

Indexing a Shared Knowledge Culture from Many Perspectives: The *Historical Index of the Medieval Middle East* (HIMME) as a Tool for Researching Diversity

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The medieval Middle East, at the crossroads of Africa and Eurasia, included more distinct yet intersecting literary traditions in more languages than any other part of the premodern world. While several of these literary traditions were religiously demarcated, others such as Arabic and Persian were multireligious written cultures. Despite this, the religious diversity of this region is often conceptualized as separate communities who sometimes interacted. Religion was certainly a socially relevant category employed by medieval people to organize their world, and yet people from every religion wrote about the same government, the same society, and largely the same culture, a culture expressed in religious multiplicity. A new digital research project has developed a reference tool (the *Historical Index of the Medieval Middle East*, HIMME) to demonstrate the shared culture and society of the diverse medieval Middle East. It provides a union index to selected primary sources in Arabic, Armenian, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Persian, and Syriac, indexing the people, places, and practices mentioned in each literary tradition. The result is that someone interested in, for example, the famous counter-Crusader Saladin (Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn) can search a database and discover relevant primary sources in unexpected languages such as Syriac as well as the expected Arabic and Latin sources, while the later conqueror Timur Lenk is also mentioned in Greek and Armenian texts that might easily be missed. This article offers an overview of the research tool (published on August 1, 2021), and a discussion of its scope, as well as suggestions for how it might be used to research Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the medieval Middle East.

Keywords: digital humanities, diversity, multilingualism, Middle East, Arabic, Armenian, Syriac, Persian, Greek, Hebrew

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We may start with a 900-year-old murder mystery which was just solved last year. In 1129 CE, as the influence of Ismā'īlī Shiism was growing in Damascus and the Crusaders were at the gates, the vizier who favored this new faction was killed, on the orders of the atabeg Tāj al-Mulūk Būrī himself. But to whom did the ruler entrust this murder? The Arabic historians Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn al-Qalānisī mention the murder but do not name the perpetrator.¹ But a Syriac source, the chronicle of Michael the Syrian, in fact directly identifies the murderer, even if unfortunately the name has been corrupted by Syriac scribes into »Sūj al-Dawla bar Šūfi.«² The name mystified the French and English translators of Michael's text, but it is still recognizable as a deformation of the name given elsewhere by Ibn al-Qalānisī as Mufarrij Abū l-Dhuwād Ibn Šūfi.³ While this is a small detail, comparing Arabic historical sources with a Syriac chronicle sheds light on the deadly urban politics in Burid Damascus under threat from a Crusader army. This has so far been missed by Islamic historians, whereas Syriacists have not usually evinced much interest in the political history embedded in this source. These divergences reflect modern scholarly frameworks rather than medieval realities, because in twelfth-century Damascus one might have heard Arabic, Greek, Turkish, multiple varieties of Aramaic, and probably also Kurdish, Armenian, Persian, and Latin.

Examples could be multiplied. Byzantinists interested in the imperial navy will find descriptions of reactions to the navy around the Eastern Mediterranean in the Persian travel account of Nāṣir-i Khusraw.⁴ Judaicists will find additional evidence for Fatimid-Jewish connections in the same author's account of an eleventh-century Jewish jewel merchant named Abū Sa'īd working for the Fatimid caliph.⁵ Crusader historians interested in Saladin (Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn) will find relevant citations in Michael's Syriac chronicle,⁶ while Timurid historians will find abundant material in the Greek history of Chalkokondyles and in Armenian colophons translated into English by Sanjian.⁷ The medieval Middle East was very linguistically diverse.

