



THE ARABIC AND ḤADĪTH MANUSCRIPTS IN SINDH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RĀSHIDIYYA COLLECTION

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Abstract

This research aims to explore and assess the Al-Rāshidiyya collection, founded by Syed Muḥammad Baqā (1135-1198 AH / 1723-1783 CE) in Sindh/Pakistan. Not devoid of disagreements among heirs and shifts in custodianship, the Al-Rāshidiyya collection's recognition extends beyond geographical boundaries, contributing significantly to the Arabic and ḥadīth discourse. After employing an individual investigation method in the library, engaging in discussions with the owners of the collection, and gathering information from its primary sources, our conclusion reveals that the Dargāh Sharīf section of al-Rāshidiyya collection hosts 20,029 printed books and 610 manuscripts, including 450 copies in Arabic including ḥadīth, and the rest in Persian, Sindhi, and Urdu. While its another section named as al-Maktaba al-'Āliyyah contains 30000 printed books and 762 manuscript including 500 in Arabic and ḥadīth, and rest in Persian and Sindhi. Although the precise total number of ḥadīth manuscripts is still under investigation, the preliminary count across both sections suggests approximately 287 such manuscripts. Notably, some of these manuscripts are copies of works whose originals have been lost in their source libraries, underscoring the unique preservation role of the Rāshidiyya Library.

Keywords: Ḥadīth, Arabic, Manuscripts, Sindh, Al-Rāshidiyya collection.

Preface

Sindh is the province of Pakistan located in its southeastern region. The word "Sindh", is said to be a Persian term derived from the Sanskrit word "Sindhu," signifying "river" referring to the Indus River.¹ According to David Ross the word Sindh or Sindhu is a Sanskrit² word meaning river or ocean.³ According to Southworth, the name "Sindhu" is believed to have its origins in "Cintu," a Dravidian⁴ term referring to the date palm, a tree abundant in the Sindh region.⁵ Another perspective attributes it to the Aryans, who named this region as "Sindh" due to the vast sheet of water formed by the Indus and the noise it produced when flowing through mountainous gorges near modern Attock. In medieval times, the entire Indus valley up to the borders of Kashmir was referred to as Sindh, distinct from Hind or India, separated by the Thar desert.⁶ Arab historians, notwithstanding, propose a different theory, suggesting that after a

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¹ Phiroze Vasunia, *The Classics and Colonial India* (UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 6.

² Sanskrit, an ancient language of India, falls within the Indo-European language family and is categorized under the Indo-Iranian subgroup, which consists of two branches: Indo-Aryan (or Indic) and Iranian. See Roger D. Woodard, *The Ancient Languages of Asia and the Americas* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

³ David Ross, *The Land of Five Rivers and Sindh* (London: Chapman and Hall Limited, 1883), 1.

⁴ A language family spoken by an estimated 220 million people, primarily in southern India, the northeast of Sri Lanka, and the southwest of Pakistan. It ranks as the fourth or fifth largest globally. This linguistic family includes at least twenty-three languages spoken predominantly in South Asia. See Sanford B. Steever, "Introduction to the Dravidian Languages," in *The Dravidian Languages*, ed. Sanford B. Steever (Routledge, 2nd ed., 2019), 1. The number of speakers, however, is grown unto around 250 million so far.

⁵ Franklin C. Southworth. "The Reconstruction of Prehistoric South Asian Language Contact," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 583/1 (May 1990): 228. (207-234).

⁶ Mumtaz Ḥusayn Pathān, *Sindh The Arab Period* (Hyderabad: Sindhi Adabi Board, 1978), 3/26.



great deluge, the descendants of Sām son of Noah, specifically Sind and Hind, inhabited the region, considering them brothers in the lineage of Yūfir b. Yaqtun b. ‘Ābir b. Shālikh b. Arfakhashd b. Sām b. Nūḥ.⁷ However, this perspective is contested by some scholars, including Pathan, who argue against its historical, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and other considerations.⁸ Sindh has lived in Bronze age the Indus Valley Civilization (3300–1300 BC) followed by Iron age (c. 1300 – c. 518 BC) having Sindhu-Sauvera kingdoms, than Achaemenid Era (516–326 BC) and the Mahājanapadas in the Post Vedic period, Hellenistic era (326–317 BC), Mauryan Era (316–180 BC), Indo-Greek era (180–90 BC), Indo Scythians (90–20 BC), Gupta Empire (345-455 AD), Sassanian Empire (325–489 AD), Rai Dynasty (c. 489 – 632 AD), Brahmin dynasty (c. 632 – c. 724 AD). In medieval era: Arab Sindh (711–854 AD), Habbari Arab

⁷ Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad b. Sa’d al-Baghdādī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), 1/43. Ibn Sa’d says that Hishām b. Muḥammad b. al-Sāib has told us narrating from his father that Hind, Sindh and Band are the progeny (بنوا) of Yūfir b. Yaqtun b. ‘Ābir b. Shālikh b. Arfakhashd b. Sām b. Nūḥ. Here is its original version: “قَالَ: وَأَخْبَرَنَا هِشَامُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ السَّائِبِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: الْهِنْدُ، وَالسِّنْدُ، وَالْبَنْدُ بَنُو يُوْفَيْرَ بْنِ يَقْطُنَ بْنِ عَابِرِ بْنِ شَالِيحَ بْنِ أَرْفَاخَشَدَ بْنِ سَامَ بْنِ نُوحٍ. قَالَ: وَمُكْرَانُ بْنُ الْبَنْدِ” As we saw that Ibn Sa’d has used the word “بنوا” which does not necessitate that the names Hind, Sindh and Band are the names of the sons, rather there is a possibility that the words Hind, Sindh and Band here are used as the inhabitants of these regions. If so, then the meaning will be that the inhabitants of the region of Hind, Sind and Band are from the progeny of Sām b. Nūḥ, not that the word “Sindh” was the name of one of the sons. We can detect this explanation from the context too, as we see the narration before this suggesting that Ibn ‘Abbās said that Arabs, Persians, Nabṭs, Hinds, Sinds, and Bands are from the son/progeny (ولد) of Sām b. Nūḥ. Here is its original version: “قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: وَالْعَرَبُ وَالْفَرَسُ وَالنَّبَطُ وَالْهِنْدُ وَالسِّنْدُ وَالْبَنْدُ مِنْ وَلَدِ سَامَ بْنِ نُوحٍ”. This means that these words are used as the names of nations not as the names of individual sons. Thus, there is nothing impossible to be so, because the narration does not talk about the etymological aspect or the root of the word Sindh. However, the next wording suggests that these three words i.e. Hind Sind and Band are the names of individuals. The next narration is: “He said and Mukrān son of Band” (قال ومكران بن البند). Other sources like Ṭabarī and Ḥamawī are dependent on Ibn Sa’ad basically. Ṭabarī has repeated the same narrations of Ibn Sa’d with his personal chain narrating from his teacher al-Ḥāris b. Muḥammad from Ibn Sa’d. However, there are some differences occurred in the narration of Ṭabarī. One of them is that he did not mention “Band” as the third son or region beside Hind and Sindh. Secondly, he has used the word “Tūqīr” instead of “Yūfir”. Moreover, Ṭabarī has added one narration more with his own chain saying that Ibn Ḥumayd told them (حدثنا), he said that Salama told us from Ibn Ishāq that Qūt b. Ḥām b. Nūḥ travelled to the region of Hind and Sindh thus the people living in this region are his progeny. See Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīk al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk* (Beirut: Dār al-Turās 2nd ed. 1387), 1/207-208. But when it comes to al-Ḥamawī (d. 626 AH/1258 CE), we see a drastic change in the story. He made the names of regions or nations as the names of individuals making them brothers. He also changed the name of their fathers “Yūfir” into “Būqīr” and Sām” into “Ḥām”. Here is its original version: “قالوا السند والهند كانا أخوين من ولد بوقير بن يقطن بن حام” See Shihābuddīn Abū ‘Abdillāh Yāqūt b. ‘Abdillāh al-Rūmī al-Ḥamawī, *Mu’jam al-Buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2nd ed. 1995), 3/267. It’s clear that al-Ḥamawī too, is not taking the burden of authenticity of this opinion on his shoulders by saying that: “They say that.” which portrays that he is not sure about this version. In short, we can say that Arab historians did not certainly and confidently claim that Sindh was the name of individual, rather it was most probably used as the name of region or nation that was from the progeny of Sām b. Nūḥ. As for the version suggesting that Sind was the name of a person, it is not authentic narration descending with its chain, rather it’s chainless and a mere quotation from anonymous people, not the personal preferred notion of the writer.

⁸ Pathān, *Sindh The Arab Period*, 3/26. According to the previous footnote, Pathān’s criticism by saying that “Arab historians believe that ...” is not in its place. Because there is big difference between believing and just mentioning what is said. Moreover, Pathān has mentioned the name as “Tuqīr ibn Yaqtan ibn Ham ibn Noah” and has cited two books named *Mu’jam al-Buldān* of al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1248) and *Āthār al-Bilād* of Qazwīnī (d. 682/1302). See Pathān, *Sindh The Arab Period*, 3/26, 44. However, Ḥamawī did not say “Tūqīr”, rather he said “Būqīr” as far Qazwīnī, he has mentioned the name as “Tūqīr”. See Zekeriyya b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-Bilād wa Akhbār al-‘Ibād* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, ?), 94.



dynasty (854–1024)⁹, Ghaznavids (1025), Soomra dynasty (1011–1333), Samma dynasty (1333–1520), Arghun dynasty (1520–1591). In early modern era: Mughal Era (1591–1701), Kalhora dynasty (1701–1783), Talpur dynasty (1783–1843). In modern era: British Raj (1843–1947), and Partition (1947).¹⁰

Islam made its ingress into India via the Sindh route during the second century after the *hijrah*. The Arab dominion prevailed in this region for several centuries. Throughout and following this era, Sindh became the cradle of numerous scholars who contributed extensively across diverse fields of knowledge in the Arabic language.¹¹ Consequently, a proliferation of scientific endeavors emerged within the humanities, accompanied by the development of Arabic literature in a distinctive style native to the region. The subsequent generations not only preserved this literary legacy but also steadfastly adhered to its principles.

These invaluable collections of manuscripts found their guardians in ancient scholarly families, who meticulously preserved them through successive generations. Subsequently, many of these manuscripts found a haven in esteemed government libraries, among which the following are noteworthy:

1. Institute of Sindhology Library, Jamshoro, Hyderabad.
2. Museum Library of Sindh District, Hyderabad.
3. Dr. Allama I. I. Qazi Library, Sindh University, Jamshoro, Hyderabad.
4. Allama Dawood Phota Library, Hyderabad.
5. Sindhi Adabī Board Library, Jamshoro, Hyderabad.
6. National Museum Library, Karachi.
7. National Bank Library, Karachi.
8. Sachal Sar Mast Public Library, Khairpur.
9. The manuscripts of Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Baloch are stored in Sindh Asar-e-Qadeema, Karachi.

