4 Cultural background

4.1 Didactic Poems and the institutions of learning

Didactic poems were studied in the Islamic Middle Ages at all levels of education, from elementary education up to the higher institutions of learning such as the madrasas or monastery colleges. The -Maʿājim al-mufahrasa or catalogues of writings studied by individual scholars prove to be a significant source for determining the importance given to didactic poetry in the above institutions.

4.1.1 Elementary education

Institutions of learning where elementary education was dispensed were called maktab or kuttāb. The maktab is mentioned in historio-prosopographical literature as a school where, in the fourth/tenth century, khaṭṭ, i.e. writing or calligraphy, was taught as well as Koran, dogma and poetry (Makdisi 1981,19).

ʿAbd al-Ghāfir b. Ismāʿīl al-Fārisī (d. 529/1135), a grandson (cf. Dhahabī, Siyar 20,17)91 of Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 456/1074) and author of an extant history of Nīsābūr, attended the maktab in his home town already at the age of five, studying the Koran and learning dogma (ʿaqīda), albeit in Persian. After reaching the age of ten he attended the kuttāb where he studied adab-literature, copying and “memorizing books” (Fārisī, Muntakhab, fo. 145r-v; quoted in Makdisi, Rise 19). Al-Fārisi’s biographical notice shows that a distinction was made, in sixth/twelfth century Nīsābūr, between maktab and kuttāb, the former institution serving to dispense basic knowledge for very young children.

The term kuttāb is used by the Iranian mystic and eponymous founder of the Mevleviyye Sufi order, “Mawlānā” Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Balkhī al-Rūmī (d. 672/1273; TDVİA 29,441-48), to denote a school for young children; this usage is found in his poetical encyclopedia of Sufism, Mathnawī-i ma’nawī which he wrote in Persian, discussing an epistemological issue, viz., kūdakān-i khurd dar kuttābhā // ... // nām-i u khwānand dar Qur’ān šariḥ (verses 3644a, 3645a).

In his excellent study titled The Written Word, etc.92 which focusses on textualization and literacy in Arabic-speaking lands, Hirschler explains, in a chapter

91 Chiabotti 2013, 49.
92 Hirschler’s source materials were mainly endowment records and chronicles related to seventh/thirteenth century Cairo and later as well as to Damascus.
devoted to the schooling of Muslim pupils, that children’s schools existed from the early Islamic period (83).

In the central Arab lands, i.e. Egypt and Syria, up to the sixth/twelfth century, children’s schools were mostly private which meant that parents had to pay the schoolmaster (Hirschler 2012, 99). Later, an increasing number of schools were founded, endowed by patrons as a charitable act. As a result of this, children’s schools were in a position to offer free instruction for children belonging to the Islamic faith (Hirschler, loc. cit.). Until the ninth/fifteenth century endowed schools were secondary endowments only, supplementing the main institution such as mosques, madrasas or Sufi convents (Hirschler 2012, 100). Girls however did not benefit from the spread of endowed schools, as only male children were mentioned in the endowment deeds (108). Female scholars acquired their reading and writing skills at home from their relatives rather than in the school and they were also excluded from salaried positions in the schools (110).

The basic aim of the curriculum in the primary schools was to ensure that pupils memorize the Koran, the recitation of which was at the centre of daily teaching, and to acquaint them with Islamic ritual. However, as time went by, from the fifth/eleventh century onwards, more emphasis was placed on reading and writing independently from Koran recitation (Hirschler 2012, 84). The aim was now to impart broader reading skills which enabled pupils to read other texts besides the Koran (98). By the eighth/fourteenth century, teachers were explicitly instructed, in some endowment records, to also include mathematics in their teaching programme. As cultural practices became increasingly textualized, teaching recitation ceased to be the central concern (85).

Hirschler infers from his researches that it is not known which texts, besides the Koran, were taught at the childrens’ schools. He also conveys the impression that the schoolmaster had the liberty to decide which texts should be studied additionally (88, 90). Hirschler offers some insight into teaching practices by drawing on manuals for market inspectors: In the sixth/twelfth century a Syrian manual prescribed that pupils start with reading, writing and recitation of the short Suras and also learn some mathematics, written correspondence and poetry. In other manuals poetry is excluded, as it was considered a vehicle for reprehensible ideas, e.g. love poetry; Shiite verses are also mentioned in this context (89). Some biographies refer to specific texts which were studied by children after they had completed the basic exercises, e.g. in the ninth/fifteenth century, a versified

93 The salaries for school-masters were as low as was their social esteem (Hirschler 2012, 111).
Didactic Poems and the institutions of learning

grammar, some works of Ibn Kathīr, a legal treatise and a compendium of ḥadīth (90).

The process of increasing textualization also entailed a change in the choice of teaching materials: Whereas in earlier periods pupils had used slates for reading and writing exercises – slates could be wiped after each use (86), from the ninth/fifteenth century sheets of paper and manuscripts began to play a more central role.94 And yet, up to the present day the use of wooden slates in the elementary schools of sub-Saharan Africa still seems to be the norm as has been observed by Andrea Brigaglia (Cape Town University)95 in Borno, i.e. Northeastern Nigeria. The wooden tablets used in the Koran schools are understood to contain a metaphysical allusion to the lawḥ maḥfūz, “guarded tablet” (cf. Sura 85/22) and celestial archetype of the Koran, and paper, in the beginning stages of schooling, is deliberately avoided. Also the anthropomorphic shape of the tablets is fraught with symbolism. The round head of the slates changes into a crescent shape in accordance with the student’s progress towards the state of maturity, taklīf. Eventually, in his advanced stages, the student may also use paper for writing; this is called suḥuf in the Kano area, which again is an allusion to Koranic terminology. The reading of the Koran written in the characteristically bold script which has preserved some of the oldest features of ancient Maghribī is perceived as an initiatic cycle before the completion of which no other texts may be read. The completion of the cycle of reading the Koran, for girls, is understood to coincide with their marriage. Besides learning to read the Koran, the young pupils also learn to produce ink, to trim their pens and to use a calabash (pumpkin) as ink container.

A description of the festivities (mawkib) which followed the completion of the memorization of the Koran by children in Lebanon, is included (fo. 4r) in a nostalgic manuscript notice (BSB Cod.arab. 2098) devoted to a young boy from Bairūt called Muḥammad Munib Shāhīn who was born in Shaʾbān 1287/1870. He died at the age of only 18 years96 in 1305/1888, from an illness which started with headaches and was accompanied by fever. In the booklet of 37 leaves (format: 12x21 cm; number of lines per page: 16-18) of which only the first ten folios have been

94 Hirschler includes pertinent illustrations reproduced from some Arabic and Persian manuscripts. Wooden slates of North African (Moroccan) provenance used for writing texts in the Maghribī style, mostly dealing with legal matters, are e.g. BSB Cod.arab. 2684, 2685, 2702, 2703, 2704 (dated 1167/1754), 2705 (dated 1137/1724; cf. VOHD XVIIB12); also Schrift-Stücke 172.
95 The information given in this passage is based on the notes which I took during a lecture delivered by A. Brigaglia on July 4, 2012 in the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) of Hamburg University.
filled with text we are told, likely by the boy’s father, that Muḥammad Munīb completed reading, i.e. memorizing, the Koran at the age of eight, having started, under the guidance of the muʿaddib al-ṭafāl, with the second chapter, viz. Sūrat al-Baqara, “as has been customary” (ʻalā ḥasb al-ʿāda). To celebrate the event of khatm al- Qurʾān he was escorted by the young children who walked before him, back to his home, while songs in praise of the Prophet (madāʾiḥ al-nabawiyya) were chanted by them as well as by a separate group of singers (jamāʿa yunshidān) walking ahead. Prayers and salutations on the Prophet and the other messengers were also offered thousandfold by the company. Sweet drinks (mashrūbāt al-sukkariyya) and biscuits were served to the people present, children and relatives, and poets made their appearance, e.g. al-Sayyid Khalīl Efendi al-Barbīr, who composed verses extolling the excellence of Muḥammad Munīb. The manuscript contains poems composed to congratulate the parents at the occasion of the birth of their son (fo. 3r, e.g. al-Ḥājj Ḥusayn Efendi; fo. 3v, [Muḥammad] Miṣbāḥ Efendi Ramaḍān [d. 1351/1932; Kaḥḥāła 12,22] as well as laudatory verses to honour the event of completing the memorization (tabrīkan bi-l-khatm al-sharīf) which are ascribed, i. a., to al-Sayyid Khalīl Efendi al-Barbīr, who, along with other poets, e.g. al-Sayyid [al-Dāʿī] Muḥammad [b.] ʻAbd al-Ghānī al-Bayrūtī, eventually composed elegies (marthiya; e.g. fo. 8r) 97 for Āl Shāhīn deploring the sudden death which overtook Muḥammad Munīb in the year in which he had been employed as a “third teacher”, al-mudarris al-thālith, at the Madrasa al-Rushdiyya al-ʿAskariyya of Bairūt, where he had previously studied Oriental as well as Western languages, Arabic, Turkish, Persian, French and Italian (fo. 5r).

Autobiographical reports mention that pupils started schooling at the age of about six years. According to his autobiography, Ṭashköprüzāde (d. 968/1561) began his studies by reading the Koran, in Anqara, when he had reached the sinn al-tamyīz, i.e. the age of intellectual maturity (Shaqāʾiq 553). Although, as a rule, boys left school when they reached puberty (bulūgh), they were allowed to stay on a little longer if they were about to complete learning the Koran by heart (Hirschler 2012, 88). The tedious school days which lasted about 30 hours a week, combined with a relatively low pupil-teacher ratio and a school attendance of 5-7 years ensured that children left school with relatively high literacy skills (98-99).

97 Khalīl Ef. al-Barbīr composed a qaṣīda of which (the) 4 verses in the Sarī metre rhyming in –ni have been inscribed in the boy’s tombstone, beginning: hādhā ḍarīḥun qad tajallat bihī / anwāru ʿafwin qad badat li-l-ʻiyānī (fo. 9v).
As there were considerable differences between the spoken Arabic language and the literary language, pupils learning Arabic had to come to terms with diglossia, and they experienced difficulties in the area of phonetics, in particular. Another challenge which young students of Arabic had to confront was related to the defective script which was widely used for writing the language (91).

Hüseyin Demir, in his short but useful monograph on Ottoman madrasas (Die osmanischen Medresen. Das Bildungswesen und seine historischen Wurzeln, etc.), also gives some information concerning the teaching of pupils in the elementary schools of the Ottoman Empire until 1600. We learn that, whereas girls were refused entry to the madrasa, they were admitted, at the age of 5 to 6 (Demir 2005, 46), for a period lasting up to 4 years, to the mektep or elementary schools. Other names used in the Ottoman epoch to designate the elementary schools which were closely linked to the madrasas were šibyān mektebi, mekteb ĥāne, dāru l-ta’lim or mu‘allim ĥāne – the last three designations are found in endowment documents (cf. Demir 2005, 48).

The schools opened early in the morning and the children, picked up by the bawwāb who also brought them back to their homes, spent the whole day in the classroom which was often situated on the second floor, where there tended to be less dampness than on the floor below (Demir 2005, 52). On Fridays the pupils were exempted from the duty of going to school – the expression used in the context runs: “they were let free” (āzād edilirler; Demir 2005, 53). Pupils considered indolent were meted out a variety of physical punishments, and the use of the staff called falaqa was among the most dreaded (Günyol, Mektep 7,658). The removal, by the hoca, of the cushion (mindere) on which the pupil sat in front of his low writing table, by contrast, was a mild form of chastisement. On the whole, it may be assumed that the relationship between the pupils and their teacher was

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98 One „šibyān mektebi” was founded by Meḥmed II (reg. 1444-46, 1451-81; TDVİA 28,395-407), conqueror of Constantinople, who built it in the vicinity of the famous madrasas called şaḥn-i gemān which surrounded the Fāṭiḥ mosque on one of the seven hills of the town (Demir 2005, 77, 87). Later on, between 1550 and 1557, a şibyān mektebi was built within the architectural complex called Sūleymānīyye külliye which contained the six şaḥn-i Sūleymānīyye madrasas (Demir 2005, 87).

99 In the fifteenth or sixteenth entury, the bawwāb received a daily salary of 2 Aqče which was equal to that of a student (dānishmand), madrasa sweeper (farrāsh) and toilet cleaner (kannās-i khalā‘). The professor teaching at the most elevated of madrasas, the Dār al-ḥadīth, by contrast, received a pay of 100 Aqče per day (Demir 2005, 92).

100 “A stout staff with a loop of rope let through two holes, by which the feet of a culprit are held up for the punishment of the bastinado or beating on the bare soles of the feet” (Redhouse 1996, 1395b, s. v. “falaqa”).
based on respect and fear, the latter probably prevailing over the former. Pupils who completed their course of study at the mektep were designated by the Persian loan word *sūkhte*, i.e. “burnt” or “experienced” and they were allowed to use the title *dānishmend* when they entered the madrasa (Demir 2005, 53) - the minimum age to be admitted was 14 years, the maximum 30 (Demir 2005, 46).

The curriculum of the mektep consisted of four elements, viz. reading and writing, Koran and the *aʿmāl-i arbaʿa*, i.e. four basic modes of calculation (addition, subtraction, etc.).

The pupil was expected, before leaving the mektep, to have read the Koran to the end, to have memorized a number of Suras and to have learnt the rules governing the discipline of *tajwid* or Koran recitation (Demir 2005, 51). Memorization in the mektep was of course not limited to retaining verses of the Koran in one’s memory. The young children also memorized prayers in the Turkish language as well as the religious hymns which were called ilāhiler.¹⁰¹ From the 1830s on, in the more prestigious schools linked to the central mosques, “the *Risāla* of al-Birkawi on ‘aqīda” as well as the short grammar books entitled *Tuḥfa*,¹⁰² *Nukhba* and *Subḥa-i şibyān*¹⁰³ were studied (cf. Günyol, Mektep 7,656,b).

The findings of Demir and Hirschler relating to the corpus of texts which were studied by young pupils may be supplemented by taking a closer look at the didactic texts themselves or at least by inspecting their titles. Such an examination indicates that a number of poems containing the quintessence of certain fields of knowledge, viz. Koran recitation, grammar and law of inheritance, were composed specifically as digests for young learners and were probably studied by them.

Sulaymān b. Ḥusayn al-Jamzūrī, al-shahīr bi-al-Efendi (lived 1198/1784; GAL S 2,456; Kaḥḥāla 4,257) composed an *urjūza* on the art of *Koran recitation* which, as indicated by its title, *Tuḥfat al-ʿaṭfāl [wa-l-ghilmān fi *tajwid al-Qurʾān]*, was addressed to children. The poem, by evidence of the fact that it was printed, must have enjoyed some degree of popularity, and it is also extant in the form of a


¹⁰² Probably the Persian-Turkish glossary *Tuḥfa-i Shāhidī*, “das erste Schulbuch der türkischen Kinder” (Flügel 1865-67, no. 131-2). A poem on *tajwid* composed for children is entitled *Tuḥfat al-ʿaṭfāl* (infra).

¹⁰³ “Rosary for boys”, a short Arabic-Turkish glossary composed of Turkish verses in different metres (cf. Flügel 1865-67 no. 116).
manuscript dated as late as 1322/1904 (the scribe has entered his name in the outer margin of fo. 3v), viz. BSB Cod.arab. 1814. In this copy of 60 verses the author mentions his name as well as the title of his poem in the introductory section on fo. 1v. The text of the poem is written in two columns and is interrupted by thematical headings mostly beginning with the words ʾaḥkām, “decrees” etc. Towards the end of the manuscript, the author states the date of composition (second hemistich) and the number of verses (first hemistich) which are encoded, by use of the system called abjad, in the third last verse. The numerical value of the letters ʾnūn, dāl, bāʾ, dāl (here given in brackets) amounts to 60: أبياته (نديد) الذي. According to the catalogue of al-Azhar university library commentaries were still written in 1950 in explanation of al-Jamzūrī’s poem, e. g. by one Maḥmūd Rifāʿa, Mudarris at the educational institution called al-Maʿāhid al-diniyya (Azhar 1,107; two other commentaries are mentioned in the same volume on pages 117 and 119, of which the former, entitled Fatḥ al-aqfāl bi-sharḥ Tuḥfat al-atfal, was written by al-Jamzūrī himself).

Another didactic work whose title indicates that it had been composed, notwithstanding its prose form, especially for the use of young children is the Qirāʾat al-ṣibyān (the alternative title Bināʾ al-afʿāl imparts information on its contents). Two manuscripts of this introductory tract written by ʿAbdallāh al-Dunquzī (who wrote before 1038/1628; GAL S 2,631,6a) on the conjugation of verbs, are in the possession of the libraries of Jena on the Saale river (ThULB) and Weimar (Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek), resp., are Ms. Prov. o. 37n, fo. 68v-75v (= VOHD XXXVII5 no. 12, part 4), and Ms. Q 670, fo. 90v-98v (= VOHD XXXVII5 no. 105, part 4). Another much copied work on grammar, the Marāḥ al-arwāḥ written by Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Masʿūd at the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century (GAL 2,24 S 2,14), is said by its author, in the preface, to have been written for children, as “wings [to carry them] to success [in their studies]” (wahwa lil-ṣabī janāḥu l-najāḥ, etc.). In both collective manuscripts of the said Thuringian libraries as well as in BSB Cod.arab. 2582, dated 1201/1786-7, the two grammatical works have been copied in association with each other. All three codexes start with the Marāḥ al-arwāḥ, followed by Kitāb al-ʿIzza (seventh/thirteenth century) on the conjugation of the verb, and by al-Maqṣūd fī l-ṣarf on morphology, a work usually attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa (second/eighth century): These manuscripts are all organized in the same way and they all include the Qirāʾat al-ṣibyān as the fourth text. The four texts thus seem to belong to a standard repertoire of grammatical works used for teaching pupils the Arabic language, particularly in the Ḥanafi teaching institutions of the Ottoman Empire.

