


ROUNDTABLE

Editing and Printing the Arabic Book: Perspectives from South Asia

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In the first decades of the nineteenth century, British Calcutta stood as one of the most important cities in the world for the editing, printing, and selling of Arabic books. Before the famous Bulaq Press in Cairo was established in 1820, from 1801–19, European Orientalists and Indian *munshis* (scribes and clerks) and *maulvis* (Arabic, *mawlanas*), alongside one Yemeni scholar, had already printed 22 Arabic titles in movable type—many for the first time—at Fort William College in Calcutta (alongside 18 in Persian and 24 in Sanskrit).¹ By 1831, a published “List of Oriental Works for Sale at the Government Education Depository, near the Hindu College, Potoldanga, Calcutta,” advertised 27 Arabic, 31 Sanskrit, 36 English, 16 Hindi and Urdu, 30 Persian, and 29 Bengali books.² Far from a marginal undertaking, Arabic books represented a sizeable proportion of printing in Bengal at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Arabic printing continued to expand throughout the nineteenth century in the Indian subcontinent with the spread of the lithographic press. After its origins in colonial institutions, Arabic printing was carried forward by Indian-owned presses (Muslim and Hindu) and publishing houses patronized by princely states, such as in Lucknow, Bhopal, and Hyderabad. Far away from the traditionally-studied centers of Arabic print in Cairo and Beirut, Indian scholars and proofreaders worked diligently to produce critical editions of Arabic texts from manuscripts, supply madrasa students and teachers with Arabic texts, and publish new Arabic and Islamic scholarship.

This vast history of Arabic publishing has yet to gain sustained scholarly treatment in multiple streams of literature, which instead relegate the history of the Arabic book largely to the Middle East and Europe.³ Yet, Arabic printing in South Asia was far from insignificant or disconnected from developments elsewhere, even in the absence of a large Arabic-reading public. By exploring its history, scholars can develop a deeper and more empirical understanding of a wide array of questions, including: the role of ‘ulama’ as editors and sponsors of print projects; the relationships between Orientalists and Indian scholars; the

¹ The Yemeni scholar was Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Shirwani al-Yamani (d.1840). See Ahmed Saleh al-Mesri, “Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Shirwani al-Yamani (1200-156AH/1785-1840): His Contribution to Oriental Studies in British India,” (PhD Dissertation, Erfurt University, 2015). For the list of published books, see Sisir Kumar Das, *Sahibs and Munshis: An Account of the College of Fort William* (New Delhi: Orion Publications, 1960), Appendix E.

² Moonshee Ramdhun Sen, ed., *Inayah: A Commentary on the Hidayah* (Calcutta: Education Press, 1831), vol. 4, 1–3.

³ The most comprehensive study in this regard is Hifz al-Rahman Muhammad ‘Umar al-Islahi, ed., *Dawr al-Hind fi Nashr al-Turath al-‘Arabi* (Riyadh: Wizarat al-Thaqafa wa al-‘Ilam, Majalla al-‘Arabiyya, 2011). For a massive bibliography of Arabic books published in South Asia until 1980, see Ahmed Khan, *Mu‘jam al-Matbu‘at al-‘Arabiyya fi Shibh al-Qarra al-Hindiyya al-Bakistaniyya mundhu Dukhul al-Matba‘a Ilayha hatta ‘Am 1980* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Waṭaniyya, 2000).

construction of Orientalist and colonial knowledge of Islam and Muslims; the development of critical editions and new conventions in Arabic books; the place of lithography in modern Arabic print culture; the emergence of transregional Arabic reading publics; and more broadly, the pedagogical and intellectual concerns of Muslims in South Asia as they developed new understandings of Arabic and Islamic scholarship, law, politics, literature, and modern sciences.

In the following discussion, I highlight important aspects of the history of the Arabic book in South Asia and consider several questions regarding the printing, editing, and consumption of Arabic books. I also briefly touch on the reach of Indian printing outside South Asia, in territories of the Ottoman Empire, as well as give comparative notes on printing in the Middle East. Finally, I offer brief reflections on print and manuscript culture as it pertained to Arabic and Islamic scholarship in South Asia.

