Essays in Honour of
Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjīd
"Rivers of Damascus" engraved by J. Saddler after a picture by C. Werner and published about 1875. Steel engraved print
Rivers of Damascus* engraved by Saddler after a picture by Werner and published about 1875. eel engraved print
Essays in Honour of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid
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Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation Publication: No. 70

Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation
Eagle House
High Street
Wimbledon
London SW19 5EF U.K.
Tel: +44 208 944 1233
Fax: +44 208 944 1633
Email: info@al-furqan.com
http://www.al-furqan.com

ISBN 1 873992 70 X
Introduction

The essays and articles published in this volume to honour Dr Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid fall into three groups. The first group consists of five essays on al-Munajjid’s life and work. The second group also includes five articles on classical Arabic and Islamic manuscript studies, a field that owes much to al-Munajjid’s original labour. The third and largest group has seventeen historical and literary studies. These contributions cover a wide range of subjects and different types of scholarship reflecting al-Munajjid’s extensive interests as scholar and publisher, and his broad circle of friends and admirers. Qāsim al-Sāmarrā‘î prepared the chronological bibliography in Arabic of al-Munajjid’s published works with additional material from Ibrāhīm Chabbouh, Iraj Afshar and Jan Just Wittkm.

The essay by ʿAbd al-Karim al-Yāfī, ʿṢalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid al-bihith wa al-muhaqiq’ (chapter 1) provides a comprehensive introduction to al-Munajjid’s background in Damascus, his education, and later career in Damascus, Cairo, and Beirut. Irfān Nizām al-Dīn, who worked with al-Munajjid in journalism for more than 25 years, gives a warm, first-hand account of him as a mentor and colleague in his ʿṢalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid kāma ’arifuhu’ (chapter 2). It is here that one can also get a sense of al-Munajjid’s political views and his close relationship with Kamil Mroueh, the distinguished Lebanese journalist, founder of Al-Hayāt, and Munajjid’s brother-in-law. Wādiʿ Fīlasṭīn’s ʿṢalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid fi Miṣr’ (chapter 3) concentrates on al-Munajjid’s years in Cairo in the 1950s when he was Director of the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts of the Arab League. This was a central period in al-Munajjid’s career, and the article by ʿAbd al-Sattār al-Halwaji, ʿIshāmāt Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid fi ta‘ṣīl ‘ulum al-makhṭūt al-ʿarabī’ (chapter 4), provides an excellent appraisal of al-Munajjid’s own pioneering contributions to the establishment of manuscript studies in Arabic. Finally there is a detailed and descriptive article, giving a vivid sense of al-Munajjid’s style and approach in an area where he has made some of his most significant contributions to research: Qāṣīr Mūsā al-Zayn’s ‘Fattuḥah kitābat al-maṣālik al-tāriskīh ʿinda Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid’ (chapter 5) surveys Munajjid’s historical essays with emphasis on his treatments of the biographies of medieval scholars, and the history of cities, especially his favourite, Damascus.

A clear introduction to the modern methods of editing historical manuscripts is provided by Ayman Fu‘ād Sayyid’s ʿTaḥqīq al-makhṭūt al-tāriskyya’ (chapter 17), which is an expert introduction to the group of specialised and precise essays in manuscript studies. François Déroche’s ‘New Evidence
about Umayyad Book Hands (chapter 25) studies the scripts used in writing manuscripts during the Umayyad period, essential for understanding the foundations of Arabic calligraphy. It was 50 years ago that Šālah al-Dīn al-Munajjid edited and published the first volume of Ibn 'Asākir’s (1105-1175) History of Damascene (Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq). This huge work of medieval scholarship, finally published in 80 volumes in Beirut between 1995 and 2000, poses interesting questions about how medieval manuscripts were transmitted and diffused. Jan Just Witkam’s ‘The Son’s Copy’ (chapter 24) studies a surviving portion of the History copied by Ibn ‘Asākir’s son, al-Qāsim, in 1167, during Ibn ‘Asākir’s lifetime, and carefully shows, among other things, how ‘the author’s contemporaries and direct descendants … supervised the distribution of the text through reading sessions, which had become a popular way of distributing text in 12th century Damascus’. Adam Gacek’s ‘A Yemeni Codex from the Library of Sharaf al-Din al-Haymi’ (chapter 26) is a technical and meticulous study of Yemeni scholarship and bookmaking in the early 18th century and ‘shows that the medieval practice of transmitting texts in the presence of a teacher was carried on in Yemen into the 12/18th century’. Finally, Iraj Afshar’s ‘The Manuscripts and Paper Sizes Cited in Persian and Arabic Texts’ (chapter 27) is a strong essay to conclude this group of manuscript studies, expert, historical, and highly informative and interesting.

The literary and historical essays begin with Annemarie Schimmel’s ‘A Posy of Flowers’ (chapter 19), a beautiful essay on flowers and gardens in the Islamic literary traditions, affectionately designed as a presentation bouquet for al-Munajjid on the occasion of this Festschrift. İhsan Abbâb’s ‘Safa min târîkh Dimashq’ (chapter 9) is a perfectly formed introduction to one of al-Mutanabbi’s poems from the pen of a master that also sheds light on a little-known episode in the history of Damascus. Najîr al-Dîn al-Asad’s extremely valuable essay ‘Al-fāzîn min al-Qur’ān al-kârim’ (chapter 6) studies the classical Islamic understanding of the terms ‘ummî’ (with reference to the Prophet) and ‘ummîyûn’, and reaches highly interesting conclusions.

İfrit Shahid’s general and illuminating ‘Medieval Islam: A Kitab-Centric Civilisation’ (chapter 20) explains how the unique centrality of the Qur’an affected the structure of medieval Arabic and Islamic culture, ultimately making literature ‘the main constituent towards which were channelled the artistic talents of most Muslims’ and, aided by the development of the paper industry, leading to a cultural explosion in book production. And Kamal Arafat Na’ban’s ‘Al-Tâwâṣā’ wa al-sîla: ahhâlgâyîyat wa aîlîyyat fi al-ta’îf wa al-nûs’i ‘arabîyya al-islâmiyya’ (chapter 7) is a long, descriptive study full of information, on an important literary and historical practice in classical Islam, in which an original book is added to and supplemented by several later generations of scholars. The importance of manuscript research and its power to illuminate or change our understanding of history is underscored by Qâsim al-Sâmarrî’s ‘A Re-Appraisal of Sayf Ibn ‘Umar as a Historian in the Light of the Discovery of his Work Kitâb al-Radda wa al-Futûh’ (chapter 21). The discovery of the original work of Sayf Ibn ‘Umar has allowed
and so we will do now ourselves. In the Middle Ages Arab and Muslim societies were at the centre of world cultural and scientific activity, and Arabic was the principal language of science. Laila Soueif's 'Al-ismā'ī al-'arabī fi taṣīr 'ilm al-jabr' (chapter 12) uses the best of the most recent historical research to describe how al-Khwārizmī and later medieval scholars developed the science of algebra from the early 9th century and does so in language that the general reader can understand. Finally, Roshi Rashed, one of the most prominent historians of science, to whose research and that of his students and colleagues we owe a large debt for the recent resurgence in the field of Arabic science and philosophy, contributes a major general survey of the field. In 'Al-'ulūm al-'arabīyya bayn nagariyyat al-ma'rifa wa al-tārikh' (chapter 18), he argues that the proper understanding of the history of Arabic science will transform the history of science as a whole, and our views of the structure and nature of medieval Islamic societies themselves. More than 30 years ago, in Beirut before the civil war, Professor Yusuf Ḥish introduced me to Dr. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Munajjīd. At that time I was a graduate student doing my doctoral research on aspects of the medieval history of women and sexuality. This was another early and distinctive interest of al-Munajjīd, and he made pioneering contributions in this important area of historical research. He treated me with enormous generosity and kindness, and gave me good guidance and his own copies of important, unpublished manuscripts that made my work possible. I have been in his debt ever since, and was delighted when the opportunity presented itself to return some of his huge favour by participating in the effort of the al-Furqān Foundation to honour him.

Bāsim Musallam
University of Cambridge
September 2002

A Posy of Flowers

Annemarie Schimmel

What to bring for a festive occasion? No doubt, flowers would be the right gift – but as we are far away from the scholar who is to be honoured we have to pluck some modest flowers from the gardens of literature, from poetry and prose, from sufism and history. By doing so we remember the lovely story of a Turkish sufi master of the 16th century who sent out his disciples to gather flowers to decorate the khānqāh. Everyone returned with beautiful bouquets; one dervish, however, returned carrying only a little withered flower. When he was blamed for his gift that seemed not worthy of the occasion, he replied: 'All the flowers in the garden were engaged in recollecting their Lord and Creator, and I did not want to disturb their dhikr. This one, however, had just finished its dhikr, and so I brought it.' It was this dervish who was appointed successor to the master for he knew that everything created is constantly remembering the Lord and praising Him, as the Qur'ān states.

The Qur'ān describes paradise as a wonderful garden. Yet, there is no description of particular flowers although the reader finds mention of fruit trees and cool shade. Descriptions of real gardens, however, develop only somewhat later, mainly under the influence of Persian traditions.

In the Abbasid period the development of urban culture led to a growing interest in gardens and flowers. At this time historians begin to describe the wonderful gardens of Baghdad and Samarra where the caliph al-Mutawakkil used to indulge in his eccentric love of roses. Superb gardens are a hallmark of early Islamic civilisation, be it in Cairo where the Tulunid Khumarawāyih laid out gardens with a multitude of different flowers and trees, or in al-Andalus where the last gardens built under Muslim rule are still extant, though in altered form. In the East, the Timurids followed the example of their ancestor Tamerlane whose gardens – large enough to accommodate numerous tents – inspired his successors in eastern Iran and even more in India to create gardens wherever they went. Babur, the first ruler of the house of the great Mughals in India (d.937/1530) dramatically describes his activities to embellish the 'ugly landscape' of Hindustan with gardens, and Mughal miniatures show in detail how the gardens were laid out. Babur's descendants, in
particular the ladies of the Mughal house, founded numerous gardens in Agra, Delhi, Lahore and in Kashmir.

The Ottomans too were rightly famed for their love of flowers, especially of tulips, and tulips became the most precious export article from Turkey to western Europe, especially to the Netherlands, in the late 17th century. Ottoman artists used flower motifs, and among them mainly tulips, on textiles and ceramics – the Rustem Pasha mosque in Istanbul shows dozens of different kinds of tulips on its colourful tiles, and my Turkish friends told me that the tulip is a symbol of Islam, the crescent moon, and, even more importantly, as the name of Allah.

Islamic gardens used to contain a reservoir or a tank, or a smaller or larger lake, which formed its centre and reminded the poets of the heavenly salads. Small watercourses led to the basin – watercourses with rows of cypresses along their borders. The poets felt that the slender trees looked like elegant young ladies whose beauty was reflected in the water as though they were brides whose faces were seen by the bridegroom for the first time in a mirror...

Real gardens play a remarkable role in the works of Arabic and Persian historiographers. One may think of Ibn Iljis (d. after 928/1521) who describes in detail the garden which the last Mamluk ruler, Qansuq al-Ghori (d.923/1516) had laid out near the Hippodrome in the citadel of Cairo, a place where he indulged in listening to the numerous birds’ songs (birds were an integral part of royal gardens) and enjoyed the fragrance of Syrian roses which he had imported along with other flowers unknown in Egypt.

Fragrance was an important aspect of the gardens, and in a slightly later period royal gardens in southern India, in the kingdoms of Golconda and Bijapur, were often arranged in such a way that at daytime the visitor could enjoy the carefully chosen colours while he would be ravished at night by the fragrance of nocturnal flowers and herbs. This becomes evident from poetical descriptions in the epics of Deccani poets of the late 16th and 17th centuries.

Poets of the early Abbasid period enjoyed the rulers’ increasing interest in gardens and with the development of the badi style in Arabic poetry descriptions of flowers and gardens proliferate. Each flower represents some similarities with human beings, the waphwan smiles with white teeth and the jasmine puts on pearl necklaces to participate in festive gatherings where rose-cheeked beauties enjoy themselves while the narcissi look at them with languid eyes. The long-awaited rains may write beautiful lines of coloured flowers on the ground while the dewdrops look like pearl buttons on the red chemise of the anemone (or, in Persian, of the tulip). Or else the spring rains weave a coloured striped Yemeni gown for the earth, while winter covers the ground and the trees with a white woollen burnous or with ermine fur.

Garden imagery as it developed in the 9th and 10th centuries AD in Baghdad and at the Harmandar court of Aleppo was immediately taken over by the Persian poets who had just begun to use their language for literary purposes. It was in Iran and the countries under her cultural influence that garden poetry developed most beautifully. Flower imagery is abundant not only in love poetry but in panegyrics as well, for the role of gardens and flowers could be alluded to in the tasbih of a qasida as well: did not spring arrive in such glory because the prince who is to be praised has just completed a new garden with a pavilion so the ‘King Spring’ has a worthy place to stay? as Farrukh (d.429/1037 in Ghazna) claims. And was not the beloved a beautiful flower garden, ‘garden of delight’? Her/his cheeks were never-withering roses, her/his eyes narcissi, her/his stature a walking cypress planted close to the lover’s tearful eyes as though it was standing close to a brooklet? The dark curls reminded the poets of the fragrant musk-coloured hyacinths, and if the beloved was a young boy the violet might be the first down appearing on his face, or else, the poor modest violet might be an ascetic bent on his dark green prayer rug...

There is no end to such verses in Islamic literature. Thousands of nightsingals (bulbuls), complain in the verses of Persian and Turkish poetry of their unrequited love of the rose, (gul), which cannot be embraced as the watchmen, the thorns, surround it, and which is also faithless, for its life lasts only a few days...

But speaking of the different flowers the poets often pointed to their medical propensities – was not rose oil good for headaches? And should a melancholy person not be cured by applying violet oil?

A flower’s shape, fragrance, and colour might point to special metaphorical aspects of its ‘personality’: the rose – the hundred-petalled centifolia – could be a book with a hundred pages out of which the nightingale reads his love-songs; the red-faced tulip with a black spot in its heart might appear as a black-hearted hypocritical person or, else, as a suffering martyr with a bloodstained coat; the weeping willow wrings its hands in despair when looking at people’s misery, and the arghwan with its red flowers may represent drops of blood, and so, all of nature turns into a representative of the human condition.

On a completely different level are the numerous books and treatises about gardening and agriculture, which can be found from early times onward in classical Arabic literature and continued into the modern ages where examples are known from India as well as from Turkey; treatises about the layout of gardens with illustrations do not lack either.

One Arabic book on flowers that attracted the interest of European scholars as early as the beginning of the 19th century, was Ibn Ghânîm
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al-Maqdisi’s (d.673/1274) work: Kāshf al-Aṣrār ‘an Ḥikam al-Tuyūr wa al-Azhār. It was edited as early as 1821 by Silvestre de Sacy under the title, Les oiseaux et les fleurs, and translated into German in (d.1267/1850) by a little-known translator called Peiper and published in Hirschberg (Silesia). Other editions and translations followed.

As the title indicates, the book has a strong mystical leaning. The author talks to the spring breeze and the flowers of the garden, and everything tells him its wishes and hopes. But not only flowers and trees talk to the author but also the birds. Thus Ibn Ghānim offers the reader an introduction into the mystical aspects of the garden – ideas that were found to a certain extent also in the works of Ibn Ghānim’s great contemporary, Mawllānā Jālālādīn Rūmī in Konya who, it seems, also understood the language of everything created and translated it into sweet Persian verse.

Ibn Ghānim’s work has been known in both east and west for a long time. But there is another treatise which is still in manuscript although it seems to be one of the strangest compilations in the field of what we may call ‘the secrets of flowers’. My colleague, Gregor Schoeler, has described it in his catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek, and I owe to his encouragement the wish to study it more intensely in the hope of editing it, perhaps, in the future.

The manuscript has the number Or. oct.1324, Sammlung Hartmann, (d.1330/1912) and contains 54 folios with 9 lines; it is written in a rather large, pleasant hand in naskh. The author is not known. The title says:

دبيب شاء زمان معلق معذب أي نشيل على ذكر ذوق ملكي جوهر

This, however, is wrong as the unknown author dedicates his booklet to Sultan Selim Yavuz (d.1520 AD) as becomes clear from his extended praise of the ruler where he expresses his hope that the work may find acceptance at the court and bring him some reward, for his lives, as he claims, in utter poverty and destitution. The text is arranged in nine lines; unusually, some sentences in highly complicated rhymed prose alternate with poems, generally of four lines, that take up the ideas of the prose section; once in a while a riddle is inserted. The author must have been an excellent scholar of Arabic as he plays with the language as did the poets in earlier times, and he was, no doubt, a sufi as we can understand from his vocabulary that abounds in expressions used by sufi writers when describing the glory of the Prophet Muhammad. But, unfortunately, nothing points to his identity.

After the basmala the text begins with the words:

حصان الله على ما أذبح في در شمسة بحراً مرودة الأسماح وأذبح من شمسة شماعة زرعة حمالة الأرج

followed by the first of the numerous little verses typical of the author’s style. His description of nature led to the conclusion that God:

This leads to the author’s praise of Sultan Selim and his request for some favour:

فأغفر من نظم هذا الدور ونسدده هذا الفرع أن النعمة الأعظم وأنفاق الأكمرين، يا هاكم مددت الأذلاء، فقيل

On fol. 8b, the author explains his work which consists of two parts, one devoted to the winter, the second one to spring.

чивل الشتاء... مشعوف على طفلك أحمد والثنا، وȘارف أجر بالذنايا؛ مرسوم بدره أيبر في اللحم، وودبة السكر في البشري، والأشبال الثلاثة في فصل النسيب متماثل للقضايا الشفيعة والنكيل السبحة، مرسوم بوضع الزهر في

In the description of winter, which starts on fol. 9b, the reader finds skilful allusions to the letters of the alphabet (fol. 11 a seq.) which contain interesting points and seem to show that our author was well acquainted (as most of his colleagues were) with Ibn Arabi’s terminology: Are we not ‘letters in the heights’ (fol. 13 b)? On fol. 15 the part on the wintry season is finished, and the author praises God who sent the Iṣra’īl of the spring breeze to revive the dead nature (a Qur’ānic phrase that is commonplace in poetry and was often used by Mawllānā Rūmī).

سبيلاً بالجة الشم النشراً رفعه اسم الأجر جميعة أمر القراصنة الفياح، إن تفعن في مرر السعد والثنا، فإنها كملاً الأثر ما كانت وثناً مثناً.

And thus, everything appears in new glory:

طوايس تشق في طين الخضرار
فرايس تنشر من عين السادة
فسح بحمد الله وأذبح إنه
جواة كريم ذ هبات جاً عشاق.

As with every poet, our author also dwells in particular on the peculiarities of the rose (fol.24a seq.) Is not the rose embellished by the Light of the Prophet? And we find also the comparison of the rose with Jesus – a comparison that is as old as Persian poetry. For shortly before the year (d.390/1000) the Persian poet Kīsā’ī invented the beautiful idea that the branch is like the Virgin Mary which is impregnated by the spring breeze and thus gives birth to the lovely rose ‘Jesus’, whose fragrant breath revives the dead and heals the sick, (fol.27a)

نهاي، مسيح الورث شفاءً
على حضرت الايمنة الأحمدية
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The manuscript closes with the prayer

The third caliph, 'Uthmân ibn 'Affan, is compared (fol.38a–42b) to jasmine, as the author claims:

His successor 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib appears (fol. 42 b sequ.) as a narcissus:

His sons, al-Hasanayn, finally appear (from fol.48 b to fol.55) as 'abbar, a word that can be translated as 'yellow narcissus', jessamine and similar whitish fragrant flowers:

After thus praising the rose and connecting it with the Prophet Muhammad our author remarks (fol. 28 b) that Abu Bakr is like a white rose, but then changes his mind to compare the first caliph to a violet (fol. 30 a). The violet is like the key to paradise, and its fragrance is healing. Among other remarks he claims (fol. 30 b) that the violet

On fol.32 b the author turns to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab who is compared to an anemone, shaqiq, and mentions in his lengthy chapter:

However, his description of the shaqiq azraq (fol.35 b) is not quite clear; I do not know what this blue variant of the anemone may be, but it is described as 'heavenly'.

