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Zacky Khairul Umam

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Table of Contents

Articles

405 *Zacky Khairul Umam*
The Scribe of Sufi-Philosophical Letters: Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar's Formative Decades (1640s-1660s) in Arabia and Syria

439 *Aziz Awaludin*
Documenting the Half-Century Evolution of Islamic Education Research: A Probabilistic Topic Modeling Study of the Literature from 1970 to 2023

477 *Ridwan, Djayadi Hanan, & Tri Sulistianing Astuti*
Examining New Public Diplomacy and Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia: Cases of World Peace Forum (WPF) and Religion Twenty (R20)

511 *Diatyka Widya Permata Yasih & Inaya Rakhmani*
Maintaining Life Under Neoliberal Capitalism: A Case Study of Muslimah Laborers in Solo Raya, Indonesia

543 *Muhammad Ansor*
Moving Out of Islam on YouTube:
Acehnese Christian Narratives,
the Public Sphere, and Counterpublics
in Indonesia

575 *Aniqotul Ummah, Aditya Perdana, & Firman Noor*
Iḥtijājāt jamāhīrīyah fī al-ḥarakāt al-ijtimāʿīyah:
Dirāsat muqāranah bayna aḥdāth ḥadīqat Ghezi
al-Turkīyah wa ḥarakat al-difāʿ ʿan al-Islām
al-Indūnīsīyah

Book Review

627 *Testriono*
Mencari Peran Islam Politik dalam Demokrasi
Indonesia

Document

641 *Tati Rohayati*
Educating Ulama to Address Climate Change:
The Greenpeace MENA-Ummah for Earth

Zacky Khairul Umam

The Scribe of Sufi-Philosophical Letters: Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar's Formative Decades (1640s-1660s) in Arabia and Syria

Abstract: *This article addresses the circumstances surrounding Shaykh Yūsuf's pursuit of knowledge, which involved traveling overseas via India to study and teach in Ottoman Arabia and Syria. The article's main objective is to focus on the period during which Shaykh Yūsuf played an intellectual role as a scribe in Aleppo, Damascus, and Medina between the 1650s and the 1660s. This will be achieved by utilizing the manuscript collections at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, the Firestone Library of Princeton University, and the National Library of Indonesia, in addition to other archival evidence. These underexplored manuscripts will provide a more comprehensive account of Shaykh Yūsuf's Arabian years, which I contend were a pivotal period in his intellectual development. Moreover, this period offers an additional perspective on the dissemination of knowledge from the post-Timurid intellectual tradition, which was oriented towards the advancement of theological-philosophical sciences, and which became prevalent in Medina before being disseminated in the second half of the seventeenth century.*

Keywords: Shaykh Yūsuf, Genealogy, Scribe, Ottoman Arabia, Syria, Southeast Asia.

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Abstrak: *Artikel ini membahas perjalanan intelektual Syaikh Yūsuf ke luar negeri ke Jazirah Arab dan Suriah pada masa pemerintahan Usmani melalui India. Tujuan utama artikel ini berfokus pada masa krusial yang mana Syaikh Yūsuf memainkan peran intelektual sebagai seorang juru tulis di Aleppo, Damaskus, dan Madinah antara tahun 1650-an dan 1660-an. Upaya penelitian ini memanfaatkan koleksi manuskrip di Perpustakaan Negara di Berlin, Perpustakaan Firestone di Universitas Princeton, serta Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, di samping bukti-bukti arsip lainnya. Naskah-naskah yang belum banyak ditelaah ini akan memberikan catatan yang lebih terperinci tentang masa formatif Syekh Yusuf di wilayah tersebut, yang menurut saya merupakan periode terpenting dalam perkembangan intelektualnya. Selain itu, periode ini menawarkan perspektif tambahan tentang penyebaran pengetahuan dari tradisi intelektual pasca-Timurid di wilayah Imperium Usmani, yang berorientasi pada kemajuan ilmu-ilmu teologis-filosofis, dan yang menjadi lazim di Madinah sebelum disebarkan pada paruh kedua abad ketujuh belas.*

Kata kunci: Syaikh Yūsuf, Silsilah Sufi, Juru Tulis, Arabia, Suriah, Asia Tenggara.

ملخص: تناقش هذه المقالة رحلات الشيخ يوسف الفكرية إلى خارج شبه الجزيرة العربية وسوريا خلال فترة الحكم العثماني مروراً بالهند. يركز الهدف الرئيسي للمقال على الفترة الحاسمة التي لعب خلالها الشيخ يوسف دورًا فكريًا ككاتب في حلب ودمشق والمدينة المنورة بين خمسينيات وستينيات القرن السادس عشر. وقد استفاد هذا الجهد البحثي من مجموعات المخطوطات في مكتبة الدولة في برلين، ومكتبة فايرستون في جامعة برينستون، والمكتبة الوطنية لجمهورية إندونيسيا، بالإضافة إلى أدلة أرشيفية أخرى. ستوفر هذه المخطوطات التي لم تُفحص بشكل كافٍ سردًا أكثر تفصيلاً لسنوات تكوين الشيخ يوسف في المنطقة، أعتقد أنها كانت أهم فترة في تطوره الفكري. وعلى ذلك، تقدم هذه الفترة منظورًا إضافيًّا حول نشر المعرفة من التقليد الفكري ما بعد التيموري في الإمبراطورية العثمانية، الذي كان موجهًا نحو النهوض بالعلوم اللاهوتية الفلسفية، وأصبح سائدًا في المدينة المنورة قبل انتشاره في النصف الثاني من القرن السابع عشر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الشيخ يوسف، السلسلة الصوفية، الكاتب، الجزيرة العربية، سوريا، جنوب شرق آسيا.

Prior to the heroic and rebellious story of ʻAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī (1808-1883), an Algerian Sufi figure during the European colonial period, the celebrated Yūsuf al-Makassarī (1627-1699) from Celebes, maritime Southeast Asia, preceded him as a mystic, author, bureaucrat, rebel, and political exile. Popularly known as Shaykh Yūsuf (or Shaykh Joseph, Sjeik Joesoef or Sjeg Joesoef van Makassar in old Dutch/Afrikaans publications; referred officially in Arabic manuscripts by himself as Yūsuf al-Maqāṣīrī), he is well-known not only in the Indonesian archipelago but also across the Indian Ocean, including Sri Lanka and South Africa, where he was a political exile and was believed to be the founder of the Muslim community in Cape Town.

He became a prototype of the Asia-Africa nexus, serving as an exemplar for reviving the post-1955 Bandung spirit and connecting the global South. This awareness emerged from outside Indonesia, even though he was officially designated a national hero in a posthumous ceremony in 1995. One year earlier, in 1994, Nelson Mandela spoke at the Eastern Festival on the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Cape Muslim community. Mandela said, "What I learned from the history of Sheikh Yūsuf is not only about Islam, but also, he gave the motivation to struggle against apartheid, since there are no differences between black and white, slaves and free people. We are happy to have Sheikh Yūsuf here in South Africa" (Lubis 2015). From Mandela's perspective, Shaykh Yūsuf's significance was unmistakably underscored in the pursuit of freedom and equality among the oppressed. The large-scale tri-centennial celebrations for Shaykh Yūsuf in South Africa, according to Tayob (1999, 23; in Baderoon 2014, 10) were "a significant indication of how Shaykh Yūsuf had been adopted as a symbol of Muslim presence in the country and Islamic resistance to colonialism and apartheid."

His heroic personal story, furthermore, was the subject of a doctoral thesis by Saarah Jappie, an expert in the history of Islam in southern Africa and the Indian Ocean world. In her thesis, Jappie (2018a; 2018b; cf. Baderoon 2014; Laffan 2022) cites biographical sketches from existing literature on Shaykh Yūsuf, which will also be reviewed briefly below. However, there is a dearth of biographical examinations of Shaykh Yūsuf from his own period, written in Indonesian and European languages, employing current scholarly trends in transregional studies and global history, particularly in the areas of cultural and intellectual history.

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The extant Indonesian biographies of Shaykh Yūsuf, such as *Syekh Yūsuf, Seorang Ulama, Sufi dan Pejuang* (1994), are deficient in their historical-philological approach, particularly regarding the period preceding his rebellion and exile from the 1670s. These books do not provide a comprehensive, critical account of Shaykh Yūsuf's life and intellectual biography but focus on the circumstances surrounding his pursuit of knowledge, which involved traversing the maritime routes of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean to study and teach in Arabia. In English literature, meanwhile, an account of Shaykh Yūsuf's network by Azra (2004, 87-108) remains a key cited reference.