Arabic printing in South Asia largely began after 1800 in Calcutta through European, Indian, and Arab figures affiliated with the Calcutta Madrasa (est. 1780), the Asiatic Society (est. 1784), and Fort William College (est. 1800).⁴ Like early printing in Istanbul and Cairo, Arabic publishing in Bengal was initially subject to the interests of state (or colonial) officials. However, in Bengal, the charge was led by Orientalists, missionaries, and—to a considerable degree—Indian and Arab scholars. As such, it took on a different hue than the early technocratic print projects of Cairo and Istanbul. In fact, as discussed below, the Indian story contrasts significantly with Egypt's print culture as described by Ahmed El Shamsy.⁵

The pedagogical imperative—for both Indians and Europeans—of training in Arabic and Islamic sciences (for service in the colonial state) was the major impetus for the publication of Arabic books in this period. Most of the titles printed were listed as “classical” texts, but some were listed as “modern.” The idea of the “classical” explicitly overlapped with Indian madrasa curricula: for example, a compilation of five Arabic grammar texts published in 1805 was advertised in the English title page as “the first part of a classical education through all the seminaries of Asia.”⁶ Hence, many madrasa staples were published including: books of arithmetic, grammar, and logic, such as the *al-Qawa'id al-Mantiqiyya fi Sharh al-Risala al-Shamsiyya* (The Qootbee: A Celebrated Treatise on Logic); and Islamic law (discussed below). In addition, other “classical” texts were also published, including: dictionaries, such as the *al-Qamus al-Muhit* (The Kamoos) of Muhammad al-Firuzabadi (d. 1414); histories, such as the *'Aja'ib al-Maqdur fi Akhbar Taymur* (The History of Timour in the Original Arabic) of Ibn 'Arabshah (d. 1450); texts of poetry and literature, including the *Maqamat al-Hariri* (The Adventures of Aboo Zyde of Surooj) by Abu Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Hariri (d. 1122) and *Alf Layla wa Layla* (The 1001 Nights); and newer texts on Arabic literature and letter-writing by Ahmad al-Yamani, the Yemeni instructor of Arabic at Fort William. As late as 1848, students were still tested on most of these titles at the Calcutta Madrasa.⁷

From the outset, the printing of “classical” books was accompanied by an attempt to produce something resembling a critical edition. Although this term was not used, the contents were usually described as being “accurate” and “correct,” “collated” (*muqābala*) with multiple manuscript copies. For instance, Arabic grammars were described as being “carefully collated with the most ancient and most accurate manuscripts which could be found in India.”⁸

⁴ In Graham Shaw's list of 368 Calcutta publications (1777–99), only a few titles are in Arabic, including most notably *al-Sirajiyya* (1792) on Islamic inheritance law. See Graham Shaw, *Printing in Calcutta to 1800* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1981).

⁵ Ahmed El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020).

⁶ John Baillie et al., eds., *Majmu'at al-Kutub al-Mutadawala li-Dars al-Nahw* (Calcutta: The Honorable Company's Press, 1805).

⁷ *Annual Reports of the Hindu College, Patshalla, Branch School, Sanscrit College, Calcutta Mudrussa, Russapuglah School, and Normal and Model Schools, for 1847–48* (Calcutta: J.C. Sherriff, Military Orphan Press, 1849), Appendix, Mudrissa College.

⁸ Baillie, *Majmu'at al-Kutub*.

The *Maqamat al-Hariri* was collated with eight manuscripts, and the *al-Qamus al-Muhit* with eleven.⁹ However, in the early nineteenth century, editors did not often share details about manuscript copies or list textual variants in the main body.

These early imprints contain unique features significant to the history of the Arabic book more generally. One such aspect was the closely intertwined work of Orientalists and Indian scholars in producing critical editions,¹⁰ a dynamic distinct from the context described by El Shamsy in which Orientalist and Arab editions were “mostly carried out independently.”¹¹ At Fort William, the proofreading, collation, and editing was usually completed by Indian scholars, who often, but not always, worked under the direction of an Orientalist. Sometimes, Europeans had Indian scholars edit the texts and wrote a preface in English themselves (in addition to the editors’ own Arabic or English preface). Less commonly, Orientalists—such as the Austrian Aloys Sprenger (d. 1893)—also independently and/or jointly edited texts with Indian scholars. Later, in the 1930s, the German Fritz Krenkow (d. 1963) served as a member of the editorial team at Da’irat al-Ma’arif al-’Uthmaniyya publishing house in Hyderabad.¹² Hence, this makes it difficult to clearly distinguish between “Orientalist” and “native” conventions of editing and publishing. Many of these first editions were re-printed in lithograph by Indian commercial presses later in the nineteenth century, sometimes with new enhancements to the original text.