Within the repositories safeguarded by ancient families, an array of significant and rare manuscripts unfolds, featuring:

⁹ ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Habbārī (240 - 270 AH / 855-884 CE), ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Umar (270 - 300 AH / 884-913 CE), ‘Umar b. ‘Abdullāh (300 - 330 AH / 913-943 CE), Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh (330 - 360 AH / 943-973 CE), ‘Alī b. ‘Umar (360 - 375 AH / 973-987 CE), Manbi b. ‘Alī b. ‘Umar (987-1010), Khafif (Soomra dynasty) (1010-1025). See Shahid Ahmad Rajput, *History of Islamic Art A Case Study of Al-Mansurah Evidence* (Lahore: Sng-e-Mil Publications), 25.

¹⁰ See History of Sind Series in 9 volumes by different authors in Sindhi Urdu and English languages published by the Sindhi Adabi Board, Hyderabad, Pakistan. Vol. 1 (1964) comprising a general introduction, giving a full description of the geographical and climatic features of the country, vol. 2 (1973), The Indus Civilization, Persian occupation, Alexander the Great’s invasion, the Scythians and their successors, the Buddhist period, and the Brahman dynasty and its fall. Both volumes by Dr. H. T. Lambrick. Vol. 3 (1978), The Arab Period, by Dr. Mumtaz Ḥusayn Pathān, vol. 4 The Ghaznavis, Ghoris, and The Sumras, vol. 5 The Sammas, vol. 6 The Arghuns, Tarkhans and Moghals, vol. 7 (1958), The Kalhoras and the Daudpotas, by Maulana Ghulam Rasool Mihr in Urdu and its Sindhi translation appeared in 1963, vol. 8 The Talpurs, vol. 9 The British period, the Separation of Sind, and the birth of Pakistan. See also: ‘Alī Kūfī, Chach Nāma, ed. Dā’ūd pōta (Hyderabad: 1358/1939); Eng. tr. Mirza Kalīchbeg Fredunbeg (Karachi: Commissioners Press, 1900); Urdu tr. Akhtar Rizwī (Hyderabad, 1963); Sindhi tr. M. A. Aḥmad (Hyderabad: 1966); Muḥammad Qāsim Farishta, *Tārikhe Farishta*, tr. Muḥammad Fida ‘Alī Ṭālib (Hyderabad Deccan: Jāmi‘a Uthmāniyya Sarkāre ‘Āli, 1932); Mīr Muḥammad Ma‘šūm Bakhīrī, *Tārikhe Ma‘šūmī*, tr. Akhtar Rizwī (Jamshoro: Sindhi Adabi Board, 3rd ed. 2006); Mīr ‘Alī Sher Qānī ‘Thatwī, *Tuḥfat al-Kirām*, tr. Akhtar Rizwī (Jamshoro: Sindhi Adabi Board, 3rd ed., 2006.)

¹¹ Abdul Aziz Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhāndo Khāndān je Dīnī ae ‘Ilmī Khidmatun jo Muṭālī‘o* (Jamshoro: University of Sindh, Department of Comparative Religion and Islamic Culture, Ph.D Thesis, 2014), 4-18.



1. Talpur Family Collection, Hyderabad, Sindh.
2. Makhdoom Hala Family Group, Sindh.
3. Pīr Pagara Khairpur Sindh.
4. Pīr Jhando Al-Maktaba Al-'Āliya Al-'Ilmiyya near Saeedabad.
5. Pīr Jhando Family Collection, Al-Rāshidiyyah Library, Saeedabad.

Among the collections preserved within Madāris (Islamic schools) and curated by scholars, a plethora of manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, and Sindhi abound. Notably, the following institutions are recognized for housing special Arabic manuscripts:

1. Darsgāh (school) Wilhar manuscripts
2. Manuscripts of the Al-Ma'rūfiya Library, Matiari, near Hyderabad.
3. The manuscripts of the Darsgāh Chotiari, in the village of Haji Ismail Hingoro, Sanghar
4. Manuscripts of the Kanz al-'Ulūm Madrasah Library, Sumrani, near Shikarpur.
5. Manuscripts of the Dargāh Choonari Library, near Larkana.
6. Manuscripts of Makhdūm Muḥammad Murād Siddiqī Library, Sehwan.
7. Bū 'Alī Manuscripts, Fazalabad, Matli Badin.
8. Manuscripts of Al-Kabir Academy, Kotri Muḥammad Kabir, Naushahro Feroze.

Despite the extensive surveys and research endeavors conducted to identify and compile manuscripts in the Sindh region, with over 60 thousand manuscripts discovered to date, the actual count remains subject to further in-depth investigations. Cataloging of such manuscripts, especially in the Arabic language, has seen huge gaps, with few undergoing this painstaking process. Though a few libraries have taken up the task, which is quite essential in terms of indexing these manuscripts in Urdu, Sindhi, and Arabic, yet the attention that the Arabic manuscripts are given for cataloging is really negligible. The need for more extensive cataloging efforts becomes all the more urgent when one considers the rich cultural and scholarly heritage encapsulated within these manuscripts. Indeed, a big step in filling this lacuna has been the indexing and cataloging of these manuscripts in English. Under the able guidance of Prof. Dr. Robert Gleave, Dr. Masood Ahmad al-Sindhi, have contributed much to this academic cause. His effort is therefore, an important step in increasing access and scholarly engagement at an international level with the knowledge treasure embedded in these manuscripts. Yet, in view of the enormity of the task ahead, further research is imperative for documentation and to make available this invaluable literary and cultural heritage.

Introduction

Sindh's manuscripts bear witness to the dynamic crossroads of civilizations, fostering a unique blend of Arabic, Persian, Sindhi, and Urdu literary traditions hosting a significant number of ḥadīth books. These manuscripts are not mere artifacts; they are repositories of wisdom, reflecting the intellectual vibrancy that has characterized Sindh throughout the ages. In the rich tapestry of Sindh's cultural and intellectual heritage, the Arabic more precisely ḥadīth manuscripts stand as venerable witnesses to centuries of knowledge, scholarship, and the convergence of diverse cultural influences.

Coming to the previous works on the huge repository of manuscripts in Sindh, starting from Sindhi, Urdu, Arabic, Persian, and English languages, there are different types of comprehensive indexes elaborately prepared. In Arabic language, Ḥāfiẓ Sanaullāh Zahidī, director, Islamic University, Sādiqābād, Pakistan, along with his research team, has undertaken a laudable initiative in the systematic categorization and preservation of Arabic manuscripts at the national level in Pakistan.



Furthermore, Dr. Ahmad Khān, in cooperation with the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts and the Center for Arabic Manuscript Preservation in Islamabad, prepared with great care detailed indexes of Arabic manuscripts in the Sindh region, even the most valuable ones, to be distributed to governmental and non-governmental libraries. In the Urdu language, Dr. Muḥammad Idrīs al-Sindī prepared the indexes for manuscripts in Sindh and especially compiled more than 900 manuscripts by Dr. Nabī Bakhsh Baloch—a compilation of great scholarly importance. A protégé of Dr. Idrīs al-Sindī, Abdulqadīr Rājpar has also compiled indexes of the Ma'arūfiyya Library in Matyārī, archaeological manuscripts and manuscripts from the Mazhar al-'Ulūm madrasah in Khada Karachi. Muḥammad Yūsuf Khushk has also prepared the index of manuscripts preserved in the Sachal Sarmast Library Khairpur. Coming to Persian, Dr. Qāsim Šāfi's works, especially the *Index of manuscripts in Sindhiology* and *Index of manuscripts of the Talpur family*, along with 'Abid Razā 'Irfānī's *Index of manuscripts in Sindhiology*, have proved to be major scholarly aids.

Syed Khizr Noshāhī has written the Index of Persian manuscripts in Dr. 'Alī Shauq's library in Karachi. Some indexes are produced in Sindhi such as Dr. Idrīs al-Sindī, Treasury of Manuscripts; Mawlānā Mūḥammad Šādiq / Mawlānā Qārī Amānullāh 'Abbāsī, Indexes for Sindhiology Manuscripts. However, our study especially stems from the scholarly contribution delivered in English by Dr. Masood Ahmad al-Sindhī, who under the esteemed supervision of Prof. Dr. Robert Gleave, had conducted a post-doctorate research on the topic at hand.

This research seeks to make a distinctive contribution by unraveling the unique features of the Al-Rāshidiyya collection. By highlighting its thematic diversity, linguistic richness, and the custodians' role in preservation, we aim to add valuable insights to the broader discourse on Sindh's manuscript culture. Although previous studies have addressed the broader landscape of manuscripts found in Sindh, the present study focuses specifically on Arabic and ḥadīth manuscripts, with particular attention to those preserved in the al-Rāshidiyya collection. We thus try to bridge the gaps in our contribution by providing more information on the topic. Thus the distinctive spotlight shall fall on the Al-Rāshidiyya collection, and our aspiration is an all-comprehensive overview in order to get insight into the development of this collection, custodianship, and its role regarding the preservation of the intellectual heritage of Sindh.

The current hypothesis is that the Al-Rāshidiyya collection represents the Sindh manuscript tradition that may hold, not only the key to the linguistic variety but indeed to the richness of Arabic and ḥadīth literature hidden in these ancient texts. Our methodology combines individual investigation within the library, engaging with the custodians of the collection, and tapping into primary sources. This multi-faceted approach aims to ensure a comprehensive and accurate portrayal of the Al-Rāshidiyya collection.

Notably, some ḥadīth manuscripts in the Rāshidiyyah Library are unique due to the loss of original copies from which they were transcribed. Despite Challenges such as internal disagreements among heirs and custodianship transitions, the collection's enduring impact on scholars and researchers, especially in the field of Prophetic Ḥadīth, underscores its significance in preserving and enriching Islamic knowledge and heritage.

