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## The Salafi and the Orientalist

The Correspondence between Paul E. Kahle and Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī from the Fondo Paul Kahle of the University of Turin

**Abstract:** The University of Turin/Italy owns the collection of materials (manuscripts, books, offprints and all the archive) belonging to the German Orientalist Paul Ernst Kahle (1875–1964). One of the most significant items in the collection of thousands of letters from around 2,500 correspondents is the correspondence between Kahle and the Moroccan Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī (1893–1987) who had been collaborating with Kahle and stayed in Germany in the years 1936–1942. The relationship between Kahle and al-Hilālī is particularly significant because of the relevance of the protagonists in their respective realms, as, respectively, a famous Orientalist and a key figure in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Salafism. The letters highlight their intimacy and friendship through the years and the scholarly exchange between them. From these letters written in German, English and Arabic, al-Hilālī appears as a fascinating character with many personalities and the letters as a whole further enrich a biography that attests to all that he was at the same time: an observer of the West and Islamic activist, a scholar according to Orientalist tradition and a Salafi.

**Keywords:** Orientalism, Salafism, contemporary Islam, shadow theatre, Islamic studies, Arabic studies, Muslims in Europe, Iraq, German orientalism

### 1. Introduction

In the collection of materials (manuscripts, books, offprints and all the archive) belonging to the German Orientalist Paul Ernst Kahle (1875–1964) and acquired by the University of Turin in the 1960s is his correspondence.<sup>1</sup> This includes tens of thousands of letters from around 2,500

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<sup>1</sup> A number of studies have dealt with Kahle's archive and materials. I myself have contributed with a monograph on his manuscripts (co-authored with Maria Luisa Russo and Michele Bernardini), *Catalogue of the Islamic Manuscripts from the Kahle Collection in the Department of Oriental Studies of the University of Turin* (Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino – CNRS Mondes iraniens et indiens, 2011), and with a booklet on Kahle's papers regarding his work on Ibn Dāniyāl, a topic that we find in the letters discussed here, *Orientalists at Work. Some Excerpts from Paul E. Kahle's Papers upon Ibn Dāniyāl Kept in the Department of Oriental Studies of the University of Turin*, "The Department of



correspondents that in some cases also preserve the carbon-paper copies of the letters sent by Kahle. This common behavior for the period is quite useful for the reconstruction of the dialogue between correspondents though, in some cases, not all the letters were preserved or kept. One of the most significant items in this collection is the correspondence between Kahle and the Moroccan Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī (1893–1987) who had been collaborating with Kahle and stayed in Germany in the years 1936–1942. The relationship between Kahle and al-Hilālī is particularly significant because of the relevance of the protagonists in their respective realms.

Kahle was a major scholar in Semitics plus Arabic and Islamic studies; he acted as secretary of the DMG (Deutsche Morgenländischen Gesellschaft) in the years that saw the advent of the Nazi regime, and had finally escaped to England in 1939, where he continued his activities and studies and where, after the war, he continued to be one of the leading figures in European Oriental studies. Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī was a key figure in the developments of Salafism in the 20th century and travelled extensively in the Muslim world, where he also taught for decades. He is mainly known for the English translation of the Qurʾān that he realized along with Muhammad Muhsin Khan (1927–2021).<sup>2</sup>

This correspondence is an important testimony of the history of Oriental Studies in 20th-century Europe and the connection of one main actor such as Kahle with one major figure in 20th-century Islamic thought throughout his presence and activities in many Muslim countries. It is also, given the consistency of the collection of letters between them, a testimony of friendship and respect that reflects a complex way of interacting on

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Oriental Studies, University of Turin. DOST Archives” n. 1 (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 2009).

2 A full description of the editorial and publishing history of this translation is given by Mykhaylo Yakubovych, *The Kingdom and the Qur’an. Translating the Holy Book of Islam in Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Open Books Publishers, 2024), 55–87; and Zaidan Ali Jasse, “The Noble Quran: a critical evaluation of al-Hilali’s and Khan’s translation,” *International Journal of English Education* 3, no. 2 (2014), see p. 238: “The translation went through several editions by different publishers in several countries. It was first published in Istanbul, Turkey in 1974 and then in the USA [...]. This earlier edition was later removed from circulation and replaced by their newer 2000-page edition in Riyadh, KSA, which went through several editions and reprints [...]. The translation, which has forewords and laudatory comments by professors at the Islamic University, Al-Madinah, comes in two forms: a shorter one-volume translation and an expanded 9-volume one. The full title of the former is *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur’an in the English Language: A Summarized Version of At-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Katheer with Comments from Sahih Al-Bukhari Summarized in One Volume*”.

scholarly questions, and with references to their own lives and the many activities they were carrying on in the meanwhile.

## 2. Kahle and al-Hilālī

There is no need here to add anything on Kahle's life and career. However, it is necessary to add something more on al-Hilālī. If Kahle was an important and influential Semitist and Orientalist, Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, as already noted above, was a no less relevant figure in the Islamic world. After his first steps and studies in Morocco (1900–1921 – including a period he worked in Algeria), he spent the following years teaching and studying in Egypt, India, Iraq, the kingdom of Nejd and Hijaz (from 1932 kingdom of Saudi Arabia), India again, Afghanistan and Iraq again (1921–1936) before moving to Germany (1936–1942). The years following his return to the Islamic world were no less marked by movement: he was back in Spanish Morocco (1942–1947), Iraq (1947–1959), Independent Morocco (1960–1968), Saudi Arabia (1968–1974) and finally Morocco again (1974–1987). His life, activities, interests and significance in 20th-century Islam have already been discussed, above all in the monograph that Henri Lauzière dedicated to Salafism and that originated from a PhD dissertation more explicit in the title in its reference to al-Hilālī's life.<sup>3</sup> A number of other studies have further focused on some specific topics related to al-Hilālī's activities and role. In particular, a more significant one here is the comprehensive study that Umar Ryad dedicated to his stay in Nazi Germany, his relation to Orientalists and Kahle in particular, and his activities there until March 1942 when he left for Morocco.<sup>4</sup> Other studies have added

<sup>3</sup> Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism. Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); Henri Lauzière, "The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century through the Life and Thought of Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī" (PhD diss., Georgetown, Washington, 2008). On al-Hilālī's biography, see Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 50–59; and Abdessamad El Amraoui, "Authentic Islam'. The religious profile of Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī (1893–1987) as reflected in his fatwas" (dissertation, Leiden University, 2015), 17–23, and on his conversion to Salafism: 28–43; cf. also 15. Al-Hilālī converted to Salafism in 1921 in Fes; his conversion was the result of a debate with Mūlay al-'Arabī al-'Alawī (d.1964) about the core of Tijani mystical knowledge and the *khātām al-awliyā'* (seal of sainthood), see Umar Ryad, "A Salafī student, Orientalist scholarship, and Radio Berlin in Nazi Germany: Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī and his experiences in the West," in *Transnational Islam in Interwar Europe. Muslim Activists and Thinkers*, eds. Götz Nordbruch and Umar Ryad (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Ryad, "A Salafī student, Orientalist scholarship". On his period in Germany, see Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 139–46.

some important insights on al-Hilālī. For instance, regarding his religious activity, Abdessamad El Amraoui has also written a comprehensive dissertation that highlights the *fatwās* and statements he issued throughout his life, including when he was in Europe collaborating with Kahle, Orientalists and various German Oriental departments.<sup>5</sup>

The contents of the correspondence between Kahle and al-Hilālī further add to an understanding of al-Hilālī's personality and what was said in this regard, but also delineate a personal relationship between an Orientalist and a Salafi in the middle of the 20th century, which is significant in many regards. The dates are in this case the first steps to take to understand such a relationship better. Al-Hilālī was in Germany from late 1936 to 1942, in Bonn and then Berlin. He was with Paul Kahle only in the period 1936–1939 when his family and then Kahle himself moved to Great Britain; only after the war – when al-Hilālī was invited as a guest lecturer in Bonn and from there was also in Oxford, in 1954 – could they meet again.<sup>6</sup>

The extant letters or copies of letters we have (see the complete list below) are from 1939 to 1956 and were written from the various places the two correspondents were at the time. Paul Kahle wrote them from Oxford or other places in England; Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī wrote his letters from Bonn and Berlin in 1939 and then from Morocco just after World War II and further, after that, from Baghdad or other places in Iraq (apart from no. 14, from Damascus) where al-Hilālī was based until 1959.

The letters collected in Turin reflect the deep relationship between the two and the high respect they had for each other. Previous studies have already underlined this: Kahle mentioned al-Hilālī many times, his contribution to some of his studies and publications, largely praising al-Hilālī's proficiency in the Arabic language and knowledge. The reference to him as Prof. al-Hilālī, reflecting first of all his role in Bonn Seminar, comes from this. On the other side, al-Hilālī underlined his special relation with Kahle on many occasions and his high esteem for him and for the German tradition of Oriental studies. This is well evidenced by the fact that al-Hilālī, proud of his PhD degree in Berlin in 1940, always preferred to be addressed as Doctor rather than *shaykh* even when back in Islamic countries, and asked for a *fatwā*.<sup>7</sup>

5 El Amraoui, “Authentic Islam”.

6 On his period in Germany, see El Amraoui, “Authentic Islam,” 81–107.

7 See on this Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 142; El Amraoui, “Authentic Islam”. The religious profile of Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī (1893–1987),” 179. The justification of his staying in Europe and not in an Islamic country is given by al-Hilālī himself in his biographical work through this story: before his conversion to Salafism, al-Hilālī claimed that the

All this reflects not only the true nature of their relationship but also their personalities, or the specific aspect of their own personalities they wanted to display in the correspondence. After their time together in Bonn their lives took them to different places, living different conditions and experiences in their and their families' lives. However, along with some personal information, the channel created by the correspondence was mainly, as we shall see, a scientific exchange and a learned relationship that were determined by the conditions under which they met, in a university, and the reciprocal esteem they always displayed. In these letters they play the role of scholars with personal ties, prompting the polite exchange of information on families and then coming to the core of their scientific interests with little else. Outer reality, in the momentous times after WWII, remained outside and reflect the attitude of an exchange that appears more than significant for a Salafi like al-Hilālī corresponding with an Orientalist in a political situation in which the relationship between Europe and the Arab world was increasingly marked by growing problems and tensions, such as the dusk of colonialism, the birth of Israel and the changing condition of relations between Islamic world and Europe and the West in the new world order.

