A digital database of Islamic manuscripts for the study of medieval Anatolia[1]

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Introduction

Manuscripts have been a fundamental part of in the history of the Muslim World. Islam considers the production and transmission of knowledge as a pivotal duty of its believers. In medieval times, the production of handwritten books made from paper became the main support for the diffusion of religious, scientific and literary knowledge across the Islamic World. These manuscripts were highly valued by different parts of society, from kings to Sufi dervishes, and praised both for their contents and as unique artefacts. An uncountable number of books were produced in the Middle East and a large amount of them still survive today in libraries across the Muslim world, Europe and the United States, but they have only recently begun to be regarded for their value. In the last fifteen years, there has been an increasing awareness of the abundancy, fragility and research possibilities of Islamic manuscripts. Libraries and research institutions both in Europe and the Middle East have ever since made efforts to make improvements in the cataloguing, accessing and digitising of their collections. Simultaneously, different research projects across the world have been created with the aim of facilitating access and enhancing academic research on the abundant, yet often chaotic, sources of information that Islamic manuscripts can provide. It was in this context that 'The Islamisation of Anatolia, c. 1100–1500' project was created.

Funded by the European Research Council as part of the ERC Starting Grant programme of 2012, Prof. Andrew Peacock, the principal investigator of the project, began to develop a five-year scheme articulated around the thematic umbrella of the 'Islamisation of Anatolia'. It aimed to produce original research on the topic, as well as to develop an online database that would function as a digital tool to facilitate further research on the subject.[2] This short essay aims to introduce this project. It first briefly discusses the theoretical basis that has been developed on

[1] The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013)/ERC Grant Agreement n. 208476, 'The Islamisation of Anatolia, c. 1100–1500'.

[2] For more information on the project see https://www.islam-anatolia.ac.uk/

the processes of Islamisation as they occurred in Anatolia; secondly, it is then followed by an assessment of the research's relevance, by looking at how the study of Islamic manuscripts can be used in conducting research in the topic; and, third and finally, it offers a view on the challenges and possibilities posed when developing an online database of Anatolian manuscripts.

The Islamisation of Anatolia: a short overview[3]

Islamisation is a term used to refer to the process by which a group of people, originally attached to another religion, become Muslim. Until recently, the term *Islamisation* was not that much in vogue, others were more commonly used, one of which, still is commonly found, *conversion*.[4] And albeit the fact that both Islamisation and conversion are often used to refer to connate processes, the former, we content, seem, in its nuance, to better express the complex scenario researchers face when trying to understand the adoption of a religion other than their own by a social group. *Conversion*, we suggest, is, by contrast, a more restrictive word that often refers exclusively to the moment in which a person (or group) adopts a new religion though rituals such as baptism, the pronunciation of the *shahada*, and so on. Historians of Medieval Islamic history are constrained to the sources available, and although in certain occasions there are references to the individual conversions undertaken by people, these cases cannot be in themselves be solely used to explain what happened at a wider scale. Individual accounts cannot easily be extrapolated to entire populations. In other words, it seems implausible that the transformation of the religious landscape of a vast and highly populated region such as Anatolia from a majority Christian region in the 11th century to a majority Muslim one in the 15th century could be solely explained by the multiplication of individual conversions among its inhabitants. This is the most substantial reason why talking about Islamisation makes more sense than to only refer to conversion; Islamisation appears as a more comprehensive term to use in studying these phenomena, because it gives room to consider

[3] This section is based on Andrew C. S. Peacock/Bruno De Nicola/Sara Nur Yildiz. Introduction. in Andrew C. S. Peacock/Bruno De Nicola/Sara Nur Yildiz (Hg.): Islam and Christianity in medieval Anatolia. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Company 2015, S. 1-20.

[4] See for example works such as Nehemia Levtzion (Hg.): Conversion to Islam. New York: Holmes & Meier 1979.

social, economic and political variables in the process that takes to the eventual conversion of a person or group.[5]

In the 11th century, the peninsula of Anatolia was the main territory from which the Byzantine Empire obtained revenues from taxes and products to supply its capital, Constantinople. In this period, the region was almost entirely populated by Christians, being them Greeks and Armenians but also Georgians and Syrian Christians. Within the wider context of Medieval Christendom, these territories had by then been a Christian borderland for more than three centuries, a period that begun with the Arab conquest of the Middle East, and continued by a Christian resistance of different Muslim offensives, counter-attacking and re-gaining territories in Eastern Anatolia and northern Syria until the same 11th century. Initially, the establishment of the Great Seljuq Empire in the 1040s in Iran and Iraq would not suppose a differential threat to the ones Byzantium had been dealing with since the establishment of the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad in 750 C.E. However, only 30 years later a Turkish victory at the battle of Manzikert in 1071 would mark the point of inflexion to the collapse of Byzantine domination in the peninsula, which was mostly controlled by Turks already by 1080.[6] Although surviving until the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Byzantium lost its Anatolian heartland and its role as a relevant player in the Middle East was severely weakened despite maintaining some maritime strength in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea.[7]

