

Article

Tables of Contents in Arabic Manuscripts as Exemplified by Works from the Refaiya Library from Damascus

Beate Wiesmüller | Göttingen and Hamburg

1. Introduction

The study of Arabic manuscripts has not focused on the subject of tables of contents very much as yet. Adam Gacek's reference work *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* contains a short entry on the topic in question and further lemmas relating to it,¹ while François Déroche's standard manual *Islamic Codicology: An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script* only contains a few lines on this phenomenon.² Florian Sobieroj has summarised some of its basic features in the handbook *Manuscript Cultures: Mapping the Field*.³ As far as printed and online catalogues are concerned, these sometimes mention the existence of such lists created by copyists and users in individual manuscripts. This article is a first systematic approach to the subject specifically concerning Arabic manuscript culture. Both single- and multiple-text/composite volumes are the object of my analysis.

The private Damascene library known as the Rifā'īya (or Refaiya)⁴ has been chosen as a source of material to demonstrate and analyse the topic. The collection of manuscripts was purchased from its last owner, 'Umar Efendi al-Rifā'ī al-Ḥamawī, in 1853 by the Prussian consul and Arabist Johann Gottfried Wetzstein (d.1905), who acquired it on behalf of Leipzig University Library.⁵ First of all, the Refaiya forms a closed unit, being a cohesive, pre-modern Arabic-Islamic private library with manuscripts copied in subsequent centuries. The oldest manuscript (Vollers 505) dates from 380 AH/990 CE and the youngest

one (Vollers 758) from 1262 AH/1846 CE.⁶ Secondly, I am familiar with the Refaiya's handwritten books as I was responsible for describing and making them available in a database and a printed catalogue in a project financed by the German Research Foundation between 2008 and 2013.⁷ The database comprises complete digital representations of the manuscripts. The Refaiya itself consists of 489 bound entities, i.e. 368 single texts and 89 multiple-text/composite volumes comprising 444 individual texts. With the total number of works contained in the manuscripts amounting to 812 texts, the Refaiya provides quite a large corpus of material with which to conduct a survey about different varieties of tables of contents. The only disadvantage it has is that the geographical scope of the collection is restricted to the eastern parts of the Arabic world; with the exception of a Maghribī Qur'ān fragment (Vollers 48) and a book on grammar in Maghribī script (Vollers 407), there are no examples of works from North Africa.

¹ Gacek 2009, 57–58 (chapter and section headings), 200–203 (prefaces of composition) and 259 (tables of contents).

² Déroche 2005, 317–318.

³ Sobieroj 2014, 83–84.

⁴ Liebrez 2016.

⁵ Liebrez 2016, 43–72.

⁶ Karl Vollers produced the first detailed description of the Refaiya manuscripts together with other oriental manuscript holdings kept at Leipzig University Library in the following catalogue: *Katalog der islamischen, christlich-orientalischen, jüdischen und samaritanischen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek zu Leipzig* von Karl Vollers mit einem Beitrag von J. Leipoldt, Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1906. The shelf marks of these manuscripts bear his surname and the consecutive numbering from his catalogue for this reason.

⁷ See the database-supported cataloguing, research and digital presentation of the Refaiya family at Leipzig University Library <<http://www.refaiya.uni-leipzig.de>>: this database has been merged into *Qalamos*, a portal for manuscripts from Asian and African script traditions in German memory institutions, see <<https://www.qalamos.net>>; Wiesmüller 2016.

2. Terminology

Two terms exist to designate a table of contents in Arabic writing:

1. *fihris*, *fihrist*, pl. *fahāris*, an arabicised word from the Persian *fihrist*, which is the most common expression
2. *tarjamah*, pl. *tarājim*

These two terms have further meanings which all centre around the topic of structuring and making information available by means of different written forms; *fihris/fihrist* can also denote a catalogue, index, inventory or list, for example.⁸ A translation, biography, chapter heading, title of a book and keyword are only some of the contents that the expression *tarjamah* can indicate in addition to a table of contents.⁹

In the Arabic manuscript tradition, the practice of dividing works into chapters can already be seen in the presentation of the Qur'ān, which is arranged in terms of *sūrah* headings. The chapter headings in non-*Qur'ānic* works are introduced by such words as *kitāb* ('book'), *bāb* ('gate'), *faṣl* ('passage'), *juz'* ('part'), *qism* ('portion'), *jumlah* ('sentence'), *maqālah* ('article'), *naw'* ('type') and the like. The text is either arranged in a one-level or a multiple-level chapter division. The latter type is usually made up of two or three levels. In the case of two-level division, we can find the following sequences of words by which the headers of the different levels are indicated:

1. *kitāb* ('book') – *bāb* ('gate')
2. *bāb* ('gate') – *faṣl* ('passage')
3. *qism* ('portion') – *bāb* ('gate')
4. *maqālah* ('article') – *bāb* ('gate').

A three-level division can have any of the following sequences, among others:

1. *kitāb* ('book') – *bāb* ('gate') – *faṣl* ('passage')
2. *qism* ('portion') – *bāb* ('gate') – *faṣl* ('passage')
3. *juz'* ('part') – *jumlah* ('sentence') – *bāb* ('gate').

Apart from introducing chapter headings by certain terms, it was also common practice to number them consecutively. The headings of the last level frequently do not contain any numbers in multiple-level headers. Finally, an introduction and a conclusion are further essential structural parts of Arabic works. The terms *muqaddimah* ('front part') and *fātihah* ('opening') stand for 'introduction' in Arabic manuscript culture, and the terms *khātimah* ('end', 'close') and *natījah* ('result', 'outcome') stand for 'conclusion'.

3. Categories of tables of contents

It is possible to distinguish two categories of tables of contents:

1. tables of contents the authors incorporated in the preface of their texts and in autographs prefixed on pages immediately preceding the opening of the text.
2. tables of contents compiled by scribes and users on pages directly preceding the text, on flyleaves or – albeit rarely – on the inside of the front cover and on the front cover itself.

Depending on the number of chapter headings there are and the size of the paper and script, the contents can be written on one of the surfaces of a folio or extend over a number of folios.

3.1 Tables of contents written by authors

The fifty works of the Refāīya with tables of contents created by the author illustrate that it was soon to become customary among scholars to incorporate an enumeration of the chapters into the preface of their works, which divided their texts into sections. This practice was not restricted to books on certain branches of study, but encompassed scholarly works on religious and profane studies alike. Table 1 shows the distribution over the centuries.

⁸ Gacek 2001, 111.

⁹ Gacek 2001, 17–18.

Table 1: Tables of contents written by authors of the manuscripts.

Shelf mark	Author	Date of death	Date of copy	Subject matter
Vollers 775:3	unknown	unknown	undated	erotica
Vollers 866:1	unknown	unknown	undated	collection of proverbs
Vollers 859:3	unknown	unknown	1085/1674	zoology
Vollers 825	‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn Ghaylān al-Bukhārī	unknown	577/1181	mathematics
Vollers 512	Ibn al-Mu‘tazz bi-Allāh	296/908–909	undated	ethics
Vollers 593	al-Ābī	421/1030	undated	literature
Vollers 458	al-Tha‘ālibī	429/1037–1038	1143/1730–1731	lexicography
Vollers 863:1	al-Tha‘ālibī	429/1037–1038	undated	rhetoric
Vollers 349	al-Dabūsī	430/1038–1039	undated	law
Vollers 546:2	Ibn Khāqān	529/1134–1135 or 535/1140–1141	1162/1748	biography
Vollers 18	al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ al-Yahṣībī	544/1149–1150	undated	religious duties
Vollers 774	al-Maghribī	570/1174–1175	undated	erotica
Vollers 398	al-Shayzarī	589/1193 or c. 590/1193–1194 or 774/1372–1373	1222/1807	ethics
Vollers 775:1	al-Shayzarī	589/1193 or c. 590/1193–1194 or 774/1372–1373	undated	erotica
Vollers 19	Ibn al-Jawzī	597/1200–1201	903/1498	biography of the Prophet
Vollers 605	Ibn al-Jawzī	597/1200–1201	703/1304	law
Vollers 747	Ibn al-Jawzī	597/1200–1201	1054/1644	zoology
Vollers 760:1	Ibn al-Jawzī	597/1200–1201	878/1474	medicine
Vollers 606	al-Malik al-Manṣūr	617/1220–1221	748/1347	ethics
Vollers 883:17	al-Jaghminī	fl. 618/1221–1222	undated	astronomy
Vollers 864:1	al-Samarqandī	fl. 675/1276–1277	undated	disputation
Vollers 864:4	al-Samarqandī	fl. 675/1276–1277	undated	disputation
Vollers 73	al-Nawawī	676/1277	undated	Qur’ānic sciences
Vollers 760:3	al-Malik al-Ashraf ‘Umar II	696/1296	undated	pharmacology
Vollers 280	Ibn al-Firkāḥ	729/1329	1129/1717	geography
Vollers 399	Badr al-Dīn Ibn Jamā‘ah	733/1333	1143/1730–1731	law

Table 1: Tables of contents written by authors of the manuscripts; continuation.

Shelf mark	Author	Date of death	Date of copy	Subject matter
Vollers 659	Ibn Faḡl Allāh al-'Umārī	749/1349	undated	stylistics for chanceries
Vollers 329	Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah	751/1350	undated	law
Vollers 842	Ibn al-Shaykh al-'Uwaynah	755/1354	undated	interpretation of dreams
Vollers 614	al-Ṣafadī	764/1363	1168/1754	biography
Vollers 282	Ibn Abī Ḥajalah	776/1375	1065/1655	dogmatics
Vollers 616	Ibn Abī Ḥajalah	776/1375	undated	entertaining literature
Vollers 662	al-Zamlakānī	probably fl. 9 th /15 th – 10 th /16 th century	undated autograph	history
Vollers 758	al-Ḍibrī	815/1412–1413	1262/1846	medicine
Vollers 759	al-Ḍibrī	815/1412–1413	undated	medicine
Vollers 490	al-Kurdī	860/1455–1456	1008/1600	rhetoric
Vollers 66	al-Suyūṭī	911/1505	undated	Qur'ānic sciences
Vollers 255	al-Sha'rānī	973/1565–1566	undated	biography
Vollers 258:1	al-Sha'rānī	973/1565–1566	1146/1734	Sufism
Vollers 353:1	al-Sha'rānī	973/1565–1566	933/1526	dogmatics
Vollers 771	al-Qūṣūnī	976/1568	undated	medicine
Vollers 866:2	Kūl Kadīsī	982/1574–1575	undated	law
Vollers 738	al-Bukhārī	fl. 991/1583	1023/1614	geography
Vollers 697	al-Biqā'ī	fl. 1000/1591–1592	1161/1748	biography
Vollers 368	Ibn Nuja'im (d. 970/1563); work compiled and edited posthumously by his son Aḥmad	must have been 10 th /16 th –11 th /17 th century	1014/1605	law
Vollers 277	al-Karmī	1033/1623–1624	undated	dogmatics
Vollers 41	al-Maqqarī	1041/1631–1632	1033/1624	dogmatics
Vollers 883:4	al-Khānī	1109/1697–1698	undated	Sufism
Vollers 385	al-Simillāwī	1127/1715	1135/1722	law
Vollers 183	al-Kamākhī	c. 1171/1757–1758	1165/1752	literature

Among the Refāiyya manuscripts, the earliest evidence of an author listing the chapters of his text in the preface is from the end of the early Islamic period, i.e. the third/ninth and the beginning of the fourth/tenth century. The author in question was the ‘Abbāsīd caliph Abū al-‘Abbās ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mu‘tazz bi-Allāh al-‘Abbāsī al-Baghdādī, who succeeded his predecessor for just a day and a night in 296/908–909 before being strangled. During his lifetime, he became a leading Arabic poet. The work in which he made use of this device, entitled *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl fī tabāshīr al-surūr* (Vollers 512), deals with various drinks, drinking and one’s behaviour while drinking, and quotes numerous poetic examples. From the end of the early Islamic period and the beginning of the early middle Islamic period onwards, i.e. the fourth/tenth and the fifth/eleventh century, the practice of providing the preface of works with a list of their chapter headings began to be established, as the increasing number of authors doing so in the works in the Refāiyya library goes to show.