1. Significance of the Rāshidī Family

The migration of the Rāshidī family to the Sindh region began in the 4th century Hijrī, when they migrated from the city of Kazimīn in Iraq and settled in Sīstān, modern-day Sehwan Shareef near the city of Dadu Sindh, Pakistan. The most significant turn of events took place when one of the ancestors of the family migrated to the city of Khairpur. The great figure,



Rāshid Shāh, the grandfather of the family, was born at Khairpur in the month of Ramadhān 1170 AH / 1792 CE. Renowned for his profound knowledge and untiring struggle for Islam, Rāshid Shāh became a legendary figure far beyond regional confines. Rāshid Shāh served Islam with such distinction that Zaman Shāh, son of Timur, conferred upon him two noble gifts in recognition, namely a flag and a turban. Following Rāshid Shāh's passing, his elder son inherited the turban, earning the title "Peer Pagara (Turbon)," while the younger son inherited the flag and was honored with the title "Peer Jhando (Flag)." This historical narrative underscores the family's deep connection to the propagation of Islam and the recognition they received for their enduring contributions.¹² The family claims to have preserved its ancestry tree given as below:

¹² Shakīl Aḥmad 'Abdullah, *al-Muḥaddis Badī'uddīn al-Rāshidī al-Sindī, Cuhūduū wa Manhajūhū fī al-Hadīs al-Nabawī* (Kuwait: University of Kuwait, Ḥadīth Department, M.Phil Thesis, 1436/2015), 38; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 29-35; Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I'lām bi Ruwāt al-Imām (Dirāsa wa Tahqīq)* (Lahore: Punjab university, Department of Arabic, Ph.D Thesis, 2014), 24, 25-26.

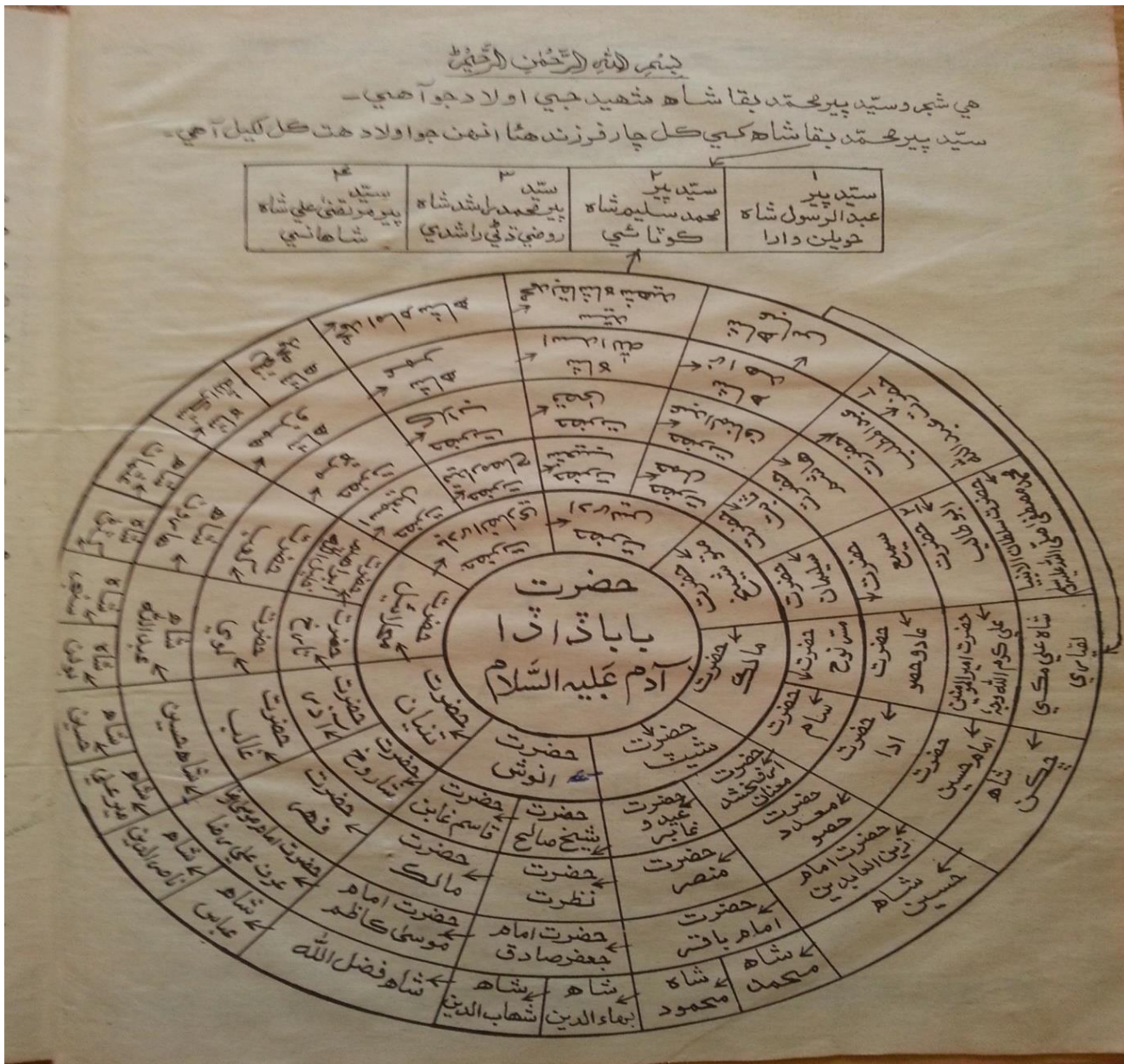


Figure 1: Ancestry Tree of Rāshidī Family, from Rāshid Shāh to the Father of Mankind Adam (peace be upon him)¹³

There is a notable account concerning the migration of a family to Sindh. According to historical records, a king named Dilo Rā'e son of Āmir ruled over Arūr and Barhaman Ābād, and he was known for his extreme cruelty. Dilo Rā'e had a younger brother named Chote Umrānī¹⁴, who converted to Islam and journeyed to Manṣūrah to pursue the study of the Qur'ān

¹³ Shakīl al-Muḥaddis Badī'uddīn, 29; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 29.

¹⁴ There is a place near the city of Sehwan Shareef called *Chuto Umrānī*, which is called by his name. Thatwī, *Tuḥfat al-Kirām*, 407. There is a cast called Umrānī named after his name living in my village Karampur near Sehwan Shareef. (Dr. Syed Muḥammad Masharib Shah al-Sindī)



and Islamic Studies. After memorizing the entire Holy Qur'ān, Chote Umrānī returned to his hometown.

Upon his return, Chote Umrānī faced criticism from his relatives, who speculated that he might marry an Arab woman. Fueled by this criticism, he decided to marry an Arab lady. Thus, when he went to Hījāz for pilgrimage there he married with an Arab lady named Fāṭimah and came back to Sindh with her. After his marriage, rumors about the beauty of his wife reached Dilo Rā'e, his elder brother. In Chote Umrānī's absence, Dilo Rā'e entered his home with malicious intentions. However, Chote Umrānī was alerted in time and arrived at the scene, preventing any harm. In response, Chote Umrānī prayed against the city and its king, predicting its destruction due to Dilo Rā'e's wicked actions.

Subsequently, Chote Umrānī migrated to an Arabian country, seeking help from the caliph against the tyranny of Dilo Rā'e. The caliph dispatched Syed 'Alī al-Makkī al-Mūsawī, b. Syed 'Abbās b. Ḥusayn b. Arshad b. Zayd b. Ja'far b. 'Imrān b. Hārūn b. 'Abdullah al-Ashraf b. Qāsim b. 'Ubaydullāh/'Abdullāh b. Mūsā al-Kāzim son of Ja'far al-Ṣādīk, the first father of Rāshidiyya family, to Sind with a hundred forces from the city Sāmra. However, by the time Syed 'Alī reached, both Arūr and Barhaman Ābād had already faced divine punishment, leading to the repentance and shame of Dilo Rā'e.

In a gesture of reconciliation, Dilo Rā'e allowed his daughter, who had embraced Islam, to marry Syed 'Alī. This union resulted in the birth of four sons: Syed Muḥammad, Syed Murād, Syed Ḥājī (famously known as Syed Barkiya), and Syed Chango. Syed Muḥammad's notable descendant, Shah Ṣadar, established himself in Bhago Thorho, referred to as Lak 'Alawī, denoting the village of Alawits the descendants of the fourth caliph of Islam, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Shah Ṣadar's lineage eventually settled near the present-day city of Sehwan Shareef, known as Lakī, and the Syed families descending from this lineage in Pakistan are recognized as Lakyārī Syeds. These families have established roots in Sehwan Shareef, with some branching out to Khairpur, Pīr Jhando, and other regions.¹⁵

The Rāshidī family stands as an ancient and reformist lineage renowned for its contributions to the realms of science, politics, religion, and guidance in the daily lives of individuals from a religious perspective. With sprawling branches, one notable faction is referred to, in Sindhi, as "Pīr Pagarah," signifying the custodian of the turban. The second branch is recognized as "Pīr Jhando," denoting the bearer of the flag.¹⁶ While the former is distinguished for its involvement in general politics, the latter has gained acclaim for its exceptional contributions in the domain of scientific research, particularly in the sciences of Prophetic Ḥadīth.

2. Al-Rāshidiyya collection

The inception of the Rāshidiyyah Library can be traced back to the collection amassed by Syed Muḥammad Baqā al-Shahīd (1135-1198 AH / 1723-1783 CE), the grandfather of this distinguished family. A devout ascetic, righteous, and a fervent bibliophile, Syed Muḥammad Baqā took it upon himself to gather whatever manuscripts he encountered in his household. His undying passion for books had him make journeys both near and far in search of manuscripts. He met his end pursuing one such quest, may it remind us of the extent of his

¹⁵ Thatwī, *Tuhfat al-Kirām*, 12-13, 75-76, 445-447.; Ejaz-ul-Haq Quddusi, *Tazkira Sūfiyā'e Sindh* (Karachi: Urdu Academy, 1959), 108-111, 114-115.