This article aims to focus on Shaykh Yūsuf's journey from Banten to Yemen via India in the 1640s, and his period of study in the Ottoman Hijaz and Syria between the 1650s and 1660s, by utilizing the manuscript collections at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Princeton University library, and the National Library of Indonesia in conjunction with other archival evidence. The examination of these manuscripts will outline the crucial phase of Shaykh Yūsuf's intellectual formation during his Arabian years. While a 2019 draft of this article acknowledged earlier research (Heer 1979, Schwartz 2018), a recent publication (Peacock 2024) cross-checks my unpublished findings, particularly in the analysis of Yūsuf's scribal period in Damascus and Medina. Nonetheless, by adding new material—unknown by Heer, Schwarts and Peacock—as represented in MS A651 of the National Library of Jakarta and MS Yahuda 1166 of Princeton University Library, this paper aims to fully acknowledge the handwritten fragments and intellectual legacy of Shaykh Yūsuf. This scribal period offers insight into the transmission of knowledge from the post-Timurid learned tradition, which emphasized the production of rational sciences (*al-maʿqūlāt*) and was prevalent in Medina. This tradition was disseminated via various channels of transmission during the seventeenth century, due to the importance of Medina where scholars from Persia and the Kurdish regions actively participated as agents of cultural transmission (see Umam 2021).

Shaykh Yūsuf's Biography

Drawing on both Islamic and European sources, Shaykh Yūsuf's life can be divided into three distinct periods. First, his early education and encounters with nobles and scholars across maritime Southeast Asia,

including Makassar, Banten, and Aceh—the three important centers of regional power that shaped his cultural outlook. Second, his travel to Arabia via southern India, with the intention of seeking advanced knowledge. Third, his return to Goa, Sulawesi, and his arrival in Banten. A few years after his return, he fought against the Dutch East Indies Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC), which resulted in his designation as a Sufi renegade and political exile for nine years in Ceylon. This was referred to as being 'Ceylonized'[1], which also gave rise to the Malay term for "being exiled" ('*di-Sailan-kan*'). He was then exiled to Cape Town, South Africa, for six years until his death.[2]

This third period in Shaykh Yūsuf's life has been widely discussed, as it represents a pivotal moment in his development as a religious scholar (Peacock 2024, 155-208). During this period, he not only reconnected with an old friend, Pangeran Surya, who was the crown prince of the Banten sultanate and who eventually ascended to the throne as Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa (r. 1651-1692). Surya subsequently became Shaykh Yūsuf's primary patron. This period is narrated in considerable detail by Dutch and European sources. In the meantime, the first and second periods in Shaykh Yūsuf's life have been interpreted solely in the broader context of his cultural upbringing and travels, largely due to the scarcity of information available about his own experiences. These two periods have been accordingly understudied, and any forthcoming research should focus more on this period of the shaykh's exhaustive cultural-intellectual formation by considering the myriad of sources pertaining to his early studies and transregional mobility, connections, and reconfiguration. These sources include, but are not limited to, archives in Arabic, Dutch/Afrikaans, Javanese, Makassar's Lontarak, and Malay.

This article will place particular emphasis on the second period, tracing Shaykh Yūsuf's earlier connection with Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1653), an Indian author known for his controversial views on condemning the Sufi school of *wujūdīyah*. It will also examine his transoceanic mobility, which took him to Yemen, the Hijaz, and Greater Syria. The scribal period during which Shaykh Yūsuf was engaged closely with Sufi masters and scholars in Arabia and Syria proved to be significant in terms of advancing his religious knowledge, particularly with regards to Sufi philosophical texts. This period of study and scribal practice laid the foundation for his subsequent role as an informed and

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esteemed Sufi master throughout the remainder of his itinerant career. The objective of this article is to shed light on this pivotal scribal period for Shaykh Yūsuf and the world of seventeenth-century Ottoman Arab lands, especially Aleppo, Damascus, and Medina, by uncovering manuscripts acquired from various manuscript libraries.

Years	Activities
1627-1644	Born and early life in Goa, Makassar
1644-1645	Traveling to and residing in Banten, befriending a prince from the Sultanate of Banten and then travelling to Aceh
1645-c. the 1660s	Traveling, studying in India, Arabia (Yemen, the Hijaz), and Syria
The late 1660s-1680	Returning to Indonesia and then joining as a qāḍī-bureaucrat in the Banten sultanate
The early 1680s	Internal conflict in the Banten sultanate with VOC intervention; rebellion
1683-1693	Exile to Ceylon, Sri Lanka
1693-1699	Exile to Cape Town, South Africa, and death

List 1. A Chronological Biography of Shaykh Yūsuf.

From Banten to Arabia: A Reinterpretation

The initial phase of Shaykh Yūsuf's life was shaped by his interactions with scholars and nobles in the Banten sultanate. The rulers of this sultanate maintained relations with not only Islamic empires, including those from maritime Southeast Asia and the Ottoman world, through the intermediation of Meccan sheriffs, but also with Europeans, particularly the British, Dutch, and Portuguese (see Peacock 2018a, 2018b). A close relationship with the Hijaz and the textual trends in the Banten Sultanate created a cultural milieu that motivated Shaykh Yūsuf to pursue his studies in Arabia (cf. Peacock 2024).

According to the traditional account of the Makassarese *Lontara*, an 18-year old Shaykh Yūsuf departed from Goa, Celebes, on October 20, 1644, aboard a Portuguese ship, with the intention of reaching Banten

to pursue his studies. The local source in Makassar notes, "Karaeng Paranggi [Portuguese nobles] set sail from Galesong overseas to Banten carrying I Tuang [Shaykh Yūsuf]" (Cummings 2010, 64). Given that Aceh was the preeminent center of Islamic learning and a commercial hub in the region at that time, Shaykh Yūsuf likely undertook the journey from Banten to Aceh during the reign of the first female sovereign, Sultana Taj Alam Safiyatuddin (r. 1641-1675). During his time in Banten (1644-1645), he intended to study with the Indian scholar Rānīrī, who was a prominent figure in Aceh from 1637 until his return to India in 1644. However, it is unlikely that Shaykh Yūsuf and Rānīrī met directly in Aceh (Azra 2004, 89) considering that the Indian author returned home in 1644.

The political climate in Aceh circa 1644 meant Rānīrī was unable to remain in the region. He was expelled due to political developments and his previous involvement in launching a smear campaign against the Sufi thought of Ḥamza Fanṣūrī (d. ca. late 16th century) and Shams al-Dīn al-Samatrāʾī (d. 1630), and their staunch followers within the Aceh Sultanate, which occurred during his period of significant influence in 1637. Sayf al-Rijāl, a Malay Sufi figure who had returned to Aceh from Surat in India, offered a rebuttal to Rānīrī's attacks. Sultana Taj Alam Safiyatuddin expressed a preference for Sayf al-Rijāl and subsequently removed Rānīrī from his position (Ito 1978, 491; Laffan 2009). It seems likely that Rānīrī's return to India prompted Shaykh Yūsuf to travel to Gujarat, following long-established cultural-economic routes (cf. Wormser 2012, 113), to study with Rānīrī in Hindustan. Despite his absence from the Indonesian archipelago from 1644, Rānīrī acted as a long-distance advisor to the Banten sultanate, likely due to his significant contributions to Malay treatises on Sufi theology, history, and Shafiʿi jurisprudence. Rānīrī's intellectual and religious authority in the cultural landscape of the Malay world was a significant factor in Shaykh Yūsuf's decision to study with Rānīrī. In his writing, *Safīnat al-najāh* ("The Ship of Salvation"), Shaykh Yūsuf states that he received both the Qādirī and Naqshbandī orders from Rānīrī (Tudjimah 1997, 194-204; Azra 2004, 89). A manuscript from Princeton University Library, which will be discussed in further detail below, however, provides a different narrative.

Following a period of study in India, Shaykh Yūsuf traveled to Yemen. The question of why Shaykh Yūsuf chose to study in Yemen,

rather than in Medina or the Hijaz, as was customary for Jāwīs at the time, requires further investigation. This is not merely a matter of considering the geographical aspect of his travels. Nevertheless, his initial interactions before 1644 with the Bāʿalwī scholars in Sulawesi such as Sayyid Bāʿalwī ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAllāma Ṭāhir and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Aydīd (Azra 2004, 87-88) likely influenced Shaykh Yūsuf's decision to prolong his stay in Yemen. Furthermore, his subsequent discipleship with Rānīrī may have provided additional motivation for him to pursue further studies in the Yemeni Sufi-Shāfiʿī tradition, with which Rānīrī had extensive connections, both intellectual and ancestral. In addition to pursuing the transmission of Sufi orders, he also taught Sufi practices. His pedagogical activities in Yemen, as documented in sources below, have never been fully acknowledged.

The first source that underscores Shaykh Yūsuf's Yemeni connections is MS A651, the National Library of Indonesia, which was completed in Aleppo in 1608 (1657) during his study in Greater Syria. MS A651 is of critical importance in Shaykh Yūsuf's intellectual trajectory, as it provides strong evidence for how he reproduced six treatises on philosophical Sufism including including (a) ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī's (d. 1424) *Manāẓir al-ilāhiyya maḥāḍir ijmāl al-ʿulūm al-laduniyya* (fols. 1a-34b); (b) ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's (d. 1492) *al-Durra al-fākhira wa-yuqāl ayḍan Ḥutt raḥlak* (fols. 35a-48a); (c) Jīlī's *al-Insān al-kāmil* (fols 55b-60a); (d) Ibn ʿAllān's (d. 1647) *ʿIqd al-farīd fī maʿrifat al-tawḥīd* (fols. 55b-60a); and (e) Najm al-Dīn Kubrā of Khwarazm's (d. 1221) *Kitāb lawmata lāʾim al-sālikīn* (fols. 60b-64b), along with several important notes on jurisprudence and Sufi teachings. This codex contains two similar texts like MS Sprenger 677 of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (discussed below): the *Durra* and *ʿIqd al-farīd*. When I examined this codex in 2019, it was in need of physical restoration, as the paper was damaged and heavily affected by bookworms, and the binding was inadequate. Produced in Aleppo, this codex offers a window to how Shaykh Yūsuf actively studied and copied important texts in Greater Syria.