In this article I am going to put such broad picture to the test and see what this correspondence brings to light in terms of the relations between the two figures and the way they gave substance to such a relationship, according to the terms described above. Rather than the factual registration of what they told each other, the focus will be on the way they chose to interact in terms of language, themes and topics dealt with, hinted at or kept

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Prophet Muḥammad frequently came to him in a dream (*fi-l-manām*) and ordered him to study religious sciences. Al-Hilālī had asked the Prophet whether he should study in a Christian or a Muslim country. The Prophet answered him saying that he could study in either country as all countries belonged to God (see El Amraoui, "Authentic Islam," 15); according to Ryad, "A Salafī student, Orientalist scholarship," 114, al-Hilālī had always held Kahle in high esteem as a scholar. In a passage in his autobiography, al-Hilālī stated that his reasons for going to Europe to study were to earn a degree and then to use it to go and teach in Africa or Asia; see El Amraoui, "Authentic Islam," 83. Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī mentions the point in his autobiography (*Kitāb al-da'wa ilā Allāh fī aqṭār mukhtalifa*, Casablanca: n.p., n.d., 180–81) defending his opinion: "Already at that time, I was of the opinion that a scholar without a diploma [from a European university] was like a traveler without a passport: there is no room for him in schools of higher standing. If he publishes a book or writes an article, the first question that people ask is: 'Does he have an internationally recognized diploma?' The answer is no. 'Does he know a foreign language?' The answer is no. 'Did he study in Europe?' The answer is no" (here in the translation by Lauzière, "The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century," 241). Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī's European period and studies were sometimes criticized and used to doubt his views, see for example Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, *Kitāb al-da'wa ilā Allāh*, 34.

aside. All this is considered in the general vision of a relationship between scholars with a personal connection displaying the rhetoric of “scholarship above all” to also open the door to personal feelings and their different needs. Notwithstanding what our discussion of these almost seventy letters is going to confirm or not about the relationship between Kahle and al-Hilālī, as suggested by previous studies and the description given above, the aim will also be to delineate the testimonies of a friendship. Their story is in fact a story of confidence between an Orientalist and a Salafi in the middle of the twentieth century beyond their careers and lives in their respective realms.

### 3. The Correspondence

The Kahle collection preserved in the University of Turin owns 66 items constituted by the letters exchanged by Paul Kahle and Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī (see table below).

	Sender	Recipient	Hand-written/ Type-written	Place	Date	Language
1.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Bonn	3 April 1939	German
2.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Bonn	8 April 1939	German
3.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Bonn	17 April 1939	German
4.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Berlin	26 April 1939	German
5.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Berlin	28 August 1939	German
6.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	London	30 August 1939	German
7.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	London	6 August 1946	German
8.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Tetouan	29 August 1946	German
9.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Tetouan	21 September 1946	German

	Sender	Recipient	Hand-written/ Type-written	Place	Date	Language
10.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Tetouan	[21 September 1949]	German
11.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	23 October 1946	German, English, Arabic
12.	Al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Chefchaouen	13 November 1946	German
13.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	5 January 1947	English
14.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Damascus	31 August 1947	German
15.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	7 September 1947	German
16.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	al-Zubayr	21 September 1947	German
17.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	27 September 1947	German
18.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	12 October 1947	German
19.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	22 October 1947	English
20.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	al-Zubayr	4 November 1947	English
21.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	15 November 1947	German
22.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	17 November 1947	English
23.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	London	26 November 1947	English
24.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	16 December 194[7]	English
25.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Mosul	16 February 1948	English
26.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	10 March 1948	English
27.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Mosul	23 April 1948	English

	Sender	Recipient	Hand-written/ Type-written	Place	Date	Language
28.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	23 April 1948	English
29.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	31 May 1948	English
30.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	18 January 1949	Arabic
31.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Sussex	21 March 1949	English
32.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	7 June 1949	English
33.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	19 November 1949, but sent 7 January 1950	English
34.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	4 April 1951	English
35.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	11 April 1951	English
36.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	28 March 1952	English
37.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	11 May 1952	English
38.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	London	15 June 1952	English
39.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	5 July 1952	English
40.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	26 March 1954	German
41.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Tw	Bonn	15 July 1954	German
42.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Tw	Bonn	23 July 1954	German
43.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Tw	Bonn	30 July 1954	German
44.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Tw	Bonn	30 August 1954	German
45.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	4 October 1954	English



	Sender	Recipient	Hand-written/ Type-written	Place	Date	Language
46.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	26 October 1954	English
47.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	—	n.d.	German
48.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	16 November 1954	German
49.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	20 November 1954	German
50.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	25 Dec. 1954	German
51.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Oxford	15 January 1955	German
52.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	[21 January 1955]	German
53.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	22 February 1955	German
54.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	—	18 March 1955	German
55.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	n.d.	German
56.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	4 June 1955	German
57.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	—	9 June 1955	German
58.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	27 June 1955	German
59.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	—	7 July 1955	German
60.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	10 August 1955	German
61.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	—	31 August 1955	German
62.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	n.d.	German
63.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	Charlbury	8 October 1955	German
64.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	—	16 November 1955	German

	Sender	Recipient	Hand-written/ Type-written	Place	Date	Language
65.	P. Kahle	al-Hilālī	Tw	—	22 March 1956	German
66.	al-Hilālī	P. Kahle	Hw	Baghdad	29 April 1956	German

The letters were written between 1939 and 1956. Early 1939 is the date when Kahle left Germany for England and the two separated after the arrival of al-Hilālī in Bonn, while 1956 is the date the correspondence ended, which is apparently not connected to any particular event.

The letters they wrote have specific features. Paul Kahle's items are not the actual letters sent but the typewritten carbon copy. Umar Ryad mentions in his work on al-Hilālī in Nazi Germany his familial archive and two letters from Kahle in the original – i. e. no. 6 (30 August 1939) and no. 26 (10 March 1948) – whose copies are preserved in the collection in Turin. I thank Umar Ryad for sending me a reproduction of these two letters preserved in the family archive for cross control. All these letters are typewritten since Kahle had the habit of preserving a carbon copy of his correspondence.

The letters by Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī are less homogenous, first of all in terms of handwritten or typewritten form, since they alternate. Most of them are handwritten. However, the handwritten letters appear to have been written by different hands. The oldest ones were produced by al-Hilālī himself, while later ones (starting from the no. 30 in Arabic in 1949), including the typewritten items, were produced by other hands, evidently under al-Hilālī's dictation. He was forced to do it this way because of problems with his sight which finally led to his blindness. The paper on which the letters are produced is also an interesting detail as regards al-Hilālī's. He made use of a variety of media, such as papers of different kind, also including letterhead of the journal *Lisān al-dīn*.

#### 4. A Multi-Lingual Scholarly Exchange

Amongst all the features, before coming to the contents, the most significant aspect of the correspondence is connected to the use of various languages between the two scholars and the meaning of this. There is not just one specific language. The collection includes 66 letters: 42 are in

German, 22 in English, one in Arabic and another one with parts in German, English and Arabic. As a sign of a scholarly intellectual exchange, the use of a multiplicity of languages is to be considered a common behavior and also one evidencing their status. This is more significant on al-Hilālī's side, since his praise of the knowledge of European languages for the sake of knowledge and his use of both German and English confirm this attitude and give evidence of it.<sup>8</sup> In the correspondence over the years, al-Hilālī made use of German, English and Arabic, Kahle of German and English.

Further, the alternation between languages does not appear casual but is connected to the evolution of their relationship and the different places they lived. The correspondence started in German because they had met in Germany and the first letters were from al-Hilālī in Germany. Kahle was the one to introduce the use of English in a letter dated 5 January 1947 (no. 13). In the same year, six other letters were written in German, while the English, which had been already introduced, was immediately used again (apart from one item in Arabic, probably dictated by al-Hilālī, who must have had a writer not versed in European languages at his disposal) until letter no. 39 in 1952 (5 July 1952). When al-Hilālī went back to Bonn and then visited Kahle in Oxford in the summer 1954, the correspondence restarted again in German with the last letters (nos. 40–66, 1954–1956), with the exception of two letters in English (nos. 45–46–4 and 26 October 1954).<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the specific language used at different times of this written relation, an interesting aspect of these letters is the insertion of languages

8 Al-Hilālī learned English in India, and on this and his praise of the knowledge of foreign languages, see Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 106; see also El Amraoui, "Authentic Islam," 63: he learned English while in Lucknow, which he left in 1933. He also praised the knowledge at least of one foreign language for Muslims.

9 The letters permit to specify the extent of this travel back to Europe better; see on this, Lauzière, "The evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century," 261: "al-Hilālī went back to the University of Bonn after the Second World War in 1953 (sic) as a visiting professor. He also remained in contact with Paul Kahle and even joined him in Oxford in August 1954 to translate yet another Arabic manuscript". From here taken by El Amraoui, "Authentic Islam," 193–94, on his trip to Germany in 1953 (RT: it is indeed 1954) to visit his son (see in part. 194 about a "disagreement with his son who had taken the German nationality in order to obtain a scholarship. He mentioned that his son, 'Abd al-Mu'min, had been encouraged by his German family to take German nationality. Al-Hilālī stated that he complained about this regulation at the German Foreign Office but without success"). As regards the exact date of al-Hilālī's travel back to Europe, which is confirmed by the letters as being 1954 and not 1953, this was indeed already stated by Kahle, in Paul Kahle, *Opera minora* (Leiden: Brill, 1956), 217: "Professor Hilālī visited me in August 1954".

different from the main one used and the shifts as a display of erudition, which are common between philologists and scholars of Arabic and other languages. This attitude is more frequent in al-Hilālī, who from time-to-time inserts quotations written in Arabic and only in a few cases in transcription, being aware that they would be perfectly understood but, at the same time, underlining his constant reference to his knowledge of Arabic language and literature. A detail of significance is that most of these quotations are vocalized, something al-Hilālī probably would not have done if corresponding with an Arab, apart from in the case of the quotation of poetry.

Some quotations directly serve scientific purposes and must also have been easier for Kahle rather than using a transcription that in any case al-Hilālī knew. For instance, this happens when al-Hilālī brings to Kahle's attention that Ibn Dāniyāl wrote other works pointing to Ahlwardt's catalogue of Berlin manuscripts (vol. 10 no. 9814) and quoting an *urjūza* (in Arabic) and its beginning (no. 3–17 April 1939). There is just one case where quotations in Arabic are long: in one letter (no. 9–21 September 1946), al-Hilālī makes reference to a *qaṣīda* by Bahā' al-Dīn al-Āmīlī (d. 1621) in his work *al-Kashkūl*, quoting the names and the first verse of this *qaṣīda* in vocalized Arabic. Another letter (no. 10–21 September 1949) includes the vocalized Arabic of 14 emistichs of the *qaṣīda* plus the translation in English of the first seven verses only and some comments in German. Significant in this regard is also al-Hilālī's mentions of the translation of his work on women's veils into English (no. 37–11 May 1952). The title *al-isfār 'an al-ḥaqq fī mas'alat al-sufūr wa-l-ḥijāb* (1<sup>st</sup> ed. Bombay 1933) is given in Arabic and then it is added that it is translated "from Arabic into English, [and] I have confirmed with plenty of proves and arguments that a Muslim woman is not obliged by the Islamic law to cover her face in the presence of stranger men, I quoted Qurān, traditions and the ideas of the jurists (*al-fuqahā'* [in Arabic])".

