.

³ For their use, and the distrust they evoked, see al-Balkhī (d. ca. 319/913), *Kitāb Qabūl al-akhbār wa-ma‘rifat al-rijāl*, MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, *Muṣṭalaḥ* 14M, *passim*. An edition of this text by myself is in an advanced stage of preparation.

for the assessment of scholarly authority. Many biographical works were concerned with describing networks of scholarship and chains of transmission. A clear example of this is the *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449), which is a biographical dictionary of trustworthy transmitters of Islamic Tradition.⁴ The usual structure of a biography in this work breaks down into three parts: firstly the full name and some other pertinent life data of the subject are given, then follow enumerations of earlier authorities from whom he transmits Tradition, and then of those later authorities who in turn transmit from him. The biographee is thereby presented in the centre of an activity of transmission of knowledge. This particular work by Ibn Ḥajar is exclusively concerned with traditionists and this particular approach can, therefore, be observed here very clearly. Other biographical works, even those that are not so exclusively concerned with traditionists, often contain similar bits of network information.

Literary genres of an individual and personal nature

Other individual and personal genres evolved. The *fahrasa*,⁵ which developed in al-Andalus and the Maghreb, is one of these. This genre, in which a scholar enumerates his shaykhs and the works he read with them, can be read as a scholarly curriculum vitae. The *thabat*, which is not confined to the Maghreb, is a list compiled by a relater of traditions in which he mentions his shaykhs and the scope of his transmissions on their authority. Likewise, in the *riḥla*, or travel account, attention shifted from geography and ethnography in the classical period to the personal relationships of scholars. Especially in later times it became much more than just a travel account. In it, the itinerant author has ample opportunity to enumerate the scholars he has met, the lessons he has taken and the authorisations he has received during his travels. And the purpose of his travels was, of course, not touristic but of a much more edifying nature, namely the pilgrimage to Makka.⁶ Yet another type of personalised text is

⁴ Published in 12 volumes in Hyderabad, 1325-7 [1907-9].

⁵ See Ch. Pellat, s.v. "Fahrasa", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed (EI²), (Leiden and London, 1960-), II, 743-4.

⁶ This genre of travel accounts became specially developed in the Western part of the Islamic world. The great distance from the Arabian Peninsula must have contributed to this development.

the *silsila*, the spiritual or scholarly genealogy.⁷ The *barnāmaj*⁸ and the *mashyakha* have a function very similar to that of the *fahrasa*, and sometimes contain accounts of travels in search of knowledge, the *ṭalab al-‘ilm*, just as in the *rihla*. One of the most conspicuous types of compilation of biographical data are the works describing the *ṭabaqāt* (“the layers”) of scholars, which list the successive generations of persons active in a certain field. This treatment “by generation” kept intact both the synchronic and diachronic connections in the history of a field of scholarship.

Especially in later times, such enumerations were compiled as a sort of scholarly autobiography. Sometimes the main attention is directed to the texts which were read with teachers, as in the *barnāmaj*, and sometimes the shaykhs themselves are the main object of attention, as in the *mashyakha*. Often these texts were compiled by the subjects themselves and were written in the first person, although the third person is used in the autobiography as well. When others took care of the compilation of such a list of subjects taught or authorities met by their shaykh, such a survey could simply be called *al-Ta’rīf bi-...*, followed by the name of the shaykh in question. The same applies to works which are entitled *Tarjamat ...*, followed by the name of the biographee. Titles such as *al-Sanad al-muttaṣil ilā ...*, followed by the name of an early authority, occur as well. Compilations with the word *asānīd* in the title serve a similar purpose in describing the chains of authorities by which a certain scholar is connected to the great imams of an earlier period. At a much later stage, probably only as late as the 12th/18th century, separate booklets with titles including the word *ijāza* began to appear. At first sight these seem to belong to the category of educational *ijāzāt* rather than that of readers' certificates but there are also connections between the two types of texts since the later diplomas frequently contain a *silsila* of learned predecessors, often putting the Prophet Muḥammad at the beginning of the *silsila* and the student to whom the booklet was issued at its end. Elaborately adorned, impressively calligraphed and elegantly worded, these diplomas can be considered to constitute the final stage of the *ijāza* and its

⁷ Many *silsilas* are known. The Sufis have their own sets of *silsilas*. I have published and analysed the *silsila* of the Bosnian Ḥanafī scholar Ḥasan Kāfī al-Aqḥiṣārī (d. 1025/1616) in *Manuscripts of the Middle East* (MME), IV (1989), 85-114.

