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Mevlevi Manuscripts, 1268–c. 1400

A Study of the Sources

Cailah Jackson

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“This important study of Mevlevi manuscripts is an outstanding piece of scholarship, based on a close examination of numerous often neglected manuscript sources. It sheds new light not just on the manuscripts themselves, but also the early Mevlevi community—its artists, artisans, and patrons, and their intellectual interests. It makes a significant contribution both to art historical scholarship and to the growing field of Islamic manuscript studies, and will be required reading for anyone interested in medieval Anatolia or Sufism.”

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“Cailah Jackson’s *Mevlevi Manuscripts, 1268–c. 1400: A Study of the Sources* is an invaluable resource for the study of Rumi and his followers. Many long-held assumptions of academic scholars, and not only general readers, can now be safely debunked on the evidence of this meticulous study of all relevant manuscripts and the profile Jackson has built of the library of Rumi’s followers. The latter is an indispensable resource for understanding their priorities and preferences regarding mysticism, religion and other forms of knowledge.”

—Professor Jawid Mojaddedi, *Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA*

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For Duraïd and Elian

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATIONS, TRANSLATIONS AND DATING

Arabic and Persian text in the catalogue entries and footnotes of Chap. 2 is fully transliterated according to guidelines suggested by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES). In this chapter, Islamic dates and bibliographical citations are transliterated following IJMES guidelines but without any diacritical marks aside from ‘*ayn*’ (‘) and ‘*hamza*’ (‘). In the rest of the book, names and titles of Arabic or Persian origin are also transliterated without diacritical marks, other than ‘*ayn*’ and ‘*hamza*’.

For the sake of accuracy and consistency in discussing this complex multilingual environment, most names and titles are transliterated according to Persian spellings, given that the Mevlevi were primarily Persian speakers (for example, ‘Masnavi’, rather than ‘Mathnawi’, and ‘al-Qunavi’ rather than ‘al-Qunawi’). However, words of Turkish origin such as ‘bey’ and ‘celebi’ are spelt according to modern Turkish orthography. The epithet ‘al-Mawlawi’ is transliterated following Persian conventions when it is part of a name or inscription in the catalogue, but the Turkish spelling of ‘Mevlevi’ rather than ‘Mawlawiyya’ or ‘Maulavi’ is preferred for general discussion of the Sufi group.

Words that have entered common English usage, such as ‘Qur’an’ and ‘madrasa’, are not italicised. Arabic or Persian words that are not in common English usage, such as ‘*zāwiya*’ or ‘*khvān*’, are italicised and transliterated throughout and translated in the first instance. They are pluralised using the English suffix ‘-s’, unless the plural form is well known in scholarship (e.g. *ḥāfiẓs*, not *ḥuffāẓs*, but ‘*ulamā*’, not ‘*ālīms*’). All transliterations and translations (and inevitable remaining errors) are the author’s unless otherwise noted.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Abstract This chapter introduces the scope and rationale for this book and discusses the notion of ‘manuscript culture’, which foregrounds manuscripts as portable, functional objects and highlights the people that interacted with them. The chapter also provides a brief overview of Rumi’s life and works, and the history of the early Mevlevi in the environment of late medieval Konya. Finally, it discusses modern scholarship related to Mevlevi manuscripts and key primary sources relevant to the period, and gives an overview of the succeeding chapters.

Keywords Mevlevi • Rumi • *Masnavi* • Medieval • Konya • Historiography

From the earliest days of the formation of a Sufi group devoted to the teachings of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273), the production, consumption and dissemination of texts—particularly Rumi’s *Masnavi-yi ma‘navi* (Spiritual Couplets)—have been central to Mevlevi identity and religious practice. Throughout their history, the Mevlevi have been involved in the production and patronage of manuscript material, some of which is beautifully decorated and studied in depth elsewhere. This publication takes a closer look at this crucial aspect of early Mevlevi life, by focusing on manuscripts, decorated or not, that can be securely linked in some way to the Mevlevi in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In its focus on manuscripts, this book has two primary aims. The first is to make a substantial group of primary sources more accessible to scholars who are interested in fields such as Sufi culture and history, Anatolian history, Islamic manuscript studies and the Islamic religious and intellectual history of the later medieval period. In doing so, the present study builds on several previous publications, discussed below, that have listed manuscripts authored by Rumi and related Mevlevi authors. Many of these works were written several decades ago, and none are in the English language. While this book is, of course, indebted to these important studies, it also updates key information and includes numerous manuscripts that have not been sufficiently acknowledged in discussions of early Mevlevi history.

