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Mapping Sanctity in Ottoman Jerusalem: Genealogy, Geography, And Indices in The *Maʿālim Al-Taṣdīq*[1]

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-ʿAlamī's *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq li-Maʿrifat Dukhūl al-Faqīr fī al-Ṭarīq* (Jerusalem, d. 1628) organizes sanctity—through genealogy, sacred geography, and indices. Whereas studies of early modern Sufi autobiography often foreground literary strategies of humility and authority, this study shifts attention to the apparatus by which sanctity is mapped, classified, and transmitted. First, the al-ʿAlamī genealogical chart is read as a double register: *nasab* (biological descent) and *silsila* (custodianship), each anchoring Jerusalemite authority within a Maghribi lineage that reaches back to ʿAbd al-Salām b. Mashīsh. Second, the text's itineraries are analyzed as cartographies of *baraka*, linking Jerusalem with Damascus, Qaṭanā, Sidon, and Mecca, while comparative reading with Abū Sālim al-ʿAyāshī's *Riḥla* highlights converging Levantine–Ḥijāzī circuits of sanctity. Third, the article considers indices of persons, places, and terms not merely as editorial tools but as epistemic instruments that structure memory and authority, continuing medieval practices of *fahrasa* and *thabat*. Methodologically, the study uses a single manuscript witness and one external corroborator (al-ʿAyāshī) and treats paratext—colophon, itinerary, indexing—as positive evidence of curated sanctity. Together, these apparatuses show that *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* was not only autobiography but also archive: a work that preserved Palestinian Sufi experience by encoding it into genealogical, geographical, and lexical maps. More broadly, early modern Jerusalem emerges not merely as a node of devotion but as a center of knowledge organization in the Ottoman Sufi world, offering a replicable method for reading paratext as evidence in Islamic intellectual history.

Keywords: Sufi autobiography; Jerusalem (Ottoman); *nasab* (genealogy); *silsila* (custodianship); sacred geography; indices and *paratext* (*fahrasa, thabat*).

Introduction

In the expanding field of early modern Islamic studies, Sufi self-writing has received sustained attention as a genre that reveals how mystics fashioned authority, negotiated humility, and inscribed presence into textual form. Scholarship has tended to privilege centers such as Cairo, Istanbul, and Fez, where manuscript circulation and institutional visibility reached high levels (Ephrat 2006; Knysh 2010; Ernst 1997). By contrast, Palestinian contributions remain underexplored, although Jerusalem held a distinctive position as a sacred hub of devotion and learning. This article addresses that imbalance by reading the autobiographical–archival treatise of the Jerusalemite Shādhilī master Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-ʿAlamī (d. 1628), *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq li-Maʿrifat Dukhūl al-Faqīr fī al-Ṭarīq*, as a key witness that repositions Jerusalem within Ottoman Sufi intellectual life and within the history of knowledge organization.

Recent scholarship—including my own work on narrating authority—has shown how al-ʿAlamī mobilizes *sajʿ* (rhymed prose), Qurʾānic allusion, and the self-effacing persona of *al-faqīr* ("the poor one") to craft a paradoxical voice of humility and legitimacy. In this frame, autobiography becomes testimony, effacement a mode of self-assertion, and authority a performance of non-agency. Even more striking is the way *Maʿālim al-*

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Taṣdīq maps sanctity. The work integrates three kinds of organizing devices—genealogical claims (colophon and lineage), sacred itineraries (Jerusalem–Damascus–Sidon–Mecca), and lexical catalogues (persons, places, terms)—that together transform a Jerusalemite life story into a *paratextual archive* of sanctity. These apparatuses preserve memory and encode legitimacy in visual, spatial, and lexical forms, offering a method for reading *paratext*—colophons, itineraries, indexing habits—alongside prose as evidence for how Jerusalemite Sufis organized, authorized, and transmitted sanctity.

Methodologically, the study proceeds from a defined evidentiary base. The analysis relies on a single surviving witness: the family-held manuscript of *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq*, copied in a careful *naskh* hand with rubrication and later pencil foliation at the al-Asʿadiyya zāwiya in Jerusalem. A single external attestation—Abū Sālim al-ʿAyāshī's *Riḥla* (Jerusalem, 1662)—confirms acquaintance with the text and excerpts more than ten pages, including his characterization of al-ʿAlamī as "imām of the Sufis in Jerusalem." This pairing—one manuscript witness and one contemporaneous corroborator—shapes the inquiry. It also clarifies the contribution: a study of sanctity that treats *paratext* as data, reads the colophon as a genealogical claim, treats itineraries as cartographies of *baraka*, and curates names, places, and technical terms as an intellectual infrastructure.

