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Certificates of Audition (*Samā'āt*) in Islamic Manuscripts: Documentary Practices, Transmission Networks, and Historiographical Value

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Abstract

The current study aimed to discuss the *samā'āt*, that is, the marginal notes found in the Islamic manuscripts as a means for the authentication of the oral transmission of Islamic sciences. This has been apparent in Islamic writings since the 5th-9th centuries AH (11th-15th CE). This study adopted a historical approach and manuscript-based method, based on a survey of 47 manuscripts including 132 *samā'āt*, preserved in Turkey, Egypt, Germany, and Syria. Three main examples were studied in detail: al-Tirmidhī's *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya*, al-Khurā'ī's *I'tilāl al-Qulūb*, and al-Anbārī's *Iḍāḥ al-Waqf wa-l-Ibtidā'*. The analysis used three methods: palaeographic transcription, biographical data extraction, and comparative analysis of documentary formulae. The findings showed four main facts. Firstly, there were three types of certificates: those that certify hearing a whole text, those that certify hearing only a part, and fragmentary notes. Each type uses different standard phrases. Secondly, *samā'āt* helped verify the accuracy of texts by recording group listening and comparing copies against original manuscripts. Thirdly, they provided evidence of scholarly networks that connected Baghdad, Fustāt, Damascus, and Iṣfahān. Fourthly, they revealed the names of non-elite actors, including women, merchants, and artisans, who were absent from biographical dictionaries and chronicles. The manuscript showed that *samā'āt* are not just minor notes in the margins of books but valuable historical sources. They clarify oral and written knowledge transmission and medieval documentation. The study concluded by proposing digital cataloguing standards and TEI-XML encoding for future biographical and network analysis. By including tables, sample transcriptions, and appendices, this study offered a practical model for using *samā'āt* as a direct evidence for the intellectual and social history of Islam.

Keywords: audition records, historiography, *ijāzah*, Islamic Codicology, manuscript transmission, palaeography, *samā'*

Introduction

All historical artefacts carry inscriptions and symbols that serve as primary sources for understanding the past; manuscript fragments are no different.¹ Among the most distinctive

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¹Abdelrazek Elnaggar et al., "Multianalytical Study of Amuletic and Talismanic Islamic-African Paper Manuscripts in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum," *ChemPlusChem* 90, no. 12 (2025):

documentary genres in Islamic manuscripts is the *samā'* certificate, literally a “record of hearing”. Written at the end or in the margins of codices, these attestations record that a text was read aloud by a teacher (*shaykh*) and heard by students or auditors. The *samā'* is less a comment of ownership and more a social practice of educational authentication: a combination of oral performance, written accuracy, and collective witnessing.

Samā'āt are frequent, yet not enough research has been conducted on them. They are likely to be considered footnotes, not as independent historical references. Recent publications by Witkam,² Leder,³ and Gacek⁴ have reconsidered these records as important for the social history of Islamic knowledge. This study has been built on that framework. Furthermore, it investigated a selected *samā'āt* from a codicological and historiographical perspective, focusing on their importance in proving the authenticity of manuscripts and documenting the transfer of knowledge across regions.

Recent studies on mediaeval Arabic reading practices, including Hirschler's ‘The Written Word in the Mediaeval Arabic Lands (2024),’⁵ highlight the social aspects of audition sessions held in

e202500433, <https://doi.org/10.1002/cplu.202500433>; Ahmed Ameen and Yassmin Kasem, “The Visual Impact of Colors in Ottoman Inscriptions: A Case Study of the Sultan Bayezid II Mosque in Didymoteichon, Greece,” *Journal of Islamic Architecture* 8, no. 4 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.18860/jia.v8i4.27523>; Ahmed Ameen and Hamada Hagra, “Textual Embodiments of the Sacred: Analyzing the Qur'anic Inscriptions in Al-Aṣḥāb Mosque of Quanzhou-China,” *SHEDET* (this is the full title of the journal and not an abbreviation) 14 (2025): 125–143, <https://doi.org/10.21608/shedet.2025.352617.1283>; Mohamed Uthmān and Ahmed Ameen, “Iwān El-Ser at Al-Malik Al-Šāleḥ Najm Al-Dīn Ayyūb Complex in Cairo: Reconsidered Based on Its Foundation Inscription,” *SHEDET* 12 (2024): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.21608/SHEDET.2024.332846>; Atef Mansour Ramadan and Ahmed Ameen, “The Credibility of Religious Quotes on Islamic Numismatics Considering Its Actual Historical Context: The Case of Ṭarmashīrīn Khan,” *SHEDET* 9 (2022): 234–245, <https://doi.org/10.21608/SHEDET.2022.248913>; Mohammed S. Tawfiq et al., “A Historical and Numismatic Study of the Dinars of the Sultan Mahmūd b. Sabuktakīn at Nishapur,” *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie III, Historia Medieval* 33 (2020): 613–652, <https://doi.org/10.5944/etfiii.33.2020.24006>; Ahmed Ameen, “The significance of the Qur'anic quotation ‘Mā shā Allāh’ on both Ottoman and Greek heritages in the Balkans,” *EJARS (Egyptian Journal of Archaeological and Restoration Studies)* 10, no. 1 (2020): 73–85, <https://doi.org/10.21608/EJARS.2020.98963>; Ahmed Ameen, “Patrons of Ottoman Mosques in Greece reconsidered in light of the Ierapetra Mosque of Crete,” *Journal of Islamic Architecture* 5, no. 3 (2019): 137–144, <https://doi.org/10.18860/jia.v5i3.5365>.

²Jan Just Witkam, “The Human Element between Text and Reader: The Ijāza in Arabic Manuscripts,” in *The Codicology of Islamic Manuscripts: Proceedings of the Second Conference of al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 4–5 December 1993*, ed. Yasin Dutton (London: al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1995).

³Stefan Leder, Yāsīn Muḥammad al-Sawwās, and Ma'mūn al-Šāgharjī, *Mu'jam al-Samā'āt al-Dimashqiyya: Recueil de Documents Fac-Similés des Certificats d'Audition à Damas 550–750 h./1155–1349* [Dictionary of Damascene Audition Certificates: Collection of Facsimile Documents of Audition Certificates in Damascus, 550–750 AH/1155–1349 CE] (Damascus: Institut Français d'Études Arabes de Damas and Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Damaskus, 2000).

⁴Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004170360.i-350>.

⁵Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748654215>.

Damascus and Cairo. Hirschler illustrates that reading was a collective, performative endeavor occurring in urban settings. The current research expanded upon the documentary turn in manuscript studies by analyzing *samā'āt* as tangible artefacts that represent authentication, scribal accountability, and social inclusivity. This study improved “paratextual documentary analysis” by providing a systematic way to get codicological and prosopographical information from audition certificates.

Additionally, the current study examined the evolution of *samā'*, that is, recording in form and function through three case studies spanning the 5th–11th centuries. It posited that *samā'āt* elucidate the dynamic interplay between oral and written traditions, formal and informal educational contexts, as well as the interactions of authority, gender, and sociability within medieval Islamic scholarship. The research gap addressed was threefold: there are no systematic ways to read *samā'āt* as independent sources; audition certificates are not used enough to help recover marginal social actors; and there are no integrated digital standards for comparing collections.

