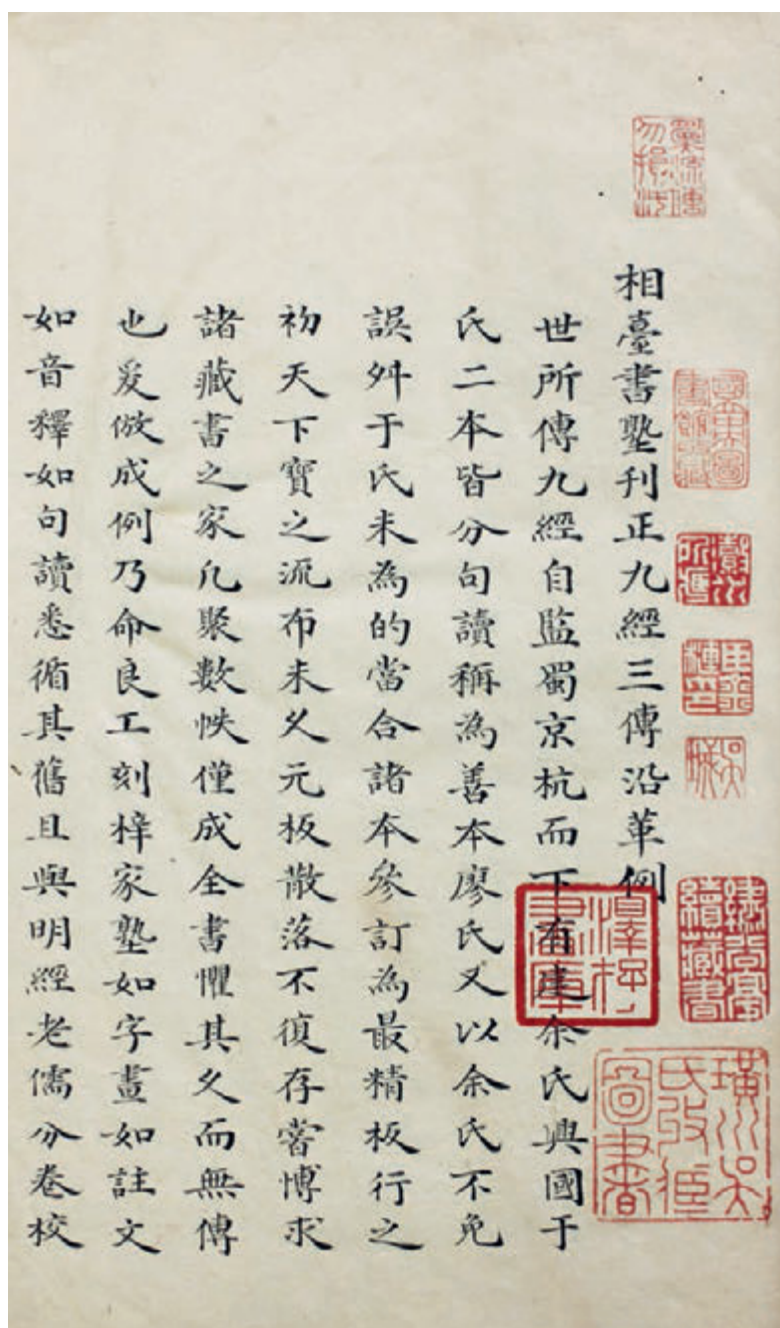


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## Publishing Information

### Editors

Prof Dr Michael Friedrich  
 Universität Hamburg  
 Asien-Afrika-Institut  
 Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1/ Flügel Ost  
 D-20146 Hamburg  
 Tel. No.: +49 (0)40 42838 7127  
 Fax No.: +49 (0)40 42838 4899  
 michael.friedrich@uni-hamburg.de

Prof Dr Jörg Quenzer  
 Universität Hamburg  
 Asien-Afrika-Institut  
 Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1/ Flügel Ost  
 D-20146 Hamburg  
 Tel. No.: +49 40 42838 - 7203  
 Fax No.: +49 40 42838 - 6200  
 joerg.quenzer@uni-hamburg.de

### Editorial Office

Dr Irina Wandrey  
 Universität Hamburg  
 Sonderforschungsbereich 950  
 'Manuskriptkulturen in Asien, Afrika und Europa'  
 Warburgstraße 26  
 D-20354 Hamburg  
 Tel. No.: +49 (0)40 42838 9420  
 Fax No.: +49 (0)40 42838 4899  
 irina.wandrey@uni-hamburg.de

### Layout

Astrid Kajsa Nylander

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## Article

# Audience Certificates in Arabic Manuscripts – the Genre and a Case Study\*

Tilman Seidensticker | Jena

The audience certificates (Arabic *samāʿ*, plural *samāʿāt*, also translated as ‘audition certificates’) in Arabic manuscripts are attested to in single instances from the tenth century CE, they especially flourished from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, and there are even certificates from the twentieth century. These paratexts are protocols of sessions during which shorter texts or parts of longer books were recited. By giving not only the dates of these sessions but also the attendants’ names and sometimes their familiar or professional background, they provide ample information on the reception and transmission of knowledge. There seems to be no counterpart to them in other manuscript cultures, and therefore and due to the insights they provide, they deserve to be introduced to a general public interested in manuscripts.

As a starting point, I shall take my own first acquaintance with audience certificates, namely those which are contained in the manuscript Ms. orient. A 627 kept at the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Germany. When I had to describe fols. 13b/14a with five audience certificates for an exhibition catalogue,<sup>1</sup> I used the given dates for a *terminus ante quem* for A 627, as Wilhelm Pertsch did back in 1878.<sup>2</sup> For my short article in the catalogue, I identified one of the attendants in Arabic historiographical works and concluded that the manuscript must once have been in Baghdad. Then I more or less forgot about this particular manuscript until I started doing some systematic work on the certificates in October 2012. Meanwhile, I think Pertsch and I should have been more cautious.