Again, the author's pen turns from this heavenly colour to the Prophet who rises out of the zodiac like the sun (fol. 36 b)

على كل جرح حال مهد
لطالة شمس في عين النزافر

The second caliph, 'Abd ar-Rahmân ibn 'Abd al-Malik appears (fol. 94 b–49 a) as a lily:...
Medieval Islam
A Kitâb-Centered Civilisation

Irfan Shahid

The felicitous Qur’ânic phrase ‘ahl al-kitâb’, the ‘People of the Book’, is applied in the Qur’ân to the Jews and the Christians, but it is in fact even more applicable to the Muslims themselves in view of the privileged place of the Qur’ân in Islam as a religion and in the life of the Muslims as a community. The distinctive characteristics of the Qur’ân may be summarised as follows.¹

While the Old and New Testaments were written by inspired human beings who, in addition to their own words, conveyed the word of God to an erring humanity, the Qur’ân is the actual word of God from beginning to end. The human involvement in it is limited solely to the fact that the Prophet Muhammad was the one to whom the word of God was revealed through the archangel Gabriel. The Qur’ân is held to be qadîm, eternal: not created but in existence from the very beginning and in God’s good time revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. More important still are two doctrines concerning the Qur’ân, the first of which is its “Arabness”: the Qur’ân is ‘arabi (Arabic), that is, revealed through the medium of the Arabic language. This doctrine was to have far-reaching consequences in early Islamic civilisation. The second doctrine concerns the concept of ḫāṣ, that is, the inimitability of the Qur’ân. This term has been variously understood² and has most commonly been accepted in literary terms.³

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No wonder then that the life of the Muslim community has been, and still is, what might be termed Qur’âno-centric. In this sense the Muslims are the

¹ The following points are well known to Qur’ânic scholars. For a discussion the reader may be referred to the article on the Qur’ân by A. Welch in the new Encyclopedia of Islam and its bibliography, vol. v, pp. 408–29.
² What the ḫāṣ consists of has been variously interpreted and hotly debated throughout the ages. As recently as 1964 two massive volumes on this subject were published. See, 'Abd al-Karim al-Khaṭâb, Ḫāṣ al-Qur’ân, (Cairo, 1964).
³ For the most recent treatment of the concepts of ḫāṣ, and its acceptance in literary terms, see, ‘Irfan Shahid in ‘Another Contribution to Koranic Exegesis: the Sûra of the Poets,’ Journal of Arabic Literature, xiv, pp. 1–21.
‘People of the Book’, Ahl al-Kitāb par excellence, and the Qur’ān is the Book: al-kitāb.4

It was only natural that a holy book of this description and with these unique and striking doctrines should affect the course of Arab and Islamic literature and culture. Religious and linguistic sciences developed rapidly in the early Islamic period, almost immediately after the authoritative edition of the Qur’ānic text was determined during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān, 644-56. In this early period, and under the stimulus of Qur’ānic analysis, the various disciplines of philology, lexicography, taṣāfīr, hadith and others flourished. All such studies revolving round the Qur’ān in the first century of the Islamic era were pursued by the Arabs themselves, with only a few exceptions. Thus, quite early in Islamic times the first layer of what developed into the edifice of Arabic Islamic culture consisted of studies stimulated by the Book – the Qur’ān or al-Kitāb – and in books written about it. These studies set the tone for the subsequent development of Islamic civilisation as one that might accurately be designated a ‘civilisation of the book’.

In a more specialised sense, it was the Qur’ān that contributed to, even necessitated, the perfection of Arabic script and Arabic calligraphy, both of which had not been well developed in pre-Islamic times. Writing materials are mentioned in the Qur’ān: qalam, reed pen; midḥad, ink; qirāṣ, papyrus and ṭaqq, parchment.5 They are mentioned approvingly and indeed God swears by the pen and by writing in the Sūra of the Pen: ‘By the pen and that which they write’6 Again, in another sūra, the first to be revealed,7 it is stated that God has chosen to teach mankind through the pen:

Recite in the Name of the Lord who created,

Created man from a clot;

Recite and thy Lord is the most bounteous;

Who taught by the pen;

Taught man that of which he knew not.

In order to preserve the purity and accuracy of the Qur’ānic revelations it was imperative that Arabic script should develop quickly. This process

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6 See, Sūrat al-Qalam, 1; al-Kahf, 109; al-An’ām, 7; al-Tūr, 2.

7 Sūrat al-Qalam, 1.

8 Sūrat al-A‘lāq, 1–5.

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It was not only the Arab–Muslim community which became ‘a people of the book’ but also millions of non-Arab peoples of widely differing ethnic groups, who lived within the boundaries of what became a vast Muslim empire extending from India to Spain. These various Muslim communities were ‘peoples of the book’ since, as Muslims, they quickly came to view the Qur’ān as central to their religious life in much the same way that Muslim Arabs had done. The doctrine of the Arabic Qur’ān involved them in the spoken word of the Arabic language as they had to learn Arabic to comprehend their scriptures and take part in the cultural life of the Muslim empire, which was for many centuries expressed through the medium of Arabic.12 The other Qur’ānic doctrine, that of ījāz, also contributed to the involvement of

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9 The most recent work on calligraphy with a full bibliography is Annemarie Schimmel’s Calligraphy and Islamic Culture, (New York, 1984).


10 See, David James, Qur’āns of the Mamluks, (London, 1988) for the latest on this subject. The volume contains a brief and lucid discussion of the devotion lavished on the Qur’ān by Muslims throughout the ages, especially in the areas of calligraphy and illumination. The book also includes many beautiful colour illustrations.

11 To which may be added the arts of bookbinding and decoration.

12 This is in sharp contrast with the practice of the early Christian Church, at least in the Byzantine Orient, which favoured the translation of the Bible into the languages of the peoples converted to Christianity, who thus did not have to read their holy book in Greek or Syriac.
fortunes of the book, which was completed centuries later by another revolution, that of the invention of printing by Johannes Gutenberg in the 15th century. Neither parchment nor papyrus was able to bring about such a revolution as paper did; a revolution which benefited both men of letters and producers of books.

The cultural explosion in Islam effected by the introduction of paper and the development of the paper industry was reflected in various ways. The flowering of that industry is testified to by the many types of paper that were in use: the ṣirāwī, the sulaymānī, the jaʿārī, the tāḥīrī and the nāḥīḥ. The specialised craftsmen that were involved in the production of books are also witness to the same phenomenon. These were organised in guilds with their own shaykhs. Warraq is the most comprehensive term including many of the occupations connected with book production, though there were many more specialised terms. The proliferation of the various occupations and functions related to wānqa (book making) is itself eloquent of the place of book production in medieval Islamic culture. They comprise the nāṣīḥ, the transcriber; the mubāhir, the corrector; the ḥaṭṭā, the calligrapher; the musawwir, the painter; the tārāḥī, the sketcher; the musāhāhīh, the illustrator; the ḍāiq, the cutter; and the muṣalīd, the bookbinder.

Finally, the extraordinary efflorescence of the art of book production in ‘the civilisation of the book’ is reflected in the vast number of repositories where these books were assembled, namely the libraries, the maktābāt. The spread of libraries was a natural concomitant of the spread of Islam, since the mosque quickly developed into a centre of learning, which eventually led to the foundation of the madrasa. Libraries spread over the entire Islamic world, the three most important being in ‘Abbasīd Baghdad, Fatimid Cairo and Umayyad Cordova.

These libraries have vanished, but traces of the books they contained may be seen in the vast numbers of manuscripts that have survived, the best testimony to the paramount importance of the book in medieval Islam. Literally hundreds of thousands of Arabic and Islamic manuscripts still exist. This paramounty can ultimately be traced back to the Qur’ān itself and its unique centrality in the life of the billion Muslims on this planet.

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[17] Ibid., p. 67.
[18] The field in which Ṣāliḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjād especially distinguished himself and for which he will be long remembered.

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A Reappraisal of Sayf ibn ‘Umar as a Historian in the Light of the Discovery of his work Kitāb al-Riđdha wa al-Futūḥ

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When compiling a descriptive catalogue of the hitherto uncatalogued manuscripts in the Library of Imām Muhammad ibn Sa‘ūd Islamic University in Riyadh in 1991, my attention was drawn to an old dilapidated suitcase in the manuscripts' safe-room that, according to the keeper, contained a jumble of rat-eaten manuscripts. A handlist compiled by an assistant in the Library was tucked inside the suitcase. The tentative handlist contained no less than 56 entries of which more than 40 dealt mainly with glosses and super-glosses of one Hanbalī work or another and mostly listed neither title nor author. I was able to identify only a few of these fragments. Some of the remaining manuscripts seemed to be unique copies and their value lies in the fact that no other copy of them is registered by Brockelmann. Examples are: Kitāb al-Mutarradī by ‘Alla al-Ḍin ‘Ali al-Manṣūri al-Maqdisī (d.885/1480); Kitāb al-Isāba fi Ḥabīb Ta‘īm al-Nisā‘ al-Kitāba by Muhammad ibn Hanād al-‘Assāfī; al-Jawā‘iz wa al-Siṣṭān ð fī Aṣārīd al-Kutub wa al-Āthābīr by Abī ʿIsā‘ī al-Ṭūsī; al-Ṣalāwīt al-Khāṣṣa wa Nuzhat al-Nāẓir (one of several commentaries on Kitāb al-Ra‘wad al-Nadīr of Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī) (d.620/1223), by an anonymous writer) and Kitāb Bughyāt al-Ikhwān fī Taḥrīm al-Du‘ā‘līkhān by ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Hasan al-Hijāzī. In the handlist we also find a copy of al-Suyūṭī’s ubiquitous work Unmīdāj al-Lābiḥ (GAL II, 143); Kitāb al-Manhāj al-‘Āmmah by al-‘Ulaymi (GAL S II, 40); Kitāb Taṣawwīq al-Anām fī al-Ha‘īl ilā Bāyār ‘Allāh al-Ḥārīm by Mārī al-Karnī (GAL S II, 497) and Kitāb al-Indīd fī Ma‘ṣīfat al-Insād by ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī (GAL S II, 521, 931). A large fragment of Kitāb al-Muntaza’ūn by Ibn al-Jawā‘iz and a large but still unidentified fragment on the history of Yemen have not been included in the list, as well as various fragments of works on arithmetic, creed, logic, medicine, rhetoric and syntax. In addition, the suitcase contained hundreds of decaying, worm-eaten loose folios on various topics. A bundle wrapped in brown paper drew my attention. I began to examine the lines of the rat-eaten manuscript and immediately felt the thrill of discovery.

1 I subsequently learned that the collection had been bequeathed by the grandsons of the Najdi-Iraqi scholar Muhammad ibn Hanād al-‘Assāfī. For information on al-‘Assāfī see, Al-Baṣānī, ‘Ulamā‘ Najdi-Iraqī Thaknīyat Qurān, (Riyadh, 1419H), vol V, p.515.

2 My edition of this work together with a facsimile edition of this work has already been published by Smitskamp Oriental Antiquarium of Leiden, New Rijn 2, 2312 JB Leiden - The Netherlands.
At the same time, I realized the manuscript's value. It was the sought-after work (long considered lost) by the controversial historian Sayf ibn 'Umar al-Dabbi al-Usayyi al-Tamimi whose works were the prime sources for al-Tabari (d.310/923) and others.  

The Manuscript

The manuscript consists of 175 folios measuring 25.5 x 19.5 cm, with 17 lines per page, and is written in a clear scribal Mameluq Nashki script typical of 9/13th century Egypt or Syria, on a rather greyish sort of paper usually made of leaf-over cotton waste, flax stems and old rags. There are no visible traces of any watermarks or wire-frames, characteristic of old Arabic paper. Only a few custode (catchwords) are found written by the scribe in the same black ink used in the text which has mellowed to a dark brown. The binding's fore cover, dafta, is missing. It was rather primitively made of discarded, old folios of various manuscripts, glued together and covered with brownish leather, ornamented with blind-stamped and leather-inlaid medallions that have almost faded out.

The manuscript bears three notes: one appears on folio 1a and the second and third on the inside cover, indicating that a certain 'Abd-Allah ibn Ibrahiim al-Ghamas bought this manuscript of Kitab al-Ridda wa al-Futuh from the legacy of the deceased Salih ibn Sulayman al-Šâ'iti', nick-named Salihi al-Šâbi, in the year 1299/1881. The second note reads: "هذا مخطوط من آثار المكرم محمد عبد الآله، هما الحياة ومحمد عبد الآله، هما الحياة في كتاب الأذفال والغزوات."

The second note mentions the name of a certain Ahmad ibn Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hamayn or al-Khamman. Apart from the following reading note, all the notes have been written in a rather weak, primitive modern Nashki script.

The oldest reading note, at the bottom margin of folio 14a, reads: "ندرك نود جري وعند النظر في هذا المخطوط من آثار المكرم محمد عبد الآله، هما الحياة ومحمد عبد الآله، هما الحياة في كتاب الأذفال والغزوات."

That is: 'The servant of God and the needy for His favour, Sa’d ibn abu al-Ghayth the governor of Yanbu’ has read it.' According to al-Magrich and ibn Taghrî Bardî, the Ḥasanî Shariî, Sa’d ibn abu al-Ghayth ibn Qatada, was indeed the sole Amir of Yanbu in the year 785/1384, but in the following year, 786/1385, the Mameluq Sulṭan Barqûq installed Muhammad ibn Mus’tîd, one of Sa’d’s cousins, as joint ruler (Sharîk) in the city with him. We are further told that Sa’d ibn abu al-Ghayth died in 801/1400.

As the small fragment originally came before the larger, I wrongly paginated the manuscript. Realizing my error, I rearranged my photocopy and repaginated the manuscript according to the juz' division.

The scribe did not only write the manuscript in superb calligraphy, bearing witness to his mastery of his craft, but he also strenuously tried to establish a correct and reliable text. This can be deduced from his frequent corrections in the margins, which are always followed by the customary remark salhaba 'this is the correct reading'. Moreover, the scribe apparently collated his text...
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with a different copy from the one he used as his model. Whenever he found sarcastic
sections in that copy he either noted these in his own copy with the
letter kh, meaning [nushkh[a] ‘so it reads in another copy’, or simply wrote:
‘fi nushka ukhara, ‘so it appears in another copy’. This copy was certainly not
altogether inferior to the scribe’s own model, because some of its readings
are better than his own. The various stages of this collation have been indicated
by the scribe in several places through the marginal remarks: balaga or
balaga al-sarani wa al-masabala, meaning, ‘here ends the collation’, or ‘his
manuscript was read and collated with the model copy during an audition’.
In spite of these efforts, the text is not altogether free of reading mistakes,
some of which are not at all easy to decipher.

Each juz’ of the manuscript consists of roughly 37 folios. What actually
now have is the following: 37 folios of juz’ 18, 37 folios of juz’ 19, 36 folios
of juz’ 20, 39 folios of juz’ 21 and 29 folios of juz’ 22 in which the text
abruptly breaks off in the middle of a narrative where it is mentioned that
‘Ali appoints Ibn ‘Abbas as his governor of Baṣra, and Ziyad ibn abi Sufyan
as his secretary. The missing part at the beginning of the manuscript must
have consisted of 17 juz’ which amounted to about 629 folios. Adding 175
folios of our two fragments, the total number must have been roughly 804
folios or even more, a bulky size for a book of one volume.

Be that as it may, it is most likely that Kitab al-Ridda must have been
divided into several parts as it is in our manuscript, as well as into more than
one volume, throughout its history. This is true at least at the beginning of
the 8th-14th century. From a remark found in a polemical work composed
sometime after 701/1309 by the Egyptian author, Muhammad al-Qayysi, under
the title:

‘Fawaz id-din id-dawla wa l-salibi wa l-salitina wa l-qudsara wa l-qadara wa l-qada wa l-dжа ibn al-Maja (The Key of Religion and Disputation between Christians and Muslims Based on
the Arguments of Prophets, Messengers and Well-guided Scholars Who Have Realized Salvation)’, we learn not only that Kitab al-Ridda was one of his
solutions but also that it was divided into several volumes. His remarks run as follows:

(‘It is reported in the fifth volume of the work of Sayf ibn Umair al-Tamimi)
Al-Qayysi quotes a narrative (with a certain degree of processing and
interpolations) from Kitab al-Ridda dealing primarily with Jesus and his
disciples and the role played by Paul in distorting early Christianity in order to
compare it with Ibn Sabas’s role in distorting early Islam.

Al-Qayysi’s remark points to the fact that the work of Sayf was certainly
well known in al-Andalus and North Africa. It is supported by al-Kalafi’s

9 See, folio 6b; 15b, 17b, 19a, 24a, 25a, 49b, 54a, 102b, 15a, 113b, 114a, 125b.
10 Preserved in the National Library of Algeria, in a ms in majuscola, no.1557, fol.49-90. My friend
P. van Koningveld, author of The Polymical Works of Muhammad al-Qayysi and their
Circulation in Arabic and Aljamiado among the Moors in the Fourteenth Century, with
G. Wiegert (Al-Quntara, 1994, vol. XV, pp.163-199), has drawn my attention to this passage.
I am very grateful to him.
11 See, fol.51b-55b.
12 In qur’ juz’ 19, fol.62a-64b of our MS.

A Reappraisal of Sayf ibn ‘Umair

(d.634/1237) quotation from Kitab al-Fatihah 13 as well as by the transmission
of Ibn Khair al-Labihi 14 (d.575/1179), of Kitab al-Ridda wa al-Fatihah and the
citations 15 of al-Ashar ‘Ali al-Ma‘ali 16 (741/1340), Ibn Farhan 17 (d.769/1367),
and Ibn Ab al-Barr (d.463/1070) 18.

It was, however, far better known in the east. Distinguished historians as early as
Nasir ibn Muzahhah al-Miqrari (d.212/827) 19, Khafif ibn Khayyat al-Usfuri 20
(d.240/854) and down to al-Basawi (d.277/890) 21, al-Baladihuri 22,
al-Taibari himself (d.320/932) in Kitab Tahdhib al-Athar 23 and his History,
al-Sahmi in Ta’rikh Jurjani (d.421/1035) 24 and Makhuj (d.475/1082) 25,
Ibn Asakir (d.571/1176) 26, ibn abi al-Damm (d.642/1244) 27, Yaqiu in Mu‘jam
al-Buldhir 28, al-Dahahbi 29, al-Subki 30 ibn Hajar in al-Isba 31 and Lisan
al-Mizan 32 clearly knew the work of Sayf.

Similarly, Ibn Nasir al-Din al-Dinshah 33, Ibn Khaldun 34, Ibn Fahad al-
Din (d.647/1250) 35, ’Athir al-Hasani 36, and many others.

13 See, Ta‘rikh al-Ridda, gleaned from al-Kitab, ed. Khurshid Ahmad Fariqi, India, 1970,
146; Hurayd al-Ma‘ali al-Ma‘ali ‘Al‘i al-Ma‘ali al-Mu‘a‘ali wa al-Khulafa, ed. Ahmad
14 Fahavan ma rawih ‘an shuyukh, ed. F. Coderer and J. Riera Tarrazo, 2nd ed. (Berlin,
16 In al-Tanbih wa l-Bayyin ‘an Ma‘alil al-Shahid ‘Uthman, (Beirut, 1964), in many places.
17 Ibid.
19 Al-Ta‘rikh quotes two narratives (see, 1311, 1310-1) narrated by Nasir ibn Muzahhah al-
Majarii through Sayf, but both are missing from our manuscript.
23 For Tahdhib, see, Musam al-Fahai, ed. M.M. Shrik, University of Imam Muhammad Ibn
Saud, 1982.
24 Hayyaraab 1369/1950, p.4.
25 Al-Rami, 1566.
28 F. Justus Heer, Die Historischen und Geographischen Quellen in Fatiq’s Geographischem
Worterbuch, (Strassburg 1896), p.10-12; GAS, I, 1312.
29 F. Rosenthal, see above, p.392; Ta‘rikh al-Isbaa, (Cairo, 1367), 21/22-3, and Siyyar al-‘Imam
31 GAS, III/311; Siyyar al-‘Imam al-Nabu‘i, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arnauag and H. al-Asad, (Beirut,
32 See, 1312.
33 Al-Faruq bin Waqa‘a fi Mushtahab al-Dhahabi min al-Ashari, (al-Madina, 1407/1987),
p. 181.
34 Al-Maqaddima, al-Ashkar Publishing, (Cairo, 1311), p. 3.
Is the Second Fragment Kitāb al-Jamāil?
We have already mentioned that starting on fol.111a of our manuscript and ending on fol.175b, all the narratives start their chain of īsād with Sayf himself, while in the first fragment the chain of īsād starts with al-Sārî ..., Shu‘ā’y ... Sayf just as they are recorded by al-Tabari who received Sayf’s reports partly in writing from al-Sārî ibn Yahyā al-Hanḍallī. 
Apart from the usual formula: (Sayf narrated to us), we have no clue in the manuscript as to the identity of the transmitter. According to al-Nādim (d.380/990), Shu‘ā’y ibn Ibrahim al-Kūfī was the transmitter of Sayf’s work.

This statement is confirmed by al-Dhahabi who says: راجع كتاب سيف الله (transmitter of Sayf’s books directly from him)
A unique and very interesting marginal note written by a certain Abū Bakr ibn Sayf and copied by the copyist, explaining a word in a line of poetry, appears on folio 169a thus:

He is mentioned many times in Ibn ‘Asākir’s chain of īsād going back to Sayf ibn ‘Umar. He received Sayf’s reports through al-Sārî ibn Yahyā al-Hanḍallī as did al-Tabarti and therefore, seems to be al-Tabarti’s contemporary. His full name as provided by Ibn ‘Asākir is Abū-Dhâbi ibn Sayf; known as Abū Bakr ibn Sayf. He was most likely the son of the well-known Egyptian qārī Abū Bakr ‘Abd-Allâh ibn Mâlik ibn Sayf al-Tujibi al-Misrî, also known as Abū Bakr ibn Sayf (d. 307/918). Furthermore, it is again likely that our copy was directly copied from Abū Bakr’s own copy with all its marginal notes and was collated with another copy by the scribe himself.

As the whole fragment deals with the Battle of the Camel and the participation of ‘Aisha and ‘Ali in this battle, we believe that what we have here is a large fragment of Kitāb al-Jamāil wa Masir ‘Aisha wa (Ali ‘the Book of the Cancel and the Marching of ‘Aisha and ‘Ali) which is mentioned by al-Nâdim in his short account of Sayf. Our assumption is in fact corroborated by the contents of the manuscript if we examine the main headings:
1) The first speech of ‘Ali delivered after his election.
2) The narrative of Makkah (about ‘Aisha and her activities).
3) ‘Aisha’s departure (from Makkah) before hearing of ‘Uthmān’s murder.

