



Faculty of Humanities



Magic, Traditional Medicine and Theurgy in Arabo-Islamic Manuscripts of the Horn of Africa

Classification and description

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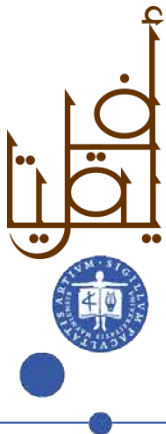
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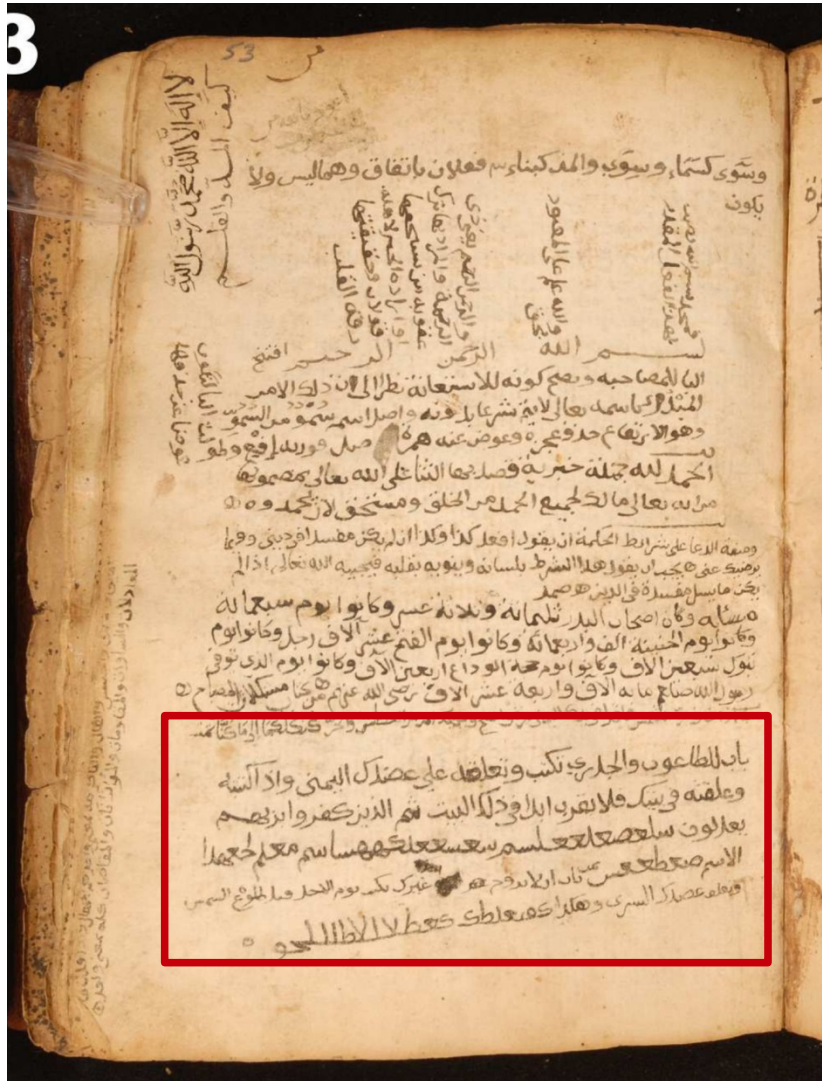