Arabic is also used in some passages, reflecting familiar confidence. For instance, al-Hilālī used Arabic when mentioning Kahle's sons by their corresponding Arabic names, written in Arabic, in the listing of greetings to Kahle's wife and five sons: "Wilhelm, Hans, *Hibat Allāh*, *Īsā* e *Waqūr*, i. e. Theodor, Paul and Hans" (no. 2–8 April 1939).<sup>10</sup>

Quotations may be more generic, such as the quotation of a proverb (no. 1–3 April 1939: *anjaza ḥurr mā wa 'ad*). In other letters, not listed here,

<sup>10</sup> See also (no. 4–26 April 1939): al-Hilālī mentions in margin of one of his letters vocalized verses in Arabic including the Arabic versions of the names of Kahle's sons.

one simple word can be inserted in the text to express a Muslim concept that would be more complicated to give in transcription or translation.<sup>11</sup> In other cases, letters include more than one Arabic word in the text.<sup>12</sup> Al-Hilālī also returns to Arabic in praise of Kahle: “you, Professor, *taqūlu wa-taf’alu* (in Arabic), you say and make” (no. 24–16 December 1947).

The most significant items to display the ability to shift between languages are those letters where the various languages are put together for different reasons. Al-Hilālī can shift between all his languages: after a letter in English, the last two lines of greetings to Kahle’s wife and sons are in German, before the final “sincerely yours” (no. 20–4 November 1947). German is in some instances the family language: al-Hilālī asks Kahle in German about his sons (no. 27–23 April 1948). Al-Hilālī also adds to the languages used with some words in Aramaic for scientific reasons (no. 24–16 December 1947; no. 27–23 April 1948). However, a shift in languages can also be due to a lapse. In one letter, Kahle starts in English, then, after a quotation of a publication by the German title, shifts to German and then finishes again with English (no. 13–5 January 1947).

The shift from one language to another is also related to the fact that one can prefer a language and naturally tend towards it. In one letter (no. 10–21 September 1949), which includes German plus the Arabic of a long *qaṣīda*, the translation of the verses is given by al-Hilālī in English, a clear sign that he feels more comfortable with and has a greater vocabulary in English. In fact he wrote and stated clearly that he preferred to read English when Kahle also used German (no. 18–12 October 1947) and the later use of German is most probably related to the fact that al-Hilālī found someone who knew German to whom he could dictate the letters. In any case, the preference in the relationship for the use of English and the fact that he felt less sure with German is directly stated in letters in which al-Hilālī asks forgiveness for his mistakes (no. 2–8 April 1939; no. 5–28 August 1939). Some problems in al-Hilālī’s German seem to be actually alluded to by Kahle himself when he states that he did not understand very well some passages of a previous letter received (no. 6–30 April 1939). Al-Hilālī in fact

11 See also (no. 18–12 October 1947): *al-du ‘ā’* in Arabic inside the letter about the prayer for Kahle’s wife. But cf. (no. 32–7 June 1949) *In shā’a Allāh* (in transcription) and given in translation (God willing); then also ‘Isā is in Arabic.

12 Cf. (no. 20–4 November 1947) with a name in Arabic then transcribed: Sayyid Ja‘far Māl Allāh. Then, when dealing with difficulties to print in Iraq, he mentions that one of these difficulties is “harakat (in Latin characters) *shakl* (in Arabic)”, i.e. vocalization; later on in the same letter another word is given in Arabic: *namūdhaj*. Words in Arabic are also in the letters nos. 25–16 February 1948; and 27–23 April 1948, for Islamic expressions and quoting a distich in vocalized Arabic.

asks Kahle always to write to him in English (“Bitte schreiben Sie mir immer im Englischen”) and Kahle tells him to write in the language he prefers (no. 7–6 August 1946). Such a display of various languages, made more and more problematic by the passing of time because of the problems in his eyes, was not always easy for al-Hilālī.

A few remarks to sum up this alternation of languages can be added. German is the prevalent language and is the language at the beginning and the end of the correspondence.<sup>13</sup> English is the common language when, after the escape to England, Kahle was well established there. Al-Hilālī had learned English in India before moving to Europe, and he had learned German before starting his job at the Bonn Seminar. While in Germany before leaving the country in 1942, it was a clear assumption of his role there for al-Hilālī to write in German. Notwithstanding the fact that he knew English, al-Hilālī used to write in German from Nazi Germany just after Kahle had left and he was still living under the Nazi regime. After WWII the use of German may have become less significant; al-Hilālī was in Morocco and then Iraq, Kahle in England and there was no problem in using English, while German was still there at their disposal. The letter where Kahle shifts suddenly from English to German, after they had met in Oxford and probably talked in that language, seems to imply a step towards a more intimate connection, such as a nostalgic use of the first language of their friendly relationship. From that letter to the last, German remained the language used between them and also the language al-Hilālī could more easily dictate his letters to the writers.

Only one letter is all in Arabic and it was dictated by al-Hilālī to a writer and not written by his hand (no. 30–18 January 1949). This unique sample is probably related to the skills of the writer, who most probably knew no foreign languages, and al-Hilālī must have found easier to dictate it in Arabic. Other passages, related to scientific and scholarly queries and debates between them, include Arabic, but always from al-Hilālī. Kahle, producing his letters in type, had no opportunity to type in Arabic. This also reflects a common attitude in the relationships between Orientalists and Arab or Muslim scholars where in most cases the *lingua franca* or the language of the scientific discussion is almost always an European language, English, French or German. Arabic was the language of the phil-

<sup>13</sup> The letters in German have been the topic of an MA dissertation by Ivana di Somma who has recently analyzed and translated them with a linguistic analysis, see Ivana Di Somma, “La corrispondenza tra Paul E. Kahle e Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī: descrizione, traduzione e analisi linguistica” (Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”, anno accademico 2020/2021).

ological detail, not of the common conversation, and the exchange between Kahle and al-Hilālī follows this pattern.

## 5. Family Greetings and Personal Confidence

Many parts in the letters are devoted to updating the reader on personal situations mostly related to families. It is al-Hilālī who asks about and prompts Kahle to insert information about his family in almost every letter. This is due to the fact that al-Hilālī had met Kahle's family in Bonn, while the converse never happened. It is consequently for this reason that we know from the correspondence what was going on in Kahle's family and much less on al-Hilālī. Amongst a few notations on his family, al-Hilālī only touches more deeply on his family affairs when mentioning his German son 'Abd al-Mu'min. Apart from this, al-Hilālī mostly refers in terms of personal questions and to queries on health and condition.

Further, no word is written on the political situation of the time, and on the momentous times after WWII, or in connection with Kahle's exile in England and eventual return to Germany. Nazism is never mentioned at all and the letters include no allowance for these questions. In only a few letters is there any mention of some broad political interest but only when dealing with the editorial board of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* by the Publisher E.J. Brill, which was organizing the board for the second edition. The new situation after the war had changed the European centrality in the field and other forces were affecting past arrangements.

As regards family affairs, al-Hilālī, in almost every letter from the first one, includes greetings for Kahle's wife (Frau) and sons (no. 1–3 April 1939; cf. no. 15–7 September 1947), also adding in a couple of letters the quirk of giving their corresponding names in Arabic (no. 2–8 April 1939; no. 4–26 April 1939). Al-Hilālī is also happy that they are well and successful (no. 37–11 May 1952). He regrets only one thing in relation to Kahle's sons, which is that none of them became an Arabist (no. 66–29 April 1956). In one previous letter he had asked: "Is there anyone of them (the children) orientalest (sic)?" (no. 29–31 May 1948). As regards Kahle's sons' jobs, al-Hilālī writes to Kahle for his 80th birthday (no. 52 – [21 January 1955]) and Kahle, on his side, describes in detail what his sons are doing (no. 38–15 June 1952). This is a recurring motif: al-Hilālī never forgets to ask how they are and Kahle answers with what they are doing (no. 40–26 March 1954;

no. 48–16 November 1954; no. 49–20 November 1954; no. 50–25 December 1954).<sup>14</sup>

Such confidence also touched on major events such as the death of Kahle's wife Marie and then the sudden death of his son Paul.

The death of Marie is preceded by a number of letters since 1939 in which her health problems had been already mentioned: Kahle informs al-Hilālī that his wife was severely ill (no. 6–30 April 1939) and later severely ill and in bed (no. 7–6 August 1946). At one point things seem to change and Kahle informs his friend in Iraq that his wife is better (no. 11–23 October 1946); actually, Kahle specifies, she is better than two or three years before but still bad (no. 15–7 September 1947). The situation rapidly changes for the worst. Kahle states that she suffers a lot (no. 17–27 August 1947) and because of these health problems, Kahle hints at his wife's wishes to buy a farm in southern England (no. 22–1 November 1947) and they finally succeeded in this (no. 26–10 March 1948).<sup>15</sup> However, this was only a brief period of retirement in countryside, since Marie Kahle died on 18 December 1948. Kahle thanks al-Hilālī for the condolences for his wife's death, informing him that the family now wants to sell the farm (no. 31–21 March 1949).<sup>16</sup>

Later on, the letters suddenly mention the health conditions and then the sudden death of Paul Kahle Jr. The father introduces the question when justifying one late answer to a previous letter by al-Hilālī because his son is seriously ill (no. 54–18 March 1955); al-Hilālī is sorry about that (no. 55 – n. d.), and writes to Kahle when he knew of Paul's death stating that he cried because of it (no. 56–4 June 1955). Kahle writes back to al-Hilālī recounting what happened and how stomach cancer killed him in a few months; Paul Jr. died on the 30 April 1955 (no. 57–9 June 1955). In a further letter al-Hilālī tries to comfort his old friend (no. 58–27 June 1955).

<sup>14</sup> In naming Kahle's family, al-Hilālī introduces at some point the mention of Lady Drower (Ethel S. Drower, d. 1972, anthropologist and orientalist) and his greetings to her (though named by al-Hilālī as Droher) after his visit to Kahle in Oxford (no. 44–30 August 1954; no. 45–4 October 1954; no. 46–26 October 1954; no. 48–16 November 1954). Kahle answers that she is receiving a PhD Honoris Causa from Oxford (no. 49–20 November 1954) and had found a flat to live in and thus left Kahle's house (no. 50–25 December 1954).

<sup>15</sup> Al-Hilālī comments on the idea to buy a farm (no. 24–16 December 1947).

<sup>16</sup> On the figure of Marie Kahle, see Christine Schirrmacher, "Marie Kahle (1893–1948): Bonner Professorengattin, Pädagogin und Gegnerin des NS-Regimes," in *Doch plötzlich jetzt emanzipiert will Wissenschaft sie treiben. Frauen an der Universität Köln (1918–2018)*, eds. Andrea Stiedorf, Ursula Mättig, Ines Neffgen (Göttingen: V&R unipress GmbH, 2018), 137–164.