The famous –Muqaddima al-Ājurrūmiyya of Ibn Ājurrūm (d. 723/1323) is also said to have been composed for the benefit of young children (cf. EAL 1,308) and
the versification (Naẓm al-Ājurrūmiyya) of this text by al-ʿImrīṭī (d. 890/1484-85; infra) was likewise written with beginners (al-mubtadiʾ) in mind.

At the end of the nineteenth century grammatical treatises were still translated into didactic verse for the benefit of young learners of the Arabic language. Muḥammad al-Ṣafadī (d. 1290/1873; Kaḥḥāla 10,93), in 1290/1873, completed his versification of Muḥammad b. Pīr al-Birkawī’s (d. 981/1573; GAL 2,583-6 S 2,654-8) very popular tract on 100 prepositions in 3 chapters (Emrullah Yüksel, in TDVİA 6,193,A,1, mentions some 40 printed editions), entitled al-ʿAwāmil al-jadīda (one manuscript of this basic work is BSB Cod.arab. 2010, dated 1222/1807-8; cf. VOHD XVIIB12)\(^\text{104}\), and al-Ṣafadī describes his poem of 109 verses entitled al-Tuḥfa al-mardiyya fī naẓm al-ʿAwāmil al-Birkawiyya in the following characterization: … qad naẓamtu li-l-ṣibyāni / urjūzata n wajīzata l-mabānī // naẓamtu… masāʾiīla l-ʿAwāmil / li-l-Birkawīyi l-ḥibri dhī l-faḍāʾil (“I have composed a poem in the Rajaz-metre for children in a succinct form / I have versified the questions of al-Birkawi’s Prepositions”). A copy of this text is the second of three parts included in the composite manuscript BSB Cod.arab. 1782. Another commentary on al-Birkawī’s tract written to meet the needs of children however was made not in verse but in prose format. The commentary of 45 folio pages included in BSB Cod.arab. 1123, the quotations of al-Birkawī having being marked with red overlines, was composed by an anonymous author in answer to the request of his two sons (saʾalanī waladān al-ʿazīzān; in the author’s preface; cf. VOHD XVIIB8 no. 66).

The inverse case - to al-Ṣafadī versifying al-Birkawī - is the didactic poem which, in order to facilitate its assimilation by, and its usefulness to children, was commented upon by a sharḥ, in prose. The didactic poem on the law of inheritance, al-Urjūza al-Raḥbiyya of Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Mutaqqina al-Raḥbī (d. 577/1181-82 or 579; GAL 1,490-91 S 1,675), was commented on by Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbdallāh al-Shinshawrī (d. 999/1590; Kaḥḥāla 6,128) in response to a request by his son. This may be interpreted to mean that the poem of Ibn Mutaqqina was too obscure semantically to be easily understood by children. Although the commentator declares that he intended to write his tract in the form of an epitome (sālikan min al-ikhtiṣār aḥsan al-masālik), the commentary encompasses more than 50 fo-

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\(^\text{104}\) The title al-ʿAwāmil al-jadīda, “New prepositions”, had been chosen by the Turkish author originating from Balıkesir to distinguish his tract from that of his predecessor, ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jurjānī (d. 474/1081; GAL 1,341 S 1,503), who had given his work the title K. al-ʿAwāmil or K. al-ʿAwāmil al-mīʿa (cf. Ahlwardt no. 6475).
A didactic poem which was popular in West Africa, and especially in Nigeria, is the *Urjūzat al-wildān* of the Andalusian scholar Yaḥyā b. ‘Umar al-Qurṭubī (d. 567/1171; GAL 1,551 S 1,763; EI2, “Ḳurṭūbī”) and, as the title indicates, the scholar composed the poem for children. The poem which was also known as – *Muqaddima* or *Manẓūmat al-Qurṭubī* contained a summary of the five pillars of Islam and, according to Hall, was designed to be memorized by children. The fact that the famous Shādhili mystic Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. Zarrūq al-Fāsī (d. 899/1493; GAL 2,329,2) wrote a commentary in explanation of the *Manẓūma* shows that it was well received even within Sufi circles.

In Islamicate China, and in Gansu province in particular, Muslim children were taught catechism in the form of questions and answers which were inscribed in mixed language manuscripts. A very popular Islamic catechism written for the instruction of children (*li-taʾlim al-atfāl*), in prose form is the *Tahāwur al-kalām fī ʿaqāʿid al-islām*, written in 1952 by Ibn Maʿṣūm ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ma Tianmin 马天民 (also known as “Jingkousi shifu” 井口四師傅; d. 1959) while he was teaching in the Hanjiasi mosque of the holy city of Linxia. In the preface he specifically mentions the fact that this catechism includes questions (and answers) relating to dogma such as: What is Islam? What is the name of one who believes in Islam? Are you a Muslim? What do you believe in (*bi-ma kunta muʾminan*)? What is the belief? What is the benefit of believing (*fāʾidat al-īmān*)? What are the principles of the belief? What is the good word (*al-kalima al-ṭayyiba*)? What is the word of the confession (*shahāda*), etc.

The text, which was published as a facsimile manuscript in Linxia (Baozi mosque 堡子清真寺), Shawwāl 1413/2004 (reprint), is bilingual, viz., Arabic and Chinese. The manuscript text starts with an introduction by the author in Arabic and continues with a *muqaddima* to be followed by 6 chapters, a number of passages (*fuṣūl*), a *khātima* and an appendix called *tadhnhīb*. The questions listed above are all given at the beginning of the *muqaddima*. The Arabic text of the questions and answers which are introduced by the bracketed letters *sin* (*suʿāl* =

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105 It is stated in the Chinese introd. 3 that the text was declared by the leading Ahong of the Nanguan Grand Mosque (in Linxia), Zhou Weixin 周维新, to be best suited for teaching Islamic dogma to male and female Muslims alike and that it has been used as the major catechism since then up to the present day, in the whole country.
question) and jīm (jawāb = answer), resp., is accompanied by a Chinese translation written in Arabic script, covering about two thirds of each page, i.e. by a transcription known by the names Xiaoer jing 小兒經 (“children’s canonical writing”) or Xiao jin 小錦 (“little brocade”). The latter variant is used in the Chinese preface and is probably also referred to in the Arabic introduction, viz., حَرْرَهَا الحَقِير بِثَيْوُكْنَ (a minuscule letter ُtāʾ ُ is placed above ِkāf ِ of ِثَيْوُكْنَ). In the translation, questions and answers are introduced by letters waw (with nūnation, ً) and dāl-alif (ٌ) again in round brackets, representing the corresponding Chinese words wen 问 and da 答, resp. The publication includes, at the other end of the booklet (pages 4-28), a printed version of the Chinese text written in characters (hanzi). The Arabic Xiaoer jing transcription seems to indicate that the text taught to the children is not in standard Chinese, but a dialect version, obviously that spoken in Southern Gansu province. In the 2004 edition of Yisilanjiao xinyang wenda 伊斯蘭教信仰問答 (“Questions and answers relating to Islamic belief” – the title appears on both (!) covers of the publication), a booklet of 54 pages in the Arabic script and 28 pages in Hanzi, sold in Gansu in about 2010, the author mentions in the preface that he also wrote another didactic work (for children), namely on prayer and fasting entitled Taḥāwur al-kalām fī masāʾil al-ṣalāt wa-l-ṣiyām. This text has also been published in an analogous format featuring Arabic text, Chinese translation and Xiaoer jing transcription, by the same publisher, Baozi Qingzhensi, in July 1406 after the Hijra.107

4.1.2 The madrasa

The madrasa, as explained by George Makdisi (1981, 29), owed its existence to the institutionalization of charity, by the law of waqf, for purposes of education. As a charitable foundation it was endowed and the endowment paid the salary of the professor. Other institutions of learning founded since the sixth/twelfth century and coexisting with the madrasa were the Dār al-ḥadīth and Dār al-qurʾān for the teaching of Prophetic Traditions and Koran as well as the monastery colleges

106 Due to the precarious employment situation in the rural areas of Northwest China, many of the female Huimin pupils who study the catechisms, find themselves working in the Karaoke bars of Linxia when they grow up; there they try to earn a living by entertaining guests, i.e. drinking and singing with them.

107 The introduction states on p. 3 that the author wrote other works, i.e. in the Arabic language only (5 Chinese titles are listed), works in Arabic which are accompanied by Xiaoer jing translation (the catechism and two further Chinese titles), as well as some Chinese texts written in the Arabic transcription only (5 titles).
such as Ribāṭ,Khānqāh, Turba, Duwayra or Zāwiyat (Makdisi 1981, 34). The Zāwiyat al-Sayyid ʿUthmān Efendi in Qustantinīyya (Constantinople) is mentioned in the colophon of Ms. Süleymaniye, Hekimoglu 272 as the institution where, in Dhū al-Qa‘da 1088/December 1677 or January 1678, the Badʾ al-amālī of al-Ūshi was copied.

Studying and memorizing didactic poems as well as tracts in prose form did not stop at the end of elementary education. In the institutions of higher learning, law and grammar were also taught in “rhymed prose” (Makdisi, Rise 268). As an example, Yahyā (b.) Nūr al-Dīn al-ʿImrīṭī, who wrote in the ninth/fifteenth or tenth /sixteenth century, composed a didactic poem on the branches of Shāfiʿī law, Nihāyat al-tadrīb fī naẓm Ghāyat al-taqrib and declares in one of the first lines of his poem that, in composing his work, he had beginners (mukhāṭiban li-l-mubtadī; BSB Cod.arab. 1900, fo. 4r, l. 3; infra) in mind.

At the madrasas such as those called Dār al-qurrā’ established in Constantinople as well as at the Dār al-ḥuffāz madrasas founded in Anatolia before the Ottoman era, the writings of Muḥammad Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833/1429; GAL 2,257-61) were studied, namely, his didactic poem, al-Muqaddima al-Jazariyya, as well as the Shāṭibiyya of al-Qāsim b. Firroh al-Shāṭibī (d. 590/1194; EI 9,365-66). According to Demir 2005, 59 Shāṭibī’s Qaṣīda-i lām was studied together with a commentary which Ibn al-Jazarī had written in explanation of this obscure poem. Apparently, Ibn al-Jazarī himself had instituted this tradition of study when he arrived in Bursa in 1395 following an invitation of Sultan Bāyezīd I, “Yıldırım” (reg. 1389-1403; TDVİA 5,231-34), who had requested the Syrian scholar to come from Cairo, and teach at the first Dār al-qurrā’, established in what was then the Ottoman capital (Demir, loc. cit.).

Relying on the autobiography of Aḥmad ibn Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Muṣṭafā Ṭāshköprüzāde / Ṭāshköprizāde (d. 968/1561; GAL 1,559-62) found at the end of the same author’s -Shaqaqa‘iq al-Nu’māniyya fi ‘ulamā‘ al-dawla al-ʿUthmāniyya (p. 552-60), Demir lists the major works taught in the Ottoman madrasas in the first half of the sixteenth century:

Divided by subjects, the following didactic poems were integrated in the madrasa curricula: In syntax (naḥw): Alfiyya (Ibn Mālik; d. 672/1273; GAL 1,359-63); in Koran recitation: “Jazarī”; Shāṭibiyya; in uṣūl al-ḥadīth: Alfiyyat Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ or Alfiyya fi uṣūl al-ḥadīth, i.e. a versification by ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-ʿIraqī (d. 806/1414; GAL 2,78,1) of K. Ulūm al-ḥadīth by ʿUthmān Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Kurdi (d.

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108 The expression shaqaqa‘iq occurring in the work-title designates red, or blood-coloured anemones (cf. Lane [1863-93] 4,1578,c). Demir in his study has used the Turkish version of Mejdī Mehmed Efendi entitled Shaqaqa‘iq-i Nu‘māniyya ve Zeylerli.
According to this list (Demir 2005, 67-72), poems were studied, i.e. memorized, in particular, in the fields of grammar, *qirāʿa* and methodology of Prophetic traditions.

The autobiography also includes information on the scope of the memorization of didactic texts by Ṭāshköprizāde and it appears that not only were poems containing the summa of knowledge of a given discipline memorized, but also prose tracts.

The author mentions that in grammar he memorized the following texts: *Maqṣūd*, on *ṣarf*; the *Mukhtaṣar* of al-Zinjānī; the *Mukhtaṣar Marāḥ al-arwāḥ*; the *Mukhtaṣar al-Miʿa li-l-Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī*; the *al-Miṣbāḥ* of al-Muṭarrizī and the *K. al-Kāfiya* of Ibn al-Ḥājib.

Ṭāshköprizāde states that he memorized all these “books”, i.e. prose texts, together with his brother who was two years older than himself (*ḥafiẓtu kull dhālik bi-mushārakat akhi*); this probably means that they aided each other to memorize the tracts by repetition and reciprocal quizzing. The brothers also began to study the *Wāfiya fi sharḥ al-Kāfiya* together, under the direction of their uncle Qiwām al-Dīn when he was appointed professor at the Madrasat al-Mawlā Khusraw in Bursa. When they reached the chapter on *al-marfūʿāt*, the nominative case, his brother, Muḥammad, to whom their father gave the *laqab* Niẓām al-Dīn as well as the *kunya* Abū Saʿīd, became seriously ill. Muḥammad asked his younger brother Abū al-Khayr to interrupt his study of the *Wāfiya* and wait until he had recovered from his illness to resume the joint study. Abū al-Khayr accepted this request and, while waiting, he studied the *Kitāb al-Hārūniyya* on *ṣarf* as well as the *Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik* on *naḥw* and he memorized the latter. However, Muḥammad died just when Abū al-Khayr had completed the memorization of the poem of 1000 verses, in 914/1508-9 (*Shaqāʾiq* 554).

Soon after, his father arrived in Bursa to assume the position of professor at the Madrasa Ḥusayniyya Āmāsiyya and he took over the task of teaching his son again (*Shaqāʾiq* 554). He had already familiarized his son when he was a child with the basics of the Arabic language (*shayʿ min al-lughāt al-ʿarabiyya*; *Shaqāʾiq* 553). Eventually however he gave up teaching his son, declaring that he had fulfilled his fatherly duties (*innī qaḍaitu mā ʿalayya min ḥaqq al-ubuwwa*), and that his son could now decide for himself how he wanted to proceed with his studies (op. cit. 555).

The reader learns that, under his father, Ṭāshköprizāde studied i. a., the *Sharḥ al-Shamsiyya* together with the glosses (*Ḥawāshī*) of al-Sayyid al-Sharīf as well as the *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʿid* of al-ʿAllāma al-Taftāzānī (op. cit. 554) and, under his uncle, he studied (*qirāʿat taḥqiq wa-itqān*), the *Sharḥ al-Tajrīd* of al-Sayyid al-Sharīf (op. cit. 555) in depth, but there is no more mention of text memorization.
It appears that the memorizing activity of Abū al-Khayr had been intimately linked to his relationship with his brother and that it came to an end with the latter’s death, his privileged partner in studying by memorization.

About 16 years later, in 931/1524-5, Ṭāshköprızāde had completed his studies and, after collecting ījāzas from the professors under whom he had studied, he was appointed as a mudarris, teaching at the Madrasat Dimatūqa (op. cit. 556), i.e. in Dimetoka near Edirne, “Thrace”, and thereafter at many other institutions of higher learning, in Üsküb, Istanbul and Edirne (EI, s. v. Ṭashköprüızāde 10,351).

4.1.2.1 The classroom situation

Students (ṭalaba)\(^{109}\) were seated in class according to their grade: those whose knowledge was greatest were seated closest to their professor (ustādh).\(^{110}\) In a very competitive procedure, the professor chose his associates (aṣḥāb) from the most capable of his students and they were entitled to the best seats (Makdisi, *Rise* 92). That the students were intimately connected with their teachers is shown e.g. in the conditions laid down in some ījāzāt (teaching authorizations) issued by the Shaykh for the student who proved successful at the end of his courses. In an ījāza dated 1259/1843 which is included in the composite manuscript BSB Cod.arab. 1994, fo. 8v-10r, the graduate student is told that after each lesson which he has completed – as well as after the daily five ritual prayers – he must pray for his teacher, Jamāl al-Dīn, imam of the Grand Mosque and professor at the Jāmiʿ al-Nūrī of Ḥimṣ in Syria (ancient Emesa; cf. TDVİA 18,370-73, s. v. “Humus”), for the latter’s father (or: parents) and children, and this in such a way that an answer to his own prayers becomes more likely (fi maẓānn al-ijābāt).

