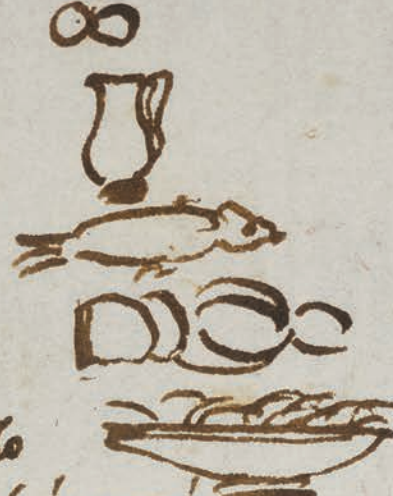


pani dua
 u bo dial dui no
 una aringa
 tor tegh



una salata
 quattro pani
 u bo dial duto do
 ou quar tuccio di bruscho
 u puerello di spinaci
 quattro a li co
 tortelli



sei pani
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 una aringa
 u bo dial di tondo

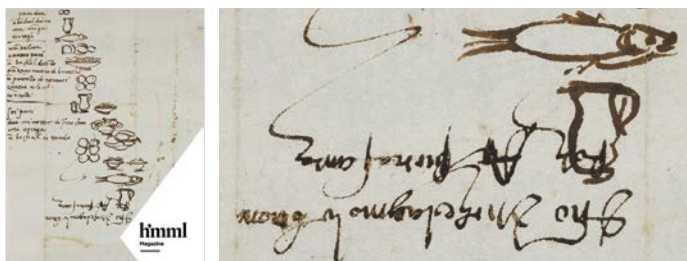


Sto Michelagnolo
 di Bologna

himml

Magazine

SUMMER 2025



The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML)

is a global organization that advances manuscript research and scholarly inquiry by digitally preserving, providing access to, and interpreting manuscript collections around the world. HMML places a special priority on manuscripts in regions endangered by war, political instability, or other threats. Current partnerships to photograph manuscript collections are with repositories in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Gaza, Great Britain, India, Iraq, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Mauritania, Montenegro, Pakistan, Slovenia, and Yemen. HMML's collection of resources for the study of manuscript cultures includes approximately 450,000 manuscripts photographed in partnership with more than 800 libraries and archives worldwide. View the cataloged manuscripts in Reading Room (vhmml.org).

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On the Cover

A list of groceries written and illustrated by the artist Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) on March 13, 1518, while he was living in Tuscany. Collection of the Casa Buonarroti Archive, Florence, Italy. (CBNR 00010)

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HMML Magazine

Is published twice a year in support of HMML's mission: to preserve and share the world's handwritten past to inspire a deeper understanding of our present and future.

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Dr. Columba Stewart—Editorial Review, Contributing Writer

Dr. Audrey Thorstad—Contributing Writer

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Dear Friends,

When I sit down to write this letter to you twice a year, there has almost always been a major development somewhere in HMML's world. Since the winter issue of *HMML Magazine*, we've seen the stunning fall of the Assad regime in Syria, home to many HMML projects from 2006 to 2012. Lebanon, where HMML has worked for over two decades, now has a stable government though peace in the south remains elusive. Our partners in Gaza are digging through the rubble of Gaza City to secure their heritage as well as their livelihoods. Our work there began in 2020 with the Great Omari Mosque, one of the oldest library and archival centers in Palestine, which has since been largely destroyed.

HMML began as a project to microfilm manuscripts in Cold War Europe "just in case." The feared nuclear war did not come to pass, but soon we found ourselves working in revolutionary Ethiopia. In recent decades we've held true to those roots, working in conflict zones as well as in areas where manuscripts are threatened by economic and environmental conditions. We've seen collections be destroyed, disappear into hiding places, or simply go missing.

It's not a stretch to assert that a future researcher—whether human or AI—could glean much of recent global history simply from the stories in *HMML Magazine*. And behind those stories is our real gift to the future, the work that we do—HMML staff, associates, partners, and all of you readers—to preserve and share the handwritten record of human experience and creativity. This is important, enduring work: thank you for helping to make it possible.