The argument unfolds across three complementary strategies through which the text systematizes sanctity. First, lineage: the genealogical chart—registered in the colophon—functions as a double register. On the one hand, *nasab* (biological descent) ties al-ʿAlamī's line to a chain of local scholars and custodians in Jerusalem; on the other, *silsila*—the initiatic chain, and in this manuscript also a register of household custodianship—aligns this Jerusalemite identity with a Maghribi ancestry reaching back to ʿAbd al-Salām b. Mashīsh (d. 1228), the luminous forebear of the Shādhiliyya. The chart therefore joins household memory with a transregional pedigree, linking family, city, and order. Genealogy here conveys prestige, yet it also performs an editorial function: it binds the act of copying to the continuity of sanctity and turns the manuscript itself into an archive of descent.

Second, space: the itineraries of *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* create cartographies of *baraka*. Jerusalem anchors the author's devotions at saints' tombs and within the Asʿadiyya *Zāwiya*. Damascus supplies initiations, teaching, and the *khirqa*; Qaṭanā and Sidon introduce secondary nodes of saintly presence and circulation; Mecca seals the itinerary with the sacred precinct and visionary confirmation. This geography resembles the circuits of early modern *riḥla* writing, and a comparison with al-ʿAyāshī's *Riḥla* makes the alignment visible: Levantine–Ḥijāzī corridors recur across both accounts. In al-ʿAlamī's prose, the key images—descending lights, gatherings of saints, the transfer of *ijāzāt* and *khirqa*—compose a spatial grammar through which sanctity travels.

Third, structure: the work's catalogic habits generate an indexical logic embedded in the prose. Sequences such as "*majālis al-awliyāʾ*, *ijāzāt*, *khirqa*, *karāmāt*, *baraka*" already behave like compact lists. A modern editorial index of persons makes chains of relation discernible—Maghribi forebears, Damascene transmitters, a Jerusalemite custodian—across dispersed passages. A places index, with *Qaṭanā* nested under *Damascus*, highlights corridors of sanctity that the narrative implies and a map can display. An index of technical terms—*faqīr, silsila, khirqa, baraka, karāmāt*—surfaces the lexicon that sustains claims to authority. Indices therefore act as epistemic instruments: they cultivate retrieval; they model how memory functions in a Sufi community; they extend medieval practices of *fahrasa* and *thabat* into a present editorial frame.

This triad—lineage, space, structure—illuminates *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* as a dual project: autobiography and archive. The humility of the *faqīr* voice remains central, yet the architecture of the codex channels sanctity through charts, itineraries, and lists. The result is a Jerusalemite contribution to Ottoman Sufi culture that joins a local voice to transregional lines of authority and, at the same time, models a method for reading *paratext* as evidence in Islamic intellectual history.

The stakes extend beyond a single treatise. Genealogical charts confer prestige by linking families to saintly ancestors; itineraries inscribe sanctity into landscape by connecting shrines to teaching centers and pilgrimage stations; indices curate memory by organizing names, places, and concepts into structures of access. Each mode resonates with broader Islamic scholarly traditions—*shajarāt al-nasab* (genealogical trees), *riḥla* literature, and *fihrist/thabat* catalogues—that served as instruments of memory and legitimacy. Within this constellation, Jerusalem appears as a city of devotion and a center of knowledge organization. The apparatus of *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* therefore offers a path for future work on Palestinian Sufism: a focus on the ways manuscripts themselves—through colophons, itineraries, and indices—encode sanctity and sustain transmission.

The remainder of the article develops this case in three steps. Section Two examines the al-ʿAlamī genealogical chart as a performance of descent and custodianship, and considers how *nasab* and *silsila* converge and diverge in the colophon and its surrounding notices. Section Three tracks itineraries as cartographies of sanctity, reading Jerusalem–Damascus–Sidon–Mecca alongside the *Riḥla* of Abū Sālim al-ʿAyāshī (d. 1679) to highlight recurring Levantine–Ḥijāzī circuits. Section Four turns to indices as instruments of authority, situating the volume's persons–places–terms within early modern indexing practice and the *longue durée* of Islamic bibliographic traditions. The conclusion synthesizes these perspectives to show how *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* preserves Palestinian Sufi experience through systematic mapping, and how this paratextual archive ensures scholarly re-entry into the text across time.