\* This article is based on a lecture held on 30 January 2013 at SFB 950 ‘Manuskriptkulturen in Asien, Afrika und Europa’ within the scope of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) during my time as a Petra Kappert Fellow (from October 2012 to March 2013).

<sup>1</sup> *Orientalische Buchkunst* 1997, 95.

<sup>2</sup> Pertsch 1878, 484. Pertsch’s description contains a number of inaccuracies. The oldest date of the sessions is not 487, but 486 Hijra; *juzʿ* is not ‘book’ (Ger. ‘Werk’), but rather ‘part’, and the notes are records of twelve sessions, not statements made by twelve different scholars.

Before turning to the manuscript itself, I will first summarise what is known about the certificates of audience by going through the publications that have appeared on the subject over the last 60 years. The existence of the *samāʿ* notes had not gone unnoticed by Arab and Western scholars, of course, but it was not until 1955 that they were actually made the subject of an entire article, namely in the first volume of the newly founded *Revue de l’Institut des manuscrits arabes* in Cairo. The well-known Syrian scholar Salahaddin al-Munaggid (Ṣalāḥaldīn al-Munajjid), who also became director of the Arab League’s Institute of Arabic Manuscripts in 1955, published a programmatic article in Arabic entitled ‘The Audience Certificates in the Old Manuscripts’.<sup>3</sup> Before presenting 16 examples from libraries in Europe and the Arab world, he listed all the elements to be encountered in Arabic *samāʿ* notes, be they obligatory or optional:

1. Name of the *musmiʿ* [also *muqriʿ*], ‘attending authority’ (either the author or another person provided with a credible chain of transmission going back to the author)
2. Names of the *sāmiʿūn/mustamiʿūn*, ‘listeners’, sometimes even specifying the age of children
3. Title of the book/part (stated in three of the certificates in the Gotha Manuscript orient. A 627)
4. Name of the *qāriʿ*, ‘reader’ (who is always mentioned as a distinct person in the Gotha example, but is identical to the *musmiʿ* elsewhere)
5. The copy of the work that was read aloud during the session (this never occurred in the Gotha example)
6. Name of the *kātib/muthbit*, ‘person who puts down the attendants’ names in writing, clerk’ (mentioned in all but five cases in the Gotha example)

<sup>3</sup> Al-Munajjid 1955.

7. Some words testifying to the correctness of the given names (nowhere in the Gotha example)
8. Venue of the session (three times in the Gotha example, but quite vague)
9. Date of the session (obligatory)
10. Note by the *musmi* testifying to the correctness of the preceding information in his own handwriting (not provided in the Gotha example).

One year after al-Munaggid's article appeared, Georges Vajda's 80-page monograph was published on the audience certificates in the Arabic manuscripts of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.<sup>4</sup> Vajda lists 72 Arabic manuscripts containing *samā'* notes and mentions the most important individuals in the categories of attending authority, reader and listener. As Witkam has noted, 'Of the 72 mss. listed by Vajda, 59 have a "traditional Islamic" content, that is, disciplines that are part of the *madrassa* curriculum, whereas 13 do not have a directly religious content but deal with such topics as medicine, literature and the sciences'.<sup>5</sup> In 1969, a lecture by Gerard Lecomte was published that he had given on the 27th 'Deutscher Orientalistentag' [German Orientalists' Congress] in Würzburg the year before.<sup>6</sup> Lecomte combined some general exhortations to Arabists to devote more attention to the certificates with examples from three manuscripts containing works by the ninth-century author Ibn Qutayba.

The next publication – a monograph by Pierre A. MacKay which spans 80 pages again – appeared in 1971 and was devoted to the certificates in just a single manuscript from the Egyptian National Library.<sup>7</sup> Witkam summarised MacKay's achievements as follows:

One of the most outstanding sets of *ijāzāt* is found not in an Islamic scholarly text, but in what is probably the most prestigious text of Arabic imaginative literature, the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī. This becomes clear from the *ijāzāt* found on the authoritative manuscript of the text, copied from al-Ḥarīrī's own copy. In the principal and contemporaneous *ijāza* on this manuscript the names of some 38 scholars, a number of

whom are identified as distinguished notables of Baghdad, are mentioned as having been present at the reading of the entire work, which took more than a month of intermittent sessions to complete. MacKay's meticulous analysis of the numerous notes in this manuscripts has, in fact, reconstructed a period of almost two centuries of cultural life in Baghdad, Aleppo and Damascus. It all started in Baghdad in the year 504/1111, when the first reading of a copy of the author's autograph took place. That reading was followed by a number of subsequent readings, all in Baghdad. In the 60 or so years since the first reading, the manuscript had become quite heavy with *samā'* notes. After a period of 40 years, which remains unaccounted for, it came into the possession of the Aleppan historian Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-'Adīm (d. 660/1262). The manuscript then remained for more than 30 years in Aleppo, and bears numerous names of members of the best Aleppan families as auditors at sessions at which the manuscript was read. Finally, the manuscript bears certificates of reading sessions held in Damascus in the course of the year 683/1284. The manuscript then fades from view until, almost exactly six centuries later, it was acquired in 1875 by Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, where it still is.<sup>8</sup>

Witkam himself, a former curator of the Oriental collections kept at the library of Leiden University and emeritus Professor of Codicology and Palaeography of the Islamic world at the same university, was the next one to publish on the subject in 1995.<sup>9</sup> His article 'The Human Element between Text and Reader: The *Ijāza* in Arabic manuscripts' was programmatic again, culminating in an appeal to Arabists not only to analyse the data contained in such certificates, as Vajda and MacKay had done, but also to include as complete a transcription as possible of the Arabic notes themselves.<sup>10</sup> He adds: 'This is not an easy task to perform, since the scholarly certificates are often written in the least legible of scripts'.<sup>11</sup> His appeal came at a moment when Stefan Leder and two colleagues from Syria had already begun to compile an opus magnum: the *Mu'ğam al-samā'āt al-dimašqiyya*, also known by the

<sup>4</sup> Vajda 1956. Vajda published a short paper on the topic two years earlier as well (Vajda 1954).

