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Research paper

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COLOPHON AS A SOURCE ON THE ARABIC MANUSCRIPT TRADITION OF DAGESTAN

Abstract. This article deals with the study of the Dagestan handwritten tradition through an examination of colophons found in Arabic and Arabographic manuscripts produced by Dagestanis between the 16th and 20th centuries. The author examined colophons of Arabic manuscripts stored in various public and private collections throughout Dagestan. The process of copying a manuscript often involved the scribe checking their work against the original text (protograph) and other manuscripts. The quality of the final handwritten book depended significantly on both the quality of the protograph and the availability of other manuscripts for collation. Colophons sometimes contain information recorded by the scribe concerning the copying process, the circumstances surrounding the creation of the manuscript, the protograph used, and any other manuscripts consulted during the copying process. Thus, the colophon is an important and valuable historical source that sheds light on numerous aspects of Arab-Muslim written culture in Dagestan. Information detailing the process of copying manuscripts appears in Dagestan colophons around the end of the 17th century, which coincides with a qualitative leap in the Arabic manuscript tradition and Muslim education during this period. This phenomenon can be associated with a new stage of Islamization in Dagestan, which began in the 17th century and involved a deepening of Islamic influence. As a result, the number of madrasas – Muslim spiritual and educational centers – increased significantly during this period. These madrasas, which became the primary places for manuscript copying, relied on high-quality educational materials in the form of reliable copies of Arabic manuscripts on various Muslim disciplines.

Keywords: Arabic manuscript; handwritten book; Dagestan history; Arabic-language culture of Dagestan; manuscript reproduction.

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Исследовательская статья

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КОЛОФОН КАК ИСТОЧНИК ПО АРАБСКОЙ РУКОПИСНОЙ ТРАДИЦИИ ДАГЕСТАНА

Аннотация: Данная статья посвящена исследованию дагестанской рукописной традиции через колофоны арабских и арабографических рукописей, созданных дагестанцами в XVI–XX вв. Автор исследовал колофоны арабских рукописей, хранящиеся в различных государственных и частных коллекциях Дагестана. Переписка манускрипта предполагала в том числе сверку копируемого списка с протографом. Качество вновь создаваемой рукописной книги значительно зависело как от протографа, так и от других списков, с текстом которых переписчик сверял свою работу. Сведения, касающиеся процесса переписки рукописи, обстоятельств переписки, протографа и других списков, с которыми сверялась рукопись, переписчики иногда фиксировали в колофоне. Таким образом, колофон выступает важным и ценным историческим источником, помогающим пролить свет на многочисленные аспекты арабо-мусульманской письменной культуры в Дагестане. Сведения, сообщающие подробности о процессе переписки рукописи, появляются в дагестанских колофонах примерно с конца XVII в., что является одним из свидетельств того, что в указанный период арабская рукописная традиция и мусульманское образование перешли на качественно новый уровень. Данное явление связано с новым этапом исламизации Дагестана, который начался в XVII в. и заключался в упрочении исламом своих позиций вглубь. Как следствие, в этот период значительно увеличивается количество медресе – мусульманских духовно-образовательных центров – которые становятся основным местом переписки рукописей. Углубленные знания по исламу, преподававшиеся в таких медресе, зависели от качественного учебного материала, которыми служили достоверные списки арабских рукописей по различным мусульманским дисциплинам.

Ключевые слова: арабские манускрипты; рукописная книга, история Дагестана; арабоязычная культура Дагестана; переписка рукописи.

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Colophon is an important component of a manuscript, its most valuable and informative part. It often contains the main, and sometimes the only, information about the author, the process of creation, and the circumstances surrounding the creation of a handwritten book. Nevertheless, the colophons of Arabic manuscripts are a poorly studied subject by researchers worldwide. This article is one of the first studies of Dagestan colophons, which explores their characteristics as a source within the context of the Arabic manuscript tradition of this region. Thus, the present study holds particular relevance.

The earliest surviving Arab-Muslim manuscripts with colophons date back to the 9th century. These early colophons were typically brief notes from the scribes, containing the copying date and their name. Over time, the content of the colophon significantly expanded. Scribes began to include information about the place of copying, the name of the overseeing sheikh, details regarding the protograph¹, standardized prayer formulas and doxologies, and much more.

The Arabic manuscript tradition emerged in Dagestan during the Later Middle Ages. Scholars from Bab al-Abwab (Darband, modern-day Derbent) composed several works on Sufism and Hadith during the 11th-12th centuries, though these works survive only in later copies [1; 2]. The earliest extant Arabic manuscripts produced in Dagestan date back to the latter half of the 14th century. However, the 17th-19th centuries witnessed a flourishing of the Arabic manuscript tradition within Dagestan.

Colophons serve as a vital historical source, offering insights into the very process of manuscript creation itself. Through colophons, we can learn about such things as the number of individuals involved in creating a single manuscript, the specific methods scribes employed when reproducing texts, the effectiveness of these methods in preserving accuracy, and even the prevailing value placed on copied works at different points in history. This study delves into Dagestan's manuscript colophons to illuminate the formative processes of the region's Arabic manuscript tradition.