In MS A651, Shaykh Yūsuf refers to himself as *kātib hādhihi al-marqūm*, which, based on his scribal experience in Arabia and Syria, can be translated as 'the scribe of [Sufi-philosophical] letters.' In Qur'anic discourse (QS 89:3), the term '*kitāb marqūm*' is understood to mean 'the written book.' This term is reflected in this ego-document, which

suggests that the author views himself as a repository of advanced texts on Sufi philosophy. Furthermore, this scribal period served to reinvigorate his sense of self-identity, prompting him to assert his role as 'the scribe of letters' (*kātib al-aḥruf*). This is evident in his writing titled *Qurrat al-ʿayn*, which is housed in the collection of the National Library of Indonesia, MS A 101. These two statements—*kātib hādhihi al-marqūm* and *kātib al-aḥruf*—reflect the Sufi author-*cum*-scribe of Sufi-philosophical treatises.

Furthermore, MS A651 offers insight into the formative years he spent in Yemen. In folio 34b of the manuscript, it is obvious that Shaykh Yūsuf learned Sufi-philosophical sciences from Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf in 1061 AH (1650 AD) in Zabid. Following a note on fasting according to the Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, Shaykh Yūsuf noted that he studied around ten books with Jamāl al-Dīn including *Kitāb ikmāl al-suʿūd* by ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāmirī (d. unknown), *Ḥaqīqat al-Muḥammadiyya* by Wajīh al-Dīn al-Ahmadābādī of Gujarat (d. 1589), *Fuṣūṣ al-maʿrifa li-baʿḍ al-ʿārifīna billāh taʿālā, Kitāb al-fanā* by Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), *Al-Risāla al-Raslāniyya* by Raslān al-Dimashqī (d. 1145), *Al-Tuḥfat al-mursala ilā rūḥ al-nabī* by Muḥammad b. Faḍl Allāh al-Burhānpūrī (d. 1620), *Marātib al-ʿulūm li-baʿḍ taṣānīf* (probably two books on this 'classification of knowledge' genre), *Mirʾat al-ʿārifin* by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, and *Kitāb al-manāẓir al-ilāhiyya* by al-Jīlī.

Several books in this list are exemplary works whose titles and contents were recalled by Shaykh Yūsuf as essential learning to profoundly understand the Sufi tradition. The recorded list does not represent the entirety of the books studied by Shaykh Yūsuf, including those in the category of transmitted sciences (*al-manqūlāt*). The list nonetheless offers a window into how these Sufi-philosophical books were circulated and how deeply they were read as part of the curriculum in certain *madrasas* or *zāwiyas* in southern Arabia. The two Sufi books from Gujarat, represented by Aḥmadābādī and Burhānpūrī, not only demonstrate transregional connections between Arabia and India but also the widespread reception of Shaṭṭāri texts crossing all Sufi followers. In addition, Shaykh Yūsuf's earlier encounters with scholars and Sufis in Yemen, seen from his ego-document, illustrate the emphasis of the advanced sciences he aimed to highlight. Shaykh Yūsuf's vitae, in later years, undoubtedly attracted Yemeni students to learn and transmit

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certain knowledge and chains of Sufi orders, as can be seen in the second source below.

Figure 1. Shaykh Yūsuf's note on fasting according to the Shāfi'ī jurisprudence and his list of books he studied in Yemen (1650) in his codex copied with his handwriting. MS A 651, National Library of Indonesia, fol 34b.

The second source is MS Yahuda 1166H, housed at the Firestone Library of Princeton. No dates and other notes appear in this source.

The codex was originally acquired from Brill in Leiden in 1900 and represents a unique source for examining comprehensive Sufi pedigrees. This manuscript contains four works including Ghawth Gwaliyarī's treatise on the duties of a Muslim to his relatives namely *Al-Akhbār wa-l-anbāʾ bi-shaʿāʾir dhawī al-qurbā*, a collection of prayers titled *Al-Ṣawāfiḥ al-wāfiya fī al-fawātiḥ al-kāfiya*, and two Sufi genealogies, namely *Salāsil*, belonging to Shaykh Yūsuf and Muhannā Baʿalwī. The latter, a Hadrami scholar, was an important transmitter to the Sufi orders from the authority of Shaykh Yūsuf. Muhannā studied with Shaykh Yūsuf during Yūsuf's extended period of residence in southern Arabia. Given that both texts were titled *Salāsil*, it seems appropriate to consider them as two interdependent genealogies.

Muhannā, a Yemeni Sufi, is identified in this manuscript as the author of *al-Salāsil al-maymūniyya al-mubāraka al-muttaṣila bi-sayyidinā Muḥannā Bāʿalwī al-Ḥaḍramī* (hereafter: *Genealogies*; see Figure 3). He provided a comprehensive listing of fifteen distinct genealogical lines, encompassing various Sufi orders, including the Shaṭṭāriyya, Chistiyya, Firdawsiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Khalwatiyya, Qādiriyya, Ṭayfūriyya, Uwaysiyya, Kubrāwiyya, Naqshbandiyya, and Mawlawiyya. It is evident from Muhannā's *Genealogies* that he transmitted two Sufi orders from Shaykh Yūsuf: the Mawlawiyya and the Naqshbandiyya. The former referred to the Shaykh as "the man of recurrent itinerant and the expert in a variety of knowledge" (*ṣāḥib al-siyāḥāt al-kathīra wa-l-taqnī fī-l-ʿulūm*). As evidenced in this Sufi genealogy, the pursuit of these two orders commenced during Shaykh Yūsuf's initial residency in the Hijaz, where he was often referred to as a *mujāwir* or foreign resident. Two Persian scholars of Lar, located in present-day Iran as Larestan, namely Mullā Muḥammad and Mullā Maḥmūd, instructed Shaykh Yūsuf in both orders, drawing upon Persian and Indian connections. Additionally, the shaykh was taught the Naqshbandi-Transoxanian tradition in Mecca by the close circle of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1690), namely Ḥasan ibn ʿUjaymī (d. 1680). Shaykh Yūsuf and Ibn ʿUjaymī established a friendship, engaged in epistolary correspondence, and contributed to the expansion of the global networks of the Hijazi intellectual milieu in the seventeenth century (Umam 2021).

Ibn ʿUjaymī's biographical dictionary of Sufi saints and shrines, *Khabāyā al-zawāyā* (Secrets of the Lodges, where one copy of this beautifully written in a manuscript resides in Dar al-Kutub of Egypt,

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MS Ta'rikh 2410)[3], provides an important account of Shaykh Yūsuf's activities in Arabia. Shaykh Yūsuf initially arrived in Yemen in around 1645. He subsequently traveled to Mecca, where he commenced his studies under the guidance of Ibn ʿUjaymī and another Meccan teacher, Muḥammad ʿAlī b. ʿAllān (d. 1647). The Banten Sultan Abū al-Mafākhir ʿAbd al-Qādir (r. 1626-1651) privately requested Ibn Allān to travel to Banten to assume a teaching and advisory role (see more in Peacock 2024). Instead, he ended up composing a reflection on the prince literature genre, based on Ghazalī's (d. 1111) *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* (Advice to the Kings). Ibn Allān, a prominent hadith scholar and theologian, served as the primary Meccan teacher for the Jāwīs. It can be reasonably inferred that the participation of Shaykh Yūsuf in this learning circle was not an isolated occurrence. Moreover, his early association with the Sultanate of Banten, where Ibn ʿAllān was held in high regard, prompted him to engage in studies with the Meccan hadith scholar.