The preface of an Arabic work follows after the *basmalah* (‘in the name of God’), the *ḥamdalah* (‘praise to God’) and the *taṣliyah* (eulogy of the Prophet). The preface is introduced by the formula *ammā ba‘d / fa-ba‘d / wa-ba‘d* (‘And then’) and may contain any of the following in this order: the author’s name, the author’s reason for composing the text, the title of the text and a list of its chapter headings. Before listing the specific chapter and section titles, the authors normally gave a resume of the total number of divisions, which structured their texts. The standard expression for such a summary goes as follows: *wa-rattabtuhu ‘alā* = ‘and I arranged it [i.e. the text] in’ (cf. Vollers 41, 183, 258:1, 280, 282, 399, 490, 616, 738, 771, 775:3, 842).

Then follows the total number of chapter headings on the first level and sometimes on the second and third level, too. If present, the introduction and the conclusion are mentioned in this standard phrase as well. According to the Refāiyya, scholars used several other phrases to summarise the organisation of their texts, viz.:

wa-banaytuhu ‘alā = ‘and I structured it into’ (cf. Vollers 512)

wa-ḥarrajtuhu fī = ‘and I gathered it into’ (cf. Vollers 863:1)

wa-ḥaṣartuhu fī = ‘and I condensed it into’ (cf. Vollers 18, 747, 825)

wa-ikhtaṣartuhu fī = ‘and I summarised it in’ (cf. Vollers 758, 759)

wa ja ‘altuhu (fī) = ‘and I made it of’ (cf. Vollers 277, 329, 398, 659, 760:3, 775:1)

wa ja ‘altuhā murattaban ‘alā = ‘and I arranged it in’ (cf. Vollers 385)

wa ja ‘altuhu muštamilan ‘alā = ‘and I made it, consisting of’ (cf. Vollers 883:17)

wa-kassratuhu ‘alā = ‘and I split it into’ (cf. Vollers 866:2)

wa qasamtuhu/qassamtuhu = ‘and I divided it into’ (cf. Vollers 760:1)

wa-waḍa ‘tuhu = ‘and I composed it using’ (cf. Vollers 606).

The summary of the total number of chapter and section headings was also given in an impersonal, neutral tone sometimes:

hādhihī risāla fī [...] wa-hiya murattaba ‘alā = ‘this is a treatise on [...] and it is arranged in’ (cf. Vollers 883:4).

In addition to the summarising formula in the first person, the enumeration of the concrete chapter and section titles could be introduced by the following headings:

dhīkr tarājīm al-abwāb = listing of the chapter headings (cf. Vollers 19, 760:1)

dhīkr tarjamat al-abwāb = listing of the table of chapters (cf. Vollers 398).

Sometimes, the summarising phrase is omitted and the reader is guided directly to the content listing of a book:

wa-hādhihī fihrist abwābihī = ‘and this is the list of its chapters’ (cf. Vollers 73).

In these last two phrases, we encounter the terms *fihrist* and *tarjamah* expressing tables of contents in the Arabic manuscript tradition. The chapter headings are listed after the introductory sentence. The tables of contents usually display the chapter titles of the first level and often add those of the second level as well. Unless we are dealing with a work written in the author’s own hand, a scribe and rubricator were responsible for the visual presentation and organisation of the list of contents in the preface of a text.

A copy of a work on the fear of God, *Tuḥfat al-akhyār wa-barakāt al-abrār* (Vollers 183) by the author ‘Uthmān ibn Ya‘qūb al-Kamākhī (d. c.1171/1757–1758), which was finished during his lifetime (in 1165/1752), can serve as a

3
 التي المنكرات وهو مشتمل على احد عشر فصلا الفصل
 الاول في منكرات القلب الفصل الثاني في منكرات اللسان
 الفصل الثالث في منكرات الاذن الفصل الرابع في منكرات
 العين الفصل الخامس في منكرات اليد الفصل السادس
 في منكرات البطن الفصل السابع في منكرات الفرج الفصل
 الثامن في منكرات الرجل الفصل التاسع في منكرات
 البدن غير مختصة ببعض معين مما ذكر الفصل عشرين في السحر
 الفصل الحادي عشر في لفظا والكلمات الباب الثالث في لفظ الكفر
 وافعاله وهي اشده المنكرات وهو مشتمل على خمسة قصول
 الفصل الاول فيما قالوا في الله تعالى من ذاته واسمائه وصفاته
 الفصل الثاني فيما يقال في الانبياء عليهم السلام الفصل الثالث
 فيما يقال في العلماء والعلماء الفصل الرابع فيما يتعلق بالايمان
 والذكر والصلوة الفصل الخامس في اقوال الفسقة وافعالهم
 الباب الرابع في الوباء وهو مشتمل على اربعة عشر فصلا الفصل
 الاول في كون الوباء غديبا الفصل الثاني في الحكمة من تسليط الجن
 على الاستر بالطاعون الفصل الثالث فيما يفاوي به الطاعون
 الفصل الرابع في بيان كون الطاعون شهادة للمسلمين ورحمة لهم

Fig. 1: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 183, fols 2b–3a.



رواية
عن

عن صاحبها في الرواية
في سنة ١٠٠٠
من الفقه
الاسلام

هذا كتاب بركات الابراء

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله الذي امرنا بالتخلق بالاخلاق الحميدة والتقوى والصلوات
والتسليم على رسوله سيدنا محمد المصطفى وعلي آله وصحابه الذين هم
الكرام البررة الاقبياء **ولعمد** فلما رأيت اوفر العباد الى رحمة ربه المبارك
عثمان بن يعقوب بن حسين بن مصطفى كما في حديث رسول الله
عليه السلام لا يؤمن من عبد حتى يحب لاخيه كما يحب لنفسه من
سعادة الدارين وهي لا تحصل الا بالتقوى فاحببت ان اكتب رسالة
في التقوى منتخبة من الكتب المعتمدة عند العلماء النفاة وسميتها **تجويد الاخيار**
وبركات الابراء وما توفيقي الا بالله عليه توكلت واليه انيب وربتتهما
على خمسة ابواب **الباب الاول** في اعتقاد اهل السنة والجماعة الباء





Fig. 2: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 280, fol. 2a.

prototype for the visualisation of tables of contents in Arabic manuscripts. This work is divided into five chapters (*bāb*) each subdivided into several sections (*faṣl*). The listing of the chapter and section headings has been integrated in the continuous text. In order to draw the reader's attention to this listing, the following components were rubricated: the formula summarising the total number of textual divisions, *wa-rattabtuhu 'alā* ('and I arranged it in'), and the words *bāb* for 'chapter' and *faṣl* for 'section' along with their corresponding numbers. In contrast to them, the titles of the chapters and sections are written in black ink (Fig. 1).

Another way of highlighting the introductory phrase and the structuring units with their numbers was by overlining them with a black or red stroke. A copy of a pilgrim's guide to the holy places in Jerusalem bearing the title *Bā'ith al-nufūs ilā ziyārat al-Quds al-mahrūs* (Vollers 280) is an example. The author was Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Firkāh al-Fazārī, who died in 729/1329. The copy was made four centuries after the author's death, in 1129/1717. Ibn al-Firkāh divided his text into 13 sections (*faṣl*). The red overlining is restricted to that term, *faṣl*, and does not incorporate the numbers. As for the textual formula *fa-qad rattabtuhu 'alā* ('and so I arranged it in'), it is not the verb but the expression *fa-qad* ('and so') that has a red stroke above it (Fig. 2). This copy is also a good example to demonstrate that the marking of these elements in the body of the text frequently does not correspond with the manner in which they have been executed in the preface. At the beginning of the first chapter commencing directly after the enumeration of the chapter headings, the term for 'section' (*faṣl*) plus a number – one – are overlined in red ink. This step and the overlining of the preface in the table of contents were performed by the manuscript's scribe. He left gaps at appropriate positions in the running text for the twelve remaining sections where the rubricator was meant to insert the expression *faṣl* and the appropriate number in red ink. The blank spaces were only filled in for sections four and five; the others remained blank.

There are also numerous manuscripts in which tables of contents in prefaces are written in black or brownish-black ink, just like the main text. This is the case in a copy of a work spanning 110 chapters, which deals with all kinds of questions concerning women. The book was originally penned by the prolific author Abū al-Faraj 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Alī Ibn al-Jawzī al-Baghdādī, who named it *Aḥkām al-nisā'* (Vollers 605). He flourished in Baghdad, which is also where he died in 597/1200–1201. The copy in question was made on indigenous paper a century later in 703/1304. In

order to distinguish the enumeration of chapters from the other phrases in the preface, the scribe arranged the headers underneath each other, thereby separating the table from the running text. Each chapter header takes up one line. For further emphasis, the last consonant of the Arabic expression *bāb*, meaning 'chapter', has been stretched horizontally and filled in with a black or red line. The introductory formula before the enumeration used here is *dhikr tarājim abwāb hādihā al-kitāb wa-hiya mi'at bāb wa-'asharat abwāb* ('listing of the chapter headings of this book; there are 110 chapters'). It is not marked in any special way (see Fig. 3). In a copy of a work on medicine called *al-Raḥmah fī 'ilm al-ṭibb wa-al-ḥikmah* (Vollers 758) dating from 1262/1846, the enumeration of the five chapter headings is barely distinguishable from the surrounding text in the preface. Unlike the aforementioned copy of Ibn al-Jawzī's work, the scribe of this transcription incorporated the list into the main body of text. The elongation of the last consonant of the Arabic term for 'chapter' (*bāb*) in the horizontal plane is the only visual clue to the reader that the content listing of the work is provided in this specific part of the preface. The Yemeni author Maḥdī ibn 'Alī al-Ḍibrī (d.815/1412–1413) employed the expression *wa-ikhtaṣartu [...] jumlat al-kitāb fī khamsat abwāb* (meaning 'and I summarised [...] the whole book in five chapters') as a summarising phrase (Fig. 4).