For the text of the passage, we refer the reader to the original manuscript.
5) The march of ‘A‘ishah (from Makkah to al- Baṣra).
6) The march of ‘Alī (from al-Rabī‘ah to al-Baṣra).

Judging from the narratives (in our manuscript) quoted by al-Tabarî in reporting the events which took place soon after the death of ‘Uthmān and prior to the election of ‘Alī, it appears that the missing part at the beginning of the small fragment must have consisted of only one folio (unless al-Tabarî had suppressed an unknown number of narratives). The recto of this must have been the title-page and the verso must have contained only one or two narratives48 of Kitāb al-Jamāl wa Ma‘ṣīr ‘Alī’sha wa ‘Alī together with a remark noting the end of juz’ 20 and the beginning of juz’ 21. The last two and a half pages of this fragment contain five narratives, three of which al-Tabarî totally ignored. Our assumption that the second fragment is Kitāb al-Jamāl is indirectly confirmed by al-Tabarî himself. At the end of his citations, he states: This is the last of the Camel Episode49. Ibn Hajir, moreover, refers to ‘Alī’s khátha which he delivered in Madīna soon after his election thus: أُحْسَنْ فِيتْ أَبَا بَكْرٍ (Sayf also reported this in the Camel Episode)50. This would certainly confirm Jawād ‘Alī’s observation that: there is no doubt that al-Tabarî took the narratives about the Battle of the Camel from Kitāb al-Jamāl of Sayf, which he received from eye witnesses whose names are preserved in al-Tabarî’s isnād, and thus he preserved for us the original form of information about that battle and the political motives which provoked it51.

Apart from the few reports presumably quoted from the lost monographs of Ibn Shabba52, namely Kitāb al-Dīr wa Maḥṣūl ‘Uthmān or Akhkhār al-Baṣra53, al-Tabarî, in fact, overwhelmingly preferred Sayf over all other authorities. He cited no title as his source, but in all likelihood his narratives were derived from Sayf’s Kitāb al-Jamāl. We find them all in our manuscript. Immediately after the last narrative quoted from Kitāb al-Jamāl, his name no longer appears in al-Tabarî’s work54. The question may be asked here: how much of the text of both works did al-Tabarî actually suppress.

49 See, 1/3233.
50 ‘Alī, p. 49.
52 See, Ibn Hajir, Fatḥ al-Bāqir, (Cairo, 1939), 3/15-54, where Ibn Hajir abridged the events of the Battle of the Camel. Strangely enough, the similarities between our narratives and those recorded by Ibn Shabba are unmistakably clear.
53 See, 1/3230; the narratives in 31/3131, 32/49, 3251 and 3255 are reported by Sayf earlier but shifted to here by al-Tabarî.

A Reappraisal of Sayf Ibn ‘Umar

Sayf’s Narratives and al-Taḥāthīf

In his article ‘Sayf’s Sources on Arabia’, Martin Hinds noted that: there is as yet no way of knowing how much of Sayf’s transmission al-Taḥāthīf may have suppressed. He further noted that al-Taḥāthīf used two separate versions of Sayf’s transmission, which differed from each other to an extent which cannot be determined55. To understand precisely what lies behind Hinds’ observation, a thorough comparison of our text with that found in al-Taḥāthīf’s work would determine how much of Sayf’s transmission al-Taḥāthīf may have suppressed.

It is worthy of comment in the present context, that as far as the narratives of Kitāb al-Ridda wa al-Futūḥ and Kitāb al-Jamāl are concerned, al-Taḥāthīf omitted 89 out of 196 narratives of the first fragment. From the 107 narratives that he recorded, it omitted more than 28 substantial portions. From the second fragment, which contains 108 narratives, he partially included 8 narratives and completely omitted 33. This is much less compared to the first fragment. His suppression can be attested to in the following instance: al-Taḥāthīf quotes two narratives about the Ridda, apparently taken from the lost part of our manuscript another in an-other work of his, Kitāb Taḥdhib al-‘Abār. Only the first narrative is recorded in his History and the second he seems to have suppressed altogether56, That is not all, al-Taḥāthīf actually reproduced some of Sayf’s narratives partly in paraphrase, partly verbatim and partially suppressed. The following three narratives reported by Sayf and processed by al-Taḥāthīf may shed some light on the way he worked:

From Sayf, al-Taḥāthīf (1/1277) quoted the following narrative:

وَقَدْ قَالَ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ رَحْمَةُ الْأَلْلَهِ نَافِعُ الْأَصْحَابِ سَيِّدُ عَمَّرِ الشَّافِعِي فَيَحْتَافُ بِالْعَمَّرِ وَيَطْهِرُ فَيَسْلُفُ لِلْأَعْلَامِ (fol.6a)

Al-Taḥāthīf reproduced the following narrative in two places; in the first place, the narrative appears thus (1/1277-8): 

وَقَدْ قَالَ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ رَحْمَةُ الْأَلْلَهِ نَافِعُ الْأَصْحَابِ سَيِّدُ عَمَّرِ الشَّافِعِي فَيَحْتَافُ بِالْعَمَّرِ وَيَطْهِرُ فَيَسْلُفُ لِلْأَعْلَامِ

The same narrative appears in our manuscript. (fol.5b-6a) as:

See, p. 12 and fn.49 where Hinds mentions the case of Abu Mīkhāl’s narratives in al-Taḥāthīf which have been compared with some surviving manuscripts of Abu Mīkhāl by Shazīm.

53 For Taḥdhib, see, Musnad ‘Alī, ed. M.M. Shākir, 83; al-Taḥāthīf 1/ 1900-1901.
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The second one appears in our manuscript. (fol.6a) as follows:

Al-Tabari only borrowed the isnād from this narrative and, while dropping the other isnād, be, incorporated the whole text in the other two narratives.

This is not, in fact, an isolated case; some 150 or more complete sentences or single words have been suppressed in the text he borrowed from our manuscript.

In another instance he would record only part of a narrative in one place and repeat the whole of it in another. An example of this is Sayf’s reporting the removal of Sa’d ibn abu Waqqas from the governorship of Kufa and his replacement by al-Walid ibn ‘Uqba56, together with the events which led to the murder of Ibn al-Hayyamīn al-Kharraṣ57 by some of the men of Kufa and the aftermath of the murder. Al-Tabari first recorded part of this among the events of the year 26 AH58 and repeated the whole narrative (together with the first part) under the year 30 AH59.

Al-Tabari, however, introduced his own wording in the sequence for example in the following narrative (consisting of 21 lines) quoted from Sayf (al-Tabari 1/3219-3221; Kitāb al-Ridda fol.167b; 169b):

It thus appears that al-Tabari not only omitted a substantial part of the passage but also changed the wording of the parts he quoted. Moreover, he single out one line from the above narrative and recorded it separately with the same isnād as follows:

In this particular passage, a strange mistake was made either by al-Tabari himself or by the copyist. Al-Tabari reports that when ‘Uthman was murdered he was 63 years old: (al-Tabari 1/3053) and adds: ‘these are Sayf’s words which he ascribed to some individuals’; meaning of course: the four authorities in the above-mentioned isnād.

This particular statement caused Ibn Kathir, who depended heavily on al-Tabari, to accuse Sayf of committing a historical blunder60 although Sayf in reality, as mentioned in the manuscript, reported that when ‘Uthman was murdered, he was 83 years old:

The following example is again typical of al-Tabari’s drawing on Sayf which shows how he actually selected some of his reports from Kitāb al-Ridda: (al-Tabari 1/3058; Kitāb al-Ridda, fol.388-39a. Those parts in bold are missing in al-Tabari’s work.)

It is apparent that al-Tabari in fact selected his narratives in rather an eclectic manner leaving out all material that, in his own opinion, would not shed any new light on the event he records. This process can be observed in a passage narrated by Sayf on the authority of Abu ‘Abd Allāh and Abu ‘Uthman61 con corroborated by Muhammad and Tabla: (not emphasised in al-Tabari)

Here is the same procedure (that al-Tabari uses throughout this book) of Shihab ibn ‘Umar62 quoting a version of the event in a different isnād.

56 Kitāb al-Ridda 85b.
57 Ibid., 1/2812-3.
58 See, 1/2840-1.
59 Al-Tabari has incorrectly: ‘sayf meaning: on foot.
60 Al-Bidāyā wa al-Nihāyā 7/190.
connection with two problematic implications:
a) The actual relation between our text and that of al-Tabari;
b) The prejudgment of Sayf’s integrity as an historian held by some classical and modern orientalists and non-orientalists based exclusively on Sayf’s reports recorded by al-Tabari.

It must be recalled that Sayf’s text was indeed fragmented by al-Tabari as we have already seen and even the fragments were not recorded in their entirety. How then could any scholar be in a position to pass a sound judgment on an author whose work is not completely recorded.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the considerable research aimed at revealing al-Tabari’s criteria of preference or the method he followed in choosing his sources, no tangible result has so far been reached nor even obviated the point in question. What are we to make of the fact that while there were several works available to him in the field of the Ridda and in Maqal ‘Uthmān, he adopted a certain range of sources and discarded the others or at best quoted them sparingly? Why did he prefer Sayf to al-Waqidi, al-Madā’inī, ‘Umar ibn Shabba and al-Minqarī, when each of the latter is known to have written a work on either the Ridda events or Maqal ‘Uthmān and the al-Jamal war? None of these questions has been adequately answered by modern scholars as E. Landau-Tasseron has shown. F. Rosenthal, on the other hand, posed the same problem without offering any answer. It was, and has remained, more difficult to gain an insight into the manner in which Tabari used his sources. What considerations determined his choice of a given source in preference to other sources that might have been available to him?

But having said that, al-Tabari himself was a strict Traditionalist in approach as can be seen from his emphasis on the isna‘īd, and clearly explained his criteria and his method of choice in the first pages of his History.

I do this for the purpose of clarifying those whose transmission I considered praiseworthy and whose information I accepted, and those whose transmission I rejected and whose transmission I disregarded, and those whose tradition is considered feeble and whose information is considered weak. In addition, I gave the reason why someone’s information is disregarded and the cause for someone’s tradition being considered feeble.

It is commonly held by modern scholars that al-Tabari was much inclined to amassed reports dealing with an event which he quoted from various sources, whether oral or written, without applying any degree of criticism to either their historical structure or reliability. Al-Durī calls this, ‘his abstention

63 See, al-Fihrist, pp. 105, 106, 111, 115, 121, 122; See, Bughayy al-Maktabin 187; for Ibn Shabba.
66 Al-Tabari, 106.
67 Rosenthal’s translation of this passage is certainly not correct. See, al-Tabari, p. 170.
from criticism of the content. This, somehow misleading, impression was created by al-Tabari himself when he stated: Let it be known that if a reader or a listener disapproves of or finds some of the reports that we have included in our book repulsive because he does not find them to be truthful or trustworthy, it is surely not of our making but it was the making of those who transmitted them to us. We only transmit to you (i.e. the reports) what was transmitted to us. Such a statement is not altogether correct as far as Sayf's narratives are concerned, as we have seen above. In many other cases, al-Tabari applied a certain degree of criticism by selecting or omitting what he decided to record or ignore. His sharp and sometimes severe comments such as: 'In our opinion the correct way is so and so; I do have my doubt concerning this or that'; to this he added the caveat that, according to some reports, the work of al-Tabari, as it stands now is more than an abridged version of an original which is said to have consisted of more than 30,000 folios, but was then abridged by al-Tabari himself to 3,000 folios.

If those reports are authentic, though they add very little to our historical knowledge, they, nevertheless, attest to his method of selecting what he found fit to record and disposing of what he considered superfluous. Considering the large number of complete narratives together with substantial parts of other narratives al-Tabari omitted from our incomplete manuscript, it seems plausible that such reports are accurate. In all probability, al-Tabari's method of shifting and rearranging his materials, his drawing two narratives in connection with the Battle of the Camel (from Sayf through Nasr ibn Muzahim al-Minqari, the author of the lost monograph, Kitab al-Janah) might have evoked Hinds' impression that al-Tabari used two separate versions of Sayf's transmission. There would seem to be a reason to presume that, al-Minqari, being younger than Sayf, might have heard those two narratives directly from Sayf after the latter had already published his work. This could explain the fact that these two reports do not appear in Sayf's work as preserved in our manuscript.

Indeed al-Tabari also used 'Ubayd Allah ibn Sa'd al-Zuhri's transmission through his uncle Ya'qub ibn Ibrahim al-Zuhri (d.208) to some of Sayf's narratives through the latter's father in more than 50 instances of his (al-Tabari's) work. None of these transmissions is found in our manuscript simply because...

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89 'The Iraq School of History to the Ninth Century', in Historians of the Middle East, B. Lewis and M. Holt, ed. (London, 1964), p. 53.
90 See, 1/17.
91 See, 1/367.
93 See, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala', 14/274-5.
94 See, Tabari, 1/3111, 3120.
95 Reported by al-Nadim 106.
96 Sayf ibn 'Umar's Sources on Arabia, (Sources for the History of Arabia), (Riyadh, 1979), vol.1, pt. 2, p. 12.
97 Died in 269/884.
98 See, Indices, p. 376.
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they mainly relate earlier events than those with which our manuscript is concerned; they presumably were taken from the lost portion. This fact and others make our manuscript all the more important and valuable. Both in understanding al-Tabari's method of compiling his work and in assessing Sayf ibn 'Umar as an historian.

Sayf's credibility has been doubted ever since Wellhausen published his biased theory about Sayf, which has so often been repeated by modern scholars. Landau-Tasseron challenged modern scholars who 'do not fully answer at least two of the points made by Sayf's modern critics: firstly, that his accounts are often unique and at odds with all of the other sources. Secondly, that he mentions many names of both people and places which are not to be found in other sources'. She sums up their conclusion thus: 'According to the critics both facts indicate that Sayf invented, or severely tampered with his accounts. But she seems to have overlooked the statement made by al-Dhahabi in his introduction to Kitab Tajrid Asma' al-Sababa where he wrote: 'I think the names mentioned in this book of mine amount to more than 8,000 but most of them are not fully known. He in fact enumerated 8,866 persons.

In the rest of her article, Landau-Tasseron, in attempting to prove that the accounts of Sayf are not as unique as some modern scholars believe, suggests that, 'the best way to undermine the belief, shared by so many scholars, in Sayf's inventiveness (hence unreliability) is to provide parallels to his accounts from other, independent sources'. Those parallels, which she adequately provides, lead her to the conclusion that, 'The foregoing material points to the necessity to get rid of the prejudice that Sayf is likely to be wrong; it now seems that, having recourse to much richer material than was available to our predecessors, and being less carried away by sheer novelty of critical method, we may with due respect part with the prejudice against Sayf which came as a by-product of that valuable method'.

The idea which depicts Sayf ibn 'Umar and his reports about the formative period of Islam as 'unreliable', was in fact not the invention of Wellhausen who may have been the first to popularise it in his long 'out of date work'. The idea was actually in vogue among orientalists long before Wellhausen published his work. As early as 31 September 1865, M.J. de Goeje, perhaps still working on his edition of al-Baladhi (d.229/892) (published in 1863-6), wrote a letter to Th. Nölsche in which he says: 'What concerns the conquest of Syria, I believe I have reached the conclusion that one should not accept...
anything based on Sayf's authority alone. In contrast to him, Waqidi and Ibn Ishaq are much more accurate.66

In this particular letter, de Goeje seems to be well aware of the scanty information at hand when he writes: 'but before I reject Sayf's authority, I have to study the other parts of his work. If Ibn Hajar was complete, it would have been possible now already to mention how the Arab scholars judge the transmitters.' The reference to Ibn Hajar's work is very vague. To the best of my knowledge, there was then no work of Ibn Hajar in the course of publication other than Kitab al-Isbah fi Tamyiz al-Sabiba which began to appear at that time (published in Calcutta by Sprenger and others between 1856 and 1893), but the work deals only with the sabiba and not with the transmitters. It is, therefore, conceivable that de Goeje was then well acquainted with Ibn Hajar's citations from Sayf's works, and he might have already compared those citations with al-Tabari's.

In the second edition of his book, 'Memoire sur la conquête de la Syrie', published 36 years later (1st. edn. Leiden, 1864; 2nd. edn. Leiden 1900), de Goeje, while highly praising Weilhausen's criticism of Sayf's accounts, nevertheless hesitated to condemn Sayf's narratives of the conquest of Syria as fabrications. Interestingly enough, apart from the accounts of Sayf which exist in greater quantity than those of the other Akhbaris (historians) narrators of news or events) and are richer in detail in al-Tabari's History, de Goeje relied heavily on other detailed accounts, transmitted by Abi Mikhail and Waqidi. Almost all the classical Muhaddithun (transmitters of Hadith), including Ibn Hajar, stigmatized these authors with varying degrees of subtlety or crudity as doubtful or as untrustworthy.67 Ibn Hajar describes Sayf in these terms: Sayf ibn 'Umar al-Tamimi al-Kufi, the author of Kitab al-Isbah, was weak in the Prophetic Tradition but trustworthy ('unda) as an historian. Moreover, Yahyâ ibn Ma'in (d.332/943) who is said to have been the most expert in the science of al-jarh wa al-tadil, has only the word 'da'i' (weak in Hadith) to describe Sayf. According to Ibn Ma'in, 'Al-Muharririb'68, used to narrate Hadith on the authority of Sayf ibn 'Umar.69 Al-Muharriri is depicted by Ibn Ma'in himself as trustworthy 'thiqah'; meaning of course in the Hadith, while Abu Haiim says of Al-Muharriri: he is veracious (sadqi) in spite of the fact that he transmitted Hadith on the authority of obscure transmitters.70

The biased attitude of the majority of the Muhaddithun towards Sayf stems from the fact that they were not so much concerned with Sayf's reliability as...

66 Preserved in the University Library, Leiden. My thanks are due to my friend Prof. Dr. P.J.S. van Koningsveld who drew my attention to it. 'Ik geloof het uitgemaakt te hebben dat Seif wàt de geschiedenis van de verovering der Syrië betreft, volstrekt niet te vertrouwen is, dat hij wel vele merkwaardige zaken verhaalt, maar dat men op zijn woord het ene na het andere mag aannemen. Daarentegen zijn Waqidi en Ibn Ishaq veel nauwkeuriger.'
67 'Maar voorkomt dit Seif geheel verwoordt niet, moet ik ook de andere gedeelten van zijn werk bestuderen. Als 'in 'Hadjaj compleet was, zou men nu reeds kunnen opgeven wat de Arabische geleerden over de verovering oordeelden.'
68 See, Ibn Hayar, Tabikhi bi-Tabikhi, 9/363.
69 Ab al-Rajmi' bin Muhammad, died soon after 190/905.
like Bukhārī, Muslim, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Abū Dāwūd, al-Hākim and al-Tirmidhī.102

According to Dīrū, the Akhbārīs had to carry on a wide search for traditions. Thus they used family traditions, tribal traditions in their province and a vast number of single reports. They had to supplement these traditions by those of other provices with which events were linked, and thus brought in traditions of Syria, Madina and Arabia (…) Sayyf ibn ‘Umar depends, especially for the conquests, on Kūfī traditions, supplemented by some Medinese and Syrian traditions. For the Ridda he relies on traditions from Kūfah, Arabia and Madina. Among his Medinese authorities are Hishām ibn ‘Urwā (d. 1467/753) and Miṣṣīq ibn ‘Uqba (d. 1417/758). Many reports go back to participants in the events.103

Ella Landau-Tasseron considers Wellhausen responsible for first introducing the myth about Sayf’s ‘untrustworthiness’ which ‘springs from the prejudice against him’.100 Wellhausen and his followers, the classical western scholars, seem to agree on the notion that: Sayf’s reports are not to be taken at face value though they differ in the intensity of their attitude. One has to wonder why scholars like Grib, Caetani, Brockelmann, Rosenthal, Goitein and Schacht should repeat the ideas perceived by Wellhausen in rejecting Sayf’s traditions while at the same time accepting the evidence found in reports (narrated in literary sources) by anonymous or suspect transmitters like ‘Allān the Shu‘ibī, whose literary activities concentrated on slanderous the Arabs’.101

With his recent edition of al-Baladhhī’s Fustah al-Baladhī, de Geoej opened that al-Baladhhī knew Sayf’s works but did not quote him because he did not trust him. One is surely entitled to doubt such a statement, since al-Baladhhī did in fact quote Sayf twice by name in the very edition of de Geoej.209 He took him from him in extenso as did al-Tahāri, but when he did quote him, he took from him only a detail, or a story epistemised in a few lines, beginning his reports with the vague formula: ‘some have mentioned’ or ‘they said’ to suit his own purpose and system of composition.