Following Ibn ʿAllān's passing, Shaykh Yūsuf returned to Yemen for a second time to pursue further studies under the guidance of several prominent Yemeni scholars. These included Aḥmad al-ʿAjl in Zabid and ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, as well as ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Mizjājī (d. 1663-4). Al-Mizjājī was specifically mentioned as the individual responsible for teaching Shaykh Yūsuf *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, and Muhannā duly acquired this knowledge from Shaykh Yūsuf. He subsequently arranged to undertake a second visit to the Holy Cities, which probably occurred in the late 1650s. This visit was undertaken with the intention of performing the Hajj, after which he was to engage in further studies in Medina with Aḥmad al-Qushāshī (d. 1661). From Medina, he proceeded to Syria, where he studied with two Sufi shaykhs namely Amin and Shaykh Ayyūb al-ʿAdawī al-Khalwatī (d. 1660), the latter of whom also afforded him the opportunity to undergo a special initiation into the Khalwatī order (for the detailed relationship with Khalwatī, see Peacock 2024). It was Qushashi who likely recommended Shaykh Yūsuf to study with Ayyūb al-Khalwatī. Ayyūb, an official imam in the Mosque of Selim I in the renowned Ṣāliḥiyya district of Damascus, was associated with the Shaṭṭārī Sufi of Medina and engaged in epistolary exchanges with Qushāshī. Ayyūb is known to have authored numerous mystical writings and poems. As chronicled by Muḥibbī, Ayyūb's oeuvre comprised a multitude of writings, including a substantial

corpus of mystical poetry that was widely disseminated. Additionally, his discourses on intellectual verification (*taḥqīq*) were highly regarded. Ayyūb's personal mystical experiences led him to discover Ibn ʿArabī's mystical treatise. As is the case in numerous Sufi narratives, Ayyūb had a dream in which he removed approximately forty veils to approach Ibn ʿArabī. Upon doing so, Ibn ʿArabī stated, "O Ayyūb, you are on my path, and I am unaware of any other individual who has managed to enter my presence." (El-Rouayheb: 2015, 262-263; Azra, 2004: 92).

After spending a period in Damascus, Shaykh Yūsuf returned to Medina and engaged in studies with Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1690). He also devoted a significant amount of time to the study of philosophical Sufism, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section. In 1661, Aḥmad al-Qushāshī passed away, and al-Kūrānī succeeded him as leader of Sufi orders, in particular the Naqshbandī and the Shaṭṭārī. Shaykh Yūsuf continued to copy manuscripts under his guidance. It seems likely that he also taught in Mecca during this period, imparting his teachings to a group of Jāwī students, among others, and introducing them to the Khalwatī order. The Gowa sources provide corroboration of Shaykh Yūsuf's presence in Mecca. Most of his students were of Malay-Indonesian origin. ʿAbd al-Bashīr al-Ḍarīr al-Rāpānī (from Rappang, South Sulawesi), among his students in Mecca, was subsequently responsible for disseminating the Naqshbandiyya and Khalwātiyya orders in South Sulawesi (Azra, 2004: 93-94).

Shaykh Yūsuf then returned to Yemen, where he engaged in teaching activities alongside the community of a certain Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Khāṣṣ. Evidence suggests that Shaykh Yūsuf corresponded with Ibn ʿUjaymī regarding his activities following his time in Arabia. Ibn ʿUjaymī states that he exchanged letters with Shaykh Yūsuf, and that the Jāwī community benefited from him. Shaykh Yūsuf then conveyed to Ibn ʿUjaymī that he had obtained great merit from the Sultan of Banten, and that he and his children had benefited greatly from this generous circumstance. Even his wives and descendants had flourished (Ibn ʿUjaymī, MS Ta'rikh 2410, fols. 131a-b). The correspondence occurred during the 1670s, when Shaykh Yūsuf was appointed as the "Jurist of the Just King" (*Qādī al-mālik al-ʿādil*) and a close advisor to the Sultan of Banten, Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa.

The second text from Princeton MS Yahuda 1166H is titled *al-Salāsil al-mubāraka al-muttaṣila* and is attributed to Shaykh Yūsuf (see

Figure 2). The manuscript lacks scribal information and it seems likely that Muhannā Baʿalwī's inner circle collected this material with the intention of pursuing the entirety of the Sufi transmissions from the shaykh. Around thirty-five chains of transmission reveal that Shaykh Yūsuf pursued these incomparable chains from some Sufi masters in India and Yemen. The Indian scholar and writer of Hadramawt origin, the aforementioned Rānīrī exerted considerable influence over the primary chains of Sufi transmissions, particularly those associated with the Naqshbandiyya, Shaṭṭāriyya, Chishtiyya, Qādiriyya, Shādhiliyya, Aydarūsiyya, Kubrāwiyya, and other Sufi orders. This information significantly clarifies that Shaykh Yūsuf only received instruction from Rānīrī in India and never directly from Rānīrī's teacher, namely ʿUmar Bā Shaybān, as previously suggested by Naquib al-Attas (cited in Azra 2004). Shaykh Yūsuf had the opportunity to establish connections with numerous prominent Sufi orders during his lifetime.

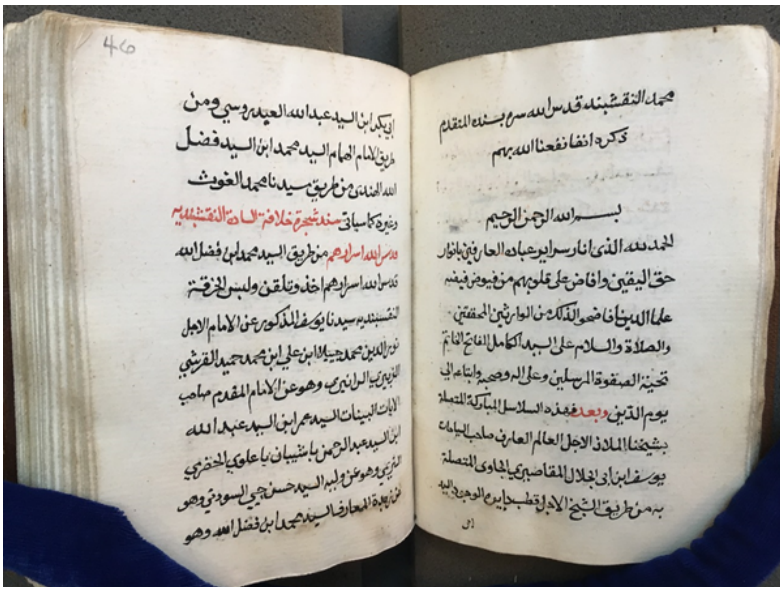

Figure 2. The opening folio of Shaykh Yūsuf's Sufi silsilas as recorded in MS Yahuda 1166 H, Princeton University Library.

While the text represents the most comprehensive account of transmission chains, particularly in comparison to other historical sources, such as those noted by Hamid (1994, 19), which mentioned 29 chains of transmission, it is notable that several significant teachers

of Shaykh Yūsuf are absent from the narrative. It would be remiss not to mention two notable teachers that have been acknowledged by Western scholars (Heer 1979, Schwartz 2018, and Peacock 2024): leading Medinan Kurdish scholar, Ibrahim al-Kūrānī, and the Damascene Shaykh Ayyūb al-Khalwati. As documented in *The Ship of Salvation*, Shaykh Yūsuf received the Shaṭṭāriyya tradition from al-Kūrānī, while al-Khalwati designated him as a legitimate successor for the Khalwatī tradition, particularly among the Jāwīs. Another textual source from the Tehran Majlis-i Shūra-yi Islāmī Library, entitled *Shajara khilāfat al-sāda al-ʿarabiyya al-hātimiyya qaddasa Allāh asrārahum*[3], corroborates the assertion that Shaykh Yūsuf acquired his Sufi pedigree from the Ḥātimiyya order, which is affiliated with the Ibn ʿArabi school of Sufism under the guidance of Kūrānī. This indicates that Shaykh Yūsuf transmitted at least 38 chains of Sufi transmission. Due to his ties to various Sufi masters, it can be concluded that he was reluctant to pursue additional Sufi orders from Kūrānī except the close study of the rational sciences (*al-maʿqūlāt*).

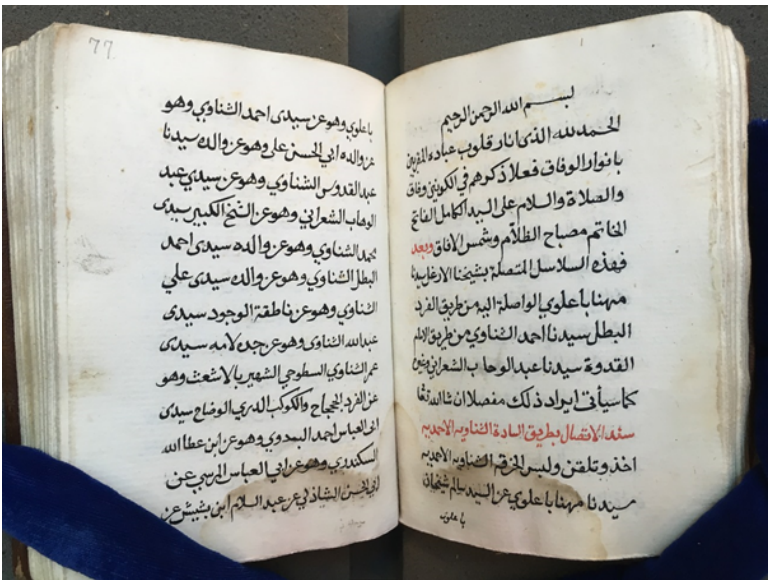

Figure 3. The opening folio of Muhannā Bāʿalwī's *Al-Salāsil al-maymūniyya al-mubāraka al-muttaṣila bi-sayyidinā Muhannā Bāʿalwī al-Ḥaḍramī*. MS Yahuda 1166H, Princeton University Library.