⁸ For this type of book, see ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ahwānī, “Kutub barāmij al-‘ulamā’ fi al-Andalus”, *MMMA*, I (1955), 91-120, 252-71.

finest artistic expression. Because of them, the *ijāza* has become an independent literary genre.⁹

Yet another special literary genre that developed from this practice is the *juz'*, a short text usually consisting of not much more than one quire, and often small enough for it to be easily carried. It could happen that only a very small part of a scholar's work was read and taught in a session in which an *ijāza* was going to be granted. In that case the issuer of the *ijāza* had the choice between two options. He could confer upon his pupil, or a visiting scholar, the right to transmit the whole of a book by him, or his transmissions (*marwīyyāt*), or his own orally received knowledge (*masmū'āt*), or the works for which he himself had already acquired certificates (*mustajāzāt*), or of any other of his works even if they had only been partially read or not read at all. Such *ijāzāt 'amma* abound.

The other option was that the short text or the specific collection of transmissions which had been read could be written out separately. Such shorter collections of part of the repertoire of a shaykh often bear the title *juz'*.¹⁰ Sometimes these *ajzā'* are provided with a more detailed specification and a more meaningful title.¹¹

⁹ Such booklets are available in numerous libraries. The MS Montreal, McGill University Library, No. AC 156 is such a separate diploma. Its content was analysed and published by Adam Gacek, "The Diploma of the Egyptian Calligrapher Ḥasan al-Rushdī", *MME*, IV (1989), 44–55. Another one is MS Leiden, University Library, Or. 11.121. This thin volume, which probably originates from Istanbul, contains an *ijāza* in the readings of the Qur'ān conferred upon Abū Bakr Luṭfī Afandī b. al-Sayyid 'Umar al-Sanūbī by his teacher Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī b. 'Alī in *Muḥarram* 1260/1844.

¹⁰ It is not impossible that the *juz'* as an independent genre developed from the old practice of writing *ijāzāt, samā'āt* and the like on each *juz'*, here more or less meaning quire, or gathering, of a manuscript. Such manuscripts are referred to as *mujazza'*, divided into *ajzā'*. This feature is by no means rare. It can be attested by the Leiden manuscripts Or. 122 (*Makārim al-Akhlaq*) and Or. 12.644 (*Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*). These manuscripts contain on each gathering a number of almost identical certificates. The gatherings have title pages of their own and break up the text into parts of more or less equal length which have no connection with any division into chapters and sections that the text may also have. This latter characteristic is shared, of course, with the Qur'ān, which has a formal division into *ajzā'* and, at the same time, a division into chapters, or *sūras*.

¹¹ *Ajzā'* with *samā'āt* are mentioned by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, "Ijāzāt al-samā'", nos. 10 and 11.

When a scholar's trust in his colleague or student was great, it could happen that he conferred upon him the right to transmit all his works, even if they had not been the subject of a teaching session. In such a case the *ijāza* may contain the titles of most or all of the teacher's works and be, in effect, an autobibliography. Such lists of titles of books in the *ijāza*, or elsewhere in a manuscript for that matter, are have hardly been explored as yet.¹² There are many more works, often with more flowery titles, which serve the same purpose, namely to record and assess a scholar's authority. When one starts searching for this type of book the supply is seemingly endless. The common features that may be observed in all of them are the enumerations of scholars visited, of books read, and of authorisations (*ijāzāt*) received. In this context the *ijāza* is the conclusion of a meeting between two scholars which simultaneously contains an account of their scholarly antecedents. By virtue of it, the recipient is invested with the authority to transmit or teach part or whole of the work of the scholar who has issued the *ijāza*. The whole process is not unlike the diplomas which students of present day universities consider as the culmination of their study, the difference being that these *ijāzāt* reflect the relationship between two natural persons, rather than between a student and his institution of education.

Finally, we may note that the alphabetical arrangement of biographical material, such as in Ibn Ḥajar's *Taḥdhīb al-taḥdhīb*, encompassed all previous developments. This type of arrangement was, of course, the only organisational answer to an ever increasing corpus of material, although we do also find limitations of a chronological or geographical nature within alphabetically arranged biographical dictionaries.

¹² See my "Lists of Books in Arabic Manuscripts", *MME*, V (1990-1), 121-36, especially the section on '*Ijāzāt and autobibliography*' on pp. 126-30 where I discuss an 8/14th century document of such a nature. Another autobibliography which takes the shape of an *ijāza*, dated Damascus, 1169/1756, is found in MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, no. 3488 (cf. Arberry, *Handlist*, II, plate 63).