It is noteworthy that the reproduction of a single manuscript was sometimes undertaken by multiple scribes, often two, for various reasons. A colophon from 1590, compiled in the madrasa of Qadi Muhammad, son of Ibrahim, exemplifies this practice. The colophon states that the manuscript on Islamic law was copied "by the hands of two feeble, sinful, erring, disobedient slaves, hoping for the mercy and forgiveness of the Merciful and Forgiving Lord. One of them is Muhammad, son of Ali al-Sugrahi (الصُّغْرَاخِي)², and the second is Ali, son of Hachak (هَچَّك) al-Awari (الأواري).^{3,4} The practice of multiple scribes copying a single manuscript continued into the latter half of the 17th century. Two scribes, possibly brothers, Karmaz (كرمز), son of Muhammad, and Baghatir (بغْتِير), son of Muhammad al-Mukhi (المُحِّي)⁵, collaborated on a manuscript of Islamic law.⁶ In both these instances, the copied works were quite voluminous, averaging between 250 and 300 folios, which explains the recourse to an additional scribe to expedite the copying process. A 1915 colophon⁷ further exemplifies this

1. In textology, a protograph is an original text from which a copy of a manuscript or document is made

2. Sogratl – a village in the Gunibsky region, Republic of Dagestan

3. Nisba al-Avari indicates that its bearer belongs to the community of the village of Khunzakh, modern Khunzakh region, Republic of Dagestan

4. Fund of Oriental Manuscripts of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography (further as FOM IHAE DFRC RAS). F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 2226

5. Megeb – a village in the Gunibsky region, Republic of Dagestan

6. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 1817

7. Collection of manuscripts of Abdulkarim Magomedov, Buinaksk

practice. Scribe Muhammad, son of Uthman al-Chiti (الچتي)⁸, acknowledges the assistance of “our venerable brother and able student, the magnificent Meselaw, son of Zulqarnay al-Qusrudi (القصرودي)⁹,” in completing the manuscript.

The involvement of additional scribes in the copying process was often facilitated by the head or teacher of the madrasa. Leveraging their position, they could enlist their students to assist with the copying tasks. An illustrative example is a following colophon¹⁰. In 1858 (1275 AH), Shamsudin al-Gumuki (الغمقي), a student from Kumukh studying in the village of Kurubuklah (? (كُرْبُكْلَهْ)), copied a portion of the manuscript on Arabic grammar titled “Sharh Marah al-arwah” (شرح مراحل الأرواح), consisting of 200–250 folios. Shamsudin documented his contribution in a colophon inserted at the point where he stopped copying. Fourteen years later, in the summer of 1872, Shamsudin, now a teacher at the prestigious madrasa of the renowned scholar Zayd al-Kurkli (d. 1882), entrusted his student with completing the copying task he had begun earlier. The student successfully finished the manuscript and added his own colophon: “The poor man Shahnawaz (شهناواز), son of Jawad al-Kaytaki (القبطاقي)¹¹, was relieved of copying approximately five leaves from the collaboratively copied collection, ‘Sharh al-Marah’ by al-Dinkuzi. This work was completed for his teacher and venerable scholar Shamsudin al-Gumuki (الغموقي) in Jumada al-Ukhra, on the 21st of 1289 AH, at the madrasa of the outstanding scholar Zayd al-Kurkli (الكركلي)¹²...”

Shamsudin himself provides a more detailed account of the individuals involved in copying the manuscript on the subsequent page following the final colophon. This explanation takes the form of a special address:

“This is a reminder and a lesson for the sensible ones:

The poor scribe Shamsudin, son of Muhammad al-Gumuki, copied the manuscript from the beginning to the section on the future tense in 1275, during his youth while studying the book ‘Sharh al-Marah’. Muslim, son of our uncle Ibrahim, then continued copying until the section on adverbial modifiers of time and place. Following this, our disciple Umarbuddha, son of Mamma al-Nitsuvkri (النزوكري)¹³, added three leaves. Hajimuhammad, son of Aminat-haji al-Gumuki, then added two parts. Next, our student Ibrahim, son of Haji al-Nitsuvkri, contributed three parts. Finally, our student Shahnawaz, son of Jawad al-Haidaqi (الخيداقي), completed the remaining five parts and thereby the entire book in the village of Kurkli on the 21st of Jumada al-Ukhra, 1289.

With such perfect labor I have collected this blessed book and let the workers (scribes) follow this example. If someone, out of lawlessness and injustice, sells after me something from this book for a small fee after I have put in such work as is known to you... So take note, O sensible ones, perhaps you will succeed! In Jumada al-Ukhra, 1289.” Therefore, the compilation of this particular manuscript involved the coordinated efforts of six scribes under the guidance of their teacher.

In rare instances, colophons may offer insights into the reasons for a change in scribes. A colophon rewritten between 1860 and 1890 provides a specific example: “Afandi, son of

8. Chadakolob – a village in the Tlyaratinsky region, Republic of Dagestan

9. Kosroda – a village in the Charodinsky region, Republic of Dagestan

10. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 1270

11. Kaitag – a historical-geographical region and feudal formation in Southern Dagestan

12. Kurkli – a village in the Laksky region, Republic of Dagestan

13. Nitsovkra – a village in the Laksky region, Republic of Dagestan

Said al-Shinazi (الشنازي)¹⁴, commenced copying this subcommentary, but unfortunately fell ill before completing the process. Due to his illness, Sadik-Fasha and Umar assisted him by adding leaves to facilitate the completion of the work. The manuscript was ultimately finished by their hands in Tsibkari (?) (تسبكره).¹⁵

In other instances, a close relative of the first scribe might take over the copying duties. A colophon compiled between 1880 and 1890 exemplifies this practice. The colophon states: “Umar, son of Kurban Muhammad al-Salti (السلطي)¹⁶, copied the manuscript up to the words: “... they use verbs of exclamation...” Following these words, his son, Hadjiyav al-Salti, completed the copying. This serves as a testament to the divine will of Allah Almighty, for fathers initiate (lit. “begin” – author’s note) and sons complete. Peace!”¹⁷