Multiple-text Manuscript Description

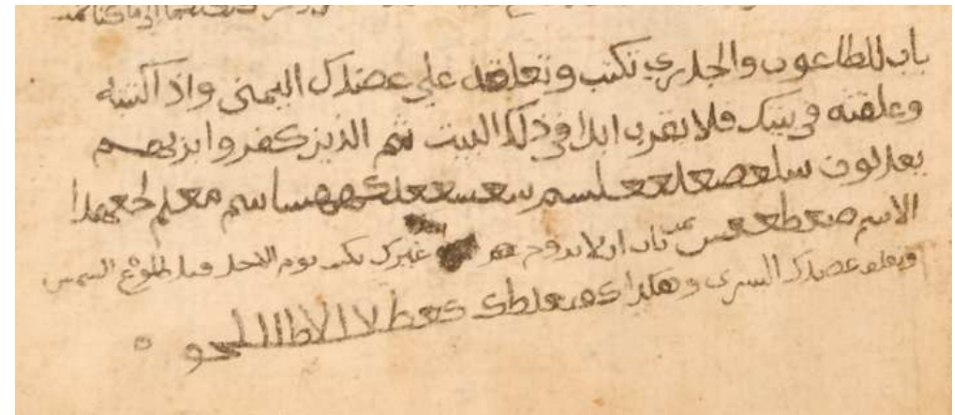
Identification of text levels

- the main text or texts consisting of one or more codicological units, sometimes related one to the other (comments, translations, glosses etc.)
- notes related to the codex history and/or to the text transmission (colophon, ownership notes, waqf certificates, reading notes, iğaza etc.)
- notes completely independent from the main texts and from their material expression



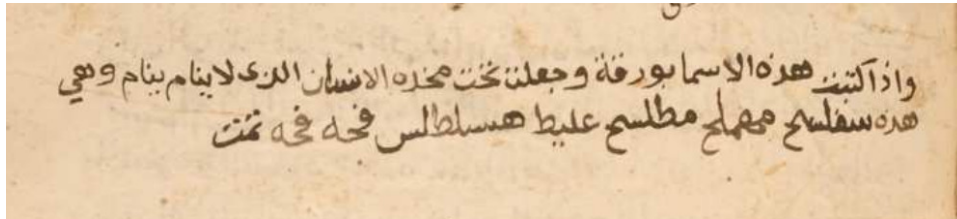


Ms Addis Abeba, IES 266, f. 53r



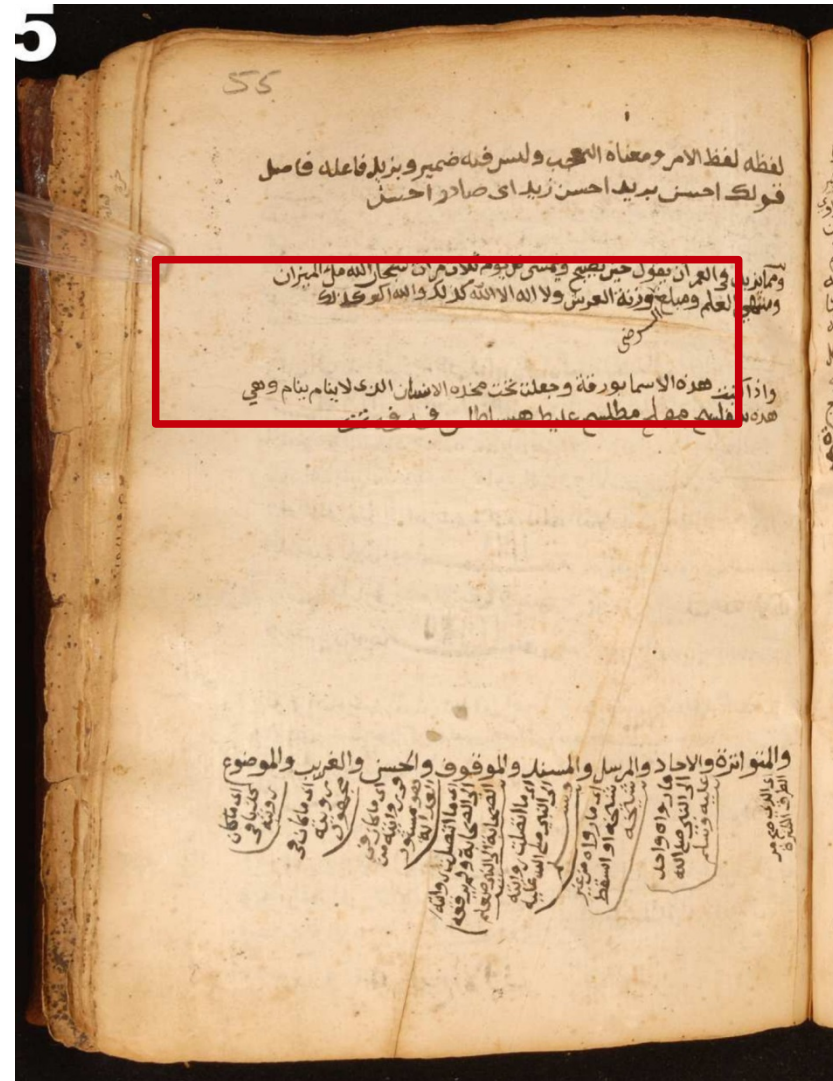
باب للطاعون والجدي تكتب وتعلق على عضدك اليمنى وإذا أنشئه
وعلقته في بيتك فلا يقرب أبدا في ذلك البيت ثم الذين كفروا بربهم
يعالون سلععل
الاسم صعطعس ناد انا انا روحهم غيرك تك يوم النحر وما لم يطلع الشمس
وقد عصى ذلك السرى وهكذا كفعلطى كعطلا الاطالحو