There is one manuscript in the Refāiyya with a table of contents originating from the author that stands out from the others in two respects (Vollers 662). First of all, the author, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Zamlakānī, wrote the manuscript in his own hand. Unfortunately, nothing about him has been handed down to us. The Refāiyya includes the second volume of his three-volume world history *'Uqūd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh al-zamān*. Secondly, al-Zamlakānī did not enumerate the chapter headings of his work in the preface, but reserved the pages preceding the title page for recording them. The word *fihrist*, or 'table of contents', in the heading above the list is rubricated: *fihrist mā taḍammanahu hādihā al-kitāb* ('table of [the] contents of this book'). The headings in the list do not contain any structuring units or numbers. Instead of these elements, they are preceded by the terms *dhikr* ('report'), *qiṣṣa* ('tale') and *faṣl* ('section'), which rather characterise the kinds of information given (Fig. 5).

Since al-Zamlakānī dispensed with foliating his text and adding the initial folio-page numbers to the headings in the list, the listing only provides the future reader with a simple overview and is not much help in finding a specific chapter

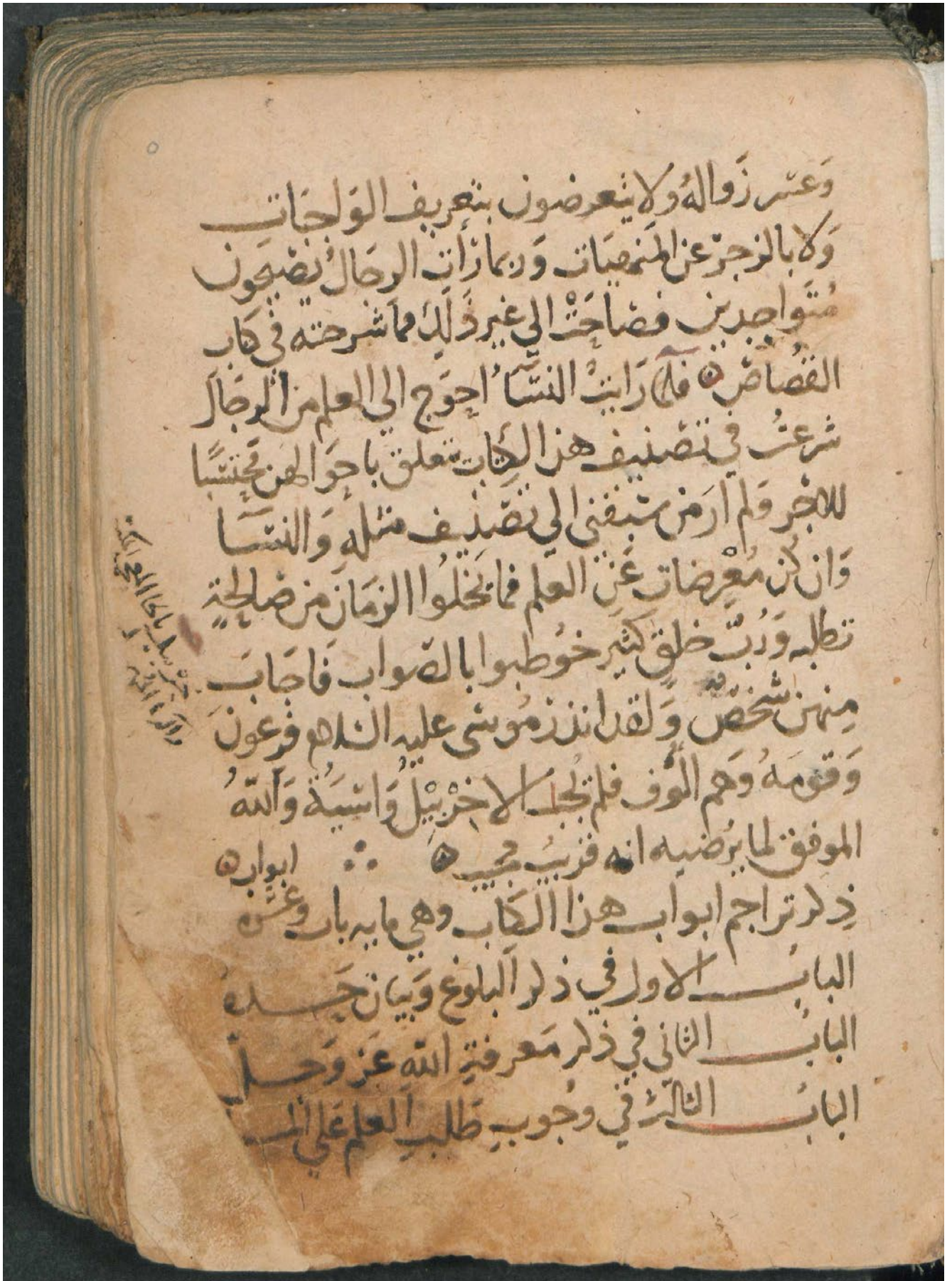


Fig. 3a: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 605, fol. 5a.

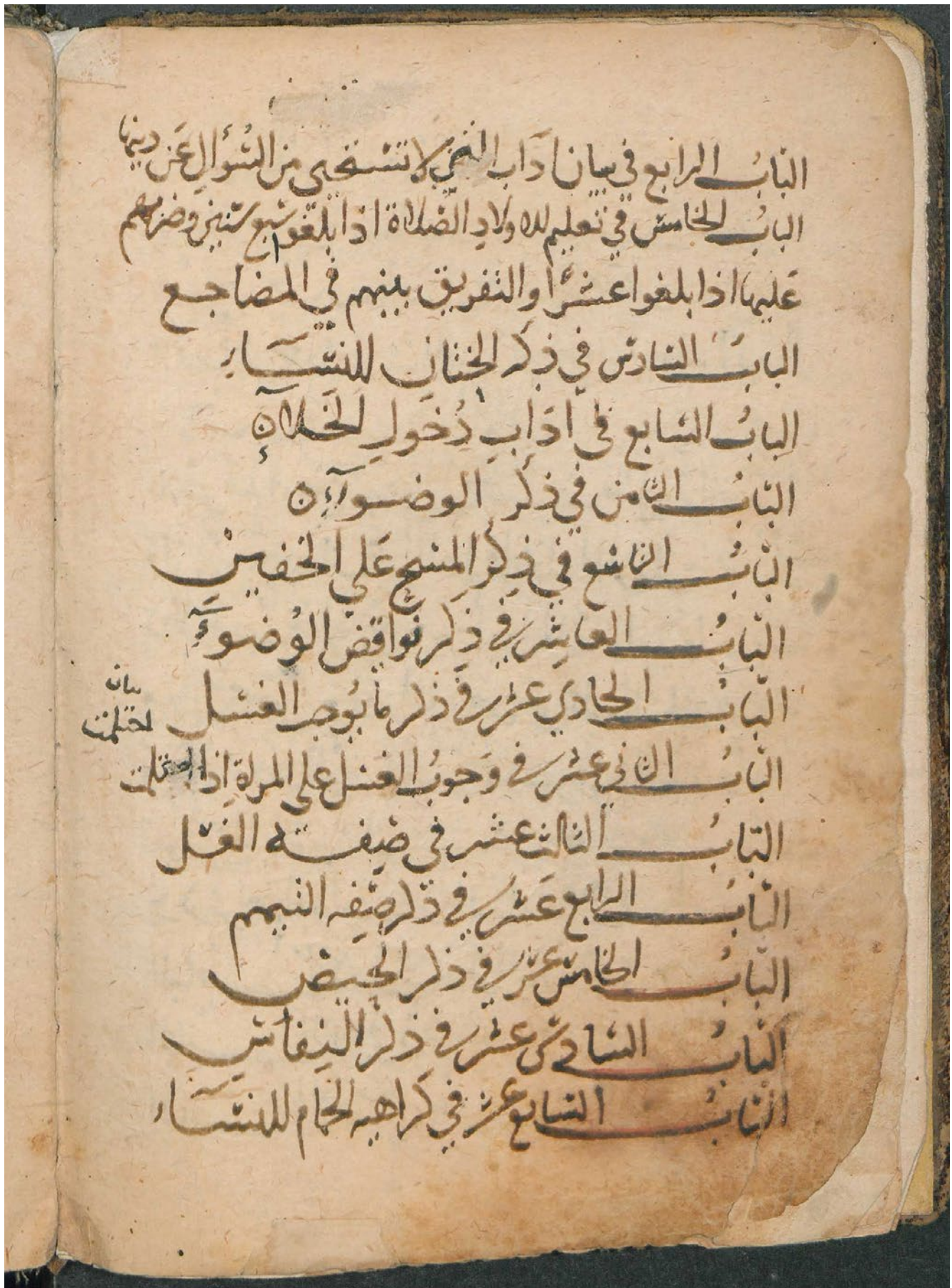


Fig. 3b: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 605, fol. 5b.