This linguistic plurality extended also to writing, as the medieval Middle East was probably home to more simultaneous literary traditions in more languages than any other part of the premodern world. These literary traditions in Arabic, Aramaic, Armenian, Coptic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Persian, Syriac, and eventually also Turkish present both a challenge and an opportunity to historians of the medieval Middle East. They present the opportunity to triangulate, to find evidence pertaining to the same people, places, society, and culture, from more viewpoints – and more diverse ones – than are typically available in most parts of the medieval world. But they are also a challenge because, for example, many scholars do not read both Arabic and Greek, and those who do almost never read both Persian and Armenian as well. Even if a scholar is open to consulting additional sources in different languages,

1 Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Tārīkh*, 223; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, ed. al-Zaybaq, 20:217.

2 Michael the Syrian, *Edessa-Aleppo Syriac Codex*, ed. Ibrahim, 620; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, trans. Chabot, 3:240; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, ed. Harrak, 178.

3 Thanks to Paul Cobb via Twitter for help identifying the murderer.

4 Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels*, ed. Thackston, 16, 50, 54.

5 Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels*, ed. Thackston, 74-75.

6 Michael the Syrian, *Edessa-Aleppo Syriac Codex*, ed. Ibrahim, 713, etc.; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, trans. Chabot, 3:328, 333, 334, 361, 364-366, 374, 375, 379, 382, 386, 388, 389, 393, 394, 396, 397, 403-405, 407-410; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, ed. Harrak, xv, 156, 158, 368, 370, 376, 378, 380, 394, 396, 404, 410, 416, 426, 428, 432, 436 and n. 1174, 438 and n. 1176, 450, 452, 454, 458, 460, 462, 464.

7 Chalkokondyles, *Histories*, ed. Kaldellis; Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts*.

reference works are almost always limited to sources in a particular language, or perhaps two, so it is difficult for an Arabist even to know what relevant sources might exist in, say, Armenian or Greek, and hard for a Byzantinist to know which emperors are mentioned in Arabic sources. Hence the study of the medieval Middle East has tended to follow confessional and linguistic boundaries shaped by graduate training. The siloing of research according to linguistic and confessional boundaries is also reflected in digital initiatives on the medieval Middle East. Digital tools in Islamic studies have proliferated in recent years, allowing scholars to access texts more easily than ever before, but challenges remain. Even tools like al-Maktaba al-Shamela are limited to the Arabic language, for example, while the *Onomasticon Arabicum* defined its scope to exclude non-Muslim names in Arabic (although some were included). But this scholarly self-segregation would not be necessary if a mechanism could be found to connect researchers to the resources of unfamiliar linguistic traditions, without first requiring them to learn the languages and master the reference works.

One attempt to connect researchers to unfamiliar resources of interest to them is the *Historical Index of the Medieval Middle East* (HIMME), an expanding research tool recently published with support from the US National Endowment for the Humanities. The idea is simple: scholars should be able to search for what interests them and thereby find relevant primary sources regardless of language. By providing index entries for persons and groups, for places, and for social or cultural practices ranging from political titles to *jizya* to fasting during Ramadan, HIMME enables researchers to find additional evidence spanning the breadth of medieval Middle Eastern languages, as well as its geography and chronology. HIMME's intended scope includes any text authored in or about the Middle East, North Africa, and al-Andalus between 600 and 1500, extending to references to earlier persons and places beyond this region found in texts authored within the medieval Middle East.

Of course, the entire corpus of medieval Middle Eastern textual sources far exceeds what any individual researcher or modest team can accomplish in several lifetimes. This project is the product of teamwork,⁸ but even so, a total prosopography and geographical gazetteer for the medieval Middle East is not feasible. Thus, while anticipating future expansion, the project has prioritized sources based on several criteria. First, the project prefers sources representing as broad a range of languages as possible, to visually display the linguistic diversity of the medieval Middle East. Secondly, the project prioritized sources that are not already being used to their full potential by scholars; we do not need another project to tell us what is in al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-l-muluk*, because scholars of Islamic history already know to look there. But not everyone would think to check the geographical dictionary of Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī for historical as well as geographical information, yet they would likely find some rich material were they to do so. Thirdly, sources were prioritized based on their anticipated ability to speak across the confessional and linguistic boundaries that presently divide scholarly subfields. Fourth, sources that have been translated into English were preferred since