In general the professor taught in the morning and thereafter the repetitors took over. The repetitors drilled the students assigned to them in the lessons which they had been taught by the mudarris. After the mid-afternoon prayer the repetitors came back and drilled the students once again (Makdisi 1981, 94).

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\(^{109}\) In Islamicate China: hailifan 海里凡 = khalīfa (cf. Ma, *Zhongguo yisilan* 28). The title khalīfa was also used as an address by Ma Mingxin Wiqāyatullāh, the “path founder” (daozu 道祖) of the Chinese Jahriyya Sufi order, when he spoke to his novice from Yunnan, later known as the Gucheng Laozu 古城老祖, who had spent a few months studying in a madrasa of Chengdu but who does not seem to have graduated. The dialogue is related in the *Kitāb al-Jahrī*, 66, l. 1: “Khalīfa, I have given away your belongings to the poor!” - And there were important things contained in it. “Are you contented?” “Master, even if you took my spirit and gave it away to others I would be contented”.

\(^{110}\) On the seating order as an expression of one’s position in the session’s hierarchy, cf. Hirschler 2012, 46-51.
4.1.2.2 Curriculum
Since the founder of an institution of learning had freedom of choice in organizing his foundation there was no unified programme of study (Makdisi, *Rise* 80). Nevertheless, the sequence of subjects taught in the Islamic Middle Ages can be derived from the biographical notices of many intellectuals, e.g. ‘Abd al-Karim al-Qushayrī (Makdisi, *Rise* 82). According to Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* 3,205-8 (no. 394), the famous Sufi-theologian was advised to study the Islamic sciences by Abū ‘Ali al-Daqqāq, his father-in-law and a major oral source in the -Risāla al-Qushayriyya.111

Qushayrī acquired a mastery of law according to the Shāfi‘i madh-hab under the guidance of Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Ṭūsī (Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt* 3,206; Nguyen, *Sufi Master* 34); thereafter, he studied *uṣūl al-dīn*, Koran and Ḥadith with the theologian Ibn Fūrak (Ibn Khallikān, loc. cit.) and, having completed the latter’s courses, he started to attend the lectures of Abū Isḥāq al-Isfārāyīnī. As a result of these encounters he became a *mutakallim* adhering to the school of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī. After the demise of Daqqāq he turned to Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021) to continue his study of Sufism. Under the latter as well as under Ibn Fūrak, Abū Isḥāq al-Tha‘labī (d. 427/1035) and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Wāḥidī, Qushayrī studied the subject of tafsīr in which he excelled - as is demonstrated by various exegetical works which he composed (Nguyen 2012, 172). Qushayrī also studied Ḥadith with numerous teachers (150-54) whose names are mentioned in the biographies dedicated to him by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and Şarifīnī in their histories of Baghdād and Nīsābūr, resp., as well as by Shahrazūrī who compiled *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā‘* al-Shāfi‘iyya. In fact, Qushayrī had at first gone to Nīsābūr, as a young *diḥqān* or landowner, to study accountancy (*‘ilm al-ḥisāb*), as an aid to collecting taxes, apparently under ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037; Kutubi, *Fawāt* 2,371; Nguyen 2012, 91, 223), the well-known author of the heresiographical work *K. al-Farq bayn al-firaq*.112

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111 A madrasa was built in Nīsābūr in 391/1001 (Nguyen 2012, 32) in honour of Abū ‘Ali al-Daqqāq. When Daqqāq died in 405/1015, he was buried in his madrasa which was taken care of by his son-in-law. The institution previously known as the madrasa of Daqqāq thereafter became known as the madrasa of Qushayrī (Nguyen 2012, 32; Chiabotti 2013, 54). It seems that the madrasas of the Sufi shaykhs of Nīsābūr were modelled after the khānqāh (pl. khawāniq) of the Karrāmiyya sect (Nguyen 2012, 67) which advocated an alternative method of spirituality to that of the Sufis.

112 Gramlich (1989, introd. 11) lists the fields studied by Qushayrī, to include *fiqh*, *tafsīr*, *ḥadith*, *uṣūl*, adab—literature, poetry, the art of the secretary (*kitāba*) and Sufism.
4.1.2.3 Didactic poems in some scholars’ fahrasa

There are catalogues called *Fahrasa* in the West or e.g. *Mu’jam* or *Thabat* in the East; they reveal what studies could be undertaken by a scholar at a given period. These catalogues sometimes include inventories of works favoured by cultivated circles (cf. Ch. Pellat, art.: „Fahrasa“, in El 2,744a) and may also answer the question of which didactic poems, if any, were studied by a given scholar. According to a differentiation made by a modern author called ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Ahwānī quoted by Pellat, there are four categories of *Fahrasa*, the two most important being „catalogue of writings classified according to the branch of study“ and second „list of masters with a note of the works studied under them“. The third category is a combination of the first two classifications and the fourth adds personal observations to the above lists of teachers.

The *Fahrasa* of Ibn Khayr al-Ishbili is considered one of the best composed in the West, whereas the *Mu’jam al-mufahras* compiled by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449; Kaḥḥāla 2,20-22) is one of the best known in the East. Both catalogues have been published in recent years (Pellat, loc. cit.).

The author Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Khayr ibn ʿUmar ibn Khalīfa al-Umawī of Seville in Spain, who died in 575/1179, listed a relatively small number of didactic poems, mostly in the Rajaz metre, in his *Fahrasa*; they were among the 1348 works he studied. Ibn Zurayq’s (d. 420/1029) poem is not included, the

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113 A very early example of a *Mu’jam al-shuyūkh* which was composed in the Levant, i.e. in the East, may be added to the titles mentioned in Pellat’s article. This *Mu’jam* was composed by Abū l-Husayn Muhammad b. Aḥmad b. Jumayʿ al-Ṣaydā wī al-Ghassānī, an ascetic who was born in Ṣaydā in 305/917 or 306/918-9 and who died in 394/1003-4 (cf. Samʿānī, Ansāb 8,357, 10,46; Dhahabī, Siyar 15,368; GAS 1,220); it provides alphabetically arranged lists of teachers under whom the author studied. However, the *Mu’jam Ibn Jumayʿ* does not seem to contain titles of works studied under the teachers but mainly lists the Prophetic traditions which Ibn Jumayʿ heard from them. Contrary to what Fuat Sezgin says about this work: „... enthält nur die Namen der Shuyūk von Ibn Ğumaiʿ, von denen je ein Ḥadīth angeführt wird“, the *Mu’jam* in the Leiden manuscript also contains other materials such as poems which Ibn Jumayʿ heard from his authorities (e.g. two verses in the Ŵawil-metre recited by [Hārūn] al-Rashīd, beginning with yamātu l-fatā min ‘athrat bin l-sīnāhiḥ; fo. 46v). It has been noticed however that the content differs from one copy of the *Mu’jam* to the next. Whereas the manuscripts used by al-Samʿānī (Ansāb 7,282, s. v. Sinn) and al-Dhahabī (Siyar, loc. cit.) included a biographical note on the Iraqi mystic Abū Bakr Dulaf b. Jahdar al-Shibli (d. 334/945) from whom Ibn Jumayʿ had heard a short poem on love beginning with Kharajn (variant: nazaln) al-Sīnna nastanu, the Leiden manuscript (Voorhoeve 1980, 221) lacks the note on the Sufi although it does contain texts belonging to other genres besides Ḥadīth.

114 Although Ibn Khayr was not known as a Sufi he took an interest in Islamic mysticism; this becomes evident, i.a. from the following entries in the *Fahrasa*: no. 567 (*Su’al Dhi l-Nūn*); no. 627-34 (the *tawālif* of Abū Saʿid b. al-Aʿrābī, shaykh al-ḥaram, viz. 8 works on asceticism, fi maʿānī l-
texts of al-Ūshī, Ibn al-Wardī and al-Laqānī of course are absent in the Fahrasa for reasons of chronology. The didactic poems cited are the following:

No. 23: Anon., K. al-Urjūza al-munabbiha fi al-qurrā’ wa-l-uṣūl;
no. 64: Abū ’Amr al-Dānī, K. al-Urjūza al-munabbiha ‘alā asmā’ al-qurrā’ wa-l-ruwāḥ wa-l-qirā’āt ilkhu. (perhaps the same as no. 23);
no. 123: Abū Muzāḥim Mūsā b. ’Ubaydallāh al-Khāqānī, Qaṣīda fi waṣf al-qirā’āt; no. 124: Abū al-Ḥusayn M. b. Aḥmad al-Malaṭī (d. 377/987, in ʿAsqalān), a Qaṣīda written in response (fi muʿāraḍa) to no. 123, in 59 verses, to which Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī added a sixtieth verse; no. 125 is a commentary on no. 123 written by al-Dānī, titled Sharḥ Qaṣīdat Abī Muzāḥim al-Khāqānī;
no. 126: Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Fihrī al-Ḥuṣrī al-Muqri (d. 488/1095; Kaḥḥāla 7,125), Qaṣīda fi qirā’at Nāfī‘;
no. 1156: Abū Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-Kātib: Qaṣīda fi manāsik al-ḥajj, on the stations of the pilgrimage to Mecca;
no. 1157-58: two poems on the art of composing poetry, not in Rajaz but in the qarīḍ metres, Qaṣīda fi al-sunna wa-l-ādāb al-shi’riyya by Abū Abdallāh ibn ‘Ammār al-Kalā‘ī and Qaṣīda fi l-ādāb al-shi’riyya wa-‘aqā’id ahl al-sunna, by al-Wazīr Abū Ḥafs ibn al-Ḥasan al-Hawzanī;
no. 1179 (1180): As for the -Qaṣīda al-lāmiyya fi siyar Rasūlallāh wa-l-zuhd, a poem (naẓm) composed by al-Faqīh Abdallāh b. Abī Zakariyyā’ b. ‘Ali al-Shaqrāṭisi (d. 466/1073; GAL 1,315), it is difficult to judge, only on the basis of the title, whether the author was motivated to compose the poem for didactic reasons; whatever the case may be, a commentary was written on the -Qaṣīda al-Shaqrāṭisiyya by one Muqri’ Ibn al-Ṭufayl, included in the Fahrasa as no. 1180;

zuhd, for which he received an ijāza; cf. no. 1278); no. 691 (Kitāb Akhbār al-Shiblī; for this mystic see the previous footnote); no. 694 (-Sulami, Ṭabaqāt); no. 695 (Ibn Jahḍam, Bahjat al-asrār, for which he obtained an ijāza, according to no. 1282); no. 703-4 (two works of -Qushayri); no. 1138, 1169 (-Kharāʾīṭ, on love).
As can be seen from the above list, the majority of the didactic poems studied by Ibn Khayr treat aspects of Koran recitation. Less numerous are the poems that are dedicated to the art of composing poetry, or to law, including inheritance, to Sīra (the Prophet’s biography) and miscellanies. Not all of the texts are urjūza - many have been written in qarīḍ metres with mono-rhyme instead - and, in a number of cases, it remains unclear whether the motivation for writing a given poem was predominantly didactic.

As for the didactic poems listed in the Muʿjam al-mufahras of Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, I have not found any urjūzas among them although there is a small number of qaṣīdas whose titles indicate that they served a didactic function, namely:

Abū al-Qāsim al-Shāṭibī, al-Qaṣīda al-Shāṭibiyya of which the alternative title Ḥirz al-amānī is given together with the isnād for the transmission of the text (no. 1689); other poems on the readings of the Koran are no. 1691, a qaṣīda rhyming on rā’, again by al-Shāṭibī, in which he treats a sub-discipline of qirāʾāt, designated as (fi maʿrifat) rusūm al-khāṭṭ; and no. 1692 which is a qaṣīda with the generic title Qaṣīda fi al-qirāʾ āt by one Athīr al-Dīn Abū Ḥayyān.

In Ḥadīth studies Ibn Ḥajar read a poem of 1000 verses entitled al-Alfiyya fi naẓm al-ʿulūm as well as a commentary on it (no. 1779).

In the study of (Shāfiʿī) law he read a versification entitled Bahjat al-Ḥāwī by (Raḍī al-Dīn) ʿUmar b. al-Muẓaffar Ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349), made of al-Qazwīnī’s al-Ḥāwī al-ṣaghîr (GAL 2,176,10: al-Bahja al-Wardiyya), with additions (no. 1821). Another didactic poem on law, viz. on the discipline of inheritance, which he studied was the Bughyat al-bāḥith ʿan ʿilm al-mawārith of Ibn al-Muṭaqqina al-Raḥbī (no. 1825). ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Shahrázūrī, the transmitter of Ibn al-Muṭaqqina, from whom he had heard the text, made a written record of
the poem and passed it on to his student, Abū Naṣr b. al-Shirāzī (\textit{anba'anā ... al-Shahrazūrī fi kitābih - anba'anā al-nāẓim samā'an 'alayh; no. 1825}).

 Ibn Ḥajar also studied poems, three in number, on dogma, qaṣīdas, without however indicating the rhyme consonant or length of poem, composed by 1. Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd (\textit{Qaṣida fī l-i'tiqād; no. 1870}), 2. Abū l-Faraj b. al-Jawzi (same title; no. 1871) and 3. al-Karajī al-Shāfiʿī, Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik (\textit{ʿArūs al-qaṣāʾid wa-shumūs al-ʿaqāʾid; no. 1872). The transmitter of -Karajī's poem passed on the text from a written record (\textit{anbaʾanā ... fī kitābih}) whereas the poet may have taught it from memory (\textit{anba'anā ... fī kitābih}).

In the field of grammar, Ibn Ḥajar studied two didactic poems of Jamāl al-Dīn b. Mālik (d. 672/1274; GAL 1,359-63), viz. his famous (\textit{-Alfiyya} (GAL 1,359,\textit{I}) as well as the even longer –\textit{Kāfiya al-Shāfiyya} (GAL 1,363,\textit{III}). He read the poems under a teacher who heard them from a transmitter; the latter had heard them from the poet-grammarian himself (\textit{bi-samāʾihā 'alā nāẓimihā; no. 1893-4}).

In the area of \textit{Sīra}, i.e. the Prophet’s biography and eulogy, he studied the \textit{-Shaqrāṭisiyya fī madḥ khayr al-bariyya} of ʿAbdallāh b. Abī Zakariyyāʾ b. ʿAlī al-Shaqrāṭī (no. 1909) which obviously is identical with the poem read by al-Ishbīlī (\textit{Fihrist}, no. 1179), as well as al-Būṣīrī’s widely disseminated \textit{Qaṣīda al-Burda} (no. 1910). Ibn Ḥajar mentions two ways in which he was taught al-Būṣīrī’s “Mantle poem”: orally, by reading the text out loud to his teacher, al-Ghumārī, and secondly, by receiving it in writing (\textit{wa-katab ilaynā}) from one al-ʿAlāʾī who heard it from a transmitter who had heard it from the Egyptian poet himself. He studied some further poems composed in praise of the Prophet, one of which, \textit{al-Mawrid al-ʿadhb fī muʿāraḍat Qaṣīdat Kaʿb}, was made in response to the famous poem of Kaʿb; Ibn Ḥajar adds a note stating that the length of the poem amounts to 83 verses (no. 1914).

 Ibn Ḥajar’s \textit{Muʿjam al-mufahras} also includes a number of works entitled \textit{Muʿjam}, etc. in a more restricted sense. Here he mentions the \textit{Muʿjam Ibn Jumayʿ} (no. 783; cf. fn. 113) which can also be found in al-Ishbīlī’s list as well as that of the fourth/tenth century Sufi Ibn al-Aʿrābī, \textit{Muʿjam Ibn Abī Saʿīd al-Aʿrābī} (no. 778) which seems to be identical with the Žāhiriyya manuscript listed among his works in GAS 1,661,\textit{I}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Like Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī, Ibn Ḥajar had included the study of \textit{Sufi literature} in his curriculum as can be seen the numerous titles of mystical texts which he mentions in his \textit{Muʿjam}, e.g. Ibn al-Aʿrābī, \textit{Maʿānī l-zuhd} (90), -Rūdhabārī, \textit{Amāli al-R.} (no. 1207); -Sulamī, \textit{K. al-Amthāl} (no. 908), \textit{Haqāʾiq al-tafsīr} (no. 1725); -Qushayrī, \textit{Risāla} (no. 760), al-Albaʿūn (no. 915); -Sarrāj, \textit{al-Luma'} (no. 1796); -Suhrawardī, \textit{ʿAwārif} (no. 1795) etc.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
In his autobiographical *Fahrasa*, the Sufi author Aḥmad b. ʿAjiba al-Idrīsī al-Fāsī al-Shādhili (d. 1224/1809; Michon, *Soufi*; Kaḥḥāla 2,163) from Tetuan, lists the writings he studied as an adolescent, from 1180/1766 onwards, in various parts of the Maghrib such as Qaṣr al-kabīr, Tetuan and Fās. He claims that he interrupted his education in the “exoteric” sciences after having come across a copy of the celebrated collection of Sufi apophtegms by the Shādhili author Tāj al-Dīn Ibn ʿAṭāʾallāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309; Kaḥḥāla 2,121) on which he was to write a much-read commentary in the later years of his life (one manuscript of his *Īqāẓ al-himam fī sharḥ al-Ḥikam* is BSB Cod.arab. 1714). As well as the aphorisms entitled *al-Ḥikam al-ʿAṭāʾiyya*, he studied, as part of his curriculum on the subject of Sufism, two works of Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) - entitled *Al-Naṣīḥa* and *Uṣūl al-ṭariqa* - who was like himself a renewer of the Shādhiliyya Sufi order in Morocco.