Sincerely,

Columba Stewart

Columba Stewart
Executive Director / CEO



ABOVE: One of HMML's earliest projects was with Subiaco Abbey in central Italy. In April 2024, travelers on the HMML Journey to Malta and Italy viewed manuscripts in the collection of Subiaco. Pictured (left to right): Columba Stewart, Richard Rodeheffer, Steven Funk, Michael Helgeson, Walid Mourad, Lyndel King.

Witnesses of Light

Armenian Manuscripts as Testimony and Digital Memory After Genocide

By Ani Shahinian

The extraordinary manuscripts held at the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul are a poignant testament to the survival of Armenian cultural and spiritual heritage in the aftermath of the Genocide in Ottoman Turkey during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This rich repository preserves not only thousands of interwoven narratives, it also embodies a luminous tradition of transmitting sacred wisdom and divine revelation across generations through written and illuminated manuscripts.

In 2004, Dr. Columba Stewart and the 84th Patriarch of Istanbul, Mesrob II Mutafyan (1956–2019), formed a partnership to preserve and share these manuscripts in digital form. HMML's digitization studio operated from March 2005 to June 2009, completing the project with photographs of nearly 800 manuscripts.

HMML is now making these ancient treasures accessible by cataloging the digitized collection. This vital work coincides with the 110th year of commemoration of the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide, memorialized on the day (April 24, 1915) when 235 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders in Constantinople were arrested, many of whom were later tortured and publicly executed.



ABOVE: Patriarch Mesrob II Mutafyan (1956–2019), in a contemplative moment, experiences HMML's digitization studio in the Patriarchate compound in Istanbul, 2005.

While Armenians had long lived in Constantinople and in the regions of the Byzantine Empire—with active churches and monasteries since the empire's founding—the population of Armenians in the capital city increased during the Ottoman period (1453–1922). The city, known as Byzantium for nearly a millennium, was renamed Constantinople in 330 and Istanbul in 1930.

Established by Mehmed II in 1461, the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul is a remarkable repository of collections. The majority of the manuscripts are written in Classical Armenian, with some texts in Arabic, Persian, modern Armenian, Ottoman-Turkish, and Armeno-Turkish. Among these are beautifully illuminated Gospels, Synaxaria (*Yaysmawurk*), hymnals (*Sharaknots*), liturgical books, psalters, and prayer scrolls; homilies and historical, philosophical, and grammatical works; astrological writings and calendars; and church records documenting parish life.

The seven collections that comprise the Patriarchate's manuscript library, digitized by HMML, came from different neighborhoods throughout the city of Istanbul, including: Balat, a neighborhood in the Fatih district, which was once home to diverse Christian (Armenian and Greek) and Jewish communities and today is predominately Muslim; Galata, a neighborhood now called Karaköy, was a Genoese colony and is home to the oldest extant Armenian Apostolic Church in Istanbul, the 14th-century Saint Gregory the Illuminator Church of Galata; and Ortaköy, historically a cosmopolitan neighborhood with a significant Armenian community. The Ortaköy Mosque, designed by Armenian architects, is a notable landmark, as are several active 17th–19th-century churches.

The other four collections currently held at the Patriarchate come from the Azgayin Matenadaran (National Library), formerly near Galata; the Shirinoglu family; the city of Kayseri; and the Patriarch's Collection in Kumkapı. Many of the holy sites in these neighborhoods are inactive today, some in ruins or completely destroyed. This treasured past only remains alive in memory and on the pages of manuscripts held at the Patriarchate and accessible at HMML.



ABOVE: A 19th-century manuscript depicting the Trinity as the Armenian letter Լ (for “God”) and a man—presumably the author of the text, Patriarch Yakob Nalean (1702–1764)—praying St. Nersēs Shnorhali’s wisdom prayer. Collection of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, Ortaköy. (APIO 00157, folios 4–5)

Since the rise of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul has held a significant role in the life and history of Armenian Christians. Some of the most devoted leaders and teachers (*vardapets*) served as its patriarchs. One such leader was Yakob Nalean, who served two terms as patriarch (1741–1748 and 1752–1764). He left treasured works of history and theology that remain invaluable to Christianity as a whole, particularly for Armenians. Among his many works is a commentary on Sirach, preserved in the Ortaköy collection (APIO 00157, pictured).