On the other side, al-Hilālī does not refer with the same frequency to his family, evidently because Kahle had never met them.<sup>17</sup> Then, on one occasion, al-Hilālī suddenly informs Kahle about the son he had in Germany, describing the situation as if he had never given him that information. Al-Hilālī does that asking for help and recounting that, before moving back to Morocco, he was living with a certain Frau Wogatzki in Berlin.<sup>18</sup> She was married to a Jew, with three children, then the Jew divorced, married a Jewish woman and ran away to Belgium “as they used to do in that time”, also leaving debts. She was kind to al-Hilālī, he helped her and married her according to Islam. Despite all her efforts not to have children – al-Hilālī’s words – she became pregnant and had a son they named ‘Abd al-Mu’min (in Arabic). The house in Berlin was destroyed and she moved to a village and stayed there. Al-Hilālī asks Kahle to pay her a visit when he goes back to Germany, adding that unfortunately her place fell into the hands of the communists (no. 24–16 December 1947). Al-Hilālī insists on this point and mentions this many times: Kahle evidently promised to do it and al-Hilālī thanks him (no. 25–16 February 1948), adding later on that he hopes Kahle can see his son ‘Abd al-Mu’min, and that he is receiving letters from his mother. ‘Abd al-Mu’min is also mentioned in other letters (no. 30–18 January 1949) and then also with a slight tone of impatience because Kahle has not yet met him (no. 33–19 November 1949). After al-Hilālī’s visit to Germany the son connected to the father, as can be inferred from the letters about ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s lessons in Arabic and English (no. 46–26 October 1954) and the certificate he obtained by the Ministry of Culture (no. 48–16 November 1954).<sup>19</sup>

One personal matter that is hinted at in many letters is al-Hilālī’s sight problems, that also made necessary that some of his letters were written by other hands.<sup>20</sup> These problems start very early. For instance, al-Hilālī wrote back at one point that he had lost his magnifying glass (no. 18–12 October 1947). As time passes he further writes that his eyes are very bad (no. 32–7 June 1949) and that he is nearly blind and can neither read nor write

17 Kahle also asks al-Hilālī about his family on some occasions; for example, Kahle asks if they are in Basra (no. 7–6 August 1946). They were indeed in Basra (no. 8–29 August 1946).

18 See on this Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 145.

19 Kahle congratulates al-Hilālī about his son’s studies in Arabic (no. 49–20 November 1954) and al-Hilālī thanks Kahle for the translation of ‘Abd al-Mu’min’s certificate (no. 53–22 February 1955).

20 Al-Hilālī states in one of the last letters that he cannot always find somebody to write letters for him (no. 58–27 June 1955). Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 147, states that in Morocco he had a secretary since he was already almost blind.

(no. 33–19 November 1949 but sent on the 7 January 1950; no. 60–10 August 1955; no. 62 – n.d.). The condition of his eyes also gave him a reason to hope to travel abroad to be cured (no. 38–15 June 1952).<sup>21</sup>

The personal confidence is strictly connected to family affairs, and almost nothing emerges in the letters in relation to political and contemporary situation, and not even in relation to the Kahles' escape to England or what was happening in Iraq after WWII.

In some passages Kahle alludes to the difficult conditions in Germany and that is all. He mentions them only once his 1942 report on Bonn University, then printed in 1945, adding that it might interest him (i. e. al-Hilālī) plus indicating what his wife wrote on their time in Bonn (no. 7–6 August 1946).<sup>22</sup> Al-Hilālī hints in a few passages to what was going on around him with few words which are in any case significant. He states, for instance, that he had no interest in working in Berlin during the war apart from money and the possibility of attacking the French (no. 8–29 August 1946). The demonstrations in Baghdad in the years after the war crop up in some letters by al-Hilālī: "I was in Baghdad in the week of demonstrations" (no. 25–16 February 1948) and Kahle, in response, only comments back that demonstrations make it difficult to print Ibn Dāniyāl without any other comment or request to know more (no. 26–10 March 1949). Further, al-Hilālī makes some comments about Jews and Communists: "The Jews are unthankful to you because of your theories about Hebrew, in spite of fact that you have done a good service to them and their language" (no. 33–19 November 1949).

Almost nothing is also written in relation to international Islamic affairs. After a letter from Muhammad Hamidullah (d. 2002), al-Hilālī confides to Kahle that an Islamic committee or organization, prompted by the Polish convert Wiesław Jezierski, cannot be established in a Communist country (no. 35–11 April 1951). Further, only in one letter is Muḥammad Amīn al-Ḥusaynī (d. 1974), the famous Jerusalem Muftī, mentioned. Al-Hilālī states that when he went to Berlin, al-Ḥusaynī made possible for al-Hilālī to go to Morocco during the war.

<sup>21</sup> As well as his sight al-Hilālī also suffered from asthma attacks (no. 46–26 October 1954).

<sup>22</sup> Paul Kahle, *Bonn University in Pre-Nazi and Nazi Times (1923–1939). Experiences of a German Professor* (Privately printed, 1945); Marie Kahle, *What would you have done? The Story of the Escape of the Kahle Family from Nazi Germany*, ([London]: Priv. Print. [by Portsoken Press], 1945); Ger. transl.: M. Kahle and P. Kahle, *Was hätten Sie getan? Die Flucht der Familie Kahle aus Nazi-Deutschland / Die Universität Bonn vor und während der Nazi-Zeit* (Bonn: Bouier, 1998).

Not strictly political but reflecting the evolution of the scholarly academy of studies on Islam is the mention of the troubled story of the editorial board of the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. The problem raised by Kahle was that the British Orientalist Hamilton A.R. Gibb had moved to Harvard, where he wanted to stay, while British Academy and supposedly European scholars wanted to appoint a scholar based in England. Further, the new board was subject of other criticism from Kahle, because to him it looked anti-German (with M. Stern, H. Levi-Provençal and J. Schacht), and from Zeki Velidi Tokan, who raised the issue that there was (in this second edition) a marked Jewish polemical attitude towards Islam. Kahle informs al-Hilālī that they are thinking about a German and a Muslim in the editorial board, but a Muslim one from Islamic countries creates a problem because he has to participate to meetings that are held in Europe (no. 61–31 August 1955). The questions are also dealt with by the Director of Brill publishing house in Leiden, who asked for a meeting (no. 63–8 October 1955). More critical thoughts from Kahle on this editorial board are expressed in another letter: there is no Muslim, Gibb, Schacht and Levi-Provençal are not an ideal composition, and Kahle would prefer a German. However, states Kahle, Gibb wants to organize everything from Harvard and involve academics in America such as F. Rosenthal, H.A. Wolfson, G.E. von Grunebaum, that would mean more Jewish scholars, while the British Academy insists on the successor to Gibb's Chair being A.F.L. Beeston (no. 64–16 November 1955).

These letters confirm and add a few details to the description of the debate and Kahle's role in it by Peri Bearman in her history of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.<sup>23</sup> The criticism from Muslim sides and the problems in managing the German presence and the presence of too many Jewish scholars are increased by the question of Gibb's move to the United States. In dealing with this question, there is a clear scent of the changings brought by the war, with the move of many European scholars to the USA and the fact that Islamic and Oriental studies was becoming less and less a mainly European affair.

One last consideration can be added on the level of the personal confidence displayed in the letters. It is reflected in a sharing of information that never comes to sharing feelings beyond a certain point. This is not that kind of exchange. And it is not a kind of exchange involving personal vicissitudes beyond a formal respect, which did not include intimate beliefs

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<sup>23</sup> Peri Bearman, *A History of the Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2018), 229–30 and ff., and see also 93 in relation to the hypothesized German edition.

and feelings. The limit was the family questions, mainly on Kahle's side, and the health problems, from al-Hilālī. War and post-war problems have no space and if this could suggest a kind of formal distance, it must be remembered that the nature of a scholarly correspondence and the closeness of such a tragedy may have prompted them to limit the exchange to what had brought them together and reflected their passion for research and literature, without entering into detailing more sad vicissitudes met in those years apart from commiseration on the passing away of family members, as in the case of Kahle.

## 6. From a Doctor to a Professor and Vice Versa

One of the features resulting from the tone of the correspondence is the fact that this is first of all a correspondence between friends, as evidenced above, but above all between scholars. Friendly exchanges and information about families and health appear but with larger parts discussing themes that are related to their intellectual relationship and their work together while in Bonn and in the following years. I am going to deal with the specific topics touched on in their correspondence in detail later. In this section I want to underline the reflection of the scholarly attitude in relation to what happened to them, and above all in the letters from al-Hilālī, to enhance the image that he conveys or wants to convey as a scholar sharing information, mostly philological, with Kahle, the Orientalist. Without pushing such a definition too far, al-Hilālī was eager to be regarded as one of the Orientalists of the Bonn Seminar. He was always proud of this, and it did not conflict with his personal Islamic faith.

This can appear rather surprising coming from someone like al-Hilālī who, at the same time, was already also a renowned Muslim *shaykh* whose opinion was sought and who was producing opinions or even *fatwās* on religious matters, and also held strong views on traditional Islam and a strong anti-colonial attitude. The relationship between Kahle and al-Hilālī was always solid and they remained on good terms for their whole lives, as is also attested in the correspondence. After all, al-Hilālī's anti-colonial sentiments were directed against France, and Germany was not on that map at that time.

The sensitive question involved in the nature of this relationship and influencing the scientific dialogue is that al-Hilālī obtained his PhD in Berlin 1940. He was in fact the first Arab from Morocco to receive such a degree from a European university and throughout his life al-Hilālī was

proud of such an achievement, even in last years of this life.<sup>24</sup> This is reflected by the fact that he always preferred, as mentioned above (p. 368) to be addressed as Doctor rather than as *shaykh*.<sup>25</sup>

These attitudes and sentiments are reflected in the letters in terms of contents and general tones. Kahle and al-Hilālī interact in a peer exchange between scholars, and if Kahle was the master and al-Hilālī the younger collaborator, their respective knowledge put them in the same community, a kind of Orientalistic republic of letters in the name of sources and philology. The roles and positions influence the fact that Kahle is mainly informative on what he is doing; he mentions scholars he has met and only on some questions, as we shall see below, is in need of al-Hilālī's help. Al-Hilālī, on his side, does not refer to his activity as a Salafi *shaykh*, and only in a few cases gives information on his scholarly matters, but is solicitous on a number of questions reflecting his needs. If he has not so much to offer in terms of philological work and research apart from previous work in Europe, as he lamented in many other passages because of the surrounding environment (see below, pp. 389–93), he participates in this exchange, sharing information and asking for something.