Besides, Muslim rule of Anatolia from the 11th century onwards, was far from homogeneous. Apart from the better known dynasty of the Seljuqs of Rūm (c.1081–1307), the Artuqids based in the city of Diyarbakr, the Mengüjekids of Erzincan or the Danishmendis of central Anatolia also obtained political control of areas of the Peninsula. By the 13th century, a further degree of complexity is added with the arrival of the non-Muslim Mongols and their victory of the Seljuq Sultan of Rūm at the battle of Köse Dağ in 1243.[8] This opened a period of political dependence of Anatolia from the Mongol domains in Western Iran, which significantly

[5] For a recent comprehensive study on the phenomenon of Islamisation from a comparative perspective see Andrew C. S. Peacock (Hg.): Islamisation. Comparative Perspectives from History. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press 2017.

[6] Carole Hillenbrand: Turkish myth and Muslim symbol. The battle of Manzikert. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2007.

[7] Claude Cahen: La Turquie pré-ottomane. Istanbul: Institut français d'études anatoliennes d'Istanbul 1988. Osman Turan, Selçuklular Zamanında Türkiye, Siyâsi Tarih Alp Arslan'dan Osman Gazi'ye (1071–1318). Istanbul: Turan Neşriyatı 1971. Andrew C. S. Peacock/Sara Nur Yıldız (Hg.): The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East. London: I.B. Tauris 2013. Andrew C. S. Peacock/Bruno De Nicola/Sara Nur Yildiz (Hg.): Islam and Christianity in medieval Anatolia. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Company 2015.

[8] For the history of Anatolia under Mongol rule see Charles Melville: Anatolia under the Mongols. In Kate Fleet (Hg.): The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. 1: Byzantium to Turkey, 1071–1453. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009), S. 51–101.

transformed the region. From then onwards, this became a geography of territories that were to be disputed between different regional powers such as the Ilkhans of Iran, the Mongols of the Golden Horde and the Mamluks of Egypt. After the collapse of the Mongol domination of Anatolia in the early decades of the 14th century, the political map of the Peninsula became fragmented into different principalities, known as *beyliks*, that would fight each other until one of them (the Ottomans) managed to control most of the peninsula in the late 15th century.[9]

Political fragmentation, however, did not mean cultural decadence, but rather the opposite. The different local powers would actively promote artistic, architectural and literary activities, strengthening the patronage of Arabic and Persian literary works but also popularising the use of Turkish as the third written language in the region. Although Anatolia cannot be considered an almost totally Turkish-speaking Muslim territory until probably the First World War, it was in the period approximately between 1100 and 1500 when Islam became the main religion in the area and Turkish was added to Persian and Arabic as a literary language. The territories that the Ottomans conquered in the 15th century were places where, even if still inhabited by numerous Christians, perhaps often even a majority of Christians, society was dominated by not just the faith of Islam, but more generally by Muslim institutions and culture.

In the same way that the Arab invasions of the Middle East in the 7th century did not wiped out Christianity from the region, the Turkish invasions did not destroy Christianity in Anatolia. Although in both cases Islam would acquire a 'cultural supremacy' or higher status provided by the fact that it was the religion of the ruling classes, for a long time both religions coexisted. In fact the adoption of the new religion by these elites could have contributed, even if partially, to make Islam more appealing for middle and lower sections of society as a religion to which to convert to. Yet, one may bear in mind that the adoption of the new religion was gradual, and that the transformative process was complex and with a multiplicity of actors. In fact, different factors might have come into play in favouring the Islamisation in Anatolia in this period. The coexistence between Islam and Christianity suggest a gradual process of cultural, religious and societal transformation that occurred in medieval Anatolia, something which has been vaguely researched until recently. Nevertheless, it is thanks to the nowadays expanding body of scholarly work in the matter that more nuances are being added to our understanding of this multifarious phenomena.

[9] For general views on the rise of the Ottoman empire see among many others Colin Imber: The Ottoman Empire, 1300–1481. Istanbul: Isis 1990). Elizabeth Zachariadou (Hg.): The Ottoman Emirate, 1300–1389. Rethymon: Crete University Press 1993.