2. Literature Review

Interest in *samā'āt* among scholars began in the mid-twentieth century. Al-Munajjid noted their importance as a scholarly permission (*ijāza*), and its fundamental categories.⁶ Vajda examined 72 specimens from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, providing the first systematic description of their formal aspects.⁷ Subsequent studies increased the empirical basis: Lecomte linked audition certificates to the writings of Ibn Qutayba,⁸ Mackay traced the transfer of al-Ḥarīrī's Maqāmāt,⁹ and Seidensticker proved their potential for the reconstruction of social networks.¹⁰ On the other hand, other researchers focused on intensive documentation. Witkam made lists and copies of audition certificates.¹¹ Leder and his research group made complete lists of *samā'āt* from Damascus.¹² These works provided the basic materials for prosopographical and social research.

Hirschler in his book *The Written Word in the Mediaeval Arabic Lands* represents a different

⁶Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, “Ijāzat al-Samā' fī al-Makhtūṭāt al-Qadīma [The Audition License in Ancient Manuscripts],” *Majallat Ma'had al-Makhtūṭāt al-'Arabiyya* 1, no. 2 (1955): 289–307.

⁷Georges Vajda, “Les Certificats de Transmission dans les Manuscrits Arabes de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris [Transmission Certificates in the Arabic Manuscripts of the National Library of Paris],” *Bulletin d'information de l'Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes*, no. 3 (1954): 107–110, <https://doi.org/10.3406/rht.1955.923>.

⁸Gérard Lecomte, “Bedeutung der ‘Randzeugnisse’ (Samā'āt) in den Alten Arabischen Handschriften [The Significance of “Marginal Testimonies” (Samā'āt) in Old Arabic Manuscripts],” in *Supplement 1 der Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (27. *Deutscher Orientalistentag, Würzburg 1968*), vol. 2 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1969) 2: 562–566, <https://www.opendata.uni-halle.de/bitstream/1981185920/110578/431/1009608541.pdf>

⁹Pierre A. MacKay, *Certificates of Transmission on a Manuscript of the Maqāmāt of Ḥarīrī (MS Cairo, Adab 105)* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1971), <https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.70249/9798893980332/html>.

¹⁰Tilman Seidensticker, “Audience Certificates in Arabic Manuscripts: The Genre and a Case Study,” *Manuscript Cultures* 8 (2015): 75–91; Tilman Seidensticker, “The Chamberlain's Sessions: Audience Certificates in a Baghdad Manuscript of al-Kharā'ī's *I'tilāl al-Qulūb* (Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Ms. Orient. A 627),” *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 11, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1163/1878464X-01101004>.

¹¹Witkam, “The Human Element Between Text and Reader.”

¹²Stefan Leder, Yāsin Muḥammad al-Sawwās, and Ma'mūn al-Sāgharjī, *Mu'jam al-Samā'āt al-Dimashqiyya: Les Certificats d'Audition à Damas 550–750 h./1155–1349* [Dictionary of Damascene Audition Certificates: Audition Certificates in Damascus, 550–750 AH/1155–1349 CE] (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1996).

school that focused on the cultural and social history of reading. He rebuilt the popular and scholarly reading sessions in Damascus (6th-8th AH/12th-14th CE centuries), showing that the *samā'* certificates were a sign of urban knowledge. A set of papers offered a methodological approach to treat marginal annotations (*samā'āt*, *ijāzāt*, and *tamallukāt*) as primary documentary evidence rather than as paratexts that complement the main text.¹³ These researches turned the study towards an understanding of the manuscript codex as a layered repository of social and intellectual practices.

The current research extended these findings by going further than descriptive cataloguing to a systematic analytical framework combining codicology, paleography, prosopography, and digital approaches. This study provided a cross-regional corpus of 47 manuscripts and 132 certificates that allows for a comparative study of formulae, scripts, and social networks throughout Baghdad, Fustāt, and Damascus, in contrast to previous studies of individual manuscripts or regional collections. Additionally, it also addressed the absence of material about women, merchants, artisans, and non-elite scholars in biographical dictionaries and chronicles.

These contributions are essential but most studies have viewed the *samā'āt* as ancillary to the transmission of texts rather than as historical sources in their own right. The emphasis has been largely on authenticity, literary confirmation or codicological description. Little has been done to study their historiographical potential to shed light on academic meetings, minor characters or societal circumstances. This study has been built on existing studies by highlighting the historical significance of *samā'āt* and by approaching them as documented sources able to alter our understanding of the history of Islamic thought.

3. Methodology

This study used a historical and codicological approach similar to that used in Islamic manuscripts, seeing them as historical records with real value rather than just notes on the margins.

3.1. Corpus and Sampling Criteria

The corpus is made up of 47 manuscripts that hold 132 different *samā'* certificates. These were found by carefully looking through published catalogues by Leder and Seidensticker, and by looking at published digital and physical collections. From the 5th century-11th century and from the 9th century-15th century, Baghdad, Fustāt, Damascus, Aleppo, and Iṣfahān are all talked about. There are various kinds of texts, including hadith, adab, Qur'ānic sciences, and religion.¹⁴

The three case studies in Section 5 are not statistically typical. They were picked on the spot to show differences in types of certificates (full, partial, and broken), time periods (6th-9th/12th-15th centuries), and places (Egypt, Iraq, and Syria). To be included, the items had to meet the following conditions: (a) have at least one *samā'* certificate that could be read; (b) have high-resolution pictures or be easy to get to; and (c) come from different places and times so as not to be biased.

3.2. Transcription and Data Extraction

When transcribing each *samā'*, palaeographical details and differences in spelling were taken into account.¹⁵ Names of teachers, students, and witnesses were written down, along with times,

¹³Andreas Görke and Konrad Hirschler, eds., *Manuscript Notes as Documentary Sources* (Beirut/Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2011), 129, <http://dx.doi.org/10.25673/108623>.

¹⁴Lecomte, "Bedeutung der 'Randzeugnisse' [The Significance of "Marginal Testimonies"]", 562–566.

¹⁵On transcription practices, Jacques Lemaire, *Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts*, trans. Mustafa al-Toubi, preface/supervision by Ahmed Chouqui Benbin, 1st ed. (Marrakech: al-Maṭba'ah wa-l-Wirāqah al-Waṭāniyyah, 2006), 53–100.

places, and parts of texts that were read. By comparing them to other texts and secondary sources, unclear parts were cleared up.¹⁶

4. Analytical Framework

The data were looked at in four different ways: networks of transmission; the places and times of scholarly gatherings; the role of *samā'āt* as proofreaders of manuscripts; and their ability to add to biographical dictionaries in terms of history. This context brings out the fact that *samā'āt* are both historical records and works of codicology.¹⁷

4.1. Definition and Typology of *Samā'āt*

Along with ownership notes (*tamallukāt*) and authorization statements (*ijāzāt*), the *samā'* (certificate of audition) is a paratext that can be found in Islamic texts. It comes from the Arabic root *s-m-'*, which means, "to hear."¹⁸ It means to formally listen to a text read out loud in front of an audience and then admit its transmission.¹⁹ So, a *samā'* is like a legal paper that proves both the audition and the right to transmit the text.

In terms of codification, *samā'āt* document a certain learning method. Usually, they have (a) the names of the readers (*al musmi'*), (b) the names of the listeners (*al sāmi'ūn*), (c) the date and location of the session, and (d) the part of the text that was read.²⁰ Some scholars used phrases, such as *sami'a al kitāb kullahu* (he heard the whole book) or *sami'a juz'an minhu* (he heard part of it)²¹ to show the difference between full auditions (*samā' kāmīl*) and partial ones (*samā' juz'ī*). The unique value of *samā'āt* comes from the fact that they had two functions: they were used to certify scholars work and to keep historical records of intellectual life, social settings, and the movement of texts (see Table 1 for types and Table 2 for formulae).²²

4.2. Historical Emergence

The formalization of *samā'āt* as acknowledged instruments of scholarly transmission occurred in the 5th/11th century, coinciding with the emergence of institutions, such as the Nizāmiyya madrasas. Al Munajjid contended that institutionalized curricula fostered conditions in which audition records were consistently recorded at the commencement, conclusion, or margins of manuscripts.²³ By the 6th/12th, and 7th/13th centuries, recording auditions had become common in the central Islamic lands.