It can therefore be surmised that the original authorship of the two texts was completed during Shaykh Yūsuf's time as a teacher in Yemen,

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prior to spending a significant period in the Hijaz and Syria. Given that he transmitted two Sufi orders to Muhannā from the Hijazi line, as is evident in his *Genealoges*, it is clear that Shaykh Yūsuf traveled back and forth from Yemen to the Hijaz (see the list below for the itinerary summary). This enabled him to perform the Hajj and seek spiritual guidance from different teachers, before he found the right time to travel to Medina to study with Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, as documented in the chronicle of Ibn ʿUjaymī.

An intriguing aspect of the Princeton MS Yahuda 1166H is that Muhannā sought to establish a connection with Shaykh Yūsuf, a rare example of a Ḥadramī scholar engaged in study with a Jāwī shaykh. Both individuals shared a connection to the tradition of Muḥammad b. Faḍl Allah Burhanpūrī's (d. 1620) chains of transmission. The latter's short treatise, *Al-Tuḥfat al-mursala ilā al-rūḥ al-nabī* (The Gift addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet), was widely disseminated throughout the seventeenth century and beyond, reaching from Indonesia to Morocco. As appeared in MS A651, Shaykh Yūsuf also studied this text in Yemen. Similarly, Muhannā also had Indo-Persian Sufi links, including those associated with the Shaṭṭāriyya, Chistiyya, Suhrawardiyya, and Firdawsiyya, which were transmitted by Aḥmad al-Shinnāwī (d. 1620), an Egyptian Sufi master in Medina and the teacher of Aḥmad al-Qushāshī. It is clear that they were well-versed in Muḥammad Ghawth Gwaliyarī's (d. 1562) *Jawāhir al-khamsa* (The Five Jewels). Furthermore, the Princeton manuscript highlighted the significance of Ghawth as the descendant of the medieval Persian Sufi poet Farīd al-Dīn Aṭṭār (d. c. 1220).

While there is no definitive evidence regarding the location and timeframe of their initial encounter, it is plausible that Muhannā and Shaykh Yūsuf met in Ḥaḍramawt during his early travels between the late 1640s and the early 1650s. During this period, the Zaydī-Qāsimī imamate exercised control over the majority of southern Arabia, effectively severing ties between parts of Yemen and the Ottoman Empire in 1636. Shaykh Yūsuf was a direct witness to the rule of the Zaydi Imam, Mutawakkil ʿalā Allāh Ismāʿīl b. Qāsim, from 1644 to 1676. Furthermore, a Jāwī appellation is referenced within the Zaydī literary corpus. Verification of this claim would establish Shaykh Yūsuf as the sole Jāwī scholar chronicled in Ibn ʿUjaymī's *Secrets of Lodges*. No other Jāwī scholars and mystics in the seventeenth century are

noted in such a bibliographical dictionary, which indicates that Shaykh Yūsuf had gained considerable popularity among the community of Arabian scholars during his lifetime. His contemporary, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Fanṣūrī of Singkel (d. 1693), who returned from Medina in the early 1660s, Aceh, is not explicitly recorded in any Arabic bibliographical dictionaries.

It is noteworthy that Shaykh Yūsuf maintained connections with Yemen, as evidenced by his friendship with his younger contemporary Sufi master, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād (d. 1720), the author of the renowned devotional litany, *Rātib al-Ḥaddād*. The encounter between Shaykh Yūsuf and al-Ḥaddād occurred in 1661 in Yemen. This information is corroborated by an account written by al-Ḥaddād in his *al-Nafāʾis al-ʿulwiyya fi-l-masāʾil al-ṣūfiyya* ("The Precious Gems on the Sufi Queries"). Al-Ḥaddād recounts that he acquired Ibn ʿArabī's teachings on "the station of Proximity (to God)" (*maqām al-qurba*) as the pinnacle of sainthood directly from Shaykh Yūsuf, who had gained a profound understanding of Akbarian doctrine from the Sufi master Mizjājī. Al-Ḥaddād referred to shaykh '*Yūsuf al-Jāwī*' as "the learned Sufi" and a close associate of Yemeni intellectual milieus (*min ahl al-ʿilm wa-taṣawwuf wa huwa min aṣḥābinā*) (al-Ḥaddād 1994, 144)[5]. The significance of Shaykh Yūsuf within the Yemeni scholarly and Sufi community is reflected in the fact that his teachings reached numerous prominent figures, as evidenced by the aforementioned two *Genealogies* and al-Ḥaddād's recognition of Shaykh Yūsuf's scholarly and Sufi authority.

According to Shamil Jeppie (2018, 38), Shaykh Yūsuf introduced *Rātib al-Ḥaddād* to his Sufi congregation during his exile in South Africa, approximately three decades after the composition of the litany by al-Ḥaddād. This is thought to have facilitated the dissemination of the text in the Islamicate colonial Cape Town. Nevertheless, this interpretation is doubtful because of the age difference between Shaykh Yūsuf and al-Ḥaddād and the nature of their relationship. It is also possible that the litany was brought to South Africa at a later date, perhaps in the eighteenth century or the following period, with the arrival of Ḥaḍramī preachers across the coastal areas of the Indian Ocean in colonial South Africa. There is no compelling evidence that Shaykh Yūsuf introduced the Bāʿalwī Sufi text to the region, as al-Ḥaddād himself acquired this knowledge from Shaykh Yūsuf and

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not from the otherwise documented sources. Furthermore, Shaykh Yūsuf devoted additional attention to developing his own Khalwatī order among his family and the broader Muslim community, who participated with him as exiles in South Africa and established the first Muslim community in the region. Despite his efforts to learn from numerous influential masters in Arabia, he did not disseminate many of the teachings he acquired, with the exception of the Khalwatī, for which he was given the honorary nickname "the Khalwatī crown" (*al-tāj al-khalwatī*) by his Damascene teacher, Ayyūb al-Khalwatī.

Route Steps	**Activities**
First	Arrived and studied in Yemen
Second	Visited Mecca
Third	Returned to Yemen, teaching
Fourth	Re-visited the Holy Cities
Fifth	Studied, scribed in Damascus and Aleppo
Sixth	Studied, taught, scribed in Medina
Seventh	Returned to Yemen, teaching
Eighth	Left Arabia and joined the Banten Sultanate

List 2. Shaykh Yūsuf's Arabian Years (1645-c. the late 1660s).

Scribal Period from Damascus to Medina

During his second period of study in the 1660s, Shaykh Yūsuf likely spent considerable time in Medina after the death of Aḥmad al-Qushāshī, during which Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī had succeeded Qushāshī as the preeminent authority in Islamic theology, Sufi thought, and hadith-legal scholarship. Both Medinan scholars were preeminent authorities in the realms of Sufism, theology, and the propagation of Ibn ʿArabī's teachings. However, no records exist that shed light on the specific books or aspects of Islamic doctrine that Shaykh Yūsuf studied with Qushāshī. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Shaykh Yūsuf transmitted Sufi orders from Qushāshī. In *The Ship of Salvation*, he makes only a passing reference to al-Kūrānī as his Sufi Master.

In the critical edition of Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's (d. 1492) *al-Durra al-fākhira*—a treatise that defends the monist Sufis' stance

on a range of matters in relation to theologians and philosophers—demonstrates that Shaykh Yūsuf initially sought to examine the subjects of Sufi-philosophical treatises in Medina (Heer 1979, 17). In particular, after examining the Garrett collections (Yahuda series, especially MS Yahuda 3872, as will be discussed later) at the Princeton University Library, Heer identifies the scribal role of Shaykh Yūsuf by presenting the information contained in the codex colophon. He did not attempt to decipher the marginalia or commentaries, particularly those incorporated into the Garrett collection of Princeton University Library.

The collection can be interpreted as representing a crucial phase in Shaykh Yūsuf's education, during which he learned *ḥikmah* or Sufi-philosophical texts from one of the learned scholars in Arabia. In premodern Islamic culture, becoming a scribe was a common pursuit for students, reflecting the high regard for calligraphic writing prior to the widespread adoption of the printing press in the nineteenth century. In the case of Jāwī (Southeast Asian) students and scholars who resided in the Hijaz as long-term sojourners (*mujāwirūn*), they could serve as scribes to achieve two objectives: firstly, to copy manuscripts under the guidance of their mentors; secondly, to earn a modest income to support themselves during their travels and studies abroad. A significant number of Jāwīs engaged in the copying of manuscripts at Qushāshī's Sufi Academy, *al-Zāwiya al-Qushāshiyya*, corroborated by the notes found on numerous manuscripts.

The function of scribes has been discussed by François Déroche and Adam Gacek in their respective publications. Scribes not only considered the act of copying to be a form of worship, particularly when it involved scriptures and jurisprudence, but they also adhered to a set of rules, or *adāb*, which were commonly understood to be religious etiquette. The Muslim scribe assumed a seated position with one leg folded under the other, resting the sheet of paper (or a quire, *kurrāsa*) on his right or left knee. As Gacek emphasized, the scribe attempted to reproduce the original text's layout and even imitate the handwriting of their teachers. The act of imitating the handwriting of holy people and scholars was considered to be inherently blessed. A scribe's demeanor was to be characterized by humility and reverence towards books, knowledge, and teachers (Gacek 2009, 236).