The second aim of the book is to provide a contextualisation of these primary sources in connection with the notion of ‘manuscript culture’. This concept prioritises manuscripts as portable, functional objects and emphasises those who engaged with these objects and in what ways (i.e. as craftspeople, patrons, readers and later owners). Manuscript culture is also concerned with the identities of these individuals and what the inscriptions they left behind can tell us about their lives and the wider socio-cultural and intellectual history of, in this case, the early Mevlevi. Many of the manuscripts discussed in this book have been examined by scholars in relation to their texts and what implications these may have for better understanding of the writings of Rumi and his circle, as well as their development, dissemination, reception and role. Such scholars include Badi‘ al-Zaman Furuzanfar, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Franklin Lewis, Leonard Lewisohn, R. A. Nicholson and Tawfiq Subhani. The book shifts its focus away from the words of Rumi and others, and towards early Mevlevi manuscript culture. In doing so, it takes a broader view of the manuscript corpus, by including any material copied, read or owned by someone who identified themselves as a Mevlevi, usually through the use of the ‘al-Mawlawi’ epithet, as well as material copied in ‘Mevlevi’ locations.¹

This volume explores the idea of early Mevlevi manuscript culture through an examination of the inscriptions of over 140 manuscripts dated (or dateable) between 1268 and around 1400 (the latest is dated 1405).

¹Further criteria for inclusion in (or exclusion from) the catalogue are discussed at the beginning of Chap. 2.

The chronological scope corresponds roughly to the period before the Ottomans absorbed much of the Anatolian peninsula into their nascent empire. While the scope could certainly be extended in future studies, the approximately 140 years covered yield a substantial amount of material to analyse. The inscriptions in the manuscripts include colophons, endowment notes and ex libris indicators. Where possible, the evidence from this material will be supplemented and supported by information gleaned from other primary and secondary sources, which are discussed below. Due to limited space, manuscript images have been restricted to those that have been particularly challenging to read, with the hope that other scholars may help to decipher them.

Before embarking on the main parts of this publication, the following sections give a brief overview of Rumi's life and texts, the early Mevlevis and their place in history and scholarship.

1.1 RUMI AND THE EARLY MEVLEVIS: HISTORY AND SCHOLARSHIP

The Mevlevis are a Sufi, or dervish, group that emerged in late thirteenth-century Konya, in present-day central Turkey, as followers of the scholar and poet Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (for the most thorough and recent examination of Rumi's life and works, see Lewis 2008). Rumi—one of the most well-known and celebrated Sufi poets in Islamic history—arrived in Anatolia with his mother, Mu'mina Khatun (d. between 1222 and 1229), and father, Baha' al-Din Valad (d. 1231), having fled their home of Balkh (Afghanistan) with the advent of the Mongol invasions in the mid-1210s (ibid., pp. 64–71). The family lived in many places in Rum (the parts of Anatolia ruled by the Seljuks and other Turkmen principalities), such as Kayseri and Karaman, before finally settling in Konya in 1228, where Baha' al-Din, a prominent Hanafi preacher, spent the rest of his days teaching in a madrasa—a position that Rumi eventually took over several years after his father died. After the death of Baha' al-Din Valad, Rumi became a *murīd* (disciple or follower) of one of his father's students, Sayyid Burhan al-Din Muhaqqiq al-Tirmizi (d. ca 1240). Burhan al-Din tutored Rumi in both the traditional Islamic sciences and the Sufi path. Following his teacher's death, Rumi continued his studies in Aleppo and Damascus—both well-established centres of traditional religious and legal scholarship, where his sons would eventually also study. After his return to