

# himml

Magazine

WINTER 2022



## On the Cover

L'viv, Ukraine, on December 8, 2007, shortly before HMML set up a digitization studio at the Vasili Stefanyk National Library. L'viv was founded in the late Middle Ages where a settlement had existed since at least the fifth century. In the historic city center, 120 hectares are designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

## In This Issue

### 3 Director's Letter

#### Cover Story:

### 4 Reversal of Fates

#### Where We're Working:

### 6 L'viv, Ukraine

#### News:

### 8 News in Brief

#### Scholar Focus:

### 10 Advancing Scholarship

#### Postscript:

### 11 A Closer Look at a Single Manuscript

## HMML Magazine

Is published twice a year in support of HMML's mission: to preserve and share the world's handwritten past to inspire a deeper understanding of our present and future.

Margaret Bresnahan—Editor, Contributing Writer

Julie Dietman—Contributing Writer

Ted Erho—Contributing Writer

Dr. Celeste Gianni—Contributing Writer

Joe Rogers—Contributing Writer, Editorial Review

Katrina P. Schlude—Editorial Review

Fr. Columba Stewart, OSB—Contributing Writer, Editorial Review

Wayne Torborg—Imaging, Production Manager,  
Contributing Writer

## The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML)

is a global organization that advances manuscript research and scholarly inquiry by digitally preserving, providing access to, and interpreting manuscript collections around the world. HMML places a special priority on manuscripts in regions endangered by war, political instability, or other threats. HMML is currently preserving manuscript collections at sites in Croatia, Egypt, Gaza, India, Iraq, Italy, Lebanon, Mali, Malta, Montenegro, Nepal, Pakistan, and Ukraine. With approximately 400,000 manuscripts photographed in partnership with more than 800 libraries worldwide, HMML offers the world's largest collection of resources for the study of manuscript cultures. View the manuscripts in Reading Room ([vhmml.org](http://vhmml.org)).

### Executive Director

Father Columba Stewart, OSB

### Board of Overseers

Dusica Babovic-Vuksanovic, Rochester, MN

Catherine Shannon Ballman, Saint Paul, MN

Thomas Barrett, Minneapolis, MN

Brother Dennis Beach, OSB, Collegeville, MN

Brian J. Bruess, Collegeville, MN

Bert Colianni, Minneapolis, MN

Kathy M. Cooney, Bloomington, MN

Judith Healey, Minneapolis, MN

Tom Joyce, Minneapolis, MN

Charlie Kelley, Orono, MN

Steven Kennedy, Medina, MN

Lyndel King, Minneapolis, MN

Abbot John Klassen, OSB, Collegeville, MN

Lucia Lahiff Crane, Edina, MN

Rachel McGarry, Deephaven, MN

Joseph S. Micallef, Saint Paul, MN

Brother Richard Oliver, OSB, Collegeville, MN

Angela Pennington, Minneapolis, MN

Shelly Regan, Minneapolis, MN

Kathryn Reyerson, Arden Hills, MN

Dan Riley, Bloomington, MN

Tamrah Schaller O'Neil, Minneapolis, MN

Sue Shepard, Sartell, MN

Patricia Simmons, Alexandria, VA

Keyna Skeffington, London, England

Father Columba Stewart, OSB, Collegeville, MN

Nick Swenson, Shorewood, MN

Brad Wallin, Edina, MN

Corine Wegener, Alexandria, VA

S. Linn Williams, McLean, VA

# Dear Friends,

Even I struggle to find something to say about the multiple conflicts and challenges before us. The effects and aftershocks of the war in Ukraine will be with us for quite a while, beginning with a cold European winter. In this issue of *HMML Magazine*, I write about our work in L'viv, Ukraine, where one last project is set to wrap up by the end of the year. They have heroically kept working throughout the war.

In August, I spent time with our teams in Mali, and we celebrated what we've accomplished together in almost a decade of partnership. The security situation in Mali continues to deteriorate with no signs of improvement anytime soon. We're almost done with our projects there and are looking ahead to possible work in Mauritania, Mali's neighboring country with its own remarkable desert cities.

Keeping our eyes and ears open to opportunities in both familiar and unfamiliar places is central to HMML's mission. Even as we are introduced to new libraries in Malta and Italy, or in India and Pakistan, we look for collections unknown to HMML. In addition to the work in Mauritania, we're developing a series of projects in Bosnia with libraries and archives of the Franciscan Friars. Bosnia is another place with a troubled past and an uncertain future, and we will do what we can.