8 The core research team consisted of Thomas A. Carlson (PI), postdoctoral researchers Liran Yadgar, Margaret Gaida, and Jessica S. Mutter, and undergraduate research assistants McKenzie Cady and Laurel Kenner. Additional contributions were made by Evan Willford, Josh Kuch, and Mary Papadopoulos. Computer programming was done by Winona Salesky, Thomas A. Carlson, and an anonymous programmer.

they are accessible to a broader range of scholars, although exceptions were made for some sources (such as Yāqūt's geographical dictionary). Finally, for a two-year project building infrastructure, it was necessary to begin with sources for which digital indices have already been prepared. The laborious process of generating a good new index to a substantial textual source was not possible within the confines of this phase.

Based on these criteria, nine sources were selected to be integrated into HIMME's initial publication. Several of them are travel accounts: From the eleventh century, there is the Persian travel account of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, who traveled from Central Asia to Egypt and Arabia and back, giving us a detailed description of Fatimid Egypt as well as of the Armenian and Kurdish highlands along his route.⁹ A Jewish traveler from Spain, Benjamin of Tudela, left a Hebrew account of his travels, including references to Abbasid court ceremonial and Seljuk politics.¹⁰ A group of four Frankish pilgrim texts by Burchard of Mount Sion, Riccoldo da Monte Croce, Odoric da Pordenone, and Wilbrand of Oldenburg provide Crusader and post-Crusader perspectives on not only Palestine, but also Syria and Egypt (and in some cases further east).¹¹ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Arabic travel account is the broadest description of the world from the medieval period, but also provides descriptions of late Byzantine Constantinople and Anatolia under the beylik period that are especially important.¹² When compared to sources originating from within the Middle East, all these travelers shared certain preoccupations and perpetuated certain misunderstandings. Travelers, more than local sources, were apt to describe local customs, because the practitioners regarded them as unremarkable, and travelers' characterizations of politics often misunderstood the long-term dynamics, alliances, and feuds, while providing modern scholars with an invaluable snapshot often less tainted by later anachronism.

By contrast, local sources were often more inclined to narrative history and recording local lore. The earliest source used in HIMME is a ninth-century Arabic apocalyptic text, the *Kitāb al-Fitan* by Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, which was chosen because it contains a surprising number of references to early Byzantine emperors as well as Umayyad caliphs.¹³ The second largest source included so far is the universal chronicle of Michael the Syrian, which describes in Syriac the reigns of Byzantine emperors, Abbasid and Fatimid caliphs, Turkish sultans, Armenian princes, and Frankish Crusaders, in addition to giving us the gossip on his own Syriac Christian community.¹⁴ There is a complete French translation, and a recently published English translation of the final 150 years, covered in this source. The largest source in

9 Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels*, ed. Thackston.

10 Benjamin of Tudela, *Itinerary*, ed. Adler.

11 Laurent (ed.), *Peregrinatores Medii Aevi Quatuor*.

12 Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Rihla*, ed. al-Tāzī, accessed on 30 October 2022: raw.githubusercontent.com/OpenITI/0800AH/master/data/0779IbnBattuta/0779IbnBattuta.Rihla/0779IbnBattuta.Rihla.Shamela0011769-ara1.completed; Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Travels*, trans. Gibb *et al.*

13 Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-Fitan*, ed. Zakkār, accessed on 31 October 2022: raw.githubusercontent.com/OpenITI/0250AH/master/data/0228IbnHammadKhuzaci/0228IbnHammadKhuzaci.Fitan/0228IbnHammadKhuzaci.Fitan.Shia003470-ara1; Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, *Book of Tribulations*, trans. Cook.

14 Michael the Syrian, *Edessa-Aleppo Syriac Codex*, ed. Ibrahim; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, trans. Chabot; Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*, ed. Harrak.