<sup>5</sup> Witkam 1995, 131.

<sup>6</sup> Lecomte 1969.

<sup>7</sup> MacKay 1971.

<sup>8</sup> Witkam 1995, 131f.

<sup>9</sup> Witkam 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Such a transcription of certificates together with a Dutch translation and five indexes is given in Witkam 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Witkam 1995, 135.

French title *Les certificats d'audition à Damas 1155 – 1349*.<sup>12</sup> He, Yāsīn al-Sawwās and Ma`mūn al-Ṣāgharjī had identified around 1,350 audience certificates from works kept at the Dār al-Kutub al-Zāhiriyya in Damascus, now known as Al-Assad National Library. They deciphered the notes and published the data in the form of indexes in 1996, first and foremost a 500-page index of individual people. Almost 8,000 persons are listed here, and their function in social life – if known – is mentioned as well as their role in the sessions. I quote from the explanations about the index's value from Leder's introduction:

A characteristic of Damascene Audience Certificates in this period is the abundant number of the listeners, who often visited the lectures not alone but in company of their friends, or their attendants, or members of their families. The documents pay special attention to the affiliation of people. This orientation is visible in personal names that include the lineage and thus the membership in families and family organizations. [...] In accordance with this is the exact description of the family ties of all those present, with reference to their attendants, and in the case of slaves and freedmen, their exact status. The women, who also visited the lectures, normally not alone but accompanied by their brothers, sisters, children, or other relatives, rarely in company of their men or female neighbours, receive the same treatment. Thus the Certificates present in general, and in the case of persons who are named several times in particular, a dense network of data about the direct genealogy and relations by marriage. Of unique value are, hence, the indications on family trees on the mother side, generally ignored in the contemporary biographical sources but abundant in these documents.<sup>13</sup>

The second index, that of place names, is similarly useful for the historical topography of Damascus. 'The use of the Umayyad Mosque constitutes a case of its own. Numerous hints to locations in the Certificates show that the Mosque's premises were used in unimagined profusion for sundry purposes, and above all for the use of people attached to differing groups. It was subdivided into very distinct but not isolated areas.'<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Leder et al. 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Leder et al. 1996, 33.

<sup>14</sup> Leder et al. 1996, 34.

In the year 2000, the register volume was followed by a second volume containing facsimiles of all the analysed certificates.<sup>15</sup> Besides this big work, Leder also published a number of articles between 1994 and 2002.<sup>16</sup> Before I move on, I wish to quote a remark that Leder made in the introduction of the first volume:

Wherever the readability of a manuscript is hampered by faintness of the writing or other impairments, this is even more acute in its Certificates, for these are written in a hasty manner and in narrow margins. In some cases, however, it seems that the real rash and 'personal' writing is not due to circumstances; rather it is chosen consciously in order to give the copy an unmistakable character, a kind of signature for its authenticity.<sup>17</sup>

The second-last contribution of importance to the audience certificates is the proceedings of a workshop entitled *Notes on Manuscripts in Islamic Studies: State of the Art and Future Research Perspectives*, which was held at the University of Kiel, Germany in April 2008.<sup>18</sup> Four papers are of particular importance regarding the topic of *samā`* notes, two of which I shall mention here.<sup>19</sup> Rosemarie Quiring-Zoche's contribution treats 'The Yemenite diplomat Qāsīm Abū Ṭālib al-'Izzī (d. 1960) as mirrored by his manuscript notes'.<sup>20</sup> She analyses a multiple-text manuscript from the Berlin State Library which contains nine treatises on Prophetic tradition and jurisprudence. They were copied towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the owner, Qāsīm Abū Ṭālib, wrote down how often he read the treatises. What is particularly striking here is the high frequency: treatise no. 4, for example, was read by him or in his presence in 1888, 1895, 1896, 1897 (twice), 1898, 1899 and a final time in 1907. We also learn

<sup>15</sup> Leder et al. 2000.

<sup>16</sup> Three of them are enumerated in Görke and Hirschler 2011, 15, footnote 26; the fourth one is Leder 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Leder et al. 1996, 33.

<sup>18</sup> Görke and Hirschler 2011.

<sup>19</sup> The other two are Stefan Leder, 'Understanding a Text Through its Transmission: Documented *samā`*, copies, reception' (pp. 59–72); Konrad Hirschler, 'Reading Certificates (*samā`āt*) as a Prosographical Source: Cultural and social practices of an elite family in Zangid and Ayyubid Damascus' (pp. 73–92).

<sup>20</sup> Quiring-Zoche 2011.

that these lectures took anything from 3 to 9 weeks. Around the year 1910, the manuscript changed hands. The last reading attested to in a note dates from the year 1952, which means that the thousand-year-old habit of leaving reading notes continued until quite recently in Yemen and probably in other parts of the Islamic world as well.

The second article of considerable importance for my topic was Andreas Görke's contribution<sup>21</sup> to the *Proceedings* mentioned above because the manuscript he analysed also stems from Baghdad and was read there at almost the same time as the Gotha manuscript; even two of the readers mentioned in the latter appear in the Damascus manuscript on taxes studied by Görke,<sup>22</sup> namely the reciters Abū Yāsir Muḥammad Ibn 'Ubaydallāh Ibn Kādīsh al-'Ukbarī (d. 496/1103) and Abū 'Abdallāh al-Ḥusayn Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khusraw al-Balkhī (d. 526/1132). Görke's observations on details and peculiarities in the certificates that he studied enable us to glean a better understanding of the *samā'āt* in the Gotha manuscript.<sup>23</sup>

In 2012, Konrad Hirschler's book *The Written Word in Medieval Arabic Lands* was published. While Leder and his co-authors covered an immense number of Damascene certificates with the aim of providing basic prosopographical data, Hirschler, in his chapter 'A City is Reading', concentrates on a close cultural-historical analysis of a few of these certificates, taking those from a manuscript of Ibn 'Asākir's *History of Damascus (Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq)* into particular consideration.<sup>24</sup> This enabled him to a) distinguish between two main kinds of reading sessions, viz. learned and popular ones, b) discover what social and cultural differences existed between various groups, and c) uncover the various motives for specific groups' involvement in learning processes. Hirschler's chapter shows the wealth of information which can be drawn from these paratexts on numerous aspects of social and cultural history in an exemplary way.