The expanding scope of HMML's work aligns perfectly with the opportunities of the digital era. Manuscripts in every country, in every language, and belonging to every religious tradition can be brought together online in HMML Reading Room. Amazing things happen when the voices of the past can speak among themselves. Check out [hmml.org](http://hmml.org) or our social media to listen in on their conversations. As always, you are the ones building the space in which they can speak together.

Sincerely,

*Columba Stewart, OSB*

Father Columba Stewart, OSB  
Executive Director



**ABOVE:** Meeting with partners from Djenné and Timbuktu in Ségou, Mali, a historic city on the Niger River, August 2022. Pictured (left to right): Sophie Sarin, Babou Toure, Hussein Maiga, Ousmane Yaro, Fr. Columba Stewart.

# Reversal of Fates

Access through photographs can be a counterbalance

By Ted Erho

Cultural losses continue to beset communities around the world, especially in areas subject to armed conflict. The loss can manifest in multiple ways: destruction and damage, dispossession, the displacement of individuals, and other forms. But while the trauma these wider events inflict upon communities remains permanently scarring, sometimes aspects of the long-term impact upon a community's treasured manuscripts can be mitigated.

## Before the War

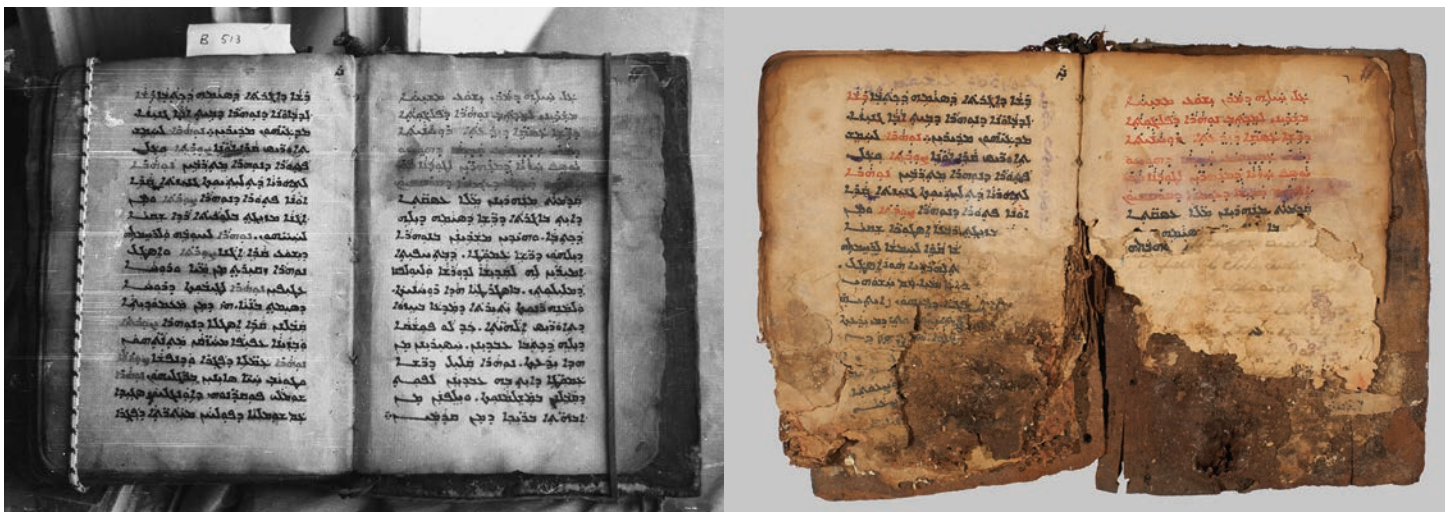
At the time of the 2003 Iraq invasion, the Chaldean Patriarchate of Baghdad, fearing the possible destruction of its manuscript collection, buried the archive in order to protect it. Often this action has been a recourse for communities under threat, including among Jews during the Holocaust and Armenians during the Armenian genocide.

In Iraq, most of the collection survived. However, flooding from the Tigris River damaged some volumes to varying degrees. One of the most affected was a seventeenth-century codex (CPB 00463): the bottom half of its pages disintegrated

in the ground. While multispectral imaging can be helpful in recovering text on waterlogged pages, the complete loss of the bottom sections renders such technology of no help.