The 19th century witnessed the leadership of several notable patriarchs, including Mkrtich Khrimian of Van (term: 1869–1873) and the distinguished theologian, historian, and patriarch Maghak’ia Ormanian (t. 1896–1908), author of the multivolume *Azgapatum*, which records two millennia of the history of the Armenian Church and nation.

During the harrowing years of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey, the Armenian community was shepherded by faithful and courageous leaders, most of whom are considered to be living martyrs,

including Patriarch Zaven Der Yeghiayan (t. 1913–1922). Exiled to Baghdad by Ottoman authorities in 1916, he returned to Istanbul in 1919 with the backing of the Entente Powers—only to be forced into exile again in 1922. Patriarch Zaven tirelessly reached out to the international community and, through his connections with European and American diplomats, he brought global attention to the atrocities committed against the Christian Armenian population in Turkey by the Young Turk regime.

With continued cataloging efforts, HMML aspires to recover the lost writings of these patriarchs and the historic collections they preserved. More than 760 of the Patriarchate’s manuscripts are currently viewable online in HMML Reading Room (vhmml.org), with more waiting to be brought into the light.

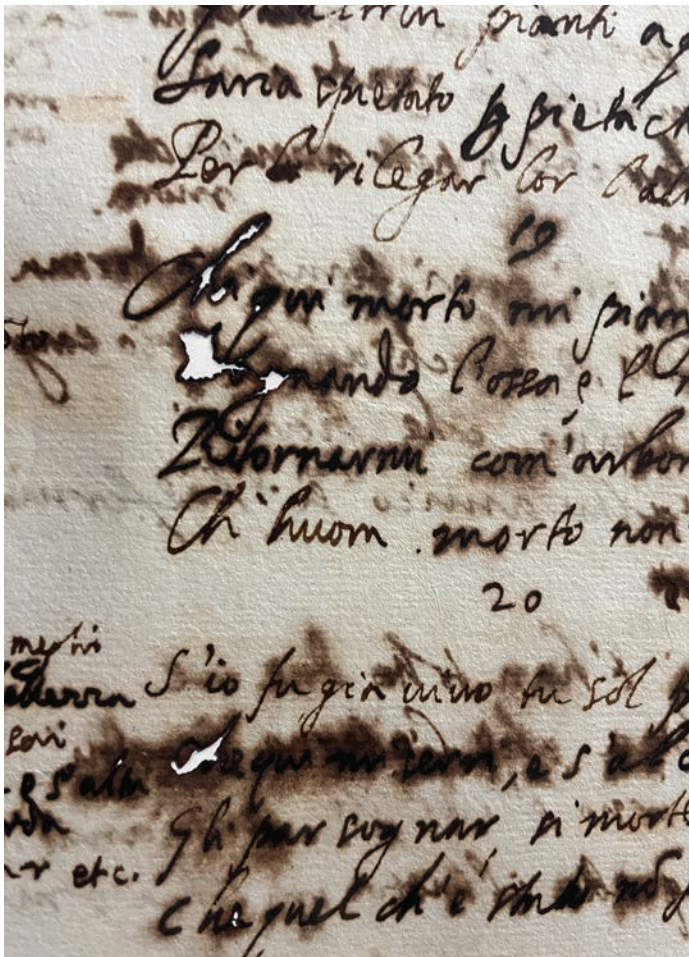
ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Ani Shahinian is cataloger of Armenian manuscripts at HMML.

When Cosimo Buonarroti (1790–1858) reacquired his family's palazzo—the Casa Buonarroti—in 1812, he found a building in a state of decay in the heart of Florence, Italy. He decided to restore the complex as a space to celebrate the family's history, whose renown began four centuries earlier with the celebrated genius of Renaissance artist Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564).

Thanks to a generous grant from the Packard Humanities Institute, HMML's Malta Study Center has partnered with the Casa Buonarroti to digitize the family archive, furthering Cosimo's vision of advancing the study of Florence by providing access to his family's history. The three-year project, coinciding with the 550th anniversary of Michelangelo's birth, will digitize 169 archival volumes and the collection of drawings. Once complete, the project will create the first comprehensive online access to the archive of this illustrious Florentine family.