One constant factor in Kahle's letters is that he shares with al-Hilālī his scientific relations through the years. Kahle mentions and comments on the names of some of the most prominent figures in Islamic and Oriental studies of the twentieth century. Kahle mentions J. Schacht and M. Meyerhof, F. Rosenthal (no. 13–5 January 1947), M. Hamidullah (no. 28–23 April 1948; no. 31–21 March 1949). Hamidullah is mentioned in other letters. Kahle informs al-Hilālī that Hamidullah paid him a visit in an interesting letter where Kahle also mentions Wieslaw Jezierski, the Polish convert to Islam (no. 34–4 April 1951). Otto Spies (d. 1981), as director of the Bonn Seminar is recalled by Kahle when answering a request for a professorship by al-Hilālī (no. 38–15 June 1952; cf. on Spies no. 39–5 July 1952; no. 51–15 January 1955). Kahle informs him that he received a visit from Prof. Rudolph Mayer from Jena, Professor of Hebrew (no. 49–20 November 1954) and that Gibb is moving to Harvard and leaving Oxford

<sup>24</sup> Al-Hilālī also published scientific literature in “Orientalistic” style, see Taqī ed-Dīn al-Hilālī, “Die Kasten in Arabien,” *Die Welt des Islams* 22 (1940): 102–10.

<sup>25</sup> Kahle addresses him as Doctor, see for example no. 17–27 September 1947, *passim*. See also Lauzière, “The evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century,” 241: on the significance of a European degree for a scholar. There is more than the preference for the title “Doctor”: he was often branded as a Wahhabi by his opponents, yet he held a PhD from the University of Berlin, was a polyglot, corresponded with eminent European scholars, dressed in suits and ties and still refused to grow a beard; see on this, Lauzière, “The evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century,” 279.

and his seat on the editorial board of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* by Brill is going to be vacant.<sup>26</sup> Names in a few cases are followed by some interesting comments. The name of Gibb is also mentioned in a letter in which Kahle states that his successor is Beeston, and he is happy about this and that Josef Schacht was not chosen, adding a critical comment on his *Origins of Islamic Law* (no. 61–31 August 1955). Another negative comment is made on Guillaume when commenting that the position in Arabic in London is vacant: Guillaume, not a great authority, went to Princeton (no. 63–8 October 1955).

The information coming from Kahle also covers his researches and relations connected to his scholarly works and publications (no. 17–27 September 1947; no. 23–26 November 1947), or his appointment at the Academy of Berlin (no. 22–17 November 1947). Kahle updates al-Hilālī on the vicissitudes and activities upon the new edition of the book on the Cairo Geniza (no. 31–21 March 1949; no. 54–18 March 1955; no. 57–9 June 1955; no. 64–16 November 1955), his *Kleiner Schriften* to be published by Brill (no. 50–25 December 1954; no. 54–18 March 1955; no. 61–31 August 1955) and the references to the Manuscripts of the Caves, i. e. Qumran (no. 57–9 June 1955). Kahle also informs him about his travels, which were a rather frenetic activity for a man around 80 years old. Kahle informs al-Hilālī about his visits to Germany and other European countries to give lectures and seminars and also his project to go to the USA and the celebration of the 50 years of his doctorate (no. 28–23 April 1948; cf. also no. 31–21 March 1949; no. 34–4 April 1951), plus his travels to Pakistan and India (no. 63–8 October 1955; no. 64–16 November 1955).<sup>27</sup> Kahle also met Giorgio Levi Della Vida and Francesco Gabrieli in Rome (no. 65–22 March 1956).

The scholarly exchange enters into details but only to a certain point and the correspondence is mostly a communication of information. They also regret, from time to time, not being able to meet and work together, mostly when recalling the good past times, before sharing, as good friends, information on what they are doing.

Al-Hilālī participates in this scholarly conversation in many ways. The confidence in the scholarly exchange is highlighted by the only case where Kahle is not formally addressed with deference as Professor etc. but with the

<sup>26</sup> See, among other names mentioned by Kahle, Zeki Velidi (no. 50–25/12/1954; no. 65–22 March 1956); Muhammad Mustafa who was his lecturer in Bonn, worked with Kahle on Ibn Iyās and was now Director of the Cairo Museum; Prof. Pérez Castro (no. 57–9 June 1955).

<sup>27</sup> See also no. 65–22 March 1956: Kahle describes this journey in which he also stopped in Cairo.

unusual “Dear Colleague Kahle” (no. 53–22 February 1955). The confidence and the intimate dialogue permit to al-Hilālī to mention his desire to go back to Europe and to ask Kahle to help him on many occasions. This is something al-Hilālī could achieve only in summer 1954, when he went back to the Bonn Seminar and also visited Kahle in Oxford.

In the letters before the war, al-Hilālī mentions the problems connected to the doctorate with the vicissitudes that preceded the discussion in Berlin (no. 2–8 April 1939; no. 3–17 April 1939; no. 4–26 April 1939) until Richard Hartmann (d. 1965) gave his consent to finish the work with him (no. 5–28 August 1939). Kahle answers that this is a good thing (no. 6–30 April 1939) and informs al-Hilālī that al-Bīrūnī’s book has been published. When the correspondence restarted after the war, al-Hilālī gave a long description of the problems he had had when Kahle left Bonn and how, when his original project on al-Bīrūnī was rejected, he went to Berlin and completed his studies with Hartmann and Hans H. Schäder (d. 1957) (no. 8–29 August 1946), with good results.<sup>28</sup>

Since the beginning of the correspondence, al-Hilālī, as stated above, also asks Kahle for a job in England when he was in difficulties with his PhD or did not like his job in Germany (no. 2–8 April 1939; no. 8–29 August 1946). Kahle answers that al-Hilālī could help him with the manuscripts of Chester Beatty and they could work together on al-Bīrūnī and then asks what kind of passport he has, because he must have the permission to enter England (no. 11–23 October 1946); this offer is declined for personal reasons by al-Hilālī (no. 12–13 November 1946). General expressions of the wish that he could join him in England are mentioned by Kahle in a number of letters (cf. no. 19–22 October 1947; no. 22–17 November 1947; no. 25–10 March 1949). A novelty in this is introduced by al-Hilālī when he mentions to Kahle that he would like to visit North America “for several reasons” listing them (no. 36–28 March 1952), before other letters where the wish to go back to Germany is recalled (no. 37–11 May 1952).

After the visit of 1954 and the letters that organize their meeting in Oxford, and description of this occasion and the journey back to Baghdad by al-Hilālī (no. 41–15 July 1954; no. 42–23 July 1954; no. 43–30 July 1954; no. 44–30 August 1954; no. 45–4 October 1954), Kahle expresses the wish to meet al-Hilālī in Hamburg for the congress of Orientalists, which is apparently an event in which al-Hilālī could definitely participate (no. 59–7 July 1955). This, however, never happened.

<sup>28</sup> On what al-Hilālī disliked of Sachau’s treatment of Bīrūnī, see Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism*, 141.

Al-Hilālī also participates in sharing references to scholars met or with whom he is in contact, such as Fritz Krenkow (d. 1953) (no. 8–29 August 1946), writing that he read about Ibn al-Faqīh’s *Kitāb al-buldān* by Prof. Hartmann (no. 21–15 November 1947), later on asking Kahle how he can have Ibn al-Faqīh’s book since he left it with Hartmann with some other requests (no. 27–23 April 1948). Al-Hilālī writes that he had received two letters from Wieslaw Jezierski, through Hamidullah (no. 35–11 April 1951), mentions the name of Gibb [written Geb] and other unspecified Orientalists (no. 36–28 March 1952), and Spies as the new director of the Bonn Seminar (no. 37–11 May 1952; no. 66–29 April 1956). His participation in the scholarly and Orientalistic nature of the exchange is given by the way Arabic is quoted by al-Hilālī, who always vocalizes the text (see above, pp. 376–77), following the habit in European scholarly circles and at the same time allowing for the knowledge of language by a non-native (see, for example, no. 1–3 April 1939; no. 2–8 April 1939).

Al-Hilālī informs Kahle about his appointment as teacher at the Queen ‘Alia University (no. 29–31 May 1948), and answers Kahle in relation to Kahle’s student interested in the history of the town of al-Zubayr (no. 24–16/12/1948). When describing his lectures at the College, al-Hilālī praises Kahle, stating that he learned a lot “from your career in education and scientific works” (no. 35–11 April 1951; see also, on his teaching job, no. 46–26 October 1954; no. 62 – n.d.). Al-Hilālī informs Kahle about movements concerning the Ministry of Culture and the role of Badī’ Sharīf and others (no. 52 – [21 January 1955]). More specifically on his own work, al-Hilālī makes reference in a letter that he is translating his work *al-Isfār ‘an al-ḥaqq fī mas’alat al-sufūr wa-l-ḥijāb* from Arabic into English (no. 37–11 May 1952).

But al-Hilālī also needs to ask for something. First of all, he is interested in the Islamic manuscripts owned by Kahle: he asks for a list of them in a number of letters and also insistently and repeatedly (no. 40–26 March 1954; no. 48–16 November 1954; no. 60–10 August 1955; no. 62 – n.d.). Kahle only mentions once that he is going to send the list of manuscripts (no. 61–31 August 1955). Al-Hilālī also underlines at a certain point his interest in studying modern Hebrew, asks for a grammar and, later on, a dictionary, possibly Arabic-Hebrew, being ready to send the money needed (no. 47 – n.d.; this is also recalled later on, see no. 55 – n.d.; no. 58–27 June 1955; no. 60–10 August 1955); Kahle answers on this and tells al-Hilālī (no. 59–7 July 1955) that he is going to buy and send it to al-Hilālī, who in the following letter writes that he has received it (no. 60–10 August 1955). As regards the Hebrew dictionary, Kahle mentions two titles and gives



Blackwell's address for ordering the book he prefers (no. 61–31 August 1955).

As a matter of fact, although it can appear strange at first sight, such a sympathetic relationship from the intellectual point of view is not so surprising. In the attitude of a Salafi operating in the colonial period, and in a country not so much involved in the colonial control of Arab countries, there must have been a common area between a philological tradition of knowledge and studies of the sources (as in German academics) and a Salafi emphasis on the return to founding sources (Qur'an and *ḥadīth*). The scripturalist approach by a Salafi could find perfect common ground with and appreciation of the philological approach of German Orientalism and in particular of a scholar such as Kahle, who had been always sympathetic towards him and respected al-Hilālī's knowledge. It was a win-win relationship: as argued by Ryad, al-Hilālī's scholarship was helpful to Kahle's studies, and most probably the training in a German university with an emphasis on philology and a positivistic approach to history "bolstered his [e.g. al-Hilālī's] scripturalist and linguistic approach to Islam".<sup>29</sup>

A scholar and Islamic figure such as al-Hilālī did not feel any contradiction between these two visions, and as a matter of fact there was none. There is not yet any anti-Orientalistic rhetoric and there is no generic anti-Western attitude of the dismissal of such knowledge. On the contrary, in the rhetoric of the intellectual exchange between scholars there is common ground and al-Hilālī can share with Kahle harsh judgements on the surrounding environment in Iraq with other Muslims, preferring a non-Muslim scholar with whom to share his scholarly interests or at least to give voice to these in the correspondence with the aim of presenting this image of himself.