Among the texts Ibn ʿAjiba studied he lists the following seven didactic poems:

1. *Manzūma fī ʿṣṭilāḥ al-ḥadīth* by al-ʿArbī al-Fāsī (d. 1052/1642-43; Michon 1973, 39, fn. 5; GAL S 2,960,18), on the terminology of the science of ḥadīth;
2. *Tuḥfat al-ḥukkām [fī nakth al-ʿuqūd wa-l-aḥkām]* by [Abū Bakr Muḥammad] Ibn ʿĀṣim [al-Gharnāṭī al-Andalusī] (d. 829/1426; GAL S 2,374-75; Kaḥḥāla 10,116; Michon, *Soufi* 40, fn. 2) on law and on the ethics of judges (a defective manuscript, copied by a Maghribī hand, of a commentary written on this *ur-jūza* by the son of the poem’s author, Abū Yaḥya Muḥammad, is BSB Cod.arab. 1961; a gloss, Ḥāshiya, on the same or another commentary on the *Tuḥfat al-ḥukkām*, again written in the Maghribi style, is BSB Cod.arab. 1942. Since the manuscript of 103 folios is deficient both at the beginning and at the end, it has not been possible to identify the commentator/commentators);
4. *Al-Alfiyya* by [Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Mālik al-Jayyānī [of Jaen]] (d. 672/1274), on syntax, in 1000 verses (Michon, *Soufi* 40, fn. 7; GAL 1,359,11);
5. *Lāmiyyat al-afʿāl* by the same Ibn Mālik, on the morphology of verbs (Michon 1973, 40, fn. 8), in 114 verses (GAL 1,359,11 S 1,526,11);
6. *Al-Khazrajiyyya* or *al-Rāmiza al-shāfiya fī ʿilmay al-ʿarūd wa-l-qāfiya* by Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al-Khazrajī al-Saʿīdī (d. 626 or 627/1229-30 or 650; GAL 1,380) on prosody (Michon 1973, 41, fn. 1) in 96 verses (one such manuscript is found in the composite volume dated 1652, 1794 and 1829-39, respectively, BSB Cod.arab.
1869/4, which includes both the basic text as well as the commentary of Zakariyā' al-Anṣārī on the didactic poem [parts 4 and 5] and other texts on metre and rhyme);

7. *al-Sullam al-murawna/iq fi l-mantiq* by Abū Zayd ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Akhḍarī (d. 953/1546; GAL 2,614 S 2,705), 94 Rajaz-verses on logic (Michon, *Soufi* 41, fn. 4; some Mss. of this poem in the possession of the BSB München are Aumer no. 674-6 and Cod.arab. 1437 [= VOHD Xvib9 no. 103]).

In the *faḥrasa* of Ibn Ṭaḥlabān the names of the teachers under whom he studied the above as well as other texts are also mentioned. According to the lists included by Jean-Louis Michon in his examination of the life of Ibn Ṭaḥlabān, he studied some texts under more than one teacher (e.g. the extensive *Alfiyya*); on the other hand, there are some teachers under whom he studied more than only one text (cf. Michon 1973, 39-41).

The bibliographical notes of Ibn Ṭaḥlabān show that the study of didactic poems continued to be an integral part of the madrasa curriculum in Morocco well into the twelfth/eighteenth century.

### 4.1.2.4 Didactic poetry in the Core Curriculum of West Africa and the Southern Sahara

In a detailed study on the circulation of traditional Islamic texts in West Africa and the southern Sahara, Bruce Hall and Charles Stewart have tried to reconstruct a “Core Curriculum” of traditional learning by drawing on authoritative bibliographical writings of Nigerian and Mauretanian scholars as well as on the data banks of a few libraries in the area. Hall and Stewart include those texts in the curriculum for which there is an (arbitrarily chosen) minimum number of manuscripts extant in at least three of four regions, viz., South West Mauretania, North Mauretania, the Niger Bend, the Middle Niger (Hall 2011, 113) and/or those texts which are cited in the above bibliographical works written by four West African (Sahelian) scholars116 (Hall 2011, 115). They mention the form in which a given work was studied, distinguishing between an original work and derivative texts but often do not specify whether a text was studied in verse or in some other form.117

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116 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saʿdī (d. after 1655-6); al-Ṭālib Muḥammad al-Bartillī (d. 1805); Abdallahi dan Fodio (d. 1829); al-Hājj ʿUmar Tall (d. 1864).

117 The *Mukhtaṣar fī l-ʿibādāt* of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Akhḍarī (d. 953/1546 [GAL S 2,705] or 1585 [Hall]), an elementary textbook on ritual duties according to the Mālikī madhhab, for instance,
The two researchers conclude that in certain areas of knowledge such as Arabic linguistics “didactic texts in verse meant for memorization” enjoyed a wider circulation than did the major treatises (Hall 2011, 120). According to their findings, didactic poems which enjoyed wide popularity in West Africa include Tuhfa al-Wardiyya fi mushkilāt al-iʿrāb of Ibn al-Wardī (grammar; studied together with a commentary; op. cit. 122) but not the latter’s Naṣiḥa; Ibn Mālik, Alfiyya (on syntax) and Lāmiyyat al-afʿāl (on morphology); Ibn Ḥājib, al-Shāfiya (op. cit. 121); various versifications of the Muqaddima of Ibn Ājurrūm; and al-Ḥarīrī, Mulḥat al-iʿrāb, in the Rajaz metre (Hall 2011, 122).

In the field of Koran recitation (tajwīd) the poems of al-Shāṭibī, Ḥirz al-amānī, as well as Ibn al-Jazarī’s Muqaddima rank among the most widely disseminated texts (118).

In the area of tawḥīd, i.e. belief, the ’aqāʾid of al-Sanūsī are declared to have been the most important in West Africa and beyond, in particular, the Umm al-barāḥin, the most elementary of the creeds. One of the versifications of the Umm extant in the African libraries is the poem written by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Baghayogho’s (d. 1655). Much less widespread than the ’-Aqīda al-ṣughrā, on the other hand, are the more advanced creeds of al-Sanūsī (Hall 2011, 137). The versification of the Sunnite creed which goes by the name Manẓūmat al-Jazāʾiriyya was also widely disseminated; the dogmatic works of Ibrāhīm al-Laqānī (d. 1041/1631-2), including his commentary on his own Jawharat al-tawḥīd, were also studied in West Africa (Hall 2011, 138). Al-Maqqarī’s versification of al-Nasafī’s ’-Aqīda was considered a popular text; however, in the data-banks of the libraries, there is only 1 copy of the original work, whereas more than 40 could be found of the versification. Also widely distributed is Ibn ʿĀshir’s (d. 1040/1630; GAL 2,613) theological poem al-Murshid al-muʿīn ʿalā l-ḍarūri min ʿulūm al-dīn, as is the commentary on the poem by Muḥammad Mayyārā (d. 1072/1662; Hall 2011, 138).

As for the Prophet’s Sīra, al-Būṣīrī’s Burda has enjoyed great popularity in the region and was often studied together with a commentary titled Sharḥ al-Burda by al-Khālid b. ‘Abdallāh al-Azhari (d. 905/1499; GAL 2,34-5; Core curriculum 126, 162). The same poet’s Qaṣīda al-Hamziyya in praise of Muḥammad is also widely available in Hall’s database (Core curriculum 126; also: infra, p. 159).

In Uṣūl al-fiqh, Ṭāj al-Dīn al-Subki’s (d. 771/1370; GAL 2,108-10) Jamʿ al-jawāmī’ was the original text studied both in Fez and Timbuktu. However, the
derivative literature, viz., al-Mahalli’s (d. 864/1459) commentary (cf. BSB Cod.arab. 2071) and al-Suyūṭī’s versification of it (Core curriculum 130) were more widely studied. The Waraqāt of al-Juwayni (d. 478/1085; GAL 1,486-8) was studied in commentaries and versifications, the most widespread found in the database being that of the Egyptian Yahyā al-‘Imrīṭī (d. about 989/1581; GAL S 2,441; Hall 2011, 131; cf. BSB Cod.arab. 1689).

Two didactic poems by ‘Ali b. Qāsim al-Zaqqāq al-Fāsī (d. 912/1506; GAL 2,341-2) on fiqh are mentioned by the West African authorities and are widely distributed in the area, namely the Manhaj, an urjūza on the principles of the Mālikī madhhab, and the Lāmiyya in which Zaqqāq provides solutions to legal problems based on the judicial practice of Fez (an anonymous commentary on the Lāmiyya is the Maghribi copy BSB Cod.arab. 1801). The poems of al-Zaqqāq are quoted as examples of a direct Moroccan influence on legal training in West Africa (Hall 2011, 134). In Hall’s opinion, West African authors produced few original “sources of substantive law”, preferring to follow the lead of outside scholars instead (132).

The value of Hall’s survey for the present project lies in its highlighting the prominent role which didactic poetry has played in traditional Islamic learning in West Africa and the southern Sahara at all levels.

4.1.2.5 A case study: Didactic poetry in an Algerian Sufi convent

The study of didactic poetry was not restricted to elementary and Madrasa education; it also played an important role in what was, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the central convent of the Algerian Raḥmāniyya Sufi order, the Zāwiyat Hāmil (the village after which the convent is named was situated near to the town of Bū Saʿāda; TDVİA 34,418).

By the middle of the nineteenth century the tariqa, closely linked with the Khalwatiyya order, comprised a total of 156,214 members, the zāwiya itself counted 200-300 students (BSB Cod.arab. 2604, fo. 2v). Far from being quietistic-minded, the Sufis of the Raḥmāniyya were collaborating with ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾiri (d. 1883) who spearheaded the uprisings in Algeria, and declared a holy war (jihād muqaddas; TDVİA 1,232c) against the French occupying forces, until his capture in 1847 (Taeschner, Geschichte 222; TDVİA 1,233a). However, ‘Abd al-

118 In uṣūl al-dhikr, the Raḥmāniyya was almost identical with the Khalwatiyya although Muḥammad b. ‘Abbās al-Raḥmān made a few changes as regards the execution of the “Remembrance of God” (TDVİA 34,418c). Haas, in his “Zikr of the Rahmaniyya order” (in MW 1943) gives a description of the ceremony which used to begin on Thursday at noon time and last until Friday afternoon.
Qādir refused to accept Sufis into his ranks, and admonished the (future) leader of the Hāmil Zāwiya, Muḥammad b. Abī l-Qāsim (TDVİA 34,418b), to concentrate on his teaching activities instead. The latter had experienced Sufism under his Shaykh Sidī al-Mukhtār b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and he remained attached to him until the master’s death in 1276/1859-60. According to the Maqāla manuscript to be discussed below, Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim wrote a number of tracts on Sufism (rasāʾil fi l-ṭarīqa) and his hagiography has been included in the -Zahr al-bāsim composed by his nephew al-Sayyid Muḥammad (BSB Cod.arab. 2604, fo. 1v).

The fact that didactic poetry played a prominent role in zāwiya education emerges from a close study of BSB Cod.arab. 2604, a manuscript of 3 loose leaves (format: ca. 12x18 and 12x21 cm., number of lines varying between 22 and 25) containing a single text written in the Maghribī script entitled Maqāla tata’allaq bi-bayān tafsīl aḥwāl al-Zāwiya al-Hāmiliyya al-Qāsimiyya. The reader is informed of the number of students who pursued their studies in the Sufi convent (‘adad al-ṭalaba; fo. 2v), of the names of the members of staff in the four classes (al-mudarrisūn bi-l-zāwiya, fo. 2v-3r) as well as of the titles of the books which formed part of the curriculum (mā yuqraʾ bi-l-zāwiya; see fo. 2a). Finally, mention is made of the works written by some of the professors and by the -mudarris al-thānī, in particular.119 The professors were Sufis, as appears from the information that al-Sayyid Muḥammad b. al-Hājj Muḥammad, the mudarris al-awwal (born 1861-2) received the ijāza for the Awrād al-Ṭarīqa al-Khalwatiyya from his uncle, Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim, who seems to have been the convent’s founder and namesake, al-Hāmil. He had started the convent in 1279/1862. As for the “fourth teacher”, al-Sayyid Balqāsim b. al-Hājj Muḥammad (born 1872-3), we are told that he “received” Sufism from his uncle, Sidī Muḥammad b. Balqāsim. The fact that, in the biographical notices, only birth dates, and not the year of death are given, indicates that the manuscript text which carries the signature of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥājj Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim, written in a different, barely legible script, was composed during the life-time of the professors.

The students read works, i.a. on the disciplines of qirāʾāt (according to the readings of Warsh, “as transmitted by Nāfiʿ”), tafsīr, grammar, Mālikī law,  

119 The author of the article “Raḥmāniyye” in TDVİA says that the majority of the writings of the order, written by Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (= the third mudarris?) and (?) by other members, are available in manuscript form. In 2006, the convent published a catalogue of its manuscript holdings (M. Fuʿād al-Khalil al-Qāsimī al-Ḥasanī, Fihris makhṭūṭāt al-maktaba al-Qāsimiyya. Zāwiyat al-Hāmil Bū Saʿāda).
astronomy (mabādi’ al-falak), theology and Sufism. In grammar they would begin their studies with the Mukhtaṣar al-Khalīl and the Ājurrūmiyya, continue with Ibn Hishām’s (d. 761/1360; GAL 2,27-31) Qaṭr al-nadā, and eventually read the very long didactic poem of Ibn Mālik titled Alfiyya, which they studied with the help of the commentaries of [ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Ali] al-Makkūdī [al-Fāsī] (d. 801/1398 or 804 or 807; GAL 1,361 2,308) or Ibn ‘Aqīl (d. 796/1397; GAL 1,360 2,108; a copy is BSB Cod.arab. 1722). In theology, the shorter credo of Sanūsī, al-Aqīda al-ṣughrā, was studied together with “the author’s commentary”, i.e. K. Tawhīd ahl al-‘irfān, or with that of al-Bayjūrī (d. 1276/1860). In this area of study, al-Laqānī’s well-known poem Jawharat al-tawḥīd was also read, in combination with the commentary of the author’s son, ʿAbd al-Salām, or with the Ḥāshiyat al-Bayjūrī. In logic, the ṭalaba would study the matn al-Sullam [al-murawnaq], “with its commentaries and glosses”, a didactic poem of 94 or 144 verses, and in astrology the Muqniʿ al-Sūsī [al-Mirghīthī or -Marjūsī] wa-shurūḥuh (fo. 2r), a didactic urjūza of which there is a copy of 4 leaves from a Maghribī hand dated 1351/1932-3 in BSB Cod.arab. 2635/8 (see fig. 6).

In Sufism, a poem entitled Manẓūmat al-Raḥmāniyya was studied together with a commentary written by the poet’s son (bi-sharḥ ibn nāẓimihā), al-Shaykh Muṣṭafā. Beside this poem which, lacking a more specific title, is difficult to identify, the murids would study the prized Sufi aphorisms al-Ḥikam al-ʿAṭāʾiya of Tāj al-Dīn Ibn ‘Aṭāʾ allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 709/1309; GAL 2,143-4 S 2,145-6) together with the often-copied commentary of the Andalusian Shādhilī author Ibn ‘Abbād (d. 792/1390; GAL 2,143 S 2,146; one manuscript copy is BSB Cod.arab. 1831, part 1).

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120 The text attributed to Warsh of the reading of Nāfi’ is used mostly in North Africa (and Yemen); cf. Small 2011, 26.

121 It now appears to me that the odds are, that this poem is identical with the Raḥmāniyya (“catéchisme en vers du metre redjez”; Cherbonneau (1852, 515) of Muḥammad Bāshṭarzī, which has been discussed, together with the commentary of the author’s son Muṣṭafā (“Sidi Moustapha, fils et successeur du précédant”), rather superficially, by Jacques A. Cherbonneau in his article, “Lettre à M. Defrémery, sur le catéchisme des Rahmaniens”. Cherbonneau has seen a manuscript copy of 236 pages of the commentary divided in a number of chapters of which he has singled out the following as being the most interesting: “Définition du Soufisme; Explication du Ouerd; Histoire des Patriarches de la confrérie de Sidi Abd-er-Rahman; Education des initiés; Exposé du dogme; Devoirs des frères envers le moqaddam; Devoirs de l’initié envers ses confrères; De la retraite; Des macérations; Du renoncement au monde” (1852, 517). Cherbonneau (loc. cit.) explains that Bāshṭarzī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al-Qusanṭīnī (d. 1222/1807; Kaḥḥāla 5,117), the author of the Urjūza, was a disciple originating from Constantine who became a muqaddam appointed by Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Azhari who had brought the Raḥmāniyya Sufi order to Algeria.
Fig. 6: Al-Sūsī: *Muqniʿ al-Sūsī al-Mirghīthī*, 1351/1932; explicit with author's name and work title (BSB Cod.arab. 2635/8, fo. 3v).
As for the literary works composed by the teaching personnel, the *Mudarris al-thānī* seems to have been a particularly prolific writer, writing both prose tracts and (didactic) poetry. As for his poetry, mention is made in the biographical notice devoted to al-Sayyid al-Ḥājj al-Mukhtār b. al-Ḥājj Muḥammad of the following works: In the area of Sunni dogma he wrote both a poem and a tract in explanation of it, to which he gave the titles *Naẓm fī ʿaqāʾid al-tawḥīd* and *al-Mūjaz al-muḥīd*, respectively. In the same field of study he wrote a commentary on a poem by a judge from Tilimsān, Shuʿayb, whose title is given in the biographical notice as *Manẓūmat al-Shaykh Shuʿayb Qāḍī Tilimsān*. In grammar -Ḥājj al-Mukhtār wrote a commentary on the *Manẓūmat al-Shubrāwī, fī l-naḥw*, a poem which seems to be the work of ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad al-Shubrāwī (d. 1172/1758; GAL 2,362-3) mentioned in GAL 2,363,8. To make it easier to understand the intricacies of the methodology of Islamic law, he wrote both a versification of the famous writing of al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085; GAL 1, 486-8) and a commentary related to it, namely, *Naẓm Waraqāt Imām al-ḥaramayn fī uṣūl al-fiṣḥ bi-sharḥ*.