¹⁶ Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 29-41; Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I'lām*, 25-26.



devotion to acquiring these literary treasures. There is this story about a certain one of his travels when Syed Muḥammad Baqā Shāh al-Shahīd came back home carrying a bundle of manuscripts on top of his head. Unfortunately, his act drew the attention of bandits who, supposing that the bundle might contain some valuable currency, seized him. Tragically, a confrontation ensued, resulting in his untimely demise.¹⁷

Since its establishment, the library held an esteemed position in the hearts of scholars and researchers of heritage. It attracted numerous contemporaries and visitors, drawn by the wealth of knowledge contained in its books and manuscripts. Visitors, both local and from the subcontinent, documented their impressions in the library's visitor log. The library's reputation extended beyond the subcontinent, attracting people and scholars from distant countries who sought to explore its treasures. This widespread acclaim and ongoing interest reflected the enduring impact and significance of the Rāshidiyyah collection on the scholarly community. Several researchers specializing in Arab heritage, particularly in the field of Prophetic Ḥadīth, have recognized the manuscripts and rare books housed in this library. They have acknowledged the value of the library's holdings, utilizing its manuscripts for investigation and presenting books to readers.¹⁸ Additionally, the library boasts works by Sindhi scholars, including Muḥammad Hāshim al-Thatwī al-Sindī, great muḥaddith Muḥammad 'Ābid al-Sindī, Makhdūm 'Abdulwāhid al-Sewistānī, and other eminent scholars.¹⁹

A distinctive feature of this library lies in the valuable and crucial role its manuscripts play in the science of Prophetic Ḥadīth. The supervisors have dedicated efforts to transfer manuscripts in this field, and some of these manuscripts, while not ancient, are exceptionally rare. The copies from which these manuscripts were transcribed have been lost from their original libraries, making the manuscripts in the Rāshidiyyah Library unique and unseen by others. For instance, the copy of *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn* by al-Ṭabarānī: (No. 285) has remained alone in the world, because the copy from which this copy was transferred is no longer found in 'Arif Hikmat's collection in Medina.²⁰

¹⁷ Quddusi, *Tazkira Sūfiyā 'e Sindh*, 266-267; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 33, 299-317; Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I'lām*, 24.

¹⁸ Aḥmad Khān, *Fihris al-Makhṭūṭāt al-'Arabiyya fī Bākistān* (Riyāz: Maktabat al-Malik Fahad al-Waṭaniyya, 1434/2013), 21-24; Ḥāfiz Muḥammad Na'im, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda," *Al-I'tisām* (March 2003): 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

¹⁹ Qāsimī, "Pīr Jhando Kā Kutubkhānā": 46; Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I'lām*, 36; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317.

²⁰ Khān, *Fihris al-Makhṭūṭāt*, 19; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317.

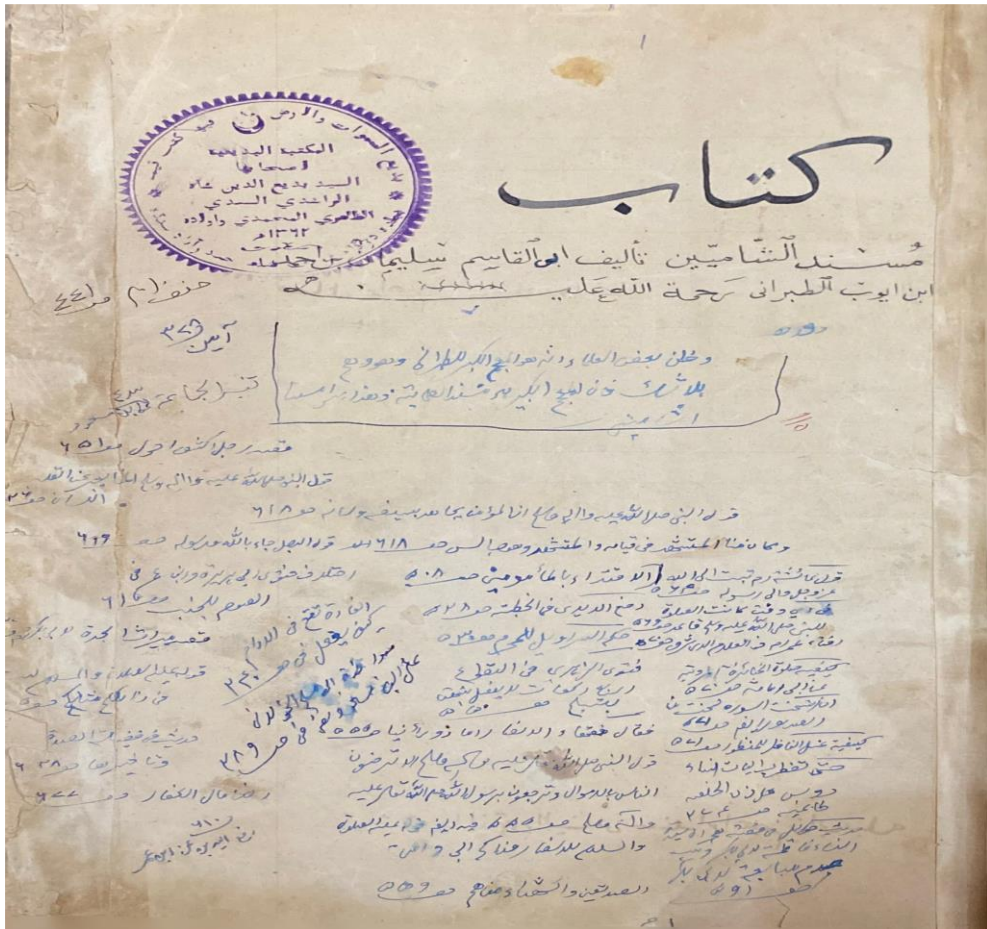


Figure 2: The first page of Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn by al-Ṭabarānī: (No. 285) at Rāshidiyya collection

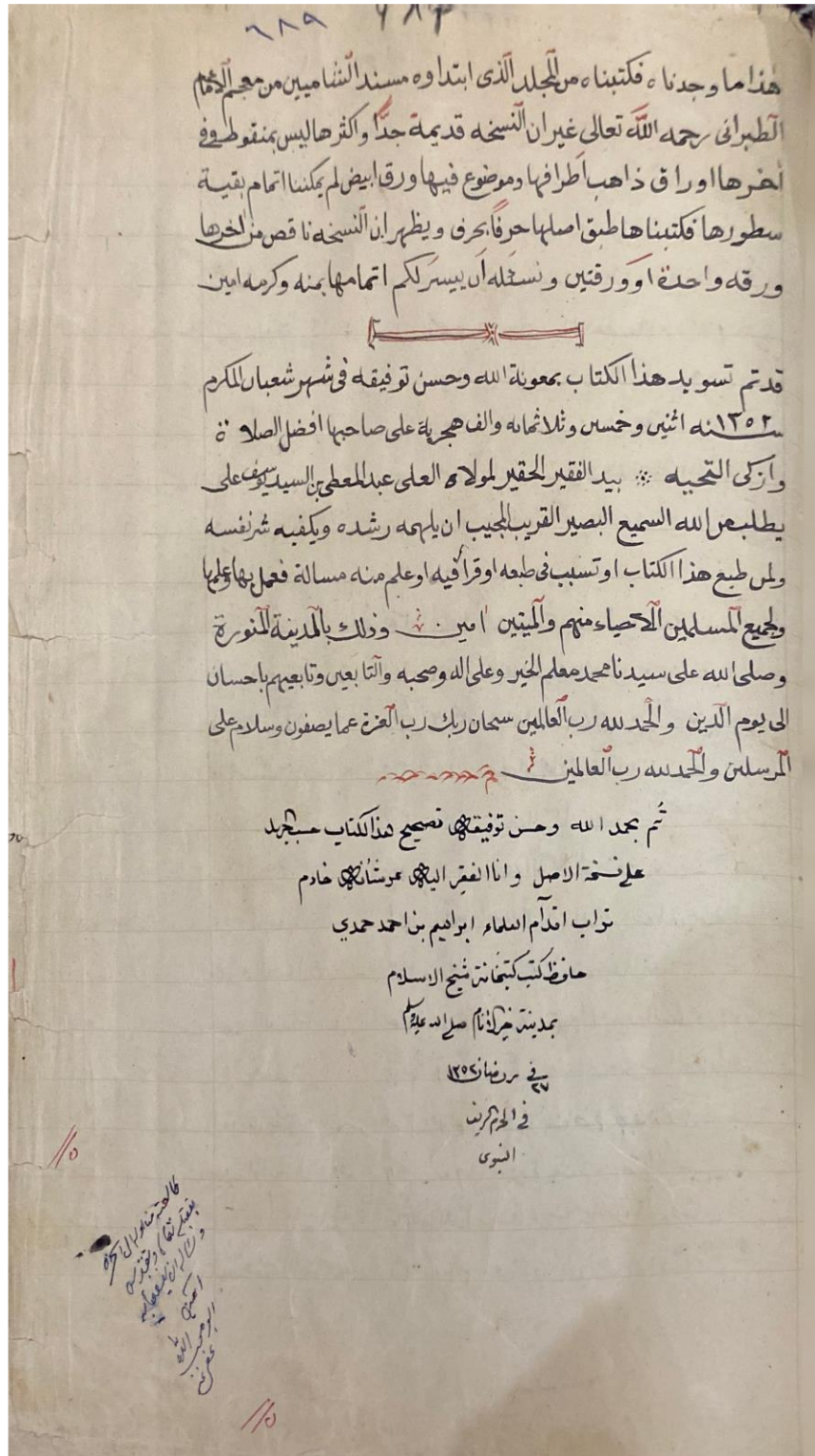


Figure 3: The last page of *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn* by al-Ṭabarānī: (No. 285) at Rāshidiyya collection



Similarly Qutbuddīn al-Hālejlī copied Ibn Mardawayh's *Mu'jam al-Buldān*: (No. 259), from a copy that was stored in the Maktaba al-Āsifiyya in Hyderabad Deccan, but the Āsifiyya copy is no longer available in Hyderabad.²¹