Most of the study of the Islamisation of Anatolia has developed in Turkish, European and the North American academia. Most of Turkish historiography on medieval Islam has been largely influenced by a nationalistic discourse concerned mostly with justifying Turkish 'national right' to the land occupied by the present republic of Turkey.[10] Further, regarding the Islamisation of Anatolia, it has remained largely subjected to 19th century paradigms of religious studies lead by scholars such as Mehmet F. Köprülü and generally isolated from latter trends developed mostly in the West.[11] This paradigm survived along the second half of the 20th century and many of the arguments of this trend remain widely accepted widely Turkish scholarship.[12] However, attempts have been made to break this paradigm by authors such as Kafadar, whom with his influential study *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* attempted to approach the religious landscape by going beyond the dichotomy between Orthodoxy and heterodoxy exposed by more traditional voices.[13] Studies like his, have contributed in recent years, to add nuance to the nationalistic discourse. They have been critical of the ways in which traditional historiography had approached the expansion of Islam after the Seljuq conquest and of its role in the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. Further, the interaction between Islam and Christianity in this period, and the role played by Sufi dervishes and Turkmen tribes in the processes of transformation have also been significantly questioned.

With regard to the academia produced in the West, Vryonis has become one of the leading contributors to the subject of the Islamisation of Anatolia.[14] In his work, he sees the Turkish conquest as responsible for the destruction of an Anatolian Christian society, a social milieu which predominantly was of Greek culture. Hence, he explains, it was war and military conflict what, according to Vryonis, were the main triggers to the dislocation and destruction of Christian and Hellenic culture of Byzantine Anatolia. He mentions the devastation caused by the Turkish conquests in the 11th century first, and in the mid-13th and 14th centuries later, as

[10] In this view, Islam in this period could be divided between "High religion" and a "popular" one, where he interpreted pagan or Christian residues in Islam as shamanistic traces originating from a largely imagined ancient Turkish Central Asian past where an unchanging essence of Turkishness remained and was transmitted through time and geography. See further in Andrew C. S. Peacock/Bruno De Nicola/Sara Nur Yildiz. Introduction. (footnote 3), S. 6.

[11] For example, Mehmet F. Köprülü's nationalistic paradigm was based on 19th century European modernist ideas, which in turn came to be applied to pre-Ottoman Anatolia. See Markus Dressler: How to Conceptualize Inner-Islamic Plurality/Difference: 'Heterodoxy' and 'Syncretism' in the Writings of Mehmet F. Köprülü (1890–1966). In Journal British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 37 (2010), S. 241-260.

[12] and is present among some scholars such as Mélikoff and her student, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak and

[13] Cemal Kafadar: Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State. Berkeley: University of California Press 1995.

[14] Speros Vryonis: The decline of medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the process of Islamization from the eleventh through the fifteenth century. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

historical moments marked by the physical destruction of towns, the uprooting of the Christian population, the decline of agriculture, and a resulting hardship brought upon to the local Christian communities. The work is concerned with the decline of Hellenistic culture and consequently only mentions the conversion of Christians in passing references, suggesting nonetheless that Muslim Turks constituted a the strong minority, which by settling in Anatolia, might have forced, at least part of the native population to convert to Islam. The conversion of these populations was, in turn, favoured by a parallel destruction of the church administration which together would have brought the destruction of Christian urban centres and towns, and their ecclesiastical structures. The main criticism done to this otherwise impressive work is that it offers mostly a Byzantine perspective on the Islamisation of Anatolia and does not provide a real insight into Anatolian Islam. Rather, it offers a mostly one-sided picture yet succeeding in detailing the decline and demise of Christianity in the region. Thus, while the work is ostensibly in part about the Islamisation of Byzantine society, we learn little about the actual process of Islamisation from an Islamic perspective.

An alternative view to that given by Vryonis' perspective of a violent replacement of one religious landscape by another, was that presented in the work of Hasluck, which mainly concentrates on the transference of religious places from Christianity to Islam.[15] Although based on an anthropological approach and therefore different from Vryonis', Hasluck's sees processes of religious syncretism in the development of Muslim Turkish Anatolia. This approach perceives the process as gradual and lastly evidences that Islamic culture eventually replaced traditional Christian spaces across Anatolia after the Turkish conquest in the 11th century. Hasluck believes that the process of transformation from a Christian to an Islamic milieu, occurred through interim periods in which religious spaces were 'shared'. These spaces acted as *loci* where mostly a peaceful and continual transition developed, marked by periods that existed between the prevalence of one religion and its replacement by the other.[16] In more recent years though, some scholars have questioned the peacefulness attributed to the religious transformation of the landscape in medieval Anatolia. Krstić acknowledges, for example, the fact that the newly arrived Turks were slightly Islamised, but does not agree with Hasluck in that acquiring a supposedly 'superficial' conversion to Islam would bring about a 'syncretic', adaptable and 'open-minded' form of religion. She also questions that these religiosities could presumably act as transitional stages that would attract into Islam those newly converted from

