

70. Andreev, Chekhovich, *op. cit.*, p. 122.  
 71. *Ibid.*, p. 123.  
 72. Masalskiĭ, *op. cit.*  
 73. Andreev, Chekhovich, *op. cit.*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Sergio Noja Nosedà et François Déroche. Sources de la Transmission Manuscrite du Texte Coranique, Les manuscrits de style hijāzī. Vol. 2.1. Les: Fondazione Ferni Noja Nosedà Studi Arabo Islamici, 2001. LXXIV + 256 pp.** Review of the *Introduction*, with special attention to the sections *Comparisons between individual manuscripts and the Vulgate* and *Some ideas for a provisional conclusion*

In this volume, Dr. Sergio Noja Nosedà has continued the fine precedent begun in the first volume of the *Sources* series by including informative and historically important articles with the text of *hijāzī* Qur'ān manuscripts. After opening with a short history of the contributions of Silvestre de Sacy and Michel Amari to Qur'ān studies, Dr. Noja Nosedà provides a helpful description of the Qur'ān script entitled *hijāzī* (p. XIV) and an analysis of its relation to the scripts described in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*. He also includes a summary of the current state of knowledge concerning this early Qur'ān script together with questions that remain unsolved.

This is followed by a brief section entitled "Collections containing manuscripts in the *hijāzī* style" (p. XIX). Here he presents an important observation shared by himself and Dr. Déroche that when the contents of known extant *hijāzī* manuscripts are surveyed (excluding the Ṣana'ā' finds) substantial portions of the Qur'ān are not represented, particularly from *sūra* 77 through 114. This writer found himself wanting more description of the contents of the manuscripts and also more reflection from Dr. Noja Nosedà as to the significance of this observation, and of any other general observations that he and Dr. Déroche could share. A table describing the contents of the extant *hijāzī* manuscripts and their location would be an excellent addition to a future volume.

The next section (p. XX) gives information concerning the Amari project that supplements what is found in the first volume. Dr. Noja Nosedà gives a de-

scription of the contents and uses of the CD-ROMs accompanying the volumes. A useful feature of the CD-ROMs is that their Arabic text files are named according to the folio page to which they relate. A further refinement could be to add a brief description of the contents of the Qur'ān portion represented by each folio, either on its facing text page, and/or in the title of the text file on the CD-ROM.

The next section is "Comparisons between individual manuscripts and the Vulgate" (p. XXIII). This is an excellent beginning to a topic that these volumes make possible, and should be supplemented and expanded in future volumes. This section describes the absence of the perpendicular *alif*, which is perhaps the most noticeable difference encountered when initially surveying the text. Its importance in the history of the transmission of the text and in the development of Arabic orthography is well deserving of the mention it receives. Also, an intriguing software package is mentioned and demonstrated, "IL COMPARATORE", for making comparisons between the text in the facsimile and the "Vulgate" of the King Fu'ād edition. A brief but very helpful list shows the variety of words in which this variant of missing perpendicular *alifs* is found.

My only criticisms of this section are that first, it could have been expanded to provide a sampling of other kinds of orthographic variants. For instance, there are other variants concerning *alif*<sup>1</sup>, as well as variants concerning the use and orthography of *yā'* in its various forms. General observations similar to Dr. Puin's concerning the Ṣana'ā' texts in his article in Stefan Wild's book<sup>2</sup> would have been helpful. Second, it was left unstated as to if "IL COMPARATORE" is available to scholars or if it is being developed further.

Also, as the series of volumes grows, it could be mentioned how these particular variants compare to those in other volumes in the series. For instance, in volume 1 which presents Paris BN 328a, the tail of the *yā'* often returns to the right under the line of text, as with

<sup>1</sup> Like where it is found added in words like ساءى : شىء Vol. 2.1, fol. 31b, line 8 in 14:38. BN 328a also has this spelling at Vol. 1, fol. 53a, line 17.