Ms. orient. A 627 from the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha is a fragment of a copy of al-Kharā'ī's *I'tilāl al-qulūb*. Abū

Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Ja'far al-Kharā'ī died in 327/938 in Ashkelon or Jaffa. His work *I'tilāl al-qulūb*, 'The Sickness of Hearts', contains love stories, love poetry and Prophetic traditions as well as sayings of pious early Muslims, grouped in more than 50 unnumbered chapters; the author tries to give guidance to Muslims on how to cope with the temptations of passionate love. There are just three manuscripts extant now besides the Gotha codex. Two of them (at the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo and Ulu Cami in Bursa) are fragmentary or abridged versions;<sup>25</sup> only the Rabat manuscript (The National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco, al-Khizāna al-'amma) seems to be complete.<sup>26</sup> Such a small number of surviving manuscripts implies that the work, once important, fell into oblivion at some point. But as a source of major thematic inspiration, it became of primary importance for Ibn al-Jawzī's famous work 'The Censure of Passion' (*Dhamm al-hawā*). Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201) has the same chapter headings as al-Kharā'ī in 15 cases, but does not mention him as his model, and he quotes much of the latter's material as well.<sup>27</sup>

So far, al-Kharā'ī's book has been edited twice; the second impression of the first edition appeared in the year 2000 in Saudi Arabia<sup>28</sup> and the second edition in 2001 in Beirut.<sup>29</sup> Both editions are based on the Rabat manuscript, but the editor of the second one also took the Cairo manuscript into account and mentions the Gotha fragment without using it, however. A first comparison has shown that the text of the Gotha manuscript contains parts (*juz*) 6 and 8 (i.e. chapters 47–49, 54–57 as in the editions) as well as three additional chapters. The value of the text as given by Ms. orient. A 627 will not be discussed here in detail; rather, I will try to shed some light on the questions raised by and the information

<sup>25</sup> On the Cairo manuscript in the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya (445 *adab*, 6542 *adab* and 962 *adab Taymūr* – why three shelf marks?), cf. al-Shaykh 2001, 25 (starts from chap. 21). On the Bursa manuscript (Ulu Cami 1535), cf. Leder 1984, 59, who gives further hints on the abbreviated or incomplete character of the manuscript, a fact which was already assumed by Jean-Claude Vadet.

<sup>26</sup> On this manuscript, al-Khizāna al-'amma bi-l-Ribāt, Awqāf 269 q, cf. al-Shaykh 2001, 23 (he states shelf mark no. 869 instead of 269 q); al-Murābiṭī 2001-2. A PDF version of a film of this manuscript made for the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts of the Arab League can be found on the internet. (The library stamps contained there can yield some valuable evidence about the manuscript's history.)

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Leder 1984, 57–61, 112–118.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Dimirdāsh 2000.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Shaykh 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Görke 2011.

<sup>22</sup> The *Kitāb al-Amwāl* by Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām (d. 224/838).

<sup>23</sup> Further publications on the audience certificates that I have not mentioned can be found in Görke and Hirschler 2011, introduction, 13f., footnotes 19–24.

<sup>24</sup> Ibn 'Asākir died in 571/1176.

which can be drawn from the certificates.<sup>30</sup> Twelve of them are contained on fols. 13b to 15b and one on fol. 37b, which is the last folio of this manuscript.

The best way of doing this is to present some examples in a simplified form, representing (usually long) Arabic names by capital letters in most cases. This is certificate no. 3 (fol. 14a, lines 16–21):

The whole part (*juz*)<sup>31</sup> was heard,  
 - with the Most Honourable Chamberlain Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī Ibn al-‘Allāf (may God be pleased with him) as the **attending authority**,  
 - and Shaykh Abū Yāsir Muḥammad Ibn ‘Ubaydallāh Ibn Kādīsh al-‘Ukbarī as the **reciter**,  
 - by the Shaykhs A and B and C,  
 - with D as the **clerk** of the *samā*,  
 - while E heard just the first 15 leaves,  
 - and this was on Wednesday 6 Ramaḍān 487 [= 19 September 1094].

The name of the attending authority (*musmi*, *muqri*) responsible for the correctness of the transmitted text has been stated in full length because he has the same function in all 13 certificates in the Gotha fragment and thus plays a prominent role in the manuscript. Ibn al-‘Allāf lived in Baghdad from 406 to 505 Hijra (1015 to 1111 CE) and was a distinguished person, being a chamberlain (*ḥājib*, probably at the Caliph’s court) and transmitter of pious knowledge. The name of the reciter (*qāri*) is given *in extenso* here as well, because al-‘Ukbarī is well known as a reciter from the certificates in the manuscript studied by Görke; his name is mentioned in certificates of lecture series held in Baghdad in the years 472, 477–8, 478, 478–9, 479, 480, 480 and 481 Hijra.<sup>32</sup> The clerk is called *kātib al-samā* in no. 3, i.e. ‘writer of the certificate’, while in others he is called *muthbit al-samā*, the ‘person who records the certificate’. Besides these three people with an ‘official’ function, only four other listeners were present at the session (A, B, C and E); with such a small audience, certificate no. 3 refers to the least attended of all 13 sessions. On top of this, listener E left earlier. Such cases of temporary

attendance are mentioned in five other certificates among the 13, and Görke states that remarks like these are quite frequent in the certificates he analysed.<sup>33</sup>

A second example, certificate no. 9 (fol. 15a, lines 10–18), shows some continuities as well as changes. People already known from the first example are represented by the letters used for them there and are highlighted in bold face, while any additions are written in italics:

The whole *sixth* part of the work *I’tilāl al-qulūb* was heard,  
 - with the Most Honourable Chamberlain *Sir* Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī Ibn al-‘Allāf (may God be pleased with him) as the **attending authority**,  
 - and Shaykh Abū Yāsir Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubaydallāh ibn Kādīsh al-‘Ukbarī as the **reciter**,  
 - by the Shaykhs **D**, his brother **F**, **C**, his son **E**, **G** and **B**,  
 - with **A** as the **clerk** of the *samā*,  
 - and this was in the month of Rajab 487 [= July/August 1094].