[15] Frederick W. Hasluck: Christianity and Islam under the Sultans. 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1929.
[16] The quintessence of this syncretic paradigm would be the Bektashism, where Bektashi saints or awliyā' (Turk. evliya)

Christianity.[17] Instead, Krstić argues that although Hasluck's shared spaces between Islam and Christianity existed in Medieval Anatolia, the phenomenon of ambiguous religious spaces does not mean that people's believes were ambiguous too. Instead, she suggests, these spaces should be understood as sites of perpetual competition and negotiation; occurrences that need to be understood in terms of local power relations, rather than as locales of merely peaceful religious coexistence.

In any case, what all these works overall evidence is that the study of the Islamisation of medieval Anatolia is still in its infancy. It is encouraging to see that the field is beginning to move beyond the dominance of the paradigms of Mehmet F. Köprülü and Hasluck but remains still somehow under the shadow of Vryonis's great but problematic work. It is worth noticing that one of the significant obstacles faced in the progress of scholarly work in these areas is the fact that few specialists can master both the Christian and Muslim source materials with enough familiarity, concurrently. Further, only occasional multidisciplinary collaborations have existed so far across disciplines.[18] It is nonetheless clear by what the evidence we so far have obtained and the research that has been carried out, especially in recent years, that the mutation of a society from one religion to another can only be explained as the result of a complex and multi-causal process, a multifarious phenomenon compelled to be studied from different angles and perspectives. In this scholarly context, Prof. Andrew Peacock proposed in 2012 to carry out a project at the University of St. Andrews to explore the Islamisation of Anatolia from by then a largely unexplored point of view. He proposed to focus the attention on the literary production of Medieval Anatolia and, more specifically, on the production of Islamic manuscripts in this period.

Islamic Manuscripts as sources for the Islamisation of Anatolia

Unlike historians studying more modern periods in the history of Turkey, those concerned with pre-Ottoman Anatolia lack any archival documentation from where to produce a systematic research on a topic of interest. Instead, the most abundant and relevant information is contained

[17] Tijana Krstić: The ambiguous politics of "ambiguous sanctuaries": F. Hasluck and historiography of syncretism and conversion to Islam in 15th- and 16th-century Ottoman Rumeli. In David Shankland (Hg.): Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: The Life and Times of F.W. Hasluck, 1878–1920. vol. 3. Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2013, S. 248.

[18] See the exception of Andrew C. S. Peacock/Bruno De Nicola/Sara Nur Yildiz (Hg.): Islam and Christianity in medieval Anatolia. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Company 2015.

in manuscripts that have become the core of research material available when trying to explain the circumstances that propitiated pre-modern phenomena, such as the Islamisation of Anatolia. One of the advantages of undertaking research directly from Islamic manuscripts instead of from using edited sources is that manuscripts can have a twofold interest for researchers. On the one hand, scholars will find appealing the actual content of the manuscripts, that is, the subjects covered by the work written and the information expressed by the author of these texts. In this regard, the type of contents contained in medieval Islamic manuscripts is very diverse, ranging from literary works in prose and poetry, to scientific works on Astronomy or mathematics, historical narratives and religious texts – in this last category, a wide array of genres are represented, from hagiographic material, commentaries on the Qur'an and works on Fiqh (Islamic law). On the other hand, the additional potential research interest of manuscripts is that, unlike edited-printed books, each copy of a literary work is in itself a unique artefact, whose unique characteristics and unique history when studied, sheds light into yet different historical aspects. Therefore, our work in this project has highlighted the clear difference that exists between the manuscript contents, which can often be repeated in different copies of the same work, and the characteristics of the manuscript as a material support of the text, containing elements unique to each specific codex. These attributes are generally referred as the codicological aspects of a book.[19]

It is the study of the codicological aspects of manuscripts (paper, ink, name of copyist, place of copying, patron, ownership marks, etc.) studied in conjunction with the content of the text what is especially interesting in the present project, because the combination of both can illuminate certain aspects of the literary evolution of medieval Anatolia that are omitted in edited sources. Because each manuscript is different, two copies of the same work might have not only been copied in different places but may also contain, for example, different dedications to different patrons; these features make the circulation of each copy of the same work very different to one another. Similarly, the existence or absence of copies of the same text copied in luxury manuscripts (including illustrations and/or more expensive paper) and more popular ones could suggest a differentiation of class in the taste for a literary work. In addition, many of these manuscripts contain marginal annotations made by readers in different periods, notes that provide unique insights into the mind of the readers of a particular book in specific times