The 18th century marked a turning point in Muslim education within Dagestan, transitioning to a higher level of quality. As part of this shift, Dagestani scholars placed increasing emphasis on identifying accurate manuscript copies. Recognizing the significant discrepancies between various copies of the same work, scribes adopted a more meticulous approach to identifying reliable copies. Consequently, they attached paramount importance to obtaining the autograph of a work (Arabic: *khatt al-muallif* (خط المؤلف) or *nuskha asliyya* (نسخة الأصل)), which refers to a manuscript written by the author themselves or a verified copy. In pursuit of autographs, many Dagestani scholars (alims) were willing to pay considerable sums of money, often acquiring them during Hajj pilgrimages to the Middle East. For this reason, a significant number of valuable autographs of Middle Eastern authors have survived to this day, some of which are stored in the Fund of Oriental Manuscripts of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In addition to autographs, copies made by major Middle Eastern and Dagestan alims were of great value. At the same time, in Dagestan, as in the rest of the Arab-Muslim world, the concept of the intrinsic value of older copies was not yet fully developed. Preference was given to copies transcribed by famous ulama. That is, a copy made conditionally by Said al-Arakani¹⁸ at the beginning of the 19th century was considered more valuable than the copy of an unknown or little-known scribe, written 100 or 200 years earlier. In this case, it was assumed that a well-known authoritative alim had a better understanding of the text of the work, and therefore could make the necessary editing or provide useful comments.

Dagestani scholars, alongside a focus on accurate manuscript copies, also placed emphasis on collating the texts of already made copies. In some instances, the processes of copying and collation were combined to create a new handwritten book. Scribes meticulously documented these details within the colophons, explaining the specific copies they used for copying and/or collating the text. The practice of mentioning a protograph in colophons has a long history within the broader Arab-Muslim manuscript tradition, dating back to the early centuries [3, p. 149; 4, p. 53-54]. However, in Dagestan, this practice emerged in colophons no earlier than the 18th century.

As an example, when a colophon mentions that the copy was derived directly from an autograph, we can cite a colophon compiled in 1841: “Completed by the hand of the scribe

14. Shinaz – a village in the Rutulsky region, Republic of Dagestan

15. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 360 c

16. Salta – a village in the Gunibsky region, Republic of Dagestan

17. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 1773 d

18. Arakani – a village in the Untsukulsky region, Republic of Dagestan

Muhammad. He copied this from the autograph (*nasakhahu min khatti*) of the outstanding scholar Said in the Untsukul madrasah in 1257...”.¹⁹ In this specific instance, the scribe clearly states that he copied the manuscript directly from the original handwritten work, using the phrase “*nasakhahu min khatti...*”. This wording was often shortened to simply “*min khatti.*” However, manuscripts were often copied not from the autograph itself, but from a copy that itself was a copy of the autograph. There could be several intermediary copies between the original and the scribe’s one. In such cases, scribes would meticulously document this lineage within the colophon, mentioning not only the protograph, but also all the intervening copies leading back to the autograph. For example, the colophon, compiled in 1760-61, mentions not only the protograph, but also several copies, the last of which was read before the author of the reproduced work: “The end of the book, praise be to Allah... I, poor Mamma, son of Muhammad, son of Umar, son of Mahmud, al-Hukali (الهكالي)²⁰, copied it and collated this ‘al-Mukhtasar’ with the copy that Suleiman al-Khulismi (الخلصمي)²¹ made. He made his copy from the copy of al-Ubri (الأبري)²², who made his copy from the copy read before the author – a sheikh, an imam, a scholar who acts in accordance with his knowledge, a servant of the venerable hadith and the imam of the sunnah of [the prophet] Muhammad, Abdullah b. Sheikh Baha ad-Din al-Shanshuri al-Shafi’i, a specialist in inheritance law (al-Fardi) ... 1174”.²³

The copy of the work, read before its author, was valued almost like an autograph. Students would often reproduce these copies under their teacher’s guidance, multiplying them. Upon completion, the students would then read the text aloud in front of the instructor during class. For example, in 1810, Hussein, son of Alimchu al-Awari al-Khunzahi, copied the work “al-Najat” “from the copy of its author, Said, after completing the composition of this work and reading part of it before the author.”²⁴ In this instance, the reference is to the renowned Dagestani scholar Said al-Arakani (d. 1834).

But quite often the scribe considered it appropriate to mention only the autograph, while the remaining copies located between the autograph and its copy were often indicated in the colophon in abbreviated form. The abbreviation could look in the form of KhTTT (من خططط), where each T denoted a separate copy. For example, a scribe’s colophon might indicate that they “copied from a copy, made from the autograph (من خططط) of Murtazaali (م ر) al-Uradi (العرادي).²⁵”²⁶ Or in the form KhKhKhT (من خخخخ) or KhKhKh al-Muallif (من خ خ خ المؤلف), where each Kh also denoted a separate copy. An example of the latter is a colophon dated 1898 (Fig. 1): “The copying was completed ... by the hand of the feeble slave Israfil al-Miusishi from the copy of the one who reproduced it from the copy, made from another copy, which [in turn] was copied from the autograph (من خط من خط من خ خ المؤلف) by Umar al-Ihali (الإهالي).²⁷”²⁸ In this case, there are 3 copies between the autograph and the reproduced copy.

19. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 215 d

20. Gukkal – a district in Kumukh, Republic of Dagestan

21. Khulisma – a village in the Laksky region, Republic of Dagestan

22. Ubra – a village in the Laksky region, Republic of Dagestan

23. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 614 c

24. Collection of manuscripts of Abdul Adamov, Makhachkala, Republic of Dagestan

25. Urada – a village in the Shamilsky region, Republic of Dagestan

26. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 1573 b

27. Igali – a village in the Gumbetovsky region, Republic of Dagestan

28. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 3118 e

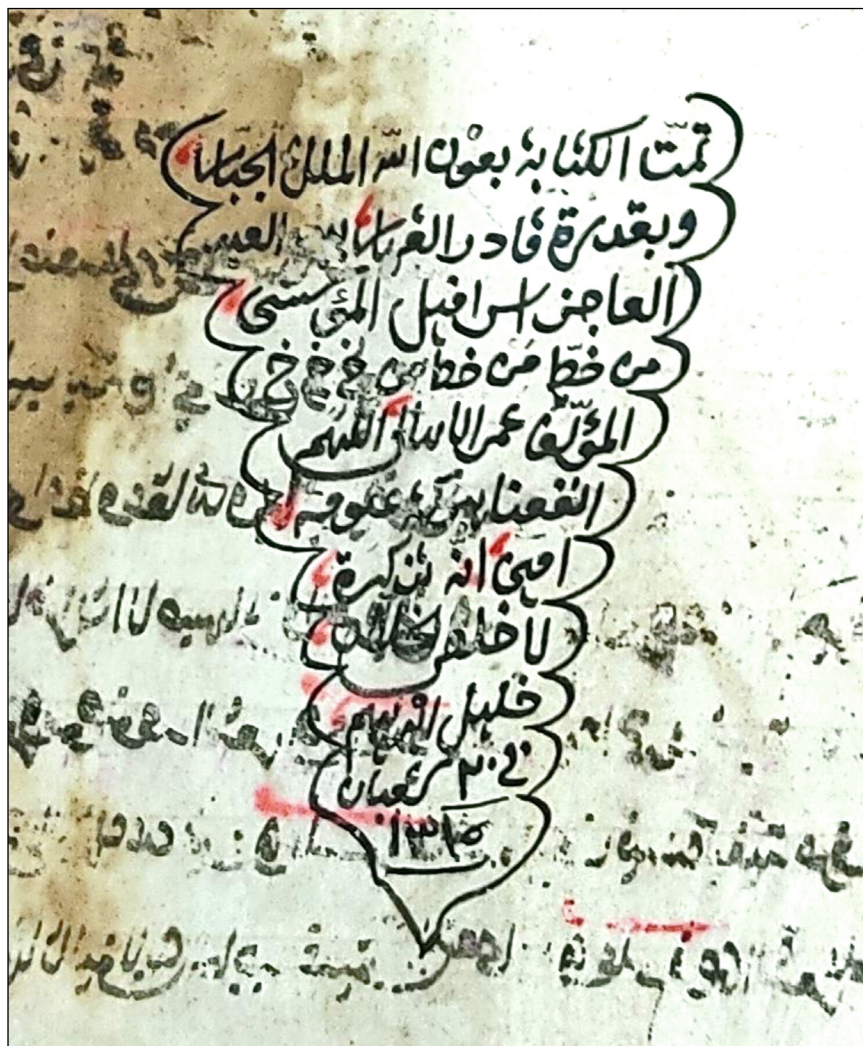


Fig. 1. Colophon of the manuscript of the work “Muklat al-‘uyun” by Umar al-Ihali // Fund of Oriental Manuscripts of IHAЕ DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 3118 e. Author’s photo, 2023

Рис. 1. Колофон рукописи сочинения «Муклят ал-‘уйун» Умара ал-Игали // ФВР ИИАЭ ДФИЦ РАН. Ф. 14. Оп. 1. № 3118 е. Фото автора, 2023 г.

Occasionally, only prepositions were omitted, leaving the word “*khatt*” (خط) itself unchanged. A colophon written in 1911 exemplifies this: “[The copying] has been completed from a copy made from a copy that was copied from the autograph (من خط خط مؤلفه) of Umar-afandi al-Ihali...”²⁹ It should be noted that in some cases the word *khatt* (خط) may not mean a noun (copy), but a past verb in the active or passive voice: “he reproduced” or “was reproduced.” For example, another colophon, dated 1896, reports that the manuscript was copied from “a copy copied from a copy that was copied from an autograph.”³⁰ In the Arabic version, the text looks like this: *min hatti hutta mimma hutta min hatti al-muallif* (من خط من خط المؤلف). In this case, in order to avoid confusion regarding the number of copies between the autograph and the scribe’s copy, the latter put a diacritical mark *damma* on the second word *khatt*, making it clear that this word means a past tense verb in the passive voice, and not a noun. Thus, between the autograph and the scribe’s copy there are only two copies, and not three or four as it might seem upon careless reading.

29. Collection of manuscripts of Abdul Adamov, Makhachkala, Republic of Dagestan

30. Ibid.

The documentation of intermediary copies in colophons reflects a well-established manuscript tradition within Dagestan. The mention of such chains in the colophon significantly increased the credibility and value of the reproduced work in the eyes of the reader. Some colophons consisted almost entirely of these chains. An example of this practice is a colophon compiled in 1808-09: “From the works of Sheikh ul-Islam, the heir of the Salaf, the mufti of the era, Taqi ad-Din Ahmad b. Abd al-Halim b. Abd al-Salam Ibn Taymiyya, may Allah Almighty be pleased with them. I copied this from the copy of the honorable Muhammad al-Karahi, who copied from the copy made from the copy of Dibir, son of Muhammad, son of Musa al-Kuduqi in Aleppo, 1223.”³¹

Following autographs and copies read before the author, copies made from the copies of renowned and authoritative scholars were highly esteemed. Scribes would often mention this in their colophons. Numerous colophons exist where the protograph is identified as a copy from a prominent Dagestani scholar, such as Muhammad ibn Shaban al-Ubudi (d. c. 1710), Muhammad ibn Musa al-Kuduki (d. 1717), Muhammad ibn Ali al-Ubri (d. 1733), Dawud al-Ushishi (d. 1759), Muhammad al-Yaragi (d. 1838), and many others.

In the later period, with the emergence of the first lithographic printed books, these publications began to serve as protographs. An example of this is a colophon dated 1917, which states that the manuscript was copied “... by the hand of the pitiful poor man Saifullah, the son of Haji Hadjiyav at-Tukiti. This is from what the teacher (ustaz) copied from the printed version published in the al-Miriya printing house in Mecca. He copied this in Karata from the teacher Abdulhalim on Eid al-Adha (‘id an-nahr) 1317.³² The work was printed in 1305.”³³ The practice of copying from printed materials became particularly widespread during the Soviet period, when Muslim theologians and students faced an acute shortage of new Islamic literature in print.