The manuscript was digitized by the Centre Numérique des Manuscrits Orientaux (CNMO) in collaboration with HMML in 2016. Despite its sad condition at that time, its text paradoxically remains fully readable—in another form.

Estonian scholar Arthur Vööbus—who in 1940, and again in 1944, fled his homeland due to the Soviet Union's occupation—is responsible for our continued access to these pages. After being imprisoned by the Nazis, he emigrated to Chicago and spent the second half of his life teaching and studying manuscripts. During the third quarter of the twentieth century, Vööbus photographed codex CPB 00463 and hundreds of other Syriac books throughout the Middle East, creating a valuable photographic archive now included among HMML's collections. Although the current physical state of the book cannot be reversed, through these earlier images created by Vööbus, the ravages of time can be undone.



**ABOVE:** The same manuscript, photographed by Arthur Vööbus (left) and decades later by CNMO and HMML (right), where it was cataloged by Grigory Kessel. Its texts include poetry, a commentary on the Nicene Creed, and Ephrem of Qirqesion's *Explanation of Yawsep Ḥazzayā's Chapters of Knowledge*. (Baghdad 513; CPB 00463)

## Record of Ownership

Images of manuscripts also help document the provenance of items that are taken from their rightful owners during war or under other circumstances. The images are evidence of histories, invaluable in situations where legally uncontested ownership records do not exist or can be easily eradicated.

For example, while the Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (EMML) is the largest and most important repository for scholarly access to texts in Ge'ez, it also records the ecclesiastical owners of individual items, an aspect for which it has only started to become more utilized.

A few years ago, the return of EMML 6533 to Dabra Libānos Monastery by Howard University was occasioned by the available public record of ownership created through the manuscript being microfilmed in Ethiopia in 1978. As is clear from the university's simultaneous retention of dozens of other Ethiopic manuscripts donated alongside the repatriated volume, it was not a broader institutional policy that prompted the return of this cultural item to Ethiopia; it was the availability of its public record.

The images—attesting to the manuscript's place in time—resulted in the monks' dispossession being temporary, not permanent. This is unlikely to be the only such case, as HMML has identified a growing number of manuscripts that were microfilmed by EMML in Ethiopia and are now held in Western collections. As an EMML partner, HMML continues to inform pertinent stakeholders about such items. Ongoing digitization and cataloging work not only serves the interests of scholars and manuscript communities—it also creates crucial, publicly-accessible provenance records that provide an increasingly robust bulwark against manuscript theft and trafficking.

## Access from Afar

Conflicts breed displacement. Sometimes this takes the form of physical possessions being moved from one place to another, but more often it results in people fleeing for their safety. Occasionally they can return to their former homes, but when circumstances do not permit this, people can become disjoined from major parts of their identities.



**ABOVE:** The opening page of EMML 6533, a fifteenth-century manuscript recently returned to Dabra Libānos Monastery in Ethiopia. (EMML 6533)

For many communities, such displacement has included loss of access to works of religious and cultural importance that stayed behind.

In some cases, handwritten books remain one of the closest links to a never-forgotten homeland, as they were for the late Professor Getatchew Haile, curator of the Ethiopia Study Center at HMML. Getatchew was fortunate that he could continue to read and remain connected to Ethiopian manuscripts in Minnesota, despite being unable to return to Ethiopia. And the world was fortunate that Getatchew made the EMML collection widely accessible, through cataloging thousands of manuscripts and promoting access in innumerable ways.

History can be lost through destruction, but history can also be made through a commitment to preserving and ensuring widespread public access to global handwritten heritage.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Ted Erho is cataloger of Ethiopic manuscripts at HMML.

# L'viv, Ukraine

By Columba Stewart

In the early decades of HMML, the region beyond the proverbial Iron Curtain was out of reach. The momentous changes of the 1990s allowed us to imagine working in parts of the former Soviet Union and its satellite states. Ukraine was our first step into that world.

In late 2006, we signed several contracts to digitize the most important manuscript collections of L'viv in western Ukraine. L'viv is like a palimpsest, with layers of interwoven Ukrainian, Austrian, Polish, Jewish, Armenian, Orthodox Christian, and Catholic histories since the city's founding in thirteenth-century Galicia.