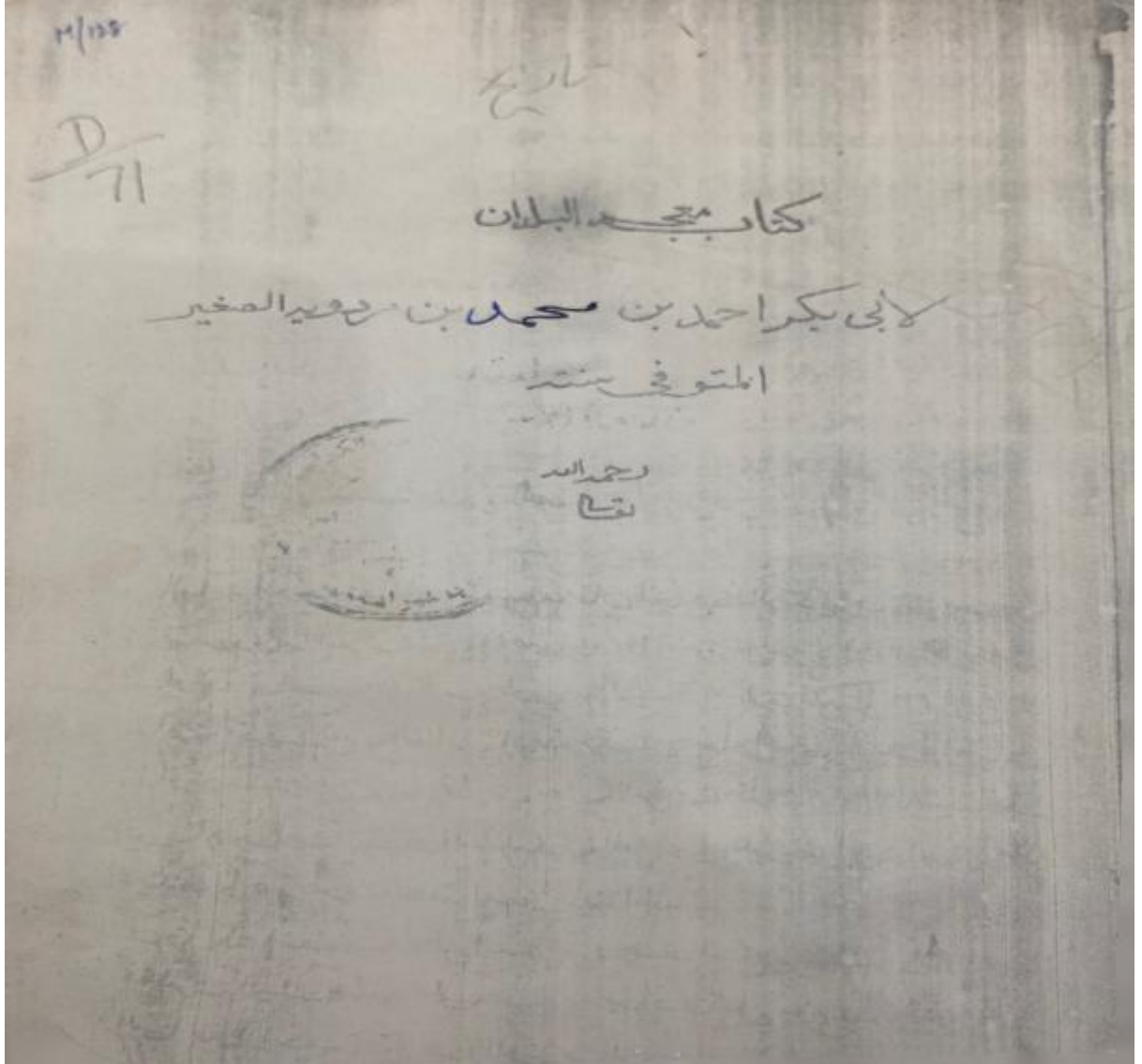


Figure 4: The first page of Ibn Mardawayh's *Mu'jam al-Buldān*: (No. 259) at Rāshidiyya collection

²¹ Khān, *Fihris al-Makhṭū'āt*, in introduction; Ḥāfiẓ, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda": 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

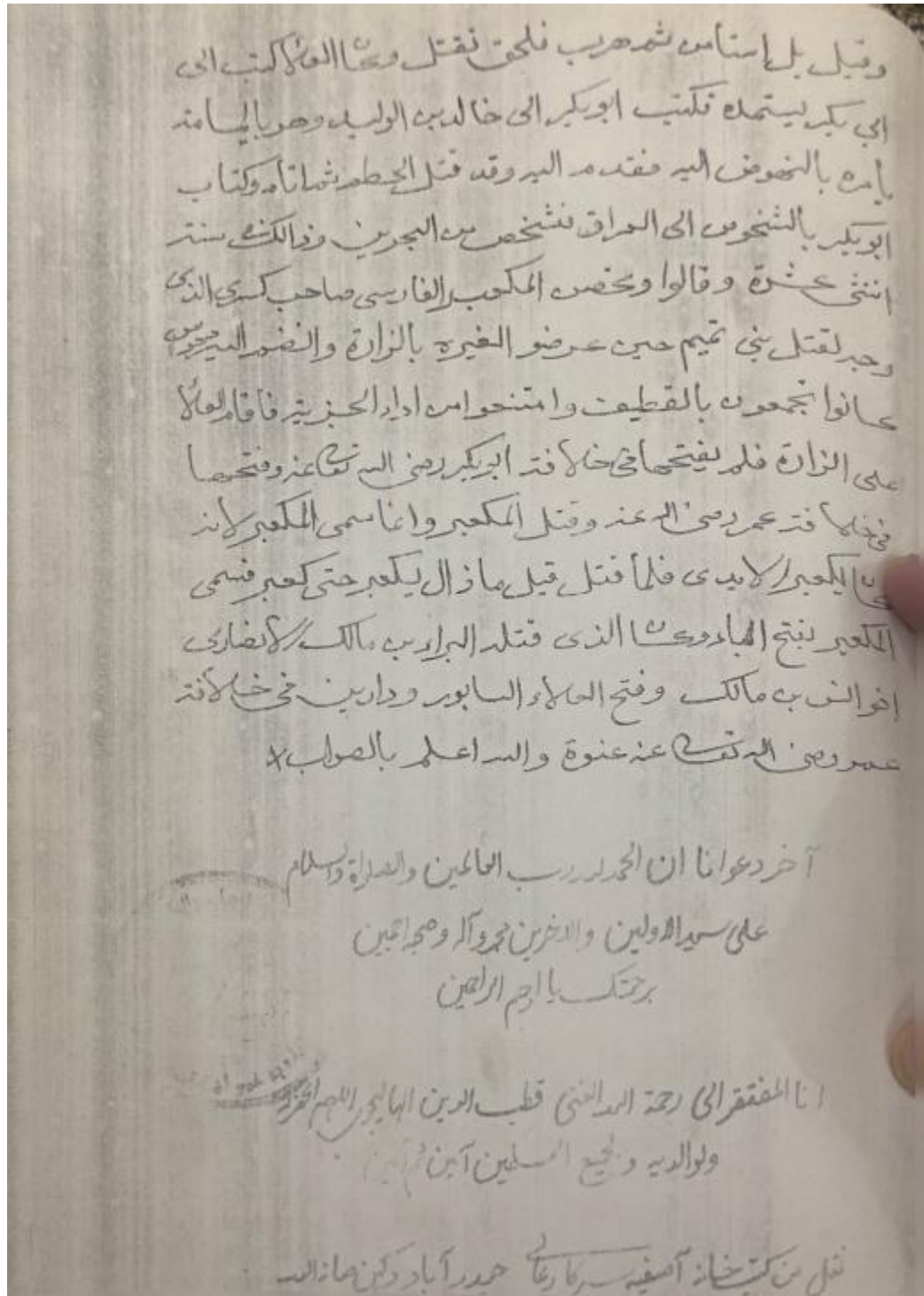


Figure 5: The last page of Ibn Mardawayh's *Mu'jam al-Buldān*: (No. 259) at Rāshidiyya collection

This distinctive characteristic has contributed to the library's renowned reputation worldwide, despite any challenges or critiques mentioned by scholars.

As for the scholars who provided a service to enrich this library, they are many. We find the Nizāmānī family among the special follower of Syed Rushdullāh, such as Fatah



Muhammad, his son Fatah Rasūl, Fayḍ Muhammad, and Luṭfullāh, all of whom were Nizāmānīs. Muhammad al-Qaysarā'ī al-Sindī, Muhammad Ismā'īl Afghān, Muhammad b. Yūsuf al-Sūrtī, Muhammad Yusuf Thonakī, Muhammad Faydulkarīm al-Sindhī, and Muhammad Qutbuddīn al-Hālejjwī, Abdul'alīm, Zaynuddīn al-Arawī al-Bihārī, and finally Ḥusayn b. Muḥsin al-Yamanī al-Subā'ī al-Anṣārī and others. From the outside, Muhammad Ṣādiq al-Fahmī b. al-Sayyid Amīn al-Māliḥ, a *Nāsikh* (copyist) at the al-Maktabah al-Zhāhiriyyah in Damascus, are among those who served this library with many copies of rare manuscripts especially the last one who sent manuscripts from al-Zhāhiriyyah to Syed Rushdullāh, the 4th flag owner and a great lover of rare manuscripts.²²

The Al-Rāshidiyya collection has garnered appreciation from various scholars, including 'Ubeydullāh Sindhī (1872-1944), 'Allāma Ghulām Muṣṭafa Qāsimī (1924-2003), great muḥaddith 'Abdufattāh Abū Ghudda (1917-1997), and others. Mawlānā 'Ubeydullāh Sindhī says that he used to visit the library during his studies. He also borrowed books, and the benefits of this library had a significant impact on the completion of his studies.²³ According to Qāsimī, the collection's renown extended to the point where even Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif Hyderābād Deccan benefited from its rare manuscripts. He notes that the collection safeguards some exceptionally rare manuscripts, some of which are not found elsewhere. For instance, a copy of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's *al-Tamhīd*, a ḥādīth book and a commentary on *al-Muvaṭṭa'* by Imām Mālik, was available only in Morocco and another exclusively within the Rāshidiyya Collection.²⁴

Scholars provide varied accounts regarding the number of books preserved in the Rāshidiyya collection, potentially attributed to the continuous growth of the library over time and its subsequent division among heirs. For example, according to the Qāsimī it contains 25000 books.²⁵ Syed Ḥamīduddīn the grandson of Syed Aḥmad Shahīd, reports that Rāshidiyya library was quite unique and extraordinary; even the sultans and rulers would not have a library like this. Fifteen thousand volumes of reputable books are available in it. So, in Persian script of Iranian style, there are copies of Dīvān-e-Fārisī, fifty-two volumes of reliable commentaries, and five copies of Shāhnāmah by Firdowsī, three of which were photocopied and adorned. All authentic books of Ḥādīth with explanations are available here such as three copies of each *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, *Taysīr al-Wuṣūl*, *Ihyāu' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah* are present in good condition and all volumes are royal.²⁶

The manuscripts within this library provide intriguing insights into extensive travels of its founder viz. Muhammad Baqā Shah, revealing that his quests extended beyond regional borders to Arab countries. His journeys served a dual purpose: pilgrimage to Ḥajj and the acquisition of books. One manuscript within the library attests to this, documenting its acquisition along with others during his travels. The manuscript was a copy of al-Bukhārī's *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, which he had purchased in Mecca from 'Umar b. al-Ḥaḍramī in *Ribāṭ al-Ḥaḍramī*, circa 1190 AH / 1776 CE.²⁷ This situation indicates the sincere desire of Syed

²² Khān, *Fihris al-Makhtūṭāt*; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317; Ḥāfiz, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda": 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

²³ Mawlānā 'Abduḥayy al-Laghārī, *Mawlānā 'Ubeydullāh Sindhī Kī Sarguzashte Kābul* (Islāmābād: Qawmī Idāra Barā'e Taḥqīq-e Tārīkh wa Saqāfat, 1980), 9.