Scribes would often collate the text of the protograph with their copy afterwards. This process of collation was sometimes documented within the colophons. For example, a colophon by Muhammad, son of Ibrahim ar-Ruguji, compiled in 1822-23, states that he completed “the copying of this valuable work, its editing and collation with the copy of the one who copied from the autograph of the outstanding scholar Muhammad al-Chinkuti (الچنكوتي).³⁴”³⁵ In addition to collating the copy with the original source, scribes also frequently compared the copied text with other copies. Colophons often documented this practice of collating the copied manuscript against other versions. A noteworthy example is found in the work of the renowned Dagestani scholar Abdulatif al-Hutsi (Gotsinsky)³⁶ (d. 1890). His colophon indicates that a work on astronomy by Sibt al-Maridini (d. 1506) was reproduced “from the copy of Sheikh al-Islam Muhammad, son of Musa al-Kuduki.” However, he later added a note on the side of the colophon specifying that he “compared this copy against the copy of the late brother Shamsuddin, son of Muhammad al-Gumuki.”³⁷ In this instance, al-Hutsi felt it crucial to cross-check the initial copy against another copy, even though it was derived from a well-respected scholar.

31. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 1312 d

32. 10.12.1317 / 11.04.1900

33. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 2347 c

34. Dzhengutai (Verkhnyi or Nizhnyi) – both villages in the Buinaksky region, Republic of Dagestan

35. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 221 e

36. Gotsob – a village in the Khunzakh region, Republic of Dagestan

37. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 2777 f

In certain cases, scribes dedicated a greater portion of the colophon to describing the manuscripts used for collation, rather than the protograph. An illustrative example is a colophon from 1783-84, where the scribe prioritizes details about the collation process. The colophon reads: “I collated this with the copy of al-Kuduki (القدقي)³⁸, who reproduced his copy from the autograph of the outstanding scholar Sheikh Ridwan, Allah be pleased with him. [The al-Kuduki’s copy was completed] on the blessed Saturday of the fourteenth of the month of Rabi al-Akhir, 1114 from the Hijra of the Prophet, may Allah bless and greet him. I myself copied this from the copy of Mahad in 1198 AH...” Interestingly, a marginal note in the same handwriting appears to correct a dating error: “Al-Kuduki copied from his copy in Rabi al-Akhir in 1115 AH...”³⁹

Collation of a manuscript may become especially important not even because of the protograph, but because of the person who participated in the collation process. An interesting example is found in the copy of the work “al-Fath al-Mubin” (الفتح المبين) by the renowned Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (d. 974/1567), copied by Muhammadtahir al-Karakhi (d. 1880). The manuscript lacks a traditional colophon. Instead, there is a note regarding collation of the manuscript: “The copy was verified with a number of other copies: imam [Shamil] read, and we listened between evening and night prayers. How blessed, happy and wonderful our sessions were! On the night of Thursday 3rd Rabi-2 1272...”⁴⁰ (Fig. 2)