¹⁶On metadata approaches; Ḥajj Qwādir Al 'Id, *Data and Documentary Records in Arabic Manuscripts: The Case of the Manuscripts of the Tuat Libraries* (doctoral thesis, Ahmed Ben Bella University, Oran 1, Algeria, 2018), 211–29.

¹⁷Said Aljoumani, "Šuwar al-Ijāzāt al-Manqūla fī l-Maḥṭūṭāt al-'Arabiyya, al-Sabab wa-l-Wazīfa [Forms of Transmitted Ijāzāt in Arabic Manuscripts: Cause and Function]," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 9 (2018): 72–100.

¹⁸Ismā'īl ibn Ḥammād al-Jawharī, *Al-Šiḥāḥ: Tāj al-Lughā wa-Šiḥāḥ al-'Arabiyya*, ed. Aḥmad 'Abd al-Ghafūr 'Aṭṭār, 2nd Ed. (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-l-Malāyīn, 1979), 4:212.

¹⁹Saleh Muhammad Zeki Al Leheabi, *The Historical Evaluation of the Manuscript Industry* (Sharjah: Sharjah Institute of Heritage, 2018), 23–24, <https://search.mandumah.com/Record/1045409>.

²⁰Badr al-Dīn Ibn Jamā'a, *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi' wa-l-Mutakallim fī Ādāb al-'Ālim wa-l-Muta'allim*, ed. Muḥammad Maḥdī al-Ājmi (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā'ir al-Islāmiyya, n.d.), 55–59.

²¹Hajj Qouider Al-'Id, *Data and Documentary Records in Arabic Manuscripts*, 224–31.

²²Seidensticker, "Audience Certificates in Arabic Manuscripts," 75–91.

²³al-Munajjid, "Ijāzāt al-Samā' fī al-Maḥṭūṭāt al-Qadīma," 289–307.

This helped to verify copies and keep the memory of scholarly sessions alive.²⁴

Scholars of classical music set the rules for auditioning and the words to use. Al Khaṭīb al Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) declared that it was important to write down the teachers entire name, the exact passage that was read, and the names of the those who heard it.²⁵ Al Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ (d. 544/1149) and al Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) said that being precise regarding dates and places is very important because being careless can hurt the integrity of scholars.²⁶ By the end of the Middle Ages, *samā'āt* had become an essential aspect of the culture of writing. It showed that manuscripts were being used for academic purposes and put them in places, such as mosques, madrasas, libraries, and even peoples homes.²⁷

Table 1. Typology of Samā'āt: Complete, Partial, and Fragmentary Certificates

Type of Samā'	Defining Formula / Expression	Scope of Reading	Function and Implication	Example Manuscript(s)
Complete Samā'	<i>sami'a al-kitāb kullahu, sami'a jamī'ahu</i>	Entire text heard and verified	Full transmission, eligible for ijāzah; ensures textual integrity	Sulaymaniyah Library MS 254 (<i>al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya</i>)
Partial Samā'	<i>sami'a juz'an minhu, ilā hāhunā, sami'a min bāb ... ilā bāb ...</i>	Limited section or chapter	Indicates partial attendance or interruption; requires completion in another session	Gotha Library MS orient. A 627 (<i>I'tilāl al-Qulūb</i>)
Fragmentary or Collation Note	<i>quri'a 'alayhi wa-qābalahu, 'uridha 'alayhi, wafaqa al-aṣl</i>	Verification or collation of sections	Establishes authenticity via comparison with the exemplar	Istanbul MS 11 (<i>Idāh al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā'</i>)

Table 2. Common Formulae Used in Samā'āt and Their Functional Meanings

Arabic Formula	Literal Translation	Function within the Certificate
<i>sami'a jamī'a hādha al-kitāb</i>	“He heard the entirety of this book”	Affirms complete oral transmission
<i>quri'a 'alā fulān</i>	“It was read to so-and-so”	Indicates passive hearing by a teacher or auditor
<i>ḥaḍara majlis al-samā'</i>	“He attended the session of audition”	Records presence without active participation
<i>bi-qirā'atihi wa-samā'ihī</i>	“Through his reading and hearing”	Dual confirmation: recitation and listening
<i>wa-ṣaḥḥa dhālik</i>	“This was verified as correct”	Certifies final verification and authentication
<i>wa-katabahu fulān</i>	“Written in the hand of ...”	Establishes scribal authorship and

²⁴Angelika Hartmann, “Authority, Ijāzāt and Politics: Caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh's *Kitāb Rūḥ al-ʿArifīn* (7th/13th Century Baghdad),” in *Rulers as Authors in the Islamic World: Knowledge, Authority and Legitimacy*, ed. Maribel Fierro, Sonja Brentjes, and Tilman Seidensticker (Leiden: Brill, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004690615_010.

²⁵Hajj Qouider Al-ʿId, *Data and Documentary Records in Arabic Manuscripts*, 198-202.

²⁶Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Al-Jāmi' li-Akhlāq al-Rāwī wa-ʿĀdāb al-Sāmi'*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Ṭahhān (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 1983), 1:142-47.

²⁷Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth fī Sharḥ Alfīyyat al-Ḥadīth li-l-'Irāqī*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad 'Uthmān, 2nd ed. (Medina: al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya, 1969), 1:77-79.

Arabic Formula	Literal Translation	Function within the Certificate
<i>bi-yadihi</i>		responsibility

4.3. Forms, Terminology, and Recording Practices

The documentation of *samā'āt* shows a lot of formalization. Most certificates have the names of the teachers (*al musmi*'), the names of the auditors (*al sāmi'ūn*), the date and place, and sometimes the name of the manuscripts owner.²⁸ The limits of audition are shown by formulaic phrases, such as *sami'a al kitāb kullahu* ("he heard the whole book"), *sami'a juz'an minhu* ("he heard a part"), or *quri'a 'alayhi* ("it was read to him").²⁹ Some records depict who read the text and who was in charge of the class, or what copy was used (for example, "the copy of so and so").³⁰ Spatial references enhance the record by indicating sessions held in mosques, madrasas, private residences, or even markets and businesses.³¹ Classical authorities formulated these rules: al Khaṭīb al Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) said to start with the *basmala* and write down the teacher's whole genealogy;³² al Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) said that not keeping records was a bad idea.³³ These prescriptions validate that *samā'āt* were perceived as essential documents of intellectual integrity³⁴ (refer to Table 2 for prevalent formulas and Table 3 for locations).

Table 3. Venues of Audition Sessions: Mosques, Madrasas, Private Homes, and Marketplaces

Venue Type	Typical Formula in Samā'	Social Context	Representative Example
Mosque (Masjid / Jāmi')	<i>bi-jāmi' 'Amr ibn al- 'Aṣ, fī masjid al- Mazzāh</i>	Public instructional setting; open scholarly gatherings	<i>al-Shamā'il</i> , Sulaymaniyah MS 254 (Fusṭāt)
Madrasa	<i>fī madrasat al- 'Adiliyya, madrasat al-Nūriyya</i>	Institutional teaching; students and jurists	<i>I'tilāl al-Qulūb</i> , Gotha MS A 627
Private Residence	<i>fī dār fulān, bi-manzilihi</i>	Domestic and family participation, including women	Ibn al-Sharīfa <i>Samā'</i> , later <i>Shamā'il</i> copy
Marketplace or Shop (Sūq, Hānūt)	<i>'inda hānūt al-bazzāzīn</i>	Professional or guild-linked recitations; informal settings	<i>I'tilāl al-Qulūb</i> , participation of <i>al-Bazzāz</i> family

4.4. Social and Intellectual Context

Samā'āt not only validated the progression of text but also illuminated social and intellectual relations. They document the identities of teachers, students, and witnesses, facilitating our

²⁸Al-Leheabi, *The Historical Evaluation of the Manuscript Industry*, 25.

