

Regourd, Anne, ed. *The Trade in Papers Marked with Non-Latin Characters: Documents and History*. Leiden: Brill. 2018. 268 pp. (ISBN: 978-9004357402)

In the closing centuries of the first millennium, paper launched its voyage as a new writing material from the Middle East to North Africa and then to Europe. The spread of Islam facilitated this movement to the Iberian Peninsula under the Andalusian Umayyad dynasty (756-1031), which in turn, is considered the Golden Age of Islam through the establishment of some of the first universities and libraries in Europe. Europe's first paper mills and paper production facilities were inaugurated in the eleventh century by Arab papermakers on the Iberian Peninsula. From there, the art of papermaking spread to the rest of Europe. In addition, Sicily was another point of entry to Europe for the techniques of papermaking. Significant accomplishments in literature, poetry, and architecture contributed remarkably to the burgeoning of culture(s), which forged the foundation of the European Renaissance in the following centuries. Promethean forces in all areas, including technologies regarding papermaking, were unleashed by the same Renaissance movement across Europe accelerating the technological and cultural unmooring of the West.

Anne Regourd, a senior researcher at the University of Copenhagen and an associée at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) of France, in this edited volume, focuses on global history through the paper trade. Regourd and her colleagues give the reader a *tour de force* vis-à-vis the evolving paper trade in North Africa, the Middle East, and the Horn of Africa. *The Trade in Papers Marked with Non-Latin Characters: Documents and History* is part of a series of volumes on Islamic manuscripts and books comprising a wide range of subjects ranging from paleography to calligraphy to the history of typography and lithography.

This edited volume by Anne Regourd contains well-delineated chapters in English and French. The nine chapters by seven experts in their respective fields treat paper as an essential source in the production of manuscripts in space and time and delve into a wide range of cases from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tunisia, the Ottoman Levant, Mecca, Persia, Russia, and Yemen.

The first chapter by Michaëlle Biddle discusses the Arabic script watermarks in three northern Nigerian manuscripts at the end of the nineteenth century. The watermarks in these manuscripts appear to have machine-made paper. Biddle describes the techniques behind its production and examines sources and dates to shed light on the shifting trade routes related to the political background of the region at that particular time in history. The second short chapter by the same author delves into a collection of Tunisian government documents written in July 1860 and February 1861 under the twelfth ruler of the Husainid dynasty. The documents are part of the Islamic manuscripts section of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at Princeton University Library.

Evelyn Kropf, in the third chapter, investigates the origins of the term *Alikurna* in the late nineteenth century Ottoman Levant classification of papers. The Ottomans used to get this variety of paper from Livorno/Liguria. Eventually, they began applying the term *Alikurna* to these watermarked imports, which is believed to be a corrupted version of the city or region mentioned above. In the nineteenth century, Italian paper producers recalled this denomination by a countermark in Arabic script placed on their paper products for the Ottoman market.

In the fourth chapter, Anne Regourd explores the period during which various *Abū Šubbāk* papers were used in Yemen and Ethiopia. Furthermore, Regourd relies on paper as the primary source for the history of commerce and instrumental in the reconstruction of trade routes. To this end, the author attempts to identify/classify various examples known to this date to provide a spectrum of their possible use in space and time. The following chapter by the same author takes a look at Bombay paper, which was manufactured in England and then distributed by Indian merchants first to Yemen and later to Ethiopia.

Francis Richard, in his chapter, argues that between 1850 and 1880, especially in Persia but also in the Ottoman Empire, it was not unusual to notice the use of paper imported from Russia, which had the particularity of being marked by a dry seal printed on each sheet. This period coincided with Russian colonial expansion in the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea regions. Subsequently, the author examines papers with Cyrillic and Armenian inscriptions which were exported to Persia from the Russian Empire.

The remaining three chapters illustrate specific cases from Iran and the Arabian Peninsula. Alice Shafi-Blanc, while studying manuscript illuminations during the Mozaffarid dynasty between 1314 and 1393 in southern Iran, notices the presence of a countermark in Arabic language and script. Although inconclusively, the author attempts to unravel the presence of possible European watermarked papermaking techniques in the Persian world. Jan Just Witkam focuses on paper through the practice of text copying in Mecca in the middle of the geopolitical quagmire of the tempestuous years of 1885-1889. Finally, the last chapter by Olga Yastrebova probes a collection of Persian *farmāns* issued by Faḥr 'Alī Šāh of the Qajar dynasty around the time of the Russo-Persian War in the Caucasus from 1804-1813 to show that paper produced in Russian paper mills along the Volga River was exported to Persia through the Caspian Sea.

This edited volume must be considered complementary to research on the trade/movement of paper and papermaking along the Silk Road. Paper was traded on the Silk Road and spread across Asia first to the Middle East and later into Europe. The means to produce paper traveled along the Silk Road in the seventh and eighth centuries. It is important to remember that the Islamic Middle East obtained the means of the production of paper after a Chinese Tang military expedition to Samarkand in the eighth century. Samarkand was probably the first place in the broader Middle East to develop papermaking technology. To

truly appreciate this edited volume, readers must be familiar with the political and economic history of the Middle East, North Africa in particular, and Eurasia/Silk Road in general.

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