Brockelmann made a rather puzzling assessment of Sayf. Relying on Wellhausen, he parrots his idea that the works of Sayf, ‘sind im höchsten Grade unkritisch und phantastisch, da sie in erster Linie der Verherrlichung seines Stammes dienen; durch die Farbigkeit seiner Darstellung hat sich die Zeit überzeugen lassen, seine Berichte vorzugsweise zu folgen.’110 This view was rejected categorically by Jawād ‘Allī, who wrote: ‘that Sayf exaggerated the glorification of his tribe Tamīn, is an uncircumspect assertion which still needs much research and proof’. ‘Allī’s second objection is based

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on the simple question: ‘How did Brockelmann know that al-Tabari was led astray by Sayf while no work of Sayf has so far survived?’109. In another place in his survey, he points out that it seems strange that al-Tabarī preferred the accounts Sayf narrated in his Kitāb al-Riddā to the reports of Al-Wāqī‘id and al-Madkhā’īnī who are equally renowned among the compilers of works on the Ridda affairs. ‘The question may be asked here’, he goes on, ‘was al-Tabari’s trust in Sayf’s accounts of the Ridda so high that he preferred them to those of the other historians, or were there any other reasons which prompted his preference?’ Unfortunately, ‘Allī does not explain his thesis. He says only that Sayf was known to be vastly knowledgeable in the history of Islam. His works and especially those he wrote on the Ridda and the conquests gained him wide fame with historians even though the Muhaddithin discredited him because they accused him, as they had accused other Akhbārīs like al-Wāqī‘id and others, of inventing izādāt and falsifying Ḥadīth. Their accusations were so grave that they said: Sayf’s traditions are comparable to those of al-Wāqī‘id.110

Wellhausen’s view in general, as he formulates it, is: ‘wir sind berechtigt und verpflichtet, ihn [Sayf] von vornherein zu misstrauen und der Hagiographie Tradition der Vorzug einzuräumen.’111 The basic assumption at the core of this idea is the notion that there exists a clear-cut difference between the Iraķī and the Hijājī traditions. It is logical to assert, however, that it is intrinsically difficult for any scholar to determine this difference, if it does exist; all the Akhbārīs drew their reports from authorities belonging to both110 as well as to other regions. Such criteria, therefore, should not be accorded undue weight.112 It is also worth noting that al-Dāraqūṭī, in his short account of Sayf, stresses the fact that Sayf drew information not only from a multitude (ālam) of Kūfī and Baṣrī informants, but also from Hijājī informants.113

Chronology and Kitāb al-Ridda wa al-Fudūth

Wellhausen, moreover, argues that the date of the battle of al-Yarmūk against the Byzantines, ‘stattgefeinden im August 636 (15 H.). Das gleiche Datum, nemlich Ragab 15 AH geben Ibn Ishaq bei Tabari und Vagi bei Baladhuri. Saif dagegen setzt die Schlacht in den Gamala 11 3 AH. 634, also über zwei Jahr zu früh.’114 He further uses the Chronicle of Bishop Johannes of Niko to prove that the Egyptian Babylon fell in the year 641 and Alexandria in the year 642; that is, in the years 20 and 21 AH respectively. Ibn Ishaq records these dates as well. But according to Sayf, the conquest of Egypt was in the year 16 AH, that is 637 AD. To prove Sayf’s inventiveness, Wellhausen adduced Sayf’s reports about the subjugation of al-Andalus (not Spain) during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān and characterised them as ‘Ungeheuerlichkeiten’.114 Wellhausen concludes, that ‘Mit der Chronologie

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102 For the saying of Sa‘īd ibn Zayd, see, Siyar A‘lām al-Nabā‘ī, 1:136, and for the Ḥadīth:

103 See, Masnad Ahmad 1:187; Tirmidhī 3758; Ibn Māja 134; See, as well: Siyar 1:29, 105; for more Hādhāth, see, Masnad al-Dhahabī 2:255-6; Lisān al-Miṣrīn of Ibn Hajar, 3:123.


105 Landau-Tasseron, p. 6.


108 GAL S.2.124; ‘are in the highest degree unceratical and fanciful, in the first instance he serves to glorify his tribe....’


111 Skizzen und Vorarbeiten, sechstes Heft, (Berlin, 1899), p. 6. 108

112 Dīrū, see above.

113 Compare the approach of Dīrū above.

114 Wellhausen, see above, p. 6.

115 ‘monstrosities’ ibid.

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chose the year 20 for Egypt and 25 for Alexandria.\(^{115}\) Al-Kindī, however, reports that the conquest of Egypt began in the year 19 and lasted for seven months before its fort was finally subjugated.\(^{116}\) Even the names of the commanders in battle are disputed by the Akhbārīs.\(^{117}\) Consensus is rare in historical writing; it must not, therefore, be accorded undue weight. One cannot agree with Lawrence Conrad’s observation that ‘consensus bears no necessary relation to historical truths.’\(^{118}\)

Wellhausen’s objections, therefore, are based only on the most fragile of hypotheses. In the absence of definite facts contradicting his data he keeps the whole matter open to question. Whether one is entitled to dismiss the validity of Sayf’s i'tiqad on the basis of a few chronological errors is another question. Moreover, some of the ‘errors’ may yet prove to be correct. Ibn al-Athir, for one, argues that the date given by Sayf for the conquest of Egypt is plausible. He bases his argument on the fact that in the year of the great famine of the Romans, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb sent to the then governor of Egypt, ‘Amr ibn al-‘As to supply Makkah and Madīnah with grain.\(^{119}\) Most historians, including Ibn Iṣḥaq, place the famine either in the year 17 or 18.\(^{120}\) Taking the year 20 for the conquest of Egypt is, therefore, neither conclusive nor definitely established.

Dismissal of Sayf’s reports on al-Andalus without any further discussion or investigation is wrong. It is certainly worthwhile observing that such reports deserve to be closely re-examined and thoroughly investigated in the light of other independent sources available, preferably Latin\(^{121}\) and Visigothic sources. This is beyond the scope of this study, but a short survey of the events can be made here which might eventually stimulate further study without going into full detail.

In Sayf’s reports, the name of al-Andalus occurs in three separate but short narratives, all of which form one coherent story.\(^{122}\) The outline of the first narrative is that some time after ‘Uthmān’s election, (3 Muharram 24 AH), he ordered the commander of the army in Egypt, ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Sa’īd to

\(^{115}\) ibid., 799.


\(^{117}\) See, E.I. 2nd edn ‘Adīnāyān’.

\(^{118}\) See, Southern Palestine, p. 48, cited by E. Landau-Tisseron, p. 12.

\(^{119}\) See, Tij al-‘Amr, 1/557; ibn Kathīr, ibid., 7980-91, at the end of 17 and the beginning of 18: al-Tabarī 1/2516.

\(^{119}\) In a passing reference, Stefano Allevi and F. Dusseto say: ‘Islam appears, as is known, for the first time in Italy already in the 7th Century, practically at the beginning of Islamic history; first with some isolated raids - the first one historically documented goes back to the middle of the 7th Century and specifically to 652 (31AH), see, Il ritorno dell’Islam - l’ispezione in Italia, (Roma, 1993), p. 21, citing: F. Gabrieli, Storia cultura e civiltà degli Arabi in Italia, in F. Gabrieli, U Scritto gli Arabi in Italia, (Roma, 1989).

\(^{120}\) Al-Tabarī 1/2814-17; Kiāb al-Ridda, fol. 53a-55a. The first one Sayf′ received from two informants. Abū Ḥāritha (Muḥarriz al-Aḥbashān) and Abū ‘Uthmān (Ya‘qūb ibn ‘Urayd al-Ghanṣūn), while he received the second and the third from Muhammad (ibn ‘Abd-Allāḥ ibn Sawdāw ibn Nūwāyray) and Tālīb (ibn al-‘Alām al-Hanāfī).
converting their suppositions into facts without any verification of the material at hand against any other sources, especially Latin sources.\textsuperscript{140}

The most worthy of attention are the accounts concerning the conquest of \textit{Ifrījya} in the sources. The first of them is Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam (d.257/871), who confused \textit{Ifrījya} with the territory which came under the power of the exarch Gregory, whose authority was considered to extend from Tripoli to Tangiers.\textsuperscript{141} Yāqūt gives three possible dates for the conquest of \textit{Ifrījya}: 27, 28 or 29.\textsuperscript{142} Equally worthy of attention are the accounts of the conquest of \textit{Ifrījya} in the ansāb works, which seem to have been the sources for the story of exarch Gregory and the participation of ‘Abd-Allāh ibn al-Zubayr\textsuperscript{143} on the one hand and the poet Abū Dhū’ayb al-Hudhali on the other. He is said to have died in the year 27 (648) returning from the conquest of \textit{Ifrījya}.\textsuperscript{144}

Whether by chance or by circumstance, Wellhausen’s distrust of Sayf is based on chronological grounds and on the differences between the \textit{Ḥijāz} and \textit{Iraqi} traditions. De Goeje before him expressed his distrust of Sayf in the letter cited above to Nöldeke. A year earlier, de Goeje had already summarised his view in his work: \textit{Mémoire sur le Foutoula’s-Châzi} (published in 1864) which he repeated in the introduction of the second edition (but not in the first edition) of the \textit{Mémoire sur la conquête de la Syrie},\textsuperscript{145} where he says: ‘Quant au mémoire sur la conquête de la Syrie, j’ai une grande satisfaction. Le but principal de mon étude avait été de rétablir l’ordre chronologique des événements et le résultat auquel j’avais arrivé, avait été que le système de Saïf doit être rejeté dans son entier, et que ceux de Wákidî et d’ibn Ishâk méritent en général notre confiance’.

This is almost the same idea which Wellhausen formulated in his work which was adopted later on by Caetani among others in his: \textit{Annali dell’Islam}.\textsuperscript{146} While praising Wellhausen’s criticism of Sayf, Caetani repeatedly accused Sayf of dramatic colouring and fantastic, romantic inventions. He deplored the narratives of Sayf as romantic, legendary, imaginary, arbitrary, invented, obscure, confused and artistically falsified.\textsuperscript{147} This anti-Sayf tendency we find in Caetani’s work is in fact an echo of de Goeje-Wellhausen views in general rather than Caetani’s own, and is mainly a result of him simply not consulting available material. For example, the detailed topographical information found in Sayf’s reports are shown to be accurate for the most


\textsuperscript{141} For \textit{Ifrījya}: Ibn ‘Idhārī, 299. This is precisely the opinion of al-Bakrī, see, Yāqūt, \textit{Mu‘jam}, (Beirut, 1957), 1/229.

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Mu‘jam}, see above 1/229.

\textsuperscript{143} See, Nasab Qurayshy by al-Zubayr (d.256/860), ed. E.Levi-Provençal, (Cairo, 2nd edn. 1876), pp. 237-8; al-Iṣbaḥ 1/203; quoting Jamharat Nasab Qurayshy by al-Zubayr Ibn Bakkār (d. 256/869).

\textsuperscript{144} See, al-Aghārī 5/56; Khūzāyat al-‘Adab 1/203; Tabaqāt Fihāl al-Shaurā’ii 110; al-Iṣbaḥ 4/67.

\textsuperscript{145} See, pp 1-2

\textsuperscript{146} (Milan, 1905-1926).

\textsuperscript{147} Cited by E. Landais-Tasseron, p. 3.
Qasim al-Samarrai

part, by the investigations of Al-ısa Musil. Thus Martin Hinds was prompted to declare: that 'the centrality of charactephyraphical and other fabrications by Sayf should accordingly be dismissed.

Nevertheless, L. Vecchia Vaglieri, for one, having written about the al-Qadisiyya battle, acknowledged that, 'the greater part of al-Tabari's account, however, is based on traditions of Sayf ibn 'Umar, whom some Islamic writers have accused of falsification. This is not the place for detailed discussion of such accusations: it is sufficient to observe that Sayf's account also forms the basis of the story related by the majority of Arab and Persian historians.

Vaglieri thus confined himself to an uncritical repetition of anti-Sayf accusations. In contrast to most scholars whose views E. Landau-Tasseron has discussed at length, Dürri, offers a balanced assessment of the Akhbārīs in general and of Sayf ibn 'Umar in particular. To him, the prime concern of the Akhbārīs was the umma. The umma, not the tribe, was the focus of their interest; 'the concept of the unity and continuity of the experience of the umma is thus noticeable. Later on, in the same article, Dürri stresses the idea that those Akhbārīs were the first historians; they differ from the ruwwāt of anecdotal Hadith in their practice of collecting traditions relevant to a theme or event, and by putting them in a coherent monograph. These monographs in their turn prepared the way for al-Baladhuri, al-Ya‘qubi (d.284/897), al-Dinawari (d.282/897), ibn Qutayba and al-Tabari in the third century AH, to write continuous histories and not monographs. According to Dürri, the first generation of the Akhbārīs did not sink to the level of sheer partisanship and were not representatives of a single view. Sayf ibn 'Umar, for instance, depended, especially for the conquests, on Kūfī traditions, supplemented by some Medinese and Syrian traditions. For the ruwwāt he relies on traditions from Kūf, Arabia and Madina. Among his Medinese authorities are the much appreciated Akhbārīs: Hisnām ibn 'Urwa and Mūsā ibn 'Uqba. Out of over 60 ruwwāt from whom Sayf ibn 'Umar drew his narratives, he relies heavily on two, namely: Talha ibn al-‘Alām and Muhammad ibn ‘Abd-Allāh, from each of whom he took over a hundred reports as quoted in al-Tabari.

Noth, Hinds and Sezgin all applied a thorough and critical investigation of Sayf’s sources of information. Noth held that there was no ground for regarding either Sayf’s reports or any of the other reports used by al-Tabari as representing a uniform historical view. In Noth’s opinion the attempt of Wellhausen, and of those who followed him, to simplify early Islamic historical source criticism by comparing sources according to a ‘vertical’ principle (Kufian versus


150 ‘... فارغعني...’

151 A Reappraisal of Sayf ibn ‘Umar (Mediense, Sayf versus Ibn Isḥāq and Wāqid, etc.) was pointless and misleading.

152 Earlier, Sezgin, in examining Sayf’s sources, considered the isnad in Sayf’s narratives in connection with the question of the extent to which material was committed to written form in the early Islamic period. He reached the conclusion that it is not possible to draw any firm conclusion since there are two possibilities: that there was a larger body of material from a particular ruwwāt ibn ‘Umar but Sayf took from it only one report, and that Sayf took several reports from such a body of material, but that only one of these was cited by al-Tabari. If, however, a ruwwāt who occurs only once in al-Tabari’s citation of Sayf’s transmission is not found in other works, this obviously confirms the possibility that his name was indeed attached only to a single report. Conclusive proof in such matters would necessitate access to more comprehensive indices of ruwwāt than exist at present.

Apart from the stereotypical criticisms levelled against Sayf by both classical and modern critics, de Goeje and Wellhausen in particular based their distrust on Sayf’s narratives as recorded by al-Tabari. As Jāwād ‘Ali rightly observes, al-Tabari’s system of tafsīr (fragmentation), serves to enrich the reader’s knowledge of different points of view, but also confuses the reader and the historian alike. Through divagation and deviation, the subject’s unity is undermined.

The controversy seems to focus on very broad historical traditions handed down through the centuries by transmitters whose task was only to collect and record reports. At the time, the method of the Traditionists (Akhbār ibn al-Hadith) was fairly widespread and influenced the Akhbārīs. Thus their method was used in scrutinising reporters and in assessing the worth of traditions. In recording his accounts, Sayf was well aware of the discrepancy in some of the reports he transmitted. For example, he stated: ‘This story of the Ubulla and its conquest is contrary to what the authors of ṣiyar know and contrary to the account of the Traditions.’ Or: ‘Concerning al-Zaybari’s pledge of allegiance to ‘Alī, there exists disagreement.’ Similarly, ‘Reports


154 Hinds, see above, p. 12.

155 Ibid.


158 Dürri, see above, p. 50.

159 Dürri, see above, p. 50, where he gives more examples of the Akhbārī’s criticism of their reports.

160 See, fol.113b of our manuscript.
differ about whether al-Zubayr was in Medina when ‘Uthmān was killed or had left the city prior to that’ (fol.86a).

As a rule, most of the sources were oral traditions, but some were probably written, as is clear from the formulas wa dhakara (he mentioned), baddathanā (he told us, he narrated to us) or rawā (he transmitted or reported). The Akhbārīs even used official documents like letters and treaties they obtained from official circles or from people who possessed them. Sayf ibn ‘Umar was no exception: he transmitted reports and official documents not on his own authority but on the authority of a chain of informants, some of whom were exceedingly respected either for their religious affiliation or their knowledge and personal integrity. Among them are ‘All ibn al-Husayn ibn abi Tābi’n, al-Qasim ibn Muḥammad ibn abi Bakr al-Ṣiddiq, (one of the seven fuqahā’ of al-Madina), al-Sha’bī (the well-known traditionist), Hitam ibn ‘Urwa, Mūsā ibn ‘Uqba and others.

If we are to understand the term ‘chronology’ as meaning anything other than ascertaining the fixed dates when past events took place and of arranging them in the order of occurrence, we are then at liberty to describe Sayf’s material as chronological simply because Sayf in fact does arrange events, not tied to specific years but in relation to other events which took place within a certain period of time.

The focus of the classical orientalists’ concerns, as we have seen, is the composition of Sayf’s narratives about the ridda wars and the conquests of Iraq and Syria as reported by al-Ṭabarī. Their criteria for understanding chronology is based on Hellenistic Persian concepts introduced into the west through the translation of Jerome into Latin of Eusebius’ Chronological Canons, as much as the Chronographia, which was one of the world chronicles. Their emphasis is primarily upon written materials (that is, dated documents) rather than upon historians, as is the case with Islamic history, which is much influenced by the al-Hadith system. Jerome’s translation seems to have had an indelible effect on western historians during and after the Middle Ages. It is clear that such differences of concept, cannot easily be reconciled, and that therefore, chronological criteria should not be accorded undue weight without first undertaking a thorough investigation of the early concept of Islamic chronology.

Conclusion

It is fortunate to have discovered the original work of Sayf ibn ‘Umar. Al-Ṭabarī gave us a certain idea, both of the periods he described and of the sources he used. But he certainly selected his material, as we have shown. With Sayf we not only get closer to the earlier historical material, but we

163 Dūrī, see above.
164 Kitāb al-Ridda wa al-Fitḥah, fol.4a; see, al-Tubahat of ibn Sa’d, 5,211-222.
165 ibid., fol.1-b, 20a, 23b.ff.; al-Tubahat of ibn Sa’d, 2,284; 5,187-94.
166 GAS 1, 286ff. ‘Er war ein Schüler von al-Zahrā’i und lebte in Madina’, (he was a student of al-Zahrā’i and lived in Medina).
169 M. Hind, see above, p. 4.
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The civilisation of Islam has had religion as its fundamental inspiration. Religion has also served Muslims as a primordial identity, and the basis of communal loyalty and political allegiance. The universality of the faith, coupled with the centralised administration of Muslim states, ensured that the determinants of political identity were expressed mainly in terms of religion and religious association rather than nation, territory, race or ethnicity. However, the transformation of the Muslim community from a single entity into nation-states has been particularly significant. This change has led Muslims to accommodate all modern ideologies within a religious framework; providing historical justifications and precedent to such an extent that Islam has been equated with ideological political prescription. In this pursuit Muslims have adopted and adapted a number of political concepts and procedures within the Islamic scheme of things. For the last two hundred years Islam has also been associated with revolution; identified with progress demanding tolerance and liberty. Western concepts like constitutionalism, parliamentary democracy and mass political organisation have all been given an Islamic flavour. The initial notion of Islamic modernism soon gave way to the adoption of the idea of the nation-state and nationalism; only to be transformed into the concept of Islamic socialism and revolution. These notions have been advocated and pursued with extremely strong conviction.

The ideologisation of Islam is not a new political phenomenon; it is as old as Islam itself. It has been inherent in the faith since its inception. The purpose of the Islamic mission is not simply to exhort the faithful to do good and avoid evil, but to construct a perfect and righteous society — where divine will prevails and sovereignty belongs to God alone. Under such divine provisions the state becomes a community of God where the believers are administered by divine ordinance. This perfect order can not countenance change or improvement. Under this purview the purpose of government is essentially executive and its basis becomes primarily ideological. The ideal Islamic state can be said to be perfect and immutable. The function of government in Muslim society is to defend the faith and protect the community. Followers of the faith need not bother with the dynamics of the state nor politics in the abstract. Nor are they to be concerned with comparative constitutions.
Thus Muslim political theories start from the basic assumption that Islamic government exists by virtue of a divine ordinance enshrined in the Shari’a. Political science is not an independent discipline under which social and political phenomena can be studied methodically, except as an integral branch of theology. Muslim study of statecraft was dominated by two distinct disciplines, directly concerned with the study and interpretation of the Qur’an and Hadith, or Prophetic tradition, the body of texts which makes up Muslim religious laws, the Shari’a. These were the religious and the legal dimensions that are interwoven in the Qur’an. The first discipline was Theological, that of acquiring positive knowledge, ‘ilm, which underlies the study of Theology, and the second became known as ‘fiqh, denoting law and concerned with the full comprehension of the legal implications of this knowledge to issue rulings and laws known as fatwas. Both disciplines have direct bearing on the political arrangements by which Muslims have been governed.

Under the rule of the Prophet, who founded the Muslim umma (community) and state, and who became its political leader, spiritual head, and ruler, there was no need for jurisprudence. No distinction existed between the powers of God and those of Caesar. God predominates as the sovereign of the universe, and the Prophet Muhammad taught and governed on His behalf. Divine authority sustained the Prophet in both tasks, the revelations embodied in the holy Qur’an provided the substance and his prophethood the basis of his authority. Islam therefore recognises no distinction between religious and secular activities: it does not distinguish between the spiritual and the temporal realms. Both realms form a unity subject to the all-embracing laws known as the Shari’a. In theory, therefore, the state in Islam is an essential part of the divine law. This law is eternal; it represents absolute good and precedes the existence of society and its body politic. The study of law, politics or government is not an independent or empirical study but is the practical dimension of the religious and social doctrine preached by the Prophet.

Thus the foundation of government in Islam is laid down in the law of God, the Shari’a. The purpose of establishing the Muslim community and the function of its government were clear and straightforward. ‘The community exists to bear witness to God amid the darkness of this world, and a civil society of imperial proportions; as well as a religious community, governed essentially by divine laws. Religion replaced other primordial loyalties – tribal, ethnic, and racial. It became the basis of corporate identity and political allegiance.