[19] On the discipline of Islamic codicology see specially François Déroche/Annie Berthier/Muḥammad I. Waley/Deke Dusinberre/David Radzinowicz: Islamic codicology: an introduction to the study of manuscripts in Arabic script. London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation 2006. Also Adam Gacek: Arabic manuscripts: a vademecum for readers. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

and places. Finally, scarce systematic research has been done so far on the identity of copyists, patrons and owners of these manuscripts. This study helps us to make sense of the production and distribution of manuscripts in medieval Anatolia. A considerable number of codices contain this type of information but the volume of works available is such (see a discussion on that below) that a methodical collection that covers the extent of materials the project *Islamisation of Anatolia* considers, has been hitherto lacking.

Handwritten texts that were relevant in the Islamisation of Anatolia are kept in different public institutions and private collections across the Middle East, Europe and even India but the bulk of this literary productions has remained in Turkey. The different collections of these Anatolian manuscripts are the product of different historical processes that influences its contents and the codicological characteristics they profess. For example, the most obvious type of collection is that made of manuscripts written, translated, and copied in Anatolia. These manuscripts offer a fundamental insight into the literary taste of different periods in the history of Anatolia, how this taste was transformed and what kind of works were most consumed by readers in each period. In addition, they offer invaluable information on the potential proficiency of a given population (being a religious, royal or economic class) at a given time and place and contain unique information on the 'economy of books' marked by a variety of sponsorship relationships between patrons, authors and copyist of these works developed in the region.

Apart from these 'autochthonous' manuscripts, many codices kept today in Anatolian libraries were not produced in the peninsula. For example, many have been brought into Anatolia by immigrant scholars coming from different parts of the Islamic world. The process of migration of Muslim *literati* into Asia Minor (Anatolia) was especially important in the 13th century, when many scholars, religious personalities and men of letters moved to the court of the Seljuqs of Rūm partially due to the advance of the Mongol invasions of Central Asia and Khurasan but also thanks to the attraction that the financial incentives offered by Seljuqs Sultans generated among cultured people in the Islamic world.[20] Part of the knowledge contained in those manuscripts brought by the *émigrés* allowed not only the presence of copies of previously unknown works in Asia minor but granted the possibility of copying and disseminate these new texts and ideas in the region. Further, other manuscripts were also brought by merchants and traders. The fact that manuscripts were unique and occasionally deemed as luxury products granted them an important economic value. It is difficult to estimate the number or proportion

[20] A good account of the literary legacy of Persian writers in pre-Ottoman Anatolia can be found in Muḥammad Amīn Riyāḥī: Zabān va adab-i Fārsī dar qalamraw-i 'Us̲mānī. Tehran: Pāzhang, 1369 [1990].

of manuscripts that reached Anatolian collections in the hands of traders or migrants, but they certainly are behind the fact that we find manuscripts produced in regions of the Islamic world far away from Asia minor such as Tabriz, Cairo, Baghdad, Herat or Samarqand.[21]

The total number of manuscripts kept today in Turkish libraries is difficult to establish. Although there have been improvements in library infrastructure, cataloguing efforts and accessibility of the material lately, the exact number of texts hold by different institutions is not always known by library staff or shared with researchers in Turkey. Further, an imprecise number of manuscripts remains in private collections owned by individuals or corporations with different degrees of commitment to allow research on their ownings. Despite the difficulties, it has been estimated that there are around 250,000 manuscripts written in Arabic, Persian and Turkish remaining in the Republic of Turkey today.[22] Ozgudenli has done extensive research on these collections in the past years, visiting all these libraries and collecting, whenever possible, quantitative data on the different existing Turkish collections. His estimations suggest that out of the quarter million manuscripts held in Turkey, some 150,000 of these can be found in different in Istanbul libraries. The table below offers a breakdown of the different quantity of manuscripts contained in Istanbul libraries and the proportion of these works written in different languages.

Table 1: List of manuscripts in Istanbul libraries[23]

	Arabic	Persian	Turkish
Suleymaniye Library	67,571		
Istanbul University Library	6,963	1,615	9,943

[21] A good number of manuscripts copied outside of Anatolia were also brought into Turkish libraries during the centuries of Ottoman territorial expansion in the Middle East, specially between the 16th and the 18th century.
[22] Osman Gazi Özgüdenli: Persian Manuscripts I. In Ottoman and Modern Turkish Libraries. In: Encyclopedia Iranica. Online version at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/persian-manuscripts-1-ottoman
[23] The table was elaborated using Osman Gazi Ozgudenli: Persian Manuscripts I. In Ottoman and Modern Turkish Libraries. (foornote 21).