During Shaykh Yūsuf's experience in Ottoman Arabia and Syiria, he

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produced multiple copies of a treatise by the fifteenth-century mystic and poet ʿAbd al-Rahman Jāmī (d. 1492), titled *al-Durra al-fākhira*. This text, which was intended for a general audience, defended the monist Sufi perspective on a range of topics in relation to theologians and philosophers. The earliest known example of this genre is a codex at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Sprenger 677. The codex represents a condensed version of the *Durra* and was copied in late Shawwal 1066 AH/August 1656 AD, as indicated in the colophon under the name Yūsuf ibn al-marḥūm Abī al-Jalāl ʿAbd Allāh al-Jāwī al-Maqāṣīrī. This is the first known copy of Jāmī's *al-Durra al-fākhira*, which was likely produced in Damascus by Shaykh Yūsuf.

In his research, Florian Schwarz (2018, 178-195) examines evidence of a Persian-Turkic intellectual presence in Syria, with a particular focus on Aleppo and Damascus, from the early sixteenth century onwards. Jāmī's texts, along with another Persian commentary, had been read. During this period, a polemical debate emerged in which a Qazvinī scholar leveled accusations of heresy against Jāmī's poetic *dīwāns.* Ibn Hanbalī (d. 1564), who recorded this polemic, unsurprisingly explicitly defends Jāmī and ridicules the Qazvinī scholar. The physical presence of Jāmī and his student, particularly ʿAbd al-Ghafūr al-Lārī, in Syria facilitated the dissemination of his literary works (Schwartz 2018).

MS Sprenger 677 represents the initial evidence that Shaykh Yūsuf was introduced with the objective of studying Jāmī's texts. Upon completion of the codex, he had already resettled in Arabia for a decade. There are two reasons why Shaykh Yūsuf was particularly interested in the advanced study of philosophical Sufism. The first reason is that the widespread reception of Jāmī's teachings in maritime Southeast Asia during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries constituted the cultural setting for his personal inquiry. Notable scholars residing in the region, such as Ḥamza Fanṣūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Samatrāʾī, referenced Jāmī's works and demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the broader Persian intellectual tradition, shaped by interactions with Gujarati communities. It is presumed that Shaykh Yūsuf was acquainted with their writings by the time he arrived in Banten and Aceh. The second reason for his interest in Jāmī's work is that his teacher, Rānīrī, and his Yemeni connections, informed him about the Sufi world of Jāmī. Rānīrī cited numerous texts by Jāmī, as previously discussed by Mohamad Nasrin (2018, 196-223). Shaykh Yūsuf's subsequent travel to Yemen allowed him to engage deeply

with Jāmī's Sufi thought, which was disseminated through Naqshbandī networks.

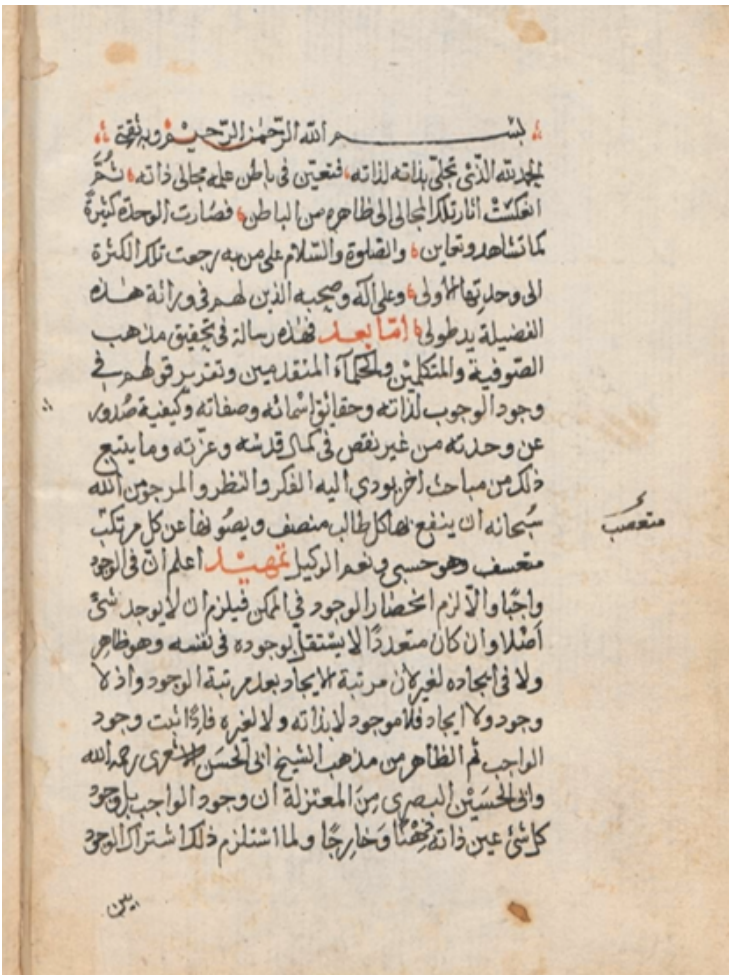

Figure 4. The opening folio of *Jāmī*'s *Durra al-fākhira* copied by Shaykh Yūsuf. Sprenger 677, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, fol. 91b.

Following Jāmī's *Durra al-fākhira*, Shaykh Yūsuf copied two additional texts of significance within the same codex: Ibn ʿAllān's (d. 1647) *al-ʿIqd al-farīd fī maʿrifat al-tawḥīd* (The Matchless Necklace on the Knowledge of Oneness), which he copied without providing any annotations, also includes theological works and a treatise on the necessary being titled *Risāla fī ithbāt wājib al-wujūd* (*Treatise on the Fixation of Necessary Being*, fols. 113b-150), written by Muḥammad

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Amīn al-Lārī (d. 1656), a Damascene Sufi of southern Iranian origin. As previously noted, Ibn ʿAllān was one of Shaykh Yūsuf's teachers. Al-Lari, as corroborated by Muhannā Bāʿalwī (MS Yahuda 1166H, fols. 41b-42a), is recorded as Shaykh Yūsuf's teacher in Damascus. Shaykh Yūsuf pursued a transmission from Mevlevi order directly from Lārī. Seen from Muhannā's perspective, Jāmī was regarded as a key figure in the genealogy of his Mevlevi order. Lārī's death occurred in the same year as the copying of the codex. While there is no evidence in the codex that Lārī commissioned Shaykh Yūsuf to copy the three texts, it seems plausible that Lārī 's circle in Damascus influenced Shaykh Yūsuf to copy and study all three texts.

In addition, the statements of ownership on the cover page of the codex warrant further examination. For example, the codex was previously in the possession of Ibrahim al-Kūrānī's student in Damascus, Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Dakdakjī (d. 1719), who was of Turkish origin and was likely the first Damascene manuscript producer. Dakdakjī was a Sufi Hanafi who obtained an *ijāza* from Kūrānī for all his works and chains of transmission by sending a request. Dakdakjī was a student and scribe of the celebrated Damascene intellectual ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1731) (Dumairieh 2018, 226); Dakdakjī also copied several of Kūrānī's treatises as appeared in the record of the Süleymaniyye Library in Istanbul. The provenance of this initial ownership may serve as evidence that the codex was produced in Damascus, where Shaykh Yūsuf studied Sufism with Ayyūb al-Khalwātī and Lārī. If this assumption is, to some extent, substantiated, it is reasonable to question whether Shaykh Yūsuf initially studied under Kūrānī before arriving in Damascus. It can be reasonably deduced that Shaykh Yūsuf's Damascene experience in the 1650s constituted a pivotal moment in his introduction to the plethora of sophisticated Sufi literature. Indeed, Kūrānī departed Damascus in 1651, residing in Medina via Cairo. It is unlikely that Kūrānī and Shaykh Yūsuf met directly in Damascus, based on the dating of the codex: 1655. Nevertheless, it seems likely that Shaykh Yūsuf had contact with several Damascene scholars, including Dakdakjī, who was in possession of the codex that had been inscribed by the shaykh.

Other recorded owners include scholars such as Muḥammad al-Shaykhī al-Ṣiddīqī, a descendant of a certain al-Ḥasan's family, after whom the book was previously owned by Muḥammad Ṣadīq b.

Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Ḥanafī. The codex was popularly known as Ibn al-Khirāṭ and was owned in 1726 (1138 AH). It was then sold in mid-Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1143 AH (May 1730) to an unknown owner whose name was scratched out, rendering it unreadable. However, none of these subsequent owners provides insight into Shaykh Yūsuf's experiences in Damascus. The manuscript is written in the Naskh style and bears witness to the readily legible handwriting of Shaykh Yūsuf. This is the sole extant manuscript that provides insight into the *naskhī* writing style of the shaykh.