HIMME is the complete Arabic geographical dictionary, the *Muʿjam al-buldān* of Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, which was made available through the Open Islamicate Texts Initiative.¹⁵ Though most of its entries are brief, some give detailed historical and political information, including details about individual Crusader kings such as Andrew of Hungary, the cities in Frankish hands or under Muslim rule at the time, and indeed one of the very earliest Arabic references to the Mongol conqueror Chingiz Khan, who was still alive when this source was being written. Both Michael the Syrian and Yāqūt also provide extensive information relevant to the study of the medieval reception of knowledge about the ancient world. A collection of Armenian colophons (notes at the end of manuscripts that usually say who copied this text, for whom, and why) is among the only available sources for the late Ilkhanid and post-Mongol periods, the reign of the Qaraqoyunlu Türkmen dynasty and the early Aqqoyunlu Türkmen.¹⁶ Finally, Chalkokondyles wrote a late fifteenth century Greek history of the rise of the Ottoman household, which also provides extensive information on Timur and his successors.¹⁷ The Armenian colophons resemble the travel accounts in usually providing a snapshot of knowledge (or rumors) from a particular time, although they are also more geographically limited, while Chalkokondyles provided a survey of the state of the late medieval Mediterranean in light of the previous century of history.

From these sources, HIMME provides an index including over 40,000 entries for persons and groups, places, and practices. The numbers of entries taken from each source is shown in Table 1. These are not the sources that scholars in the various subfields of medieval Middle Eastern history would be inclined to check first, which is the point: HIMME is designed to provide new, perhaps surprising references on research topics, ones that might alter the study of those topics in unforeseen ways.¹⁸

Table 1. Sources included in HIMME's initial publication

Source	Century CE	Language	English translation?	No. of persons*	No. of places	No. of practices
Nu'aym b. Ḥammād	9th	Arabic	Y	611	239	78
Nāṣir-i Khusraw	11th	Persian	Y	110	251	42
Benjamin of Tudela	12th	Hebrew	Y	459	595	199
Michael the Syrian	12th	Syriac	Partial (plus complete French)	5,039	1,568	264

15 Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, accessed on 31 October 2022: raw.githubusercontent.com/OpenITI/0650AH/master/data/0626YaqtHamawi/0626YaqtHamawi.MucjamBuldan/0626YaqtHamawi.MucjamBuldan.Shamela0023735-ara1.mARkdown.

16 Khach'ikyan, *XIV Dari Hayeren Dzeragreri Hishatakaranner*; Khach'ikyan, *XV Dari Hayeren Dzeragreri Hishatakaranner*; Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts*.

17 Chalkokondyles, *Histories*, ed. Kaldellis.

18 HIMME provides citations to text editions – and, where possible, translations – but was unable to link directly to each cited text due to the facts that most cited sources remain within copyright and are not online in a format where particular pages could be addressed.

Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī	13th	Arabic	N	12,006	14,815	15
Frankish pilgrims	13th-14th	Latin	Partial	310	526	33
Ibn Baṭṭūṭa	14th	Arabic	Y	1,581	1,201	926
Armenian colophons	14th-15th	Armenian	Y	897	483	164
Chalkokondyles	15th	Greek	Y	489	460	82
Total**	9th-15th	7		20,356	18,283	1,646

* Includes groups.

** Note that the numbers in the last three columns cannot simply be added to arrive at a total, because some persons and many places occur in more than one, even several, sources. For example, Baghdad is mentioned in all these sources.

For example, HIMME has an entry for ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.¹⁹ As seen in the screenshot below (Figure 1), he is mentioned in several primary sources in Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Persian, and Syriac. Thus, if a scholar or perhaps a student or a curious member of the general public wanted to know what medieval authors had to say about ‘Alī, they could search for him in HIMME and find a number of different references to him. They would learn about when each event occurred (in this case, the life of ‘Alī), as well as when each author wrote his text (Figure 2). Therefore, in addition to finding individual citations relevant to ‘Alī, researchers can study the way ‘Alī is portrayed in medieval texts and how that portrayal changes over time. For example, one might ask how the Mongol conquest of parts of the Middle East changed historical perspectives on ‘Alī and his legacy, and scholars might be surprised to find that they can explore these changes using Syriac sources as well as Arabic ones.