In the second example, all those who are named in certificate no. 3 are present as well, and they are enforced by two more attendants (F and G). The clerk has changed, which is in accord with Görke’s statement that the role of the *kātib/muthbit al-samā* was not formalised even in lecture series with a common core of listeners.<sup>34</sup> A similar overlap of attendees can be found in other pairs, namely 1 and 13, 2 and 8, 4 and 10, 6 and 11 and 7 and 12. Such a seemingly systematic doubling of the presence of part of the audience at recitation of one and the same part of the book<sup>35</sup> has to be accounted for. Görke found such cases in his Baghdad manuscript and offered a plausible explanation:

The fact that it was not uncommon that participants missed parts of a lecture resulted in another phenomenon documented throughout the certificates. If they later intended to be able to transmit the whole work, participants who missed a lecture needed to catch up with the material. Therefore follow-up sessions were held for participants who missed some sessions or parts thereof. We find certificates which record readings of the same part of the book with the same *qāri* taking place

<sup>30</sup> I intend to publish the complete text of the *samā’āt* in a separate article together with an analysis of the persons mentioned in the certificates.

<sup>31</sup> In this case, *juz* is not identical to those *ajzā* which divide the text in the editions; there, *juz* 8 ends later in the text (see below).

<sup>32</sup> Görke 2011, 116f.; cf. 109.

<sup>33</sup> Görke 2011, 107f.

<sup>34</sup> Görke 2011, 107.

<sup>35</sup> Nos. 1 and 13 do not seem to refer to recitations of the same text, of course, because no. 13 is separated from the other twelve by two dozen folios.



only a month or two apart. In the latter of these lectures, people take part who usually attend the previous series of lectures, but missed the respective parts.<sup>36</sup>

This explanation does not hold for our pairs, however. The later session of pair 3 and 9 was no. 3, and only people are mentioned there *who had already attended the earlier one*. The dates are a clue that can help us solve the riddle, however: the second ones within all these pairs with a common stock of attendants (i.e. 13, 8, 10, 11 and 12) were either held in the same month as the first ones *or they were held earlier*. Table 1 shows the dates in a simplified notation where Muslim months are indicated by Roman numerals. (In three cases, the exact dates and weekdays are given in the certificates' text,<sup>37</sup> but as they have no relevance for clarifying the chronological questions, they have been omitted here.) Certificates 1 to 12 are written on each of fols. 13b to 15b, and only no. 1 is written on two pages (on two folios, in fact). No. 13 is written on fol. 37a. Nos. 1 and 13 are written immediately after the preceding text units of al-Kharā'if's

Table 1: Simplified dates and folios of the 13 certificates (a common stock of attendants can be found in nos. 1 & 13, 2 & 8, 3 & 9, 4 & 10, 7 & 12).

#1	III 486	(13b/14a)
#2	III 487	(14a)
#3	IX 487	(14a)
#4	X 490	(14a)
#5	XII 488	(14b)
#6	II 501	(14b)
#7	VII 499	(15a)
#8	III 487	(15a)
#9	VII 487	(15a)
#10	X 490	(15a)
#11	I 501	(15b)
#12	XII 488	(15b)
#13	III 486	(37b)

work respectively. In the table, a bold line is inserted when the chronological sequence of the dates is interrupted.

Such chronological disorder is quite surprising; the outward impression conveyed by folios 13b to 15b is that the twelve certificates are written one after the other from top to bottom on each page (which is the usual way in Arabic manuscripts). When one tries to find a reason for the disorder, a comparison of the text with the editions yields an initial insight. The text preceding certificate no. 1 on fol. 13b is from chapter 55, 'On the Hopes of Lovers' (*Dhikr amānī ahl al-hawā*); this chapter is the second of four chapters contained in part 8.<sup>38</sup> This makes the initial statements of the three certificates (nos. 8, 9 and 12), which are the only ones containing any explicit mention of the part of the book recited in the session, difficult to understand. The beginning of nos. 8 and 9 is: 'The whole *sixth part* of the work *I'tilāl al-qulūb* was heard by ...'; no. 12 begins: 'This whole part, which is the *sixth one* of the *I'tilāl al-qulūb*, was heard by ...'. A look at the text between certificate no. 12 (15b) and no. 13 (37b) shows that the text of chapters 47 to 49, which belong to part 6, is reproduced here (in addition to three other chapters that are not contained in the editions).

The reason for the duplicated pairs of certificates, whose chronology is inverted sometimes, and the fact that text belonging to part 8 precedes text from part 6 are obviously due to a bookbinder transposing certain folios, probably when the manuscript was rebound in Gotha, but possibly also prior to its acquisition by Ulrich Jasper Seetzen in Cairo in 1808 (cf. fol. 1a). The original order of the certificates must have been this one:

13, 8–12 (fol. 37b, fols. 15a–b: referring to readings of what is called 'part 6' in nos. 8, 9 and 12 and what is actually included in 'part 6' in both editions)

1–7 (fols. 13b–14b: referring to readings of text which is included in 'part 8' in the editions).

The jumping back of years between 7 and 8 can be explained this way, but similar irregularities are found before nos. 5, 7 and 12 as well. To explain these, we must try to find out what these three certificates all have in common. A first shared feature is that they are all the last certificate on the respective pages. A second feature is their similar handwriting. For a better understanding of certificates 5, 7 and 12 as well

<sup>36</sup> Görke 2011, 107.

<sup>37</sup> In certificates no. 3, 4 and 10.