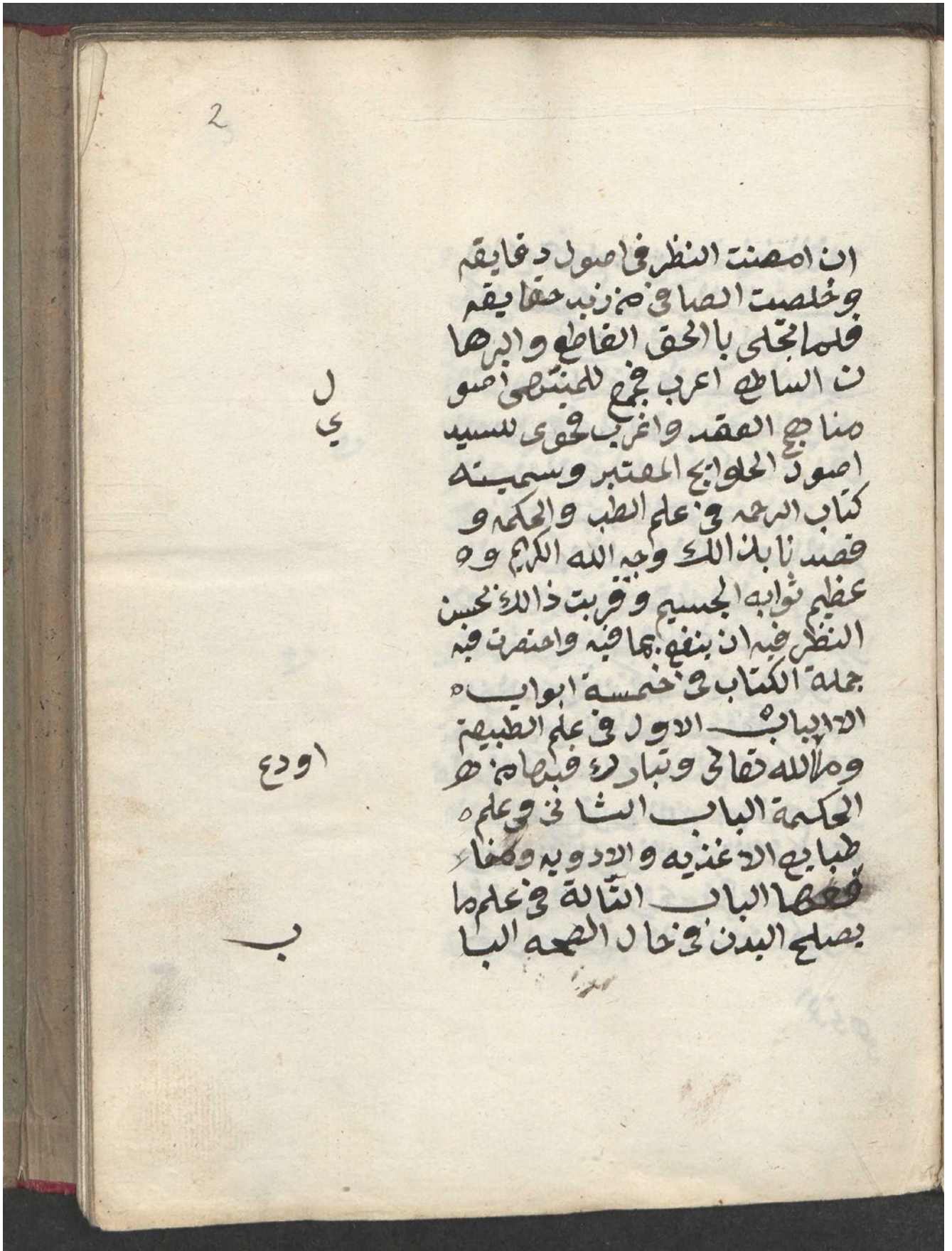


Fig. 4: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 758, fol. 2a.

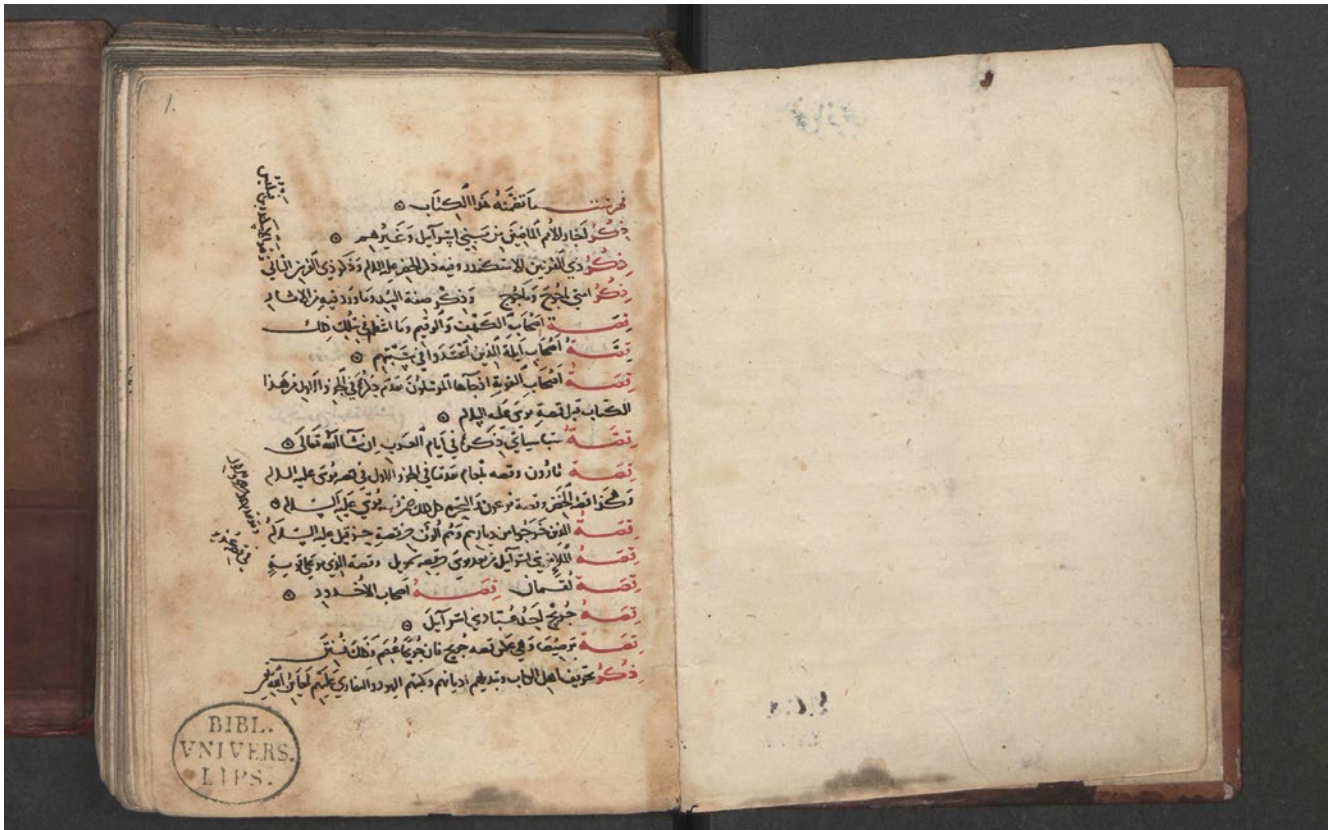


Fig. 5: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 662, fol. 1a.

more easily in his book. The prominent place where the author presented the table of contents and its well-drawn decoration on the title page reveals that al-Zamlakānī intended to enhance the importance of his world history and his own status as an author by employing these two devices. Although he did not state exactly when he finished the second volume, both the fact that he wrote it on indigenous paper, not on imported European paper, and the colouring and shape of the panel on the title page suggest that he may have written it between the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth century (Fig. 6).

3.2 Tables of contents written by copyists and users

In the material to be found in the Refāīya, the total number of manuscripts incorporating tables of contents compiled by scribes and users is 14. It is noteworthy that almost half of these lists, viz. six, were prepared for texts on Islamic law. The other works presenting such a list cover the topics of biographies, edifying literature, grammar, lexicography, rhetoric, Sufism and traditions. The distribution between scribes and users is as follows: there are five manuscripts with tables of contents written by their scribes between the tenth/sixteenth and the twelfth/eighteenth century, i.e. the late Islamic period (Table 2).

Table 2: Tables of contents written by scribes of the manuscripts.

Shelf mark	Date of copy	Copyist	Subject matter
Vollers 159	undated	unknown	literature
Vollers 365	974/1567	unknown	law
Vollers 438	1054/1644	Muṣṭafá ibn Ramaḍān al-Šalunawī	grammar
Vollers 357	1086/1675	Sa‘īd Muṣṭafá ibn Muḥammad	law
Vollers 470	1182/1768	‘Umar, disciple of ‘Abd al-Qādir Murād	rhetoric

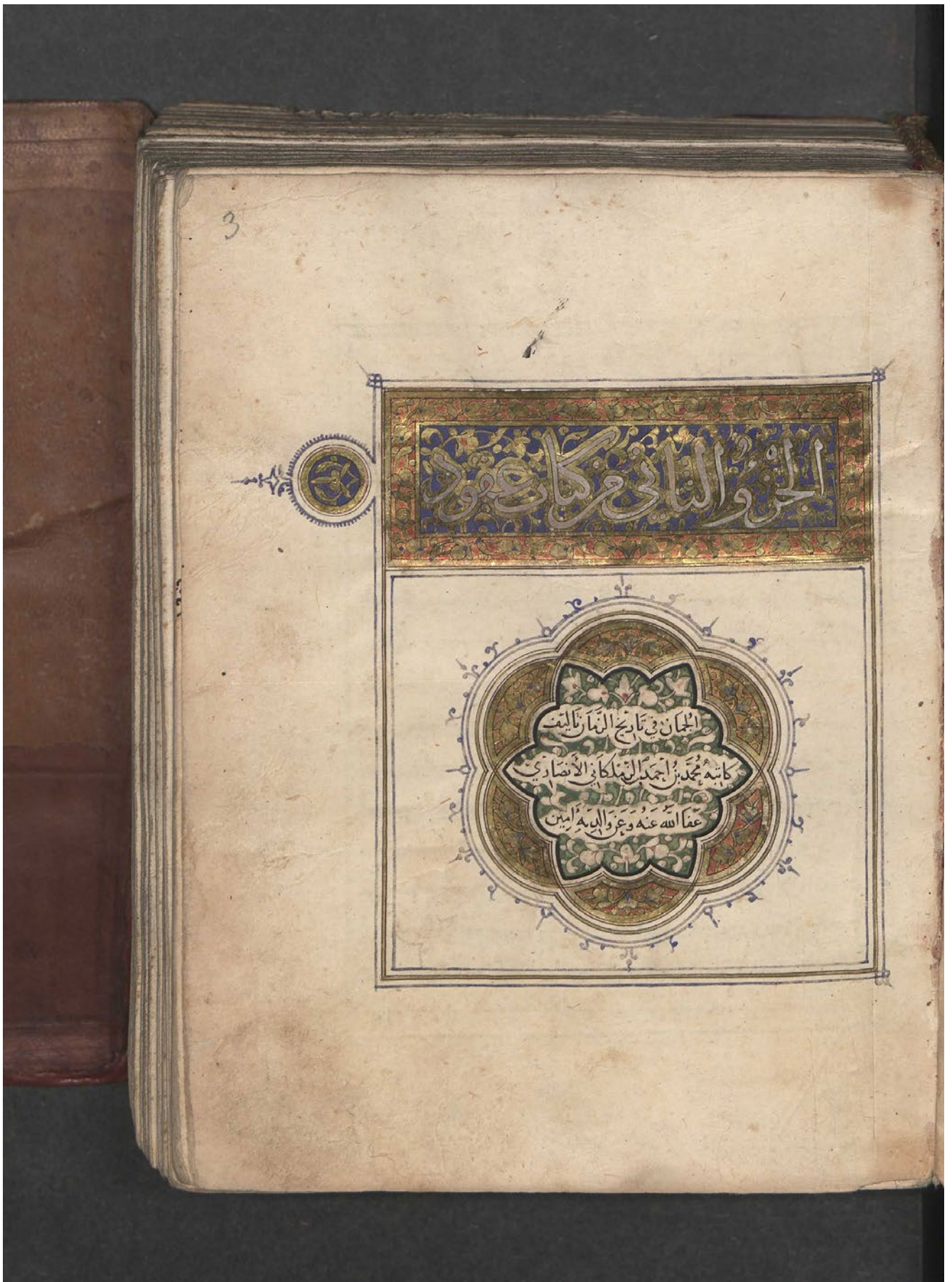


Fig. 6: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 662, fol. 3a.