Historical Index of the Medieval Middle East

'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib
 URI <https://medievalmiddleeast.org/person/7442>

The cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, the husband of Fatima, the fourth caliph according to Sunnis, and the first Imam according to Shiites.

Names

- Arabic: علي بن أبي طالب = 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib^{1-2, 4-5}
- Arabic: علي = 'Alī³
- Greek: Ἀλιῆ = Aliē⁶
- Hebrew: עלי בן אבי טאליב = 'LY BN 'BY Ṭ'LB⁷
- Latin: Ahali⁸
- Persian: علی بن ابی طالب = 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib⁹
- Syriac: ܥܠܝ = 'LY¹⁰
- Syriac: ܥܠܝ ܒܢ ܥܘܡܝܬܐ = 'Alī bar Abū Ṭāleb¹²
- Syriac: ܥܠܝ ܒܢ ܥܘܡܝܬܐ = 'Alī bar Abū Ṭāleb^{11, 15}

Attributes

- Male
- Death: 661 CE¹⁵
- Office: Caliph from 656 to 661^{1, 3, 6, 10, 12, 15}

See Also

- TEI XML source data
- "Alī b. Abī Ṭālib" in Wikipedia
- "Alī b. Abī Ṭālib" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition

Figure 1: HIMME entry for ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib

19 Carlson et al., ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, medievalmiddleeast.org/person/7442.

Historical Index of the Medieval Middle East				
Event Description	Date †	Composition †	Manuscript †	Edition †
Event mentioned by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī. ¹	before c. 1225	c.1225	877 A.H. / 1472	1995
Event mentioned by Nu 'aym b. Hammād. ²	before 843 CE	c. 820-843 CE	687 A.H. / 1288-9 CE	1993
Event mentioned by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa. ⁵	before 1354 CE	1354-1356	1356	1997
Event mentioned by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa. ³⁻⁴	before 1354 CE	1354-1356	early 1180 A.H. / 1766	1997
Event mentioned by Laonikos Chalkokondyles. ⁶	before 1464	1464-1468	mid-late 15th C	2014
Events mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela ⁷	before c.1170	c.1173	13th C	1907
Events mentioned by Riccolodo da Montecroce ⁸	c. 1289	c.1290	14th C	1864
Events mentioned by Nāṣir-i Khusraw ⁹	c. 1050	circa 1065	10th C Hijrī/16th C CE	2001
Events mentioned by Michael the Syrian ¹⁰	before 1199	1195-1199?	1598	2009
Event mentioned in the anonymous . ¹¹	946 AG / 634-5 CE	early 1200s	14th C	1920
Event mentioned in the anonymous . ¹²	966-76 AG / 34-44 AH / 655-65 CE	early 1200s	14th C	1920
Event mentioned in the anonymous . ¹³	966-76 AG / 34-44 AH / 655-65 CE	early 1200s	14th C	1920
Event mentioned by Gregory Bar Hebraeus. ¹⁴	before 1275	1275-1286?	before 1668 A.G./1356-7	1890
Event mentioned by Gregory Bar Hebraeus. ¹⁵	968-72 AG / 37-41 AH / 657-61 CE	1275-1286?	before 1668 A.G./1356-7	1890
Event mentioned by Gregory Bar Hebraeus. ¹⁶	530 AH / 1447 AG / 1135-6	1275-1286?	before 1668 A.G./1356-7	1890
Event mentioned by Gregory Bar Hebraeus. ¹⁷	567 AH / 1171-2	1275-1286?	before 1668 A.G./1356-7	1890
Event mentioned by Gregory Bar Hebraeus. ¹⁸	1485 AG / 1173-4	1275-1286?	before 1668 A.G./1356-7	1890