The foregoing may suffice to show that in the areas of the study of grammar, the methodology of law, logic, astrology, theology and Sufism, didactic poetry formed an important part of the literary output of the professors who taught at the *zāwiya*, and/or it was included in the curriculum of this teaching institution. As a rule, the poems were studied together with one or more commentaries which, in at least two cases, were written by the author’s sons (al-Laqānī; *Manẓūmat al-Raḥmāniyya*). As for the literary production of the *mudarrisūn*, they composed didactic poems as well as commentaries to facilitate comprehension and they adapted basic texts (Juwaynī), writing them in verse.

### 4.2 Orality, scripturality and memorization

The *relationship of co-existence and inter-dependence between orality and scripturality* that has been discerned and analyzed in the manuscripts of didactic poetry can also be observed to have been at work in the process of the *emergence of Arabic literature*. Likewise, in the *methodology of learning* in medieval Muslim society, both orality and the written record played an important role. *Memory* also plays an important part, significant in the genesis of literature and an effective aid to learning.
4.2.1 The oral and the written

In his seminal studies on the relationship between orality and scripturality, Gregor Schoeler has shown that the transmission of Islamic scholarship in the first four centuries cannot simply be considered as the dichotomy oral/written, i.e. that the opposition between the oral and the written has to be rejected. Schoeler adopts the distinction developed by Alois Sprenger between aides-mémoire, lecture notebooks and actual books, while introducing the Greek terms syngramma/ta (systematic work) and hypomnema/ta (written remainder, notes) to designate books proper and private notebooks, respectively (Genesis 8, 21f.).

During the Jāhiliyya and early Islam, poetry was published orally, namely through recitation, and this method was continued even after written collections had begun to be compiled. During the poet’s life-time, he or his transmitter/s (rāwī, ruwāh) recited and thereby disseminated the poems; the poets often transmitted the poetry of others. The ruwāh not only strove to preserve the material they disseminated, but also to maintain its quality and sometimes even to improve it, e.g. by polishing impure rhyme (Schoeler 2009, 19). This method of publication did not exclude the use of writing in the transmission of poetry. However, the written texts used by the ruwāh were not intended for public dissemination, they served as aides-mémoire only. Although the learned transmitters made notes for their personal use, they recited the poems they had collected from memory (Schoeler 2009, 22).

Thus, dissemination of knowledge was initially done orally, or, to use Schoeler’s expression which adds precision, aurally. Works were disseminated through audition and publication happened without any formal redaction. Transmission depended on audition and on the personal instruction which took place in scholarly sessions (Schoeler 2009, 54).

Although in the more advanced stages of the development toward scripturality scholars often copied the notebooks (ṣuḥuf) which circulated among their peers (the teacher’s draft or notes of the auditors; Schoeler 2009, 24), they nurtured the fiction that they acquired their knowledge through audition and personal contact with their teachers.

When it came to publishing the muṣannafāt, the systematically classified works which first appeared in the eighth century, instruction through audition still remained the norm (71). The students read the book they were studying out loud

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122 Next to Dhū al-Rumma and Jarir, quoted by Schoeler (2009, 19), as examples of “transmitter-poets”, mention may also be made of the mystic Abū Bakr Dulaf al-Shibli (d. 334/946; GAL 1,216-7), who likewise belonged to this category of poets, albeit on a smaller scale.
while the teacher listened and monitored the recitation (a mode of transmission called *qirāʾa* or *ʿard*) or the teacher would dictate the *lecture* (a method called *imlāʾ*; op. cit. 73).

In the ninth century, what had been predominantly an oral culture turned into an increasingly book-based one (Schoeler 2009, 107). Henceforth, books were no longer published exclusively through recitation in a scholarly context. They were disseminated through written transmission and thus became accessible to a larger readership (Schoeler 2009, 112-13).

Nevertheless, transmission through audition co-existed, necessarily, with transmission through writing, because the deficiencies which are inherent in the Arabic script (117) required instruction by an informed teacher.

This coexistence seems to have been a characteristic feature of the age of the madrasa (from the eleventh century onward). Oral transmission continued to be practised. However, in contrast to the pre-madrasa era, audition now depended on a written text (122).

As a consequence of the inter-dependence of the oral and the written, Hirschler (2012, 15) helpfully observes that reading may be understood as both the visual as well as the *aural reception of a written text*. Also, aurality has to be conceived of as including modes ranging from purely aural forms to forms of individual reading (13). Hirschler highlights the fact that the binary notions of orality and literacy are reflected in the verbal forms of *qaraʾa* and *ṭālaʿa*. Whereas *qaraʾa* is linked to oral/aural culture, *ṭālaʿa* is more closely connected with written culture and reading (14). *Ṭālaʿa* denoted a single, silent reading of a text, whereas *qaraʾa* referred to a recitation to an audience, often without using a written text. The exact form in which a (latent) text was activated in the *qaraʾa*-mode cannot be easily determined: it could refer to (visual) reading or to the recitation of a text without a manuscript, i.e. as a recitation from memory (*qaraʾa ḥifẓan*; Hirschler 2012, 14).

Audition generated a new document, viz. the certification of audition (*ijāzat al-samāʿ*), the first of which appears in the manuscripts in the eleventh century. Although participation in audition authorized the transmission of a given work, the impact of literacy was also apparent in the *ijāzāt*: A method had been devised in which the student was authorized to transmit any of the teacher’s compilations without having had any contact with him (Schoeler 2009, 123).

In the transmission of the Koran, oral and written literary cultures coexisted, but eventually the relationship of oral and written transmission shifted to a

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123 Pertinent observations have already been made by Ott 2003, 180, who refers to Lane (1863-93) 5,1868b.
stronger reliance on the written (Small 2011, 144). Small (141) points out that, due to a predominance of the conventions of oral transmission in the earliest period, Koranic texts written at that time did not survive. Gradually orality became less important and was restricted to the memorization of set texts (144). Furthermore, due to the defective character of the Arabic script, oral recitation systems were created which, thanks to the efforts of Ibn Mujāhid (154), were standardized in the late third/ninth century. However, oral reading transmission was not a distinct system, rather it arose from the written text. Thus, in Koran studies, orality may be seen in combination with written transmission (179), and having the specific aim of preserving the precise pronunciation of the received Koranic text (152). Nevertheless, although oral tradition was a necessary complement of the ambiguous text, it was not strong enough to completely contain variation (163).

4.2.1.1 Ijāzāt

The professor would testify in the ijāza that the student who passed his examinations had made a qirā’at samā’ or a qirā’at tašḥīḥ wa-itqān, i.e. a reading which established that he had embedded a text in his memory or that he corrected the text and memorized it (Makdisi 1981, 143).

An example of a manuscript in which (multiple) authorizations were inscribed is BSB Cod.arab. 1994, a collection of ijāzāt on loose leaves of different formats and by different hands, including i.a. one authorizing its owner to teach the commentary (Sharḥ) of ‘Abd al-Salām on al-Jawhar[a], i.e. the didactic poem of al-Laqānī (fo. 3v). The certificate was issued by one Aḥmad al-Aṣbaḥī al-Qādirī who calls himself “servant to the sandals of the poor”, i.e. the Sufis (khādim niʿāl al-fuqarāʾ), in Shawwāl 1258/November-December 1842, to Muḥammad b. Sīdī Ḥasan Efendi al-Bayṭār, and it includes an admonition (wa-ṣiyya) for the recipient as well as a list of the conditions he was expected to keep, such as maintaining professional standards in his teaching materials (“to show oneself worthy of it, be fully familiar with the texts to be transmitted, to explain the meanings intended by the words and only draw upon manuscripts which have been collated and corrected”, al-taʾahhul li-dhālik wa-al-tathabbut al-kāmil ... wa-ʿadam al-ʾtimād illāʿalā al-nusakh al-muqābala al-muṣahḥhaḥa)124 (see fig. 7).

124 A rather unusual way of granting and obtaining authorization is described in another ijāza of this manuscript, on fo. 3r, where the same Muḥammad b. Ḥasan relates how both he and his father were initiated into the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order and how the father granted a teaching authorization for the collection of prayers by [Muhīy al-Dīn] Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240; GAL 1,571-82 S 1,790-802) entitled al-Dawr al-aʿlā (one manuscript of this text is BSB Cod.arab. 1791, part 3;
Fig. 7: Ijāza, authorizing Muḥammad al-Bayṭār to teach the commentary of ‘Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī on his father’s didactic poem (Jawhara); signature by al- Awsāhī and dating 1258/1842 (BSB Cod.arab. 1994, fo. 3v).

VOHD XVIIB12) to the Mufti of Damascus. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan narrates that on the second day of the festival of the sacrifice in 1259/1843 they went to see the Mufti, Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Murādī, and the copyist adds that his father narrated a dream in which he saw the Mufti initiating him into the Naqṣbandiyya ṭarīqa whilst spitting into his mouth (nafṭ fi l-fam) three times. In return Ḥasan al-Bayṭār accorded ijāza to the Mufti for the -Dawr al-a’lā- . Having related this dream, both of the scholars asked one another now to mutually accord ijāza while they were in the state of wakefulness (talaba kull minhumā al-taḥaqquq yaqẓatan). The Mufti dispensed ijāza for the khatma of this Sufi order, also by spitting, and the father authorized his colleague to teach or transmit Ibn al-ʿArabi’s prayers as well as all the other awrād (litanies) of the “Pole” (quṭb), i.e. the greatest of all mystics (of all times). The copyist, Muḥammad b. Ḥasan, the son, concludes the ijāza-note by telling us that he also asked the Mufti for ijāza and received authorization for whatever the Mufti had obtained since he was a child of only five years of age. The process of authorization described above proves to be the enactment of a dream that is motivated by the high esteem in which dreams were held in Sufism as indubitable messages from the supernatural (al-ghayb).
The impact of literacy showed itself not only in the emergence of the *ijāzāt*-genre. The fact that the practice of dictation sessions (*imlāʾ*) gradually waned was another sign of the decline of aural transmission (Schoeler 2009, 124). Also, to guarantee that one was in possession of a reliable text the *isnād* was not felt to be sufficient any more. To recover an authentic text, it was concluded that as many correct manuscripts of the different extant recensions as possible should be collated so that a reasonable critical edition could be prepared (Schoeler, *loc. cit.*).

4.2.2 Memory and memorization

4.2.2.1 Development of memory

The *development of memory* was a constant feature of medieval education in the Muslim world. People with a prodigious memory have been referred to as oceans (*baḥr*) or receptacles of knowledge (*wiʿa*), although they were mostly learned men who could read and write. People learning by heart, entirely through oral instruction, were the exception, and they did so because they were illiterate or because they were blind (Makdisi 1981, 101).

The *biographical notices* devoted to Muslim intellectuals show the significance attributed to memorizing in education. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231) studied grammar under his teacher al-Anbārī whose method consisted in listening to his disciple’s recitations and in adding his own explanations. Returning home at night the student would learn the lessons, rehearsing them until he had learned them by heart. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf claims to have memorized Ibn Qutayba’s *Adab al-qāḍī* on judges’ duties as well as his *Taqwīm al-lisān*, the former within several months, the latter in forty days, one day for each fascicle. He also claims to have studied the works of al-Anbārī on other sciences such as grammar, jurisprudence, Sufism and asceticism, etc., by “hearing them in lectures (*samāʿan*), reciting them in class (*qirāʾatan*) and learning them by heart (*ḥifẓan*)”. In an advice he wrote for his own students, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf says that when reading a *book one should exert one’s utmost to learn it by heart*, in order to be able to dispense with it if the book gets lost (Makdisi 1981, 89, 103). The student should also see to it that he devotes himself exclusively to one book at a time (Makdisi 1981, 89).

Some authors recommended that the intelligent student *learn their own works by heart*. A case in point is the well-known author Muḥammad b. Asʿad al-

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Dawwānī (d. 908/1502; GAL 2,281-84 S 2,306-9) who supports this advice by claiming, in the preface of his Risālat Khawāṣṣ al-jism al-latīf, on human psychology, that his tract contains “many useful insights and various benefits” (wājib ḥifẓuhā li-l-adhkiyāʾ ... li-kathrat fawāʾidihā wa-wafrat ʿawāʾidihā; BSB Cod.arab. 1953, fo. 2r).

Books were written in which the authors explain to the students how to study, and here again memory plays an indispensable role: The famous traditionalist and historian of Baghdad, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071; TDVİA 16,452-60), in his book entitled K. al-Fiqh (or: al-Faqīh) wa-l-mu-tafaqqih (GAL S 1,564,18), specifies the place he considered best suited for memorizing one’s lessons and he also recommends a particular physical disposition which the student should adopt while he studies, viz., the ṭālib should have an empty stomach and not overload his memory but instead memorize intermittently (Makdisi 1981, 102).

In offering a classification of memory and its aids, Makdisi (99-105) mentions, besides the memorization of texts and the note book, three further related points, viz., repetition, understanding, and mudhākara.

Repetition was considered the best way to commit texts to memory. This was so essential to the system of learning that the professor usually had a repetitor (muʿīd), who assisted him while he taught in the madrasa or the mosque (Makdisi 1981, 102-103).

Scholars distinguished between merely reproducing a text and understanding it – which they called tafaqquh. Memorization was not meant to be “unreasoning rote learning” (Makdisi 1981, 103). In the science of Ḥadīth a distinction came to be made between mere memory (riwāya) and comprehension (dirāya). Motivated by the need for materials to elaborate religious law, there was a shift from emphasizing the mere ability to store ḥadīths in one’s memory, to that of understanding their contents (cf. Makdisi 1981, 144).

Mudhākara, the reciprocal action of aiding one another to memorize, was another aid, and here the written record also comes into play.126 The -Khaṭīb, in his -Faqīh wa-l-mutafaqqih, advises the students that after attending a class they should repeat to each other what they learned and examine each other on it. Once the lesson had been learnt by heart it should be written down from memory, and the written record of the lesson should serve as a reference when memory fails him. Strengthening one’s memory of the lesson through mudhākara should – so the -Khaṭīb tells us – best be practised at night-time (Makdisi 1981, 104).

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126 On the term mudhākara cf. also Schoeler 2009, 42.
As memory alone could not be trusted, a written record was to be made from what the professors said as well as from their works. The note book was held to be indispensable because one had to refresh one’s memory in order to keep intact what had been transmitted (Makdisi 1981, 104). The notes which the students made of their professor’s lecture in law-classes were called taʿlīq. They were studied and memorized and eventually submitted to the Mudarris for examination. In Ḥadīth, by contrast, the text of the Prophetic traditions were noted down word for word in a process which was designated by the verb kataba and which forms the counterpart of ʿallaqa / taʿlīq (Makdisi 1981, 114-16). The professor may have dictated his text from a book or from memory - the first was permitted in Ḥadīth classes, but not in lectures on law, where the professor was expected to know his materials by heart (Makdisi 1981, 148).

### 4.2.2.2 Aids to memorization

Memorization was effected through the above-mentioned procedures, repetition, mudhākara, quizzing one another, etc. However other more accidental means were indicated in the manuscripts; such means were intended to serve the same purpose. Some of these were associated with the notion that memorizing text in Arabic is easier than in Persian. However, other means may appear to the modern observer to be “superstitious” or expressive of a mentality which is more magical, i.e. interested in harnessing supernatural powers for personal, rather than purely religious ends.

#### 4.2.2.2.1 Translation of texts into Arabic

Some members of the ‘ulamāʾ-class considered that memorizing scholarly texts, originally written in Persian, was easier when translated into Arabic. With this in mind, ʿIṣām al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Isfarāʾīnī (d. 944/1536; GAL 2,540) claims to have made a translation, for the benefit of his son, of a tract of ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī, generally known as al-Sayyid al-Sharīf (d. 816/1413; GAL 2,280-1), on the basic concepts of logic, which the latter had composed for his own son, in Persian. In the preface to his work ʿIṣām al-Dīn mentions that through Arabization (taʿrīb), and notwithstanding the great usefulness of the Persian original (risāla mushtamila ‘alā fawāʾid), “lucidity is increased and memorization is facilitated through the [greater] nobility of the Arabic language” (kāna ḍabṭ al-ʿarabiyya li-faṣāḥatihā ashal wa-ḥifẓuhā li-sharafihā aḥsan). Since ʿIṣām al-Dīn composed his taʿrīb as a study aid for his son, he entitled the tract al-Risāla al-Waladiyya fī ʿilm al-maṭāq (two copies of the tract in the BSB München are Cod.arab. 2006 [9
densely written leaves] and Cod.arab. 2046, the third and last part, dated 1079/1668-69, in a collective volume [cf. VOHD XVIIB12]; a copy of the Persian original of al-Jurjānī’s work entitled al-Risāla al-Waladiyya fi l-uṣūl al-manṭiqiyya is Ms. Zāhiriyya, falsafa 174).