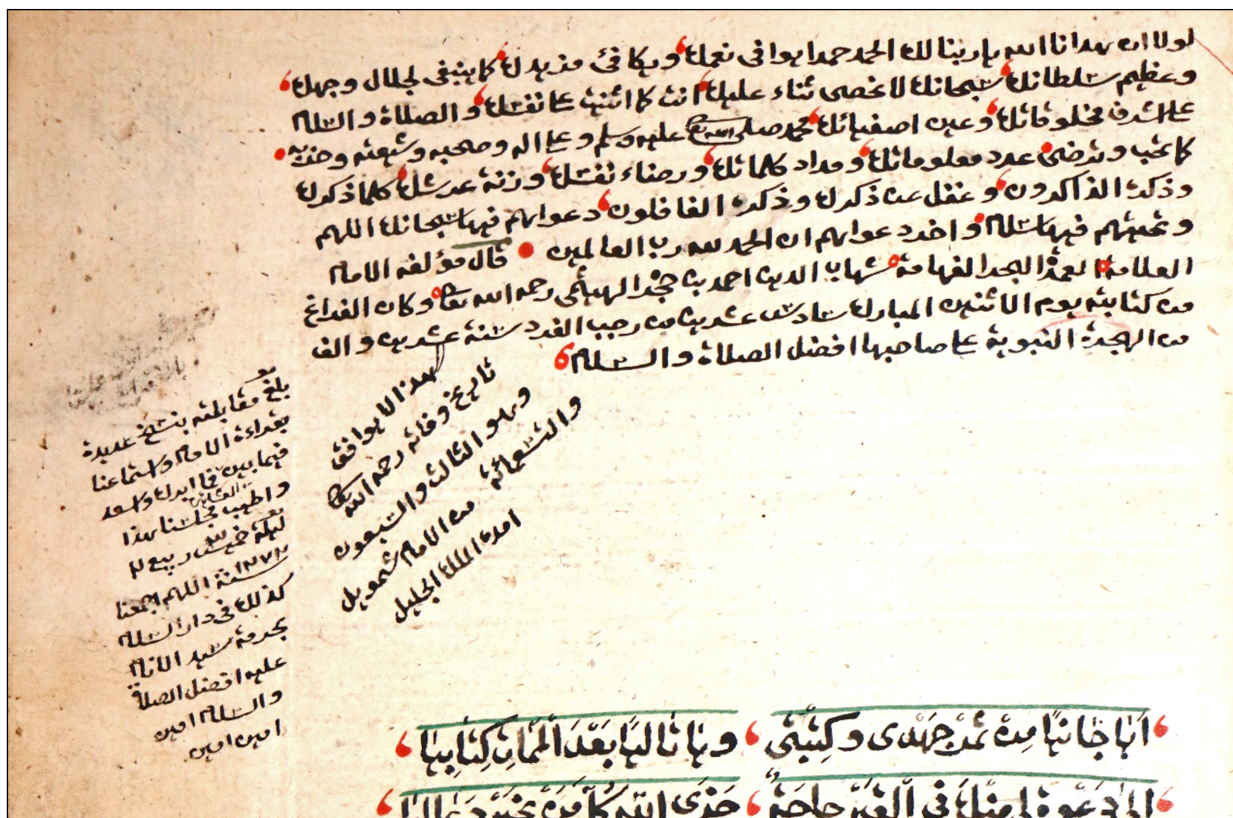


Fig. 2. The last page of the “al-Fath al-Mubin” by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami // Collection of manuscripts of Muhammadtahir al-Karakhi, Tsulda village, Republic of Dagestan. Photo by Musa Bagilov, 2017

Рис. 2. Последняя страница рукописи сочинения «ал-Фатх ал-Мубин» Ибн Хаджара ал-Хайтами // Коллекция рукописей Мухаммадтахира ал-Карахи, сел. Цулда Республики Дагестан. Фото Мусы Багилова, 2017 г.

38. Kudutl – a village in the Gergebilsky region, Republic of Dagestan

39. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 1183 b

40. Collection of manuscripts of Muhammadtahir al-Karakhi, Tsulda village, Republic of Dagestan

On the margins of the first page of the work, Muhammadtahir al-Karakhi included an additional note (Fig. 3) that elaborates on Imam Shamil's (d. 1871) collation sessions. The note reads: "Imam Shamil began reading this in the presence of Amirkhan al-Chirki (الچركي)⁴¹ and Muhammadtahir al-Karakhi (القرخي)⁴² in order to make corrections to this copy every Sunday night. 19 Safar 1272. How blessed were our sessions that took place between evening and night prayers! May Allah Almighty grant this gathering grace and us a good completion, amin!"

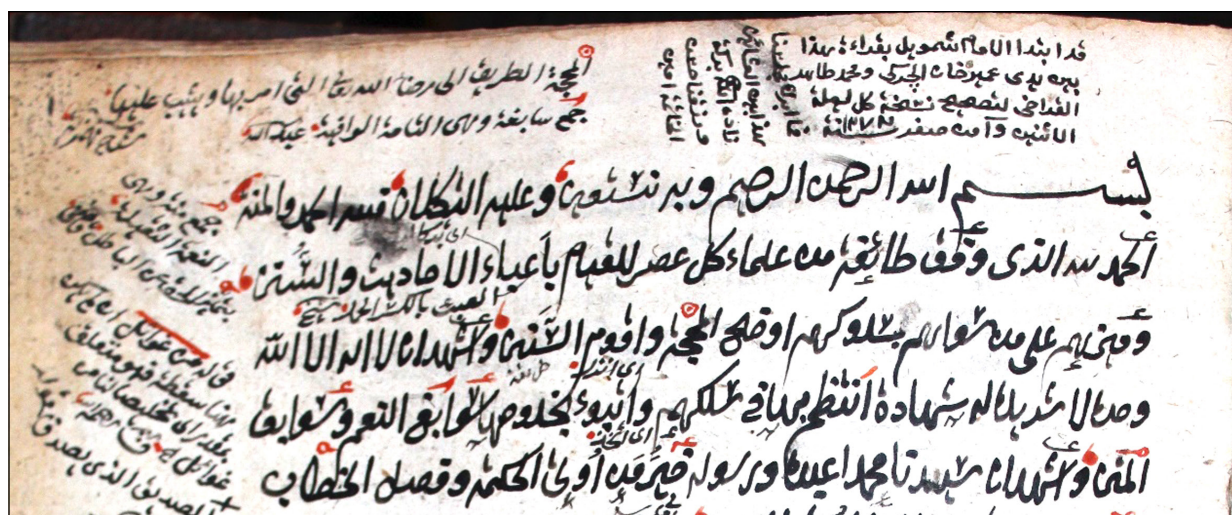


Fig. 3. The first page of the "al-Fath al-Mubin" by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami // Collection of manuscripts of Muhammadtahir al-Karakhi, Tsulda village, Republic of Dagestan. Photo by Musa Bagilov, 2017

Рис. 3. Первая страница рукописи сочинения «ал-Фатх ал-Мубин» Ибн Хаджара ал-Хайтами // Коллекция рукописей Мухаммадтахира ал-Карахи, сел. Цулда Республики Дагестан. Фото Мусы Багилова, 2017 г.

As we can see, such gatherings involved a close circle of associates, in this particular instance – two of Imam Shamil's secretaries: al-Karakhi and Amirkhan al-Chirki (d. 1876). The weekly gatherings took place on Sunday nights, between evening and night prayers. For the collation process, participants consulted multiple copies. Imam Shamil would read the text aloud from the copy, while the others followed along using other copies. If discrepancies arose, they would be reported. It's important to note that the primary purpose of these meetings was not to compare and collate the copies themselves, but rather to engage in a collaborative study of the work. Al-Karakhi evidently used the opportunity to verify his own copy during these sessions. The entire reading process spanned a period of one and a half months, commencing on October 31 and concluding on December 13, 1855.

On the last page of the manuscript, al-Karachi includes another note that highlights Imam Shamil's meticulousness. As previously mentioned, the manuscript lacks a traditional scribe's colophon. However, it does contain a colophon by the original author, indicating the work's completion in 1020 AH. Al-Karakhi adds a marginal note here that reads: "This does not correspond to the date of the author's death, may Allah Almighty have mercy upon him: 973 AH. [This remark is made] by Imam Shamil, may the Majestic Lord prolong his life!"