Figure 2: Temporal information for 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib

What about slightly less famous figures? HIMME has an entry for the *qāḍī* Yaḥyā b. Aktham (Figure 3), who was *qāḍī al-quḍāt* under the Abbasid caliphs al-Ma'mūn and al-Mutawakkil.²⁰ He was mentioned by both Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, in Arabic, and Michael the Syrian, in Syriac. A scholar looking for references to him might be surprised to find a Syriac source from several centuries after his death that mentions him, and indeed Michael is here indebted to Dionysius of Tell-Maḥrē, a contemporary of Yaḥyā, for his information. This reference might provide a valuable, contrasting perspective to the Arabic sources she might otherwise have consulted.

Sources
¹ Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, <i>Mu'jam al-buldān</i> (Beirut: Dār Ṣādr, 1995), (1) 334- 371- 521 (2) 86- 104- 364- 420 (5) 72 [Arabic].
² Gregorios Yuhanna Ibrahim, ed., <i>The Edessa-Aleppo Syriac Codex of the Chronicle of Michael the Great</i> (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2009), 521 [Syriac]. • Yaḥia, fils d'Aktem: J.-B. Chabot, trans., <i>Chronique de Michel le Syrien</i> (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901), III, 67 [French].
³ Gregorios Yuhanna Ibrahim, ed., <i>The Edessa-Aleppo Syriac Codex of the Chronicle of Michael the Great</i> (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2009), 523 [Syriac]. • Yaḥia: J.-B. Chabot, trans., <i>Chronique de Michel le Syrien</i> (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1901), III, 69 [French].

Figure 3: HIMME's citations for Yaḥyā b. Aktham

Yaḥyā's entry in HIMME provides his name as attested in Arabic and Syriac with transliterations of each, as well as an abstract with basic information and links to both the code for his page and other online sources of information. All HIMME entries also contain a temporal model, which visualizes the mediation of knowledge about this entity to the present, by plotting on a temporal field what is known about the date(s) of the event(s) contained

²⁰ Carlson *et al.*, Yaḥyā b. Aktham, medievalmideast.org/person/12287.

in the primary sources, as well as when the primary sources were written, when they were copied into the earliest extant manuscript, and the publication date of the edition used by HIMME. The model for Yaḥyā (*Figure 4*) has the date of an event that mentions him in the chronicle of Michael the Syrian, represented in dark blue, which is several centuries earlier than the date range in which Michael actually wrote his text, represented in light blue. The dark orange circle represents the date of the earliest extant manuscript, and the light orange circle represents the publication date of the edition used by HIMME. The same identifying dates are represented for Yāqūt's entry on Yaḥyā, though Yāqūt did not provide a date for him, and so all HIMME can confirm is that the reference occurs sometime before Yāqūt wrote his text. This uncertainty is represented by a dotted line to the left of the text's publication date, and the semicircle represents the last year in the range of dates in which Yāqūt was writing.