By the time I intended to write the codicological and historical aspects of Princeton MS Yahuda 3872, which is the second example of Shaykh Yūsuf's role as a scribe, based on my archival work in 2017, Florian Schwarz had already examined it in a chapter of the edited book *Jāmī in Regional Contexts*. His contribution, "The Arab Receptions of Jāmi in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," (2018, 178-195) provides a comprehensive historical and codicological analysis of Jāmī's two significant works, *al-Fawāʾid al-ḍiyāʾiyya* and *al-Durra al-fākhira*, within the context of the Ottoman Arab world. Of particular importance is his analysis of Princeton MS Yahuda 3872. His scrutiny of the transmission, study, and dissemination among the circle of Ibrahim al-Kūrānī is crucial, as it provides valuable insight into the context in which the modern edition of *al-Durra al-fākhira* was created. MS Yahuda 3049, which is also a copy of Jāmī's *Durra al-fākhira*, contains annotations made by readers, including Kūrānī's explanation of the concept of absolute being. This demonstrates that Kūrānī's authority helped later readers to engage with the intellectual discourse of fifteenth century Timurid texts.[6]

The circle of Ibrahim al-Kūrānī was responsible for the creation of MS Yahuda 3872 during the initial four-month period of 1075, spanning the months of August to October 1664. Shaykh Yūsuf, the scribe, transcribed Jāmī's texts and Lārī's glosses under the guidance of Kūrānī. The copying was completed within a single week, in the month of Rabīʿ II, 1075 CE (October 1664 CE), at the *ribāṭ* of Imām ʿAlī al-Murtaḍā, in proximity to Kūrānī's residence. A detailed analysis by Florian Schwarz indicates that Jāmī's texts played a significant role in the study of mystical texts in Medina. The autograph glosses by al-Kūrānī are located in the margins of the *Durra* and the *Risāla fī-l-wujūd*. The manuscript contains two autographed copies of treatises by Ibrahim al-

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Kūrānī, both produced in 1664 between one and six months after the original final drafts (*taswīd*). It is noteworthy that several individuals from the Jāwī circle of Ibrahim al-Kūrānī in Medina assumed roles as scribes and readers. In addition to Shaykh Yūsuf, the scribes include ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Jāwī and ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jāwī. The readers who assisted in the correction of the codex include ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Jāwī (d. 1693) and two Arab students of Kūrānī: Aḥmad al-Dimyāṭī and Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Kawkanī.[7] Aḥmad al-Dimyāṭī had also been a fellow student of Shaykh Yūsuf.

It is not known whether any other Jawi scribes, besides Shaykh Yūsuf, were involved in the copying of the codex under Kūrānī's commission. It would appear that they were not recorded as prominent figures among Jāwī scholars. ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Jāwī, a contemporary of Shaykh Yūsuf, was identified directly in Ibrahim al-Kūrānī's handwriting as part of two reading notes (*qirāʾa*), dated Saturday, 7th Rabīʿ I 1078/27th August 1667. ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Jāwī was already the chief jurist-consult at the Aceh Sultanate, under the sovereign Sultana Taj al-ʿAlam Safiyatuddin, during the time of the reading session. He engaged in two decades of study under the guidance of Aḥmad al-Qushāshī from 1640 onward and subsequently under the friendly mentorship of Ibrahim al-Kūrānī during the 1650s. ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Jāwī returned to Aceh in 1661, where he facilitated the transmission, translation, and adoption of Medinan intellectual ideas throughout the region, including Aceh and the wider maritime Southeast Asia. Upon Shaykh Yūsuf's arrival in Aceh in 1644, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf had already departed for Medina. It is assumed that during Shaykh Yūsuf's initial visit of to the Holy Cities, both engaged in cordial communication, which prompted Shaykh Yūsuf to pursue further studies with Qushāshī. This indicates that ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Jāwī returned to Medina in 1667 as a prominent intellectual and bureaucrat within the central administration of the Aceh court. It seems probable that when ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Jāwī read the *Durra* in front of Ibrahim al-Kūrānī's forum, Shaykh Yūsuf had already returned to Yemen, where he continued to teach. It is difficult to ascertain with certainty whether their subsequent encounters occurred, but it is evident that their paths crossed within the codex, if not in person. The philological-intellectual encounters are marked by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Jāwī's annotations, which correct the scribal traces made by Shaykh Yūsuf three years earlier (cf. Peacock 2024). It is unlikely that ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Jāwī was aware of

the subsequent career trajectory of Shaykh Yūsuf, who ascended to a similar position of authority within the Banten Sultanate. From the perspective of the Jāwīs, the codex represents not only the history of Kūrānī's intellectual centrality in the transmission of Jāmī's texts, but also the history of the peripheries, which became another centrality in their own milieus.

One might inquire as to why Shaykh Yūsuf felt the need to study specific rational sciences under Ibrahim al-Kūrānī's guidance rather than in Yemen. It is insufficient to simply identify Ibrahim al-Kūrānī as one of the most authoritative mystic scholars in the Ottoman Arab lands. One possible sociological consideration is that both Kūrānī and Shaykh Yūsuf have extensive Yemeni connections, particularly within the Arabian networks of the Naqshbandī order, which were responsible for disseminating Jāmī's texts. As a matter of fact, if we follow Schwartz's argument, the establishment of the pan-Arabian nexus of the order by Tāj al-Dīn al-ʿUthmānī in the early seventeenth century represents a turning point in this regard. It is noteworthy that Kūrānī inscribed the *Durra* with a specific title, *ḥuṭṭu raḥlak* ("put down your saddle bag"), as evidenced in Shaykh Yūsuf's copy and in the register of Kūrānī's extensive intellectual credentials, *al-Amam li-īqāẓ al-himam*. This title also bears an intriguing connection to the Yemenis, who, according to Ṭāshkoprüzade, were responsible for naming the book. Additionally, *al-Amam li-īqāẓ al-himam* serves to illustrate an intriguing connection to the Yemenis, who, as documented by Ṭāshkoprüzade (d. 1561), bestowed the book with its distinctive title. Another copy of the *Durra*, commissioned by Kūrānī and written by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad ibn al-Bannāʾ al-Dimyāṭī, has been identified as MS ʿAqāʾid Taymūr 93 at Dār al-Kutub Cairo, and was completed in Medina in January 1675 under the same title: *al-Durra al-fākhira al-mulaqqaba bi-Ḥuṭṭa raḥlak*. The Khalwatīs, with which Shaykh Yūsuf was primarily associated, did not particularly focus on the advanced study of Jāmī's texts. The cover of MS Sprenger 677, written in 1655 one decade before MS Yahuda 3872, does not include the phrase "*Ḥuṭṭ raḥlak*" in the title. Two years later, as demonstrated in another manuscript scribed by Shaykh Yūsuf, MS A 651 of the National Library of Indonesia (fols. 35a-48a) included the full title of the work as *al-Durra al-fākhira wa-yuqāl ayḍan Ḥuṭṭ raḥlak*, with numerous marginalia notes. It provides, compared with MS Sprenger 677, evidence of a different trajectory. MS A 651 was

 DOI: 10.36712/sdi.v31i3.40568

completed in Aleppo in 1608 (1657), when Shaykh Yūsuf is assumed to have become aware of the phrase "*Ḥuṭṭ raḥlak*" as part of this Naqshbandī network. Therefore, the convergence of the Naqshbandīs, the Yemenis, and the pan-Arabian affiliations of Medinan Sufis proved particularly alluring to Shaykh Yūsuf, who sought to pursue the study of Jāmī's texts under the guidance of Kūrānī, who in turn produced a substantial corpus of exegetical annotations and surviving glosses, including *Al-Taḥrīrāt al-bāhira li-mabāḥith al-Durra al-fākhira.*

Figure 5. An example of scribal traces of Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar (core texts of *Jāmī's Durra al-fākhira* and a few comments in the upper left) and extensive commentarial notes in marginalia by Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī. MS Yahuda 3872, Princeton, fols. 10b-11a.

From Kūrānī, Shaykh Yūsuf acquired a substantial body of rational knowledge. It is documented that Kūrānī transmitted several other books, including the *Durra*, as well as his own works, to students such as Shaykh Yūsuf. MS Yahuda 3872 served as a conduit for the transfer of knowledge between the teacher and the student. Shaykh Yūsuf produced a substantial corpus of annotations, incorporating corrections from Kūrānī. As a scribe and student, Shaykh Yūsuf made additions to the text, namely marginal notes, which constituted a more substantial segment of the text. While there are instances where scribes have made

additions to improve the understanding of a word or passage, which may have been difficult to comprehend or even corrupt, Shaykh Yūsuf's contributions appear to have served as an explanatory apparatus to facilitate his comprehension of the subject matter. In order to gain a full understanding of the authorship of Jāmī's *Durra*, Shaykh Yūsuf made use of the information provided by the Ottoman chronicler Ṭāshkoprüzade in his celebrated *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʿmāniyyah fī ʿulamāʾ al-dawla al-ʿuthmāniyya*. It would appear that Kūrānī appended several notes to the front of the codex, providing details of the births and origins of several Sunni scholars and celebrated thinkers, including Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Mahāʾimī, Ghawth Gwaliyarī and his own student Wajīh al-Dīn al-ʿAlawī of Gujarat. These names are of significance in the context of Kūrānī's scholarship, as he engaged with the rational theology of Dawānī and the Sufi thought and practice of Indian Shattarī through reading, commentary, and transmission. Additionally, Kūrānī composed further annotations on the exterior of the volume. The first note pertains to Ashʿarī's *Al-Ibāna fī uṣūl al-diyāna*, which Kurani regarded as the final work of Ashʿarī and utilized to elucidate his stance on 'neo-Ḥanbalī traditionalism' (on this, see El Rouayheb, 2015). The second note provides an explanation of the concept of the quiddity (*māhiyya*). However, additional notes were subsequently appended, indicating that the codex remained in the possession of Kūrānī, who utilized it to elucidate a multitude of philosophical tenets, presumably with the intention of composing a commentary on Jāmī's text. This second circumstance can be interpreted as follows: Shaykh Yūsuf's scribal period proved instrumental in facilitating Kūrānī's ability to solicit information through a plethora of notes.