Notes on Citation and Transliteration

Since this study relies on a single fragile manuscript and integrates Arabic primary materials alongside modern scholarship, it is important to clarify the conventions by which citations, transliteration, and editorial interventions are handled. This section is placed here to facilitate verification and to ensure consistent use of locators in the analysis that follows. Scholars of Islamic intellectual history employ a variety of styles and mechanisms in citing manuscripts, Qurʾānic verses, and technical terms. The system adopted here is designed to ensure transparency, to facilitate verification across manuscript and digital formats, and to provide consistency with established academic practice in Sufi studies. These notes therefore serve not only to explain how locators and terms appear in the text but also to render the work a reliable research instrument for future scholarship.

Manuscript and Locators. The most significant technique employed in this study is the system of manuscript locators. Because the *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* survives only in a single copy, precise referencing is essential for scholarly verification. All primary citations marked "MS" refer to the family-held manuscript preserved at the al-Asʿadiyya zāwiya (Jerusalem). Since the codex survives as a single witness with later pencil foliation and no stable original pagination, each quotation provides a section marker (e.g., opening invocation, colophon) and a locator. For ease of verification, I also supply PDF page numbers for the digital file consulted (e.g., "MS, colophon; PDF pp. 18–19"). Where pencil page numbers are used, I indicate them explicitly (e.g., "MS, pencil p. 37"). When folio references become available, they may be added in the form "MS, fol. xxr/xxv."

Normalization and Editorial Intervention. A second important aspect concerns normalization and the notation of editorial intervention. Arabic quotations are rendered in English translation with light normalization of punctuation and sentence breaks. Qurʾānic citations are standardized to the ʿUthmānī rasm and cited by sūra:āya. The following signs mark editorial intervention: […] = lacunae; [ ] = words supplied by the editor; (?) = uncertain readings.

Transliteration. A third dimension is transliteration. Arabic is rendered according to IJMES conventions: long vowels ā, ī, ū; hamza ʾ; ʿayn ʿ; the definite article *al-* assimilated where appropriate. Proper nouns are normalized to the forms most familiar in Sufi studies (e.g., Shādhilī/Shādhiliyya, Qādiriyya, zāwiya, khirqa, silsila, baraka, karāmāt). Technical terms appear italicized at first mention and in roman thereafter.

External Corroboration. Finally, the only contemporaneous attestation is Abū Sālim al-ʿAyāshī's *Riḥla* (Jerusalem visit, 1662), which excerpts more than ten pages and characterizes al-ʿAlamī as "imām of the Sufis in Jerusalem." References to the *Riḥla* are given by volume and page (e.g., 2:441–55).

Together, these conventions—locators, normalization, transliteration, and corroboration—provide the scaffolding by which the *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* can be read, cited, and compared with other sources, ensuring that a fragile single-witness manuscript becomes a stable and usable resource for scholarship. For ease of reference, a concise table of these conventions is provided in Appendix A.

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Genealogy and Authority

If the narrative of the *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* presents Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-ʿAlamī as *al-faqīr*—the poor servant who effaces his name before God—the codex's genealogical apparatus activates a second register of authority: descent. At the end of the manuscript, the copyist Muḥammad Ṭāhir b. al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlamī inscribes a colophon that identifies himself, places the copy within the family lodge, and anchors the line of transmission in a Maghribi saintly ancestor. The colophon reads:

> This copy was transcribed by the hand of the poor servant … Muḥammad Ṭāhir b. al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-ʿAlamī … the son of our guide to God Most High and the conveyor of seekers to the Presence of the Lord of the worlds, al-Sayyid al-Sharīf Muḥammad al-ʿAlamī, buried in the al-Asʿadiyya zāwiya on Mount Ṭūr Zaytā—may God grant him vast mercy. … He was the son of Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar, the Muftī of Damascus … son of al-Amīr Mūsā al-Sharafī al-ʿAlamī, buried in the quarter of al-Sharaf in Jerusalem, upon whose tomb are inscribed these verses … He was the son of … our lord ʿAbd al-Salām b. Mashīsh … the son of ʿAbd Allāh al-Kāmil, the son of al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā, the son of al-Ḥasan al-Sibṭ, the son of our master ʿAlī and our lady Fāṭima, daughter of the Prophet of Mercy … (MS, colophon; PDF pp. 18–19).