²⁴ Qāsimī, "Pīr Jhando Kā Kutubkhāna": 46.

²⁵ Ibid; Ḥāfiz, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda": 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

²⁶ Ghulām Rasūl Mahar, *Syed Aḥmad Shahīd* (Lahore: Shaikh Ghulām 'Alī & Sons, 3rd ed. 1981), 290.

²⁷ Ḥāfiz, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda": 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.



Muḥammad Baqā Shāh to collect ḥadīth books and manuscripts, and to preserve them throughout his life. This collection, including printed books and manuscripts, was inherited by Syed Muḥammad Rāshid Shāh (1171-1233 AH / 1758-1818 CE), known as *Sā'in Roze Dhanī* (سائين روضي ڌڻي) in Sindhi language meaning “the owner of the shrine” to whom this family’s name is related, after the death of his father, Syed Muḥammad Baqā Shāh (1135-1198 AH / 1723-1783 CE).²⁸

Following the tenure of Syed Rāshid Shāh, the extensive collection of books underwent a division as part of the inheritance, apportioned between his two sons. The elder son, Syed Şibghatullāh Shāh (1193-1246 AH / 1799-1831 CE), received a portion, and the younger son, Syed Muḥammad Yāsīn Shāh (1212-1275 AH / 1799-1862 CE), inherited another. Syed Muḥammad Rāshid Shāh bestowed his eldest son with his turban, earning him the title “Pīr Pagara,” symbolizing the owner of the turban. The youngest son, in turn, inherited his father’s flag and was titled “Pīr Jhando,” representing the owner of the flag. Both sons dedicated themselves to the pursuit of knowledge and the expansion of their manuscript collections. Their collective efforts in manuscript acquisition laid the foundation for the operationalization of the Rāshidiyyah Library, featuring two branches. Initially, the library served scholars from the village of Pīr Jhando, near Saeedabad in the Matyari district of Sindh. Subsequently, it relocated to another location, specifically Pīr Pagara in the village Pīr jo Goth near Khairpur/Sukkur in Sindh.²⁹ In these two distinct settings, the libraries flourished independently, each contributing significantly to the scholarly pursuits of their respective regions.

The second branch³⁰ of the Rāshidiyyah Library commenced its service to scholars under the patronage of Syed Şibghatullāh Shāh Rāshidī al-Husainī, the first son of Rāshid Shāh, and the inaugural individual to be titled Pīr Pagara (the turban owner). Syed Şibghatullāh demonstrated a heightened commitment to manuscript collection, surpassing even his younger brother, amassing numerous manuscripts and acquiring rare publications. His imprint, in the form of a seal, is discernible on several significant manuscripts within the collection. His ardent dedication to manuscript acquisition is vividly illustrated by an incident where he left the village to welcome a gathering of scholars in honor of obtaining a manuscript—specifically, *al-Jāmi' al-Şaḥīḥ* by Imam al-Bukhārī.³¹ This event transpired when he initially procured a copy from a scholar in Shikarpur city Sindh.

After the death of his father, Syed ‘Alī Gohar Aşghar (1231-1263 AH / 1816-1847 CE) the second owner of the turban son of Şibghatullāh Shāh collected books and manuscripts, following the path of his father. He displayed an unwavering commitment to the enhancement and refinement of the library. Possessing a profound passion for books and manuscripts, he spared no effort in procuring valuable manuscripts characterized by exquisite handwriting, intricate decorations, and gilding. A proficient chemist himself, he also curated a collection of books related to the field of chemistry within the library. His progeny continued this legacy

²⁸ Quddusi, *Tazkira Sūfiyā'e Sindh*, 268, 277; Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I'lām*, 35; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317; Hāfiz, “Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda”: 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

²⁹ Quddusi, *Tazkira Sūfiyā'e Sindh*, 273; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317; Hāfiz, “Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda”: 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

³⁰ In spite of its being under the custody of first and elder son, we call it second branch because it was shifted from its central place to wit village of Pir Jhando, Saeedabad to the new village named Pir jo Goth, Khairpur.

³¹ Quddusi, *Tazkira Sūfiyā'e Sindh*, 271.



one after another with remarkable dedication, ensuring the continual growth and prosperity of the library. They are Syed Ḥizbullāh (1258-1308 AH / 1842-1890 CE) the 3rd Pīr Pagara, his son ‘Alī Gohar II (1275-1314 AH / 1859-1896 CE) the 4th Pīr Pagara, his son Shāh Mardan I (1279-1340 AH / 1867-1921 CE) the 5th Pīr Pagara, his son Ṣibghatullāh II (1327-1364 AH / 1909-1943 CE) the 6th Pīr Pagara, his son Sikandar ‘Alī Shāh know as Syed Shāh Mardan Shāh II (1347-1433 AH / 1920-2010 CE) the 7th Pīr Pagara respectively. The last one in particular, made significant contributions by constructing a dedicated building for the library. In present it is in the custody of Syed Ṣibghatullāh Shāh III the 8th Pīr Pagara. This facility was equipped with all the necessary amenities to cater to the needs of those seeking to access the scientific heritage preserved within its walls.³² The library, under the stewardship of successive generations, evolved into a testament to the family’s enduring commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and the preservation of cultural and scientific treasures.

This branch, which is now called “Dargāh Sharīf Library,” stores 20,029 printed books and 610 manuscripts, including about 450 copies in Arabic, and the rest in Persian, Sindhi, and Urdu. While the exact total number of ḥadīth manuscripts remains the subject of ongoing research, preliminary findings indicate the presence of approximately 287 manuscripts. Significantly, some of these are copies of works whose originals are no longer extant in their source libraries, highlighting the distinctive role of the Rāshidiyya Library in the preservation of Islamic scholarly heritage. It contains many anecdotes such as illuminated and gilded Qur’anic manuscripts, and there is a long copy of the Holy Qur’ān 300cm in width and 150cm long with a fine writing and written in all the fonts that were popular until the time of its writer, and in beautiful shapes, that dazzle the eyes and warm the hearts.³³

Concerning the original section of the library situated in its inaugural location, namely the village Pīr Jhando, it remained under the stewardship of Syed Yāsīn Shāh, the son of Rāshid Shāh. Thereafter, the inheritance passed on to his son, Sayyid Faḍlullāh Shāh (d. 1287 AH / 1909 CE?), the 2nd Pīr Jhande Wāro (bearer of the flag). Subsequent to his passing, the custodianship was assumed by his son Syed Rashīduddīn Shāh (1254-1317 AH / 1834-1899 CE), the 3rd Pīr Jhande Wāro. Thus, each successive inheritor took pains not only to maintain but also to increase the repository of books and manuscripts, tending with utmost care the legacy bequeathed by his forebear. These custodians did not merely preserve the already existing collection but also made noteworthy additions to it, turning the library into a dynamic center of knowledge. Their commitment extended to serving scholars and visitors alike, creating an environment most propitious for the pursuit of knowledge. This custodial tradition continued through the time of Abū Turāb Syed Rushdullāh b. Rashīduddīn (1277-1340 AH / 1860-1922 CE), the 4th Pīr Jhande Wāro, who is known among the masses for the title of "caliphate" Under his guardianship, the library continued to thrive, marking yet another chapter in its illustrious history.³⁴

³² Abū Sufyan Muḥammad Khan Muḥammadī, “Sindh Men Rāshidī Khāndān,” *Majalla Usva-e-Hasanah Karachi* (December 2013): <https://usvah.org/2013/12/15/sindh-men-rashdi-khandan-ka-khandani-o-tareekhi-pas-manzar-or-un-ki-deeni-khidmat-ka-jaiza/> 12.04.2023. 12:00; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317.

³³ Ghulām Mustafa Qāsimī, “Pīr Jhando Kā Kutubkhānā,” *al-Walī Hyderābād* (Apr-May 1975): 46; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317; Ḥāfīz, “Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda”: 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

³⁴ Qāsimī, “Pīr Jhando Kā Kutubkhānā”: 46; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317; Muḥammadī, “Sindh Men Rāshidī Khāndān”; Ḥāfīz, “Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda”: 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.



The era under the leadership of Syed Rushdullāh saw an unparalleled golden period for this branch of the Rāshidiyyah collection. In the 25 years long period, the library had reached a high point regarding its working and had touched the apex of scientific services. One significant initiative during this period was the establishment of a school named Dār al-Rashād in the year 1319 AH / 1901 CE.³⁵ Concurrently, meticulous attention was devoted to fostering the prosperity of this branch, now identified as Al-Maktaba al-‘Āliyya al-‘Ilmiyya. Syed Rushdullāh made huge investment, both in terms of finance and strategy, in collecting books and manuscripts. He allocated scholars and dispatched them to various corners of the globe, including Mecca, Medina, Egypt, the Levant, Istanbul, Baghdad, and several Indian cities such as Hyderabad Deccan, Delhi, and Kanpur.³⁶ Distinguished by his meticulous approach, Syed Rushdullāh directed his team, specializing in this service, to prioritize obtaining original manuscripts. Where the originals were not available, they were requested to prepare copies as soon as possible. Such commitment to access and authenticity made the library one of the most reliable centers for scholarly material during the visionary leadership of Syed Rushdullāh.

It was an academic practice for scholars at that time to collect as many books and manuscripts as possible during their Hajj pilgrimages to Arab countries, and Syed Rushdullāh being the custodian of this library during this period is most noted for active participation in this pursuit; in fact, he never neglected an opportunity to enrich this library whenever he visited any of the Arab countries. Notably, in one of his travels to Hijāz in the year 1322 AH / 1904 CE he bought many books from Mecca and Medina including some ḥadīth books and handwritten copies.