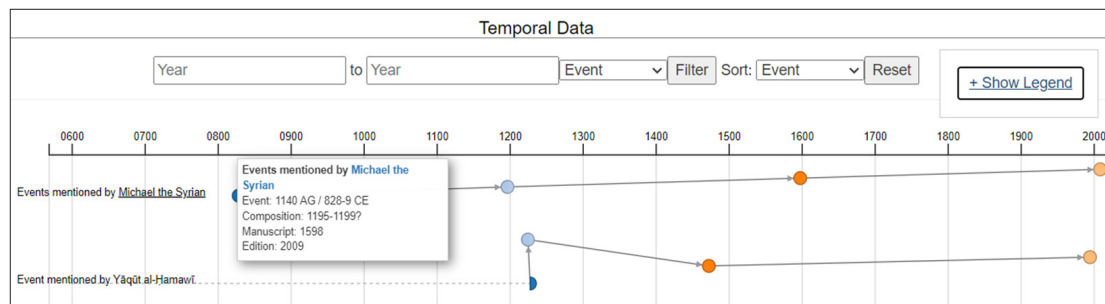


Figure 4: Temporal model for Yaḥyā b. Aktham

Nathan Gibson's project on Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a's biographical dictionary of physicians prompted one of us to ask: How many physicians are in HIMME's sources? At present there are at least 20, listed in Table 2. These include a very early brief reference to Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) by Nāṣir-i Khusraw, who was discussing the famous doctor within a decade of his death. Michael the Syrian mentioned the famous ninth-century caliphal physician Bukhtishū', and Ibn Buṭlān was used as a source by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī. Interestingly, Benjamin of Tudela names a Jewish physician from Egypt who was a court doctor in Constantinople, as well as the head of the Jewish community in Egypt before Maimonides, a physician named also by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a.²¹

21 Carlson and Yadgar, Rabbi Solomon Hamitsri, medievalmideast.org/person/14459.

Table 2. List of physicians included in HIMME's initial publication.

Name	Location	Century	Religion	Source
Hippocrates	Greece	5th-4th BCE	Pagan	Michael the Syrian, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī
Erasistratus	Alexandria	3rd BCE	Pagan	Michael the Syrian
Galen	Pergamon	3rd CE	Pagan	Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī
Sergius of Rēsh'aynā	Syria	6th CE	Christian	Michael the Syrian
Ibn Uthāl	Damascus	7th CE	Christian	Nu'aym b. Ḥammād
Sa'īd	Mosul	c. 700 CE	Christian	Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī
Bukhtishū'	Baghdad	9th CE	Christian	Michael the Syrian
Solomon	Baghdad	9th CE	Christian	Michael the Syrian
Ishāq al-Mutaṭabbib	Kairouan (Qayrawān)	9th CE	Unknown	Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī
Yahyā b. Jarīr al-Takrītī	Tikrit (Takrīt)?	Unknown	Christian	Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī
Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā)	Northern Iran	11th CE	Muslim	Nāṣir-i Khusraw, Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī
Ibn Buṭlān	Baghdad, Egypt	11th CE	Christian	Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī
Abū Mu'ādh 'Abdān	Tus (Ṭūs)	12th CE	Muslim	Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī
Abū Sa'īd	Eastern Anatolia	12th CE	Christian	Michael the Syrian
Ibn al-Tilmīdh	Baghdad	12th CE	Christian	Michael the Syrian
Nethanel Hibat Allāh	Egypt	12th CE	Jewish	Benjamin of Tudela
Solomon Ha-Miṣrī	Constantinople	12th CE	Jewish	Benjamin of Tudela
Zedekiah	Damascus	12th CE	Jewish	Benjamin of Tudela
unnamed	Western Anatolia	14th CE	Jewish	Ibn Baṭṭūṭa
Amirtovlat'	Amasya, Istanbul	15th CE	Christian	Armenian colophons

Among other examples of HIMME entries, the caliph al-Mahdī received a great deal of attention from the indexed sources, including six mentions by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, five mentions by Michael the Syrian, five mentions by Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, and several even as late as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa.²² Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qifṭī was used as a source by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, and also by Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, and he also is mentioned by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's travel account.²³ Yāqūt also included

22 Carlson *et al.*, al-Mahdī b. al-Manṣūr, medievalmideast.org/person/11600.

23 Carlson, 'Alī b. Yūsuf Abū l-Ḥasan al-Qāḍī al-Akram Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shaybānī al-Qifṭī, medievalmideast.org/person/7659.

six references to mobeds.²⁴ Michael the Syrian also refers to magi at least ten times, not all of which are pre-Islamic.²⁵ It was also interesting to find that, despite popular misconceptions that Constantinople was renamed Istanbul by the Ottomans after their capture of the city in 1453, Nāṣir-i Khusraw used both names already in the eleventh century; the »new« name of the city had been mentioned even earlier, in al-Mas'ūdi's tenth-century Arabic text *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf*.²⁶ Byzantinists might also be interested to know that 67 Byzantine emperors and empresses between Justinian I (r. 527-565) and Constantine XI, the last Byzantine emperor in 1453, have records in HIMME, and 13 occur in multiple sources.