At the core of the archive are the records of Michelangelo's great-nephew, Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger (1568–1647). Like his namesake, Michelangelo the Younger was an outstanding figure within Florentine society—a celebrated playwright and poet whose true legacy is revealed in his voluminous correspondence. His letters connect the modern reader to the intricacies of Florence, and they reveal his political acumen as well as his role as patron to scientists and artists such as Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1653). Michelangelo the Younger's effort to build the Casa Buonarroti palazzo as a monument to his family is extensively documented, including detailed sketches he provided to artists for the composition of murals.

No less important are the 18 archival volumes regarding Fra Francesco Buonarroti (1573/74–1631), brother to Michelangelo the Younger. A trained architect, Fra Francesco became a Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in 1598. He frequently served as secretary and emissary of the Grand



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ABOVE: Digitization studio operated by Dr. Serena Biondo, a HMML associate conducting field site management and photography at the Casa Buonarroti.

Master of the Order to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. His personal friendship with Pope Urban VIII (1568–1644) created unique political opportunities to advance the interests of his family, which he often recorded in letters, written in cipher, to his brother, Michelangelo the Younger. Also of note are several documents demonstrating Fra Francesco's devotion to the Order and its religious way of life, including his efforts to promote the cult of Fra Gerard of Villamagna (1174–1242), a Florentine saint and a knight of the Order of St. John.

The Malta Study Center's partnership with the Casa Buonarroti is part of a larger initiative to digitize private family archives in Italy and Malta that have historic connections to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Recently, the Center digitized the De Piro and Testaferrata family archives in Malta, both of which are deeply tied to the history of Italy and the Order of St. John. Future projects may include the Galilei family archive, now partially held in the State Archives of Florence. Such collaborations enable scholars to research difficult-to-access collections that document how families built networks that created the foundations for modern cultural and social institutions in Europe and the Mediterranean.



ABOVE: Dr. Daniel K. Gullo, the Joseph S. Micallef Director of HMML's Malta Study Center, holds a volume containing the poetry of Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) during a visit to establish the Center's digitization studio at the Casa Buonarroti.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Daniel K. Gullo is the Joseph S. Micallef Director of the Malta Study Center at HMML.

News in Brief

Highlights from HMML's cultural preservation initiatives and activities

Travel to Uzbekistan in 2026

In the autumn of 2026, experience an incredible HMML Journey through the country at the heart of the famed Silk Road: Uzbekistan. Led by Dr. Columba Stewart, executive director of HMML, participants will visit the cities of Tashkent, Bukhara (home to the Mir-i-Arab Madrasa, pictured), Samarkand, Urgench, Khiva, and Nukus, as well as the legendary citadels of Toprak and Ayaz Kala in the Khorezm desert.

Special cultural experiences include learning how to make Uzbekistan's legendary national dish (*plov*); a bread-baking demonstration; a trip to the Savitsky Art Museum; and time with master artists in ceramics, suzani embroidery, and paper making. Registration is open now (hmml.org/programs).



Learning at HMML

Students and scholars from around the world visit HMML on the campus of Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota, to experience the world's handwritten past firsthand. In the 2024–2025 academic year, Dr. Matthew Z. Heintzelman (pictured, right)—the curator of Western European manuscripts and Special Collections at HMML—shared HMML's collections with more than 250 undergraduate, graduate, and lifelong-learning students. In addition, scholars, artists, and teachers traveled from five different countries to utilize HMML's on-site resources—four as recipients of HMML fellowships and 10 as self-funded visiting scholars.

Learning at HMML continues to be vibrant this summer, with 15 students joining HMML's virtual course (Introduction to Arabic Manuscript Studies) and 12 students at HMML for a four-week, intensive introduction to Classical Armenian language and paleography. The latter is offered through the annual Dumbarton Oaks / HMML Summer School, this year in partnership with the Zohrab Center of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.