Read through the lenses of intellectual history and material philology, this chain operates as a double register. As *nasab* (biological lineage), it assembles forebears who conferred social capital in Jerusalem—jurists, custodians, and patrons—so that the family's standing appears cumulative rather than episodic. As *silsila* (custodianship/initiatic belonging), it welds the local to the transregional by carrying the line through the Maghrib to ʿAbd al-Salām b. Mashīsh, the luminous ancestor of the Shādhiliyya, and from there into the prophetic household via al-Ḥasan al-Sibṭ. In Bourdieu's idiom, this arrangement converts symbolic and spiritual capital into a coherent, transmissible endowment (Bourdieu 1986); in Weber's, it routinizes charismatic authority through named succession (Weber 1978); in Assmann's terms, it stabilizes cultural memory by binding ephemeral life-writing to a durable schema of kinship and sanctity (Assmann 2011).

A second manuscript voice cultivates the counter-register of humility. Early in the text, the author performs self-effacement through the formula of poverty: "[…] *al-faqīr* … confessing weakness and poverty, hoping for the mercy of the Almighty, obedient to the command of the Subduer." *(*MS, opening invocation; PDF p. 2*)*.

This alternation—faqīr rhetoric on the one hand, nasab/silsila display on the other—generates a productive tension while avoiding outright contradiction. Humility frames the persona through which sanctity speaks; genealogy furnishes the scaffolding through which sanctity travels across generations. The codex, in other words, performs both roles: it carries a voice of abasement in the lines of *sajʿ*, and it houses a diagram of prestige at the paratextual edge.

Theologically and socially, such a performance resonated strongly in the seventeenth-century Levant. Descent through ʿAbd al-Salām b. Mashīsh affiliated a Jerusalemite household to a saint whose repute threaded the Maghrib, Egypt, and Syria through the Shādhilī networks. In a city where several sharīfian and scholarly lineages sought recognition and endowed their prestige through lodges and offices, a Maghribi link endowed the family with a bi-directional claim: upward toward the Idrīsids and the Prophet's house, and outward toward the Shādhilī order's transregional circuits (Geoffroy 2010; Le Gall 2005). The colophon thus aligns the al-ʿAlamī archive with two currencies of legitimacy at once—blood and *baraka*.

From a historiographical vantage, this colophon requires critical reading. Genealogical texts in Islamic societies frequently functioned as performances of legitimacy, not neutral registries (Messick 1993; Sublet 1991; Savant & de Felipe 2014). The act of copying the book within the family *zāwiya*, naming the ancestor-custodians, marking the Asʿadiyya as locus of residence and burial, and inscribing the Maghribi chain together produce a paratext that claims rather than only reports lineage. The material form matters: *naskh* hand, rubricated saints' names, and a closing apparatus that "seals" the codex with a tree of descent convert the manuscript into a carrier of authorization. In Genette's sense of *paratext*, the border-zone of the book does decisive work: it prescribes how the reader should receive the narrative voice and the memory it seeks to sustain.

The evidence base remains modest and sharply defined. The manuscript available to us is *one* family copy; the sole contemporary corroborator is *one* traveler, Abū Sālim al-ʿAyāshī, who in 1662 consulted the text in Jerusalem, excerpted more than ten pages, and praised the author as "imām of the Sufis in Jerusalem" *(al-ʿAyāshī, Riḥla, vol. 2, pp. 441–55)*. Al-ʿAyāshī's testimony confirms reception and esteem, even as it leaves the internal architecture of the genealogy unverified by an external register. Within these constraints, the colophon still serves as positive data: it documents how one Jerusalemite household curated its sanctity at the intersection of kinship, initiatic memory, and institutional place.

The *faqīr* voice and the genealogical chart do more than sit side by side; they shape one another. The poverty formula channels the Sufi topos of effacement, but it also legitimates the self as a vessel worthy of bearing the chain: the more the author recedes behind confession and praise, the more the colophon may speak on his behalf. Conversely, the chart magnifies the humility rhetoric by implying that genuine descent requires comportment suited to the burden of transmission. Many Ottoman-era Sufi families, especially those occupying custodial positions in shrines and lodges, cultivated this equilibrium of posture and pedigree: abasement before God intertwined with the public performance of *nasab* as a social obligation toward the living archive of saints and scholars.