As established earlier, collation differs from simple copying. Collation could occur years

41. Chirkey – a village in the Buinaksky region, Republic of Dagestan

42. Karakh – a historical and geographical region and a union of societies in Nagorno-Dagestan

after the initial copying, if performed by the original scribe. For instance, a colophon dated 1306 AH (1888-89) by Ibrahimhajjiyav, son of Khanti al-Kurudi (القردي)⁴³, states that he copied the manuscript from “the brilliant scholar ... Nuruddin, son of Muhammad al-Tsuldi (الزلدي).⁴⁴”⁴⁵ However, a marginal note by the same scribe, likely added later, clarifies that he “edited this book based on the book of Muslim al-Uradi, while staying with him in Ghenta (هنط)⁴⁶ and reading it before him.” The text could also be collated by subsequent owners of the manuscript after a long time. The collation could also have been carried out under the guidance of a different mentor than the one under whose leadership the manuscript was reproduced. Scribe would also sometimes note this fact in the colophon, thus supplementing and expanding it after some time. The following colophon exemplifies this. The scribe, Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Mughi (المغي)⁴⁷, states that he finished copying the manuscript in April-May 1757 at “his teacher, ... master of all sciences, Muhammad son of Alimuhammad al-Muhi (المحي).” Later in the text, he adds a note specifying that he completed the verification and editing of the manuscript in January 1758 with another mentor, “his teacher, ... deeply knowledgeable in all disciplines, Muhammadamin son of Ismail al-Uluchari (الألچري).⁴⁸”⁴⁹ The nature of the writing of the entire colophon suggests it was not written immediately after the copying, but rather in January of the following year, when the manuscript was fully prepared.

Manuscripts were frequently reproduced to order. Colophons often included the names of the customers. While payment for such commissions was likely common, explicit mentions of it are less frequent within colophons. For instance, a colophon from 1769 by the lame Hasan Muhammad, son of Umar, son of Ali al-Urari (الأررين)⁵⁰, states that he copied a grammar manuscript of 118 folios “for Bahmud, son of Ibrahim al-Zirihgirani (الزرهكراني)⁵¹ for a cheap price...”⁵² Another scribe, Kuduqi al-Karakhi al-Hunukhi (الهنخي)⁵³, reveals in the colophon that in 1868 he “completed the reproduction of this valuable book, although he rarely did that for a fee” for Ahmad, son of Shaban al-Chari (الچاري)⁵⁴. Kuduqi further clarifies his motivation, emphasizing that the reproduction stemmed from “strong love, friendship, obligations to him and the need to maintain honor, and not payment, although it was great. But he still forced me to accept it.”⁵⁵

Information regarding manuscript purchases and prices is more likely to be found next to the colophon, on the colophon page itself, or on the unwan page. Such notes, categorized as extra-textual records (*khawarij al-nass*), warrant independent study. The notes were typically made by the customer or subsequent manuscript owners. For instance, a colophon dated 1873-74 documents that Khizri al-Tlyarahi (اللرحي) (?) copied a grammar manuscript for his brother (Fig. 4). While the brother’s name is redacted within the text, two other names, Ali

43. Koroda – a village in the Gunibsky region, Republic of Dagestan

44. Tsulda – a village in the Charodinsky region, Republic of Dagestan

45. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 2058 a

46. Ghenta – a village in the Shamilsky region, Republic of Dagestan

47. Mugi – a village in the Akushinsky region, Republic of Dagestan

48. Ulluchara – a village in the Akushinsky region, Republic of Dagestan

49. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 1349

50. Urari – a village in the Dakhadaevsky region, Republic of Dagestan

51. Zirihgeran – a historical and geographical region and a union of societies in Nagorno-Dagestan

52. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 2982

53. Gunukh – a village in the Charodinsky region, Republic of Dagestan

54. Djar – a village in the Zaqatala region, Republic of Azerbaijan

55. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 256 a

and Abubakr, are discernible. A different handwriting appears next to Ali's name, containing an erased note that can still be partially deciphered: "...son of Muhammad'ali al-Tlyarakhi (اللرخي)." On the verso of the colophon page appears an additional note in a different hand: "However, I purchased this manuscript for two kurush. I am Ali..., son of Muhammad'ali