## 7. "I hate the Oriental nature": al-Hilālī's Comments and Nostalgia

Among the words used in the scholarly exchanges between the two, a few passages testify to the feelings and beliefs of al-Hilālī as a Muslim displaying his faith in his words but living in an environment that does not reflect his

<sup>29</sup> Ryad, "A *Salafi* student, Orientalist scholarship," 140. See already Lauzière, "The evolution of the *Salafiyya* in the Twentieth Century," 240: "In actuality, al-Hilālī's training as an Orientalist in Germany, his emphasis on philology and his positivist approach to history all bolstered his scripturalist and literalistic approach to Islam and made it more persuasive".

vision of knowledge and culture. These few passages include harsh judgements that are significant and functional in the rhetoric of the scholarly exchange. They also reflect an attitude complying with the nature of al-Hilālī's relation with the Orientalism he knew – and Paul Kahle in particular – and his traditionalistic feelings perceiving a surrounding environment far away from his vision of true Islam.

Al-Hilālī was rhetorically and proudly playing the role of the scholar rather than the role of Muslim preacher or of the expert giving his *fatwās*. However, in this, as always, we must first of all consider that in the correspondence this is also a way to capture the attention of the interlocutor Kahle and to strengthen his wish to reach him in Europe or to visit America to go on with his studies and to find a cure for his sight. But at the same time, sharing the sincere feelings of uneasiness in the Muslim environment in which he shared nothing with Kahle and of which Kahle was not aware, he was giving voice to what could easily be the feelings of a Salafi living in the aftermath of WWII and at the dusk of colonialism, when nationalistic feelings with no specific religious connotation were prevailing. It is thus most probable that al-Hilālī was sincere and he did not find it difficult to underline the ignorance of the people around him, meaning this in terms of adherence to what he considered the genuine tenets of Salafi vision of Islam and the pessimistic evaluation of the current attitude in Muslim world and Iraq towards the scientific study of Arabic and Islamic literature.

On the other side, for Kahle al-Hilālī was a great expert on Arabic literature, maybe an Arab collaborating for some time with Radio Berlin for anti-colonial reasons, but nothing emerges of a possible awareness by Kahle of al-Hilālī's activism in the religious sphere during those years. In his letters, Kahle is always the old professor maintaining the connection with a younger collaborator at the time of the Bonn Seminar who displayed a significant skillfulness and could be useful for his publications and in the scientific exchange. The relation is always scientific and if al-Hilālī in some cases uses Islamic expressions – which are quite common and not specific to his Salafi beliefs – Kahle never mentions anything related to religion or even politics related to Arab world, neither in the first letters when al-Hilālī was in Germany nor when later on he was in Iraq and Kahle in England.

The harshest words used in al-Hilālī's letters refer to the people around him in Muslim countries. In some letters the criticism is related to the general lack of interest into research in Arabic and Islamic studies. Al-Hilālī states that what he learned in Germany is not useful here in this lost country (i. e. Morocco): Islamic studies (“Islamwissenschaft”) and pure Arabic literature are not considered among these people (no. 12–13 No-

vember 1946). Further, a philological criticism can be read as a general attitude for texts and editions. When suggesting printing Ibn Dāniyāl's shadow plays as soon as possible because an Egyptian is soon preparing an edition of them, al-Hilālī adds that most of the Orientals ("Oriental Menschen") settle for the wrong text ("falsche texte") (no. 16–21 September 1947). It appears that there is no problem in this correspondence with the term "Oriental": after regretting that he cannot work with him, al-Hilālī harshly adds that "die orientalische Natur hasse ich sehr. Der grosse Feind dieser Leute ist die Arbeit und die Wahrheit" (I hate a lot the Oriental nature. The great enemy of these people is work and truth" (no. 18–12 October 1947). The concept of the attitude to work of the "Orientals" is repeated after he states that he cannot go to the congress of Orientalists and regrets being far away from Kahle and other professors studying and loving Arabic literature; he adds: "Die Orientalen hassen meistens/ die Arbeit und sind egoistisch mit ihnen kann/ man nichts machen" (Orientals mostly hate work, are egoistic and with them is not possible to do anything) (no. 60–10 August 1955)". The same attitude is behind a less explicit comment where he praises Kahle as scholar, adding that in the Orient scholars can only make their living with other work and jobs and, introducing one of his students sent to visit Kahle, al-Hilālī praises him, stating that his character is wonderful as it can be rarely found in the Orient (no. 62 – n.d.).

Such a condition is common to Arab countries in general and not related to one only. Morocco is defined in this context as a lost country: in it ("in diesem zurüegeblebenen [sic] Land"), he works as he can, not as he would like (no. 8–29 August 1946). There, he has no books to work with and carry out research (no. 10–23 September 1946). When in Iraq, the mood and feeling are the same. "Here in this ignorant country" days and nights pass over him without his doing anything, states al-Hilālī. "I close my life here while I could do various important things in literature just as the poet wrote..." (no. 27–23 April 1948). Further, al-Hilālī writes that "I am producing very few things because of the weakness of my eyes and the atmosphere of this country which stands against everyone who likes to fill every moment of his time with useful work", adding later on that people there do not buy books and do it only if those books are published abroad without reading them (no. 35–11 April 1951).

One other significant passage seems to reflect a controversial reference to Muslims as Muhammedans, complying with the European use of the term and the obvious reluctance of a Muslim to make such a reference. Al-Hilālī chose a middle way in this case, using the abbreviation "Muh". In

particular, when dealing with his prayers for Maria Kahle's health, al-Hilālī proudly states that “doch wir Muh es glauben dass *al-du 'ā'* (in Arabic) hilft”, i. e. that “We Muh[ammedans] believe that prayer helps” and for this reason states that he prays for Kahle's wife (no. 18–12 October 1947).<sup>30</sup> On another occasion, related to familiar questions and the confidence between them, al-Hilālī expresses the wish that Paul, Kahle's son, learns Arabic to be able to use his father's library. Commenting on this he adds a quotation from the sura of Mary, Qur. 19:5–6, in German translation: “So give me, from Thee, a kinsman who shall be my inheritor of the House of Jacob” (no. 48–16 November 1954).

More connected to a doctrinal criticism is another passage. In one of the first letters al-Hilālī refers to “unorthodox” Muslims, probably meaning in this case the Shi'is, using a term that already reflects a Salafi attitude: “Ich erwarte Ihre Antworte wie die unorthodoxen Muslims auf den *hilāl Shawwāl* [in Arabic] warten um sich von dem Fasten zu befreien” (I wait for your answer as the unorthodox Muslims wait for the crescent of the month of Shawwāl to get rid of the fast [of Ramadan]) (no. 2–8 April 1939). The definition of Shi'is as unorthodox could be a reflection of his Salafi beliefs but also of the reduced vocabulary al-Hilālī had in German.

In a number of other letters, al-Hilālī makes reference to neutral Islamic imagery in the conversation with Kahle. Most of these passages are the expression of common Muslim feelings and also of a Muslim knowing Islamic traditions with no specific reference to Salafi attitudes. A couple of passages evidently have the function of displaying al-Hilālī's deep Islamic culture and even its use in a confidence that is not religious at all. For instance, in one of the first letters, when afraid of not being able to finish the doctorate for Kahle's escape to England and before the solution to his case, al-Hilālī asks for Kahle's help, using an expression recalling the Qur'an. The quotation is in Arabic to give force to it: “Ich bitte Sie um Leitung *ahdini širāṭan sawiyyan*” (no. 2–8 April 1939, cf. Qur. 19:43).

In only one passage does al-Hilālī mention an exegetical passage, along with a reference to a work of Ibn Taymiyya he is working on, adding that Ibn Taymiyya is a great authority on traditions (no. 58–27 June 1955). In this passage al-Hilālī mentions the *Kitāb al-futuwwa*, where the author quotes Qur. 18:13 (given in transcription) as a reference to *futuwwa*. Al-Hilālī states that he found nothing in the Qur'an commentaries about the

30 Kahle answers to this letter stating that his wife also believes that the *du 'ā'* helps. See also (no. 20–4 November 1947): al-Hilālī writes that he always prays to “the Almighty God” for his wife. In another letter, al-Hilālī (no. 2–8 April 1939) mentions the English term “Muslims” in a letter in German.

traditions the book includes (he gives one in transcription), not even in the books on forged traditions. He believes that these traditions go back to the time of the author. He then asks Kahle's opinion. As regards *ḥadīth*, it is interesting to note that al-Hilālī does not answer when Kahle tells him that if he needs something related to *ḥadīth* he can write, in Kahle's name, to J. Fück (no. 58–27 June 1955).

Finally, more neutral expressions of his Muslim faith are given by al-Hilālī in the use of the common *in shā'a Allāh* which is usually spelled in Arabic script (no. 16–21 September 1947; no. 24–16/12/1947; see also no. 27–23 April 1948): "I'd like to work with you", states al-Hilālī "but children tied me here in Iraq and *al-amr li-Lāh* (in Arabic); I hope to see you again *in shā'a Allāh*" (in Arabic). Religious imagery is also used in relation to Kahle's sad and sudden loss of his son Paul from stomach cancer.<sup>31</sup>

In these letters and passages, al-Hilālī gives a specific image of himself as a Muslim scholar, showing this to Kahle in terms that are comprehensible to a European Orientalist and also trying everything he can to show his confidence in this realm. It is evident that what for Kahle was a simple testimony of faith plus the recognition by a Muslim Arab that the approach of European Oriental studies to texts and sources was a positive common ground of research, for al-Hilālī was a reflection of an attitude he also had as a Muslim activist in post-war decolonization against a surrounding Islamic world that he felt was not in line with his conception of Islam. The criticism "against Orientals" reflects al-Hilālī's judgement of the political elite and of common people's beliefs in Arab countries that were not yet receptive of religious activism and not at all of the emerging Salafi visions. Kahle paid no specific attention to religious activism and had no reason to perceive anything else in al-Hilālī's comments other than possibly an uneasiness towards the surrounding environment. For Kahle, al-Hilālī was an expert in the Arabic language and a good Muslim, as displayed in the common and neutral expressions where this faith comes to the surface, and he had no idea of al-Hilālī's activity as a Salafi.

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31 Al-Hilālī writes that he prays Allah (written this way) (no. 56–4 June 1955); after commenting on the death of Paul Kahle Jr, al-Hilālī states that power belongs to God only (no. 58–27 June 1955). See also (no. 29–31 May 1948): "to see your native country... is also a grace from Allah". Al-Hilālī expresses the wish to reach Kahle in England safe and sane with the company and help of God (no. 42–23 July 1954).