²⁹Said Aljoumani, "Dalālāt al-muṣṭalahāt al-wārīda fī majālis al-samā' wa-l-qir'a fī l-maḥṭūṭāt al-'arabiyya [Semantics of the Terms Occurring in Audition and Reading Sessions in Arabic Manuscripts]," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 11 (2020): 106–132.

³⁰Badr al-Dīn Ibn Jamā'a, *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi' wa-l-Mutakallim fī Ādāb al-'Ālim wa-l-Muta'allim*, 58–60.

³¹Hajj Qwīdir al-'Id, *Al-Ma'lūmāt wa-l-Wathā'iq fī al-Maḥṭūṭāt al-'Arabiyya: Dirāsa fī Maḥṭūṭāt Maktabāt Tuwāt* (Oran: Jāmi'at Wahrān, 2013), 228–30.

³²Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ghāya fī Sharḥ al-Hidāya fī 'Ilm al-Riwāya li-Ibn al-Jazarī*, ed. Muḥammad Sīdī Muḥammad al-Amīn (Medina: Maktabat al-'ulum wa al-Ḥikam Publishing and Distribution, 2002), 2:311–15.

³³Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Al-Jāmi' li-Akhlāq al-Rawī wa-Ādāb al-Sāmi'*, 1:145–48.

³⁴Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth fī Sharḥ Alfiyyat al-Ḥadīth li-l-'Irāqī*, 1:79–81.

comprehension of the interpersonal networks that disseminated information. They usually document individuals not included in biographical dictionaries. This augments the prosopography of Islamic intellectual history.³⁵ *Samā'āt's* spatial references indicate several sites for learning, including mosques, madrasas, private homes, and commercial sites, such as stores and markets³⁶ (see also Table 3). These aspects integrate academic activities into the urban surroundings and show the relationship between academic and communal life.

Such formulae as *samī'a juz'an* ("he heard a portion"), *ibtadā'a hāhunā* ("he began listening here"), or *qara'ahu fulān* ("read by so and so") show scrupulous documentation of auditory scope and intellectual purity.³⁷ Additionally, one certificate may name the teacher, the reader, multiple auditors, and the scribe. This proves that knowledge was generated by a group of scholars.³⁸

The *samā'* was not just a legal role but also an urban micro-historical record of literacy and social learning.³⁹ The evidence for artisans and merchants, as well as women, such as Umm Ibrāhīm Rābi'a, suggests that participation in scholastic circles was not confined to jurists and was not gendered. *Samā'āt* open the porous borders between professional and intellectual groups and demand a reconsideration of the way knowledge was disseminated in towns of the Islamic world.⁴⁰

5. Case Studies from Chosen Manuscripts

The next three case studies were chosen because they show a range of places (Baghdad, Fustāt, Damascus), eras (5th–9th/11th–15th centuries), and types of texts (*hadīth*, adab, Qur'ānic studies). They show that *samā'āt* were multi-layered historical records that kept track of scholarly networks, social processes, and the accuracy of the writing (see Tables 1–2).

5.1. Al-Tirmidhīs al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya

5.1.1. Manuscript Reference⁴¹

Sulaymaniyah Library, Turkey (MS 254). Dated: Saturday, 29 Šafar 578 AH/10 July 1182 CE. Place: Fustāt, Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ.

5.1.2. Who are the Participants?

Teacher/Reader: Abū Nizār Rabī'a b. al-Hasan al-Ḥaḍramī (primary transmitter). Auditors: Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd (Ibn al-Sharīfa), 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥaristānī, 'Alī al-Mardāwī, 'Umar al-Nābulusī, the critic 'Alī al-Mizzī, and a female auditor, Umm Ibrāhīm Rābi'a bint Muḥammad, along with other family members and lay witnesses. It is clear that the scribe is a synchronous scholar, even though their name is not given.

5.1.3. Venue and Date (Where and When?)

Fustāt, Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ (*al-Jāmi' al-Āṭiq*), Saturday 29 Šafar 578 AH/10 July 1182

³⁵Seidensticker, "The Chamberlain's Sessions," 53–100.

³⁶Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ghāya fī Sharḥ al-Hidāya*, 2:315–19.

³⁷Hajj Qouider Al-'Id, "Data and Documentary Records in Arabic Manuscripts, 231–34.

³⁸Al-Leheabi, *The Historical Evaluation of the Manuscript Industry*, 25.

³⁹Said Aljoumani and Konrad Hirschler, "A Glimpse into Egyptian/Syrian Elite Book Culture during the Seventh/Thirteenth Century: Booklist T-S Misc. 24.28 from the Cairo Geniza Corpus," *Der Islam* 100, no. 2 (2023): 504–518, <https://doi.org/10.1515/islam-2023-0026>.

⁴⁰Badr al-Dīn Ibn Jamā'a, *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi' wa-l-Mutakallim*, 61–64.

⁴¹The Sulaymaniyah Library's MS 254, Cf. al-Tirmidhī (*Muḥammad ibn 'Isā ibn Sawrah al-Tirmidhī* died 279 H/c. 892), *al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya*, ed. Mohamed Omar Sabsoub, (Qatar, 2019), 23–32.

CE. As proof of the manuscripts journey through different regions, an additional certificate lists later auditions in Damascus and Jerusalem.

5.1.4. Reading Scope (What Portion?)

The audition formula determines the accurate listening percentage for the authorization; and we find it here in the formula of complete listening (*samā' kāmīl*) for all the attributes with one exception, which has been detailed as the section from “The Life of the Prophet” to “The Description of the Prophet's Speech in Poetry.” Mentioning this partial exception in such an explicit manner (*illā juz'an*), confirms the reliability and authenticity of the hearing testimony.

5.1.5. Documentary Function

(1) *Muqābala*, that is, checking the copy against the original manuscript of Abū Nizār Rabī'a; (2) Implicitly *ijazah*, that is, legally proving the right to transmit the content; and (3) Keeping a record of a group of scholars from all walks of life, including women and non-elite people.

5.1.6. Additional Notes (Context, Paleography, and Value)

There are 76 pages in this copy, and each one has 15 lines written in an organized *naskh* script. A handwritten copy of *majālis al samā'* by Abū Nizār Rabī'a was used. He wrote it in Damascus, Jerusalem, and Fustāt. The *samā'* certificate is written in a beautiful *naskh* style with ligatures that are close together and verticals that are longer than usual for Egyptian codices from the late 6th to early 12th centuries. Rubrication highlights the names of the transmitters, and occasional erasures (*kasht*) suggest that the person who was dictating made a mistake right away. The *samā'āt* here keep *isnād* chains that connect Yemen, Egypt, Syria, and Iṣfahān, and they show how inclusive society is. In comparison to parallel witnesses (Al Azhar MS 89561, Dār al Kutub al Zāhiriyya MS 3819, Escorial MS 515), the Sulaymaniyah copy stands out as a key link in the Mediterranean transmission of the *Shamā'il* tradition (see Table 4).