Codicology and the ijāza in Arabic manuscripts

What, one might ask, has all this to do with manuscripts and, more particularly, with codicology? The latter science is sometimes described as the specialism that devotes attention to all aspects of a manuscript other than the contents of the text it contains. In more positive wording, it is sometimes designated as the science that focusses exclusively on the physical features of the handwritten book. These are useful definitions but as summarised here they are too simplified. Indeed, there are often more things to be learned from a manuscript volume than the philological aspects of the text which is contained in it. One cannot, however, make such a simple schematic distinction between immaterial text and physical manuscript, between soul and body, so to speak. There is always an interaction between the two aspects, as is illustrated by, for example, the occurrence of a great variety of indications of personal use that can be found in many manuscripts. Each manuscript is, of course, a personally made artefact and contains information — always implicitly and sometimes explicitly — on the maker and sometimes on the users of the manuscript as well. On the whole, features such as the colophon, copyist's verses, owner's marks and reader's certificates enable us to gain an idea of the functioning of a certain text in general and the use of a certain manuscript volume in particular. Therefore, the study of these features, which belongs to the field of codicology in as much as the study of writing materials and script are part of it, gives a text an extra dimension and places it in its cultural context. Only this overall and integrated approach to the manuscript does justice to its features in coherence with one another. It is philology in the widest sense of the word, involving all these aspects and also the interaction between the text and the environment in which it was launched.

One usually finds *ijāzāt*, or copies of them,¹³ added at the end of a text or written on the title page preceding the text for which the authorisation is granted. Sometimes the *ijāza* consists of a few lines only but sometimes they can be quite elaborate. They may be combined with readers' certificates. To add *ijāzāt* to texts was a time honoured practice in Arabic manuscripts which remained in use for a number of centuries. By looking at the manuscripts in which they are written, one can gain an idea of how this system of authorisation to teach operated. In addition to this, an *ijāza* can

¹³ Copies (*mithāl* or *ṣūra*) are often not recognised as such.

reveal much about the way a certain text or manuscript was used. Quite surprisingly, as yet very little has been done by way of a systematic collection of the data contained in the *ijāzāt* in Arabic manuscripts.¹⁴ A corpus of such texts with an analysis of both their formulaic peculiarities and their content would be highly desirable. The fact that such a corpus would indeed be useful is illustrated by the discovery by Ebied and Young of the etymology of the term “baccalaureate”: by scrutinising the Arabic wording of the *ijāzāt* in a number of manuscripts they found evidence for their thesis that the well known European academic term is in fact derived from the Arabic term *bi-ḥaqq al-riwāya*.¹⁵

Examples of some important ijāzāt

The *ijāza* originated within the Islamic educational system in which the Islamic religious sciences were taught. Its use, however, has by no means remained restricted to that field. Of the 72 manuscripts listed by Vajda, 59 have a “traditional Islamic” content, that is disciplines that are part of the *madrassa* curriculum, whereas 13 do not have a directly religious content but deal with such topics as medicine, literature and the sciences. This is still a high proportion in view of the fact that there are so many more manuscripts of the first category. Vajda’s geographical register reveals that Damascus and Cairo are the places from where most manuscripts with *ijāzāt* on them originate. Baghdad, Makka and Aleppo are the runners up as places where *ijāzāt* were most frequently issued. Most other places are also situated in the Mashreq. Eighty percent of Vajda’s corpus dates from the 6–9th/12–15th centuries, with a more or less even distribution over this period.¹⁶

One of the most outstanding sets of *ijāzāt* is found not in an Islamic scholarly text, but in what is probably the most prestigious text of Arabic imaginative literature, the *Maqāmāt* of

¹⁴ MacKay’s extensive analysis of the *ijāzāt* in MS Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, *Adab* 105 (see n. 1 above), which contains a contemporary copy of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 512/1122), makes ample reference to secondary manuscripts and is exemplary both in this respect and from the methodological point of view. Vajda’s collection of certificates (see n. 1 above) also provides a wealth of information.

¹⁵ R. Y. Ebied & M. J. L. Young, “New Light on the Origin of the Term ‘Baccalaureate’”, *The Islamic Quarterly*, XVIII (1974), 3-7.