With regard to another work of al-Jurjānī originally written in the “non-Arabic, i.e. Persian expression” (bi-l-ʿibāra al-ʿajamiyya), dealing with metaphysics and entitled Risālat al-wujūd, the translator Kamāl al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī (wrote in 874 or 876/1471; GAL 2,281,11) mentions that the reason for translating the short text, “a noble treatise and fine pearl” (durra laṭīfa), from Persian into Arabic is that the latter language is “more lucid and the benefit which its practitioners derive from it is more easily achieved and more yielding” (afṣaḥ wa-intifāʿ ahlihā bi-hā aysar wa-anjāḥ; BSB Cod.arab. 2018, fo. 29v; this opinion can be found in the preface of the third text of a composite manuscript [VOHD XVIIB12]). Although Kamāl al-Dīn, like ʿIṣām al-Dīn, prefers the Arabic language to Persian, nevertheless he does not credit it with the property of facilitating memorization.

Giving precedence to Arabic over Persian is also sanctified through a commandment ascribed to Muḥammad in the form of a ḥadīth starting with man aḥsan minkum an yatakallam bi-l-ʿarabiyya adduced by the Sufi author ʿAbd al-Raʿūf al-Munāwī (d. 1031/1621; GAL 2,393-4 S 2,417) in his Fayḍ al-qadīr (BSB Cod.arab. 2043, fo. 267v), a multiple volume commentary on al-Suyūṭī’s collection of traditions entitled al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr. According to this tradition, he who knows Arabic well should not speak Persian, as this is said to engender hypocrisy (nifāq; -Munāwī, loc. cit.).

### 4.2.2.2.2 Versification

A major means of aiding memorization of a text was of course the translation of prose into verse.127

Countless tracts in the most diverse of fields of knowledge were versified in order to make it easier to memorize the content. The fact that metre and rhyme genuinely help in committing a text to memory is a universally acknowledged fact; and the fact that the authors were well aware of this property of versification can be gleaned from their own words. To quote but one example:

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127 Some medieval scholars were said to be able to translate prose tracts into verse with the greatest of ease. The Syrian biographer of classical and Islamic physicians, Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 668/1270; EAL 1,307), mentions the physician Sadīd al-Dīn b. Raqiqa as being so talented in writing poetry that he could transform any tract on medicine within the shortest time into Rajaz-verses (cf. Ullmann 1966, 58).
Yaḥyā Nūr al-Dīn al-ʿImrīṭī (fl. ninth/fifteenth century), the Egyptian author of an urjūza on the branches of Shāfiʿī law, mentions at the beginning of his poem that, through versification, he had tried both to treat this field of study exhaustively and to help make it easier to memorize and understand the reference text of Abū Shujāʿ al-Iṣfahānī (d. after 593/1196; infra): naẓamtuhū mustawfīyan li-ʿilmihī / musahhilan li-ḥifẓihī wa-fahmihī. In another versification of the same author, namely the Naẓm al-Ājurrūmiyya of the grammatical textbook of Ibn Ājurrūm, al-ʿImrīṭī implies, in a prayer at the end of the poem’s introduction, that his work is both to be memorized (ḥīfẓ) and understood (fahm) by the student (infra). The year and month of completion of the versification as well as his own name, both of which al-ʿImrīṭī mentions in his poem, do not of course belong to the versification strictly speaking, and accordingly, these data have been entered as a concluding poetical addition called bāb al-muḍāf.

That didactic poems were indeed meant to be committed to memory was sometimes stated explicitly in the text itself; such is the case in the short grammatical poem consisting of eight Rajaz verses composed by one possibly unidentifiable Aḥmad al-Muqriʾ which includes in its last hemistich the final words in the imperative, fa-ḥfaẓ wa-ʿlamā, i.e. “memorize and understand it!” The text, enumerating 29 instances in which the noun may occur indeterminately (Incipit: muṣawwighātu al-ibtidāʾi bi-l-nakira), was inscribed on the recto side of the last leaf (fo. 30) of a dated manuscript bound in a reddish brown leather cover without flap, BSB Cod.arab. 2052 whose main text includes the famous tract on grammar of Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 646/1249; GAL 1,367-73) entitled al-Muqaddima al-Kāfiya [fī l-naḥw]. The hand of the scribe of the short urjūza is different from that which copied Ibn al-Ḥājib’s text in 1086/1675; the former, younger hand had also entered further para-texts on the first leaves of the manuscript, such as, e.g. the biography of the author Ibn al-Ḥājib excerpted from the well-known prosopographical lexicon Tārīkh Ibn Khallikān, i.e. Wafayāt al-aʿyān (on fo. 1v).

Likewise, BSB Cod.arab. 2055, a versification of 325 verses in the Rajaz metre entitled (Naẓm) Hidāyat al-fattāḥ li-māniʿ al-sifāḥ of a prose text on the laws of marriage, has been made for the purpose of easing memorization. This fact is stated in the first hemistich of v. 9 (qaṣadtu naẓmahū li-kaymā yashula ḥifzan). In the subsequent verse the author, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī, declares that his composition is aimed at beginners and that verse is the appropriate means of leading them onto the path of right guidance (muqarrīban taʿbīrahū li-mubtadī / kay-mā bihi subulu l-rashādi yahtadī; v. 10). As is the case with many prose texts, the author’s name and work title are given in the introduction to the poem: The author mentions his name in the introductory passage, i.e. in v. 1; the name of the author of the text is versified (ʿAlī al-Munayyir al-Shāfiʿiʾi) in v. 7, with the title of
the latter’s work in v. 5; the title of the versification is given in the penultimate verse of the first passage. As stated in the colophon, the extant copy of the *urjūza* was completed on 1. Dhū al-Qa‘da 1122/22. December 1710 by the hand of one ‘Umar al-... al-Shāfi‘ī al-Azharī, which means that he was a jurist of the Shāfi‘ī law school and an affiliate of Azhar University.

Furthermore, in the introduction to his poem, the author gives some information about the method he adopted in versifying the legal tract. He concedes that he has taken the liberty of adding a paragraph or a subject here and there (wa-rubba qaydin zidtuhū aw mas’ala / li-ḥukmin aw li-nuktatin mukammila), and that he also occasionally inverted the order in which certain passages were placed in the prose text (wa-rubbamā qaddamtu aw akhkhartu fī / tartibihī bi-nis-batin fa-l-taqtafī) (see fig. 8).

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**Fig. 8:** Al-Rifā‘ī: *Naẓm Hidāyat al-fattāḥ li-māniʿ al-sifāḥ*, versification of 325 Rajaz lines, 1122/1710; intr. with author’s name (v. 1), work title (v. 5, 13) and explanation of design (v. 9ff.) (BSB Cod.arab. 2055, fo. 13v).
Didactic poems, of course, have also been composed in their own right, viz. independently of any prose tract, and also not exclusively in the Rajaz metre, although the urjūza was by far the most popular poetical form. The reference to al-Aqfahši’s (d. 808/1405; GAL 2,114; infra) poem of 288 Bāṣīṭ-verses on the legal category of the pardonable impurities titled Manẓūma fi al-ma’fuwwāt is an adequate example.

4.2.2.3 **Ways of increasing strength of memory**

While the methods outlined above were successfully used to facilitate memorization, other devices were discovered and/or concocted which were believed to increase the potency of the individual’s memory. Pride of place in the context of pre-modern Islam belongs to prayer in its various manifestations.

4.2.2.3.1 **Prayer**

To further increase the effectiveness of his memory the Muslim was advised to recite prayers with the names of God in a particular way, as is the case in the text entitled al-Asmāʾ al-ilāhiyya al-Idrīsiyya. This collection of prayers (“the divine Idrisic names”), ascribed to the mythical figure of Idrīs who, in Islam is revered as a “prophet” preceding Muḥammad (and can, perhaps, be identified with the Hermes of ancient Egyptian religion, cf. EI, article “Idrīs”), consists of invocations to God by using his so-called “beautiful names” (al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā) as well as of explanations or recipes. In the composite manuscript BSB Cod.arab. 1817, fo. 1r-6r, the latter are written in Turkish, below the prayer formulas, and in a smaller script. Here, the Turkish scribe specifies that to increase the memorizing faculty one should recite the formula yā ḥayy ḥīna lā ḥayy fī daymūmiyyat mulkihī wa-baqāʾihī ("O Living one when there is no-one living in the eternity and everlastingness of thy [literally: his] kingdom") every day 107 times for exactly forty days (cf. BSB Cod.arab. 1817, fo. 1r).

A similar prayer in which the divinity is invoked by use of the name “Living” (Allāhumma yā ḥayy qabla kulli ḥayy, etc.) is likewise recommended for the purpose of strengthening one’s memory (mā yanfaʿ li-al-ḥifẓ; fo. 12r) in a collection of Fawāʾid, “useful recipes”, assembled by Yūsuf b. Ṭabd al-Rahmān al-Sunbulāwini (baladan) al-Āhmadi, on 10. Jumādā I. 1263/26. April 1847. BSB Cod.arab. 2089. This is a manuscript of 49 unbound leaves which are numbered by quires, incomplete at the end, and which was copied in the same year, on 15th Rajab/29th June, shortly after its composition, by one Ḥasan ibn ‘Ali who, like the author, was a Shāfiʿī jurisconsult, a descendant of Abū Bakr (al-Bakrī) and a Sufi
of the Aḥmadiyya order (al-Aḥmadi). The formula which follows the prayer (ihfaz ḥāmilahā min sharri kulli ḥayy, i.e. “guard him who carries it against the evil of any living being”) suggests that the prayer was meant to be written on some flexible material and to be carried on the body. The prayers inscribed in the manuscript text, orally received from the author’s teachers and/or excerpted from a number of literary works by authors such as al-Būnī, al-Jīlānī and Ibn al-ʿArabī, served the most diverse purposes; these range from easing the pain of a teething child (ṭulūʿ asnānihi; by attaching the tooth of an Arab (!) horse to its body; fo. 39v) to restoring a woman’s virginity (fo. 17v).

Of course, the first and foremost beneficiary of strengthening one’s memorizing ability, by means of prayers, was the [dissemination of the] Koran. The celebrated Sufi of the Ashʿarī confession and ascetic of Shirāz, Abū Abdallāh Muḥammad Ibn Khaffīb b. Isfahānī (d. 371/982; Dhahabī, Siyar 16,342-47; El, s. n. [Vadet]) included some relevant “transmitted” prayers under the heading fi-mā jāʾa fī al-duʿāʾ li-ḥifẓ al-Qurʾān (Ms. Süleymaniye, Feyzullah Efendi 1296, fo. 142r-144v) in the 256th and 257th chapters of his Khawāṣṣ al-āyāt (al-qurʾāniyya, Ms., fo. 1r); there are some alterations or corrections of the chapter numbers in the manuscript, in the hand of the scribe128. This little-known work, which is also

128 The expression khawāṣṣ al-āyāt refers to the magical and mystical qualities which have been ascribed - no later than the time of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, Sufi and sixth Imam of the Shia sect (d. 148/765; GAL S 1,104) - to certain Koranic verses or expressions occurring therein. Some works of this literary genre attributed to famous authors like Muḥammad al-Ghazzāli (d. 505/1111; GAL 1,535-37; Kitāb fīhi khawāṣṣ al-āyāt wa-fawāʾid min al-suwar) and Aḥmad al-Būnī (d. 622/1225; GAL 1,655-6; Shams al-maʿārif), Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258; GAL 1/5388-4; K. al-Ikhtiṣāṣ min al-fawāʾid al-Qurʾāniyya wa-al-khawāṣṣ), or the lesser known Ibn al-Khashshāb al-Yamani (fl. 650/1252; S 1,913), i.e. to mystics as well as to magicians, are mentioned in Wilhelm Ahlwardt’s Verzeichniss (numbers 4154-60). The text, probably composed by the North African founder of the Shādhiliyya Sufi order, Abū al-Ḥasan, concentrates on the potency of the Qurʾānic formula ḥasbunā Allāh wa-niʿma al-wakīl (= Sura 3/173, “God is our sufficiency and he is an excellent guardian”). In BSB Cod.arab. 2086, an incomplete Ms. of 10 leaves (fo.s 5v-10v are blank) with varying numbers of lines (mostly 24-25), it includes some diagrams of magic squares (fo. 3r, 4r, 4v) as well as a few divine names borrowed from the Hebrew language which has been badly distorted (yā ḥaṣhar ahŷā adāfāy(!) asbāwut al-shadāy; fo. 3v). The Qurʾānic prayer combined with magical recipes in this Ms. promises things such as reinstatement in government offices which were formerly held and from which one has been removed or degraded, or success in taking revenge on the unjust and on tyrants. A copy of Ibn al-Khashshāb’s al-Durr al-naẓīm fi faḍāʾīl al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm, mainly based on al-Ghazzālī and al-Būnī, is BSB Cod.arab. 1963, a manuscript incomplete both at the beginning and at the end. BSB Cod.arab. 2002 is an anonymous tract of only 9 leaves on the khawāṣṣ al-āyāt which explains the alleged effects of reciting certain Koranic verses a particular number of times, the numbers being related to that of the letters occurring in
entitled *K. Sharḥ khāṣṣiyyat al-āyāt al-bayyināt wa-jawāmiʿ al-daʿawāt fī al-awqāt al-mukhtalīfāt* (!, on the fly leaf) or *K. Faḍāʾil wa-jāmiʿ al-daʿawāt wa-al-adhkār* (ḤKh. 5,131) (a possibly unique manuscript, dated 21. Rabīʿ I 791/20. March 1389, is Süleymaniye, Feyzullah Efendi 1296), is mentioned in ḤKh., loc. cit., with incipit, as well as in its sequel, the *Hadiyyat al-ʿārifīn* of İsmail Paşa (vol. 2,50, without the beginning of the text); however, it is not found in the bibliography which Fuat Sezgin devoted to Ibn Khafīf in his *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* 1,664.129

The first such prayer in Ibn Khafīf’s collection is attributed to Muḥammad’s son-in-law, ‘Ali, “the best of attackers at the front line”, after ‘Uthmān (!, al-karrārī fi ṣaffi al-qitālī; cf. al-Ūshī, *Badʾ al-amālī*, v. 36b), who is reported to have learnt a sura of the Koran which he then forgot. He was upset by this and complained to Muḥammad who reacted by teaching him a prayer against forgetfulness, with the incipit “God have mercy upon me by [helping me] giving up performing acts of disobedience against you, etc.” (اللهُ ارحمنِي يترك كُتابك وَالزم معاَصيك بِارحمنِي اللَّهُ بِكَلِمَةِ عَلّمتِي يُرضيك الَّذِي نَحوَّهُ اتَّلوهُ وَجعَلني كَما كَتَبَكَ حَفَظٌ قُلْبِي) claiming that this may help him against the problems he had with his poor memory. A second prayer related by Ibn Khafīf to help memorize the Koran is attributed to one ‘Ikrima Mawlā b. ‘Abbās who reports that he heard ‘Alī complain (again) to Muḥammad that the Koran had disappeared “from his breast”, etc. (یتفلَّت الْقُرآن اَن مُنِ صدِّرِي فَمَا أَجِدْنِي أَقِدِّر عَلَيْهِ). In response to this request Muḥammad taught ‘Alī a variation of the above prayer (*a-fa-lā uʿallimuka kalimātin yanfaʿuka Allāh bi-hinna*, fo. 142v) which, in the manuscript, is preceded by an instruction in which Muḥammad explains when it is best to pray. Here we learn that the time he recommended as best suited for offering prayers is Friday night, or more precisely, the last third of that night - because it is a “witnessed hour” (*sāʿa mash-hūda*), i.e. one in which prayers are answered – or, if it be felt that praying in the last

129 The compilation does not seem to be mentioned in the bibliography of the works of Ibn Khafīf which his disciple, the eclectical and philosophically-minded author al-Daylamī (cf. EAL 1,185-86), has integrated in the hagiography of his master; apart from a few excerpts, this text is only found in the form of a Persian translation (edited by the late Annemarie Schimmel under the title *Sirat al-Shaykh al-kaṭīb etc.*). However, in the Persian version of the *Shadd al-izār* which is a prosopographic work on saintly individuals buried in Shirāz, a work with the title *Jamiʿ al-daʿawāt* was ascribed to Ibn Khafīf (cf. Sobieroj 1998, 312, no. 30).
third of the night requires too much effort, praying in the first third is just as good. The believer should also pray four rak`as and, in the first genuflection, should recite the Koranic chapters al-Fātiha and Yāsin, in the second genuflection al-Fātiha and Ḥāmīm al-dukhān, in the third al-Fātiha and Alíf-lām-mīm, in the fourth al-Fātiha and Tabāraka; having performed certain other actions, he should pray “on” him, Muḥammad, as well as on the “other prophets”, asking for forgiveness for himself and [all] the believers who came before him, and, finally, he should say the prayer beginning with the words Al-lāhumma ṣamān-nī, etc. (supra). This, in order to strengthen the power of his memory.