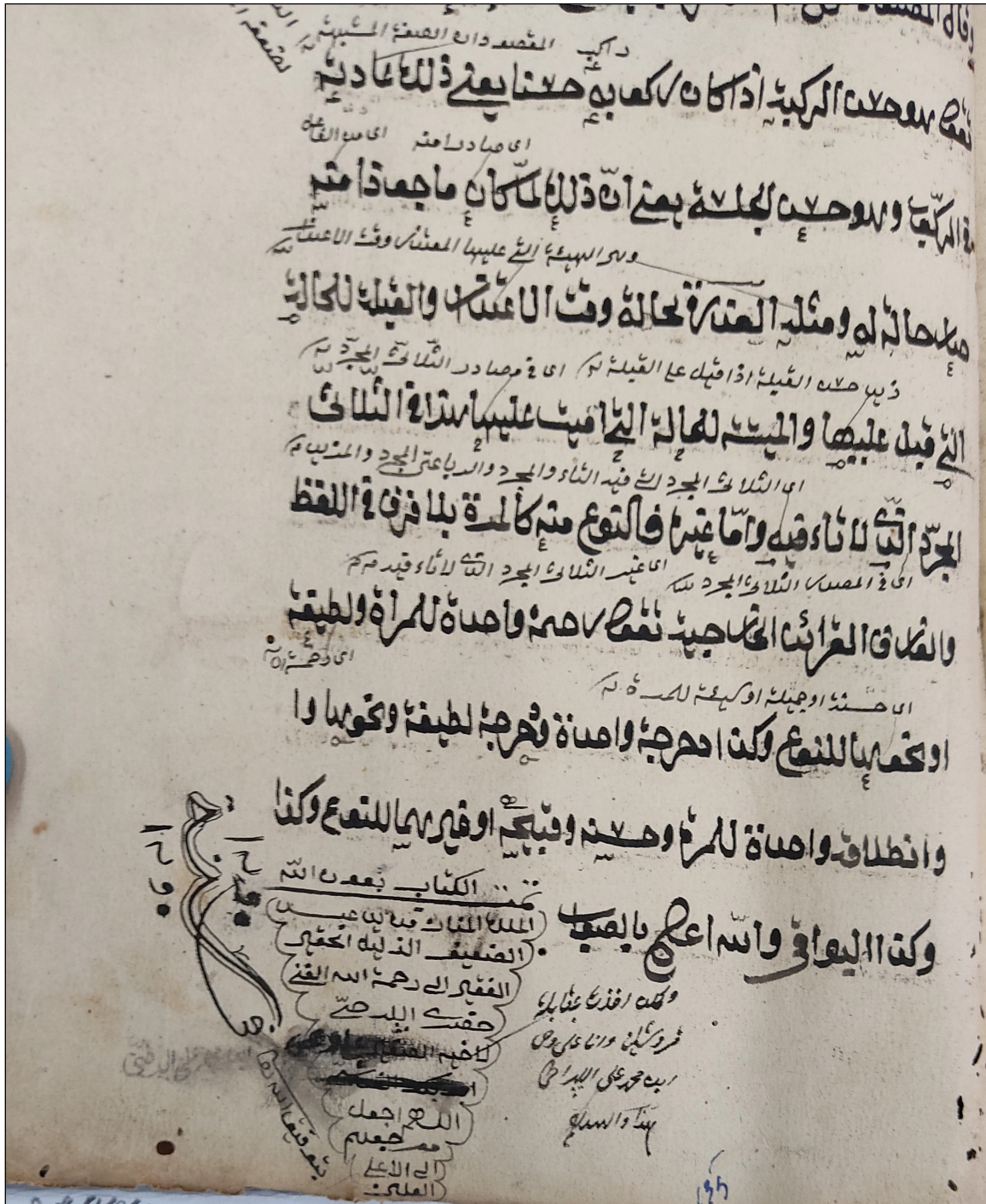


Fig. 4. Colophon of the manuscript of the work "Sharh Tasrif al-'Izzi" by Sa'd ad-Din al-Taftazani // FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 2645. Author's photo, 2023

Рис. 4. Колофон рукописи сочинения «Шарх Тасриф ал-'Иzzi» Са'д ад-Дина ат-Тафтазани // ФБР ИИАЭ ДФИЦ РАН. Ф.14. Оп. 1. Д. 2645. Фото автора, 2023

at-Tlyarakhi (اللراخي). Peace!”⁵⁶ This inscription suggests that the scribe initially copied the manuscript for both Ali and Abubakr, as mentioned in the colophon. However, it seems one of the co-owners, presumably Ali, desired sole ownership. The marginal note indicates that Ali purchased the manuscript from his co-owner for two kurush and subsequently erased Abubakr’s name from the colophon. The term “kurush” in the context of 1870s Dagestan typically refers to the Russian ruble. Therefore, assuming this manuscript was a textbook on Arabic grammar with 129 folios and measuring 17x21 centimeters, the total cost of acquisition would have been four rubles. This figure is derived from the price of two rubles paid by Ali for his co-owner’s share.

Colophons sometimes document transactions where payment for a manuscript involved the exchange of books rather than money. This practice was more prevalent in earlier records, reflecting dominance of barter trade at that time in Dagestan. Even in the latter half of the 19th century, as Dagestan transitioned towards capitalist economic relations, students and book readers continued the practice of exchanging books. One such example appears in a colophon dated 1297 AH (1880). The document states that Muhammad al-Kudali (الكُدالي)⁵⁷ copied a manuscript on grammar while visiting Zakaria, qadi of the village of Verkhnyi Dzhengutai.⁵⁸ An adjacent note, written in a different hand, adds that in 1299 AH (1881-82) “this book came into my possession from him (Muhammad al-Kudali – author’s note) in turn for [the manuscript of the work] ‘Malla Ughli’ (ملا أُغلي). I am Saifuddin from Nizhnyi Dzhengutai.⁵⁹ This was witnessed by Musa, the son of the pilgrim to the two shrines and the clerk Hadjiyav al-Kudali. Near the venerable scholar and qadi Zakaria al-Kudali.”⁶⁰ In this case, Saifuddin decided to exchange the textbook on logic “Malla Ughli” for the textbook on Arabic grammar “Hashiya Hada’iq ad-Daqa’iq (حاشية حدائق الدقائق).” Considering that the volumes of both books are approximately the same, the exchange was equal.

Colophons found in Arabic manuscripts from Dagestan offer valuable insights into the creation and transmission of Islamic knowledge during the 17th-19th centuries. The increased focus on recording details within colophons during this period reflects a qualitative shift in the Arabic manuscript tradition of the region. This phenomenon coincided with a renewed emphasis on Islamization within Dagestan, starting in the 17th century. As a result, the number of madrassas, serving as centers for Islamic education and manuscript reproduction, grew significantly. These institutions played a crucial role in deepening Islamic knowledge by providing students with high-quality learning materials, including accurate copies of Arabic manuscripts covering various Islamic disciplines.

56. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 2645

57. Kudali – a village in the Gunibsky region, Republic of Dagestan

58. Verkhniy Dzhengutai – a village in the Buinaksky region, Republic of Dagestan

59. Nizhny Dzhengutai – a village in the Buynaksky region, Republic of Dagestan

60. FOM IHAE DFRC RAS. F. 14. Inv. 1. No. 2405 a

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