After the death of the Prophet various strategies and contingency plans were drawn up to deal with the situation, but none was universally accepted. It was recognised that the Prophet was the last and only executive commissioner of the divine will. Until his death he had been the fount of all legitimate action – executive, judicial and legislative. His prophetic status could not be shared, inherited or emulated by his successors. The Qur’an and Hadith remained the essential sources and rudiments for all religious interpretation. While the Prophet’s spiritual and prophetic function, the proclamation of the divine message of Islam, was complete; his religious, administrative and political work were to be continued by a deputy, khilafa or caliph. Though the holder was regarded as the spiritual head of the community, the office of the caliph, which became the great institution known as the caliphate, was an improvisation. It had no basis or substance in religion. No specific arrangement for the succession had been enunciated, and no rules had been promulgated before the death of Muhammad. The caliphate was born out of the existential necessity to carry the message of the Prophet forward. Muhammad’s ‘deputies’, the caliphs, could not fulfil all his functions. The Prophet had combined his religious and spiritual function with his secular and temporal role in the community. The caliph was not so endowed: he could not expond or interpret the faith. His duty was to uphold the divine ordinance of Islam and protect the community from internal challenges and external threats to its existence and well-being. It was also considered incumbent on the holder of the office of the caliphate actively to engage in the extension of the frontiers of Islam until the whole of humankind was won over.

Muslim political formulations, that became the rudiments of Muslim political theory, are primarily concerned with the position of the ruler or the imam, the spiritual head of the community. They were predicated on an ideal that was constantly contradicted by the objective reality of Islamic political life. The main preoccupation was the question of the selection and deposition of the ruler. A schism emerged over the question of who should be the khilafa of the Prophet and how was he to be selected. Though there was a wide degree of acceptance on the attributes, qualities and qualifications he should possess, the question was also bedevilled by important differences. To the majority of the Prophet’s disciples an initial insistence on consensus, ‘ijma, was of paramount significance to safeguard the unity of the community. Its advocates, who became known as ashl al-sunna wa al-jama’a, represented the mainstream of Sunni orthodoxy. The Sunnis agreed with the Shi’is that the successor must be a kin of the Prophet, but differed on the definition of this requirement. The Sunnis thought it sufficient that he should be of the Prophet’s tribe, Quraysh. The Shi’is were not content with mere tribal affiliation, they stipulated that the Prophet’s successor should be a member of the Prophet’s own family, narrowing down the choice to his cousin and son-in-law, ‘Ali, and ‘Ali’s direct descendants through the Prophet’s daughter,
Fatima. They also agreed that the unity of God, the universe and the faith demanded that there should be only one supreme Muslim ruler on earth, to represent divine will and enforce the law.

Under Ummayyad rule the Shi'is, however, went further and adopted the doctrine of divine light, whereby the imam held office by divine appointment. As such there would have to be only one imam (or khilafah): the only rightful candidate, known only to his predecessor.7 The introduction of this doctrine had serious political implications. It questioned the legitimacy of Muslim rule throughout the ages as far as the Shi'is were concerned. The doctrine became somewhat stagnant with the disappearance of the twelfth Imam in the 9th century. Before the disappearance of the last Imam two offshoots of the Shi'is, the Isma'ilis and the Zaydis insisted that there must always be an Imam present to guide the community at all times. None the less, the Kharijis were the most radical of all Muslim factions. They rejected both Sunni and Shi'i formulations about the succession. They saw no reason for confining the succession to a member of the Quraysh. They also rejected the hereditary nature of succession advocated initially by the Shi'is and subsequently adopted by the Sunnis, albeit in a monarchical fashion, and came to the conclusion that any Muslim of sufficient merit and worth could become the Imam. There would be no restriction of eligibility by descent or status as long as the Imam was freely chosen by the community. Having been chosen as leader he would remain so as long as he retained the consent of the faithful.

Muslim statecraft was not a matter for philosophical speculation and the jurists were embroiled in the God-given law of Islam. Many found themselves in no-man's-land and devoted their lives to worship and religious studies as well as mysticism. Others attempted to influence rulers to conform to the basic tenets of Muslim holy law; while some became rebellious against the status quo demanding change in the name of God and the faith. As principles of wisdom, and a certain latitude to use personal judgement in deciding between traditions and their applicability gained ground and credence, the foundations of Islamic jurisprudence were laid on the basis of ijma' (consensus), qiyas (analogical reasoning and deduction) and maslaha (generally viewed as public interest). This formula led to a dynamic period of Muslim political thought which was, however, lost when it was decided in the third century of Islam to close the avenue of continuous interpretation (on the grounds of growing knowledge) commonly known as the bab al-jihadi. The formal legal doctrines and definitions of the various schools of Muslim jurisprudence shared a substantial agreement on the more important matters and have remained more or less the same for almost ten centuries while the state has continued to drift away from religion. The drift was accompanied by the creation of an official religious establishment to assist secular rulers to maintain a semblance of religious orthodoxy. Jurists, qadis, muftis and shaykh al-islams

6 See Moojan Momen, An Introduction to Shi'lah Islam, Yale University Press, 1985, pp.147-160, also Lambton, Opcit, pp.219-241.

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became government officials of dubious independence, more often than not catering for powerful rulers. Outside the official realm, political, legal and theological interpretation of religious tenets depended on the attitude, outlook and inclination of individual interpreters whose motivation was constantly the desire to bridge the gulf between theory and practice. Individual Muslims, however learned or poorly versed in the intricacies of the studies of the Shari'a, can devise, have devised and will devise their own ideologies as to how they want to be governed. These ideologies have been inclined to chart a religious course towards the salvation of Muslims in this world and the one to come.

In the latter half of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century the Muslim world witnessed a proliferation of schools of thought advocating various ideologies, not only concerned with the revival of Islam but also with determining the nature of political power and authority in highly differentiated polities. Their quest is for the ideal state that the Prophet had set up as the fundamental aim of Islam. The development away from this ideal had been neither sudden nor swift. Nor was it the result of deliberate acts by Muslims. The state had simply continued to move away from religion under the relentless movement for modernisation in the 19th century. It was further compounded by a fundamental discrepancy between theory and application in the evolution of the Muslim concept of the state and its political dynamics. The demands of the new ideologies were at variance with the strict application of religious laws meant to ensure universal justice, righteousness and eternal salvation. What appears to have made this possible is the Muslim desire to contemporarise the arrangement for Islamic rule under western influence. Another and more long-standing reason was the desire to bridge the gap created between theory and practice in the conduct of Muslim public affairs. In the absence of a divine formula for government in Islam, together with the lack of an institutional framework after the death of the Prophet to determine the nature and extent of political action, the task of determining rights and obligations had fallen immediately to the Prophet's successors, later to Muslim theologians and jurists and eventually to civic rulers within the newly emergent nation-states.

Following the crisis of rule after the death of the Prophet a dichotomy developed between the idealised concept of the Muslim state under the Prophet and the reality of the existing situation. The ideal Muslim state became an aim to be aspirated to and the existing reality became a condition to be tolerated but often rejected and resisted. In this malaise the ideological vision of Islam was given an impetus that has been nurtured over the centuries. The quest for the idealised religious state injected an activist dimension into the Muslim body politic, which has continued to the present. It provided a millenarian feature, a salient feature of many revivalist religious movements. As jurists and Muslim thinkers pondered political realities, the development of Muslim statecraft simply deepened the disparity between theory and practice. The jurists have had neither the means nor the power to alter the realities of politics. Furthermore they could not change the fundamental basis of their
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political thought. The quest for the idealised religious state motivated many Muslim movements, injecting an activist dimension into Muslim politics. They aimed for an almost unattainable ideal – that of emulating Muslim rule under the Prophet and his immediate successors. This ideal, despite the obvious difficulty of attaining it, has become a salient feature of all revivalist Muslim movements throughout the centuries.

The primary concern of Muslim jurists has been a strict adherence to the faith, enforcing conformity and excluding dissent. The inevitable outcome has been the development of a certain degree of rigidity and regimentation as the corpus of religious laws and regulations were compiled and codified to become the body of Islamic jurisprudence. Moreover, it has been impossible to study politics as a completely separate discipline outside the confines of Islamic jurisprudence. Vital issues such as the nature of the state as a corporate organisation, authority, power, the variety of government institutions, methods of electing rulers, limitations of power, individual rights and obligations could not be examined and assessed except within the jealously guarded laws of the Shari’a. The right to disobedience was articulated by the Prophet when he enjoined the community that there was no duty of obedience to sin. Islam therefore sanctions not only a right but also a duty to disobey under certain circumstances, though the conditions giving rise to such situations have not been defined. Nor has the arrangement been institutionalised. There was no mechanism or institutional framework by which the performance of the ruler could be examined and assessed. Nor was there a clearly defined formal procedure for the removal of a ruler except by outright defiance, challenge and rebellion. The absence of a recognised institution or legal agency to secure the enforcement of rejecting or removing a given ruler allowed the right to disobey to rest on mere exhortations issued by jurists to rulers reminding them of their religious obligations to be just and righteous. Under these circumstances Islamic tradition has sought to avoid situations of anarchy and civil strife and jurists have been confronted with an inescapable choice. They have generally been unwilling to impugn the validity of the existing system. Rebellion was tantamount to heresy and it could not be condoned; any established political order was preferable to none, provided that it expressed a degree of conformity to religious laws. In short, the ruler’s only sanction was the fear of God. Strong and powerful rulers were able to prevail upon jurists to provide religious justification for the status quo. The loss of independence by the jurists meant that those charged with the preservation of Islamic legal norms became the mainstay of neglect and abuse.

It is this political legacy that the modernising rulers and religious reformers of the Muslim states have had to grapple with since the beginnings of the 19th century. Until then, and despite the vicissitudes of Muslim rule, traditional Islam had continued to view European Christendom as a rival and an enemy of Muslim doctrine and power in the world. Muslims were more inclined to dismiss European civilisation as inferior, incomplete, superseded, and above all irreligious. Their attitude was based on the absolute conviction of the immutable superiority of their way of life and the validity of their faith as the last divine message to mankind. This stereotypical perception of European civilisation and culture was shattered by the decline of Muslim power and the emergence of strong and powerful nations in Europe. The struggle between the world of Islam and Europe and the west went through different stages. Following a period of adjustment it culminated in the wholesale adoption of many European norms and methods. The previously unoccupied and despised European had to be looked upon in a completely different light. He was transformed into a teacher, guide and mentor. None the less, a certain degree of ambivalence has continued to govern the relationship between the two sides. While admiring European power and technology the individual Muslim continues to resent his own weakness and the frailty of his social and political institutions that necessitate the emulation of western culture. The resentment has been compounded by European political domination of most of the Muslim world and aggravated by a perceived western campaign to denigrate Muslim achievement and belittle Islamic culture and heritage. The dialectics governing this relationship have contributed in no small measure to the revivalist Islamic movements generally characterised today as Muslim fundamentalism and Islamic militancy.

Most Muslim countries, faced as they were with the threat of European encroachment and domination, were driven to a paradoxical conclusion. They resolved to emulate Europe to enable themselves to check European penetration of the Islamic world. At the outset they sought the importation of European weapon systems, military organisation and industrial technology. A direct practical consequence of this process was practically the introduction of a certain aspect of secularism into the patterns of Muslim life. What followed was the whole secularisation of government institutions seen as the real essence of European civilisation. The purpose of wholesale adoption of western norms was to infuse into the Muslim way of life those elements it so clearly lacked – constitutional government, civil society and parliamentary democracy. The function of absorbing these norms and civic values was the modernisation of the world of Islam while the purpose remained the containment of European power and encroachment to enable Muslims to contend with the west and defeat it at its own game.

The introduction of these new modes in the conduct of political life had to be sanctioned by the religious authorities who could ensure their compatibility with the fundamental tenets of Islam. Religious leaders from various parts of the Muslim world became engaged in an effort whose primary function was to examine the state of their religion and assess the position of the community of believers in the contemporary world. They conceded that, through internal weakness and error, as well as external pressure and influence, Islamic values and standards had been distorted and corrupted. Their conclusion was that true Islam, a dynamic, humane, liberal and living religion, must be rejuvenated and defended if Muslims were to resist the western onslaught and survive western competition. From India to Egypt and Iran to Turkey they called for the reformulation of Islam as a modern doctrine; the
construction and elaboration of a system of Islamic principles and values related to the needs and requirements of the modern age. The call was tantamount to the politicization of Islam, and an initiative to launch a modernist Islam as a modern ideology.

A frantic search was mounted for appropriate Muslim precedent and tradition on which the modernizing processes could be based and justified. It was imperative that none of the alterations proposed should be looked upon as innovation and contrary to the basic teachings of the faith. In this pursuit the reformers were much more concerned with the ends of European political practices rather than the means by which they were obtained. This process of adoption and adaptation made it possible for Muslims to remain within the boundaries of Islamic orthodoxy while proposing the required changes. Thus constitutionalism was interpreted as the same as the limitations imposed on the authority and power of Muslim rulers under the laws of the Shari‘a. Similarly parliamentary democracy was equated with the concept of consultation, advocated by Islam in the running of public affairs without reference to or regard for the notion of popular sovereignty embodied in parliamentary democracy and institutionalised public accountability.¹

These were half-baked notions devoid of substance when related to individual rights in a civil society. The religious reform movement, in almost all its variants, was much more concerned with apology than doctrinal reform. It was no more than a process of tinkering to give the Islamic system of government a fresh gloss. Their campaign sought to distinguish between the essence of Islam, which is the unchanging sacred aspect of the faith, and the acquisition of norms of conduct over the centuries, which could be altered without doing damage to the truth of religion or the moral fabric of society. The distinction proved rather tenuous. It was extremely difficult to maintain in practice. It was ultimately discarded as unworkable especially when fundamentalist salafi values of Islam began to be reasserted in a bewildered and disoriented Islamic milieu. The resurgence of fundamentalist Islam coupled with the ambivalence that accompanied the modernization movement spelled the beginnings of the end of what was generally regarded as the school of modern Islamic liberalism.

Before the First World War throughout the world of Islam and particularly in the Middle East, in countries like Turkey, Egypt and Iran, a serious attempt was made to introduce and operate a system of liberal democracy, with written constitutions, elected legislatures, independent judiciaries, multi-party politics and free press. Almost everywhere the experiment failed. In many of these countries democratic institutions have been abandoned in favour of a more totalitarian system of government of the variety prevalent in eastern and central Europe under communism. In most of the others the system borrowed from the west is in a state of disrepair and collapse despite several attempts at its radical overhaul. The failure has triggered off a search for a viable alternative, including an Islamic political system, which has been on for some years.

Many reasons have been advanced to explain the failure of the liberal constitutional experiment in Muslim countries. It may be said to have been doomed from the outset. The transfer of a ready-made political system, not only from another culture but from another civilization, imposed by a European power or a westernised Muslim ruler from without and above, could not respond adequately to the strains and stresses of Islamic, Middle Eastern society. It enjoyed the backing of no powerful economic or social interest of body of opinion. The outcome was a political order unrelated to the cultural norms of the indigenous people, their past or present, and profoundly irrelevant to the needs of the future.² Bernard Lewis has no doubts as to who was responsible for this débacle. He holds the European imperial states that became the mandatory powers over the political destiny of Middle Eastern states responsible for the failure of the parliamentary system. He is dismissive of their role as 'interference without responsibility', which could neither create nor permit the emergence of stable and orderly government. He writes poignantly that 'Democracy was installed by autocratic decree, parliament sat in the capital, operated and supported by a minute minority, whose happy immersion in the new games of parties, programmes and politicians was ignored, or else watched with baffled incomprehension, by the great mass of the people'.³

As the secularisation of state and society gathered pace, however, so did the religious undercurrents of opposition that accompanied it; the failings and shortcomings of the constitutional system contributed in no small measures to the emergence of a nationalist movement with strong religious undertones. The advocates of westernisation and their religious allies who fulfil none of the promises made when embarking on their mission of resisting and containing western domination. On the contrary, they offered questionable justification for greater emulation of the west and further secularisation as evidenced by the emergence of Kemalist Turkey following the end of the First World War. This development allowed the gulf between, on the one hand, the modern political structure and ideological orientation and, on the other, the traditional social order and affinity to religion on which they were superimposed to grow ever wider and more complex. The two schools were on a collision course as the involuntary drift of state institutions from religious values and standards produced cultural polarisation and spiritual disorientation. These were, in some cases, aggravated by economic and social dislocation brought about by gigantic state-sponsored development programmes fuelled by the

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³ ibid.
newly found oil wealth. The ultimate outcome was societies highly charged with social tension and political conflict where alienation prevailed. Adherents of the faith found themselves bereft of guidance and leadership, antagonistic to the liberal constitutional system by which they were governed, and armed with nothing but their Islamic tradition and religious instincts. Soon this sentiment was translated into radical religiously inspired movements throughout the Muslim world.

Religious reformers politically allied to liberal constitutionalists could not show that modernisation and the adoption of nationalism as a legitimating ideology in the new nation-states had strengthened Muslim society or led a meaningful Islamic revival. In many ways the reverse became true. Westernisation appeared to pose a more direct threat to the Muslims as its impact began to be felt by ordinary folks. It made not only their state but also the individual more vulnerable to the European onslaught. It heightened materialist attitudes and values at the expense of spiritual and moral norms. Urban alienation and poverty alerted religiously motivated political organisations in Egypt, Iran and Turkey to the potentials of this social dimension to solicit support and seek recruitment to their ranks. As the national economy of the Muslim states became more integrated into the international economic system (through what has become known as the phenomenon of globalisation) subject to forces beyond their control and often seen as inimical to their interest, traditional Muslims became fearful for the fate of their faith. Campaigns began in earnest not so much for the greater emulation of Europe, but to draw back in favour of religious renewal. Traditional Muslims also became alarmed at the prevalence of laxity in religious observance and creeping unbelief.

Moreover, the compromise worked out by the liberal religious reformers proved unworkable mainly because of the intellectual inhibitions imposed by religious laws. The reformers and their political allies showed a marked reluctance to delve into certain areas of Islamic beliefs and practices lest it expose them to accusations of innovation and heresy. They all had to profess that Islam remained a sacred religious and juridical system. Since it is based on a number of immutable and unquestionable truths, the reformers could not tamper with its essence. All the new concepts and political notions had to acknowledge that they were derived from the spirit of the faith rather than its texts. In the political sphere the effort of the modernisers could not extend beyond the over-all strengthening of the state, the establishment of sovereign national entities and the quest for political independence. In the process of nation-building Islam was somewhat overshadowed, but by no means forgotten. Its emotive symbols played a crucial role for purposes of social and political mobilisation against foreign rule and European influence in the domestic politics of the newly emergent Muslim states in the Middle East and further afield.

In the modern independent states of the Muslim world, westernised political elites have constantly sought accommodation for Islam in the formulation of their nationalist ideology. In practically all of them Islam has been proclaimed to be the official state religion. In many of these countries the religious leaders and their institutions appeared willing to provide religious justifications for the requirements of the state and a practical compromise between these requirements the demands of the faith. The radicalisation of the nationalist movement after the Second World War and the increasing popularity of European totalitarian ideologies, however, reinforced corresponding tendencies among Muslim political thinkers. Whether completely opposed to these political phenomena or deeply attracted to them, the new trend of nationalist and Marxist thought made a deep impression. The popularisation of new concepts like nationalism and socialism began to be expressed in an Islamic cultural idiom with frequent reference to Muslim example as prototypes. Within its own milieu, and in its own terms, Islam was bound to triumph over the foreign imports.

In the Arab world in particular nationalism became an effective source of social power. Its appeal as a national ideology was widespread amongst the intelligentsia. It called for the reunification of the Arab countries, divided by the European powers, into a single powerful state comprising the whole Arab nation. Arab nationalist ideologues, both Muslims and Christians, have had to rely on the Islamic cultural legacy to provide historical perspectives for their right to nationhood. In their attempt to create the myth of a historical nation these writers tended to overlook the fact that the glory of the Arab cultural legacy was due to Islamic civilisation, which was the product of an amalgam of cultures. The unity of the Arabs as a nation, past and present, was achieved via Islam. The faith was the effective instrument for the unification of a people with strong tribal affiliations. Modern Arab nationalist aspirations were inspired by the demands of their religious allegiance. In their pursuit of a distinct political ideology Arab nationalist ideologues attempted to Arabise Islam, and went as far as nationalising Islam in order to make it the exclusively national religion of the Arabs. The contrivance proved detrimental to their cause as it set Arab against non-Arabs, Muslims against non-Muslims; and in some cases Sunni Muslims against heterodox Muslims since they entertain different perspectives of Islamic history and especially its political legacy.

On the whole nationalism has drawn its advocates and spokesmen chiefly from the westernised intelligentsia: lawyers, teachers, officials and journalists. These groups, by education, function and inclination were the least traditional of all social elements. Their political ideas and behaviour intensified the rift

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10 This was clearly shown in the split in the reform movement started by Afghani and 'Abdu when Rashid Rida, the editor of the influential journal Al-Manar decided to dissown the reformers and revert to the Salafi tradition. See Malcolm H. Kerr, Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida, (London, 1966). The trend has continued to characterise the contemporary Muslim reform movement, as indicated by developments in Iran, Turkey, Algeria and Afghanistan.

between them and the traditional mass of society. However, once they started projecting their nationalist ideology as a question of faith, traditional believers (like religion) could not be accommodated within the ideological framework of nationalism. Ideology was no longer the prerogative of the westernised elites. Traditional Islam began to be asserted as a more valid system of belief and political orientation. Traditional Muslims were more readily inclined to respond to Islamic appeal rather than to the proponents of the new and alien ideology. The new ideological formulations were viewed as, at best, a bad imitation of the original faith and, at worst, no less than a distortion of the divine message. In more cases than not the masses rallied to seek release for their resentment and fulfillment of their aspirations in the traditional native idiom of Islam. The quest has been on ever since for an idealised religious state recapitulating the glorious legacy of the Islamic past. Muslim political movements have proliferated throughout the Muslim world and beyond, reminding Muslims of their obligations to their faith and to their fellow Muslims. It is this mood and desire that has spurred the reactivation of the populist political notions of what has become known as the new Islamic ideology – commonly known as Muslim fundamentalism or political Islam.