Table 4. Comparative Summary of Three Case Studies

Work / Author	Date & Place of Samā'	Primary Participants	Script and Codicological Features	Distinctive Elements	Historiographical Value
<i>al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya</i> (al-Tirmidhī, d. 279/892)	Fustāt, 578/1182; extended to Damascus, Jerusalem	Abū Nizār Rabī'a al-Ḥaḍramī; Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn al-Sharīfā; al-Mizzī; <i>Umm Ibrāhīm Rābi'a</i>	Formatted <i>naskh</i> , rubricated; marginal cross-references	Inclusive audience (women, families); transregional readings	Demonstrates oral-aural continuity and gendered participation
<i>I'tilāl al-Qulūb</i> (al-Khurā'ifī, d. 327/938)	Baghdad, Ramaḍān 487/1094	Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Allāf; Abū Yāsir al-'Ukbarī; Sa'd Allāh al-Bazzāz	Clear <i>naskh</i> ; 13 certificates over 5 folios	Partial and full auditions distinguished	Shows occupational diversity and precision of documentation
<i>Idāh al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā'</i> (al-Anbārī, d. 328/940)	Baghdad, Shawwāl 306/918	Abū Bakr al-Anbārī and his disciples	Transitional <i>kufī-naskh</i> ; autograph <i>ijazah</i>	Early proto- <i>samā'</i> format	Traces origins of documentary transmission

5.2. Abū Bakr al-Khurā'īṭis I'tilāl al-Qulūb

5.2.1. Manuscript Reference

Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, MS orient. A 627. Dated: Wednesday, 6 Ramaḍān 487 AH/10 September 1094 CE.

5.2.2. Who are the Participants?

Teacher/Presiding Shaykh: Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. al-'Allāf ("the chamberlain"). Reader: Abū Yāsir Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd Allāh b. Kādāsh al-'Ukbarī. Witnessing shaykhs: Abū al-Qāsim 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Alī al-Mukharṛamī; Abū al-Karām al-Mubārak b. Ja'far b. Muslim al-Hāshimī; Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī 'Umar al-Bazzāz. Scribe: Sa'd Allāh b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Ayyūb al-Bazzāz. Partial auditor (15 folios only): Abū Sa'd Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Abdūn al-Bazzāz. Occupational epithets (*al-Bazzāz* = cloth merchant; *al-'Ukbarī* = from 'Ukbarā) indicate participation of merchants and provincial scholars.

5.2.3. Venue and Date (Where and When?)

Baghdad (as shown by the participants affiliations and the manuscripts origin), Wednesday, 6 Ramaḍān 487 AH/10 September 1094 CE. Other certifications in the 13-item dossier cover more sessions, which were probably held in a madrasa or private majlis (maybe the *'Ādiliyya* or *Nūriyya* madrasas).⁴²

5.2.4. Reading Scope (What Portion?)

One certificate (fol. 15v) shows that the whole passage was read out loud (*samī'a jamī' al-juz*). A second auditor, Abū Sa'd Aḥmad al-Bazzāz, is specifically mentioned as having heard only fifteen folios (*samīa min awwalihī khamsat 'ashar waraqan*). This means that there was a partial audition (*samā' juz*) during the same session. This level of detail shows that there is accurate documentation of different levels of engagement.

5.2.5. Documentary Function

The Gotha dossier serves as a micro archive of 5th/11th century Baghdadi pedagogy: (1) authentication through a chain of reading and witnessing; (2) regulation of transmission rights by distinguishing between full and partial auditors; (3) social documentation of occupational diversity (merchants, scribes, chamberlains); and (4) prosopographical recovery of non-elite figures not present in biographical dictionaries.

5.2.6. Additional Notes (Context, Paleography, and Value)

There are thirteen *samā'āt* in this manuscript made up of five folios. The script is a clear late 5th/11th century *naskh* with long alifs, tight ligatures, and personal names written in red. The thorough record of partial attendance sheds light on scholarly conventions that are both flexible and exact. This codex shows how the business and academic worlds came together in mediaeval Baghdad. It gives reliable chronological and prosopographical information about transmission networks.

5.3. Abū Bakr al-Anbārīs Idāḥ al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā'

5.3.1. Manuscript Reference

Al-Faḍīl Aḥmad Turkish Library, Istanbul (MS 11). Author's autograph tradition;

⁴²Seidensticker, "The Chamberlain's Sessions," 89.

implicit *samā'āt* within *ijāzah* records.

5.3.2. Who are the Participants?

Author/Teacher: Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Anbārī (d. 328/940). Recipients/Students: Sirāj al-Dīn al-Mahdawī, Majd al-Dīn al-Khazrajī, and several unnamed others. Scribe of the *ijāzah* note: 'Abd al-Mujīb b. Abī al-Qāsim al-Ḥarbī. While phrased as an *ijāzah* (authorisation), the document functions as a *proto-samā'* because it certifies direct audition of the author's recitation of his own work. The phrase "written by the author's own hand" (*bi-khaṭṭ al-mu'allif*) proves that the work was written by the author.

5.3.3. Venue and Date (Where and When?)

Baghdad, Shawwāl 306 AH (February–March 919 CE). It is not said where it happened exactly but it was probably the authors own teaching place. It could have been in a mosque or a private residential building. During that time as early 4th/10th century, *madrasas* were not yet recognized schools. As it can be seen, the documentary logic of audition was around before it was written down in later guides.

5.3.4. Reading Scope (What Portion?)

An implied affirmation is made in the document regarding the complete transmission of *Idāh al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā'*, which is a treatise on the pause and origin of the Qur'ān. In this early example, the legal word *ijāzah āmmah*, which translates to "general authorization," indicates that the author was required to read the entire work aloud. On the other hand, later *samā'āt* often use phrases, such as "entire book" or "partial section." Additional evidence of textual faithfulness is provided by a collation note, also known as *wāfaqa al aṣl*.

5.3.5. Documentary Function

This record connects the early *ijāzah* tradition to the later *samā'* certificate. Its functions include: (1) a legal guarantee of the authenticity of the transmission, certified by the author's own hand; (2) a way to keep the teaching going, connecting Baghdad's 4th/10th-century textual culture to later practices in Cairo and Damascus; and (3) proof of early documentary practice. This shows that core *samā'* elements (teacher, student, date, verification) were already in place before the genre's formal codification by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071) formally codified the genre. This manuscript refutes the notion that *samā'āt* emerged solely with the rise of *madrasas* in the 5th/11th century.

5.3.6. Additional Notes (Context, Palaeography, and Value)

The text contains indirect audition certificates that al-Anbārī gave to his students. One remark, dated Shawwāl 306 AH, sends the work to Sirāj al-Dīn al-Mahdawī, Majd al-Dīn al-Khazrajī, and others. It was authored by 'Abd al-Mujīb al-Ḥarbī. Even though it is called an *ijāzah*, its phrases ("handed over," "written by the author's own hand") and collective witnessing render it functionally equivalent to a *samā'* record. Written in an early Abbasid *kufī naskh* transition script, the document shows careful alignment and formal honorifics. The phrase "this is correct, written by..." at the end proves that the author is who they say they are. It is clear from this record that *samā'āt* was used as a legal and educational guarantee very early on. This means that the reasoning of audition was used before it was written down.

5.4. Commentary and Comparative Analysis

The above-mentioned case studies show different types of *samā'āt*, which should be classified into complete, partial, and broken. Each one has its own purpose (Table 1). It was confirmed for him

using the words *samī'a jamī'ahu* ("he heard it all"), *bi qirā'atihi* ("through his reading"), and *wa ṣaḥḥa lahu dhālik* ("it was confirmed for him"), which can all be found in Table 2. People could learn in mosques, madrasas, private homes, and markets, among other places. This shows that learning was a part of life in the city (Table 3). These traits support the same as important official texts rather than extra notes on the edges.