## 8. "Not without vocalization": Scholarly Work and the Obsession with Ibn Dāniyāl

The correspondence between Kahle and al-Hilālī is first of all, in their intentions, a conversation between scholars, and scientific questions are the main topic. Throughout the years there are a few topics that constitute the matter to be dealt with and the apparent reason for many letters. It is significant to note that such interaction reflects the different interests and also the roles they played during their relationship starting from Germany. Al-Hilālī is the expert in Arabic and then, when in Iraq, the one who has access to materials or facilities from there, such as printing in Arabic. For al-Hilālī, Kahle is the channel to Europe, the one who could provide materials kept in the libraries there and above all give him the opportunity to visit Europe again for reasons of research and health.

In the realm of the scientific exchange, one question emerges largely above all the others and represents a major concern on Kahle's side, and this is the publication of the shadow plays by Ibn Dāniyāl. I have dealt with the complicated story of this enterprise in another publication introducing the reproduction of some materials kept in Kahle's papers in Turin.<sup>32</sup> The letters cover a span of more than ten years of desperate interest by Kahle to have this work published after many years of painstaking work on these unique and very problematic pieces of Arabic Medieval literature. The period covered by the letters illustrates that there were many attempts in the period after WWII to bring such an edition to a publisher, from the first steps and attempts concerning this work by Kahle when he took the work done by Georg Jacob (d. 1937) and first tried to have the plays published and the final publication of them from Kahle's paper by Derek Hopwood. It is Kahle himself, in the pages of introduction to the edition of the three shadow plays then published by Derek Hopwood, who gives further information on this.<sup>33</sup>

Since the beginning of his work, conceived in continuation with that of Jacob, Kahle had praised the collaboration of Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, who arrived in Bonn in autumn 1936 and worked with him on these shadow plays from the end of 1937. Al-Hilālī's contribution was very important up to the printing attempted in Cairo, which came to nothing because of the

<sup>32</sup> *Orientalists at Work. Some Excerpts from Paul E. Kahle's Papers.*

<sup>33</sup> Muḥammad Ibn Dāniyāl, *Three Shadow Plays*, ed. P. Kahle, with a critical apparatus by Derek Hopwood and M. Badawi (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 1992).

war.<sup>34</sup> Cairo proofs were mentioned by Kahle himself and dated around 1938; he also mentioned at that time the possibility of an edition of the Arabic text in Leiden by the Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin.<sup>35</sup> In more recent years, the topic has been the object of the studies and publication of Li Guo, who has also carried out research on some unpublished material preserved in Turin.<sup>36</sup>

The letters help to bring more information on the nature of the Cairo proofs and how the publication of Ibn Dāniyāl occupied Kahle's thoughts throughout all those years and the circumstances that made it impossible to realize it. Al-Hilālī, from the tone of his answers, was eager to help him at the beginning, though such a work does not seem to be one of his main interests over the years, for many reasons, and probably because of the problems connected to finding a good publisher in Iraq.

The mention of Ibn Dāniyāl appears for the first time in 1939 when al-Hilālī brings to Kahle's attention that Ibn Dāniyāl wrote other works, pointing to Ahlwardt's catalogue of Berlin manuscripts and quoting an *urjūza* (word in Arabic) and its beginning (in Arabic) (no. 3–17 April 1939). The matter was still of great interest in those years just after their work together: al-Hilālī asked in a letter for the text of Ibn Dāniyāl that he could read with Mr Naggar (Najjār) (no. 5–28 August 1939), to which Kahle answers that he is sending the second fascicule of Ibn Dāniyāl (no. 6–

34 Kahle had already mentioned the work and collaboration of Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, naming it in the short communication that arose from the 20th congress of Orientalists on their joint work on Ibn Dāniyāl: *Actes du XXe Congrès international des orientalistes*, Bruxelles, 5–10 September 1938, Louvain 1940, 324–25; see also Paul Kahle, "The Arabic shadow play in Egypt," *JRAS*, January 1940, 21–34 (in Kahle, *Opera minora*, 297–306: 300): Kahle mentions al-Hilālī's cooperation, stating that he is a "truly critical scholar" describing briefly his career before joining the Oriental seminar in Bonn and his (Kahle's) confidence in coming, with his (Hilālī's) help, to "a considerably better understanding" of the difficult texts of Ibn Dāniyāl; Kahle, *Opera minora*, 216, mentions the work done on this with al-Hilālī in Bonn in relation to his doctoral studies, in a rather long description of the work together, cf. also pp. 217–19; on Cairo edition, see Ibn Dāniyāl, *Three Shadow Plays*, 3–4. The Cairo proofs were published in *Orientalists at Work. Some Excerpts from Paul E. Kahle's Papers*, 33–48.

35 P. Kahle, "The Arabic shadow play in Egypt," 21–34 (in Kahle, *Opera minora*, 306, from here quoted by Badawi in his introduction to Muḥammad Ibn Dāniyāl, *Three Shadow Plays*, 10). Further information of the scientific and scholarly work on these plays and on other editions is also given in Ibn Dāniyāl, *Three Shadow Plays*, 6–12.

36 See Li Guo, *The Performing Arts in Medieval Islam. Shadow Play and Popular Poetry in Ibn Dāniyāl's Mamluk Cairo* (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2012); Li Guo, *Arabic Shadow Theatre. A Handbook* (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2020). See also the translation, with an introduction and a preface to the translation in *Theatre from Medieval Cairo. The Ibn Dāniyāl Trilogy*, transl. and ed. by Safi Mahfouz and Marvin Carlson (New York: Martin E. Segal Theatre Center Publications, 2013).

30 April 1939). After seven years, when the war has ended and the correspondence starts again, the question is raised directly by Kahle: “Was sollen wir nun mit Ibn Daniyal machen?” (What should we do now with Ibn Dāniyāl?) (no. 7–6 August 1946), adding for the first time the proposal of checking if it is possible to print it in the “Orient” and stating, in that case, that he would need to check the proofs and that it must be mostly vocalized and with good quality paper.

At that time al-Hilālī was still in Morocco and, consequently, the suggestion was to have it printed there. Al-Hilālī answers that Ibn Dāniyāl can be printed using the type of the journal (*Lisān al-Dīn*) but the vocalization is not possible (no. 8–29 August 1946, repeated in no. 9–21 September 1946). Printing in Cairo, states al-Hilālī later on, could be another possibility, he has a friend there with a good typography (no. 14–31 August 1947) and things become a little more concrete when al-Hilālī is in Iraq: Kahle is happy that al-Hilālī could talk about Ibn Dāniyāl with the Ministry of Culture, stating that he has sent by mail 30 pages of the first play and a copy of his articles, including praise of al-Hilālī himself (no. 13–5 January 1947). This letter is also important because adds information on the Cairo proofs, which are here defined as [Muṣṭafā or ‘Īsā al-Bābī al-]Ḥalabī’s print: “The rest of the Ms of the first play is still with Halabi and I had asked Atiya to look after it”.

At one point al-Hilālī states that he has come to know that an Egyptian is preparing an edition of the work for print (no. 16–21 September 1947). Another change is announced by Kahle when he informs that he has proofs of pages 1–30, while pages 31–70 of his manuscripts in two fascicules have been in Cairo since before the war and still are, and adds that he has talked with the publisher Harrassowitz about having the Arabic printed in Arab countries and some of those copies being added to a German translation to appear with Harrassowitz (no. 17–27 September 1947). Al-Hilālī is happy about that and adds that he cannot go to Egypt and, consequently, the Arabic text could be possibly published in Iraq (no. 18–12 October 1947). Kahle agrees in this, if they can have it printed there, thanks to the offices of B. Sharīf, though he needs to retrieve the text from Cairo (no. 19–22 October 1947). The trust in the possibility of publishing it in Iraq breaks for a first time when al-Hilālī states that one Sayyid Ja’far Māl Allāh is interested in the text and could help the publication, though al-Hilālī lists “several difficulties” in printing it in Iraq. The first one is “harakat *shakl* (in Arabic)”, i. e. the vocalization, and then he introduces a new argument: the



government “perhaps will not allow such a book to be printed; it would say: it is immoral” (no. 20–4 November 1947).<sup>37</sup>

Things seem to speed up at one point when, along with his letter, al-Hilālī sends an estimate and a printed page as a sample, adding that the price (183 dinars) is not expensive, and asks Kahle to send him the complete text (no. 21–15 November 1947). Kahle likes the proposal and the sample (no. 23–26 November 1947). At one point the doubts about the immorality of the text recur. Al-Hilālī writes in another letter that someone proposed producing two editions of Ibn Dāniyāl, one with no change and one with omissions, though people in the ministry do not trust Iraqi publishers; he insists that he needs a complete copy of the work to show around for a better evaluation (no. 24–16 December 1948).

Al-Hilālī touches on the problems of immorality in another letter after Kahle had sent the copy of the work and of the English translation: B. Sharif told him that it is very difficult to have it published. Al-Hilālī has a further proposal, given such a situation: “a friend has made me a suggestion: to omit all the words which cannot be published to the public and make an edition for the common people” (no. 25–16 February 1948). Kahle does not answer this directly but his feelings appear clear: “you have received Ibn Dāniyāl and the English translation, the best is to print it in Germany or, maybe, it is easier to have it printed in Cairo or Syria”; saying this, Kahle asks al-Hilālī to take care of the manuscript so that he can send it back when needed (no. 26–10 March 1949). Al-Hilālī cannot but agree: Germany or The Netherlands are the best places to have it printed if it cannot be printed in Cairo or Damascus (no. 27–23 April 1948). Later on, Kahle writes that he received the Arabic translation of his papers on Ibn Dāniyāl<sup>38</sup> and that he is going to Germany to discuss publication with Harrassowitz (no. 28–23 April 1948). Then, while Dr Sharif does not answer al-Hilālī (no. 30–18 January 1949), Kahle asks for the manuscript with his text of Ibn Dāniyāl back, giving al-Hilālī Beeston’s address as where to send it (no. 31–21 March 1949); al-Hilālī promises to do it as soon as possible (no. 32–7 June 1949) then announcing he has done it (no. 33–19 November 1949).<sup>39</sup>

37 On the explicit language in the texts by Ibn Dāniyāl, see Muḥammad Ibn Dāniyāl, *Three Shadow Plays*, 11.

38 Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, *Thalāth Masraḥiyyāt ‘arabiyya muththilat fi al-qurūn al-wustā: waḍa’ahu Ibn Dāniyāl al-Mawṣilī yuqaddimuhā ilayhā al-‘ālim Professor Kahle* (Baghdad: Maṭba‘at al-I’timād, 1948).

39 Al-Hilālī adds in another letter one note that a friend from Persia, Mirza Muhammad, had written an article explaining three Persian words from Ibn Dāniyāl (no. 29–31 May 1948).

The setting is ready for another scene change: Kahle, hoping that al-Hilālī received the article on Ibn Dāniyāl he sent to him, announces that the text will probably appear in Cairo (no. 34–4 April 1951), and al-Hilālī cannot but be happy about that, commenting in an apparently neutral way: “I think in the last 13 years Ibn Dāniyāl has taken the great part of your thought and work” (no. 35–11 April 1951). It then takes a year to return to the topic. This is when al-Hilālī writes to Kahle asking what has become of the Arabic text and the English and German translations (no. 36–28 March 1952) and Kahle writes back that he has had no news from Cairo (no. 38–15 June 1952).