Prayers believed to be effective in fighting forgetfulness were also copied in the manuscripts of didactic poetry:

Beneath the end verse of al-Ūshi, Bad` al-amālī, (dated 1103/1692, in the Azhar mosque of Cairo, in Ms. Princeton no. 5729), a recipe including prayers is given to be used against forgetfulness (li-daf` kathīr al-nisyān). The note shows how prayer was integrated into the process of memorizing a didactic poem: After completing the reading [of the text, i.e. in order to memorize it], the student is advised to say a prayer in which he “deposits” with God “what he has read or heard” and which Allāh may give back to him when he needs to remember it. To confirm this request and to solemnize it, he should add a prayer on Muḥammad, his prophet: Allāhumma innī stawda`tuka mā qara`tu ʿalā waqta ḥājatī ilayhi wa-ṣallā llāh ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa-ālihī wa-ṣaḥbihī wa-sallam (tammat), i.e. “God, I have deposited with you what I read or heard, so return it unto me when I am in need of it, and may he pray upon our lord Muḥammad and his family and give [them] peace”. The scribe adds another prayer in which God is asked to render light that which he made light, light for the student to learn; the prayer ends with the words “you make light of sorrows if you want”.

Even in the twenties of the twentieth century, recipes prescribing how to increase one’s memorizing ability through prayer were entered into Arabic manuscripts. Such is the case with BSB Cod.arab. 1830, a copy dated [1]343/1924 of al-Fatḥ al-rabbānī wa-al-fayḍ al-raḥmānī, a prose text in seven chapters on paranetics, by the Syrian mystic ‘Abd al-Ghanī b. Ismā’il al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731; GAL 2,454-58). Written on the recto-side of the last page of the manuscript, an alien hand adds the advice that a prayer on Muḥammad the prophet be recited as often as possible (bi-lā ʿadad) between sunset and night time; the prayer begins with the words: Allāhumma ṣallī ʿalā Muḥammadin wa-ālihi, “with the intention to [increase] memory and to counter forgetfulness (ʿalā niyyat al-ḥifẓ wa-ʿadām al-nisyān tutlā ḥādhihī al-ṣīgha), in the same way as there is no limit to your perfection and to the number of his [i.e. Muḥammad’s] perfections”.

4.2.2.3.2 Religious magic as an aid to memorization

Various means related to religious magic were devised for furthering one's memory and preventing forgetfulness; descriptions were assembled in tracts such as *K. Taḥdhīr al-ikhwān fi-mā / mimmā yūrith al-faqr wa-al-nisyān* (“Admonition of brothers concerning that which causes poverty and forgetfulness”) or *Qalāʾid al-ʿiqyān fī mūrithāt ilkh*. by Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Nājī al-Dimashqī al-Shāfiʿī who died in 900/1495 (GAL 2,121-22 S 2,117; two Mss. are BSB Cod.arab. 1917 and Pertsch 1878-92, no. 80). Interestingly, and as if to underline its character as a collection of devices against forgetfulness, the tract of al-Nājī was versified by the Syrian author Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. al-Ghazzī (manuscripts of this didactic poem of 100 Rajaz verses which is devoid of a specific title are BSB Cod.arab. 1795/11 and Pertsch 1878-92, no. 81). The *K. Taḥdhīr al-ikhwān* was discussed by the Hungarian Jewish scholar and one of the founding fathers of Islamic studies in Europe, Ignaz Goldziher (d. 1921), in an article in German to which he gave the title “Muhammedanischer Aberglaube über Gedächtniskraft und Vergesslichkeit” (Frankfurt 1903), 134. He contextualized the tract by drawing parallels between pertinent Muslim notions and comparable ideas he traced in Rabbinical literature. According to a popular Jewish tradition quoted as one example by Goldziher (133), it is not advisable to mend one’s clothes while naked because it nurtures forgetfulness. In a parallel Muslim tradition attributed to Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, the danger ascribed to the activity of mending one’s clothes while worn on the body (!), is more general and not restricted to (partial) loss of memory (Goldziher 133).

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130 The term “religious magic” is used in preference to “superstition”, since the latter, used by nineteenth century authors like I. Goldziher and W. Ahlwardt, implies an attitude of condescension towards practices advocated by Muslim authors. Such condescension is incompatible with a purely descriptive approach. For a discussion of the concept of “magic” in the Western scholarly tradition and in Islam see Dorpmüller 2005, 1-6.

131 As regards the transmitter of this report, Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Chinese Muslims have traditionally credited this relative of Muhammad, a maternal uncle, as the person who brought the Islamic religion to the Middle Kingdom – as the leader of a diplomatic mission dispatched by caliph ʿUthmān – and consequently his tomb is revered as *shengmu* 圣墓 in the city of Guangzhou in al-Ṣīn, i.e. southern China (cf. Ma 1985 [1999], 24). His alleged travelling companions, “Wuaisi” 吾艾斯 and “Gasi” 嘎斯 – names suspiciously similar to that of the Prophet’s uncle in the sinicized version –, survived “Wangasi” 宛嘎斯 (i.e. Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ) and in their peregrinations through the pagan country, are believed to have reached the northwest of today’s Gansu province and the east of Xinjiang region respectively. There, mausoleums have been erected by the faithful near Yumen 玉门市, “gate of jade”, and in the outskirts of Uyghur Qumul/Hami 哈密, in memory of their pioneering feat of spreading monotheism.
4.2.2.4 Motivations for memorizing didactic poems

4.2.2.4.1 Realization of perfection in belief

Poems were memorized by the Muslim in order to perfect his religious belief. This observation seems to apply especially well to al-Úshí’s poem on Sunni dogma. A pertinent note can be found in the multiple-text volume of 16 parts, BSB Cod.arab. 1610, which contains a relatively high number of poems. Among these poems is the *Badʾ al-amālī* which is preceded by an anonymous commentary. The latter, copied by one Ḥasan b. Qāsim, ends with a colophon dated Friday, in the month of Ṣafar 1080/July 1669.

The scribe’s note ends with a remark in which the reader is encouraged to memorize the poem; the reason given is that through memorization of al-Úshí’s *Qaṣīda* man attains to perfection in his belief. The statement in extenso runs:

> He who memorizes and reads whatever he wants becomes perfect in his belief because the belief of the perfect man is explained (*buyyina*) in this [i.e. al-Úshí’s] ode (fo. 37v, see fig. 9).

![Fig. 9](image-url)

*Fig. 9:* Anon.: *Sharḥ Badʾ al-Amālī*, 1080/1669; colophon of a comm. on the *Qaṣīda* and scribe’s note encouraging the reader to memorize the poem (BSB Cod.arab. 1610, fo. 38v).
Similar exhortations are found with other poems in the same majmūʿa. In the tenth part of this manuscript, the parenetical -Qaṣīda al-Nūniyya, also known as ‘Unwān al-ḥilm, by Abū al-Faṭḥ ‘Ali al-Bustī (d. 401/1010; GAL 1,291-92), the reader is admonished, in Turkish, to memorize the poem, for “he who memorizes the poem becomes learned without doubt” (fo. 215r). The sixth text in the manuscript (fo. 162v-64r), the -Qaṣīda al-Ṭanṭarāniyya, composed in praise of the wazīr Niẓām al-mulk by Abū Naṣr Aḥmad al-Ṭantarānī (fl. 480/1087; GAL 1,292), was also supposed to be memorized. With this in mind, the scribe copied out the poem once again, separately from the commentary in which it is included. Also the -Qaṣīda al-Rūḥāniyya, composed in praise of another worldly ruler by an unknown author and copied together with a commentary as the twelfth part of this manuscript (fo. 224v-230r), is recommended, if only indirectly, to be committed to memory (“blessed is he who memorizes it”, fo. 224r).

4.2.2.4.2 Realization of the ideal of perfection, regarding manners

Poems were memorized not only in order to have the summa of a given scholarly discipline available in one’s mind or to perfect one’s belief but also to fulfil the ideal of perfection of manners or elegance (ẓarf) associated with the cultivated person.

To memorize the didactic poem of Ibn Zurayq for instance was considered one of the things the cultivated person (al-adīb) was expected to do in order to achieve the ideal of elegance:

Ḥājjī Khalīfa, Kashf 4,519 reports a saying, apparently taken from al-Ṣafadī, according to which memorizing the Qaṣīda was, among other things, a way of reaching “perfection in elegance” (fa-qad istakmala al-ẓarf). The philologist Abū ‘Umar Ghulām Thaʿlab (d. 345/957; GAL 1,123-24) who, inspired by the sermon of the Baghdadian Sufi Abū Bakr al-Shibli,132 “renounced the world”, is said to have favoured the poetry of the Caliph Ibn al-Muʿtazz, the “perfect adīb” (d. 296/908; EAL 1,354-5), as the ideal poetry to be memorized in the pursuit of elegance; the latter had studied under the same master, viz., Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Thaʿlab (d. 291/904; GAL 1,121-22). Other things seen as prerequisites for achieving elegance are studying the fiqh of al-Shāfiʿī, donning white clothes and wearing a carnelian stone as a seal-ring.

132 Cf. Hamadhānī 1959, 1,171, s. a. 345.
4.2.2.4.3 Entering paradise: the case of the -Shāṭibiyya

Besides attaining perfection of belief and manners, another motivation for memorizing didactic poems was the idea that by memorizing a poem entrance to paradise was guaranteed.

The leather-bound volume BSB Cod.arab. 1894, includes a copy of 50 pages of the poem -Shāṭibiyya fi ‘ilm al-tajwīd of al-Qāsim b. Firroh al-Shāṭibī (d. 590/1194; GAL 1,520-22), dated Friday, 14. Jumādā I 1037/21. January 1628. Here, facing the last page of the poem, two “traditions” are found under the heading “a beautiful report on the excellence of the -Shāṭibiyya” (khabar ḥasan fi faḍl al-Sh.), written by the scribe, Sālim b. al-Ḥājj ... al-Qaramānī (fo. 50r). Both stories include an exhortation on the reader to memorize the poem, the subject of which is the art of reciting the Koran. Those whose authority for this advice is claimed are the author, al-Shāṭibī, his alleged transmitter(!), al-Qurṭubī al-Dānī (d. 444/1053; GAL 1,516-17) and the Prophet, respectively. In the first tradition al-Qurṭubī is quoted as stating that he who memorizes the poem, also known as Ḥirz al-amānī wa-wajh al-tahānī, shall enter paradise (man ḥafiẓa hādhihī al-qāṣida dakhala al-janna). In order to overcome any possible doubt on the part of his colleagues, and before any questions can be asked, he adds the “reason” for this claim (al-aṣl fī ḥādhā l-kalām)– is as follows: he who dies merely having a copy of the -Shāṭibiyya in his abode, enters paradise. Furthermore, he explains, no-one memorizing it will remain deprived of its benefit, basing this claim on a performative act of al-Shāṭibī, his teacher (!, sayyidi), who is reported to have circumambulated the Ka’ba in the Islamic sanctuary of Mecca for 12 weeks, the poem on his body, and every time he reached a place where prayers were prescribed for Muslims (fi amākin al-du’āʾ), he would pray for those who read the poem, using the following words: Allāhumma fāṭir al-samawāt wa-al-ard ... infaʿ bi-hā kullā man yaqraʾuhā (“O God, thou who createst the heavens and the earth [...] benefit those who read it!”), etc.

The second tradition included in the postscript of this manuscript implies that the poem’s author saw the Prophet Muḥammad in a dream after he had completed the composition of his text. Al-Shāṭibī stood up and greeted the Prophet and asked him to cast a glance at his poem. Muḥammad took it from him with his “blessed noble hand” and declared: “It is blessed. He who memorizes it enters paradise!”

As the -Shāṭibiyya is a versification made by al-Shāṭibī of a tract written by al-Qurṭubī about 150 years earlier, an obvious confusion has been at work in the composition of this epilogue (see fig. 10).
Fig. 10: Al-Shāṭibi: *Al-Shāṭibiyya fi ʿilm al-tajwīd*, 1037/1628; colophon and scribal verses; two traditions on the excellence of the poem (BSB Cod.arab. 1894, fo. 49v-50r).

While confirming the amenability of the *Shāṭibiyya* to memorization, Theodor Nöldeke, in his *Geschichte des Qorans* (1909), gives a wholly negative appraisal of this poem, seeing it as one example of the darkness which, he says, has dominated this science:

> Der Ruf dieses Werks gründet sich nur auf die durch die eigentümliche Anordnung möglich gewordene Kürze, wodurch diese Verse leicht auswendig gelernt werden können, sonst ist es eine geistlose Arbeit, welche recht die Finsternis dieser Wissenschaft zeigt (quoted in GAL 1,520).  

| 133 | A. Neuwirth evaluates the *Shāṭibiyya* more sympathetically. She objects to Nödecke (and Bergsträsser) saying that “since the poem is not meant to be read silently but recited aloud, the mnemonic function of the sigla works on the phonetic level rather than on the visual; read as denoting sounds, not letters, they constitute an important contribution to pre-modern mnemotechnics” (EI2 9,365b, art. “al-Shāṭibi”). |
4.3 Performative usages\textsuperscript{134} of didactic poems

The above story about al-Shāṭibī circumambulating the Meccan sanctuary while carrying the codex on his body constitutes one example of a performative usage of didactic poems. Other uses of didactic poems can be classified as \textit{magical} and \textit{liturgical}. The performative usages associated with al-Būṣīrī’s \textit{Qaṣīdat al-Burda}, “poem of the mantle” were particularly variegated. The poem has long been recited in a magical context, i.e. in non-hermeneutical performances, in which a particular, self-seeking wish was ascribed to a given verse.

Al-Būṣīrī’s poem is still recited liturgically, in the form of an amplification called \textit{takhmīs}, as part of a particular religious ceremony in the Sufi orders of Central Asia (see fig. 11).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig11.png}
\caption{Al-Būṣīrī: \textit{Qaṣīdat al-Burda}, an eulogy on the Prophet; 3 lines to the page; interlinear Persian trans., written obliquely against the text (both the direction of writing and the order of the Persian hemistichs alternate after each Arabic verse); a prayer imploring health and protection (\textit{Duʿāʾ Q. al-B.}), in the margin of fo. 29r (BSB Cod.arab. 2780, fo. 28v-29r).}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{134} In most cases the medium manuscript was used to reproduce texts although, at the other end of the spectrum of usages, there are cases where the user was less interested in content than in performative use, e.g. in a magical recitation. For some discussions related to the concept of performativity see \textit{Performativität und Medialität} edited by Sybille Krämer 2004.
4.3.1 Qaṣīdat al-Burda

At the Eastern periphery of the Islamic world, i.e. in Northwest China, the Qaṣīdat al-Burda of the Egyptian Shādhili shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Saʿīd b. Ḥammād b. ʿAbdallāh al-Ṣanhājī al-Būṣīrī (d. 694/1294, in Alexandria; GAL 1,308; Kahhāla 10,28; Nagel 2008, 318-326) has long been studied as part of the curriculum of madrasa education (cf. Ma 1985 [1999], 32-33; Stöcker-Parnian 2003). The Muslims of the Hui 回 ethnic minority, formerly called (perhaps pejoratively) Huihui by their infidel (kafeier 卡菲尔; cf. ChEI 277) neighbours among the Han-people, have long believed that the Muḥānmaisi 穆罕迈斯 or 穆罕麦斯, an amplification of the Burda, was brought to Northwest China from the Yemen (Ma 1985 [1999], 33) by Ma Mingxin 马明心, the “pathfounder” (daozu 道祖) of an important Chinese version of the Naqshbandiya-Sufi network who was executed in 1781 (ChEI 345) during the anti-Qing uprisings and came to be revered as a martyr (shahīd; Ma 1985 [1999], 85).

The length of the poem varies from 160 verses in the oldest manuscripts to 165 bayt in more recent copies. It was known under various names, such as Qaṣīdat al-Kawākib al-durriyya fī madḥ khayr al-bariyya, or, relating to its rhyme consonant, it was also called al-Qaṣīda al-Mīmiyya In the Ottoman culture, its therapeutic ascriptions led to a variant title: Qaṣīdat al-Burʾa (TDVİA 24,568). In China however the poem, whose title has been transcribed phonetically by Ma 1985 [1999], 32, as Gaisuide buerde 该绥德 布尔德, or translated as Gunyisong 衣颂 (literally: “ode of the imperial robe”; Ma Tong, loc. cit.), achieved great popularity under the generic name Muḥānmaisi, i.e. mukhammas, a title which indicates that the Burda was recited within an elaboration of five verses, viz., the takhmīs of al-Ṭabādākānī al-Ṭūsī (d. about 900/1494-95; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, Kashf 4,527). The poem has also been referred to as Zansheng 赞圣 (lit. “praise of the saint”, i.e. the Prophet Muḥammad).135

There are more commentaries and elaborations (of such diverse sorts as sharḥ, ḥāshiya, takhmīs, tasdīs, tasbīʿ, tashṭīr 136, etc.) of the Burda than of any

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135 For this term cf. EICh 732, article “zannian” 赞念.