Furthermore, from the earliest decades, Indian (or Arab) editors were described by their Orientalist counterparts as possessing strong scholarly expertise; they were not mere proofreaders. Usually, the editors’ contributions were introduced in the title page with phrases such as “*taṣḥīh*” (proofreading/editing). Sometimes, they were given the stand-alone title “*muṣaḥḥiḥ*” (proofreader/editor).¹³ In addition, their titles as *munshis*, *’ālims*, and *muftis* were often highlighted and praised with lengthy epithets in the preface and title pages. The terms “*ṣāhib al-taḥqīq*” and “*muḥaqqiq*” (editor) were also used occasionally, a century before the Egyptian philologist Ahmad Zaki Pasha (d. 1934) popularized this particular title.¹⁴ As an example, the two Indian editors of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* were praised for their “learned industry” by the Fort William instructor M. Lumsden in his preface—and one of them, Maulwi Jan ‘Ali, even compiled and published an Arabic-Persian dictionary of its vocabulary in an accompanying volume. Similarly, for publishing the *al-Qamus al-Muhit* dictionary, Yemeni editor Ahmad al-Yamani was praised for consulting multiple manuscripts and lexicons, in addition to preparing the press type and inserting the vowel points himself. This intellectual labor and the descriptions thereof make it difficult to distinguish between proofreaders and editors, as the work involved both proofreading the text blocks and editing (and enhancing) texts as scholarly authorities.

Another unique aspect of early Indian print was the prolific publication of (mainly Hanafi) legal texts in both letterpress and lithograph decades before presses in Cairo and Istanbul undertook such publications.¹⁵ These were important for Indian muftis and British judges in the larger context of the Regulating Act of 1772, which expanded the East India Company’s jurisdiction to native inhabitants and required the use of native (including Islamic) law in

⁹ Maulavi Jan Ali and Maulavi Allah-Dad, eds., *Al-Maqamat al-Haririyyah* (Calcutta: The Honorable Company’s Press, 1809); Ahmad Yamani, ed., *The Ocean: An Arabic Dictionary* (Calcutta: The Press of the Editor, 1817), vol. 1.

¹⁰ For more in this vein, see Susannah Heschel and Umar Ryad, eds., *The Muslim Reception of European Orientalism: Reversing the Gaze* (London: Routledge, 2018).

¹¹ El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics*, 237.

¹² Mohsin Malik Ali, “Modern Islamic Historiography: A Global Perspective from South Asia” (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2022), 283–85.

¹³ *Al-Fatawa al-’Alamgiriyya* (Calcutta: Education Press, 1828), vol. 1, Introduction.

¹⁴ For instance, see Ramadhana Sena et al., eds., *Kitab ‘Inaya Sharh Hidaya* (Calcutta: The Education Press, 1830–1831), vol. 3, 674.

¹⁵ Richard N. Verdery, “The Publications of the Būlāq Press under Muḥammad ‘Alī of Egypt,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91, no. 1 (1971): 129–32; Kemai Beydilli, *Türk Bilim ve Matbaacılık Tarihinde Mühendishane, Mühendishane Matbaası ve Kütüphanesi (1776–1826)* (Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1995), 253–74.

specific legal domains. This created institutional and educational demand for access to Islamic legal scholarship. Many of the texts printed included canonical texts of the Hanafi school, but they also included lesser known and new compilations. The texts included: the *Sirajiyya* (1792) on inheritance law by Siraj al-Din Sajawandi (d. 1203); the canonical *al-Hidaya* (1818) of the Central Asian jurist Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani (d. 1197); *al-Fatawa Hammadiyya* (1825); the seminal *al-Ashba wa al-Naza'ir* (1826) by the Ottoman Egyptian jurist Ibn Nujaym (d. 1563); a newly composed legal compilation, *al-Fatawa al-Sirajiyya* (1827); *Fatawa Fusul al-Ihkam fi Usul al-Ahkam* (1827) by a medieval Central Asian jurist; *Durr al-Mukhtar* (1827) by the Ottoman Syrian jurist al-Haskafi (d. 1677); *Fatawa Qadi Khan* (1835) by another Central Asian, Qadi Khan (d. 1196); and the famous *Fatawa al-'Alamgiriyya* (1828–35), composed in the reign of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707). Two commentaries of the *Hidaya* were also printed, including *'Inaya Sharh al-Hidaya* (Inayah: A Commentary on the Hidayah, 1831) by Akmal al-Din Babarti (d. 1384) and *al-Kifaya* (1832) by Jalal al-Din al-Khwarizmi.