It is also evident that Shaykh Yūsuf, like other Jāwī students, transmitted Kūrānī's works. One of Kūrānī's works on the meticulous aspect (linguistic, theological, and prophetic) of the *shahāda*'s statement, *Inbāh al-anbāh fī taḥqīq iʿrāb lā ilāha illa Allāh*, was summarized in Arabic by Shaykh Yūsuf. Previously, it was assumed that he authored a comprehensive commentary on Kūrānī's voluminous work (Tudjimah 1997). Meanwhile, other scholars posit that he authored the *Inbāh*. Neither assertion has been substantiated by evidence. Nevertheless, there is no evidence regarding the extant copies of Shaykh Yūsuf's work pertaining to his teacher's treatise. However, the dissemination of the concise Malay interlinear translation of *Inbāh* has been documented.

Translations from this work are held in the collections of the libraries at Leiden (MS Cod. Or. 7025) and Princeton (MS Garrett 479L[a]). It seems reasonable to suggest that some of these copies relate to Shaykh Yūsuf's rendering. The manuscript does not include any names on its folios or in its colophon. An alternative hypothesis is that some readers or students of Islamic sciences subsequently copied Shaykh Yūsuf's summary of *Inbāh*. Despite the existence of few examples of Shaykh Yūsuf's handwriting as a scribe, it remains difficult to rediscover his treatises with his handwritings from his own era. All the extant manuscripts are dated from the nineteenth century.

Figure 6. A fragment of Kurani's *Inbāh al-anbāh* with Javanese interlinear translation. The original text of this fragment was very likely completed by Shaykh Yūsuf (MS Garrett 479L[a], Princeton; cf. Shaykh Yūsuf's *Zubdat al-asrār* with Javanese interlinear translation, MS A 45, National Library of Indonesia).

Concluding remarks

The precise number of scribed works produced by Shaykh Yūsuf during his time in Ottoman Arabia and Syria, particularly in Aleppo, Damascus, and Medina, remains uncertain. The term 'scribe' is used here in a non-technical sense, not to denote a professional scribe employed in an Islamic court. Shaykh Yūsuf was engaged in the practice of common scribal work, either as a student copying manuscripts under

the guidance of his teachers or as a professional earning an income to support his studies, in addition to receiving financial assistance from an endowed institution (*waqf*), such as the Sufi Academy of Qushāshī, where Ibrahim al-Kūrānī continued to teach and expand the established intellectual networks.

The examples of manuscripts written by Shaykh Yūsuf, along with other textual evidence of facts chronicling his literary and historical activities, enable us to reconstruct his intellectual trajectory in Arabia with greater precision. He referred to himself as the 'scribe of books' or 'scribe of letters' and copied Sufi treatises with philosophical nuances. His affiliations with various Sufi orders, particularly those originating from Indian and Yemeni milieus, did not prevent him from copying and learning various advanced Sufi-philosophical texts in Damascus, Aleppo, and Medina, thus perfecting his intellectual path throughout Ottoman Arabia and Syria.

Shaykh Yūsuf's scribal period additionally illustrates how he acquired knowledge from a Medinan intellectual culture (Umam 2021; cf. Dumairieh 2022). This trajectory of learning can be traced back to the post-Timurid intellectual lineage, which emphasized both Sufi and rational sciences, transmitted from, at least, two lines: Persia to Medina via Shahrizor (Kūrānī's Kurdish teachers) and via Qushāshī's authority. By copying Sufi-philosophical works in Arabia and Syria, Shaykh Yūsuf secured his relationships with learned figures and managed to maintain his intellectual networks—it is one of many ways in which a copyist in a particular scholarly circle or Sufi community served a particular intellectual cause and distinguished himself by his textual skills (Bahl & Hanss 2022, 55). The active role of Shaykh Yūsuf in teaching and disseminating Sufi discourse and rituals within the Arabian and transoceanic milieus allows us to argue that the post-Timurid scholarship had a significant imprint through his role as a *passeur culturel*, actively transmitting, transforming, and recreating Islamic texts and practices assembled from various sources. His handwritings have endured despite the author's demise—reflecting a classical Arabic proverb that was also copied by the esteemed calligrapher Abū ʿAmr Uthmān al-Warrāq in a Quranic codex he completed in 1074 for a Ghaznavid court, *al-ʿumru fāniyyun wa-l-khaṭṭu bāqiyyun*, meaning: "life withers but writing remains" (in Zadeh 2016:11).

Shaykh Yūsuf's scribal period had a significant impact on his writings,

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particularly following his extensive exposure to Sufi philosophical discourse in Ottoman Arabia and Syria. His initial encounter with Rānīrī did not result in any enduring consequences, apart from the transmission of Sufi orders. Following his encounter with Kūrānī, who had composed emphatic writings for the Jāwī audience regarding an issue that Rānīrī had claimed was heretical, Shaykh Yūsuf's writing style, which was created during his period of exile, reflected his own synthesis.

Endnotes

• The full draft of this paper was presented in the Collège de France, Paris, in September 2019, in a workshop convened by François Déroche and Nuria de Castilla (of the École pratique des hautes études). Thanks to Pierre Lory for his critical feedback. Several manuscript fieldworks were funded by Berlin Graduate School of Muslim Cultures and Societies, Freie Universität Berlin (2015-2017), and Princeton University Library Friends (2017). I would also like to acknowledge the École française d'Extrême-Orient in Jakarta, whose visiting fellowship in 2019 enabled me to draft this article. I thank an anonymous reviewer for his pedantic eyes. All errors are solely mine.

1. I thank to Ronit Ricci who emphasized the context of this word in her presentation in Jakarta, August 2019. During his Ceylonized period, Shaykh Yūsuf penned several works attributed to Ceylon such as: *Al-Barakat al-saylāniyya min al-futūḥāt al-rabbāniyya* (MS A108, the National Library of Indonesia) and *al-Nafḥat al-saylāniyya fi-l-minḥat al-raḥmāniyya* (MS A101, the National Library of Indonesia).
2. Henri Chambert-Loir divides Shaykh Yūsuf 's life into five episodes: (1) Makassarese period; (2) Arabian period; (3) living in the court of Banten; (4) exile in Sri Lanka; and (5) exile in Cape Town. See Chapter 4 in Henri Chambert-Loir, *Naik Haji di Masa Silam, Jilid I Tahun 1482-1890* (2013, 169-208). In addition to a short review of historical Shaykh Yūsuf, this chapter mostly addresses the hagiographical accounts of him.
3. I consulted the manuscript copy of this text in 2017 from Riyadh's King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies. For recent critical editions of this work, see Ibn ʻUjaymī (2017, eds. Ahmad ʻAbd al-Raḥīm al-Sāyiḥ and Tawfīq ʻAlī Wahba; this was consulted by Peacock 2024) and *Sufis and Their Lodges in the Ottoman Ḥijāz* (Dumairieh 2023).
4. I thank Ginanjar Syaban for making me aware of this manuscript.
5. I thank Azam Bakhtiar for this reference.
6. Princeton MS Yahuda 3049, fols 2b, 5a. This codex is excluded in Florian Schwarz's analysis.
7. For further details about these two Arab scholars and their relation to Kūrānī as seen from other manuscripts, see Florian Schwarz's article, "The Arab Receptions of Jāmī in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries."

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Arabic romanization should be written as follows:

Letters: *'*, *b*, *t*, *th*, *j*, *ḥ*, *kh*, *d*, *dh*, *r*, *z*, *s*, *sh*, *ṣ*, *ḍ*, *ṭ*, *ẓ*, *'*, *gh*, *f*, *q*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *h*, *w*, *y*. Short vowels: *a*, *i*, *u*. long vowels: *ā*, ī, ū. Diphthongs: *aw*, *ay*. *Tā marbūṭā*: *t*. Article: *al-*. For detail information on Arabic Romanization, please refer the transliteration system of the Library of Congress (LC) Guidelines.

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Muhammad Ansor

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أنيقة الأمة و أدتيا فردانا و فرمان نور