"On the plague and smallpox: write and hang
on your right arm and if you write it and hang
it in your house, it [the plague] will never
approach that house... [invocation]"



واذا كتبت هذه الاسماء بورقة وجعلت تحت مخدة الانسان الذي لا ينام ينام وهي هذه سفلسح مهملح مطلبسح عليط هسسلطلس فجه فجه تمت

"If you write these names on a paper and you put it under the pillow of the man who doesn't sleep, then he will sleep; and here they are:
[invocation]"



Ms Addis Ababa, IES 266, f. 55r

“Text levels”

Literary works, for example

IES 00272 [Harar 36], dated 15 šawwāl 1210 A.H.-23/04/1796 [f. 111r]; multiple-text ms.

- ff. 1r-8r: كتاب بهجة الطرف في علم الحرف (The book of the joy of the glance into the science of the letters) by Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh Ibn Qurqmās (d. 1477).
- ff. 8v-10r: كتاب في علم الارقام والافاق, anonymous text on numerology and magical squares.
- ff. 13r-112r: النور الاسنا في شرح الاسما الحسنی (The most brilliant light on the explanation of the most beautiful Names of God) by Aḥmad al-Būnī (d. 1225).

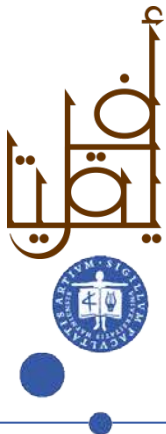
IES 280, XIX century; multiple-text ms, main text:

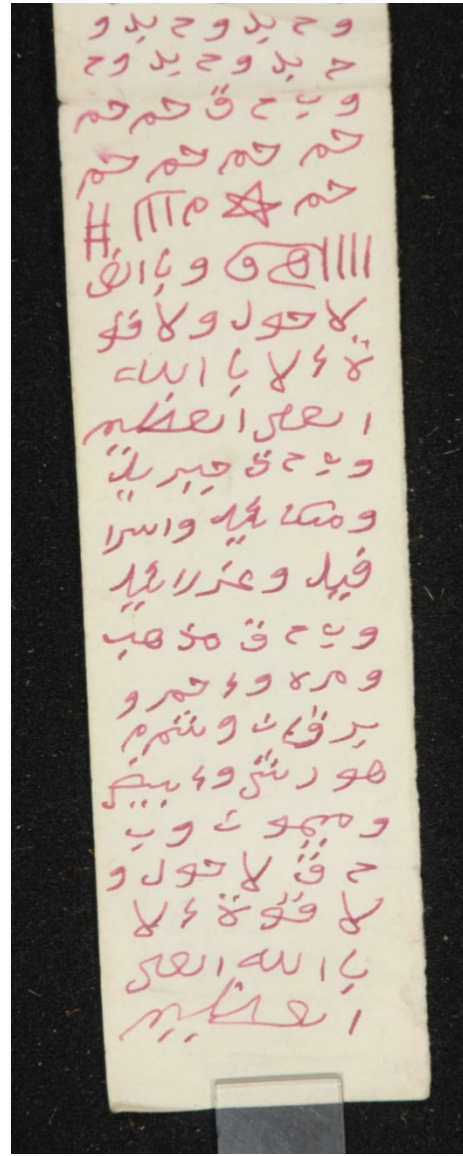
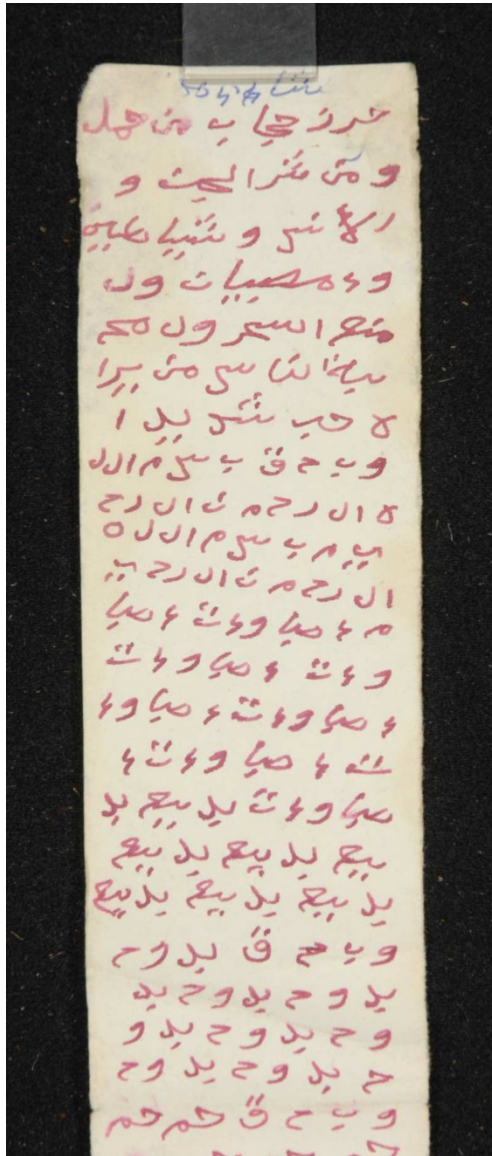
- ff. 7r–30v: الجوشن الكبير , (The invocation called The Big Shield) ascribed to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.



“Text levels”

- notes which are scattered throughout the codices and have nothing to do with the subject of the main texts they transmit. They are usually explicit textual indications about what to do or say to obtain something with typical syntactic structures
- the object or realization of these prescriptions, that is written amulets and talismans (*ḥirz*, *ṭilasm*, *ḥiğāb*)





"Amulet protection to whom who carry [it] against the evil of ġinn, men and devils; it prevents magic (سحر) and makes happy with a strong feeling of love who saw it by the truth of the basmala [...]"

Ms Addis Ababa, IES 647

Ms Addis Ababa, IES 280, ff. 66v-67r and IES 247, *incipit*.

[illegible]

al-Būnī classification of spiritual sciences:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| علم الأعداد | - numerology |
| علم الأوفاق | - science of the magic squares |
| علم الحروف | - science of the alphabetical letters |
| علم الطبائع الأربعة | - science of the four nature |
| علم الكواكب والبروج | - astrological science |
| علم الاختيارات النجومية | - science of the astral determinations |
| علم الأسماء والرقى | - science of the names of God and of invocations |