Each case study (as Table 4 shows) represents a unique example concerning its content: *al-Shamā'il* (cross-regional, welcoming), *I'tilāl al-Qulūb* (Baghdadi, variety of jobs), and *Iḏāḥ al-Waqf* (early Abbasid proto-*samā'* that links the *ijāzah* tradition).

Five things can be compared with Table 5: the people who took part, the place, the date, the reading scope, and the goal of the documentary. The theory behind it is similar to other documentaries: careful recording of participants, clear limits on the text that was heard, and confirmation through witnessing or collation, considering that the levels of formality are different.

Table 5. Comparative Analytical Framework: Who, Where, When, What, Function

Analytical Dimension	<i>al-Shamā'il</i> (MS 254)	<i>I'tilāl al-Qulūb</i> (MS A 627)	<i>Iḏāḥ al-Waqf</i> (MS 11)
Who (Teacher/Reader/Auditors)	Abū Nizār Rabī'a (teacher); Ibn al-Sharīfa (auditor); 'Alī al-Mizzī; Umm Ibrāhīm (female)	Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Allāf (teacher); Abū Yāsir al-'Ukbarī (reader); al-Bazzāz family (scribes/auditors)	Abū Bakr al-Anbārī (author/teacher); unnamed disciples as auditors
Where (Venue)	Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ, Fustāt	Baghdad (likely a madrasa or private majlis)	Baghdad (author's circle)
When (Date)	578 AH / 1182 CE (primary); later 7th/13th c. additions	487 AH / 1094 CE	306 AH / 918 CE
What (Scope)	Complete except one section (<i>samā' kāmīl illā juz'an</i>)	Full and partial auditions (15 folios specified)	Implicit full transmission via <i>ijāzah</i>
Documentary Function	Authentication + social inclusivity	Precision in partial attendance + occupational diversity	Proto- <i>samā'</i> : jurido-pedagogical guarantee

Table 5 also shows how things have changed over time. The earliest example (al-Anbārī, 4th/10th c.) uses an *ijāzah* formula that works like a *samā'* but does not have any words that mean "hearing." By the 5th/11th century (Gotha I'tilāl), certificates were made more official and showed the difference between full and partial attendance. The 6th–7th/12th–13th century. The *Shamā'il* manuscript illustrates a socially-expansive and regionally-interconnected transmission that encompasses women and transregional scholars.

So, the *samā'* comes out as both a type of documentary and a social activity. The formulas, scripts, and contexts in mediaeval Islamic manuscripts showed that they were both texts and objects that people used to learn. *Samā'āt* are physical remnants of historical reading occurrences and narrative documentation that facilitate the reconstruction of Islamic intellectual life.

6. Historiographical Value

Samā'āt are historically significant in addition to being codicological. They supplement chronicles, biographical dictionaries, and legal writings as manuscript annotations offering independent witness. Their exact names, dates, places, and transmission scope provide us micro-

historical facts that we do not usually find in other sources.⁴³

A significant contribution is prosopography. Biographical dictionaries tend to focus on well-known scholars, leaving out pupils, scribes, and local auditors. *Samā'āt* reveal peripheral figures, augmenting the prosopographical foundation of Islamic intellectual history and offering precise chronological indicators for educational settings.⁴⁴

Samā'āt enhance manuscript authentication by delineating the source, time, and overseer of a text, affirming its integrity and transmission lineage.⁴⁵ They add to philological and codicological credentials.

They also keep texts and reading, teaching, and passing on activities alive by conceiving of manuscripts as layered archives.⁴⁶ *Samā'āt* can serve as primary evidences to rebuild intellectual networks, delineate learning geographies, and generate comprehensive histories for the academic community.⁴⁷

Finally, *samā'āt* affect the arguments for oral-written continuity in *ḥadīth* criticism. They show how Brown and Schoeler have proved that oral instruction was written down as a legal record.

7. Challenges and Future Prospects

The study of *samā'āt* faces challenges despite its promise. Countless manuscripts are not published, not in a catalogue, or are spread out. Sometimes, certificates include fading, overwriting, or hard-to-read handwriting.⁴⁸ Not having digital collections makes it harder to build and use databases.

Samā'āt methods vary from thorough to inadequate and confusing. Interpretation requires cross-referencing with biographical dictionaries, chronicles, or other such sources, which could lead to incorrect attribution.⁴⁹ Moreover, survival is unequal: certain regions, genres, and institutions are over-represented, which may bias generalizations.

Digital repositories, such as YEK and Qalamos projects now provide exceptional access to high-resolution images, enabling future linked databases for comparison study.⁵⁰ Advances in digital humanities offer tools for cataloguing, analyzing, and visualizing *samā'āt*.⁵¹ Databases can map teacher-student networks, trace geographical patterns, and integrate lesser-known figures. Standardized metadata and TEI XML encoding make it easier for different systems to work together and make progress over time.⁵²

By comparing *samā'āt* to *ijāzāt*, endowment annotations, and ownership inscriptions, more can

⁴³Al-Sakhāwī, *Fath al-Mughīth fī Sharḥ Alfīyyat al-Ḥadīth*, 1:77–81.

⁴⁴Seidensticker, “Audience Certificates in Arabic Manuscripts,” 75–91.

⁴⁵Hajj Qouider Al-‘Id, *Data and Documentary Records in Arabic Manuscripts*, 211–18.

⁴⁶Nasim Koohkesh, and Robyn Sloggett, “Marginalia and Ownership Notes: A Study of the Provenance of a Copy of *Silsilat al-Zahab*, by Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī,” *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 16, no. 3 (2025): 363–384, <https://doi.org/10.1163/1878464X-01602006>.

⁴⁷Al-Leheabi, *The Historical Evaluation of the Manuscript Industry*, 25.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Seidensticker, “The Chamberlain’s Sessions,” 89–100.

⁵⁰YEK (Turkey Manuscripts Portal), accessed 27 April 2026, <https://portal.yek.gov.tr/>; Qalamos: Database of Oriental Manuscripts, accessed 27 April 2026, <https://www.qalamos.net/>.

⁵¹Hajj Qouider Al-‘Id, *Data and Documentary Records in Arabic Manuscripts*, 219–24.

⁵²For TEI-XML standards for manuscript notes, see: Said Aljoumani and Konrad Hirschler, *Audition Certificates Platform*, version 5, accessed January 7, 2026, <https://www.audition-certificates-platform.org/>; Lomier, *Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts*, 97–101.

be learned about manuscripts as social artefacts.⁵³ This goes beyond codicology and focuses on how people get education, listen, and record knowledge together.

Digital tools for mapping geographical and prosopographical data should be used in future studies. Collaborative databases can show how information was sent from one generation to the next, connecting collections from different regions, protecting private records, and helping us understand how premodern academic networks worked.

8. Conclusion

The main idea of this study is that *samā'āt* are independent, well-documented sources that change the way we think about the intellectual and social past of Islam. From 47 manuscripts and three in-depth case studies, four main conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) The standard written formulas for *samā'* certificates include full (*kāmil*), partial (*juz'ī*), and fragmentary/collation remarks with their own equations (Table 1). This lets researchers figure out how much it is transmitted while still following the learning traditions.
- 2) Make sure everyone can take part. Audition records often include women (like Umm Ibrāhīm Rābi'a), traders (like the al Bazzāz family), and craftspeople with wealthy jurists. They challenge restricted notions of Islamic education by recovering through *samā'āt*.
- 3) According to the certificates, students were able to travel within Baghdad, Fustāt, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Iṣfahān, all of which are part of different political groups. The Sulaymaniyah Shamā'il manuscript connects the power hierarchies of these transregional networks.
- 4) Collation notes (*muqābala*, *'uriḍa 'alā*) prove the authentication of the material; they provide a supplemental textual verification next to oral audition. Scribal corrections, erasures, and cross-references demonstrate meticulous self-correction.