These works have largely been overlooked by scholars of colonial and Anglo-Muhammadan law, who focus on English translations of Islamic texts to push a narrative of the increasing codification and narrowing of Islamic law under colonial rule.¹⁶ However, engaging with the book histories of legal knowledge at an empirical level can reveal a far more complex story than the inevitable emergence of a codified Anglo-Muhammadan law imparted by colonial officials. For instance, not everyone involved was even Muslim: at least two bulky titles, the *al-Ashba wa al-Naza'ir* and the *'Inaya Sharh al-Hidaya*, were edited by a Hindu *munshi*, Babu Ramdhan Sen, Assistant Librarian at the Asiatic Society, who oversaw a team of *maulvis*.¹⁷ There were also other textual innovations: the *Hidaya* with its commentary *al-Kifaya* published by Hakim 'Abd al-Majid and a team of eight *maulvis*, including a chief judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*), used a new format where a dividing horizontal line was used to separate the *Hidaya* and the commentary *al-Kifaya* on each page (rather than having the commentary in the margins or integrated in one main text block). Altogether, these books are indicative of a larger textual and social sphere occupied by Indian *munshis* and muftis in the early nineteenth century than unilateral narratives of colonial law may suggest. Paying due attention to the production and circulation of these books is crucial to reconstructing the intellectual and legal worlds of jurists in nineteenth-century South Asia.¹⁸

The history of Arabic printing in Calcutta in the first decades of the nineteenth century thus contains many distinctive elements with important implications for the history of the Arabic book. This stands equally true for the subsequent history of Indian-owned presses, which began to emerge in South Asia in the 1820s and 1830s and increased dramatically from the 1850s and 1860s onwards.¹⁹ In the remaining pages, I briefly touch on several themes that speak to both South Asian and Arabic print history more generally.

First, Arabic publishing was not exclusively the preserve of Europeans or Muslims. In addition to the limited presence of Hindu editors, even non-Muslim presses were incentivized to publish and sell for an Arabic-reading market in India, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. From the colonial records of Indian publications from 1848 to 1852, we can see Arabic titles in grammar, morphology, and medicine published by non-Muslim presses.²⁰ For example, a primer on Arabic morphology was published alongside Sanskrit

¹⁶ See the seminal article by Scott Kugle, "Framed, Blamed and Renamed: The Recasting of Islamic Jurisprudence in Colonial South Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 35, no. 2 (2001): 269–75.

¹⁷ Another Hindu Brahmin, Shama Charan Sircar, also taught at the Calcutta Madrasa and wrote on Islamic law. Nandini Chatterjee, "Un islam non colonisé. Le champ textuel de la shari'ā et le système juridique colonial en Inde," *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle*, 64 (2022), 80.

¹⁸ For an example, see Chatterjee, "Un islam non colonisé."

¹⁹ Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007), 64.

²⁰ "On the Native Presses in the North Western Provinces," *Selections from the Records of Government, North Western Provinces, Volume 3, Part 12-21* (Agra, India: Secundra Orphan Press, 1855), 237–306.

primers at a Benares press owned by “Beer Singh, son of Moonshee Boodh Singh Khuttree” in 1849.²¹ Later, Arabic publishing flourished at the lithographic press of the great Hindu proprietor Munshi Naval Kishore (d. 1895), who employed teams of Muslim scholars and calligraphers to edit and publish books in Lucknow. In fact, Naval Kishore may have been, in the words of Ulrike Stark, “the first publisher to render the holy book of Islam accessible to a mass audience,” as he employed master calligraphers and churned out at least 17 editions of the Qur’anic *muṣḥaf* in the nineteenth century.²² In addition, a bibliography of Naval Kishore Press lists 310 titles in Arabic out of about 3,600 titles.²³ Another list includes at least 130 Arabic titles, including previously unpublished titles in a range of subjects.²⁴ Altogether, this demonstrates how the market for Arabic books attracted investment from non-Arab and non-Muslim presses. It underscores the importance of examining Arabic print not only in terms of reading publics of a nationalist kind, but also the competitive “religious economies” of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁵

Second, while the lithographic printing of Arabic books did exhibit continuities with manuscript culture, it also displayed more novel features; it would arguably be a mistake to exclude lithography from the story of the modern Arabic book. Indeed, only recently have Arabic publishers in South Asia begun freeing themselves of their reliance on copies of lithographed prints from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁶ Consider for instance the work of the renowned hadith scholar Ahmad ‘Ali Saharanpuri (d. 1880), an owner of the Matba‘ Ahmadi press.²⁷ Saharanpuri published the first critical editions of the canonical hadith compilations *al-Jami’ al-Sahih* of Imam al-Bukhari (between 1848 and 1854) as well as the *Jami’ Tirmidhi* of Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 892). In *al-Jami’ al-Sahih*, Saharanpuri not only verified the text from at least ten manuscripts of the *Sahih* and several other commentaries, but he also identified textual variants in the text itself. This level of detail was not yet prevalent in Arabic critical editions, even those produced by Orientalists. Saharanpuri also wrote a lengthy prolegomenon where he provided a biography of compiler Imam Bukhari (d. 870), an overview of hadith sciences and terminology, and listed the nearly 70 works he consulted in preparing this edition.²⁸ Saharanpuri’s authorial voice as a scholar of hadith and the editor of the text was paramount in helping it achieve widespread use in Indian madrasas to this day.²⁹

Third, recognizing the scholarly and editorial labor in lithographic publications opens larger lines of inquiry regarding the much-discussed question of the relationship between print and modern Muslim scholarship (‘ulama’) in South Asia. Although it is commonly recognized that modern Muslim movements (in Deoband, Aligarh, Lucknow) heavily utilized print technology, it is less recognized that the enterprise of Arabic printing depended in

²¹ Ibid., 260; see also Stark, *An Empire of Books*, 62.

²² Ulrike Stark, “Calligraphic Masterpiece, Mass-Produced Scripture: Early Qur’an Printing in Colonial India,” in *Manuscript and Print in the Islamic Tradition*, ed. Scott Reese (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 161.

²³ “Naval Kishore Press Bibliographie,” <https://biblio.uni-heidelberg.de/navalkishore/Search/Results?filter%5B%D=language%3A%22Arabic%22> (accessed 15 October 2022).

²⁴ See Muhammad Ajmal ‘Ayyub al-Islahi, “Matba‘at Nawalkishur wa-Juhuduha fi Nashr al-Kitab al-‘Arabi,” in *Dawr al-Hind*, 100, 87–118.

²⁵ Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840–1915* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁶ Large-scale publishers such as Maktabat al-Bushra, an independent non-profit trust in Karachi have only emerged in the last decades to edit and publish computer-composed Arabic books and supply them in huge quantities to madrasas across South Asia and beyond.

²⁷ Muntasir Zaman, *Hadith Scholarship in the Indian Subcontinent: Ahmad ‘Ali Saharanpuri and the Canonical Hadith Literature* [n.a.] UK: Qurtuba Books, 2021). I am grateful to the author for providing me with his book.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ For a comparison of Saharanpuri’s edition and the Ottoman edition, see Mehmet Özşenel, “Sahih-i Buhari Neşirleri: Seharenpuri Neşri ile II. Abdülhamid Neşrinin Karşılaştırılması,” *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 11 no. 21 (2013): 457–84.

large part on the Muslim scholars themselves.³⁰ The laborious and skill-intensive tasks of obtaining manuscripts and then drafting, editing, and publishing them demanded the expertise of scholars with strong fluency in “classical” madrasa education. This holds especially true for presses patronized by princely states such as Matba‘ Siddiqi in Bhopal and Da‘irat al-Ma‘arif al-Uthmaniyya (est. 1888) in Hyderabad.³¹ While commercial presses such as Naval Kishore often printed texts of pedagogical or canonical value, as guided by their markets, the presses supported by princely states could afford to publish less common titles without being beholden to the market. The Da‘irat al-Ma‘arif even set up a list of criteria for selecting unprinted Arabic manuscripts from the seventeenth to fifteenth centuries CE for publication. To do so, they relied on the expertise of a wide range of individuals, many of whom were trained in classical Arabic.

Finally, Arabic printing in South Asia cannot be disconnected from contemporaneous developments in the Middle East or historical patterns of interaction in the Indian Ocean. Yemeni scholars in particular contributed to printing projects at Fort William College, the press of Siddiq Hasan Khan (d. 1890) at Bhopal, and Da‘irat al-Ma‘arif, among others.³² After a century of such interactions, it should be no surprise that the first Arabic account of the process of editing and preparing manuscripts for publication was written at Da‘irat al-Ma‘arif by the Yemeni philologist ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Mu‘allimi (d. 1966) in the 1930s. In addition, Arabic books were sold outside South Asia to markets in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. Historical catalogs of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century libraries and book collections prominently feature Indian prints.³³ The volume of publishing in India was enough to trigger Ottoman anxieties and occasional calls to ban or surveil “harmful” texts published there.³⁴ It also opened new opportunities for Indian scholars: as is well known, the famous Indian scholar Siddiq Hasan Khan (d. 1890) sent his books to cities across the Middle East and even gifted his Arabic *tafsīr*, *Fath al-Bayan fi Maqasid al-Qur‘an*, to the Ottoman sultan ‘Abd al-Hamid II, who later awarded him with the *Mecidi Nişanı* (the Mecidi Order) in 1877.³⁵