Topkapı Saray M useum Library	9,043	940	3,090
Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi	15,858	164	359
Bayezıt Devlet Library	9,107	443	1,569
Millet Library	5,728	509	2,528
Nuruosmaniye Library*	3,667	466	919
Atatürk Library	258	44	3,836
Köprülü Library	3,284	139	390
Atıf Efendi Library *	2,615	95	518
Hacı Selimağa Library	2,226	131	595
Murad Molla Library	2,129	82	126
Istanbul's Archeological Museum	633	179	1,304
Yapı Kredi Cultural Center Sermet Çifter Library	98	274	1,389
Ragıp Paşa Library*	1,165	41	68

The remaining hundred thousand codices are distributed across different provincial libraries in the Republic of Turkey; the following table offers an statistical representation.

Table 2: List of manuscripts in The Republic of Turkey (outside Istanbul)[24]

	Arabic	Persian	Turkish
Ankara University School of Language,	8,084	926	5,801

[24] The table was elaborated using Osman Gazi Ozgudenli: Persian Manuscripts I. In Ottoman and Modern Turkish Libraries. (foornote 21).

History and Geography Library				
National Library		8,813		
Adnan Ötüken Public Library (Ankara)		2,640	1,300	1,252
Department of Religious Affairs Library		4,800		
Ankara University School of Theology Library		approximately 2,000		
Konya	Yusuf Ağa Library	4,656	109	375
	Koyunoğlu Museum and Library	2,060	296	2,112
	Regional Manuscript Library	3,053	75	529
	Mevlânâ Museum	2,298		
Bursa		11,155	1,315	405
Manisa		4,201	271	672
Kastamonu		3,439	157	660
Çorum		2,891	48	555
Selimiye Library (Edirne)		2,701	125	469
Izmir		1,423	190	1,439
Kütahya		2,473	192	420
Diyarbakır		1,629	51	1,321
Burdur		2,027	57	232
Kayseri		1,587	95	283
Cyprus		1,948	96	211

This impressive amount of documentation is complemented by several manuscripts that at present are distributed in different collections across Europe and the United States. Not all the material contained in these European collections is equally valuable to understand the Islamisation processes undertaken by the inhabitants of Anatolia in Medieval times. The amount of manuscripts which are actually potentially relevant for the study of the Islamisation of Anatolia is more reduced than the number of works these collections contain. However, some of these collections are significantly valuable in terms of its relevance for this project. Some of the most relevant collections include those manuscripts held in the United Kingdom in places such as the British Library in London, the University Library of Cambridge and the Bodlean Library at the University of Oxford. Besides, in continental Europe, there noteworthy collections held in libraries such as the Bibliothèque National du France, the StaatBibliothek zu Berlin, the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, or at the University library in Leiden, the Netherlands (collection of Turkish manuscripts) which offer some extraordinary exemplars and rare volumes that are unique in nature and significance.

In sum, the available material is enormous, varied in content, spread in different regions and difficult to interpret from a research point of view. With this vast amount of existing codices, the aim of the *Islamisation of Anatolia* project was to bring together a selection of the most relevant manuscripts concerning the processes of religious transformation into Islamdom that the region underwent, and to offer a representation of the literary legacy that was produced in this context, in a way that could be freely, quickly and comprehensibly be made accessible to researchers and the general public. With this idea in mind, the team has produced an online database that brings for the first time a large representation of the manuscripts available about the process of Islamisation of Anatolia from the 1100 to 1450.

A manuscript database for Medieval Anatolia

As the members of the project embarked on mapping the literary production of Anatolia before the consolidation of the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century, a number of methodological issues needed to be addressed. Firstly, it became apparent that the actual geographical scope of the project needed to be stablished from an early stage, especially, in terms of what we understood as *Anatolia* and what would be considered its limits for the purpose of the data collection. Certainly, from a basic geographical point of view, the consensus would lead us to consider

simply the territories of the present Republic of Turkey. However, in medieval times there were no clear-cut borders between central Anatolia and its adjacent regions, and places such as Azerbaijan (including the present independent republic as well as the Iranian region) had loci of literary production that are certainly relevant to understand the Islamisation of the region. Thus, urban centres of manuscript production such as Tabriz were in close cultural interaction with Anatolia. Nevertheless, Tabriz, for example, stands as an instance of a center that had a significantly rich literary tradition of their own, and additionally including all these body of materials was unrealistic in the time frame given to the project. Thus, one of the limitations the project has evidenced is that the setting of the limit will ultimately have an arbitrary component and that places with a certain degree of relevance such as Tabriz would regrettably have to be excluded. The opposite case was also considered. Cities such as Mardin, which today are part of the Republic of Turkey were culturally tided up to the area of influence of Damascus and the Arab world rather than that of Anatolia, yet, they have fallen within the scope of the geography we have decided to cover. At the end, it was a matter of clarity that lastly defined our choice. We finally decided that for the sake of avoiding confusion, we would consider the current frontiers of the Republic of Turkey. Having these considerations into account, however, give us a more adequate idea of what could and could not be convered by the project, highlighting interesting lines for potential future research.