Our first effort in L'viv was at the Vasili Stefanyk National Library, itself a witness to the thick cultural texture of the city. The library was built for the personal collection of Count Józef Maksymilian Ossoliński (1748–1826). At that time there was no independent Polish nation. A polyglot Polish nobleman and patriot, Ossoliński thought that L'viv, then under Austrian Habsburg rule, should have a research library serving the largely Polish population of the city. This became known as the Ossolineum.

The fate of the library since its founding was tied to the dramatic changes in L'viv, especially during the Soviet period. In the wake of World War II, the Polish population was expelled westward to the newly reconstituted nation of Poland, and L'viv became a Ukrainian city. The collection was divided along ethnic lines and much of it sent to the refounded Ossolineum in Wrocław, Poland.

Meanwhile, libraries belonging to churches, religious orders, seminaries, and synagogues in L'viv were confiscated by the state and many of these books and manuscripts found their way to Ossoliński's building in L'viv, now belonging to the Soviet state. The library acquired its current name—Vasili Stefanyk National Library—in 1971, honoring a Ukrainian writer and politician. When I first visited in 2006, I saw Slavonic, Latin, and Hebrew manuscripts packed into the former church building. More than 800 of these manuscripts are now available online in HMML Reading Room (project code STEF).

Our next project was at the L'viv Historical Museum, which houses an assortment of objects from each strand of local history. Like the former Ossolineum, the L'viv Historical Museum became the repository for several other collections belonging to religious and secular organizations from the pre-Soviet era. The 165 manuscripts (project code LHMU) are almost entirely Slavonic and await the expert description that will bring them, fully cataloged, into HMML Reading Room.

HMML's third and largest project in L'viv is with the personal library of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky (1865–1944), profiled in the Winter 2018 issue of *HMML Magazine*.



**ABOVE:** The reading room of the Vasili Stefanyk National Library, photographed during a site visit in 2006.



**ABOVE:** A seventeenth-century Latin Gradual (book of chants for Mass) showing the Introit for the feast of Pentecost. The front pastedown of the manuscript has a list of Masses for special occasions, including one for use “against the Turks”—a reminder of the wars between the Austrian and Ottoman Empires that lasted until the Battle of Vienna in 1683. L’viv Historical Museum. (LHMU 00162)



**ABOVE:** Andrei Sheptytsky was ordained a bishop in 1899 and appointed as the Metropolitan of L’viv and Halych in 1900. His collection of manuscripts, part of the Andrei Sheptytsky National Museum, is currently being digitized by HMML.

Like Ossoliński, Sheptytsky was from a noble Polish family. In his case, however, he dedicated his life to the Ukrainian part of his ancestry, founding monasteries and leading his people through the Soviet invasion of 1940, the German invasion of 1941, and the return of the Soviets in the summer of 1944 just months before his death. His more than

1,500 manuscripts were deposited with the National Museum in L’viv following the liquidation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church by Stalin in the late 1940s. That museum now bears his name.

HMML’s project at the Sheptytsky National Museum (project code ASNM) is expected to be completed in the coming months. Technician Maksym Tymo keeps working in L’viv despite Russian missile attacks. The resilience of the Ukrainian people in these dark days inspires all of us to protect cultural heritage, to preserve and share all that makes us who we are.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Father Columba Stewart, OSB, is executive director of HMML.

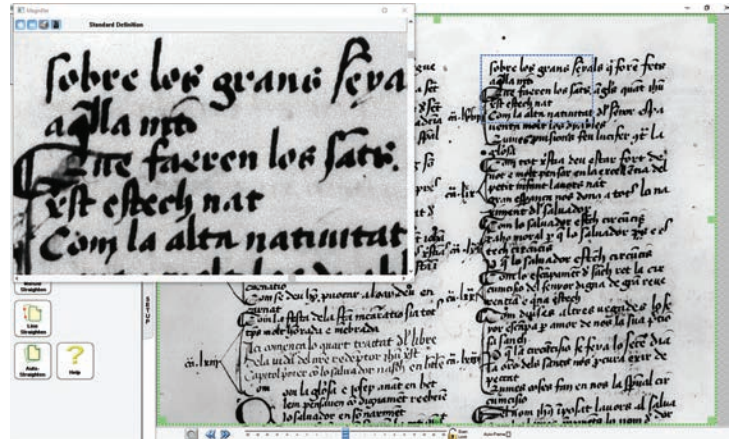
# News in Brief

## Highlights from HMML's cultural preservation initiatives and activities

### New Microfilm Readers On-site

Researchers at HMML have traditionally relied on optical microfilm readers to view manuscript images on film. These devices—using lenses, prisms, and projection screens to magnify film images—were state of the art for decades but have limitations that often leave users wishing they could see things a little larger or brighter.