Table 3: Tables of contents written by users of the manuscripts.

Shelf mark	Date of copy	Owner	Subject matter
Vollers 161	733/1332	Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ (fl. 1199/1784–1254/1838) ¹⁰	edifying literature
Vollers 255	undated	unknown	biography
Vollers 297	undated	Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥusainī al-Iṣḥāqī (d. at the end of the 10 th /16 th century) ¹¹	traditions
Vollers 343	1095/1684	unknown	law
Vollers 356	undated	unknown	law
Vollers 364	840/1436	unknown	law
Vollers 368	1014/1605	unknown	law
Vollers 458	1143/1730–1731	Aḥmad al-Falāqinsī (d.1173/1759) ¹²	lexicography
Vollers 717	1022/1613	unknown	biography

Nine manuscripts contain tables of contents written by their users. Three owners who lived in the late Islamic period could be identified: one lived in the tenth/sixteenth century (Vollers 297) and the other two between the twelfth/eighteenth and the thirteenth/nineteenth century (Vollers 161, 458) (Table 3).

The characteristic and most frequent feature of lists of contents written by scribes and users is their arrangement in tabular form. The numbered or unnumbered chapter headings with their initial folio-page numbers written in numerals either above or underneath the headings constitute a compartment, as it were, and are arranged in several rows and columns. The reading direction runs from right to left and row by row. The reference numbers in such tables presuppose that the manuscript was foliated either by the scribe or at a later stage by a user.

The compartments are frequently framed in red ink. A list of contents in tabular form in a copy of a legal compendium of the Hanafi school of law has a single-line frame in red for each compartment in which the chapter headings are placed (Vollers 364). The table was drawn on the flyleaves by an anonymous user who also added the missing pages to the original copy of the text dating from 840/1436. While the original copy is

written on indigenous paper, the supplemented pages are made of European watermarked paper. The headline for the list, stating the title of the work – *fihrist Kanz al-daqa'iq* ('table of contents of *Kanz al-daqa'iq*') – has been centred over the table. The list is provided with headers at all levels, into which the author, Abū al-Barakāt 'Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Nasafī (d.710/1310), divided his work. The structuring unit of the first level is called *kitāb* ('book'), *bāb* ('gate') is on the second level and *faṣl* ('passage') on the third level. They do not have any numbering. In the compartments of the table, the three components constituting the heading (the structuring unit, the title and the corresponding number) are listed one above the other with the rubricated numbers being centred. When the title of a heading was quite long or the user placed the structuring unit a bit too low in the compartment, he deviated from this composition and started with the title in the first line straight after the structuring unit so that these two components form a continuous text. Furthermore, he elongated the last consonant of the word *kitāb* ('book') and *bāb* ('gate') in the horizontal plane and designed the last consonant of the word *faṣl* ('passage') as two or three perpendicular loops crossed by a horizontal one (Fig. 7).

¹⁰ See *Qalamos* <https://www.qalamos.net/receive/MyMssPerson_agent_00000324>.

¹¹ See *Qalamos* <https://www.qalamos.net/receive/MyMssPerson_agent_00005193>.

¹² See *Qalamos* <https://www.qalamos.net/receive/MyMssPerson_agent_00005579>.

In a copy of a text on Arabic poetry finished in 1182/1768 (Vollers 470), the scribe – a man called ‘Umar – chose to outline the compartments of his list of contents with a red double line. He wrote the table on pages preceding the title page and the main text. The work is called *Umdah fī maḥāsīn al-shi‘r wa-ādābihi wa-ṣinā‘atihi* and was composed by Abū ‘Alī Ḥasan Ibn Rashīq al-Azdī al-Qayrawānī (d.456/1063–1064 or 463/1070–1071). The interesting thing about ‘Umar’s table is the diagonal arrangement of the headings in the compartments. The headings run alternately from the lower right to the upper left corner or from the top right to the lower left, thus creating a diamond pattern within the table. This way, the functionality of such a list is combined with an aesthetic design. The reference numerals for the folio-pages are centred above the headers either in the right or left space in the compartment, depending on the direction of the header (Fig. 8).

The first part of a dictionary of Arabic synonyms, *Fiqh al-lughah wa-sirr al-‘arabiyyah* (Vollers 458), demonstrates that a manuscript can sometimes have a table of contents in the preface of a text as well as one preceding it. The author, Abū Maṣṣūr ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad al-Tha‘ālibī (d.429/1037–1038), enumerated the chapter headings in the preface, and the former owner – the Damascene scholar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Falāqīnsī (d.1173/1759) – prefixed a list of contents to the text in tabular form without a frame. Fortunately, al-Falāqīnsī left a dated note next to the table, stating that he was the one who had commissioned the work: *istaktabahu li-nafsihi wa-li-man shā‘a al-mawlā min ba‘dihī al-‘abd al-faqīr ilā al-muḥsin al-musammā Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Falāqīnsī ghafara Allāh lahu wa-li-walidayhi wa-li-mashāyikhī wa-lil-muslimīn āmīn fī sannah [1]145* (The humble servant to the benefactor given the name Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Falāqīnsī had a copy of it written for himself and for those who will come after him contingent on the Lord’s decree, may God pardon him, his parents, his masters and the Muslims, amen, in the year [1]145). Al-Falāqīnsī is a tragic figure in two respects. He had a brother named Faṭḥī (d.1159/1746) who was a notorious financial administrator in Damascus with high political ambitions. In the fight for power in Damascus that he engaged in with the governors there, Faṭḥī was eventually executed. Aḥmad was imprisoned and tortured in the course of his brother’s fall. After his release, he was no longer the same. He even had to sell his library, to which this book once belonged – he had commissioned the scribe Muḥammad

ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Muḥammad, known as Ibn al-Sham‘ah (d.1187/1774), to copy it for him.¹³ Complying with his wish, Ibn al-Sham‘ah completed his task in 1143/1730–1731. After a while, Aḥmad al-Falāqīnsī began to feel the need for a proper list of contents for the book. Apparently, he was not that familiar with the text and often had to leaf through the book in order to find specific chapters and information. Two years after the acquisition of the book – in 1145/1732–1733, as the note next to the list says – he finally prefixed a table of contents to the text with references to the folio-page numbers. He put each header together with the reference numeral in the form of an upturned triangle. The structuring unit and the corresponding numeral occupy one line, while the title extends over two to four lines and the folio-page number marks the last line. Why did he not ask the scribe to create such a table during the process of copying the text, I wonder? It would have spared him the task of compiling one himself (Fig. 9).

Scribes and users also had other options at their disposal than just presenting the contents of a book in tabular form. The anonymous scribe of the commentary on the legal compendium of the Hanafi law school entitled *Kanz al-daqa‘iq* (Vollers 365) decided to arrange the headers of the first level (*kitāb*, ‘book’) consecutively one after the other. As he reserved the recto page of the folio preceding the beginning of the text on the verso page for his table of contents, he did not have enough space left to note down the headers occurring at every level. The unnumbered headers exhibit red overlining above which the folio-page numerals are placed. After mentioning the title of the work and the author’s name, the scribe introduced his table by two of the three formulas a work normally starts with: the *basmalah* (‘in the name of God’) and the *ḥamdalah* (‘praise be to God’). The author Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Sulṭān ad-Dimašqī (d.950/1544) named his commentary *Kashf al-ḥaqā‘iq ‘an asrār Kanz al-daqa‘iq*. The scribe made a copy of the commentary in 974/1567, twenty-four years after his death (Fig. 10).

An anonymous user chose a rather unusual design for the list of contents of the third part of a commentary on another legal compendium of the Hanafi law school, *Jāmi‘ al-muḍamarāt wa-al-mushkilāt fī sharḥ Mukhtaṣar al-Qudūrī* (Vollers 356), which was written by Yūsuf ibn ‘Umar al-Ṣūfī (d.832/1428–1429). At first sight, the arrangement of

¹³ Liebrecht 2016, 170–172.



Fig. 7: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 364, fols 2b–3a.

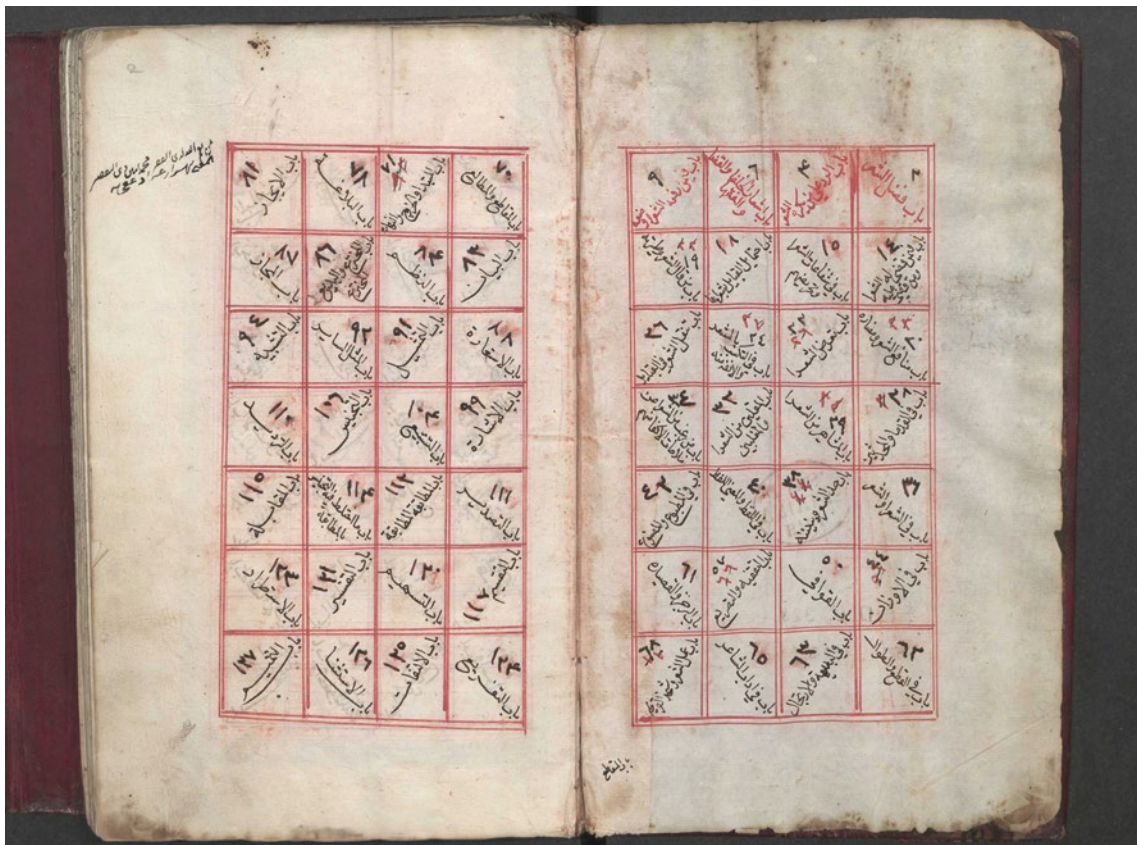


Fig. 8: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 470, fols 1b–2a.