<sup>38</sup> The last words preceding no. 1 are: *ḥaddaṭanā 'Abdallāh Ibn Burayda 'an 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb raḍīya Allāh 'anhu*. In the editions, this sentence is missing in al-Shaykh 2001, 339, but the preceding sentence can be found there; it is found in line 11 in al-Dimirdāsh 2000, 395.

as the remaining ones, an attempt to find out by how many people they were actually written by seems helpful. Using the information provided in the certificates is a first step. As we have seen in nos. 3 and 9, they sometimes contain a mention of the clerk who was chosen to record names and dates. These are the following in Ms. orient. A 627:

(1 and 13: no clerk mentioned)

2 and 8: Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn Muḥammad al-Wāsiṭī, known as Ibn al-‘Ukbarī

3 and 9: Sa‘dallāh Ibn ‘Alī Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn Ayyūb al-Bazzāz/Abū al-Qāsim ‘Ubaydallāh Ibn ‘Alī al-Makhrāmī (as seen above, roles changed; the clerk of one session was an ordinary attendant in the other)

4 and 10: al-Ḥusayn Ibn Naṣr Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khamīs al-Mawṣilī

(5: no clerk mentioned)

6 and 11: ‘Umar Ibn Zūfar Ibn Aḥmad

(7 and 12: no clerk, but a copyist mentioned.)

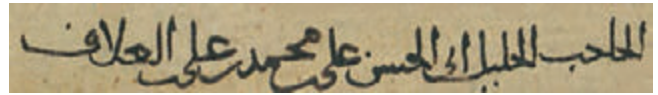
Instead of a clerk, the name of a copyist (*nāqil*) has been included in pair 7 and 12. The habit of transferring audience certificates from other manuscripts is frequently mentioned in the publications referred to above. When the copyist did not mention himself and the act of transferring, using such a transferred certificate to determine a *terminus ante quem* for the manuscript in which it is contained yields false datings, of course. In every certificate which has been transferred from another manuscript, the handwriting normally is not that of the clerk of the original certificate, although it cannot be excluded that a clerk sometimes transferred records made by himself. In nos. 7 and 12, the name of the copyist is stated in various lengths: he gives his name as ‘Abdalkhāliq Ibn Aḥmad Ibn ‘Abdalqādir Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Yūsuf initially, while he just calls himself Ibn Yūsuf the second time. A comparison of the handwriting in both certificates (see below) shows that they were written by the same person.

The common element of the attending authority Ibn al-‘Allāf is very useful for identifying different hands discernible in the certificates. In what follows, I have compared his name for each of the pairs of certificates that have a common stock of listeners. To facilitate comparison, letters from neighbouring lines and stains have been covered digitally; the reader who wishes to see the original script is referred to the facsimiles contained in the appendix.

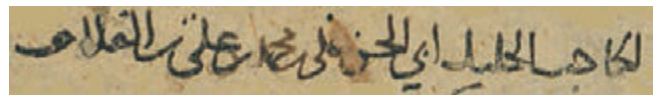
#### Pair no. 1 and 13

At first glance, the ways of writing are not identical; in the first example, some words are connected (e.g. ‘Alī Ibn) that are separated in the second one.

No. 1, line 1:

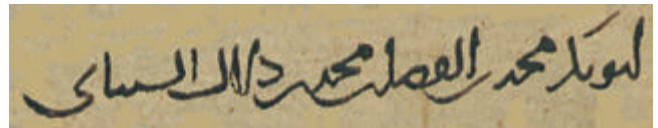


No. 13, line 1:

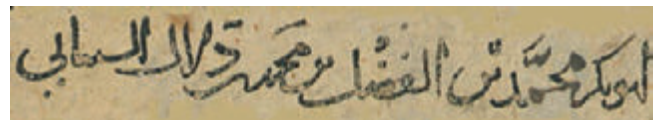


But the components of another name (Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn al-Faḍl Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Dallāl al-Shaybānī), in particular the last two elements, could show that both versions were probably written by the same person:

No. 1, line 3:



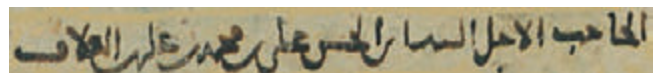
No. 13, line 2:



#### Pair no. 2 and 8

Although no. 8 is much more worn and smeared than its counterpart, the similarity is still quite obvious:

No. 2, line 1:



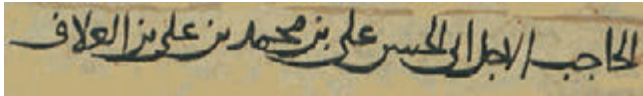
No. 8, lines 1–2:



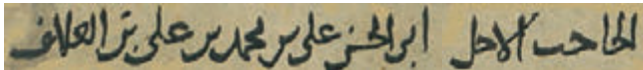
*Pair no. 3 and 9*

In this case, identical hands cannot be expected because the clerks are not identical. First the title and name of Ibn al-‘Allāf:

No. 3, line 1:

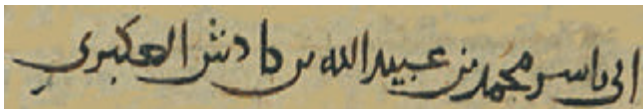


No. 9, lines 1–2:

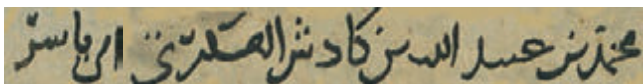


Another name (Abū Yāsir Muḥammad Ibn ‘Ubaydallāh Ibn Kādīsh al-‘Ukbarī) shows dissimilarity as well, especially in the second *mīm* of Muḥammad, the *hā’* of Allāh and the *kāf* and *shīn* of Kādīsh:

No. 3, line 2:

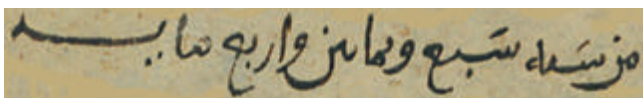


No. 9, line 3:

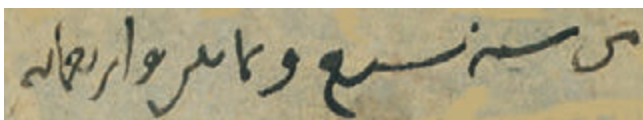


The ways in which the year 487 is written may suffice as final evidence of different hands:

No. 3, line 6:

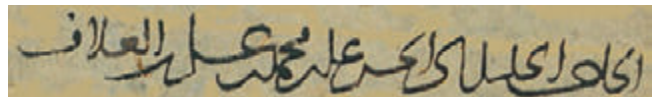


No. 9, line 9:

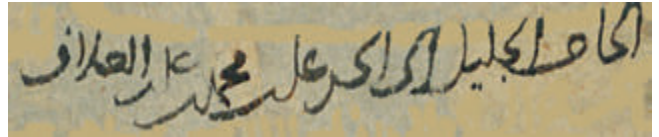
*Pair no. 4 and 10*

This pair shows agreement again in Ibn al-‘Allāf’s title and name, especially in the writing of the *jīm* in al-Ḥājib and the *lām-alif* in al-‘Allāf:

No. 4, line 1:

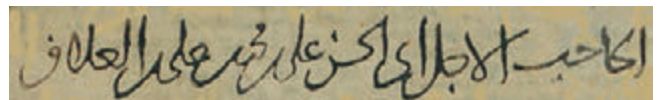


No. 10, line 1:

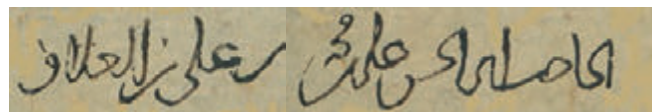
*Pair no. 6 and 11*

The impression of far-reaching agreement is especially conveyed by the second half of Ibn al-‘Allāf’s mentioning:

No. 6, line 5:

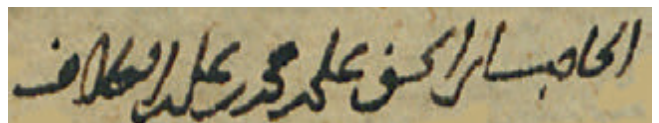


No. 11, lines 5-6:

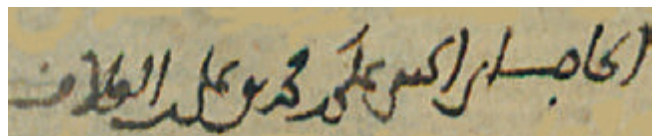
*Pair no. 7 and 12 (plus 5)*

This pair shows a comparable degree of agreement in a hand noticeably inclined to the right:

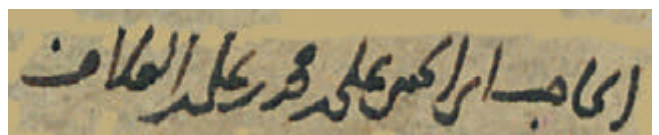
No. 7, line 1:



No. 12, line 2:



No. 5, line 1. No. 5 seems to be written by the same hand, too:



As a result, we can state with a high degree of probability that 1) the handwriting is identical whenever the clerk or copyist has the same name in the text; 2) the handwriting is different whenever different clerks are mentioned; 3) although neither the clerk nor the copyist is mentioned in three cases (nos. 1, 5 and 13), the identity of hands 1 and 13 and of hands 5, 7 and 12 is highly plausible. This latter observation makes it almost certain that no. 5 is a transferred *samā'*, too.

Nevertheless, we still need to ask ourselves whether other certificates than nos. 5, 7 and 12 have been transferred from other manuscripts containing the same text; this is of relevance to the question of determining a *terminus ante quem* for Ms. orient. A 627 and in understanding which sequence the paratexts are in. One clue can be found in the eulogies attached to the name of the attending master (*muqri'*), Ibn al-'Allāf, who died in 505 Hijra, whereas our certificates refer to sessions held in the years from 486 and 501. The eulogy *raḥimahu llāh*, 'May God have mercy upon him', is used in pair 7 and 12; this phrase is reserved for the deceased. This matches perfectly with the expressly transferred nature of both certificates, so we can conclude that they must have been copied after 505 Hijra (along with no. 5). The eulogy mentioned in nos. 4 and 10 is similarly clear: *ayyadahu llāh*, 'May God support him', refers in all probability to his mundane well-being. Among the remaining texts, nos. 6 and 11 do not attach a eulogy to Ibn al-'Allāf's name. The phrase used in nos. 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 13, *raḍiya llāhu 'anhu*, 'May God be pleased with him', is difficult to interpret: it is well known with reference to pious deceased Muslims, but to the best of

my knowledge, the question of whether it can be used for revered individuals who are still alive has not been dealt with yet in scholarly literature. Based on my own general experience and on assessments of several colleagues well acquainted with these phrases and *samā'* notes, I propose the working hypothesis that *raḍiya llāhu 'anhu* might well have been used for contemporaries. Accordingly, we may assume that the use of this eulogy is not a compelling reason for regarding the certificates containing it as transferred ones.

Based on all these observations and reasoning, the apparent chronological disorder in certificates which appear to have been written one after the other (with the exception of no. 13) can be explained in the following way:<sup>39</sup>

Leaving aside no. 7 for now, table 2 indicates that there were six different circles. Either part 8 was recited in the same month as part 6 (13 & 1, 8 & 2, 10 & 4), or one month later (11 & 6, 12 & 5) or two months later (12 & 5). The disorder in the manuscript can be explained by two different factors: 1) two separate cases of misbinding and 2) later transferring of certificates. As for the first factor, the text of part 6 including the first audience certificate referring to it (no. 13) was wrongly bound after the text of part 8 on an unknown date, and the folio bearing the text of the certificates which originally followed (fol. 15, nos. 8 to 12) was wrongly inserted after the folio which carried the certificates referring to part 8 (fol. 13b to 14b, nos. 1 to 7). The second reason for the chronological disorder is that certificates 5, 7 and 12 were added later; having established this from textual and palaeographical evidence, a fresh look at the visual evidence supports this hypothesis as they are squeezed under the preceding notes.