Through a generous donation by Robert Weyerhaeuser, HMML recently acquired two ScanPro 2500 digital microfilm readers. These units use a high-resolution camera to send images to a computer, where the operator can adjust brightness, contrast, and magnification to extremes not possible with the older film readers. These new tools will be of great help in unlocking the secrets in HMML's microfilm holdings.



### Tracing the Legacy of Saint Columba

In September 2022, HMML resumed its tradition of traveling the world to see the importance of preserving cultural heritage, starting with a long-awaited trip to Scotland and the island of Ireland. The group of 22 HMML supporters and friends visited museums, churches, libraries, and archeological sites, tracing the legacy of St. Columba and the monastic tradition he established.

In addition to viewing the Cathach (the Psalter of St. Columba) and the Stowe Missal (both pictured), the group met with Dr. John Gillis, who led the effort to preserve and restore the Faddan More Psalter after it was discovered in a peat bog. In Northern Ireland, the group met with leaders from both Nationalist and Unionist parties, and in Derry and in Iona, Scotland, visited with communities that invoke the spirit of St. Columba in efforts to create social change and healing. The trip reinforced the conviction that in understanding the past, we can build a better and more hopeful future.





## Preservation Projects

Site visits were back in full swing this year. Fr. Columba Stewart, executive director of HMML, visited Mali in August, meeting with HMML's preservation teams and presenting at a widely-attended press conference in Bamako to celebrate a nearly 10-year partnership with SAVAMA-DCI—HMML's largest digitization project to date.

Earlier, Fr. Columba was joined by Walid Mourad (HMML field director for the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia), visiting current and prospective partners in Italy, Croatia, and Bosnia.

In Rome, Fr. Columba signed HMML's first agreement with the Order of the Discalced Carmelites, to digitize documents related to Carmelite missions in Malta, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Persia. The Malta Study Center also launched two new digitization projects this year, at the National Archives of Malta and at the State Archives of Florence, Italy. The latter began by photographing 190 parchments over the course of 11 days (example pictured), led by Dr. Daniel K. Gullo (the Joseph S. Micallef director of the Malta Study Center) and Wayne Torborg (director of digital collections and imaging at HMML).

HMML has also started digitization work at the Abdul-Latif Abu Hashem Library in Gaza (a collaboration with the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme); is preparing for a project at the Thrissur Hindu Temple in India (a collaboration with Hamburg University); and has hired two field representatives to look for new projects in South Asia: Dr. Ahmad Atta, based in Pakistan, and Dr. Rohan Chauhan, based in India.



## Notable

More than 413,000 manuscripts have been photographed by HMML and our partners. Of these...

**317,435 manuscripts** are preserved by digital photographs—totaling 15.3 million unique image files, roughly 350 terabytes.

**96,000 manuscripts** are preserved by microfilm images.

More than **105,000 manuscripts** are cataloged and searchable online in HMML Reading Room ([vhmml.org](http://vhmml.org)), more added every week.

HMML currently employs **14 catalogers** from **7 countries** who work collaboratively to describe manuscripts, including those written in Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bambara, French, Fulfulde, Ge'ez, German, Italian, Latin, Persian, Songhai, Syriac, Tamashek, Turkish, and Urdu.

In the cataloged manuscripts, more than **100 genres** have been identified, including bestiaries, breviaries, biographies, commonplace books, journals, land surveys, medical works, petitions, plays, poems, ship logs, symphonies, and trial proceedings.

More than **90 languages** are represented, with Latin, Arabic, and Syriac being the most prevalent.

Standardized name authorities are used to identify the persons, families, places, works, and organizations associated with each manuscript. More than **20,000 name authorities** are now publicly available in HMML Authority File ([haf.vhmml.org](http://haf.vhmml.org)).

**6,670 people** are registered users of HMML Reading Room, accessing HMML's collections online from around the world, free of charge.

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS:** Wayne Torborg is director of digital collections & imaging at HMML. Joe Rogers is director of external relations at HMML. Margaret Bresnahan is director of communications at HMML.