رسالة في معرفة
رسالة في فقه اللغة

استكتبه لنفسه ولبنائه المولى ابن
العبد الفقير الى المحسن للمسي احمد
الغلام غفر الله له ولوالديه
ولسائر المسلمين امين
٥٢

الباب الاول في التكميل ٥	الباب الثاني في التزييل والتفصيل ٧	الباب الثالث في التزييل تختلف اسماؤها واوصافها باختلاف ٧	الباب الرابع في اوائل الاسماء واواخرها ٩	الباب الخامس في كبار الاسماء وصغارها وعظاها ٩	الباب السادس في الطول والقصر واللين والرخوة ١٠	الباب السابع في اليبس والشد يد الاسماء ١١	الباب الثامن في السد والظلم والكمرة ١٢	الباب التاسع عشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ١٦	الباب العاشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ١٩	الباب الحادي عشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ٢١	الباب الثاني عشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ٢٦	الباب الثالث عشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ٢٨	الباب الرابع عشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ٢٦	الباب الخامس عشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ٢٦	الباب السادس عشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ٢٦	الباب السابع عشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ٢٦	الباب الثامن عشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ٢٦	الباب التاسع عشر في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ٢٦	الباب العشرون في ضروريات الالوان والاشكال ٢٦
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Fig. 9: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 458, fol. 1a.



Fig. 10: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 365, fols 1b-2a.

the unnumbered headers (*kitāb*, *bāb*, *faṣl*) in justified lines one beneath the other is not a particularly special one; what catches the reader’s eye here is rather the distribution of the structuring units, titles and the reference numerals in each line: the word *kitāb* (‘book’) for the first-level headers occupies the entire line, whereas the words *bāb* (‘gate’) and *faṣl* (‘passage’) for the second- and third-level headers respectively only occupy two thirds of a line. While the user stretched the last consonant of the words *kitāb* and *bāb* horizontally, he chose the middle consonant for the word *faṣl*. In addition to that, the structuring units are also written in bigger and thicker letterforms than the headings and the numerals. The commencing folio-page numerals are arranged on top of the elongated consonants of the three structuring units in such a way that they form a sort of column within the listing. As regards the headings themselves, they have been placed above the end of the stretched consonant of the word *kitāb* and behind the words *bāb* and *faṣl* at the end of the line. Last but not least, the user quoted the title of the commentary on top and at the bottom of his table of contents (Fig. 11).

3.3 Tables of contents in multiple-text and composite manuscripts

The purpose of tables of contents within multiple-text/composite manuscripts is to list the titles of the works they contain, often along with the names of their authors. Twenty-seven volumes of the 89 collective manuscripts in the Refāiyya possess such a list of contents (Table 4).

Table 4: Tables of contents in multiple-text and composite manuscripts.

Shelf mark	No. of texts	Subject matter	Date of copy	Compiler of the list of contents
Vollers 40	4	biography of the Prophet, tale	undated	Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ (fl. 1199/1784–1254/1838) ¹⁴
Vollers 221	5	Sufism, religious duties	625/1228 (text 1)	copyist of texts 1–4: Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Muḥsin ibn ‘Iwaḍ al-Anṣārī
Vollers 231	2	Sufism	undated	Tāhā (fl. 1186/1772), ¹⁵ Muṣṭafā ibn Ibrāhīm al-‘Aṭṭār (d. after 1162/1749) ¹⁶
Vollers 247	6	religious duties, dogmatics	865/1461 or 875/1471	anonymous user
Vollers 393	2	law	undated	anonymous copyist
Vollers 422	2	grammar	undated	anonymous user
Vollers 505	3	poetry		anonymous user
Vollers 546	2	rhetoric, biography	1164/1750–1751, 1162/1748	copyist: Aḥmad al-Falāqīnī (d.1173/1759) ¹⁷
Vollers 727	4	certificate of transmission	1123/1711 (texts 1, 3), 1124/1712 (text 2)	Muḥammad Sa‘īd ibn Muḥammad Amin ibn Muḥammad Sa‘īd Ibn al-Uṣṭuwānī (d.1305/1888) ¹⁸
Vollers 768	2	pharmacology	undated	Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ
Vollers 820	10	astronomy	undated	Muṣṭafā ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar al-Ḥalabī al-Dimashqī al-‘Urḍī al-Ḥusaynī al- Muṭṭalabī al-Qādirī (d. after 1279/1862–1863) ¹⁹
Vollers 844	2	edifying literature, Sufism	740/1339 (text 2)	Muḥammad al-Kafarsūsī
Vollers 845	7	poetry, edifying literature	1078/1668 (text 1)	Sa‘īd al-Saqāmīnī (fl. 13 th /19 th century) ²⁰
Vollers 848	4	travelogue, traditions, certificate of transmission	1158/1745 (text 4)	anonymous user

¹⁴ Liebrez 2013; Liebrez 2016, 228–233.

¹⁵ See *Qalamos* <https://www.qalamos.net/receive/MyMssPerson_agent_00005562>.

¹⁶ See *Qalamos* <https://www.qalamos.net/receive/MyMssPerson_agent_00000793>.

¹⁷ Liebrez 2016, 170–172.

¹⁸ See *Qalamos* <https://www.qalamos.net/receive/MyMssPerson_agent_00000677>.

¹⁹ See *Qalamos* <https://www.qalamos.net/receive/MyMssPerson_agent_00000671>.

²⁰ See *Qalamos* <https://www.qalamos.net/receive/MyMssPerson_agent_00000566>.

Shelf mark	No. of texts	Subject matter	Date of copy	Compiler of the list of contents
Vollers 849	5	dogmatics, Sufism, prayer, law	928/1521–1522 (text 1–2)	anonymous user
Vollers 850	4	law, wisdom sayings, religious duties	1126/1714 (text 2) 1199/1785 (text 3)	anonymous user
Vollers 851	2	law, traditions	716/1316 (text 1)	anonymous user
Vollers 854	2	traditions, biography of the Prophet	872/1467	anonymous user
Vollers 856	3	ethics, edifying literature, philosophy	1072/1662 (text 1)	anonymous user Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Uṣṭuwānī (d.1314/1897) ²¹
Vollers 859	4	astronomy, dogmatics, zoology, medicine	1124/1712 (text 2)	anonymous user Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ
Vollers 866	2	collection of proverbs, law	985/1577 (text 2)	Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ
Vollers 867	4	medicine, biography, dogmatics	undated	Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ
Vollers 868	7	poetry, dogmatics, Sufism, collection of proverbs, ethics, certificate of transmission	1172/1758 (text 5)	‘Abd al-Ḥamid
Vollers 872	7	poetry, dogmatics, Sufism, collection of proverbs, ethics, certificate of transmission	1033/1624 (text 2) 1065/1655 (text 6) 1086/1675 (text 7)	anonymous user
Vollers 875	5	geography, dogmatics, edifying literature, poetry	undated	anonymous user
Vollers 877	9	dogmatics, religious duties, occult sciences, rhetoric, Qur’ānic sciences, grammar, tales	1191/1777–1778 (text 2)	Aḥmad al-Rabbāṭ
Vollers 878	8	dogmatics, religious duties, poetry	1183/1769–1770 (text 1)	Sa’id al-Saqāmīnī

²¹ See *Qalamos* <https://www.qalamos.net/receive/MyMssPerson_agent_00005289>.



Fig. 11: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 356, fols 2b–3a.

The majority of the people responsible for compiling a table of contents in multiple-text/composite volumes of the Refāiyya were former owners. Only three scribes could be attested for Vollers 221, 393 and 546, one of whom is anonymous (Vollers 393). With four of the five texts being copied by the same scribe and the first one bearing the date 625/1228, the codex Vollers 221 is the earliest example of a multiple-text/composite volume in the collection containing a table of contents written in the scribe's own hand. With regard to the 21 owners, nine of them fortunately left their names in the codices (in Vollers 231, 727, 820, 768, 844, 845, 856, 859, 866, 867, 868, 877, 878). Details about the lives of seven of them have been determined (Vollers 40, 231, 727, 768, 820, 845, 856, 859, 866, 867, 877, 878). All of them lived between the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth century. Two former owners, Aḥmad al-Rabbāt and Sa'īd al-Saqāmīnī, drew up a table of contents for six

composite volumes (Vollers 40, 768, 859, 866, 867, 877) and two composite volumes (Vollers 845, 878) respectively.

Reference numbers relating to the folio-page are uncommon in tables of contents found in multiple-text/composite volumes. Apart from a list of the different texts included, multiple-text/composite volumes may contain texts with an enumeration of their chapter headings in the preface (see Vollers 866, for instance). There are also volumes that exhibit more than one listing of their complete contents, however, five of which are provided by the Refāiyya (Vollers 231, 546, 856, 859, 877).

Multiple-text volumes were frequently written by one and the same hand, so there is a real possibility that the scribe noted down the contents of the volume in a list. This applies to a manuscript comprising two treatises on Islamic law by the Egyptian author Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Kāfiyājī, who died in 879/1474 (Vollers 393). The first

treatise, *Mi'rāj al-tabaqāt wa-raf' al-darajāt li-ahl al-fahm wa-al-thiqāt*, concerns the proportion of future generations at a foundation, while the second treatise, *Wajz al-nizām fī iẓhār mawārid al-aḥkām*, deals with the manner in which ancestors and their successors applied knowledge (*ilm*) and independent interpretation (*ijtihād*) to legal questions. The volume was probably destined for a person holding a certain rank, because the paper and the binding are of good quality and the texts have been written carefully using gold and coloured inks. Last but not least, the anonymous scribe provided the recto page of the first folio on which the text of the first work starts with a decorative panel drafted in gold and blue. He placed the titles of the two treatises in the upper part of the panel and inscribed the name of the author in the medallion below it. This page thus fulfils the function of a title page and a table of contents at the same time. According to Adam Gacek, rectangular panels like this one are especially attested for the seventh/thirteenth to the ninth/fifteenth century in Egypt, Syria, Turkey and Iran.²² This multiple-text volume was possibly produced during the author's lifetime or shortly after his death (Fig. 12).