This study aimed to enhance Islamic manuscript scholarship in three distinct manners. The paradigm provided a replicable methodology for interpreting *samā'āt* as primary evidence. Secondly, it employed paleographic, prosopographical, and codicological methodologies. Thirdly, focusing on marginal players and informal learning spaces makes the social history of premodern Islamic study more complete.

Future research should concentrate on interconnected open data repositories, TEI XML encoding, metadata standards, and social network analysis. Comparative study of Byzantine, Jewish, and Christian colophons would elucidate textual verification methodologies. Uncataloged *samā'āt* from underexamined collections (North Africa, South Asia, Caucasus) must be retrieved and disseminated. From the margins of the manuscript, the voices of merchants, lawyers, women, and scribes can be heard who created the book a living record of community memory. The *samā'* not only means “hearing,” but it also keeps the soundscape of Islamic scholarship alive.

Author Contribution

Saleh Muhammad Zeki Mahmood Al-Leheabi: writing – original draft, resources, data curation, conceptualization. **Ahmed Ameen:** writing – review & editing, methodology, visualization.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

⁵³Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, *Al-Makḥṭūṭ al-'Arabī wa-'Ilm al-Makḥṭūṭāt* [The Arabic Manuscript and Manuscript Studies] (Cairo: al-Dār al-Miṣriyya al-Lubnāniyya, 1997), 156–61.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Transcriptions of Selected Samā'āt with Palaeographic Notes

Sample 1: Gotha MS orient. A 627 (*I'tilāl al-Qulūb*, fol. 15v) [Figure 2b]

سمع جميع الجزء على الحاجب الأجل أبي الحسن علي بن محمد بن علي بن العلاف رضى الله عنه / بقراءة الشيخ أبي ياسر محمد بن عبيد الله بن كاشش العكبرى / الشيوخ الشيخ أبو القسم عبيد الله بن علي المخرمى / وأبو الكرم المبارك بن جعفر بن مسلم الهاشمي / وأبو الحسن علي بن محمد بن أبي عمر البزاز / وكاتب السماع سعد الله بن علي بن الحسين بن أيوب البزاز / وسمع من أوله خمسة عشر ورقة أبو سعد أحمد بن علي بن محمد بن الحسن بن عبدون البزاز / وذلك يوم الأربعاء سادس شهر رمضان من سنة سبع وثمانين وأربع مائة

English Translation

“He heard the whole part from the noble chamberlain Abū’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-‘Allāf—may God be pleased with him—through the reading of the shaykh Abū Yāsir Muḥammad b. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Kādash al-‘Ukbarī, before the shaykhs: Abū’l-Qāsim ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Alī al-Mukharramī; Abū’l-Karām al-Mubārak b. Ja‘far b. Muslim al-Hāshimī; and Abū’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Umar al-Bazzāz (Fabric merchant).

The scribe of the audition record was Sa‘d Allāh b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. Ayyūb al-Bazzāz. From its beginning, fifteen folios were heard by Abū Sa‘d Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abdūn al-Bazzāz. This took place on Wednesday, the sixth of Ramaḍān in the year 487 AH.”

Sample 2: Sulaymaniyah MS 254 (*al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya*, fol. 76v) [Figure 1a]

سمع/ كتاب الشماليل والفوائد التي في آخره على الشيخ الفقيه أبي نزار / ربيعه بن الحسن بن علي بن عبد الله اليماني الحضرمي أبو علي حسن بن / عبد الباقي بن أبي القيم الصقلي المديني بقراءته وأبو الحسين يحيى / ابن عقيل بن شريك بن رفاعه وصح لهم ذلك بالجامع العتيق / بمصر في سلخ صفر سنة ثمان وسبعين وخمس مائة / والحمد لله وحده وصلى الله على محمد وآله وسلم / بلغت مقابلة على أصل النسخة المنقول منها / وهي بخط الفقيه أبو نزار ربيعة بن الحسن بن علي / بن عبد الله بن أبي الشجاع اليماني ثم الحضرمي وهو / من مسموعاته بأصبعهان بحسب الاجتهاد.

English Translation

“Heard (Samā') the Book of al-Shamā'il and the benefits appended to it, under the Shaykh and jurist Abū Nizār, Rabī'ah ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Yamānī al-Ḥaḍramī. Also: Abū 'Alī Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Bāqī ibn Abī al-Qayyim al-Ṣiqillī al-Madanī, with his recitations; and Abū al-Ḥusayn Yaḥyā ibn 'Uqayl ibn Sharīk ibn Rifā'ah. This was duly verified for them in the aljāme' al'atīq (Ancient Mosque) of Miṣr (Fuṣṭāt) on the last day of Ṣafar, in the year 578 AH. Praise be to God alone, and may God's blessings be upon Muḥammad and his family and grant them peace.

Collation note: It has been collated against the exemplar from which it was copied. That exemplar is in the hand of the jurist Abū Nizār Rabī'ah ibn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī al-Shujā', the Yemeni and then the Ḥaḍramī, and it belongs to his *Samā'* (auditions) in Iṣbahān (Iṣfahān), to the best of our ability.”

Sample 3: *Dār alKutub alzahiriyyah* in Damascus, (MS 3819) (*al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya*, fol. 44) [Figure 1b]

الحمد لله رب العالمين وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد خاتم النبيين وسيد المرسلين وعلى آله وصحبه اجمعين / سمع جميع [أجزاء] هذا الكتاب من أوله إلى آخره على الشيخ الرحلة [كشط] شهاب الدين أحمد / بن محمد بن محمود عرف بالشريفة سماه لجميعة خلا جزء من باب عيش رسول / الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى باب في صفة كلام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بالشعر على المشايخ / العلامة عبد الله بن خليل الحرساني وعلي بن أحمد بن محمد المرادوي وعمر بن محمد / النابلسي بسماع الأول وحضور الآخرين علي المزي ومحمد بن إبراهيم / المهريني (أو المهديين) ومحمد بن إبراهيم بن أبي عمر وزوجته وبنت عمه أم إبراهيم ر[[ابعة] / بنت محمد وعلي بن العز عمر بن أحمد وأحمد بن محمد بن أحمد بن أبي عمر ومحمد بن داود / بوجه... م وأحمد بن محمد بن جا [كشط] ...

English Translation

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, and may blessings and peace be upon our master Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets and the chief of the Messengers, and upon his family and all his companions / All [sections] of this book were heard from its beginning to its end from the itinerant scholar, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd, known as Ibn al-Sharīfa—his audition comprising the entire work except for a portion extending from the chapter “The Life of the Messenger / of God, peace and blessings be upon him” to the chapter “On the Description of the Speech of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, in Poetry.” The reading took place before the learned shaykhs/ ‘Abd Allāh ibn Khalīl al-Ḥaristānī, ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Mardāwī, and ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad / al-Nābulusī—complete audition by the first and the presence of the others. Also in attendance were ‘Alī al-Mizzī, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm / al-Mahrawīnī (or al-Mahdawiyyīn), Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Abī ‘Umar, together with his wife and cousin Umm Ibrāhīm Rābi’a / bint Muḥammad; ‘Alī ibn al-‘Izz ‘Umar ibn Aḥmad; Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī ‘Umar; Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd / and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn [Ja... (erased)].