In the aforementioned year when he undertook the Hajj pilgrimage, he was accompanied by esteemed individuals, including two scholars: Qāḍī Fatah Muḥammad al-Nizāmānī and Mawlawī ‘Ināyatullāh.³⁷

Qāḍī Nizāmānī, recalling the days when he was working together with Pīr Rushdullāh in Mecca and Medina, says, "In the company of Pīr Rushdullāh, we spent most of our time in Mecca and Medina moving from libraries to bookshops and bazaars searching for printed books as well as manuscripts. When we had located what we were looking for, we strove to get the manuscripts ourselves." Where acquisition was difficult, our approach changed to expeditious reproduction. Whenever our companion, Rushdullāh, discovered that we had located a rare manuscript but were unable to secure it, he persistently encouraged us to obtain it in manuscript form, emphasizing the imperative regardless of the associated cost."³⁸

Another anecdote is narrated by Mawlawī ‘Ināyatullāh, who recalls an incident from their travels, stating, "During one of our journeys, we chanced upon a bookstore housing a copy of the book *Irshād al-Fuḥūl* by Imam Al-Shawkānī, complete with his *samā’* (certificate of his learning this book) and his personal endorsement inscribed by his own hand. Upon learning of this from us, Syed Rushdullāh expressed great concern and swiftly accompanied us to the bookstore. There, he negotiated the acquisition of the copy, and despite the owner quoting a price of two hundred Rupees at that time, Syed Rushdullāh promptly paid the amount and

³⁵ Qāsimī, "Pīr Jhando Kā Kutubkhānā": 45; Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I‘lām*, 39-41; Ḥāfiz, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda": 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

³⁶ Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I‘lām*, 36; Ḥāfiz, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda": 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

³⁷ Muḥammadī, "Sindh Men Rāshidī Khāndān"; Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I‘lām*, 36-37; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317; Ḥāfiz, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda": 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

³⁸ Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I‘lām*, 36-37; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317; Ḥāfiz, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda": 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.



took possession of the coveted manuscript.”³⁹ This anecdote underscores Syed Rushdullāh’s fervent dedication to obtaining rare and significant manuscripts for the library’s collection.

Syed Rushdullāh demonstrated a proactive approach to enriching his library by seeking to acquire the collections of esteemed scholars. Upon the demise of a scholar, he would initiate contact with the heirs, expressing his interest in obtaining the cherished books left behind. Responding to his invitations, many heirs willingly brought their forefathers’ collections to be included in Syed Rushdullāh’s library, thereby contributing to the collective benefit of the scholarly community. A notable example is the acquisition of the extensive collection amassed by the prominent Sindhi scholar Muḥammad Hāshim al-Thatwī who hold a good grip on ḥadīth having experts hand in Sīrah. Syed Rushdullāh either purchased or received as gifts the entire collection from the heirs of Thatwī, successfully incorporating these valuable manuscripts into his personal library.⁴⁰

Many manuscripts were either purchased or typed by Syed Rushdullāh from Arab and Turk regions, such as Mecca, Medina, Damascus, and Istanbul. He obtained photographs of some manuscripts from Germany, France and other European countries, in addition to India like Delhi and Patna especially from Maktaba Al-Āsfiya and Maktaba Al-Sa’īdiya Hyderabad.⁴¹

Regrettably, following the demise of Syed Rushdullāh, the fourth flag bearer, the Rāshidiyyah Library encountered significant challenges due to a profound disagreement between his two sons: Syed Iḥsanullāh, the 5th Pīr Jhande Wāro (1313-1357 AH / 1896-1938 CE), and his brother Syed Diyāuddīn Shāh al-Rāshidī (1314-1376 AH / 1887-1957 CE). This domestic strife was the cause of the eventual separation of the library between them. Unfortunately, during this period of discord, much of the manuscripts collected by their father with great trouble and expense were lost and went to ruin. Twelve years after the death of Syed Rushdullāh, his sons, Syed Iḥsanullāh and Syed Diyāuddīn Shāh, took charge separately of their respective shares in the library. Despite the obstacles, both sons did their best to enrich their collections. Syed Iḥsanullāh was especially keen, following in his father’s footsteps, to augment his part of the collection. He actively purchased major and rare manuscripts, just like his father Syed Rushdullāh. He also obtained a huge collection of his uncle, Syed Mithal Shāh Abū al-Baqā (1301-1377 AH / 1883-1958 CE), that comprised manuscripts, for his library. These activities were accompanied by huge financial investments in the acquisition and transcription of manuscripts, showing the commitment of Syed Iḥsanullāh in preserving and enlarging the scholarly legacy of the Rāshidiyyah Library.⁴²

As for the second part, which was owned by Syed Diyāuddīn Shāh after the division between the two brothers, it remained locked in its original place, and nothing significant happened to it, except for care to keep it in good condition. After his death, this section was passed on as an inheritance to his son, Syed Wahbullāh Shāh (1339-1425 AH / 1921-2004 CE), who finally sold it to the National Library in Karachi, circa 1400 AH / 1980 CE.⁴³ As a result, the collection

³⁹ Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I’lām*, 37; Hāfiz, “Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda”: 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

⁴⁰ Qāsimī, “Pīr Jhanda Kā Kutubkhānā”: 46; Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I’lām*, 36; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhanda Khāndān*, 299-317.

⁴¹ Abdul Qadeer, *Kitāb al-I’lām*, 36; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhanda Khāndān*, 299-317; Muḥammadī, “Sindh Men Rāshidī Khāndān”; Hāfiz, “Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda”: 305-313, 343-349, 380-388.

⁴² Hāfiz, “Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda”: 305-313, 343-349, 380-388; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhanda Khāndān*, 299-317.

⁴³ Ibid; Ibid.



found a new home outside the family. The transfer to an institution outside the family raised discontent among family members and scholars, who felt that the library was losing its visibility and being somewhat neglected.

A tragic turn of events came to pass for the first part of the library, the share belonging to Ihsanullāh, the fifth flag bearer. His efforts at augmenting his section were well appreciated, but destiny had its say, and he died at the age of forty. After his untimely death, his two sons, Syed Muhibullāh Shāh (1340-1416 AH / 1921-1995 CE) and late muḥaddith Syed Badī'uddīn Shāh (1342-1416 AH / 1924-1995 CE), inherited their respective shares from the library. The share, which was inherited by Syed Badī'uddīn Shāh Rāshdī after this partition, was shifted to the city of Saeedabad, adjacent to the village of Pīr Jhando. This wing initially was known as al-Maktaba al-Badī'iyya later changed to al-Maktaba al-Rāshidiyya, and this can easily be observed by the stamps on the manuscripts. The rest, however, belonging to Syed Muhibullāh Shāh remained in its original place, that is the village of Pīr Jhando. This division was a major re-arrangement in the contents of the library, one part of it made its way to a new city, while the other remained in what had been its birthplace.⁴⁴

In the present day, al-Maktaba al-'Āliyyah operates under the patronage of Syed Qāsim Shāh, the son of Syed Muhibullāh. Despite facing various challenges and enduring adversities, the library has persevered. It currently houses 30000 printed books and 762 manuscripts. Among these, approximately 500 are in Arabic, while the remainder is divided between Persian and Sindhi. Although the comprehensive inventory of ḥadīth manuscripts is still in progress, our investigation has thus far identified approximately 287 such manuscripts. Importantly, several of these represent copies of texts whose originals have been lost in their home libraries, emphasizing the critical preservation function served by the Rāshidiyya Library. This enduring collection stands as a testament to the resilience and commitment of those who have worked to preserve the scholarly heritage of *al-Maktaba al-'Āliyyah*.⁴⁵

In summary, the Rāshidiyyah collection, once expansive and rich in content, underwent a division into six distinct groups amidst family disputes. This partitioning and separation among family members resulted in the loss of several books and manuscripts, with an unknown quantity presumed stolen. Additionally, the collections suffered from various environmental factors, including extreme heat, wear and tear, and a lack of proper preservation efforts. These challenges have collectively contributed to the diminished state of this once illustrious and valuable collection. Despite of these challenges, the collection maintained to house unique manuscripts in ḥadīth and Arabic.

3. Categorization of the Manuscripts in Al-Rāshidiyya collection.

After employing an individual investigation method inside the library, and engaging in discussions with the owners of the collection, we found that the manuscripts of this collection, can be categorized into three sections as per their origin and condition:

1. The first section encompasses manuscripts written in ancient handwriting, regarded as the original ancient documents.
2. The second section comprises manuscripts transcribed in modern handwriting during the previous century, yet these transcriptions originate from ancient manuscripts.

⁴⁴ Hāfīz, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda": 305-313, 343-349, 380-388; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317.

⁴⁵ Hāfīz, "Kutub Khāna Pīr Jhanda": 305-313, 343-349, 380-388; Qāsimī, "Pīr Jhando Kā Kutubkhānā": 46; Nuhrhio, *Pīr Jhando Khāndān*, 299-317.



3. The third section includes manuscripts that have undergone digitization through imaging technology.

The manuscripts are classified according to language into four categories:

1. Arabic, the most prominent among the languages.
2. Persian.
3. Sindhi.
4. Urdu.

The manuscripts are organized into sections based on the level of information available.

Here are the sections:

1. The first section comprises manuscripts where the author's name, manuscript's provenance, and the accuracy of the attribution to the author are known. This is the most common category.
2. The second section includes manuscripts for which the author's name is not known, although the manuscript's provenance may be known.
3. The third section encompasses manuscripts where neither the author's name nor the manuscript's provenance are known. This category is very rare.

The manuscripts are categorized based on their condition, whether they are intact or damaged, into four sections:

1. The first section includes manuscripts that are complete and in good condition. These are the most common.
2. The second section consists of manuscripts that are in good condition but are incomplete.
3. The third section includes manuscripts that are complete, but they have suffered damage at the beginning or end or somewhere inside.
4. The fourth section comprises manuscripts that are both damaged and incomplete.

4. Some Outstanding Ḥadīth Manuscripts in Al-Rāshidiyya collection.

It is noteworthy to enumerate certain scientific pearls within this library, which captivate the attention of all who visit:

1. The copy of the book *Al-Jawāhir al-Mukallala fī al-Akhbār Al-Musalsalah*, by great muḥaddith Muḥammad b. 'Abdurrahmān b. Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (No. 32), written by a scholar who was al-Sakhāwī's contemporary. It contains his hearing and approval for Shaikh Fakhruddin Abū Bakr al-Sulamī al-Shāfi'ī.