Secondly, there was a need to establish a clear interpretation of who could be considered an *Anatolian author*. Certainly, those born in the region we initially considered would make sense to be included. However, when considering the type of data that could end up being more meaningful, it seemed more relevant to consider only those individuals who composed works in the region. These individuals would give us more insightful hints from the perspective of mapping the literary production and intellectual development of Anatolia, rather than just those merely born in the area. In this way, we could include that those who were not only born in Anatolia but also had an intellectual impact in the region would appear as part of the database. That includes also relevant foreign authors such as Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240) or Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 1311), who despite coming from abroad, had a great impact in the development of intellectual life of the region.

Finally, it was clear that the project would not include works composed after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453 because the historical and cultural context of Anatolia after the second half of the 15th century is markedly different from those preceding it. However, many authors who lived in Anatolia prior to this date, might not have been very influential

during their lifetime - with no manuscripts dated in out period of interest have survived - but became popular thereafter, for example, in the 16th and 17th centuries, during Ottoman rule. In those cases, the members of the project decided that these authors were to be included for being a product of a cultural milieu covered by our period of study, even though, and there is also mention of this, their work has rather *a posteriori* relevance in terms of literary influence.

Considering the quantity of materials that exist, tackling the gigantic amount of data available and being able to relate it to the Islamisation of Anatolia would have been an impossible task not having been for the aid of new technologies. The project is not only pioneer in thematic terms, but also in the amount of materials that succeeds to consider. Without the use of these technologies and the tools provided by the framework from the digital humanities, our ambitious objectives would not have been accomplished. The project carried out at the University of St. Andrews envisioned the development of an online database that could be used as a digital tool to help systematise this vast amount of information.[25] Digital technology allows us to collect, storage and process large amount of data and then to render it back to the researcher in an organised manner that becomes useful for the scientific enquiry. However, the challenge of this online platforms lays in the design of the database's rationale, a coherence that has to facilitate the correct disposition of information. Furthermore, this rationale has to give clear and precise guidelines that permit solving potential methodological problems that could arise in the daily handling of information. In addition, this frame has to give us the possibility to anticipating potential uses of the data storage and to be able to provide a rational rendition of data to the users' requests.

The development of the database and the systematic collection of data from manuscripts was done simultaneously, allowing the database to develop in accordance to the type of data that was being made available by project members in the field. Apart from the general information regarding a given manuscript (author, title, location, number of folios, etc.), it was the codicological aspects of the manuscripts mentioned above that were especially relevant for the project. Hence, information on copyists and patrons contained in manuscripts' colophons, ownership marks, type of script used and any information concerning the date of production of the manuscript was identified and introduced in the database. The data was converted into xml files representing individual manuscripts following the guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), a consortium which collectively develops and maintains a standard for the

[25] The database can be accessed online in https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/anatolia/data/

representation of texts in digital form, chiefly in the humanities, social sciences and linguistics.[26] Individual files are being created simultaneously in Arabic, Persian and Turkish and transliterated based on the guidelines provided by the Department of Cataloguing and Acquisitions of the Library of Congress (US).[27] Similarly, those names appearing in a manuscript and the related subjects of the works, were standardised, whenever possible, according to the *Library of Congress Authority headings* and provided with a link to the *Virtual International Authority File*.[28] When a name could not be found in these databases, we have generated a local authority file that could be used for keeping internal consistency in the treatment of names.

From the beginning of the project, the vision was to produce solely an online version of a library catalogue or rather a collective online catalogue along the lines of those that already exist.[29] Instead, we complemented the main metadata of the manuscripts by adding to the location of the manuscript, mentions to the author and title, data obtained from research done based on the manuscripts themselves but also little known secondary material available in Middle Eastern languages. In the case of some well-known authors such as Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273), Sadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 1274), et al., there is abundant information in European languages, but for other less well-known authors such as the 15th century Turkish poet Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb Fīrūzābādī (d. 1414-15), the information is less abundant and often found only in Turkish secondary sources. In this way, the corresponding metadata for each manuscript that can be found in library catalogues is complemented by, in addition, codicological information on the specific manuscript obtained by our team directly from the text. Likewise, for each individual record, we have added biographical information on the author of the text obtained from primary and secondary sources, a description of the contents of the work(s) contained in the codex and a list of further reading that includes not only secondary sources in oriental and European languages but references to any existing editions and translations of the work.