136 A Tashṭīr al-Burda was composed by the Sufi author Dāʿūd b. Sulaymān b. Jirjis Ef. al-Baghdādī al-Naqshbandi al-Ḫālīdi al-Ḥanafi (d. 1299/1882; GAL S 2,789-90; Kahhāla 4,137). The Burda was not the only poem of which al-Baghdādī made an amplification in the tashṭīr format, i.e. by taking each hemistich as an independent unit and adding a hemistich of his own: The fourth item of BSB Cod.arab. 1996, a booklet of 8 leaves enclosed within a composite manuscript of texts on the Islamic festivals (ʿĀshūrāʾ), on prayer and Sufi ijāzāt, contains a copy of al-Baghdādī’s Musalli al-wājid wa-muthīr al-tawājud fi tashṭīr marthiyat Mawlānā al-Shaykh Khālid, “Consoler of one seized by passion etc.” The text, consisting of 61 verses in the Khaṭīf metre,
other work in the Muslim world (on the amplifications, see GAL 1,311 S 1,469). It was translated into Chinese for the first time under the Manchu Qing dynasty by the Muslim scholar Ma Anli 马安礼; he completed his rendition in the sixth year of the Tongzhi 同治 era (= 1866 Common era) and gave it the title Tianfang137 shijing 天方诗经 (“Islamic poem”). His translation imitated the lyrical form of the original and, enriched with an extensive commentary (zhushu 著述), it was published in the southwesterly province of Yunnan in the sixteenth year of the Guangxu era (= 1890 CE) as a wood-print (muke fuyin 木刻复印) in both Arabic and Chinese on facing pages (Ma 1985 [1999], 33).

In addition to those listed in GAL, copies of the -Burda can be found in BSB Cod.arab. 1355, 1924, 2780, part 1. Many copies are integrated in multiple-text volumes some of which also include the likewise popular Qaṣīda of al-Ūshī. The following multiple-text volumes in the possession of the Süleymaniye library include both texts: Hüsnü Paşa 231, part 6; Ismail Hakki 4053, part 6; Laleli 1591, part 2; Laleli 1888, dated 1148/1735-36; Hasib Efendi 527, part 7.

In some manuscripts in which the Burda takes pride of place, e.g. BSB Cod.arab. 1924, al-Būṣīrī’s poem is juxtaposed alongside its shorter analogue, the Bānat Suʿād or Qaṣīdat al-Burda of Kaʿb b. Zuhayr (Nagel 2008, 324-25), an erstwhile opponent of Muḥammad who obtained the prophet’s mantle as a sign of pardon and reward for his composition (cf. GAL 1,32-33). In this copy, defective at the end, a major feature of the very unusual page layout is the use of three columns and of rectangles which interrupt the columns. The central column contains the first hemistichs of the Burda as well as verses of an anonymous poetic amplification written underneath in a smaller script. The left column encloses the second hemistichs and the right one contains the verses of Kaʿb’s ode. The verses amplifies an elegy (marthiya) which the Ḥanafi Mufti of Damascus, Muḥammad Amin b. ‘Umar Ibn ʿAbidin al-Dimashqi (d. 1252/1836 or 1258; GAL S 2,773) wrote while mourning the death of his Shaykh, Diyāʾ al-Din Khālid al-Shahrazūrī of the Naqshbandiyya order, which occurred in 1242/1827 (TDVİA 15,283-85). In the above manuscript copy, the hemistichs of Ibn ʿAbidin’s elegy are overlined by use of red colour, thereby marking off the core poem against the added hemistichs of al-Baghdādī’s amplification. Al-Baghdādī was himself acquainted with the head of this branch of the Naqshbandiyya, Khālid, whom he visited as a young man in Damascus. In anticipation of encountering his master he composed a poem of verses in the Khāfīf metre praising Khālid which is extant in the above booklet on fo. 4v-5v.

137 The expression tianfang may at first have been used as a reference to the square building of the Kaʿba in Mecca but thereafter the use of the term was extended to cover the notion “Islamic” in general (cf. Roberta Tontini, “Tianfang Dianli: A Chinese Perspective on Islamic Law and its Legal Reasoning”, Ming Qing studies 2011, 491-532, here 501).
in the inner and outer columns are written obliquely against the text in the central column.

4.3.1.1 Liturgical usage in Muslim Northwest China

The *Burda* of al-Būṣīrī has been recited for centuries throughout the Muslim world; it is heard at various religious ceremonies, such as those relating to circumcision, marriage and burial. In China it has not only been part of the madrasa curricula but has also been used liturgically in the Sufi convents of the Hui communities of the provinces of Ningxia and Gansu, and, in particular, by the adherents of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order called Zheherenye 哲赫忍耶 / Zhehelinye 哲赫林耶 / Jahriyya, i.e. the sect which practices dhikr, remembrance of God’s name, at the top of their voices, whence they are also called gaonian pai 高念派.

The text is recited in the Northwestern provinces, in the form of Tabādākānī’s takhmīs (cf. supra), on the anniversary of the Sufi shaykhs’ death, called ermaili 尔买里, i.e. Arabic ʿamal (for this term cf. EICh 142). Members of the Naqshbandiyya recite the Zansheng 赞圣 as well as adherents of other well-established Sufi orders in China such as the Qādirīyya and the Kubrawiyya. This commemoration may be identified with the institution ‘Urs, “Wedding”, described by the Sufi theologian Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī in his collection of 131 questions and responses entitled ‘Uyūn al-ajwiba fi funūn al-asʾila, under the heading “why do they gather at the death of one of their shaykhs and call it a wedding?” (masʾala 58).

However, in China, al-Būṣīrī’s poem was not only read on the day of the ermaili festival. It is said that the adherents of the Jahriyya (cf. Ma 1985 [1999], 33)

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138 In Chinese Islam the term phonetically translates Arabic ʿamal and means primarily shanxing 善行, good works; in a secondary meaning, it refers to certain activities practised during the religious festivals. In the Sufi orders, ermaili designates the activities carried out on the days of remembering the founders (chuangshiren 创始人) and forebears (xianzu 先祖); on their birthdays and deathdays, in particular, it includes recitation of the Koran (songjing 诵经), praise of Muḥammad (zansheng 赞圣) and an invitation to a banquet (yanqing binke 宴请宾客的活动) which corresponds to Arabic walima; in the Jahriyya Sufi order, the banquets would take place as part of the ʿamal, on Thursday night and, besides feasting, would include prayer and spiritual instruction as well (cf. Daotong shi zhuān 道统史传8).

were obliged to recite the Qaṣīda every day after the „Hu-fu-dan“ 虎夫丹 (= Per-
sian khoftan خفتن), i.e. after night-prayer (and/or: after rising from sleep).

4.3.1.2 Therapeutic and theurgical usages
There is a tradition, first documented in the Fawāt al-wafayāt (vol. 3, p. 368-69) of al-Būṣīrī’s biographer Ibn Shākir al-Kutubi (d. 764/1363; GAL 2,60) who died only 6 years after the poet, according to which al-Būṣīrī was healed from paralysis after he was granted a vision of Muḥammad. There, the prophet appeared to al-
Būṣīrī and recited back to him the first line of the Qaṣīda which he had composed in honour of Muḥammad. As a consequence of this legend, the poem has been used by Muslims as a therapeutical device (cf. TDVİA 24,568). From the 140th verse on, the poem is recited for seven days in front of the paralyzed person in order to effect a healing (TDVİA 24,569).

The Muqaddimat taṣrīf al-Burda, also known by the alternative and more ex-
plicit title Khawāṣṣ al-Burda fi burʾ al-dāʾ, is one example of a magical usage of the “poem of the mantle”. The text is ascribed to the Moroccan author ʿAbd al-
Salām b. Idrīs al-Marrākushī (d. 660/1262; GAL 1,311,71 S 1,469,56) and treats the magical properties believed to be inherent in particular verses of al-Būṣīrī’s poem. An analogy can be seen between the concept of magical properties inher-
ent in the Burda and those attributed to particular verses of the Koran (as early as
the fourth/tenth century, texts were written on the subject of the khawāṣṣ al-āyāt, by e.g. the Persian Sufi Muḥammad b. Khafīf al-Shīrāzī, entitled Khawāṣṣ al-āyāt al-qurʾāniyya; on this text and a possibly unique manuscript see supra).

Although the most prominent of the properties ascribed to the -Burda seems to be the power of healing, to which the alternative title of the commentary refers, some verses were identified by al-Marrākushi which were believed to help over-
come a financial crisis (TDVİA 24,568), or to have other beneficial effects. The Muqaddima is included in BSB Cod.arab. 1817 (cf. VOHD XIXIB12), a collective manuscript made up of five texts, one of which is dated Muḥarram 1128/1715-16. One of the scribes of this multiple-text volume can be identified as a Turkish na-
tive, by virtue of the language he used to explain the Arabic prayer formulas of the first text. The non-hermeneutical quality of the text in question is underlined by the fact that, in the manuscript copy, there is a strange misspelling of the name of the poet which has been written as Abū Şiri. With regard to the first verse of al-
Būṣīrī’s poem, viz., from a-min tadhakkuri jīrānin bi-dhi salami, until istaﬁq

140 The expression formed of three Chinese characters is left unexplained by Ma.
yahimi al-Marrākushī prescribes two magical usages in the above text: The property (khāṣṣa) believed to be attached to this verse could allegedly be used both to tame a wild animal (bahīma) and to teach a foreign slave how to speak clear Arabic more quickly (yatafassah bi-sur’a). The relevant words of the verse were written on a beaker - the inscribed words were to be washed away with rain water which the animal had to drink, or on the skin of a gazelle (raqq ghazāl) which the slave had to wear on his right arm (BSB Cod.arab. 1817, fo. 10v). Such uses are instances of contagious magic or “Berührungszauber”.141

Some Muslims felt that the praise of Muḥammad in certain lines of the poem (especially in verses 33, 109, 152, 154) was exaggerated; thus, the formidable Ḥanbalī jurist Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Taymiyya (d. 728/1328; GAL 2,125-27) and his followers criticized the poem, the recitation of which they stigmatized as “innovation” (bid‘a; TDVİA, loc. cit.).

4.3.2 al-Qaṣīda al-Juljulūtiyya of Pseudo-ʿAlī: magical usages

Perhaps the most prominent example of the magical use made of an Arabic poem is the -Qaṣida al-Juljulūtiyya, a versified prayer with magical names of Allāh, which is traditionally ascribed to the fourth caliph of Sunni Islam and son-in-law of Muḥammad the prophet, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (on this work see Mohamed el-Gawhary, Die Gottesnamen im magischen Gebrauch in den al-Buni zugeschriebenen Werken, Bonn, 1968, 146f.).

The titles under which this poem has become known vary. The most popular variant seems to be Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-Juljulūtiyya (with or without incorporated explanations), but the titles al-Qaṣīda al-J. and al-Da’wa al-J. are also testified in the manuscripts.

Some manuscripts of the Qaṣīda, in addition to those listed in GAL (S 1,75) and Sezgin, Geschichte (2,280,4), are the following: Berlin, Ms. or. oct. 2452, fo. 51r-67r (=VOHD XVIIB1 no. 147), Hs. or. 4438, fo. 44r-45r (=XVIIB3 no. 195), Hs.

141 Also the names of the companions of Muḥammad who died as martyrs during the battle of Badr were believed to own magical properties: Written on a piece of paper (qirṭās) attached to one’s dwelling-place, e.g. at the threshold (uskuffa, misspelt) of the door (fo. 4v), the names could protect one’s home against burglary in the absence of its owner while he was performing the pilgrimage to Mekka. This and other similar stories are reported by the twelfth/eighteenth century author ‘Abd al-Laṭīf b. Ahmad al-Dimashqi in his Asmāʾ al-ṣaḥāba al-Badriyyīn which includes, next to the narratives adduced by way of introduction, an alphabetically arranged list of the names of the martyr-companions (cf. BSB Cod.arab. 2084, a copy of 15 leaves).
or. 4438, fo. 53r-55v (=XVIIB3 no. 196); BSB Cod.arab. 1870 (the manuscript includes the text of the poem [fo. 42v-46r], an anonymous commentary [fo. 40v-42r], as well as notes in Turkish on its prescribed usages); Paris 554; Copenhagen, 3,1427, Cod.arab. add. 86 (with copious notes and illustrations); Princeton no. 5194; Yale no. 762. Two recent Egyptian copies said to have been produced in the fourteenth century hijri are Damanhūr no. 76 and 77 and carry the titles al-Juljulūtiyya and Khaṣāʿīṣ al-J., respectively.

One commentary entitled al-Bahja al-saniyya fī sharḥ al-Daʿwa al-Juljulūtiyya has been ascribed to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111; GAL 1,535-37; one manuscript is VOHD XVIIB3 no. 197), another one entitled Sharḥ al-J. is said to have been written by Aḥmad b. M. b. Nāṣir al-Sibāʿī al-Salāwī al-Ḥifnāwī (d. after 1258/1842; Kaḥḥāla 2,165; a fourteenth century manuscript is Damanhūr no. 179). Al-Salāwī, the commentator, claims to have received an ijāza for the transmission of the Qaṣīda and he gives his teacher’s isnād which, via numerous links, i.a. Aḥmad al-Mujīrī al-Mullawī and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728; TDVİA 16,291-307), famed as one of the founding fathers of Sufism, traces the poem back to its alleged author, ‘Alī142 (see fig. 12).

In BSB Cod.arab. 1870, which was produced in the Anatolian region of Anqara in the year 1279/1862-63, the -Qaṣīda al-Juljulūtiyya is preceded by a small number of prayer texts which represent various types of supplication, viz. ḥizb (Ḥizb al-baḥr, fo. 36v), munājāt (Muḥammad Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, fo. 5r) and duʿāʾ (Duʿāʾ rijāl al-ghayb, fo. 7r), many of which bear a distinctively magical coloration. Some of the prayers are accompanied by notes in Turkish instructing the user how to apply the texts; e.g. in a Turkish gloss written in a triangular form resembling a colophon (fo. 40r), the reader is advised to recite the -Qaṣīda al-Juljulūtiyya 11 times before he sets out to read the ism-i aʿzam āyetleri, i.e. Koranic verses quoted in the following (wa-ilāhukum ilāhun wāḥidun ilkh. = Sura 2,163), which are said to include the “Greatest name of God”. The qaṣīda, in this manuscript, is directly preceded by a text entitled “commentary on the Juljulūtiyya” (fo. 40v-42r) which, in the outer margin, is again accompanied by some text in the Turkish language.

142 For some listeners, the quest for prestigious lines of transmission – connected with the expectation of thereby acquiring social prestige – was their reason for attending reading sessions, rather than the content of the work itself (cf. Hirschler 2012, 51ff).
The text of the Qaṣīda in BSB Cod.arab. 1870 (VOHD XVIIB12), beginning on fo. 42v, numbers 68 verses in the Ṭawīl-metre with the rhyme-word tāʾ (in the two Mss. SBB-PK, VOHD XVIIB3 no. 195-96, the number of verses is 57 and 111, respectively). As to the layout of the poem in Cod.arab. 1870, the odd-numbered verses, i.e. the first, third and fifth, etc., are written in red colour on the right border of the page, whereas the evenly numbered verses are written with wide indentations and are contiguous with the left edge.

The poem is followed by instructions in Turkish, copied from (naql) a manuscript of Sulaymān known as (al-shahir bi-) Ishāq Efendi (?), and is followed by a poem entitled Qaṣīdat ʿAbdalqādir al-Jīlānī, ascribed eponymously to the universally revered orthodox saint of Ḥanbalī persuasion, Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbdalqādir

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143 In Islamicate China “Abudu Kade'er” is not only revered as the founding father of the “Kadelinye” Sufi order but also as one who decisively enriched (chongshi) and developed the teachings of the Zheherenyen (= Jahriyya, i.e. Naqshbandiyya) Sufi network (cf. Ma, Zhongguo
al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1167; GAL 1,560 S 1,778) of the Qādiriyya Sufi order. Thus, the frontier between magic and mysticism, if it ever existed in Islam, has been crossed once again (see fig. 13).

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Fig. 13: Ps.-ʿAlī: al-Qaṣīda al-Juljulūtiyya; end of poem; 19 lines to the page, the script fully vocalized; second hemistich of each verse written with indentation; in the commentary after the explicit the reader is exhorted to memorize the poem and not to divulge it to the ignorant and impious (SBB-PK, Hs. or. 2452, fo. 54r).

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yisilan 15). The centre of the Qādiriyya order in China nowadays is located in the heart of Hezhou 河州/Linxia 临夏 (southern Gansu), where the majestic buildings of the monasteries-cum-mausoleum called, i.a. Da Gongbei 大拱北 and Guo Gongbei 国拱北 cannot fail to impress the visitor. 144 In the classification of sciences of the mysterious Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ and of the North African scholar Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406; GAL 2,314-7), magic (sihr) is situated on an equal footing with the other scientific disciplines (cf. Gardet 1948, 108, 117, 123).