Updates from the Field

Since June 2024, HMML has formed new partnerships with 18 repositories to digitally preserve and provide access to handwritten objects and artwork in their collections (project codes in parenthesis):

India:

- The Pantal Mana family in Rappal (DKA 003); the Tiyyannūr Mana family in Varode (DKA 004); Tantra Vidyā Pīṭham in Aluva (DKA 005); and, at Vaṭakke Maṭham Brahmasvam in Thrissur, the collection of Naṭuvil Maṭham monastery (DKA 001)—all digitized in partnership with the Digital Preservation of Kerala Archives Project
- Haadi-e-Deccan Library and Research Institute in Hyderabad (HDL)
- Faṣāḥat Jā'isī Library in Lucknow (UUL KKFJ)
- In Calicut, the Markaz Central Islamic Library (MF MCL), Kuttichira Juma Maṣjid (MF KJM), and the Personal Collections in Jifri House (MF PJH); in Malappuram, the Personal Collection of Ashraf PK (MF PAPK), the Personal Collection of Abobaker Agathi (MF PAA), and Ponnani Juma Maṣjid (MF PJM)—all digitized in partnership with the Malaibar Foundation for Research and Development

Italy:

- Casa Buonarroti Archive in Florence (CBNR)

Malta:

- St. George's Basilica in Victoria, Gozo Island (GZSG)—images supplied by the repository
- Monastery of Saint Peter in Mdina (MSP)

Pakistan:

- The Library of the Sirah in Lahore (KKS)
- Punjab University Library in Lahore (PUL)

Turkey:

- Chaldean Church of Istanbul (CCI)

Notable

HMML STAFF AND ASSOCIATES PRESENT AT GLOBAL CONFERENCES

FEBRUARY 7, 2025

Princeton University Library

(Princeton, New Jersey, USA)

Speaker—Dr. Jeremy R. Brown

Topic—Monks, Monasteries, and Manuscripts

FEBRUARY 21, 2025

University of Michigan

(Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA)

Speaker—Dr. Ani Shahinian

Topic—Christian-Muslim Identities and the Perception of the “Other”: A Case Study of Awag Salmastec'i's Martyrology (1390)

MARCH 1, 2025

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Mediterranean Seminar Workshop

(Urbana, Illinois, USA)

Speaker—Dr. Josh Mugler

Topic—A Greek in Arabic Clothing

APRIL 1, 2025

Austrian Academy of Sciences, Codicology & Paleography Lecture Series

(Virtual)

Speakers—Dr. Catherine Walsh, Dr. Matthew Z. Heintzelman

Topic—From Kremsmünster to Timbuktu: HMML's Mission to Preserve Manuscripts Through Photography

APRIL 24–25, 2025

George Mason University, AbuSulayman Center for Global Islamic Studies Annual Conference

(Washington, DC, USA)

Speakers—Dr. Ali Diakite, Dr. Paul Naylor

Topic—Cultural Heritage Preservation and Digitization in West Africa: the Work of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library at HMML

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Katrina P. Schlude is director of advancement at HMML. Dr. Audrey Thorstad is programming associate at HMML. Margaret Bresnahan is director of communications at HMML.

Advancing Scholarship

The Mountains Shall Drip Honey

By Tsehay Ademe Belay

In the Ethiopic version of the Book of Joel, the Greek word for “sweetness” (*glukasmon* / γλυκασμόν) has been translated as the word “honey” in Ethiopic—*ma‘ar* (መላር). This use of “honey” is later carried into original Ethiopic literature and liturgy.

With its vivid imagery of locust plagues and divine pronouncements, the Book of Joel—one of the 12 minor prophets—has a deep resonance of repentance, using intense imagery and symbolism to convey its message.

In the Ethiopic version of Joel, honey appears as a literary symbol as well as something that is consumed. In Joel 3:18, the translation of “sweetness” (γλυκασμόν) as “honey” is noteworthy. Reminiscent of other Old Testament passages indicating the fertility of the land promised to the sons of Israel—“flowing with milk and honey” (Numbers 13:27; Deuteronomy 6:3; Amos 9:13)—in Joel (3:18) we find:

ይህን ደብዳቤ ያንጸፈጽፍ መላር፡ እም፡ አድባር፡፡

“In that day, the mountains shall drip honey.”

The motif of honey is also reflected in the Book of Joel’s reception in Ethiopic literary works more broadly, such as Ethiopic hymns. One example—*Māhlēta šegē*, “Canticle of the Flower” (ማሳሌተ ጽጌ)—is particularly notable.