After the collection of the data, the coding into xml computer language and its input into the database, the software designed by the IT team at the University of St. Andrews indexes all the

[26] See http://www.tei-c.org/index.xml, specific guidelines for Islamic manuscripts developed by a join project carried out by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and funded by JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee). See https://www.jisc.ac.uk/
[27] http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/roman.html
[28] http://authorities.loc.gov/ and https://viaf.org/
[29] See for example the union catalogue for manuscripts in Arabic script in the United Kingdom at www.fihrist.org.uk

data in its own servers. The specific coding of the data following the TEI guidelines allows the software to organise the information received and interconnect the data of different manuscripts and group similar information between them. In this way, the individual information obtained for each manuscript is collated with other and gathered to identify similar authors, work titles and the collections to which the manuscripts belong. Yet, in order to maximise the interconnectivity of the data, the above mentioned biographical information and description of works is systematically tagged to produce an interactive *hypertext* allowing a quick navigation and highlighting concordances of data across the database. This systematic tagging of keywords, proper names and location allows also the potential user of the database to navigate the site transversally, making in it more dynamic and providing different possibilities for research across the whole database spectrum.

After four years collecting data from manuscripts in Europe, the Middle East and India, coding the information obtained into xml files and developing a user-friendly search interface for the database, we have accomplished our goal of interconnecting over 7,000 metadata for manuscripts produced by 'Anatolian authors' in the medieval period. The open access of the database to researchers and the general public will hopefully soon become a tool to unveil new aspects of the cultural milieu of pre-Ottoman Anatolia. Its potential usages are multiple. For example, the systematic collection of data on the names of copyist and patrons will allow users to connect the production of different manuscripts to a single person. This apparently easy task is something that carries on a number of complexities not having been for the help of digital tools, due to the mobility of books in the medieval and modern periods and the dislocation and centralisation of manuscript collections in national and local libraries in more recent times.

In this way, finding a person that copied an Arabic manuscript in, for example, Amasya in the early 14th century can be once again be found copying another manuscript, this time in Turkish, in Kastamonu, in the 1330s. This will offer the possibility to potentially open new areas of research on aspects less known of the literary production of pre-Ottoman Anatolia such as the mobility of these copyists, the multilingual characteristics of society or the interest of patrons on subjects in each period and place of medieval Anatolia. It is a vision of the project to contribute to the development of a new perspective on the literary development of medieval Anatolia, aided by examining this generally neglected sort of information. This data will, in turn, contribute to our understanding of the Islamisation of the area.

An example of one of these under-researched areas refers to the language of preference in the composition of certain works. In this sense, the database show how the production of manuscripts underwent a slowly by steady transference of certain topics, subjects in which the main trend previously was to write them in Persian, and that became more normally addressed in Turkish from the 14th century onwards. Persian language in Anatolia remained as a prestige language and works of famous Persian authors continued to be copied well into Ottoman times but Turkish would become the main language of poetry, literature and history from the 1350s onwards. Concurrently, there was a burgeoning effort being made in translating works from both Arabic and Persian into Turkish in the same period. The case evidences how, by looking only at the language of composition of a significant number of manuscripts collected in the database, it is possible to back with statistical data, the existence of a parallel process of Turkicisation, a linguistic process that accompanied and seems to be key in understanding, the Islamisation of Medieval Anatolia. Finally, despite the ending of the project in December 2016, the design of the database allows for continuing its expansion after that date. It is hoped that users and researchers will continue to contribute to the database by supplying new data collected in the field and amending, whenever necessary, the existing data.

Conclusion

The study of Islamic manuscripts is still at its infancy. The existing literary corpus held in libraries, universities and other institutions in the Middle East and the West is vast and remains still largely unexplored. The technological advances in digitization and cataloguing of manuscripts allow facilitating access to a large part of these documents to researchers and the general public. However, we are at a point where a further step from the plain description of data into a more comprehensive collection, organisation and rendition of the information is needed. The project described in this article have tried to take that step forward. By focusing on medieval Anatolia and on the specific topic of *Islamisation*, the team have managed to design and build an online database that helps to rationalise at least part of the available documents on the subject. In doing so, it has developed a digital tool that will enhance the study of medieval Anatolia from a unique perspective, different from the one normally offered by the study of Islamic manuscripts and leave a legacy consisting of a flexible database that can continue to expand beyond the duration of the project.