These are just a few examples, out of thousands. HIMME will be useful for a variety of potential users, including established scholars in medieval Middle Eastern history, scholars in adjacent fields, students researching topics related to the medieval Middle East, and even the interested general public. The project expands the potential base of sources that any given user can access by providing information that might have been overlooked or unusable due to linguistic, confessional, or disciplinary boundaries. Many of the sources in HIMME contain entries for people and places outside of the Near East or from before the medieval period, providing medieval Middle Eastern perspectives on what was »known« about historical persons, places, and phenomena from other eras and geographic regions. This resource will therefore be useful to scholars in medieval Middle Eastern studies as well as medieval European, South Asian, East Asian, and African studies. HIMME can enrich scholarship on the medieval Middle East and beyond it by promoting broader conversations among scholars of the medieval world. Moving forward, HIMME can be expanded to include additional sources, either indexing the entirety of a work or providing individual citations. Contributions from HIMME users are warmly welcomed and may be submitted to the corresponding author of this report. As HIMME grows, its usefulness will increase for discovering polyglot evidence and demonstrating the inseparability of medieval Middle Eastern literary traditions.

What HIMME proposes is a radical reorientation of the scholarly categorization of textual primary sources that we have inherited. Scholars have categorized medieval Middle Eastern sources first by religion (Muslim, Christian, Jewish), and within those categories by language, so that Carl Brockelmann's large *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* included Islamic sciences but excluded texts written by Jews and Christians unless they were on »secular subjects.« Georg Graf supplemented this reference work with a separate *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Litteratur*, creating the false impression that »Christian Arabic« is an exclusively religious literary tradition separate from »Arabic« *simpliciter*. The evidence of medieval texts such as Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a's biographical dictionary shows that Jews, Christians, and Muslims participated in the same Arabic literary tradition.²⁷ Many of them also participated in non-Arabic literary traditions at the same time, whether Avicenna in Persian, Maimonides in Hebrew, or Ibn al-Tilmīdh in Syriac, demonstrating that all of the literary traditions of the medieval Middle East inhabited the same world with overlapping social and cultural contents.

24 Carlson, Mobeds, medievalmideast.org/practice/699.

25 Carlson *et al.*, Magi, medievalmideast.org/practice/486.

26 Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels*, ed. Thackston, 54; al-Mas'ūdi, *Kitāb al-tanbīh*, ed. de Goeje, 139. Thanks to Sean Anthony for the reference to al-Mas'ūdi's work.

27 See, for example, Carlson, »The garden of the reasonable«.

For the early Islamic period before the Abbasid revolution, the paucity of Arabic sources has persuaded Islamicists since the 1970s of the value of consulting sources across the breadth of different linguistic traditions, but the more abundantly supplied later periods may likewise benefit from imitating this method. Islamicists have much to learn from texts authored by Christians, Byzantinists can learn much from texts authored by Muslims, and both will find useful materials in Jewish sources. Even when there are abundant Arabic literary sources, it may be a Syriac source that names the murderer.

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List of Figures and Tables

- Figure 1: HIMME entry for 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.
- Figure 2: Temporal information for 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.
- Figure 3: HIMME's citations for Yaḥyā b. Aktham.
- Figure 4: Temporal model for Yaḥyā b. Aktham.
- Table 1: Sources included in HIMME's initial publication.
- Table 2: List of physicians included in HIMME's initial publication.