Placed in this frame, the manuscript's claims illuminate a specific Jerusalemite politics of sanctity. The Asʿadiyya on Ṭūr Zaytā emerges as both locus of residence and memorial spine; the list of jurists and muftīs stitches the city's legal authority to its Sufi memory; the Maghribi anchor extends the spatial horizon of recognition to Cairo and the western lands. Through a single colophon, a map of authority becomes legible: local custodianship, office-holding, saintly descent, and shrine-based continuity, bound together in one object and carried forward through copying and recitation.

This dialectic of voice and tree carries methodological consequences. Reading the narrative alone yields a devotional self; reading the paratext yields a cartography of authority. Mapping that cartography entails attention to both lines on the page and lines of transmission. The *bn*-chain of descent links fathers to sons; the *silsila* of custodianship links manuscript to copyist, lodge to family, saint to seeker; the Maghribi connection links Jerusalem to the wider Ottoman Sufi world. Together, these strands transform the autobiography of a single *faqīr* into a chart of authority spanning centuries and geographies—albeit one preserved within the fragile bounds of a single manuscript *(*MS, colophon; PDF pp. 18–19*)* and the solitary testimony of a Moroccan traveler *(*al-ʿAyāshī*, Riḥla,* vol. 2, pp. 441–55).

Sacred Geography and Travel

Where genealogy anchors al-ʿAlamī in lines of descent, travel (*safar*) situates him within sacred space. Premodern Sufi discourse consistently framed *safar* as an ethical and epistemic discipline—movement that trains humility, tests endurance, and opens inward unveilings (Assadi 2025). As synthesized there, *safar* can be classified into outer journeys across terrain, inner journeys of the heart, pedagogical journeys under a master's discipline, and imaginal journeys through visionary states. Ibn ʿArabī describes the itinerary from illusion to certitude, while Abū Madyan insists on the schooling of the soul through fatigue and dispossession (Assadi 2025; Addas 1993). Al-ʿAlamī places himself inside this pedagogy, presenting his movements across

Jerusalem, Damascus, Sidon, Qaṭanā, and Mecca as cartographies of *baraka*—a geography where shrines, lodges, and cities function as nodes of transmission.

Jerusalem emerges as the axial point of experience and memory: "I invoked God at the tombs of the saints in Bayt al-Maqdis and I attended the Asʿadiyya *zāwiya*, where I beheld anwār tanazzalat ['lights descending'] upon those places." (MS, Jerusalem section). Here space itself assumes agency. Saints' tombs, the al-Aqṣā Mosque, and the Asʿadiyya lodge appear as engines of illumination. The phrase *anwār tanazzalat* condenses a theology of sacred geography in which coordinates radiate divine presence. Jerusalem is not simply stone and archive; it is an animated surface where signs of favor are seen, remembered, and repeated in devotional practice.

From the Jerusalem axis, the path extends north to Damascus, a central theater of Ottoman-era Sufism, where prestige derived from the density of teachers, chains of transmission, and the city's role as a hinge between inland Syria and the Ḥijāz. Al-ʿAlamī's Damascene encounters appear in a compressed catalogue: "I attended majālis al-awliyāʾ and delighted in the lights of the pure ones. I received ijāzāt and the khirqa from the guiding shaykhs; I witnessed their karāmāt and absorbed their baraka." (MS, Damascus section). Each term—majālis, ijāza, khirqa, karāmāt, *baraka*—marks a discrete operation of legitimation. The syntax folds a semester of initiations into a few clauses, yet the cumulative effect is a pedagogy of sanctity enacted in place.

Beyond Damascus the itinerary names Qaṭanā, a village associated in local lore with saintly presences. Its single mention has analytic weight: minor nodes matter for mapping the corridor between city and countryside. Sidon (Ṣaydā), the Levantine port, likewise emerges as a threshold where inland devotion met maritime circuits. Even brief notices, when placed on a Levantine map, sketch the spine that linked Jerusalem to Damascus, with tributary stations radiating sanctity outward.

The journey reaches its climax in Mecca, where ritual fulfillment and visionary confirmation converge: "I was among those present as witness at the sacred precinct of God [al-balad al-ḥarām], where signs of approval and lights of blessing were manifest." (MS, Mecca section). Again, the motif of *anwār*—lights—anchors the validation. The Meccan horizon consummates the itinerary: the presence that Jerusalem initiates and Damascus amplifies appears at the Ḥaram as a saturated field of favor.