¹⁶ See Vajda, *Certificats de lecture*, 65–6.

al-Harīrī. This becomes clear from the *ijāzāt* found on the authoritative manuscript of the text, copied from al-Harīrī's own copy. In the principal and contemporaneous *ijāza* on this manuscript the names of some 38 scholars, a number of whom are identified as distinguished notables of Baghdad, are mentioned as having been present at the reading of the entire work, which took more than a month of intermittent sessions to complete.¹⁷ MacKay's meticulous analysis of the numerous *ijāzāt* in this manuscript has, in fact, reconstructed a period of almost two centuries of cultural life in Baghdad, Aleppo and Damascus. It all started in Baghdad in the year 504/1111, when the first reading of a copy of the author's autograph took place. That reading was followed by a number of subsequent readings, all in Baghdad. In the 60 or so years since the first reading, the manuscript had become quite heavy with *samā'* notes. After a period of 40 years, which remains unaccounted for, it came into the possession of the Aleppan historian Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-'Adīm (d. 660/1262). The manuscript then remained for more than 30 years in Aleppo, and bears numerous names of members of the best Aleppan families as auditors at sessions at which the manuscript was read. Finally, the manuscript bears certificates of reading sessions held in Damascus in the course of the year 683/1284. The manuscript then fades from view until, almost exactly six centuries later, it was acquired in 1875 by Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, where it still is.

When one looks at the more than 200 names of those involved in reading and listening to the manuscript, one is struck by the fact that many of them are related by family ties. The history of the transmission of the text in this manuscript often goes hand in hand with the history of generations of scholars and literary men who occupied themselves with it.

One of the earliest known *ijāzāt* is that found in the unique manuscript of *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh fī al-Qur'ān* by Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 223/837).¹⁸ Here we do indeed

¹⁷ See MacKay, *Certificates of Transmission*, 9.

¹⁸ MS Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, Ahmet III A 143. The *ijāza* itself appears to be a copy (*mithāl*). A facsimile edition of the manuscript was published by Fuat Sezgin, Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, Series C, XII (Frankfurt am Main, 1985). Pp. 418-9 of the facsimile edition contain the *ijāzāt*. The text was edited by John Burton, *Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām's K. al-nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh (MS. Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III A 143)*, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, New Series, XXX (Cambridge, 1987). Burton gives the readers' certificates

have a work which belongs to the core of Islamic sciences, the knowledge of the abrogating and abrogated verses of the Qur'an. The earliest *samā'* in it dates from 392/1001-2, while the latest dates from 587/1191. In one of *samā'āt* in this manuscript a place is mentioned: al-Jāmi' al-'Atīq bi-Miṣr.¹⁹ Here, too, several members of the same family are mentioned, including a father, his sons, and several brothers. Just as in the previously mentioned example of al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*, it becomes clear that transmitting a text was a social event and sometimes also a family affair. In either case the personal element is clearly present. Comparison of the *ijāzāt* at the end of the Istanbul manuscript of Abū 'Ubayd's *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh* with the list of *riwāyāt* on the title page of another Istanbul manuscript, the *Kitāb al-Mujālasa* by Abū Bakr al-Dīnawarī,²⁰ reveals the occurrence of the same person in both manuscripts, namely, the otherwise unknown scholar Abū 'Abd Allāh M. b. Hamd b. Ḥāmid b. Mufarraj b. Ghiyāth al-Artājī. In the very old manuscript of Abū 'Ubayd's *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*, he is active as *musmi'* in 587/1191, while in the copy of al-Dīnawarī's *Kitāb al-Mujālasa*, copied in 671/1272, he is one of the transmitters of the text preceding the manufacture of the manuscript. This shows that it is rewarding to accumulate the data of *ijāzāt*, *samā'āt*, *riwāyāt* and the like, with the present example, for instance, revealing the beginning of a scholarly network.

The *ijāzāt* given by Ibn al-Jawālīqī (d. 539/1144), one of the foremost philologists in Baghdad,²¹ can be found in a number of manuscripts. A manuscript in Dublin contains on its title page a certificate of reading signed by Ibn al-Jawālīqī in 514/1120.²² A

of the Topkapı manuscript on pp. 101-3 of his edition, with an analysis of their contents and an identification of most persons mentioned in them on pp. 52-3 of his introduction.

¹⁹ This must be the manuscript to which Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Munajjid refers ("Ijāzāt al-samā'", 233, n. 1). The date which he gives there, 372 AH, is apparently a misreading for the clearly written date of 392 AH.

²⁰ MS Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, Ahmet III, No. 618. Facsimile edition by Fuat Sezgin, Publications of the Institute of the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, Series C, XXXVIII (Frankfurt am Main, 1986).

²¹ See C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, I (Weimar, 1898), 280.