The so-called fundamentalist trends in Islam, which represent to a large measure the new Islamist political ideology, have a wide popular following throughout the world of Islam, but they do not constitute a homogeneous movement with a cogent and coherent programme for political action. Nor do they share a uniform organisational infrastructure. Their ideological frameworks and activities are often determined by the nature and the requirement of national politics, and the peculiar domestic problems of the countries concerned. Various groups and organisations exist in many parts of the Arab world, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey as well as Southeast Asia and Africa. They all share an affinity of outlook and a community of interest in resurgent Muslim practices. Although two distinct strands can be identified, one more radical than the other, they all share the common belief that Islam is a comprehensive self-evolving system: it is the ultimate regulator of all human conduct; its truth is eternal; and its applicability is permanent irrespective of time and place. This view of Islam validates the universal nature of the original struggle to institute an Islamic order bound by the principles of the faith, applying its social and economic system, propounding its fundamental tenets and securing obedience to its rules and structures. In essence the militant Islamist seeks the twin objectives of theocratising the state and politicising religion, in order to complete the fusion of the temporal realm with the spiritual as required by the political practice of early Muslim rule. In short, the Islamist ideology demands the restoration of the sovereignty of divine ordinance not just upon the universe but also over the political order where rulers govern by the divine will.

The Islamist political schools of thought have followed in the footsteps of the earlier religious reform movement as well as the modernist liberal constitutionalists by espousing modern interpretations of Islamic religious dogma, adhering to the age-old practice of following Islamic precedent and by cultural adaptation and adoption of European norms just as many of the modernist predecessors. Under these circumstances they could be said to be no more authentic adherents to their religion than their westernised counterparts. Like their westernised counterparts, they strive to affect a radical change in the way society is organised and governed, but unlike them, they want to precipitate the emergence of a viable and vigorous Islamic alternative. They advocate a cultural revolution, by violence if necessary, based on personal sacrifice and moral resolve, as a prerequisite to the establishment of an Islamic state. The instrument and the vanguard of this revolution are the religious teachers, the ‘ulama’, whose function is to pronounce on religious matters and conduct public affairs. The task is to save mankind from its own moral turpitude. The organisational infrastructure is based on local mosques and affiliated religious schools.

In common with the radical nationalist schools, the Islamists’ consciousness of and concern for social inequities, moral deprivation and economic exploitation lead them to veer towards the promotion of Islamic collectivism, a kind of socialism of which the most extreme has been dubbed Islamic Marxism. Though the majority of those who subscribe to the Islamist schools of thought abhor Marxist ideology and historical determinism, the inevitability of the class struggle and dialectical materialism, they share with the nationalists as well as Marxists their denunciation of imperialism and capitalism which provided the motives and the means for European power and domination. They call for the formulation and implementation of a radical socialist programme to mitigate the hardship and misery of the poverty-stricken masses.

Private property, for example, has posed a particular difficulty for fundamentalist Islamists of all strands. They are bound to honour it as a sanctified right in religion, yet they have been prepared to recognise its impact as the root cause of a number of social evils. While not denying its importance, they have attempted to tamper with its application. The most favoured postulation is that private property must be utilised for a social function and public benefit. It is to serve as a kind of social security, generally described as al-takāfūl al-ijtimā‘ī, or social self-support and assistance. Muslims are entitled to share all the goods that the Muslim community as an entity generates and properly established Muslim government must ensure that equality prevails among the faithful. The majority of Islamist fundamentalist groups reject the concept of the class struggle as an ever-present process of history. Instead they advocate social harmony and co-operation among the various elements in society. Public ownership of the means of production and nationalisation of measures are permitted because the needs...
the community have a higher priority than the requirements of the individual. The ultimate justification for public ownership is that since sovereignty is accorded to God it is to God alone that the resources of the earth belong. Human beings enjoy these resources on trust from God to develop them in honest toil for the benefit of the community. The theoretical framework for these notions is derived from a tradition of the Prophet in which he is reported to have stated that people own three things in common: water, plants, and fire (or energy).

This ideological framework amounts to an Islamic collectivism based on the sovereignty of God and the public utility of the goods of the earth. It means that the western liberal democratic system of government of modern nation-states is condemned and rejected. Divine law on earth does not permit for alternative choices, and God’s community knows no political frontiers. Democracy as a system of government presages division and social and economic differentiations; it precipitates the emergence of what is generally regarded as false loyalty to political icons, party organisations and programmes for political action. It is rejected in favour of Muslim collectivism. Islamic socialist measures undertaken by the state are not viewed as merely instruments of policy to alleviate poverty and reduce inequality, but as a religious obligation carried out for the glory of God. Nationalist modernisers as well as Marxists are condemned for their emphasis on material values. Moreover, a distinction is drawn between the welfare services provided by authoritarian nationalist regimes like Nasser’s of Egypt or the Shah’s of Iran, or even of those regimes based on fundamentalist Salafi tendencies like the puritanical Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia, that enhance the power and influence of the rulers and those to be administered by a truly Islamic government for the benefit and welfare of the community as a whole.

The interaction between the advocates of Islamic militancy and Marxist ideas and methodology has produced a radical and ambivalent reaction similar to that induced by the earlier exchanges between Islam and the west during the modernisation period of the 19th century. Most of the fundamentalist political strands have rejected any reconciliation between Islam and the atheistic conceptualisation of Marxist thought. They insist that Islam must be viewed as a unique phenomenon; different and separate from any ideology derived from alien historical and philosophical foundations. Under these strictures no synthesis can be allowed to take place. The common objectives that Islam might share with these ideologies do not warrant the identification of one with the other; nor lead people to the conclusion that they are based on the same principles. Each provides for a comprehensive and indivisible system of thought and life. Genuine belief in Islam demands absolute submission to the will of God and an irrevocable admission of His majesty. The commitment to Islam requires the liberation and the purification of the soul so that moral and spiritual salvation, contentment and supremacy may be secured.

Abbas Kedlar

Islam As A Modern Ideology: An Overview

Other groups and organisations, especially in Egypt and Afghanistan, have been so galvanised by spiritual disorientation (caused mainly by rapid political change and social upheaval, coupled with increasing inequality, urbanisation and economic dislocation and compounded by military defeat on the battlefield) that they have gone further in their rejection of contemporary society.15 In many ways the new Muslim political ideologies are as revolutionary in their politics and as dialectic in their study of history as the Marxists they condemn and despise; they have substituted Muslim rehabilitation of the universe for Marxian determinism.16 The purpose of the exercise, however, is to render Islam the sole ideology of political struggle in the contemporary world. The Iranian sociologist, ‘Ali Shari’ati, regarded as the spiritual father and mentor of the political Islamist movement, Mujahidin Khalq, has employed the Islamic notion of sunnat Allāh, the way or order of God, as the equivalent of the law of evolution.17 Extending the traditional concept of ta’awīd, the oneness of God, to a world view embodying the unity of the universe, Shari’ati sees the world as a single unit, one living organism whose development is determined by God in accordance with His own way of ordering the world. Any other view or means of analysis such as capitalism or Marxism would be inimical to God’s evolutionary process and doomed to failure and ultimate extinction. The evolution of mankind is a continuous process culminating in the establishment of the righteous order of society. This new political order will be dominated by the toiling masses to whom God promised the earth. Ayatollah Khomeini concurs with this interpretation as he makes the same assertions in his treatise, Wilāyat al-Faqīh,18 and cites the Qur’ānic verse to support his thesis: “And We will bestow favour unto those who were oppressed on earth, to make them spiritual leaders and to make them the inheritors” (Sūrat al-Qassās: 5).19

Thus, the struggle becomes one between the haves and the have-nots, between good and evil, ordered by God, in which the Marxist-inclined Muslim radicals have a convenient substitute for the Marxist concept of the class struggle and historical determinism.

The syndrome rejecting contemporary society which is so clearly manifested in the ideology of the Egyptian Islamist movement of al-Jam‘a al-‘Islāmīyya


16 See Enayat, Modern Islamic Political Thought, pp.155-9.


19 Author’s translation.
known as al-takfīr wa al-hijra (erroneously translated as ‘atonement and flight’) has remained a vibrant strand in the ideologisation of Islam. This group, among many others, was held responsible for the assassination of President Sadat of Egypt in October 1981. Their ideological framework is intensely Islamic in its tone and profession of the faith. The group has pronounced contemporary Egyptian society to be simply apostate and beyond redemption. In an attempt to emulate the Prophet Muhammad when he left his native Makka for Madinah and set out to establish the Muslim community, they have called on their members to abandon their current milieu and to establish a righteous social organisation where piety and religion prevail. For all intents and purposes they have declared war on modern society by their departure from it. The founder of the movement in Egypt, Ahmad Shukri Mustafá, who was executed by the Egyptian authorities in 1977, explained his aims in stark terms. He was emphatic in his rejection of the Egyptian reality in all its manifestations because he believed every aspect of it arose from heresy and contradicted religious laws. ‘We reject everything that has anything to do with modernisation or is allegedly related to modern progress. We demand the restoration of natural simplicity in our life. Modernised society has taken control of the minds and souls of ordinary Muslims. It has intensified heresy. It has made people oblivious of their nature and forgetful of their obligations to their religion.’

Not many political Islamists would query this sentiment. However, the interaction between Islam and the various ideological projections made in its name will continue and become more intensified. In what appears to be a shrewd tactical move some Islamist movements have moderated their views and accommodated their ideology to the prevailing parliamentary system as in the case of Hizb Allāh in Lebanon and the Muslim Brotherhood and its Islamic Action Party in Jordan. The Brotherhood in Egypt is not allowed to contest elections but through ‘front’ organisations their candidates stand and win seats in the Egyptian National Assembly. In Turkey the experiment came to grief (in 1997 when the Arbak government was thrown out of office). Under the Turkish military, the Islamist movement was banned. Though differently based and nurtured, in Iran and Afghanistan the Islamist regimes remain supreme, while that of the Taliban in Afghanistan was toppled by an American-led military campaign following the 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York.

The ultimate issue is not whether these movements can establish an Islamist political regime, but whether they are able to capture a semblance of the idealised Islamic state they envisage for their societies. It has proved practically impossible to resolve the problem of the nature of the relationship between the exercise of power and the universal truth of the faith. Muslims have to determine the existential basis of temporal authority and the method by which the demands of their religion can be accommodated within that framework. No doubt, both the eclectic formulations of the Islamist ideology as well as the ambivalence which has dominated this search will continue until the problem is resolved either by the recreation of a completely new idealised state or by embarking on an entirely fresh and uncharted course of political discourse and action. Whichever it is, it will not be in the same mould as the past.

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21 See the Beirut newspaper, al-Anwar, 31 July 1977.
Science and Technology in the Islamic World

A. B. Zahlan

Introduction

Science and technology over the past two centuries have made enormous strides that have resulted in widespread social and economic changes. As a consequence of recent scientific and technological developments, there has been a massive decline in the economy. More than 90% of the economic output of industrial nations is knowledge-based and more than 50% of this output is based on quantum physics, which was unknown in 1900. These developments explain the important role of research in industrial countries. Above all else, advances in science have enthroned creativity. Knowledge, however, has only a limited domain of application in pre-industrial societies. The utility and significance of scientific research increase as societies establish an enabling environment for the conversion of knowledge into useful products and services. The advancement of nations depends on mastering the skills needed to benefit from science and technology. During the 19th century, developing countries were exposed to the power of science at the hands of imperialists. They paid a high price for their technological backwardness. Since then, these countries have been seeking to develop their universities and scientific establishments in order to obtain the benefits they see so much in evidence. However, economic progress is not an automatic outcome of the establishment of universities and the undertaking of research. Centuries ago, the Islamic world was at the centre of one of the great waves of scientific progress. The Muslims lost their way, however, from the zenith of their accomplishments. Science and Technology Issues for Development in the Muslim World, produced in 1991, is a good introduction to their current standing.

This paper will discuss the scale of scientific activity in Arab and Islamic countries today; the extent of cooperation between their scientists; and the degree to which they have been able to acquire technological capabilities and apply them to the developmental process. The first part of the paper provides a summary account of the current status of science and technology in the major countries of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC). This


will be followed by an account of the extent of collaboration between scientists in the Arab countries with fellow scientists in OIC countries and the rest of the world. The paper dwells briefly on those features that are responsible for an enduring capacity of technological competence and self-reliance.

The Status of Technology
A large number of indicators may be utilised to assess the status of science and technology in a particular country. The more advanced the state of science and technology, the more elaborate the indicators. In countries where science and technology are still in their infancy, however, data is poor and incomplete and countries do not undertake regular surveys to assess their international standing.

The indicators for assessing the level of technological development include: the rate of production of new patents, drugs and technologies; the proportion of industrial products which are based on advanced technologies; the proportion of investments designed and carried out by national consulting engineering design organisations (CEDOs). Net royalty payments to foreign parties is a measure of the shortfall in innovation. Countries concerned with their level of technological progress constantly compare their scientific and technological capabilities with those of their competitors in order to identify areas of weakness for prompt correction.

When we examine the performance of the Arab countries, we find a uniform picture of technological dependence, a low level of innovation and only limited concern for their present status. Local patent registration is virtually non-existent; most patents registered in the Arab countries are by foreign companies in order to protect their own intellectual property. Practically all substantial infrastructural and industrial projects involve foreign consulting and contracting firms.

Among the OIC, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey appear to have made serious efforts to acquire some selective technological capabilities. However, the absence of systematic studies of these efforts leaves us short of factual information. Indonesia sought to industrialise in a broad range of industries: automotive, iron and steel; chemical; aerospace and ship building. These pursuits have yet to be consolidated to a satisfactory level. Indonesia’s exports of manufactured products is still limited and below 13%. The economy is still heavily based on agriculture, which employs 43% of the labour force. GDP per capita collapsed from its level of $1,250 in 1996 to its present $686. Whether the country’s hopes of the past 30 years will be realised partly or fully remains to be seen.

Iran has also sought to diversify its economy and to industrialise. These efforts have yielded a non-oil manufacturing sector that generated 13.6% of GDP in 1992. Though there are signs that Iran is embarking on serious industrialisation, we are still in the domain of aspirations.

Malaysia has been able to achieve some development in the electronics and electrical machinery sector combined with some success in chemical industries. This may be measured in terms of Malaysia’s exports in 2000, which were $84.5 bn, of which electronics and electrical machinery accounted for $31.3 bn and chemicals for $2.9 bn.

Pakistan has a GDP of $63.2 bn for a population of 138 million. It has made considerable advances in the development of its agricultural sector. Agriculture accounts for 25% of GNP and employs 50% of economically active manpower; and it generates 70% of its exports. But Pakistan’s exports are a meagre $8.7 bn. One quarter of its R&D budget is devoted to agricultural research. The Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) has 50,000 affiliated scientists. This effort led to an increase in wheat production from 4 to 15 million tons; rice from 1 to 4 million tons; cotton from 0.3 to 1 million tons; cane sugar from 10 to 40 million tons. But agricultural yields were still below international standards in 1995. Pakistan has succeeded in producing a nuclear bomb, China, India and Pakistan are the only Third World countries that have been able to produce a nuclear device. In all three cases, there was a national programme to produce the fissile material, the only major industrial problem in the manufacturing of a nuclear bomb.

Finally, Turkey has made great strides in partial industrialisation. It has also developed considerable capabilities in consulting engineering design and contracting. However, the recent collapse of its financial system shows how vulnerable the country still is to the weaknesses of a rent political economy. All the Islamic countries are trying to develop industrial economies. The degree of success varies considerably amongst the 53 member states of OIC. The formation of an effective science and technology infrastructure has, so far, eluded all Islamic countries.

Research Output
The research output of nations is measured in terms of the numbers of papers cited in the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) database. This database examines systematically those periodicals that meet minimal standards. Thus, the ISI enumerates the contents of only 3,600 of the more than 40,000 periodicals published every year. Even amongst these, there is a pecking order with only a small proportion of these periodicals providing the most cited papers.

In Table 1, I have entered the figures for the output of selected Islamic countries. Turkey with 6,074 publications was the leading Islamic country. Among the non-Arab Islamic countries, Turkey is followed by Iran and then Malaysia and Nigeria. The scientific size of Pakistan is roughly equal to that of Kuwait; that of Iran is equal to that of Saudi Arabia; the scientific size of Malaysia and Nigeria is smaller than Morocco. Bangladesh has roughly the scientific size of the UAE.

The total output of the Arab world was more than 8,695 publications. The largest Arab producer is Egypt with 2,481, followed by Saudi Arabia (1,614); and with Morocco (1,111) coming in third place. Interestingly, the scientific

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Table 1: Contributions of Selected Islamic Countries to Science in 2000

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<td><strong>Arab Countries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>4,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1,260</td>
<td>3,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2,110</td>
<td>5,050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2,481</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>3,080</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>493 (est.)</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>112 (est.)</td>
<td>1,520</td>
<td>3,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>387 (est.)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>94 (est.)</td>
<td>3,350</td>
<td>6,090</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>16,527</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>25,314</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>9,960</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>20,987</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>1,614</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>10,120</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19,115</td>
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<td><strong>Average Arab World</strong></td>
<td>29 (2,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Arab World</strong></td>
<td>8,373</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Islamic Countries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1,370</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>3,390</td>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>889</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>7,730</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>128.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>500</td>
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<td>389</td>
<td>123.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>360</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4,120</td>
<td>6,360</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>117.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>860</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Europe</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>6,074</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3,130</td>
<td>6,470</td>
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<td>5.8</td>
<td>2,304</td>
<td>16,180</td>
<td>17,680</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>1,211</td>
<td>32,810</td>
<td>29,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>17,502</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>1,660</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Output of Egypt in 1973 was four times that of Turkey. In 1990, the GCC and Egypt were equal; in 2000, the GCC out-produced Egypt by a margin of 10%. The trend is towards widening this gap, with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in the lead. Countries such as Syria and Libya have consistently been poor producers; others such as Sudan saw better days in the 1960s and early 1970s. Lebanon, in the early 1970s, was the second largest producer of research after Egypt, declined during the civil war, but has been recovering steadily since the 1990s. The growth of Arab research output has significantly slowed down since 1988. It had maintained a steady growth rate over the period 1967-1987. The annual growth rate of some 7 to 10% collapsed to zero between 1988 and 1993, but resumed at a slower rate since then.

We have no studies into the reasons for these changes, but there are many candidate causes. A few will be cited: The invasion of Kuwait led to a decline in Iraq's and Kuwait's outputs. The impact of the economic decline of several Arab countries has effectively reduced the income of university staff forcing them to take on extra work and thereby reducing their capacity for research. The rise of for-profit private universities throughout the region may have contributed to this decline; these universities do not appear to be interested in research or scholarship.

The Institutional Base of Scientific Research in the Arab World
80% of all R&D in the Arab world is generated in universities. Hospitals and agricultural research stations account for much of the remaining research output. In 1995, 26 organisations published more than 50 papers or 64% of the output of the Arab world. Of these, 23 were universities; the other three were: the National Research Center, Cairo (150 papers); The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), Aleppo (57 papers); the Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research (KISR), Kuwait (50 papers). Research output from the leading Egyptian universities - the Universities of Cairo, Alexandria and Ain Shams - appears to have reached a plateau in the mid-1980s. Unpublished R&D is also conducted in a large number of centres throughout the Arab world. However, no analytical studies of their output are available. Thus the system of publicly funded higher education provides the foundation of current research activity. With minor exceptions, industrial firms have not reached the point where they find it necessary to undertake, or even to sponsor, R&D. This is why the condition of university staff is, and will continue to be, the determinant of scientific research. Two factors affect the productivity of university staff: workload and facilities (libraries and laboratories). 95% of all R&D is in applied subjects. Clinical medicine is the leading field (40%). R&D in chemical, medical, agricultural and life sciences accounts for more than 80% of R&D output. These figures highlight the limited opportunities for research in the basic sciences. The development and rapid growth of for-profit private universities has been an alternative to publicly funded higher education.

These new universities provide even less facilities and support for academic research than the publicly funded ones.

Linkages Between Research and the Economy
In the absence of any effort to establish functioning and effective Science and Technology Systems, local R&D cannot translate into benefits for the national economy. The agricultural sector is probably the main beneficiary of national R&D and this is due to the moderate integration of its R&D activity with extension services. The medical sciences are the oldest and largest field of research in most Arab countries, accounting for about 40% of output. I have not been able to fully verify this feature in other Islamic countries, although it appears that this may also be the case. We do not have any analytical studies of the impact of medical research on the quality of health services, the pharmaceutical industry, public health policies or medical education.