Māhlēta šegē is one of the most well-known hymns dedicated to Saint Mary and is regarded as one of the most beautiful examples of poetry in Ge‘ez literature. This composition consists of 156 stanzas, each containing five lines. The hymn praises Mary by reflecting on the holy family and Mary’s nature, miracles, and life, including her Dormition (‘*eraftā*) and Assumption (*felsatā*). The author of the *Māhlēta šegē* was an exceptional writer and a learned theologian, as is evident through the hymn’s references and allusions to a variety of works within Ge‘ez literature.

The following poem, or effigy, within *Māhlēta šegē* includes a quotation from the Book of Joel in the last two lines:

ማሳረረ ትንቢት ማርያም ዘመነ ጽጌ እንግዳ፡

ወዘመነ ፍሬ ጽጋብ ዘዓመተ ረኃብ ፍዳ፡

ብኪ ተአምረ ዘይቤ ኢየሴል ነቢየ ኤልዳ፤

ያንጸፈጽፍ እምአድባሪሁ ወእምአውግሪሁ ለይሁዳ፤

ፀቓውዐ መላር ቅድው ወሐሊብ ፀዓዳ፡፡

“The harvest of prophecy is Mary, a season of the flowers of strangers

And the season of abundant fruit, a repayment for a time of famine.

The miracle that Joel the prophet of Elda spoke is [revealed] in you

‘From Judah’s mountains and hills will pour Sweet honeycomb and white milk.’”

These elements draw from both ancient prophetic texts and contemporary compositions that significantly influenced the thoughts of those who collected, composed, read, or edited the prophetic books. In liturgical references to the Book of Joel, “honey” and “milk” are often recurring symbols for Mary and Jesus, respectively.

In Ethiopian tradition, the flower serves as a common symbol representing Mary. Within the *Māhlēta šegē*, a variety of floral literary devices are employed, such as “flower of Aaron,” “flower of the faith,” “flower of the resurrection,” “perfume of the flowers,” and “flower of the king.” The *Māhlēta šegē* also documents the circumstances surrounding the original spoken composition of this hymn by Abbā Šegē Dengel, who notably references Joel within the context of his own time.

When interpreting the liturgies, it is essential to also consider the purpose of ritual within them. Scholars such as John D.W. Watts have illustrated that the liturgies, considered as a whole, possess historical, social, and religious significance that is on par with individual compositions for communities who have heard and performed these works in worship. It is of considerable value to study these relationships through close readings that draw connections across text and contexts—such as biblical milk and honey echoed in liturgy and hymns.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Tsehay Ademe Belay is a philologist working as a researcher and lecturer at Addis Ababa University, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, and is a recipient of HMML’s Heckman Stipend (2024).