Talismanic inscriptions: *

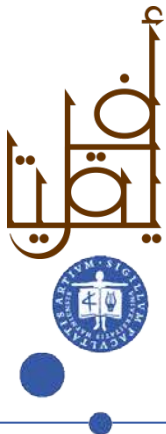
دعائية

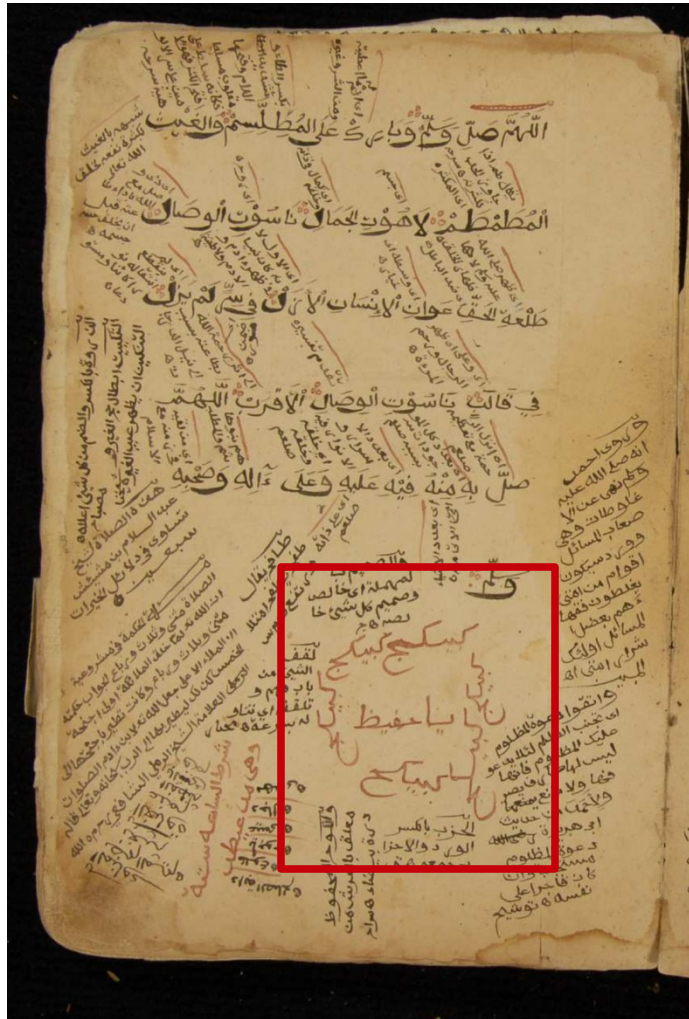
structured like prayers and addressed to God; excerpts from the Coran in accordance with the theme of the request. To this category refers also the رقية , Coranic salmodies with therapeutic and exorcising effects used also by the Prophet; it's usually performed in case of bites, against poisons, fever, evil eye.

قسمية

adjuratory inscriptions, that implies certain spirit mediation in which the name of the person is an essential element and is subjected to cryptographic procedures.