Another table of contents in a multiple-text volume (Vollers 546) brings us back to the scholar mentioned above, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Falāqinsī. This time, he did not commission the production of a book, but acted as a copyist himself: he made this copy of the volume after the loss of his precious library. In 1164/1750–1751, he copied the first work, *Unwān al-murqīṣāt wa-al-muṭribāt*, containing prose pieces and poems from ancient times and the recent past, which the author, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Mūsā Ibn Sa'īd al-'Ansī al-Maghribī (d.673/1274–1275 or 685/1286–1287) had arranged according to five aesthetic viewpoints: charming, amusing, pleasing, bearable and dull. In the second work, *Maṭmah al-anfus wa-masrah al-ta'annus fī mulah ahl al-Andalus*, which was copied by al-Falāqinsī two years earlier, Abū Naṣr al-Faṭḥ ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khāqān al-Qaysī (d.529/1134–1135 or 535/1140–1141) collected biographies of viziers and secretaries, jurists and judges as well as *littérateurs* and poets from Muslim Spain. Both texts have got a separate title page. The information is presented in the shape of a triangle with the tip pointing downwards. To indicate that the two texts belonged together and formed a unit, Aḥmad al-Falāqinsī decided to repeat the title and the name of the author of the second text on the title page of the



Fig. 12: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 393, fol. 1a.

first one. He wrote the information about text two beneath the title and author of text one using the same triangular shape. The title of the second work is introduced by the expression *wa-yalīhi*, meaning 'and it [i.e. the first book] is followed by', thereby making it clear that the volume is comprised of two texts (Fig. 13).

Multiple-text volumes and also composite volumes do not contain immutable fixed text units but were subject to changes, i.e. texts could be taken out and new ones taken in or added on blank pages, and also the sequence of the individual texts could be changed. Occasionally, a table of contents enables us to reconstruct the stage such volumes had at a certain time of their history. As the following example reveals, a multiple-text volume could be transformed into a composite one.

On the title page of the first text of the volume bearing the signature Vollers 221 the scribe added in tabular form beneath the details of the first text information about the total of six texts that are consequently to be embodied in the codex:

²² Gacek 2009, 229.

1. Abū Naǧīb ‘Abd al-Qāhir ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī (d. 563/1168):
Kitāb Ṣafwat al-ṣūfiyya fī ādāb al-murīdīn (Sufism)
2. *Kitāb fīhi min kalām al-anbiyā’ wa-al-ḥukamā’ wa-al-zuhhād wa-al-‘ibād* (Sufism)
3. *Kitāb fī ādāb al-murīdīn* (Sufism)
4. *Kitāb fīhi al-masā’il allatī sa’alahā Mūsá* (religious duties)
5. *Kitāb fīhi kalām Abī Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī* (Sufism)
6. *Min kalām ba’d al-‘arīfīn fī al-taṣawwuf* (Sufism)

Beneath the enumeration of the titles the scribe stated that he copied the texts for himself and wrote them in his own hand giving his name afterwards: *‘allaqahu li-nafsihi wa-katabahu bi-khattihi [...] Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Muḥsin ibn ‘Iwaḍ al-Anṣārī*. (Fig. 14) Today the volume encloses five texts. The second text is a fragment and might belong either to the former texts two, three or six. Texts four (*Kitāb fīhi al-masā’il allatī sa’alahā Musá*) and five (*Kitāb fīhi kalām Abī Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī*) of the list now adopt the third and fourth place in the order of the texts. The current fifth text (*Hidāyat al-qāṣidīn wa-nihāyat al-wāṣilīn* by Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibn Maymūn ibn Abī Bakr al-Maghribī al-Idrīsī, d. 917/1511–1512) is written by a different hand and was added to the volume at a later time. The listing of the works comprised in the binding clearly shows that in the first place the manuscript was conceived as a multiple-text one and finally ended up as a composite volume. Furthermore with the first work bearing the date of copying 625/1228, the codex Vollers 221 is the earliest example of a multiple-text / composite volume within the Refāiyya collection containing a table of contents in the hand of the scribe (Fig. 14).

Abū Ḥasan Aḥmad al-Rabbāt al-Ḥalabī al-Shaqīfātī al-Shāfi‘ī is a prominent figure in the Refāiyya library and lived between 1199/1784 and 1254/1838, i.e. the late Islamic period. He not only collected and copied a large number of books over the years, but he also wrote dialect poetry and performed songs in coffee houses. About thirty books from his personal library became part of the Refāiyya.²³ One of them, catalogued as Vollers 877, is an assemblage of nine texts on various topics. In all probability, it was Aḥmad al-Rabbāt who was responsible for grouping these heterogeneous texts together in a single binding. He recorded the contents of the book in two places, the first one being inside the binding’s front cover, where we find the proper table of contents with

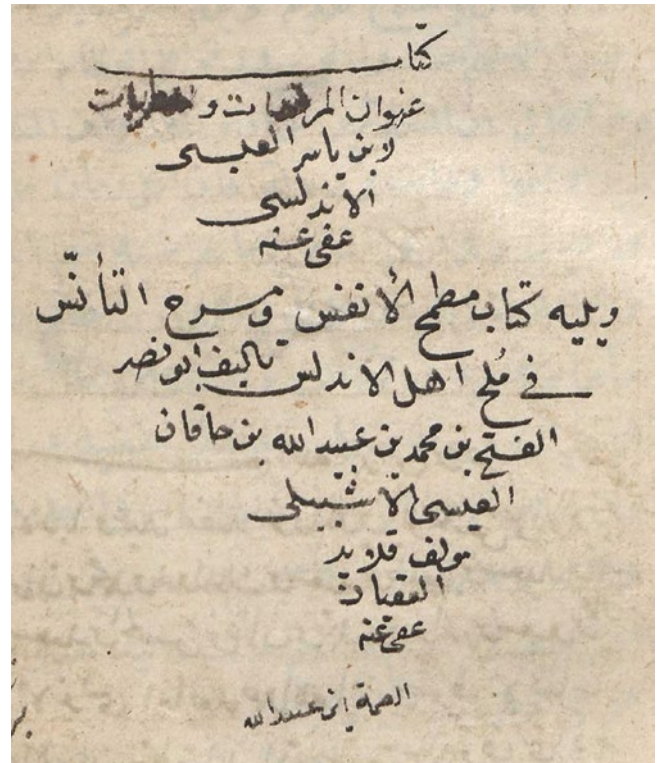


Fig. 13: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 546, fol. 2a, detail.

a tabular arrangement of the titles of the works in Aḥmad al-Rabbāt’s handwriting (Fig. 15).

Al-Rabbāt used the flyleaf of the binding as a title page, repeating the names of the texts in order and linking them to his ownership. He put them in an upside-down triangle again with the tip serving as his ex-libris. The ownership statement, which has been blacked out, formerly read: *wa-huwa min kutub al-ḥājj Aḥmad ar-Rabbāt* (‘[this] belongs to the books of Aḥmad al-Rabbāt, the pilgrim [who went] to Mecca and Medina’) (Fig. 16).

In another composite volume in his library, viz. Vollers 867, he even enumerated three of the four works it included on a piece of paper glued on the front cover, which says: *Hādihā kitāb Ḥikmah wa-yalīhi Nubdhat al-Nūr al-sāfir ‘anmā ḥadatha fī al-qarn al-‘āshir wa-yalīhi Muḥarrarat al-tamāmah fī aḥwāl al-qiyāmah* (‘This is the book *Ḥikmah* and it is followed by an excerpt from *al-Nūr al-sāfir ‘anmā ḥadatha fī al-qarn al-‘āshir* and [this] is followed by *Muḥarrarat al-tamāmah fī aḥwāl al-qiyāmah*’). As for the last text, he must have either forgotten it or overlooked it. The piece of paper is cut out in the shape of a triangle with arched outlines and the tip pointing downwards (Fig. 17).

²³ Liebrez 2013 and Liebrez 2016, 228–233.



Fig. 14: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 221, fol. 2a.

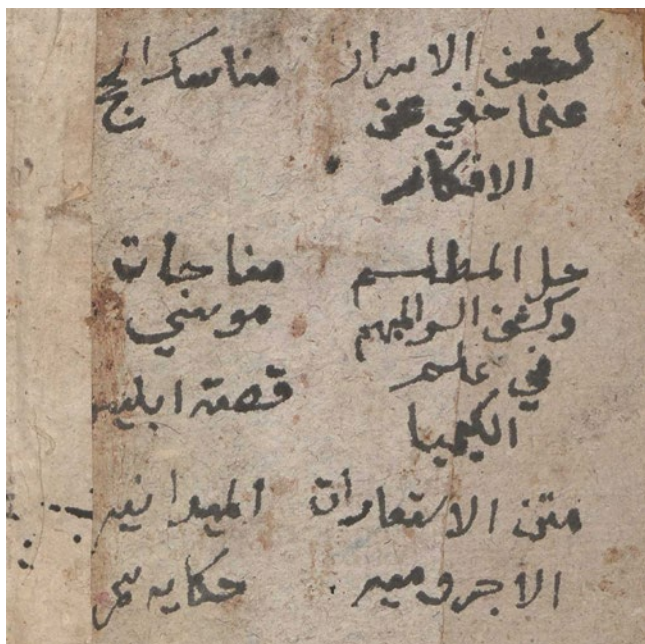


Fig. 15: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 877, inside of front cover, detail.

As an exception to the rule, Saʿīd al-Saqāmīnī, the owner of the composite manuscript Vollers 878, who lived in Damascus in the thirteenth/nineteenth century, added the commencing folio-page numbers to the title of each text in his list of the book's contents by placing the corresponding numeral in the right-hand corner of the black stroke he had used to overline each title. The list of contents he set up on the flyleaf simply has the heading *majmūʿ*, which is the Arabic term for a multiple-text/composite volume (the term in general has the meaning of a compendium, collection, compilation or miscellany²⁴). In the left-hand corner below the list, he immortalised himself in an ownership note that says *malakahu al-faqr al-sayyid Saʿīd al-Saqāmīnī* ('the humble gentleman Saʿīd al-Saqāmīnī possessed it'). Since the reference numbers make it easier to find the individual works in the volume, al-Saqāmīnī obviously did not consider this special collection of texts to be a temporary arrangement and the table of contents he compiled was not provisional. The table mentions seven works belonging to the volume. Al-Saqāmīnī forgot to include a poem that comes between texts six and seven in his list. The poem is not separated by the *basmalah*, with which every text should ideally begin, and it comes directly after another poem, so it must have escaped his notice (Fig. 18).