<sup>2</sup> Gerd-R. Puin, "Observations on early Qur'ān manuscripts in Ṣana'ā'", *The Qur'ān as Text*, ed. by S. Wild (Leiden, 1996), pp. 107—11.

BL Or. 2165, but it also very often faces forward, similar to a more modern *yā*<sup>3</sup>. With Or. 2165, the tails mostly, if not invariably, return to the right<sup>4</sup>.

This discussion is followed by a section titled, "Some ideas for a provisional conclusion" (p. XXV). This section was especially interesting and helpful. It opens with an apt quotation from Bruno Chiesa comparing the similar historical situations of the Qur'ān and the Jewish Bible for the processes of the addition of vocalisation marks to their largely unvocalised consonantal texts. It is followed by a brief description of the history of the printing of the Arabic text of the Qur'ān in the West. With its excellent bibliographic references for further study, the only criticism for the beginning of this section was that it left this reader wanting more! The rest of this section is divided into numbered subdivisions:

1. *Number of sheets in relation to the totality of the Qur'ān.* This was an intriguing section listing Or. 2165's contents in relation to the complete text as presented in the current King Fu'ād edition, that *sūra* 78 onwards is missing. In his personal research, this writer catalogued the content of Qur'āns said to date to the first three centuries of Islam that are held in collections in France, Britain, and Ireland. Though these include both *ḥijāzī* and *kūfī* Qur'āns, a similar phenomenon was observed — that the Meccan portions after *sūra* 56 are under-represented in the earliest manuscripts and especially so after *sūras* in the mid-70's. It will be quite interesting to see if the Ṣana'ā' manuscripts fill these gaps.

2. *The script* has an extremely helpful chart of the development of the *kūfī* and *naskhī* script styles out of the *ḥijāzī* style. The simple but significant observation that the *kūfī* script comes after and out of the earliest inscriptions is presented. Dr. Rezvan's brief article "From Syriac to Arabic" is worth a mention here in that it consists of notes on his correspondence and conversations with Dr. Nosedā on this issue<sup>5</sup>, and represents his thinking after four further years. Perhaps it would be good to include the Rezvan article in a future volume. Again the only criticism that can be made here is that the reader comes away wanting more of Dr. Nosedā's thinking on the development of *ḥijāzī* script in relation to the *kūfī*.

3. *The alif* is also very informative, especially the conclusion that the *alifs* had little effect on meaning and were most probably included to help non-Arabic speakers as the Islamic Empire grew by making an understood pronunciation explicit. A bit more explanation concerning how Or. 2165 confirms the reforms concerning the *alif* by al-Ḥajjāj would have been useful. Also, bibliographic information concerning the Qur'ān on a modern disc from Pakistan which further confirms this point would have been helpful.

Dr. Nosedā in this section also presented an intriguing and practical hypothesis for the omission of the *alif* in these manuscripts, to economise on parchment by

omitting this common and easily understood letter. This hypothesis deserves further consideration. It seems to this writer that this kind of decision would have to have been made in the context of a fairly developed book trade during the Umayyad period. If true, such a phenomenon could have a significant effect on the discussions concerning the degree of completeness of the Arabic script, the level of literacy in early Islamic societies in regard to partially-vocalised scripts, and the degree of orality still present in Islamic culture in the early to mid 700s. The problem of the perpendicular *alif* certainly deserves much more study.

4. *The lack of titles of the sūras.* This brief section states the important observation that Or. 2165, unlike the Paris manuscript of the first volume which leaves a wide space, has *sūra* titles added later in a different script style. It could have also been noted that less space was allowed between *sūras* in Or. 2165, and that the added *sūra* titles are written in a much smaller hand. This section could also have been improved to present discussion on the introduction of *sūra* titles in manuscripts in general, or at least reference to any scholarly discussion on the chronology and conventions of their introduction.