*A. Rahal, *La tradition talismanique en Tunisie*, 2007





Ms Addis Ababa, IES 5513, f. 4r

Hamburg, 19 July 2014
Dias 11



Ms Addis Ababa, IES 280, ff. 31r-v

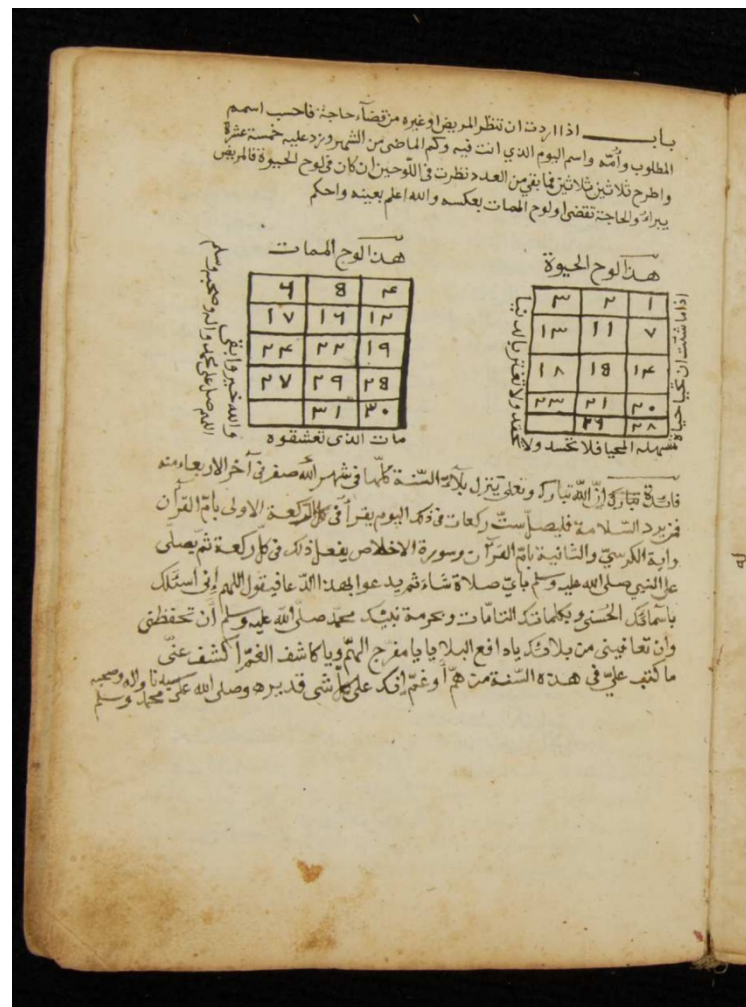
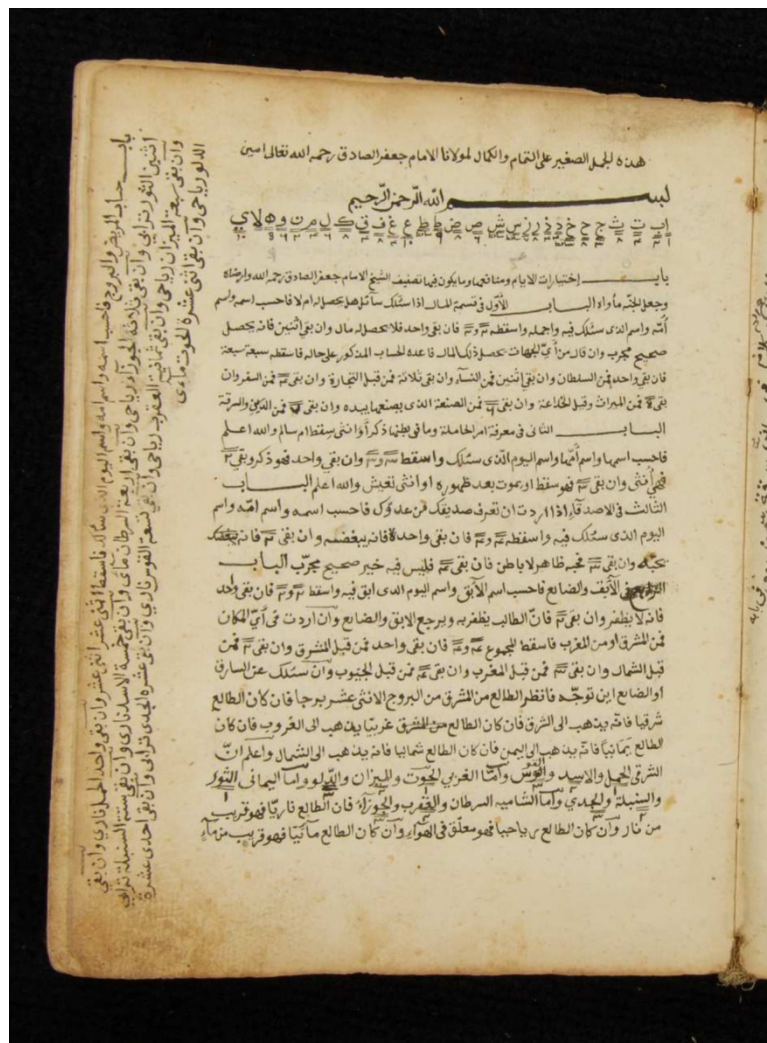
فيلقيا





Ranunculus ficaria, L.

Ms Montréal, McGill's Osler Library of the History of Medicine, f. 277r, mid-thirteenth-century fragment of the *Kitāb al-adawiya al-mufrada* by Abū Ġa'far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ġāfiqī (d. 1165).



Ms Addis Ababa, IES 1853, ff. 3r, 6r, *Iḥtiyārāt al-ayām wa-l-šuhūr* ascribed to Ġa'far al-Šādiq



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Thank you for your attention

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