The pharmaceutical industries in many Arab countries have flourished in recent years; this is largely due to the expiry of Western patents of otherwise protected drugs, thus providing lucrative market opportunities. Arab pharmaceutical industries sponsor limited R&D input in what is essentially an imitative process. There does not appear to be any national or regional effort to integrate the research expertise of the medical sciences with the activities of the pharmaceutical industry in order to support the development of drugs of importance to the region. As is well known Western pharmaceutical firms are concerned with producing drugs for their lucrative national markets. The diseases of the Third World are neglected for lack of an economic incentive; yet, Third world and Islamic countries do not appear to be concerned with the challenge of mobilising their considerable capabilities to search for cures for their own diseases. This is an area of potentially vital importance for collaboration within OIC and within the Third World.

R&D in the industrial fields is generally on a limited scale and one finds little correlation between R&D and industrial development. Industrial firms in the Arab countries normally purchase R&D services from foreign firms rather than develop local capabilities.

Comparison with other Countries
The outputs of Singapore, Israel and India are shown in Table 1 as a basis for comparison. The per capita output of Singapore is 40 times greater than that of the Arab world; or more than 12 times that of leading Arab countries. Only 30 years ago, Singapore was no different from the average OIC country. The output of Israel is some 150% greater than that of the entire Arab world; in fact, it is comparable to the output of the entire Islamic world. On a per capita basis, Israeli output is 80 times greater than that of the Arab world. The output of Third World countries, on a per capita basis, except for the Asian Tigers, is roughly 2% of that of the industrial countries. The Asian Tigers have attained an intermediate level which is about ten times, on a per capita basis, that of leading Third world countries such as China, India and

Science and Technology in the Islamic World
Brazil. The GCC countries are closer to Korea than they are to their fellow Arab countries. However, GCC countries have yet to integrate their scientific capabilities, presently in their universities, with their respective economies.

If we compare the total output of the Islamic world, we find it comparable to those of India or China, and larger than that of Brazil. There are considerable scientific and technological capabilities in the Arab and Islamic world, waiting to be recognised and mobilised. The main difference between the Arab world and countries such as India, China and Brazil on the other hand, is that the Arab countries have not developed their national Science & Technology Systems. So China, India, Brazil and Korea have been able to benefit far more from their scientific infrastructure. South Korea was a very poor country until recently. In 1985, its scientific output was equal to that of the Arab world: 15 publications per million inhabitants. Its government, however, has been adopting deliberate national policies to establish a science-based economy since the 1960s. Thus through the systematic pursuit of the acquisition of technology, a readiness to adopt promising policies, and a commitment to institution building, Korea successfully evolved a science-based economy. It has moved steadily ahead and is now a major producer of science-based products. Table 2 shows the convergence of the Korea infrastructure in science and technology to the levels of other OECD countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Research &amp; Development Personnel &amp; Expenditures, 1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of researchers</td>
<td>thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers in active population</td>
<td>per 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure per researcher</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The situation in the non-Arab Islamic countries varies. There are wide differences in the efforts made to harness the national science and technology infrastructure. Malaysia, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Indonesia have all made efforts in this respect. To date there has not been sufficient analysis and discussion of these efforts. Utz provides a rare comparative study of research in physics from Middle Eastern countries. He finds that the total publication in physics for the period 1990-1994 from Egypt was nearly double that of Turkey. However, Turkish scientists published their papers in better rated periodicals (as measured by ISI in term of their impact factor). He also found that during this period the total output in physics from Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Turkey was less than 1% of world output. He furthermore reports that although the world average of
physics research output is 1.6% of total scientific output the Middle Eastern countries' share of physics of their national output was: 0.5% for Saudi Arabia, 0.2% for Syria; 1.1% for Iraq; 1.1% for Turkey; and 1.6% for Iran. This confirms my findings that the proportion of research output in all the basic sciences is generally less than 10%.

Expenditure on Research & Development

UNESCO's World Science Report, 1998, confirms that the expenditure of Arab states, as a percentage of their GDP, on R&D is the lowest in the world. It is 0.2% of GDP. Only Bangladesh of the OIC countries devotes a similar proportion. Iran and Pakistan devote 0.45% and 0.5% of GDP respectively. Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia each devotes 0.3% of GDP; and China invests 0.5%. The R&D budget is only part of the support that the research community in a Third World country receives. In fact, since the vast majority of research is undertaken at universities, as we have said earlier, the employment conditions of academics are crucial. In most Arab countries -- except for GCC public universities and possibly the Maghreb -- the salary levels of university professors are inadequate for their survival. They often have to take on additional employment, which of course drastically limits their ability to undertake research.

Cooperation in Science and Technology

I will discuss here three relevant areas of cooperation in science and technology:
(a) Cooperation between research scientists and technologists: regional (i.e. inter-Arab), within OIC; and international.
(b) Participation in international conferences;
(c) Cooperation in the acquisition and application of technology.

The Arab and other Islamic countries share a wide range of common scientific and technical problems. Thus one would expect to find considerable incentives for co-operation between them. Most of the Arab world is in a dry zone where water is scarce; this dictates certain issues in water use, agriculture and water management. Likewise, several Arab and Islamic countries are oil and gas producers; this provides common technological challenges and opportunities for sharing experiences. Moreover, they all share a number of problems; these include health, the application of codes and standards, international trade, and many others.

I recently undertook a detailed analysis of Arab scientific output. Table 3 shows the extent of purely local and joint publications. Joint publications are those involving scientists from that country and any other country. It is clear that there are considerable variations amongst the Arab states; the ratio of local to joint publications varies from 3.2 in Saudi Arabia down to 0.1 for Yemen. This is a 32-fold difference.

---

Table 4
Collaboration Between Scientists in the Arab Countries and the rest of the world, 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Joint Papers</th>
<th>Multina-</th>
<th>Inter-</th>
<th>OIC</th>
<th>Third World</th>
<th>East Europe</th>
<th>OECD</th>
<th>USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tional Org.</td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>minus Arab</td>
<td>minus OIC</td>
<td>minus OECD</td>
<td>minus USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>83*</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>2,393</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1,292</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100...</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>14.8**</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every number in this table should be divided by two since every joint article between two Arab countries is counted separately under each country. The grand total 2,393 should be reduced by half of 356. These corrections have not been made in the table.

* Of the 81 joint publications from Syria 30 were the result of ICARDAS’s activity. These are included in the first column under multi-national organisations.

** Every joint paper within the Arab world is counted twice: once under each of the participating countries. Thus the figure 15.2% should be reduced by a factor of 2 and 15.2% replaced with 7.6%.

*** Not corrected for double counting within the Arab countries.
A. B. Zahlan

There have been some efforts to develop cooperation among OIC members in consulting and contracting. Turkey is one of the few OIC members that has developed the financial services to enable its consulting and contracting firms to export their services. However, the extent of technological cooperation is still far below even the most realistic expectations. Trade in non-oil products and services among members of OIC is very small. Even between the Arab countries the extent of non-oil trade is barely 6% of their trade.

Concluding Remarks

Islamic countries have sponsored ambitious programmes in education. Most of them have experienced considerable expansion in their systems of higher education. Yet they have not fully benefited from these efforts to the extent expected. The articulation of the system of education with the national economy is normally effected through linkages established by the national system of science and technology. The under-development of these systems is the root cause of difficulties. The prevailing economic and technology policies in the Arab world have resulted in limited demands for national capabilities in science and technology. Arab governments seek predominantly the services of international firms for the planning and execution of their investments. Foreign direct investment and globalisation may be expected to aggravate present practices.

Though the number of scientific researchers, even in industrial countries, is very small (less than 1% of the economically active population) they play critical and multiple roles in their respective countries: as authoritative specialists in their fields of expertise they provide advice and guidance; as members of international invisible colleges they provide access to a broad field of science and technology; and as recognised members of their scientific community they provide leadership. Thus this small but economically active population has a strategic impact on the quality of education and thinking; an impact is amplified further through the normal functioning of an enabled national science and technology system.

I have already noted that Consulting Engineering Design Organisations (CEDOs) are essential instruments for the acquisition and transfer of technology. CEDOs do not emerge spontaneously. They need an enabling environment to grow and prosper; their formation is dependent on public policies. When non-national CEDOs import foreign produced supplies and equipment and utilise non-national labour, the entire associated value-added and multiplier factor are not generated locally. Their installations cannot be repaired and maintained locally; nor can they be upgraded and replaced without recourse to companies abroad.

A large number of countries have succeeded in adopting a different approach to the introduction of new technologies. They have sought to develop and mobilise their own national CEDOs in order to acquire know-how and internalise some of the multiplier factor and value added associated with the investment made. The technological progress of a region may be measured

Science and Technology in the Islamic World

by its capacity to acquire technology along with each transaction that it undertakes. In the Arab world, more than $3,000 billion were invested in their respective Gross Fixed Capital Formation during the past 20 years; these investments resulted in little improvement in per capita income, despite an additional expenditure of one trillion dollars on education. These figures highlight the negative developmental implications of current Arab technology policies.

I have already noted the limited degree of cooperation and trade exchanges between Islamic countries. The state of development of a Science & Technology System determines the extent to which a country can benefit from its own professional manpower and to which it can collaborate with other countries. The benefits of Research & Development accrue to sponsors in different ways. The existence of an enabling environment and institutional capabilities is essential to translate scientific and technological expertise into economic gains. In the absence of such capabilities no society can afford to fund R&D on a significant scale. The level of R&D therefore remains at the subsistence level found in OIC countries.

Arab and other Islamic countries are blessed with considerable human resources. Many of these countries register a high level of brain drain. Since the education of highly qualified manpower is a slow and time-consuming process, Islamic countries may be said to have a considerable, scarce and prized resource that is waiting to be tapped. The bottleneck is not in a shortage of scientists, but rather in the inauspicious environment for the utilisation of national talent. What is lacking is an acute awareness of the place of science and technology in political culture.

6 See note 3 above
Introduction
Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī ibn al-Hasan, known as Ibn 'Asākir (499/1105-571/1175), an outstanding member of the cultural elite of Damascus, devoted his life to literature and scholarship, and his most famous endeavor consisted of the compilation of his gigantic work 'The History of the City of Damascus', which has recently become completely available through the 80-volume edition by 'Umar ibn Gharāma al-Ámrawi. The work is not a 'History' in the modern sense of the word, in which a flow of events is described, with an attempt by the historian to explain these events by the analysis of actors and circumstances. Ibn 'Asākir's approach is quite different. After the necessary preliminary remarks on the early history of Damascus and a description of the locality (vols. 1-2 of al-'Ámrawi's edition), he has structured his work as an alphabetically arranged reference work about the men (and a few women) who made the history of Damascus, both natives and visitors, and from all walks of life. He enumerates them as prophets, leaders, caliphs, governors, scholars of jurisprudence, judges, scholars, knowledgeable people, Qur'ān readers, grammarians, poets, traditionists, and so on. This way of writing a local history Ibn 'Asākir had derived from the 'History of Baghdad', Ta'rīkh Baghdaḍ by al-Kāṭib al-Baghdādi (d. 463/1071), a work which he had become acquainted with at an early stage of his life. Another work, the later 'History of Aleppo' by Ibn al-'Adīm (d.660/1262), is arranged in the same way, although Ibn al-'Adīm also wrote a much shorter chronicle of Aleppo, in which the flow of events is given. Ibn al-'Adīm may have felt an urge to compete with Ibn 'Asākir's monumental 'History of the City of Damascus'. Celebrating the fact that in 2001 it was exactly fifty years since Salah al-Dīn al-Munajjī published the first volume of Ibn 'Asākir's 'History', I wish to make here some observations of textual criticism in connection with the manuscripts and editions of the Ta'rīkh Madīnat Dimashq.

1 An abbreviated version of this article, together with a full facsimile of the Leiden MS Or.12.644, is available on the web: http://ub.leidenuniv.nl/olg/select/ta'rikh_dimashq/index.htm
2 The biographical dictionary occupies vols. 3-68 and 71-74 (for the men) and vols. 69-70 (for the women) of the new edition. The categories of persons are enumerated by Ibn 'Asākir in his introductory chapter, vol. 1, p. 5.
3 The main work being Bughyat al-Talab fi Ta'rīkh Halab, and the chronologically arranged extract Zubdat al-Ḥalab fi Ta'rīkh Halab.
The manuscript fragment which is the subject of the present essay is a relatively recent acquisition of the library of Leiden University. In 1974 it was the object of research by P.S. van Koningsveld, the then curator of the library who himself had purchased it in 1972 from Frederick de Jong, who in turn had purchased the fragment in the late 1960’s from ‘Abd al-Hamīd al-Shimī, a private Egyptian scholar in Cairo. In the course of 1977, Qāsim al-Sāmarrī’s, a Leiden-based Iraqi scholar, was able to find in Cairo two more leaves of the very same set, which he subsequently presented to the Leiden library, so that a few of the lacunae in the Leiden fragment could be filled. Al-Sāmarrī’s notes in pencil can be seen on the two additional leaves (between ff. 52-53 and 69-70).

The Leiden fragment’s most conspicuous feature is that it originates from a MS of the ‘History’ which was copied by the author’s son al-Qāsim (527/1133-600/1203), apparently during his father’s lifetime. The son’s colophons on f. 20a (the middle decade of 1209/11), f. 39b (1210/11) and f. 70a (1210/11) all date from the year 562/1167. From the wording at the beginning and end of the quires of the Leiden fragment it becomes evident that the author’s copy, or the author’s presence, was never far away when the volumes from which the Leiden fragment came were copied. It is also evident that this fragment, and therefore the volumes from which it originates, are an important witness for the Ta’rīkh Muḥammad Dimashqī, if not the most important, since the father’s copy, the autograph, does not seem to have survived. For the basics of the description of the fragment, I refer to what van Koningsveld has written, and use that as a starting point for my further reflections on the Leiden fragment.

Form and contents of the Leiden fragment
The Leiden fragment now contains 70 ff. plus the two additional folios which were added later, and two inserts attached to the quires (between ff. 67, 52-53). According to this count, there are still lacunae of altogether eight folios. The folios of the Leiden fragment are distributed over four parts (four ajzā’, numbered by the copyst 277-280). The numbering of these parts reflect a new division of the work, whereas another division of the work is still visible by marginal notes:

- f. 11a: end of a juz’ 369;
- f. 23b: end of a juz’ 370;
- f. 36a: end of a juz’ 371;
- f. 51a: end of a juz’ 373;
- f. 64b: end of a juz’ 374.

4 The Leiden MSS Or. 14.458 and Or. 14.459 also come from his collection. The latter MS contains notes in the hand of Mr. al-Shimī.

5 He is No. 5 in Westenfeld’s genealogical table of the Bani ‘Asikir. See also the genealogy of the Bani ‘Asikir given by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjīd in the introduction to the first volume of his edition, pp. 2-3.

6 Class-mark Or. 12.644.

From this one can deduce that the ajzā’ in the other copy were shorter, by about one fifth, than those in the Leiden fragment. Van Koningsveld identifies the other copy with the author’s copy, but that is far from sure. In fact these numbers 369-374 partly coincide with those in the Petersburg manuscript. To make things even more confusing, the Petersburg volume is also a son’s copy. At the beginning of the ajzā’ in the Petersburg MS is the same formula which we also find on top of the pages with which the quires in the Leiden fragment begin. There is an overlap of text between the Petersburg manuscript and the Leiden fragment. In the Petersburg volume the quire numbering of the Leiden fragment is present, and is written by the copyst. In the Leiden fragment, the references to the Petersburg ajzā’ are written as well, but evidently as a marginal addition, and possibly not even by the copyst. From this it follows that the Leiden fragment already existed when the Petersburg volume was copied. In all probability, the Petersburg volume was copied by an expert secretary from the Leiden fragment. The Petersburg volume is devoid of sets of readers’ protocols. It may have been meant to become itself a manuscript around which an audience would focus, but in the end it did not become one. The Petersburg volume was therefore, and also because of the difference of size of its ajzā’, written by a copyst, and outside reading sessions.

The writing of the Leiden fragment was done by the son in the presence of the father. The son’s copy, one may assume, may have been made in private sessions with the father, and possibly not (or not only) in reading sessions, but in copying sessions. That this was a family affair is evident in the copyst’s son Muḥammad profited of these occasions to be a sānī, a listener, whose presence in the sessions cannot have failed to give him a degree of authority over the text as well. Analysis of the readers’ protocols in the Leiden and Aẓhar manuscripts shows that the distribution of the text through reading and certification sessions was to a large extent a family affair.

For the sake of clarity it should be added here that this division into ajzā’ does not, of course, reflect any partition in the content of the work (which is basically an alphabetically arranged biographical dictionary), but that it is made in order to divide the text into lectures of approximately equal length. These portions often do not even coincide with the beginnings of a biography. One may compare this double way of dividing a text with the way the Qur’ān is divided into 114 chapters of different size and at the same time into thirty ajzā’ of equal length.

The text in the Leiden fragment corresponds to part of vol. 32 of the edition by al-Amrāwi (pp. 26, line 9-287, line 14). There are still a few
lacunae in the Leiden fragment in juz’ 279 since all leaves containing references to the author’s copy and to reading sessions are lacking. Each juz’ has a title-page and a dated colophon of itself, only juz’ 279, being lacunous, does not give a colophon but it has the title-page and without any doubt it belongs to same set of ajza’ as 277, 278 and 280. At the end, juz’ 279 lacks but one leaf since only a few words of the text are missing between the two ajza’.

It also lacks the readers’ protocols, with which all quires end, because that leaf is missing at the end of the quire. Each juz’ in principle consists of one quire only, comprising ten folded sheets. Each juz’ is written in the hand of Ibn ‘Asākir’s son al-Qāsim ibn ‘Ali ibn al-Hasan. Van Koningsveld’s remark that the Leiden fragment may represent an extended draft of the author’s original text will be set against the evidence of the manuscript itself and the information gathered from al-‘Amrāwī’s critical apparatus.

**Readers’ notes in the Leiden fragment**

A few clues can be found in the fragment which establish the relationship between the text in the fragment and the autograph, the existence of which we can at the moment only postulate. The notes of Tāsāfī (author’s indication) and Samā’t (listener’s indication) can be found on the title-page of each of the four quires (ff. 1a, 21a, 41a, 52a). Here follows the text of the title-page of juz’ 277 (f. 1a):

احذ الباب والسيوين بعد المائة من كتاب يزيد من دراسة دمشق جماعة الله وذكرها فيها وتسهي من

حلك من الأكمل أو أبحارها من زيداً وأعلها تعريف الخلفين دمياطه القاسم صبب بين الحسين بن

الله الشافعي رحمه الله مساع رده القاسم صبب على بن الحسن وافراً له في بعض شيء أبى

رحوم الله

However, there is in this text on the title-page also mention of an ijāza, an authorization to transmit, issued as it seems to the son by one or more of his father’s Shaykhs. This would imply that the relationship between the present text and the author’s copy is not entirely beyond doubt. For one, the author, who could easily have authenticated the son’s copy in his handwriting, either after his reading session with his son al-Qāsim and his grandson Muḥammad, or after the reading sessions which are described in the first set of reading protocols, has apparently not done so. Would that be the reason why the copyist al-Qāsim thought it necessary to try to enhance the value of his copy of his father’s magnumopus by having it authenticated by other scholars as well, in order to make good for the lack of the author’s autograph authentication? May al-Qāsim have been eager to avoid the reproach that his copy was merely an informal, underhand family affair? This raises yet another question, namely that of the financial interests involved in the distribution of an authenticated text. Lack of data in the Leiden fragment must postpone this discussion for the moment, but one should realize that participation in the reading sessions in order to obtain the independent right of further proliferation of the authoritative text cannot have been a gratuitous affair. Was it the case that the better the credentials of a manuscript, the better the fees that could be obtained from the studious listeners, and the more one

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12 See the transition in the edition, vol. 32, p. 223, between lines 7-8.
Remarks on a contemporary manuscript of Ibn 'Asikir's 'History of the City of Damascus' should invest in obtaining the right to further divulge the text from a manuscript with an impressive pedigree. It may have been a matter of copyright avant la lettre.

The introductory remarks, before the text in each quire actually begins, between the basmala and the first khabar, are (on ff. 1b, 21b, 41b, 52b): akbbaran wālīdī al-bāṣṣīg Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī ibn Hasan rahimahulla Allāh qalā. This too implies a close relationship with the author's copy. But there is something wrong, namely the tarhīm which follows the name of the author. It implies that the author had already died when this sentence was written, but the author died in 571/1175 and the manuscript is dated 562/1167. If one looks well at the opening line of each quire (ff. 1b, 21b, 41b, 52b) one can see that these sentences may be later additions written by al-Qāsim after the demise of his father. Especially the opening line on f. 41b gives the impression of being a later addition. There is also a tarhīm on the four title-pages, which implies that either these title-pages were added after the author's demise, or that the copyist's dating at the end of the quires is not altogether authentic. These additions were most likely written on the quires between the year of the author's demise (571/1175) and the year in which the second set of protocols of reading sessions were written: 576/1180.

The Sanūt notes at the end of the three quires.

Three out of the four quires (Nos. 277, 278 and 280) of the Leiden fragment have each a note by the author's son about having read the quire with his father, during which sessions the author's grandson Muhammad was present as a listener as well. This note of only one line of text is followed in each of these quires by five sets of similar readers' protocols, which document reading sessions before an audience with the manuscript in a period of over fifty years, between 562-619 (1167-1222). The texts of these protocols as found in quire 277 will follow hereafter in full. For convenience's sake, the numbering given to these protocols by van Koningsveld is maintained.