Taken together, these movements array a triangular geography—Jerusalem, Damascus, Mecca—flanked by lateral nodes like Sidon and Qaṭanā. Each vertex performs a distinct function: Jerusalem anchors through shrines and descent, Damascus legitimates through initiation and teaching, and Mecca consummates through pilgrimage and vision. This is the sense in which the *Maʿālim* "maps": it aligns sanctity with geography until a cartography of baraka becomes legible.

Indices as Knowledge-Maps

If sacred geography charts sanctity through *where* al-ʿAlamī traveled, the apparatus of indices charts sanctity through how memory is organized. The *Maʿālim* lacks a modern index, yet its prose already behaves indexically. Names of saints, places of *baraka*, and technical terms of Sufi doctrine recur in compact catalogues, functioning as retrieval devices within the narrative itself. What emerges is a cognitive map: a structure where sanctity is not only narrated but also systematized into repeatable patterns.

A single passage from the Damascus section illustrates the principle: "I attended majālis al-awliyāʾ, I received ijāzāt and the khirqa, I witnessed their karāmāt, I absorbed their baraka." Here the catalogue is autobiography and list at once. It compresses social setting (*majālis*), formal transfer (*ijāza, khirqa*), and experiential validation (*karāmāt, baraka*) into a short, mnemonic sequence. Similarly, the Jerusalem recollection—"I invoked God at the tombs of the saints … I attended the Asʿadiyya … I beheld lights descending"—arranges shrine, lodge, and illumination into a ready-made thesaurus of sanctity.

Placing these catalogues within a longue-durée perspective reveals their genealogy. Islamic scholarship developed list-genres such as the *fahrasa* (teachers and lessons) and the *thabat* (chains of authorization), both of which served as early indexing technologies. Al-ʿAlamī's catalogues function as micro-thabats: curated inventories of authority embedded in autobiography. Modern indices of persons, places, and terms extend this native logic, scaling it into a navigable archive.

Two examples show how editorial indices clarify the manuscript's internal order. An Index of Persons collates scattered names—ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Damascene transmitters, Jerusalemite custodians—into visible chains of recognition otherwise buried in prose. An Index of Places situates Jerusalem, Damascus, and Mecca as primary entries, with Qaṭanā nested under Damascus and Sidon cross-referenced as a coastal node, thus making the Levantine–Ḥijāzī corridor explicit. An Index of Technical Terms highlights the operative lexicon—*faqīr, ijāza, khirqa, baraka, karāmāt*—so that authority can be tested against the manuscript's usage rather than left impressionistic.

Indexing thus performs a dual function: it documents sanctity as remembered in the text, and it models sanctity as retrievable knowledge. Whereas sacred geography maps baraka across space, indices map baraka across memory and language. Both logics belong to the same epistemic culture of verification. To walk the road was to gather blessings; to list the road was to stabilize them for posterity.