In closing, what has been included in these "Introductions" is valuable and necessary, and can only be improved by there being more of the same. The decision was an inspired one to include both the best of current scholarly reflection and also reprinted classics by the pioneers of this discipline. These volumes introduced me to the scholarship of Dr. Nosedā for which I am particularly grateful, and I am glad that these volumes will give his views and those of other important scholars a wider audience. I applaud the fact that discussion of important and controversial issues of orthography, like the perpendicular *alif*, are being presented and this should continue and be expanded. The bibliographic information in the endnotes is excellent and thorough. It would also be worth keeping in mind for the future to have the introductory material published separately, perhaps in a volume that combines the "Introductions" of a few volumes. These volumes are providing an invaluable resource for Qur'ān scholars, not only in the access they are making possible to the priceless *ḥijāzī* manuscripts, but also to the accumulated wisdom contained in the "Introductions".

Some suggestions for articles to be included in future "Introductions":

To complement the reprints in Volumes 1 and 2.1 of classic articles by de Sacy, Amari, Bergstrasser, and Pretzl, here are some articles this writer would like to see included in future volumes. They mainly concern various facets of the *ḥijāzī* script. A thorough bibliography of articles related to *ḥijāzī* script would also be useful.

A. Dr. Puin's article from Stephan Wild's book mentioned earlier. Also his article published online<sup>6</sup>, and his

article in the book that accompanied the exhibit of Ṣana'ā' MSS at the Kuwaiti National Museum<sup>7</sup>.

B. Dr. Déroche's section on dating *ḥijāzī* manuscripts from his 1983 *Catalogue*<sup>8</sup>, and pertinent sections in Paret's and Blachère's introductions to the Qur'ān.

C. Dr. Rezvan's article mentioned earlier concerning the development of the *kūfī* and *ḥijāzī* scripts, and any of his other articles that would be useful in this regard.

D. Any of Dr. Nosedā's other articles concerning early Qur'ān manuscripts, scripts, inscriptions, etc., like his list of extant *ḥijāzī* manuscripts or his article concerning his visit to Ṣana'ā'<sup>9</sup>.

E. Any classic articles worthy of inclusion by past scholars, like Bergstrasser, Pretzl, Jeffery, Giorgio Levi Della Vida, Silvestre de Sacy, Mingana, Moritz, Caetani, or others. These could be spread out throughout the intended series to present an accumulated collection of classic articles.

Keith E. Small

<sup>3</sup> For instance, Vol. 1, fol. 53a, lines 16—18, which contain 14:38 according to the Cairo *āyāt* numbering. You even find both kinds of tails in words immediately adjacent to each other.

<sup>4</sup> For instance, Vol. 2.1, fol. 31b, lines 7—9 which contain 14:38 according to the Cairo *āyāt* numbering.

<sup>5</sup> E. Rezvan, "From Syriac to Arabic", *Manuscripta Orientalia* XI/1 (2005), pp. 68—70.

<sup>6</sup> Puin, "II. Über die Bedeutung der ältesten Koranfragmente aus Sanaa (Jemen) für die Orthographiegeschichte des Korans", *Magazin Forschung. Saarland* (Saarland, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Idem, "Methods of research on Qur'ānic manuscripts — a few ideas", *Masāḥif Ṣana'ā'*, (Kuwait, 1985), pp. 9—18.

<sup>8</sup> F. Déroche, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Arabes* (Paris, 1983), pp. 50—1.

<sup>9</sup> S. Noja Nosedā, "La mia visita a Sanaa e il Corano palinsesto", *Istituto Lombardo CXXXVII* (2004), pp. 43—60.

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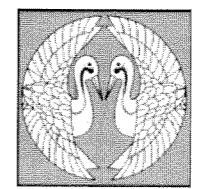
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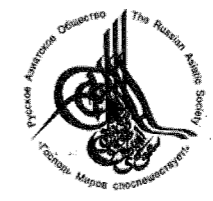
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