²² Chester Beatty Library, No. 3009 (Arberry, *Handlist*, I, plate 1). See also S. A. Bonebakker, "Notes on Some Old Manuscripts of the *Adab al-kātib* of Ibn Qutayba, the *Kitāb aṣ-ṣinā'atayn* of Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī and the *Mathal as-sā'ir* of Ḍiyā' ad-Dīn ibn al-Athīr", *Oriens*, XIII-XIV (1960-

Leiden manuscript containing Abū al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī’s *Luzūm mā lā yalzam* was copied by Ibn al-Jawālīqī before 496/1102-3.²³ His handwriting is easily identified and the date can be established from an autograph note by his teacher and predecessor at the Nizāmiyya school in Baghdad, al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī (d. 502/1108).²⁴ Other reading notes in the same manuscript reveal the reading by a pupil, Ibn al-Khashshāb, in the course of the year 519/1125. The manuscript then travelled from Baghdad to Cairo, as is borne out by notes about its new owner, the grammarian Ibn al-Naḥḥās (d. 698/1299).²⁵ Another Leiden manuscript containing the philological work *Kitāb al-‘Alfāz* by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Isā al-Hamadhānī (d. 320/932), was copied in 522/1128.²⁶ It, too, contains an autograph *qirā’a* note by Ibn al-Jawālīqī on the title page. The manuscript itself contains notes of *bulūgh* and *muqābala* at fairly regular intervals and from these the length of the reading sessions can be approximately measured, each probably lasting around one or two hours. A late copy (11th/17th century?) of a *qirā’a* note by Ibn al-Jawālīqī, dated *Ṣafar* 501/1107, is available in MS Leiden Or. 403, f. 430b, which contains the *Dīwān* of Abū Tammām with a commentary by al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī.²⁷ The impression one gets from Ibn al-Jawālīqī’s notes is that his transmissions were probably not as much of a social event as were the previous cases. It would appear that he had a predilection for a smaller group to whom he taught the important texts of his time. His copy of al-Ma‘arrī’s *Luzūmiyyāt*, with only his teacher al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī between the author and himself, is an eloquent witness of this.

1), 159-94. The note in the Dublin manuscript is edited by Bonebakker on p. 165.

²³ University Library, Or. 100. See also S. M. Stern, “Some Noteworthy Manuscripts of the Poems of Abu’l-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī”, *Oriens*, VII (1954), 322-47, especially 339-44.

²⁴ The *qirā’a* note was published by me in *Seven Specimens of Arabic Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1978), 11.

²⁵ See Stern, “Some Noteworthy Manuscripts”, 343-4.

²⁶ MS Leiden Or. 1070 (P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Collections in the Netherlands* [Leiden, 1957], 10).

²⁷ Voorhoeve, *Handlist*, 62.

Conclusions and perspectives

Two aspects of the *ijāza* have been dealt with, one from the point of view of cultural history, the other with codicological considerations taken into account. Both are necessary and the two complement one another by interaction. The *ijāza* itself is a good example for proving that these two orientations cannot be isolated from one another. The *ijāza* is an important source for the history of scholarly and cultural networks and gives the details by which an entire cultural environment can be reconstructed.

The *ijāza* as a mechanism in the distribution of learning deserves to be studied on a much wider scale than has hitherto been the case. Librarians should collect the *ijāzāt* in their manuscripts and publish them. Such publications should not only consist of an analysis of the data of the certificates, as Vajda and MacKay have done, but should also contain as complete a transcript as possible of the Arabic texts themselves. Only then can the most important work begin, namely, the compilation of a cumulative index of all the bio-bibliographical information contained in such certificates, which would be a valuable addition to existing bio-bibliographical reference works. The publication of a large corpus of *ijāzāt* will enable us to make a survey of the technical terminology employed which, in turn, will deepen our knowledge of the function of the *ijāza* in Arabic manuscripts.

The minimal requirements for such a corpus are, firstly, the full texts, with good photographs, of a great number of *ijāzāt*. These would constitute the main body of the work. Secondly, such a corpus should also contain a number of research aids: summary descriptions of the manuscripts in question, an index of persons with their functions in the process of the issuing of the *ijāzāt*, an index of the places to where the manuscripts in which the *ijāzāt* are found peregrinated in the course of time, and a glossary of the technical terminology employed.

This is not an easy task to perform, since the scholarly certificates are often written in the least legible of scripts. The study of the *ijāza* will only be fruitful if the student of the *ijāzāt* is well acquainted with the formal requirements of these certificates²⁸ and the educational environment from which they stem, and if at the same time he has a wide experience in working with manuscripts. In the ongoing development towards an increased

²⁸ As sketched by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, "Ijāzāt al-samā'", 234-41.

professionalisation of the science of manuscripts, it is only natural that such a corpus of *ijāzāt* should be compiled by a professional codicologist.