# Advancing Scholarship

Meet Eight Scholars Completing Fellowships at HMML



David Andrés Fernández  
**Nicky B. Carpenter Fellowship**

Professor of Musicology, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain  
Project Title: “*Corpus Processionalium Hispanarum: Sources, Music, History, Arts, 1400–1600*”  
At HMML: May 14–June 7, 2022



Augustine Dickinson  
**Swenson Family Fellowship**

PhD candidate, Universität Hamburg, Germany  
Project Title: “Focused on Ethiopic Manuscripts Containing Anthologies of Religious Poetry, Primarily the Genre Known as Malke’ (መልክዕ: ‘Image’ of a Saint)”  
At HMML: Sept. 1–30, 2022



Jonathan Egid  
**Swenson Family Fellowship**

PhD candidate, King’s College London, U.K.  
Project Title: “Examination of Two Texts From Seventeenth-Century Ethiopia, the *Hatäta Zär’a Ya’äqob* and the *Hatäta Wäldä Heywat*, and the Century-Long Controversy Over Their Authorship”  
At HMML: August 5–19, 2022



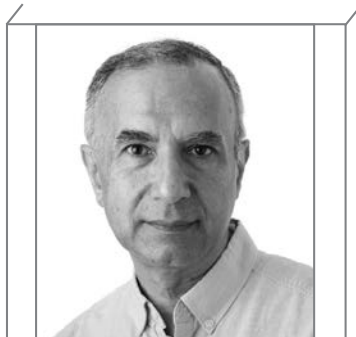
Emy Merin  
**Swenson Family Fellowship**

PhD candidate, Central European University, Austria  
Project Title: “The Paravur Dialogues: Reconstructing a ‘New Past’ by Exploring an Early Modern Garshuni Malayalam Manuscript from South India”  
At HMML: Sept. 8–29, 2022



Matteo Poiani  
**Swenson Family Fellowship**

PhD candidate, Université de Strasbourg, France  
Project Title: “Evagrius in the Syriac Manuscripts”  
At HMML: August 6–September 17, 2022



Dr. Botros Sadek  
**Swenson Family Fellowship**

Claremont Graduate University, U.S.  
Project Title: “Book of Confession by Cyril ibn Laqlaq, the 75th Coptic Patriarch”  
At HMML: August 20–September 3, 2022



Timothy Sailors  
**Swenson Family Fellowship**

Professor of Catholic Theology, Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen, Germany  
Project Title: “Pre-Nicene Christian Literature Preserved in Eastern Christian Manuscripts”  
At HMML: July 25–29 and August 8–19, 2022



Valeria Vanesio  
**Heckman Stipend**

Professor of Library Information and Archive Sciences, University of Malta, Malta  
Project Title: “Behind the Scenes of the Langue of Italy. Institutional and Archival Dynamics of the Order of St. John Between Center and Periphery (Sixteenth Century to 1839)”  
At HMML: Sept. 3–17, 2022

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Julie Dietman is assistant for advancement & library services at HMML.

# A Closer Look at a Single Manuscript

Dr. Celeste Gianni

Luqmān the Sage (also known as Luqmān al-Ḥakīm, the wise) is a legendary character in Arabic and Islamic storytelling. The historical origins of this sage are difficult to determine. However, two noted figures that go by the name of Luqmān are found in both pre-Islamic and Quranic traditions.

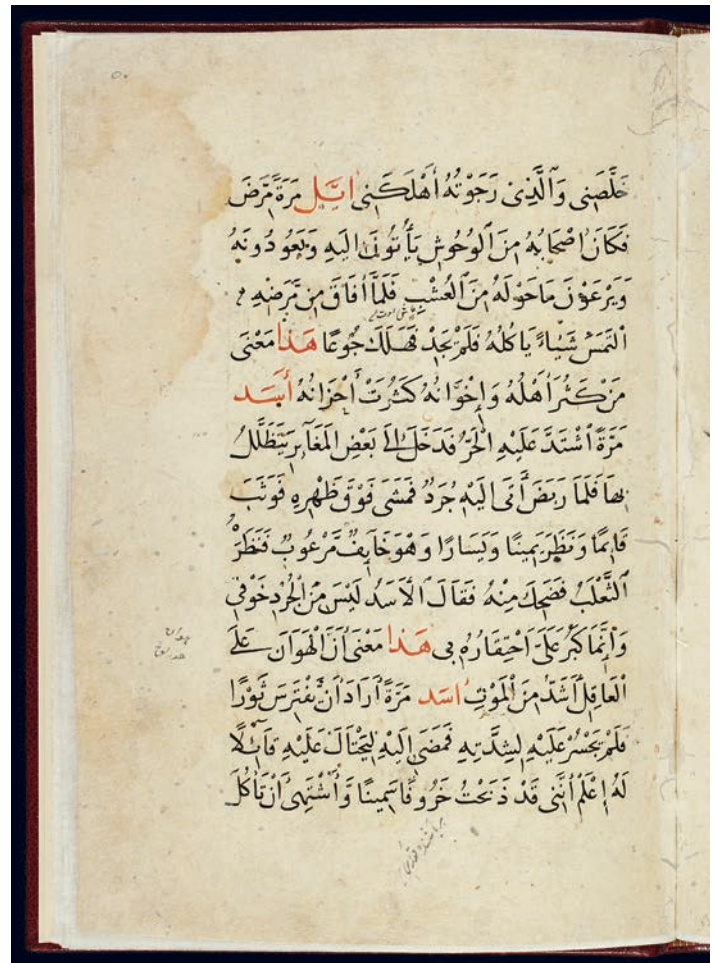
The pre-Islamic Luqmān was from a tribe named 'Ad that settled in the al-Aḥqāf region, between modern-day Yemen and Oman. In this tradition, Luqmān is not only described as a wise man but also as a legendary figure with strength and longevity.