After this, interest in Ibn Dāniyāl becomes less pressing. Kahle is occupied with other work, many travels and his attention on Ibn Dāniyāl is probably distracted. It is al-Hilālī who simply asks how is it going with Ibn Dāniyāl from time to time (no. 41–15 July 1954; no. 53–22 February 1955). But Kahle is now busy with other publications, which are, in the last years of the correspondence, the new edition of the book on the Cairo Geniza (he states he is going to work again on Ibn Dāniyāl when he has finished with that, see no. 54–18 March 1955; no. 61–31 August 1955) or unspecified other works (no. 57–9 June 1955). It is al-Hilālī who solicitates attention on the work again, stating that many Arabs are waiting for this edition, as he writes (no. 60–10 August 1955) and, again, when he hints to Kahle that maybe he (Kahle) is now ready to publish it (no. 66–29 April 1956).

Some of these letters on Ibn Dāniyāl refer to the question of vocalization, which is a returning motif through the years. Kahle states firmly that without vocalization there is no sense in publishing it (no. 11–23 October 1946); and again: it must be printed well and vocalized (no. 13–5 January 1947; no. 22–17 November 1947), the printing must include variants in the notes from the manuscripts and some vocals (no. 15–7 September 1947). Al-Hilālī answers explicitly that printing the “*harakat shakl* (in Arabic)” is complicated and at best costly (no. 20–4 November 1947). But Kahle replies that he knows the government press and they use vowels (no. 22–17 November 1947) and further underlines that he needs in any case to check the proofs, when he has the mistaken impression that they are going to publish it soon (no. 19–22 October 1947).

Along with Ibn Dāniyāl, the correspondence touches on other research subjects. In one of the first letters, al-Hilālī informs Kahle that he is not proceeding with Ibn al-Faqīh (no. 5–28 August 1939) and, later on, he knows nothing about this (no. 37–11 May 1952). As a matter of fact, writes al-Hilālī, he could work on Ibn al-Faqīh with the Iraqi Academy (no. 39–5 July 1952). On his side, Kahle comments that he has found interesting

things in the manuscript collection he is working on (Chester Beatty) (no. 6–30 April 1939). The work of description of the manuscripts of Chester Beatty carried out during the war is mentioned in other passages and letters to underline the value of the collection (no. 7–6 August 1946; no. 15–7 September 1947), then also adding that he was also working on the description of the Arabic manuscripts acquired by Bodleian Library in Oxford in the last hundred years, plus some other information on work on Bible translations and other things.

Al-Hilālī introduces in some cases texts in Arabic (no. 9–21 September 1946; no. 10–21 September 1949) as a way to discuss scholarly matters but Kahle answers that working together at a distance is difficult (no. 11–23 October 1946), though proposing in the same letter collaborating on al-Bīrūnī. In the last part of the correspondence the topic of the *futuwwa*, on which Kahle had already written previously,<sup>40</sup> returns when al-Hilālī asks for the reproduction of a *Kitāb al-futuwwa*: some friends in Iraq would like to have it published (no. 40–26 March 1954; no. 46–26 October 1954); al-Hilālī asks for a photographic reproduction and sends the money to buy it (no. 48–16 November 1954), Kahle ordered the microfilm in Tübingen (being the Ms Tübingen, UL 137, containing Ibn al-Mi‘mār’s *Kitāb al-Futuwwa*) to be sent to al-Hilālī. Kahle states he has finished his work on the text (no. 49–20 November 1954), which, he announces, will be published soon; Kahle also expresses his approval of the possibility that al-Hilālī edits the text in Arabic in Iraq (no. 50–25/12/1954). Kahle finally received the reproductions from Tübingen (no. 51–15 January 1955), which in a short time were also received by al-Hilālī (no. 52 – [21 January 1955]) who, in another letter, writes that he is working on it with al-Najjār and asks Kahle for the translation done together in Germany (no. 53–22 February 1955) – a translation that Kahle confesses he is no longer able to find (it is indeed present in his fonds in Turin) (no. 54–18 March 1955).<sup>41</sup>

Al-Hilālī, while writing that the work on the *Kitāb al-futuwwa* goes on, mentions a book by Ibn Taymiyya that he has found and that he would like to edit (no. 55 – n.d.; no. 58–27 June 1955). Kahle ignores the mention of Ibn Taymiyya and in his letters of that period asks repeatedly and only about the work on the *futuwwa* (no. 57–9 June 1955; no. 59–7 July 1955). Kahle even states, while asking in another letter about the work on the

<sup>40</sup> Paul Kahle, “Die Futuwwa-Bündnisse des Kalifen an-Nāṣir,” in *Opera Minora*, 215–46.

<sup>41</sup> The work, with the help and direct contribution by al-Hilālī was then edited and published in Iraq: Ibn al-Mi‘mār al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-futuwwa*, eds. Muṣṭafā Jawād, Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī, ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Najjār and Aḥmad Nāji al-Qaysī (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1958).

*futuwwa*, that they are very interested in it in Pakistan (no. 65–22 March 1956). The answer is the generic statement that, yes, they are working on the *futuwwa* (no. 60–10 August 1955).

The last exchange on the *Kitāb al-futuwwa* underlines a common attitude between the two, that is the attention paid to the circulation by mail of material at a time when having copies of manuscripts but also of one's own proper handwritten work was neither immediate nor simple. Kahle appears to be paying this a lot of attention after all the vicissitudes with the proofs of Ibn Dāniyāl's texts in Cairo and is very careful in sending this kind of material to al-Hilālī, though not refraining from posting what needed on Ibn Dāniyāl in view of the possible publication. In other cases, al-Hilālī is interested in having the material of the work they carried out when they were together in Germany (translations, Arabic texts).

The written letters hint at some impatience in only a few cases, but this does not reflect, apparently, a lack of trust but rather the problematic exchange of materials between England and Iraq, and their different concerns. In this regard the question of Ibn Dāniyāl is a chronicle of hopes, occasions, changes of mind and many problems in which the circulation of the manuscript produced by Kahle between Cairo, Germany and Iraq played a major role. Along with this, too many problems and concerns prevented any possible publication, but also because Kahle at a certain point probably abandoned the idea to have it done and moved to other projects.

## 9. Conclusion

The correspondence between Paul Kahle and Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī confirms the general assumption on their relation that previous studies have maintained. Their confidence, their reciprocal appreciation and their deep involvement in sharing knowledge emerge even more strongly from such an exchange through the years. Esteem, respect and personal sympathy are common traits, and if the scientific interest is the mark of their connection, familiar questions are evoked from time to time to attest the nature of a relation that was solid up to the last letter. The collection in Turin stops in 1956, three years before al-Hilālī left Iraq and at a time in which Kahle, probably because of age, started to reduce his numerous correspondence relationships. No specific matter seems to have prompted such an interruption.

Though the general picture confirms the previous interpretation of the nature of the relation, the letters help to further characterize some attitudes. One of this is the confidence between the two in the name of the scientific work and the scholarly exchange using methods that are those of the traditional Oriental studies, with emphasis on texts and sources. Along with this, there is a common cultural and general appreciation of Islamic civilization, shared by the scholar and the believer.<sup>42</sup> Al-Hilālī was sympathetic to this and participates with Kahle in this from the viewpoint of a Muslim involved in Salafism. The letters communicate that he was also a scholar and student belonging to the Bonn Seminar and one who carried out valuable work, upon which he often interrogates Kahle. On the other side, Kahle is aware of this and, though he was the old professor and al-Hilālī a collaborator, he respects him as a scholar, stressing this in his replies along with his wish to continue with the collaboration.

The epitome of such an attitude is given by the harsh comments on “Oriental” people, which reflect al-Hilālī’s feelings in relation to his research and study interest when compared to his work in Germany with Kahle. These comments reflect a sincere feeling by al-Hilālī not only in terms of scholarly production but also as a general attitude towards his vision of Islam. As already noted and emphasized, philological German Orientalism can find a common ground with the Salafi textual vision of Islamic tenets in the name of going back to the sources and what they state and of the high appreciation of Arabic literature and traditions. Kahle, on his side, never adds a comment on this regard apart from some generic statements about the possibility for al-Hilālī to visit him in England and Europe and, with that, the opportunity to work together again.

In the scholarly exchange and the discussion and work on texts, editions and translations of Arabic and Islamic literature, the letters further attest the significance of the texts of Ibn Dāniyāl and how the problem of their edition and publication spanned many years. In some letters the discussion on this, with different possibilities and proposals, even seems to be the reason for the exchange of letters and the dialogue is mainly around this, including different feelings in various moments, since Kahle was pushing for this at the beginning but then, and in the last part of the correspondence, it was al-Hilālī who solicited from Kahle an answer on what he was going to do with it, with also the intention to participate in the proposals.

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<sup>42</sup> Ryad, “A *Salafī* student, Orientalist scholarship,” 108: a remarkable story of collaboration between a Salafī and an Orientalist and, according to his definition (109), Kahle’s declared agenda in Germany was to defend Islam.

We have already discussed above the other aspects of the letters in the various paragraphs identified as general themes and concerns. Contents, attitudes and the exchange have been underlined, though it should never be forgotten that a correspondence is not a simple historical attestation of narratives but also a display of personalities. Facts may be indirectly detected from what a writer wants to convey in a relationship with a reader of the letter through times that can change interests, attitudes, feelings and, consequently, also the personality that one may want to show to the other. As it happens, the individual person is one and many things at the same time, and sometimes different things, according to his/her personal relationship with the other. This specific relationship between two people, mediated by the writing of letters, is as influenced by their personality as is by the specific circumstances of their interaction.

In this penned relationship the personality that appears as more significant is that of al-Hilālī. Kahle is the Orientalist and emerges as such from his letters, even in his choice not to mention anything about the contemporary situation, not even of the facts that brought him to leave Germany. Al-Hilālī, instead, appears not only as a proud Doctor who graduated from a German university, but as a scholar making every effort to maintain such a connection. It was not easy to do this in Iraq, almost blind as he was, having to resort to dictating his letters someone else to write and with the tiring work of teaching Arabic and cultivating his interests in relation to his activity as a Muslim *shaykh*. He dictated letters, tried to help Kahle in publishing Ibn Dāniyāl, sent money to obtain Hebrew books, succeeded in visiting Bonn again and Kahle in Oxford, even travelling by train. In the end, al-Hilālī appears as a fascinating character with many personalities and the letters as a whole further enrich a biography that attests to all that he was at the same time: an observer of the West and Islamic activist, a scholar according to Orientalist tradition and a Salafi, succeeding in every respect and evidencing in a thought-provoking manner how the same person could be all of this at the same time and, consequently, how these concepts are not necessarily alternative or contrasting.

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