A Closer Look at a Single Manuscript

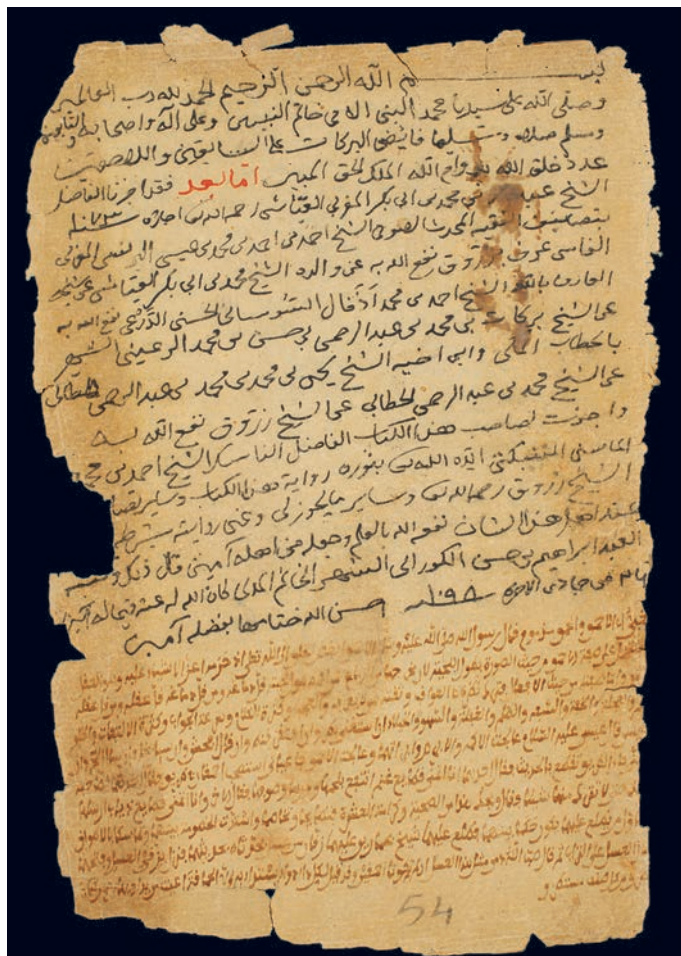
By Ali Diakite and Paul Naylor

A unique aspect of HMML Reading Room (vhmml.org) is that it allows us to see how texts travel among disparate people, places, and cultures. Sometimes a manuscript can pinpoint the exact moment of this knowledge transfer. One such manuscript is SAV ABS 03135.

The text is a commentary by Aḥmad Zarrūq (died 1493 CE) on Ibn ‘Askar’s legal treatise *Irshād al-sālik*, copied in 1687 CE in Medina (in present-day Saudi Arabia). Our interest here is the page following the colophon, which features an *ijāzah*—a license allowing the bearer to teach the book to others. It states that on May 9, 1687 CE (the month after the manuscript was copied), Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥaṣan al-Kūrānī taught the book to its owner, the pilgrim Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Māsīnī al-Tinbuktī. The *ijāzah* traces the teachers of this book from its author, Aḥmad Zarrūq, to al-Kūrānī, who now accredits the copy made by his student and gives him permission to teach others.

The note transports us to the study sessions of teacher and pupil, meeting face to face, in the cosmopolitan environment of Medina centuries before talk of globalization. Al-Kūrānī was a prolific author and teacher belonging to the Naqshabandī Sufi order. Himself a Kurd from the region of present-day Iraqi Kurdistan, he taught at the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina and shared his knowledge with a diverse array of students. Al-Kūrānī is especially revered in Indonesia. One of his most famous Indonesian students was Shaykh Yusuf (Yusuf al-Makassari), who was exiled by the Dutch to South Africa in 1684 CE and is credited with introducing Islam to the Cape of Good Hope.

This *ijāzah* demonstrates that around the same time that Shaykh Yusuf was in Cape Town, al-Kūrānī was granting teaching licenses to at least one West African—the pilgrim Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. We can imagine the richness of the conversations between Muslims from all across the world, and what an impact such exchanges must have had on individuals such as this pilgrim. Upon his return to Timbuktu, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad would have passed this valuable *ijāzah* to his own students, preserving this moment of exchange for future generations.



ABOVE: The *ijāzah* (teaching license) of al-Kūrānī to al-Māsīnī. Collection of the Aboubacar Ben Said Library, Timbuktu, Mali. (SAV ABS 03135, page 54)

What follows is a partial translation of the *ijāzah*:

"I was permitted to teach [this text] by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Maghribī al-'Abbāsī, may God have mercy upon him. This accreditation was in 1073 AH [1662–1663 CE] [...] I pass my accreditation to the owner of this copy, the favored pilgrim Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Māsīnī al-Tinbuktī. May God assist him by His light to pass on this book, along with the remaining works of Shaykh Zarrūq [...] and anything else that is permitted of me under the conditions established by the experts in this domain. May God make him benefit from this knowledge and make him among the knowledgeable ones. Amen."

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Dr. Ali Diakite and Dr. Paul Naylor are catalogers of West African manuscripts at HMML.

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“I gave 41 years of my monastic career to library work, the bulk of which was devoted to doing a cataloging job which begged to be done. The career began one month after completing the novitiate in July 1923 when Abbot Alcuin Deutsch, like myself, out for a morning stroll after breakfast, called me: ‘Father Oliver, come here. I want you to work in the library.’ And thereon hangs the tale.”

—Fr. Oliver Kapsner, OSB, founding director of HMML, writing about HMML's history in *A Sense of Place II* (Liturgical Press, 1990).



ABOVE: In 1965, Fr. Oliver Kapsner (left) and Eugene B. Power (right, founder of University Microfilms, Inc.) began HMML's first projects to photograph and catalog manuscripts. Pictured here with the minibus used to transport equipment and crew throughout Austria.

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