In conclusion, the rich variety of themes emerging from Arabic printing in South Asia all point to the importance of engaging Arabic and Islamic book history with due attention to the specific but transregional contexts of publication and consumption, rather than “flattening the Islamicate world into one unit.”³⁶ Indian Arabic publications cannot be considered as external or peripheral to the history of Arabic print; they are an integral element of a transregional enterprise. For even though South Asia did not boast a numerically large Arabic-reading public, it was home to significant and pioneering developments in Arabic printing by Indian, Arab, and Orientalist scholars. These were accompanied by larger intellectual transformations, such as Indian historians and hadith scholars’ turn towards Arabic genres of historical writing, as discussed by Mohsin Malik Ali in his contribution to this roundtable; Indian engagement with the Arab Nahda, as discussed by Roy Bar Sadeh; and

³⁰ See, for instance, Zubayr Ahmad Faruqi, *Musahamat Dar al-‘Ulum bi-Diyuband fi-l-Adab al-‘Arabi: Hatta ‘Am 1400 H/1980 M* (New Delhi: Dar al-Faruqi, 1990).

³¹ Omar Khalidi, “Da‘irat Al-Ma‘arif al-Uthmaniyyah: A Pioneer in Manuscript Publishing in Hyderabad, Deccan, India,” *MELA Notes*, no. 80 (2007): 27–32; Muhammad Mubin Iqbal, “Musahamat Da‘irat al-Ma‘arif al-Uthmaniyya bi-Haydarabad fi Nashr al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya fi al-Hind,” in *Dawr al-Hind*, 119–36.

³² Al-Mesri, “Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Shirwani al-Yamani.”

³³ For an example, see the catalog for an early twentieth-century collection in Mecca: ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Ali al-Raqib al-Thubayti, *‘Abd al-Sattar al-Dihlawi Hayatu wa Atharu (1286–1355h)* (Beirut: Jadawel, 2020), 108–147.

³⁴ See for instance, Cumhuriyet Bakanlığı Devlet Arşivi (BOA), DH.MKT.918.15 and DH.MKT.1465.96.

³⁵ Siddiq Hasan Khan, *Dhukhr al-Muhti min Adab al-Mufti*, ed. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Isa (Beirut: Dar ibn Hazm, 2000), 208–11. For his letter of gratitude (*teşekkürname*) upon receiving the Mecidi award (translated into Ottoman Turkish), dated Rajab 1296 (1879), see (BOA) HR.TO.387.90 and HR.TO.387.92. Thereafter, his book was published by Bulaq in Cairo in 1882 (in addition to his press in Bhopal).

³⁶ Kathryn A. Schwartz, “Book history, print, and the Middle East,” *History Compass* 15 (2017): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12434>.

in other fields of knowledge more broadly.³⁷ The search for a modern Arabic public in a liberalist or nationalist sense should not occlude the resiliently influential Arabic engagements that blossomed in South Asia over the past two centuries.³⁸

With careful attention to the transregional collaborations between Indian, Arab, and Orientalist scholars and editors, the flow of books from and into South Asia, and the larger “religious economies” and marketplaces in which books were printed, scholars can begin to recover a major, missing column of Arabic history and scholarship. They can begin to interrogate how the production and distribution of Arabic texts dissolved real or imagined boundaries between empires, nation-states, linguistic communities, and reading publics.³⁹ Paying closer attention to the printers, editors, and the physical books themselves can help contextualize the history of Indian Arabic, and Arabic more generally, within global histories of the modern book.

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³⁷ See also: M. G. Zubaid Ahmad, *The Contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic Literature* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1946/ 1968); M. Qasim Zaman, “Commentaries, Print and Patronage: Hadith and the Madrasas in Modern South Asia,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 62, no. 1 (2009): 60–81.

³⁸ J. Barton Scott and Brannon D. Ingram, “What is a Public? Notes from South Asia,” *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 38, no. 3 (2015): 357–370.

³⁹ In this line, see Nile Green, “Journeymen, Middlemen: Travel, Transculture, and Technology in the Origins of Muslim Printing,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 2 (2009): 203–24.

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