There is some more information that can be drawn from Ms. orient. A 627; a future publication will have to deal with the role of women and children in the lectures, the social background of the listeners, the possible difference between two terms for the clerk (*kātib* vis-à-vis *muthbit*), the place where readings of 'The Sickness of Hearts' took place, and what was really to be achieved by being present at the lessons. For the purposes of this article, suffice it to say that *samā'* notes can only be used for dating manuscripts

Table 2

Referring to part 6		Referring to part 8	
#13	III 486	#1	III 486
#8	III 487	#2	III 487
#9	VII 487	#3	IX 487
#10	X 490	#4	X 490
#11	I 501	#6	II 501
#12	XII 488 (transferred after 505)	#5	XII 488 (transferred after 505)
		#7	VII 499 (transferred after 505)

<sup>39</sup> If not stated otherwise, the certificates seem to have been written down immediately after the sessions. No. 11 is an exception: it is stated here in line 11 that the text was written down 'on another date' (*bi-ghayr hādihā al-tārīkh*); on the other hand, in no. 10, line 11, it is expressly stated that the certificate was written down on exactly the same day as the session (*bi-tārīkh al-samā'*).

with great care. If further evidence can be found for the assumption that the eulogy *raḍiya llāhu ‘anhu* was used with reference to living people, however, we could conclude that Ms. orient. A 627 was written before Rabī’ I 486 (April 1093 CE).<sup>40</sup> This is what the most ancient date looks like in the Gothanus:



Fol. 37b ult. It should be read as *Rabī’ al-awwal sanat sittin wa-tham[ā]nīna wa-arba’imi’atin*. The line is as mutilated by cutting and worn in the original manuscript as it looks here.

<sup>40</sup> Boris Liebrecht/Leipzig, in an email dated 26 May 2015, draws my attention to an obvious instance for *raḍiya llāhu ‘an* with respect to living persons in the manuscript Ms. 199 (fol. 5b) from the Daiber Collection I (cf. Hans Daiber [1988], *Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the Daiber Collection, Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo* [Tokyo], p. 88). The sentence reads: *su’āl bi-mā qawlukum raḍiya llāhu ‘ankum wa-naḥa’ a bi-‘ulūmikum al-muslimīn fī al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirā fī-mā dhakara al-Jalāl al-Suyūṭī fī fatāwīhi ...* ‘a question about your opinion – may God be pleased with you and may he cause benefit from your knowledge for the Muslims in this world and the hereafter – concerning what Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī mentions in his legal rulings ...’. Eight lines later, the answer is given. The page can be found on the Internet ([http://ricasdb.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/daiber/db\\_ShowImg\\_I.php?ms=199&txtno=&size=m&page=10](http://ricasdb.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/daiber/db_ShowImg_I.php?ms=199&txtno=&size=m&page=10)).

Fig. 1: fol. 13b.

قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ كَثِيرٍ الْمُصَنِّعِيُّ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَنِ عُمَرَ بْنِ  
 بِنِ حَسَّانَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سَيْبٍ عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ  
 عَنْهُ وَمَا كَانَ مِنْ قِصَّةِ نَضْرَةَ حِجَابٍ وَأَنَا إِذَا كَرِهْتُ  
 الْحَدِيثَ بِطَوِيلِهِ وَذَكَرْتُ مَا آتَى اللَّهَ حَالِ نَضْرَةَ حِجَابٍ  
 بِمَوْضِعِهِ إِنْ سَأَلَ اللَّهُ الْإِنْسَانَ إِلَى فِرَاسِهِ عَمْرًا رَجَمَهُ  
 اللَّهُ مَا أَوْضَحَهَا وَالِي ظَنَّهُ مَا أَصْدَقَهُ وَالِي قَبِيحُ مَا  
 أَرْتَكِبُهُ نَضْرَةَ مَا أَفْطَحَهُ حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ  
 صَلَحَ بَنُ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ قَالِدٍ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الصَّمَدِ بْنُ عَبْدِ  
 الْوَارِثِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَوْ دُرَّابِيُّ الْفَرَاتِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا  
 عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ بَرِيدٍ عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ  
 سَمِعَهُ يَقُولُ إِنْ شَاكَكَ بِهِ الْقَوَّةُ فِي الذُّبُولَةِ >  
 حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ قَالِدٍ حَدَّثَنَا  
 عَبْدُ الصَّمَدِ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْوَارِثِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَوْ دُرَّابِيُّ  
 أَبِي الْفَرَاتِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ بَرِيدٍ  
 قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ بِطَوِيلِ ذَاتِ  
 لَيْلَةٍ بِالْمَدِينَةِ >  
 وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي قَلْبِكَ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ  
 وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ  
 قَرَأَ هَذِهِ الْخُرُوجَ عَلَى الْمَلِكِ الْعَلِيِّ الْحَسَنِ عَلِيٍّ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلِيٍّ الْعَلَوِيِّ  
 رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ هَبَّ اللَّهُ مِنْ عِنْدِ الْحَسَنِ عَمْرًا رَجَمَهُ اللَّهُ  
 لَوْ بَدَأَ مُحَمَّدٌ الْعَلَوِيُّ ذَلِكَ السَّيِّئَ وَالسَّيِّئَ الْعَلَوِيُّ لَوْ بَدَأَ  
 وَالسَّيِّئَ لَوْ بَدَأَ الْحَسَنِ مُحَمَّدٌ أَحَدُ الْعَرَبِ وَيَأْتِي فِيهِمْ وَالسَّيِّئَ لَوْ بَدَأَ  
 أَحْسَنُ عَمْرًا الْفَرَجِ الْأَنْبِيَّ وَالسَّيِّئَ لَوْ بَدَأَ عَمْرًا رَأَى سَيِّئًا الْفَرَجِ













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