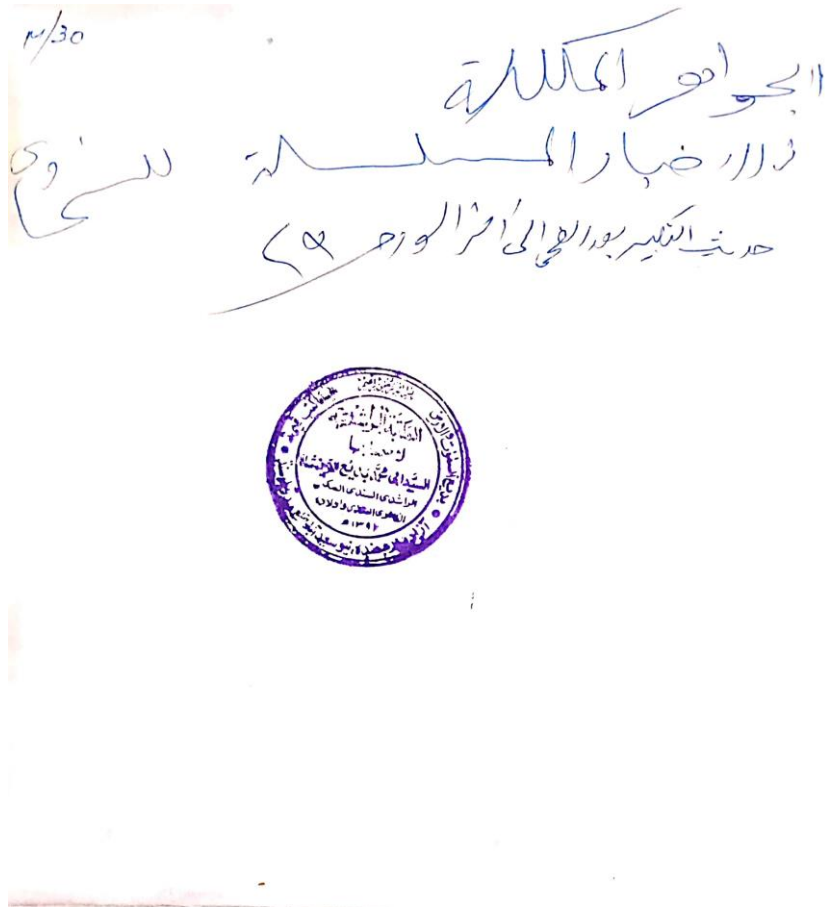


Figure 6: Cover page of the book *Al-Jawāhir al-Mukallala*, by *al-Sakhāwī* (No. 32) at *Rāshidiyya* collection



وصلى الله على محمد وآله وصحبه وسلم
 الحمد لله الذي جعلنا من فضله، فتمسكنا، وتطول، فعمدنا، الفاضل لفضله
 والا فضل وتوسل المفضل، فمن يليهم اليه نبينا المرسل، صلى الله عليه وعلى
 آله وصحبه الموضيعة، لكل مشكلى معضل،
 فان من الانواع المشيقة والآ ومناجى العليم المنيف، الاحاديث
 المستقلة، التي هي لمزيد ضبطها وعها من اللالاء، وكوت من فوائدها الاقراء
 بالرسول عليه الصلاة والسلام، في احواله وافعاله المحسوسين عن اسنوس
 والاولها من ارباب الدين، والترس والانتفاع، فمينا في فضاء الصريح
 الجسيق او القرداة او السماع، او وصف ذواتها او اوطا فعم بظلم
 فردة، ولو كلف ثقات وحفاظ عمها او مصرحيه او دمشقويه، مما هو
 في غاية الشدة والحسن، كما قاله النووي ولكنه كثر فيها التخليل
 وظرف بالزيادة والنقص والتعريف والتبديل من التعمد بالوضع و
 غير ذلك من اسباب التعليل، ومعناه انه من مفاك العمل اذا كان مع الاضاح
 لها فها من علة، والا فضاغ من الضبول منها وما به خلل، وقد جمعها
 الا على من دعت المسات فكان مما علمته البلاد
ابوبكر محمد بن اسماعيل بن عباس المسلمى الوراق
وابو محمد الحسن بن اسماعيل بن محمد الصراب
وابو عبد الله الحسين بن محمد بن الحسين بن فنجويه
وابو الحسن بن احمد بن ابراهيم بن شادان
والاستاد ابو منصور عمر بن القاهر بن طاهر بن محمد البغدادي
والفقيه ابو نعيم احمد بن عبد الله بن محمد بن
وابن بن ابراهيم بن ابي سرور بن عبد الملك بن زياد الله الطبري

Figure 7: First page of the book *Al-Jawāhir al-Mukallala*, by al-Sakhāwī (No. 32) at Rāshidiyya collection

2. The copy of *Ithāf al-Mahra bi al-Fawāid al-Mubtakara min Atrāfi al-Asharah*, by prominent muḥaddith Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (No. 196). Though it appears to be in the author’s handwriting, but in fact it is written by his student, and it is interesting that his student’s handwriting resembles the handwriting of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī. Here is it:

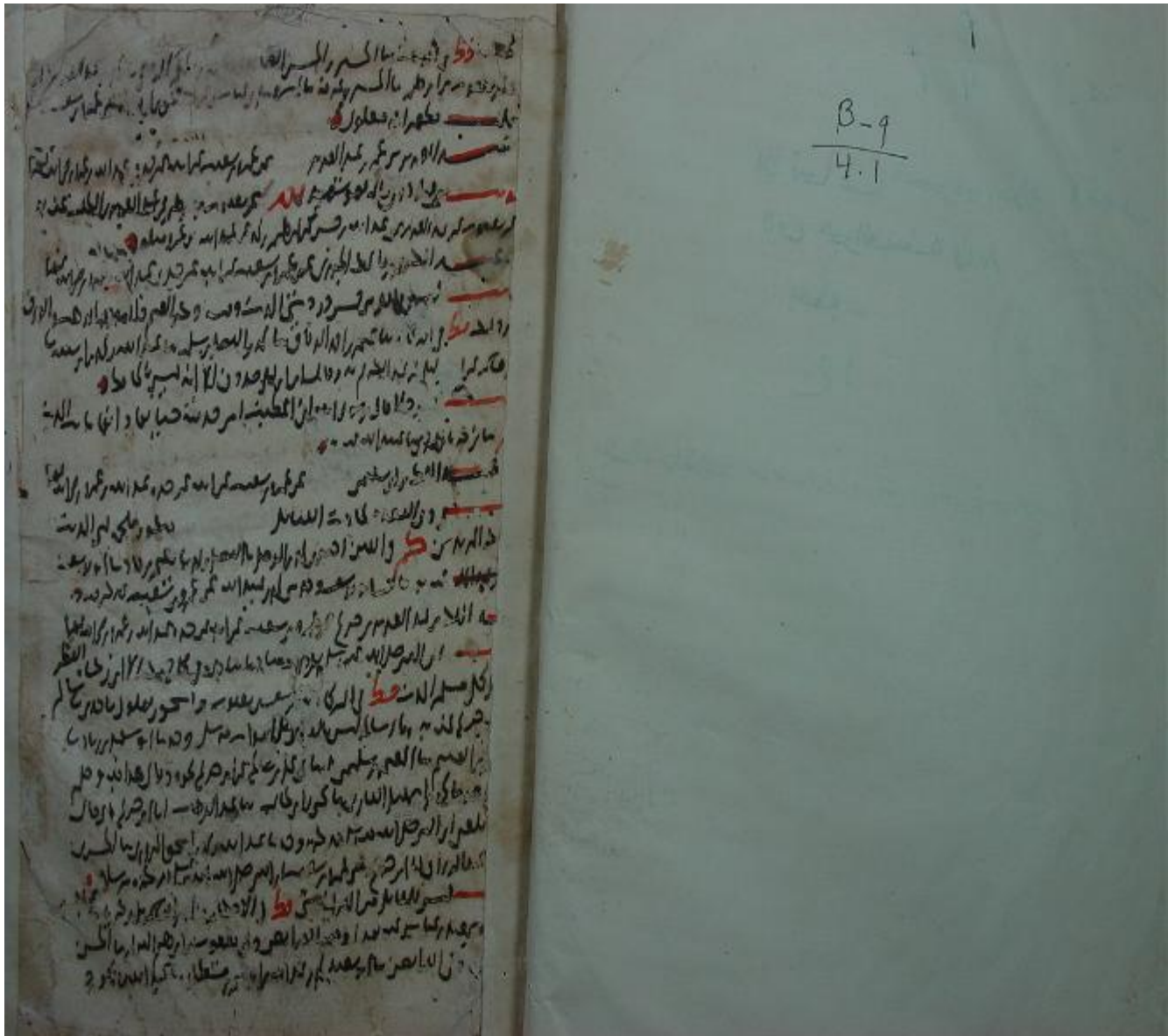


Figure 8: Copy of *Ithāf al-Mahara* by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (No. 196) at Rāshidiyya collection

Conclusion

The exploration of the Al-Rāshidiyya Manuscript Collection unveils a multifaceted tapestry of historical, cultural, and scholarly importance. Rooted in the visionary endeavors of Syed Muḥammad Baqā al-Shahīd during the 18th century, this repository has not only withstood the test of time but has also safeguarded manuscripts that traverse a spectrum of linguistic, thematic, and contextual dimensions. Characterized by its linguistic diversity, the collection is a kaleidoscope with manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, Sindhi, and Urdu a great number of which covers ḥadīth collection. A precise categorization by language, attribution of authorship, and condition gives reason to understand the diverse literary panorama preserved between its volumes. This collection is a broad spectrum, covering themes from religious texts and theological treatises to scientific works and literary masterpieces, hence it comes as a rich



reservoir for intellectual exploration. Particular efforts on the part of the custodians in collecting manuscripts pertaining to the Prophetic Ḥadīth provided this collection with a scholarly dimension.

The findings indicate that the Dargāh Sharīf section of the al-Rāshidiyya collection comprises 20,029 printed books and 610 manuscripts, of which 450 are in Arabic—including works on ḥadīth—while the remainder are in Persian, Sindhi, and Urdu. The other section, known as al-Maktaba al-‘Āliyyah, houses 30,000 printed books and 762 manuscripts, including 500 in Arabic and ḥadīth, with the rest in Persian and Sindhi. The total number of existing ḥadīth manuscripts continues to be examined; nevertheless, our research has successfully located around 287 manuscripts to date. Notably, among them are copies of works no longer found in their original repositories, underscoring the Rāshidiyya Library’s vital role in safeguarding Prophetic Tradition. For example, the copy of *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn* by al-Ṭabarānī (No. 285) appears to be the only extant one of its kind, as the source manuscript from which it was transcribed is no longer preserved in the ‘Ārif Ḥikmat Library in Medina.

The course of the Al-Rāshidiyya Manuscript Collection has not been without its obstacles. Conflicts among heirs, the inexorable passage of time, and changes in custodianship have left an irreversible mark on the fate of these manuscripts. The history of preservation efforts—or lack thereof—tells of a delicate balance between seeking knowledge and the impediments of historical contingencies. Despite the challenges it faces, the Al-Rāshidiyya Manuscript Collection has left an indelible mark on the hearts of muḥaddithīn, scholars, researchers, and heritage enthusiasts. Its influence extends beyond geographical boundaries, for visitors and researchers alike have testified to its importance in enriching scholarly discourse, specifically in the field of Prophetic Ḥadīth.

More than a place to store old manuscripts, the past and present custodians of Al-Rāshidiyya collection have played a very pivotal role in the preservation and promotion of this rich cultural and intellectual heritage contained within its pages. This collection is invaluable, as it continues to call on scholars to further explore and research the multifaceted realms of Islamic knowledge and heritage.