The Quranic Luqmān, instead, is usually described as a slave from Nubia or Egypt who underwent several trials by God and, in the end, managed to prove his wisdom to his enslaver. The 31st *surah* (chapter) of the Qur'an is named after Luqmān who, according to the sacred book, received his wisdom directly from God.

These two figures fuse together in the literary tradition of fables and proverbs attributed to Luqmān the Sage, texts called *Amthāl Luqmān al-Ḥakīm* (Proverbs of Luqmān the Wise), or simply, *Amthāl*. Throughout different historical periods, Luqmān's fables and proverbs incorporated pre-Islamic Arabic sayings and rhymes; moral and ethical sayings from the Islamic period; and narratives from other traditions, such as the wise tales of the Aramean sage Aḥiqar, those by the Hellenistic Jewish sage Ben Sirach, and fables of Greek origin. Therefore, Luqmān texts circulating under the same title can vary greatly in accordance with the period they were produced or copied.

In HMML's digital collections, two manuscripts in Arabic (AKDI 01686 0214 and LMMO 00328) and one in Arabic Garshuni (LMMO 00318) feature proverbs and fables attributed to Luqmān. These proverbs are related to the Medieval period (which included Luqmān fables of Greek origin), currently the most common version of this composite tradition that is found in manuscripts.

AKDI 01686 0214 is the oldest copy of the three, a fifteenth-century manuscript held at the Khalidi Library in Jerusalem, likely copied in Egypt. The *Amthāl* text covers 10 leaves of the manuscript. Most of the proverbs are tales about animals and greatly resemble Aesop's Fables.



**ABOVE:** This page presents two tales by Luqmān the Sage: a story of a deer with too many friends, followed by a story of a lion, mouse, and fox (quoted). Khalidi Library, Jerusalem. (AKDI 01686 0214, folio 50r)

Each story is a few lines long and ends with a proverb or a teaching phrase, such as:

*"One day a lion became very hot, so he entered a cave to find some shade. When he was resting, a mouse came to him and walked on his back. The lion jumped upright and looked right and left, frightened and awkward. A fox saw him and laughed at him. So the lion said, 'I was not scared by the mouse! The worst was him humiliating me like that.' This story means that for the wise ones, humiliation is worse than death."*

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Dr. Celeste Gianni is cataloger of Arabic manuscripts at HMML.

# hill museum & manuscript library

2835 ABBEY PLAZA  
P.O. BOX 7300  
SAINT JOHN'S UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGEVILLE, MN 56321-7300  
320-363-3514 HMML.ORG

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Saint John's University



---

## Preserve and Share

Working with communities around the world to preserve rare and endangered cultural heritage

“You need the story of who you are to help you survive a disaster and give you hope for the future, so that you can tell the story about what happened there.”

—Corine Wegener, director of the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, speaking with Father Columba Stewart, OSB.

(To Listen: *A Global Journey*, May 26, 2022, available at [hmml.org/programs/pastevents](http://hmml.org/programs/pastevents))



**ABOVE:** A technician prepares an Evangelion (Gospel book) for digitization as part of an ongoing partnership with the Centre Numérique des Manuscrits Orientaux in Iraq.

---