Conclusion

The *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq li-Maʿrifat Dukhūl al-Faqīr fī al-Ṭarīq* of Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-ʿAlamī offers more than a glimpse into the life of a Jerusalemite Sufi. Preserved in a single fragile codex and attested externally only by the Moroccan traveler Abū Sālim al-ʿAyāshī, the work embodies both the vulnerability and the resilience of Palestinian manuscript culture. The author presents himself consistently as *al-faqīr*—poor, effaced, deferential—while the apparatus encodes sanctity in forms that endure: genealogical chains, itineraries of shrines, and catalogues of terms. These modes of inscription convert autobiography into archive.
Three strategies of mapping sanctity emerge from the analysis. First, genealogy: the colophon inscribes the al-ʿAlamī family into a chain that begins with Jerusalemite custodians, ascends through scholarly offices such as the Muftī of Damascus, and culminates in the Maghrib with ʿAbd al-Salām b. Mashīsh before reaching the Prophet's household. This chart functions simultaneously as *nasab* (biological descent) and *silsila* (custodial and spiritual transmission), reconciling the paradox of humility and prestige: the *faqīr* speaks in abasement while the family line bears the weight of high sanctity. The manuscript thus operates as both confession of weakness and archive of honor.
Second, geography**:** the recollections trace a triangular itinerary—Jerusalem, Damascus, Mecca—with secondary nodes at Sidon and Qaṭanā. Each site performs a distinct role: Jerusalem anchors sanctity through shrines and descent; Damascus legitimates through teaching, initiation, *ijāzāt*, and *khirqa*; Mecca consummates the journey through pilgrimage and visionary confirmation. The imagery is consistent: shrines radiate *anwār* (lights), shaykhs bestow authorizations, the sacred precinct displays "signs of approval and lights of blessing." A comparative view of al-ʿAyāshī's *Riḥla* confirms the same nodal points and shows how the Jerusalemite *faqīr* and the Maghribi traveler converged upon a shared cartography of sanctity.
Third, indices: although the *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* predates modern indexing practice, it generates proto-indices through compact lists of names, places, and terms. Phrases such as "I received *ijāzāt* and the *khirqa* … I witnessed their *karāmāt* and absorbed their *baraka*" already behave as curated entries that invite cross-reference. Modern indices of persons, places, and technical terms extend this latent structure and render the manuscript retrievable for diverse questions. Indexing functions as an epistemic instrument: to index Damascus is to signal a hub of initiation; to cross-reference "Qādiriyya → ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī" proposes equivalences and pathways of recognition. In this corpus, indices do not merely point toward knowledge—they model how sanctity is structured.
Taken together, genealogy, geography, and indices present *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* as a multi-layered archive that converts fragile recollections into durable forms of legitimacy. A single witness still encodes sanctity across registers—descent, space, vocabulary. This multi-modality helps explain why al-ʿAyāshī, encountering the text in Jerusalem, praised al-ʿAlamī as "the imām of the Sufis in Jerusalem" and transcribed substantial excerpts in his *Riḥla*. For him, as for the al-ʿAlamī family, the codex operated simultaneously as testimony and archive.
The implications reach beyond Jerusalem. For Sufi studies**,** the case illustrates how Palestinian voices participated actively in Ottoman traditions of self-writing, genealogical performance, and the curation of memory. For intellectual history**,** the treatise offers a model of knowledge organization—genealogical trees, sacred itineraries, and lexical catalogues as scaffolding—long before modern indexes. For manuscript culture, the codex demonstrates how families preserved authority through copying, rebinding, annotation, and lodge-based custodianship.
Most pointedly for the history of Jerusalem, the *Maʿālim al-Taṣdīq* reframes the city as a center of knowledge organization as well as a landscape of shrines. The codex crystallizes a Jerusalemite strategy: fragile in circulation, dense in preservation. Sanctity here is narrated and mapped. To speak as *al-faqīr* articulates humility; to inscribe a genealogy anchors authority; to outline an itinerary connects places in a cartography of light; to list names and terms orders memory for re-entry. In that convergence, autobiography takes the form of an archive, and a singular Jerusalemite voice becomes a durable map of sanctity.

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Appendix A: Citation and Transliteration Conventions

Aspect	Convention	Purpose
Manuscript Locators	All primary citations marked "MS" refer to the family-held manuscript at the al-Asʿadiyya zāwiya (Jerusalem). Section markers used (e.g., opening invocation, colophon). PDF page numbers supplied (e.g., "MS, colophon; PDF pp. 18–19"). Pencil page numbers indicated explicitly; folio refs may be added later.	Enables precise verification in a single-witness manuscript without original pagination.
Normalization	Light normalization of punctuation and sentence breaks in translations.	Provides readable English prose while preserving fidelity to original rhythms.

Aspect	Convention	Purpose
Editorial Signs	[ ] = supplied by editor; […] = lacunae; (?) = uncertain reading.	Makes clear where interventions occur and signals textual uncertainty.
Qurʾānic Citations	Standardized to the ʿUthmānī rasm; cited by sūra: āya.	Ensures consistency and facilitates cross-checking with standard Qurʾānic editions.
Transliteration	IJMES system: long vowels ā, ī, ū; hamza ʾ; ʿayn ʿ; *al-* assimilated; proper nouns normalized to forms familiar in Sufi studies (e.g., Shādhilī/Shādhiliyya). Technical terms italicized at first mention, roman thereafter.	Aligns with international academic standards; keeps terms recognizable to specialists.
External Corroboration	Abū Sālim al-ʿAyāshī's *Riḥla* (Jerusalem, 1662), which excerpts >10 pages and calls al-ʿAlamī "imām of the Sufis in Jerusalem." References given by vol./page (e.g., 2:441–55).	Establishes external testimony beyond the single manuscript witness.