²⁴ Gacek 2001, 26; Steingass 1963, 1178.

4. Conclusion

The material in the Refāiyya has demonstrated that tables of contents are not a standard phenomenon in Arabic manuscripts. In fact, only 91 manuscripts out of the 812 in the collection include such a table. These were added by their authors, scribes or users.

Scholars began to enumerate the chapter headings into which they had divided their work in the preface of the text by the end of the early Islamic period at the latest, i.e. the third/ninth to the fourth/tenth century. It is quite difficult to determine exactly when scribes and users chose to prefix a list of contents to the texts. As far as scribes are concerned, the earliest exemplar of a multiple-text/composite volume in the Refāiyya dates from the seventh/thirteenth century and the earliest exemplar of a single-text volume from the tenth/sixteenth century. Some of the users who compiled a table of contents for texts in the collection lived between the twelfth/eighteenth and the thirteenth/nineteenth century.

Conventions were gradually established for the visual organisation and presentation of tables of contents. The enumeration of the chapter and section headings in the preface of a work was done by rubricating the structuring units and their numbers, by overlining them with a red or a black stroke or by writing them in bigger and thicker letterforms. In general, the list is part of the continuous text. When separated from the running text, the chapter and section headings are arranged underneath each other. Sometimes the enumeration does not stand out from the surrounding text at all because it is not highlighted in any way. Folio-page numbers are missing. A tabular structure was predominantly used to visually organise lists of contents. The compartments drawn around these lists were added in black or red ink, but some lists were not framed at all. Presenting the contents as a continuous text or listing the items underneath each other are other ways of presenting this kind of information. In multiple-text/composite volumes, the title page of the first work could be expanded to include a table of contents, and a flyleaf could also function as a title page and a list of contents. In these places, the titles of the texts and the names of the authors are often written in the shape of a triangle with the tip pointing downwards. Scribes and users frequently added reference numerals to their lists relating to the folio-page numbers of the text. They mostly refrained from doing so if tables of contents were provided in multiple-text/composite volumes. In the Refāiyya collection, Vollers 878 is an exception to this rule.

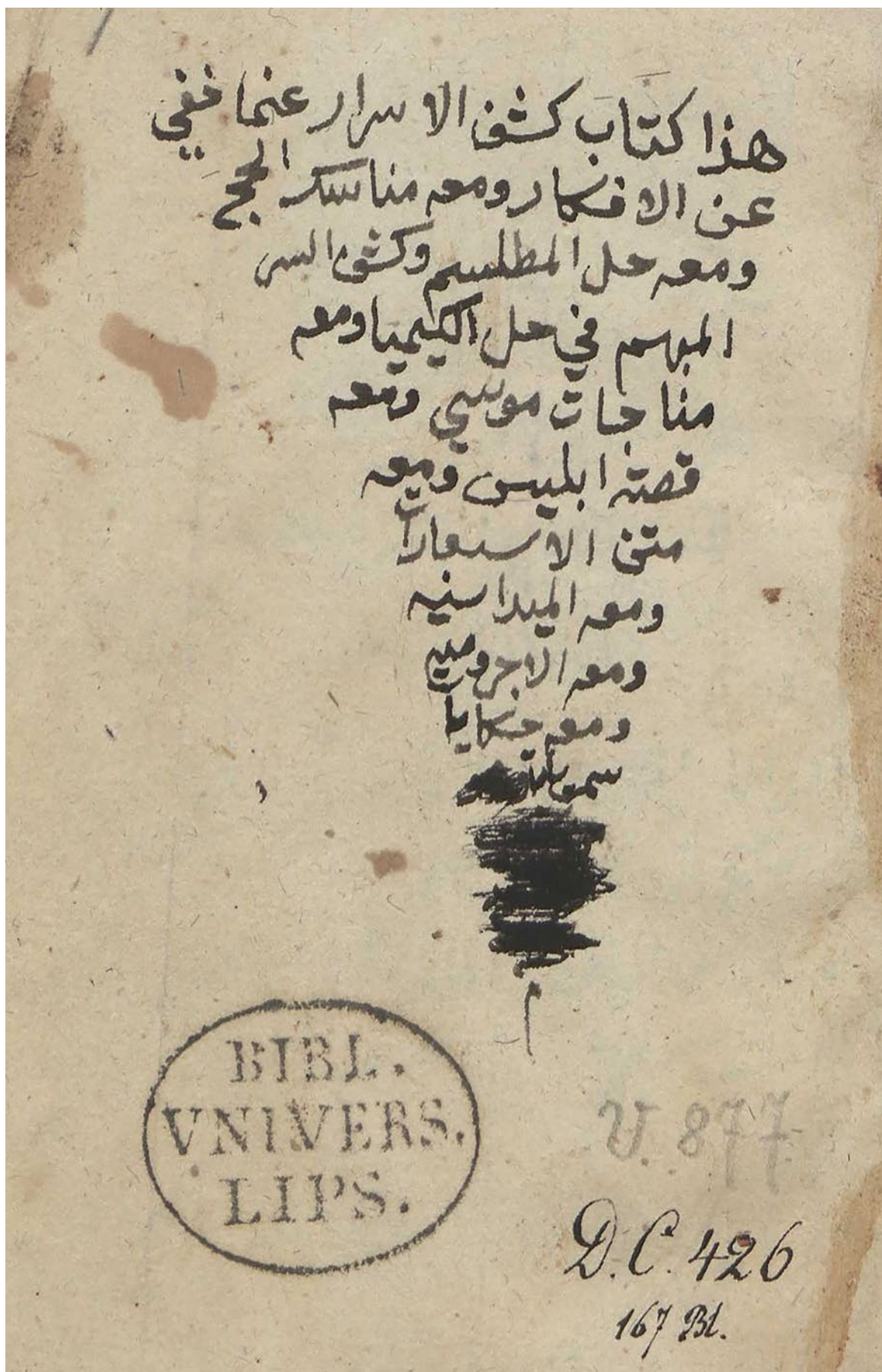


Fig. 16: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 877, fol. 1a, detail.

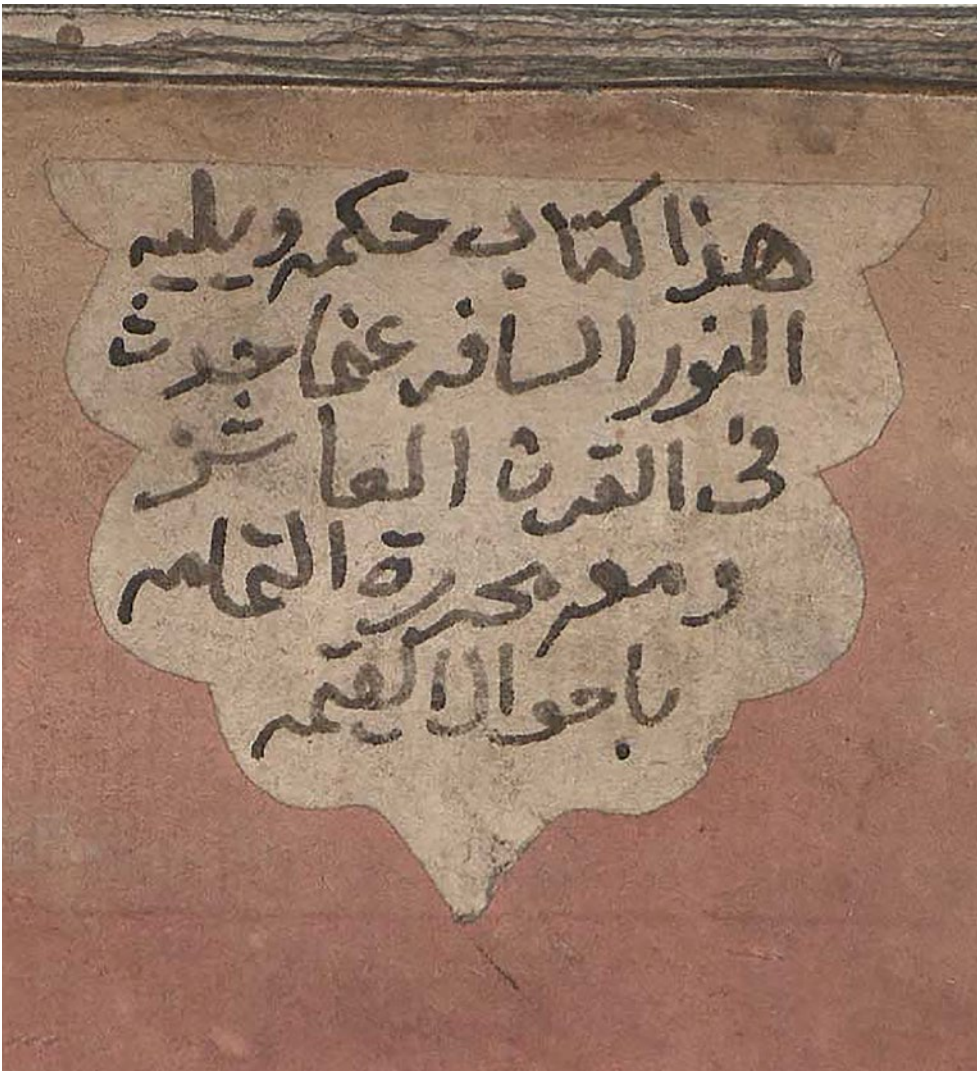


Fig. 17: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 867, front cover, detail.

Occasionally, the manuscripts include both an enumeration of the chapters in the preface of the text originating from the author and a table of contents prefixed to the work by the scribe or a user. Multiple-text/composite volumes sometimes display more than one list of the texts they contain. Lists of this kind in composite volumes occasionally reveal something about the stages of their compilation, viz. which texts once belonged to the binding, but were then taken out and replaced by other ones. Tables of contents lacking numbers referring to the folio-page where a chapter/section and a work respectively commences merely served as a general overview of the content of a book. By contrast, tables of contents with folio-page references allowed the reader to use a book in a more selective way and gave him easier access to specific parts or information. However, it is not the case that every book included an enumeration of the

chapters in its preface, and proper tables of contents with reference numbers were only compiled according to users' requirements. There was obviously a greater need to provide legal texts with content listings written by scribes while they were copying a text or added subsequently by users than a need for tables of contents on texts about other topics. Since Islamic law includes the duties of a Muslim in all areas of religious, public, political, social and private life, legal texts were presumably consulted more often than other texts as they were reference works. Thus, although it was familiar with the principle of creating a table of contents, the Arabic manuscript tradition may not have regarded books as easily accessible reference works, contrary to our understanding today.



Fig. 18: Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, Vollers 878, fol. 1a.

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PICTURE CREDITS

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