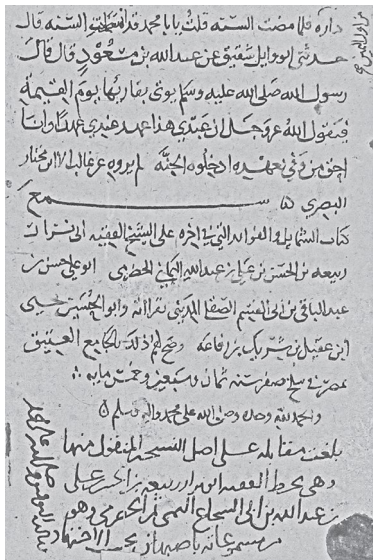


Figure 1a. The Last Page of the Sulaymaniyyah Library, Turkey, (MS 254)

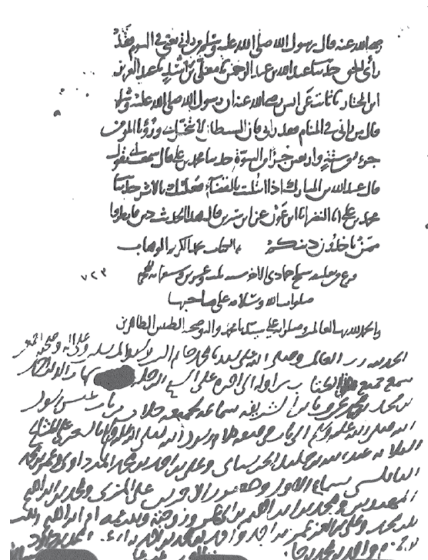


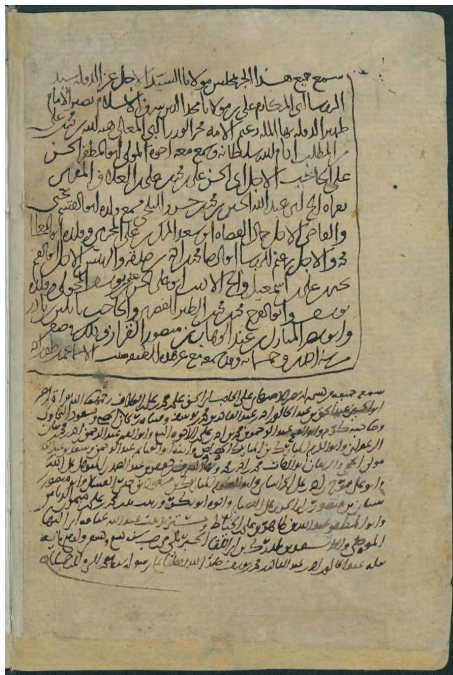
Figure 1b. The Last Page of the Dār alKutub alzahiriyyah in Damascus, (MS 3819)

Appendix 2. Photographic Figures of Representative Samā'āt

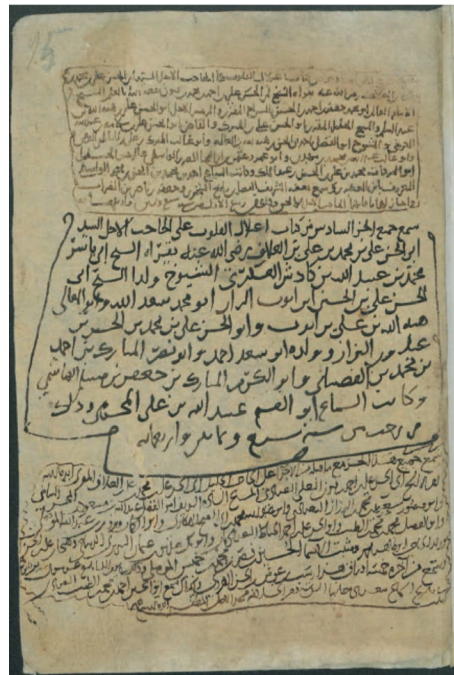
Plate No.	Manuscript	Folio	Description
Figure 1	a Sulaymaniyyah Library, MS 254	fol. 76v	Ending <i>samā'</i> with rubricated headings; Fustāt, 578/1182.
	b Dār alKutub alzahiriyyah in Damascus, (MS 3819)	fol. 44	Dense multi-line <i>samā'</i> certificate; c. 8 H/14 AD century
Figure 2	a Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, MS orient. A 627	fol. 14b	Examples of dense multi-line <i>samā'</i> among with 13 attestations; Baghdad, 487/1094.
	b	fol. 15a	

Plate No.	Manuscript	Folio	Description
Figure 3	Istanbul, Al-Faḍil Aḥmad Library, MS 11	fol. 1r	Early Abbasid <i>ijāzah</i> -type <i>samā'</i> with author's hand.

Figures reproduce high-resolution scans for palaeographic comparison. Captions specify codicological features, date, and provenance.



a. Fol. 14b.



b. Fol. 15a.

Figure 2 a & b. Gotha MS orient. A 627 (*I'tilāl al-Qulūb*)

Appendix 3. Codicological Descriptions of Manuscripts Cited

Manuscript	Shelfmark / Library	Material & Script	Dimensions / Lines per Page	Binding / Ink	Notes
<i>al-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya</i>	MS 254, Sulaymaniyyah Library (Turkey)	Paper; <i>naskh</i>	22 × 14 cm; 15 lines	Black and red ink; modern brown leather	Collated with autograph; marginalia preserved
<i>I'tilāl al-Qulūb</i>	MS orient. A 627, Gotha Forschungsbibliothek	Paper; <i>naskh</i>	24 × 17 cm; 14–15 lines	Black ink; simple brown cover	13 <i>samā'āt</i> across 5 folios
<i>Idāh al-Waqf wa al-Ibrida'</i>	MS 11, Al-Faḍil Aḥmad Library (Istanbul)	Paper; <i>kufī</i> – <i>naskh</i> transition	25 × 18 cm; 16 lines	Dark brown ink; limp binding	Early <i>ijāzah</i> -type note

Appendix 4. Prosopographical Index of Named Individuals in the Samā'āt Discussed

Name	Role / Title	Associated Manuscript	Date / Context
Abū Nizār Rabī'a b. al-Ḥasan al-Ḥaḍramī	Teacher / Transmitter	<i>al-Shamā'il</i> , Sulaymaniyah MS 254	Fustāt, 578/1182
Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd (Ibn al-Sharīfa)	Itinerant scholar / Reader	Later <i>Shamā'il</i> copy	Syria–Egypt, 13th century
ʿAlī al-Mizzī	Scholar / Auditor	<i>Shamā'il</i> (Ibn al-Sharīfa <i>samā'</i>)	Damascus, 7th/13th century
<i>Umm Ibrāhīm Rābi'a bint Muḥammad</i>	Female auditor	<i>Shamā'il</i>	Syria, 13th century
Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-ʿAllāf	Teacher / Chamberlain	<i>I'tilāl al-Qulūb</i> , Gotha MS A 627	
Abū Yāsir Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd Allāh al-ʿUkbarī	Reader	<i>I'tilāl al-Qulūb</i> , Gotha MS A 627	Baghdad, 487/1094
Sa'd Allāh b. ʿAlī al-Bazzāz	Scribe	<i>I'tilāl al-Qulūb</i> , Gotha MS A 627	
Abū Bakr al-Anbārī	Author / Teacher	<i>Idāḥ al-Waqf wa al-Ibtidā'</i> , Istanbul MS 11	Baghdad, 306/918

This index consolidates personal data across manuscripts, highlighting interregional scholarly connections and the recurrent role of artisans, merchants, and women in the *samā'* milieu.