The five sets of protocols give us twofold information. First they present us with an overview of the five reading sessions in which the present manuscript was used in the years 562, 576, 592, 615, and 619 AH. The five sets of protocols are easily identified by the hand of their secretary. Each protocol enumerates the names of those present in the audience. Each protocol makes clear the functions of some persons of the audience: the scholar or notable presiding over the session, the readers of the text and the secretary whose task it was to write down the names of the participants. The secretary would also note if someone had only participated in part of the session. Each audience within the same set of protocols is slightly different. Apparently there is a hard core of listeners, and in addition there is a shifting group of persons present at the different sessions for each of the quires. As we have three quires each of which contains a similar set of five protocols, we can also get an impression of the stretch of time during which reading sessions for the same audience took place. The Leiden fragment of Ibn 'Asikir's 'History of the City of Damascus' is an eloquent example of this way of divulging texts in sessions with the author or another qualified person presiding, which was then extremely popular, especially in Damascus. Stefan Leder and his two co-authors have painted a vivid image of this process of transmission of texts, and by their repertory of many thousands of participants.
they have shown how widespread and popular these reading sessions once were. As the present article is primarily meant to serve textual criticism in connection with the Ta’rikh Madinat Dimashq, a profound analysis of the audiences present at the different reading sessions in which the quires of the Leiden fragment figured will have to wait for another occasion.

An overview of the reading sessions
The first set of protocols consisting of Nos. 1 (f. 20a), 7 (f. 40a) and 13 (70a) describes three sessions in the Great Mosque of Damascus which were held on Thursday 15 Shawwal 562, Friday 16 Shawwal 562 and Thursday 22 Shawwal 562 (between 11-18 August 1167). This set of protocols is the only one in the Leiden fragment which was written during the author’s lifetime. The second set of protocols consists of Nos. 2 (f. 20a), 8 (f. 40a) and 14 (f. 70a) describes three sessions in the Great Mosque of Damascus which were held on Monday 4 Rajab 576, Friday half-way Rajab 576 and one in the middle decade of Shawban 576 (between 1 December 1180 and c. 11 January 1181).

The third set of protocols consisting of Nos. 3 (f. 20b), 9 (f. 40b) and 15 (f. 70b) describes three sessions in Damascus which were held in the first decade of Muharram 592 (two sessions) and in the middle decade of Muharram of 592 (between c.17 and c.27 December 1195).

The fourth set of protocols consisting of Nos. 4 (f. 20b), 10 (f. 40b), 11 (f. 40b) and 16 (f. 70b) describes three sessions in the citadel of Damascus and one in the mosque of al-Miṣra, which were held on Tuesday 16 Rabī‘ I 615, Wednesday 17 Rabī‘ I 615 and Thursday 18 Rabī‘ I 615 (between 19-21 June 1218). The note from the mosque in al-Miṣra (No. 11) mentions a session on Tuesday 23 Rabī‘ I 615 (26 June 1218). In that latter session the reading of the entire 40th volume (mujalla) out of the set of 57 volumes of the Ta’rikh Madinat Dimashq was completed. The hand of the secretary of this set of protocols is cursive and difficult to read.

The fifth set of protocols consisting of Nos. 5 (f. 20b), 12 (f. 52a) and 17 (f. 52b) describes three sessions, which are recorded by a secretary writing in a maghribi hand in Damascus, and which were held on 1 Rajab 619, Thursday 9 Rajab 619 and Friday 17 Rajab 619 (between 18 August - 3 September 1222). There is a clear connection between this final set of protocols and MS Cairo, al-Azhār Library, 452/Abaza 6746, which was copied in the same year 619 by the very secretary of this set of protocols. The Azhar manuscript must be the product of the reading sessions of the details which were recorded in the Leiden fragment.13

From all this it becomes clear that the sessions took place at very regular intervals, sometimes on successive days, sometimes just a few days after the previous session. To explain the slightly larger interval between the second and third protocol in each set of protocols one is reminded that the protocols in the lacunous juz’ 279 of the Leiden fragment are not preserved.


Remarks on a contemporary manuscript of Ibn ‘Asikī’s *History of the City of Damascus*

The texts of the protocols
Some editorial clarification must be given here first. I have often, but not always, added a hamza, thereby following modern usage. I have maintained the alif of the word ibn which is added when the word occurs at the beginning of a line. I have maintained different spellings of the same name, precisely as they occur in the manuscript (e.g. the name Ibrahim occurring both with and without the alif in the middle syllable). As reading sessions’ protocols never excel in clarity of writing, not all names were read with absolute certainty, and a few names or words could not be read at all. Especially my understanding of some of the nisba’s, and a few names of Turkish origin has suffered from this. The sets of protocols in quiries Nos. 278 and 280 have sometimes been used in order to obtain a corroboration reading.14

Before the first protocol is a separate bāḥilāh note by the author’s son al-Qusaim, dated the middle decade of Safar 562/1167 (f. 20a):

The Arabic states: ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Abī Mansur ibn Basīm al-Shafi‘ī, the author’s son, has written this note. The protocol was not written by the author himself who used to write in the small calligraphy of the scholars and the great vizier in the middle of the 12th century, whereas his son, al-Qusaim, was the writer of this note, written with a larger calligraphy, as appears from the note accompanying the text. This note, dated, as explained, in the middle decade of Safar 562, follows the style and form of the notes added at the end of the manuscript, which include the names of the author’s sons, as one can see in the following protocols. It is of importance to point out that this note is written by the author’s son and not by the author himself.

Protocol No. 1 of a reading session with the author presiding, dated Damascus, in the Great Mosque, on Thursday 15 Shawwal 562/1167, recorded by the secretary ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Abī Mansur ibn Basīm al-Shafi‘ī. The presence of the name of the author’s son in this protocol is conspicuous. At the end of the protocol, a person is mentioned who has only heard two qa‘īma (two leaves) from the beginning of the author’s copy (f. 20a):

Ibn ‘Asikī states that the person mentioned is a scholar who had only heard two pages of the manuscript, as the author’s son states. This person, a scholar named Abī Bakr al-Muhāb, visited the author and his son, al-Qusaim, on the day of the protocol, Thursday 15 Shawwal 562/1167. This visit was significant as it led to the preservation of the protocol and the addition of the note by the author’s son, al-Qusaim, as mentioned above.

The protocol itself is a record of the reading session held in the Great Mosque of Damascus on Thursday 15 Shawwal 562 (1167). The session was attended by a number of scholars, including Abī Bakr al-Muhāb, who was mentioned in the note as having heard two pages of the manuscript. The protocol contains a list of the readers and their positions, as well as the text of the protocol itself. The text is written in the maghribi hand, a style commonly used in the Islamic world, and is divided into sections for clarity.

The protocol is a valuable source of information about the reading sessions and the manuscripts of Ibn ‘Asikī’s *History of the City of Damascus*. It provides insight into the social and intellectual life of Damascus during the late 12th century, as well as the methods used by Ibn ‘Asikī to record and preserve his work.

14 My colleague Dr. Armand Vrolijk was so kind to help me solve some of these problems. His help in procuring me a copy of the 80-volume edition of the Ta’rikh Madinat Dimashq was also of vital importance to me.
Remarks on a contemporary manuscript of Ibn 'As'ikir's 'History of the City of Damascus'
Remarks on a contemporary manuscript of Ibn ‘Asākir’s “History of the City of Damascus”

Protocol No. 4 of a reading session, presided over by Nūr al-Dawla Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Kawwās al-‘Amīrī, by virtue of his own listening to the author and an absolute jāzā issued by him, dated Damascus, in the citadel, the afternoon of Tuesday 16 Rabi’ al-Awal 1615/1218, and recorded by Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Abd-Allāh al-‘Amrī (f. 20b):

Protocol No. 5 of a reading session, presided over by Abū Naṣr Muhammad ibn Hibāt Allāh ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Shirāzi (by virtue of his own listening and a jāzā), dated Damascus, in the beginning of Rājib 619/1222, and recorded in a maghrabi hand by Muhammad ibn Yusūf ibn Muhammad ibn Abī Yūnūs al-Bīrāzī al-Isbīlī (f. 20b):

Leiden, Or. 12.644, f. 20b. Sequel and end of the protocols of the reading sessions of jāzā 277 of the son’s copy of Ibn ‘Asākir’s Ta’rīk Dimashq.
The Leiden fragment and the Azhar manuscript

According to van Koningenfeld, the copy by al-Qāsim is preserved in the Library of al-Azhar University in Cairo, and the Leiden fragment would apparently originate from the same set as the twenty-one volumes of the Taʾrīkh Maḍīnat Dimashq, which is now preserved in Library of al-Azhar University in Cairo. However, the Azhar set is evidently a set of very mixed origin and contents as is clear from the detailed description in the Azhar catalogue, and not all volumes and quires may come from al-Qāsim’s copy. The first question to be asked, however, is whether there are volumes originating from al-Qāsim’s copy at all in the Azhar set. Volumes 1, 11, 12, 14, 17, 19 and 21 of the Azhar set all contain reader’s protocols dated between 560-565 AH, which would coincide with the date 562 AH in the quires of the Leiden fragment, as these come from the middle part of the work. Volumes 1, 4 and 8 of the Azhar set contain reader’s protocols dated between 571-572 AH, which is later than those in the Leiden fragment, but possibly not too late. Who would maintain that the eight hundred quires of the Taʾrīkh Maḍīnat Dimashq were read in a strict numerical order, anyway? However, nowhere in the description in the Azhar catalogue is the connection of any of the volumes with the copy made by al-Qāsim explicitly mentioned, and one wonders why not. The Azhar catalogue mentions that the set comes from a copy of the work which has a division into 800 ajāʿīb, which number is, in the biographical literature usually connected with the number of ajāʿīb of al-Qāsim’s copy. Additional doubt seems to be raised by volumes 8 and 9 of the Azhar set. According to the Azhar catalogue, volume 8 contains ajāʿīb 261-270, ending with a biography of a certain ‘Ābd al-Allāh, and it has protocols which are dated 572 AH. Volume 9 of the Azhar set contains ajāʿīb 281-301, beginning with the biography of ‘Ābd al-Allāh ibn Muhammad ibn ‘All al-Mansur, and it has protocols which are dated 562 AH. Apparently the ajāʿīb 271-280 are missing from the Azhar set and that is precisely the part of the text, of which the Leiden fragment is a part. However, if volume 9 of the Azhar set were part of al-Qāsim’s copy, then exactly where juzʿ 280 ends, now, the Leiden fragment ends with juzʿ 280 somewhere in the middle of the biography of ‘Ābd al-Allāh ibn Muhammad ibn ‘All al-Saffah, and this does not fit with the information of the Azhar catalogue. But if one understands the Azhar catalogue in the sense that the first biography beginning in juzʿ 281 is that of ‘Ābd al-Allāh ibn Muhammad ibn ‘All al-Mansur, then it suddenly does fit. An additional argument is the fact that in al-ʾAmrāwī’s edition (vol. 32, p. 287), the text corresponding with the end of the Leiden fragment exactly coincides with the transition between volumes 8 and 9 of the Marrakech manuscript, which for al-ʾAmrāwī was the main source (ajāʿīb) for that part of the text.15

16 If that were the case, it would take at least 800 days to read the same quire again. I doubt if this really happened.
17 See the résumé made of the biographies by N. Elsèff.
18 F. 70a of the Leiden fragment, corresponding with vol. 32, p. 287, of al-ʾAmrāwī’s edition
19 See al-ʾAmrāwī’s edition, vol. 32, pp. 287-288. He incorporates the colophon in his text, from which it transpires that that volume was copied on 20 Jumadā 11112 (2 November 1700) by the copyist Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Shaʿbī al-Mālikī al-ʾAdawi. For a full

Further study of the Azhar volumes is clearly necessary. The Azhar set is indeed mentioned by al-ʾAmrāwī in his edition, though with very few details about the volume’s contents. This is due to the fact that the text was copied by him on its textual value. Al-ʾAmrāwī gives the Azhar manuscript the siglum Z,20 but he is silent about what would be, according to the Azhar catalogue, a very old set of volumes. A positive identification of the Leiden fragment with the Azhar set was attempted in January 1994 by the present author, but failed because of lack of cooperation on the part of the Azhar librarians. All the circumstantial evidence, however, points to the fact that at least some volumes of the Azhar set may indeed be identified with al-Qāsim’s copy of the Taʾrīkh Maḍīnat Dimashq.

Till the publication of the first volume of al-ʾAmrāwī’s edition, this problem could only be solved by comparing the Leiden fragment with the Azhar manuscript, but that was unavailable. A classical deadlock. Al-ʾAmrāwī has now published two reproductions from the first volume of the Azhar set, which are revealing images, despite their poor graphical quality.21 It transpires from these that the first volume of the Azhar set of the Taʾrīkh Maḍīnat Dimashq is not an old manuscript at all, and that it is certainly not the copy written by the author’s son al-Qāsim.

First, al-ʾAmrāwī reproduces an unspecified opening from what he says is the Azhar manuscript. It shows the transition between juzʿ 7 and juzʿ 8 of the text of the ‘History’. The Azhar catalogue does not mention a volume in which these ajāʿīb are present, but the catalogue can be misleading. In the reproduction there is no division into separate ajāʿīb or quires whatsoever. On the same page where juzʿ 7 ends, juzʿ 8 starts, without further ado, and without any readers’ protocols in between the ajāʿīb. The next reproduction given by al-ʾAmrāwī is even more revealing. It shows the transition from juzʿ 3 to juzʿ 4 of the text, apparently from the first volume, which according to the Azhar catalogue contains a reading protocol with the date 571 AH. It contains part of the introductory section of the ‘History’. Between these two ajāʿīb there is the text of two protocols of reading sessions, but they are copies taken directly or indirectly from the exemplar of the Azhar manuscript, a fact which the Azhar catalogue failed to notice, as he described the protocols as if they were genuinely old and authentic. The first of these two protocols describes a reading session presided over by the author, held in Rabiʾ 1 557 (February-March 1162) for several members of his family, including his son al-Qāsim, and for a few others, at or near the Eastern Minaret of the Great Mosque of Damascus and recorded by ʿUmar ibn Muhammad ibn Muḥammad al-ʾAʿlamī. Partial reading is separately recorded. In addition, there is a note saying that Ahmad ibn Ahmad al-Maqdisī copied the protocol in Ramadan 610 (January-February 1214). The text of this protocol reads as follows:

- على الألف صدر منسق هذا المعجم على أسطر من نصيف الشيخ الأحاسين عالماً الآيات، ثم غرف اليدين
- مصدق (1) للقلم، صدر الحافظ الباري الأمام على الكاتب بن عبد الله الشافعي، وأolulu: وعند (1) الحاذر، أبذا يشطب السمان، بمحمد بن إبنا، خامس الفقهاء مهدي باب الهوا، ونوبة عن إيا

Survey of the contents and an indication of the age of the (incomplete) 31-volume set of the Marrakech manuscript, see theYaʿṣufyya catalogue, pp. 456-461 (Nos. 1665-1692).
Jan Just Witkam

الأُمِينين ابن عبد الله محمد بن الحسين (1) وريسف بن طاهر بن علي الفارابي وعمر بن محمد بن
محمد العلياني وعائلته له زملاء في هارب الأول والثاني ومحمد وخسندان بن الزعفرانة من
عماب دشين بعده بقرة (المافرخاء) أصبت) والياقوت بكر العلماء أحمد بن أحمد الفقدي في
رغم من سنة عشر مستماثة.

The second protocol begins with a number of references to the author, and
to his great-grandson al-Qasim ibn `Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Qasim
by virtue of listening certificates, but the session is, if I read the text correctly,
apparently presided over by Abū al-Futūḥ Abū al-Razzāq. The session took
place on Thursday 10 Safar 614 (26 May 1217). As the secretary is Isma`il
ibn Abū Allāh al-Ammānī, who is also the secretary of the fourth set of protocols
in the Leiden fragment, the place of the session was probably Damascus,
either mosque or citadel, or in the mosque in al-Miza, as these are the
localities specified in the Leiden fragment. Here too, partial reading is
separately recorded. The text of the protocol reads as follows:

والله أعلم فيه، أني أصرح عليه مع عدم جزاء هذا الجري، عن الشيخ الإمام مكي النجاشي (1)
المفتي إلى المعصر عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن أحمد الفقيه، نسبه إليه من علماء
ك jihadists بن مصطفى عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن أحمد الفقيه، بن حسن بن أحمد بن
ال فأثناء كتب فيه السياج قاية بن محمد بن أحمد بن أحمد بن أحمد بن أحمد بن
الكوفية بن الفقيه بن محمد بن أحمد بن أحمد بن أحمد بن أحمد بن أحمد بن
الله الله

However, both these protocols from the first volume of the Azhar manuscript
are copies, or copies of copies, written in a manuscript of much later date than the year mentioned in
the protocols. The poor quality of the reproductions makes a dating of the first volume of the Azhar manuscript,
even a dating by the century, a hazardous affair. Why al-Amrāwi refrained
from using the Azhar set remains unclear. The manuscripts which he did
prefer are not older, nor more authentic than some of the volumes in the
Azhar set in which there are remnants of the copy written by al-Qasim of his
father’s work. That both the Azhar and the Zāhiriyāa libraries contain old
fragments of Ibn `Asīkir’s ‘History’ is borne out by the illustrations given by

Remarks on a contemporary manuscript of Ibn `Asīkir’s ‘History of the City of Damascus’

Salah al-Dīn al-Munajjīd.22 A much more detailed description of the
manuscripts would have been in place, but is now unfortunately lacking.

The Leiden fragment and the new edition of the Ta’rīkh Mūdiq fī Dimashq

At the recent edition of Ibn `Asīkir’s ‘History of the City of Damascus’ by
al-Amrāwi is almost devoid of bibliographical references as far as its
manuscript basis is concerned, we will here supply some of the most basic
details. The relevant information must be extracted from the edition’s combined
notes and apparatus system at the foot of each page. The introduction in the
first volume only sheds a very limited amount of light on the manuscripts
and their use by the editor.21 The new edition is primarily based on six sets
of manuscripts. First there are the manuscript volumes in the Zāhiriyāa
Library in Damascus.22 Al-Amrāwī refers to these volumes as al-Nuskha
al-Sulaymānīyya, because they form part of a Waqf instituted by Sulaymān
Basha, a governor of Damascus. The volumes of this so-called archetypal
(nuskhā umm) are described in the Zāhiriyāa catalogue by Yūsuf al-Ush.23
It is a mixed manuscript, with very old volumes, but also with later parts
containing dates in the 1280/13th century. As the Zāhiriyāa set of volumes is
in many places incomplete or corrupt, the editor had to use other manuscripts
as well. One such other manuscript which he used was the set of twelve
volumes from Istanbul, Ahmet III, No. 2887 in the Topkapi Library.24 The
other manuscripts witnesses of the book which served as a basis for the new
edition are from the Bibliothèque Générale in Rabat, the Bibliothèque
Nationale in Tunis, the set of thirty-one volumes in the Bibliothèque Ibn
Yusuf, volumes Nos. 1665-1692, in Marrakech (known as al-Nuskhā
al-Maghribiyya and also as al-Nuskhā al-Yarubiyya).25 This manuscript, which
was made by al-Amrāwī into a textual witness of archetypal value as well,
is also a relatively late manuscript. The colophon of vol. 15 of the Marrakech
manuscript is quoted in the edition by al-Amrāwī, vol. 32, p. 287, and it
contains the date Tuesday 20 Jumādā I 1112 (2 November 1700). Al-Amrāwī
also refers to the set of twenty-one volumes in the Library of al-Azhar
University in Cairo, which I have discussed above. On the basis of these
manuscripts the editor has set himself, as he says, to produce a good text,
without mistakes and lacunae.26 Al-Amrāwī in his preface refers to the
rules of edition of texts as given by Salah al-Dīn al-Munajjīd in his own

22 Plate 5 shows an autograph note by Ibn `Asīkir dated 549/1154-1155 and one dated
564/1168-1169, both from the Zāhiriyāa library. Plates 1 and 2 show images of genuinely old
volumes in the Azhar library.

23 Even an updated survey of the manuscripts in the Zāhiriyāa library has given in the
first volume of his edition (pp. 44-46) is lacking.

24 See al-Amrāwī’s introduction, vol. 1, pp. 36-64.

25 Catalogues, pp. 109-130. It is the set of nineteen volumes bearing the class-marks Ta’rīkh
I-5, 113, 6-18. It was published in facsimile in Amman in 1407/1987 in 19 volumes, an
edition which I have not seen.


27 Catalogues, pp. 456-461.

28 Vol. 1, editor’s introduction, p. 36.
edition of part of Ibn 'Asâkir’s ‘History of the City of Damascus’.29 However, these rules are more editorial instructions and prescriptions to typographers rather than a description of textual criticism. In fact al-'Amrawî does not go any further than describe his methodology: comparing the manuscripts, and confronting them, and establishing what he considers to be correct.30 Al-'Amrawî’s critical apparatus in the edition is of great simplicity, since any awareness of a critical and stemmatic approach in which a hierarchy of manuscripts could be established is absent.

Sakina al-Shâhâbi’s edition of vol. 38 of Ta’rikh Madinat Dimashq has an overlap of text with the Leiden fragment. Her volume begins with the first complete biography of the Leiden fragment. That edition does not show any of the marks of what I have styled as ‘the son’s copy’ and will therefore not be further discussed here.

With the scanty evidence of the Leiden fragment, which contains only 72 ff. plus two small inserts, a few remarks on the relationship between some of the manuscripts of the Ta’rikh Madinat Dimashq may be made here. Looking once more at the beginning of vol. 16 of the Marrakech manuscript,31 it is evident that the Marrakech manuscript is closely related to the copy of the ‘History of the City of Damascus’, made by the author’s son al-Qâsim. The volume begins with the same formula as the four quires in the Leiden fragment, including the dubious tahrîm after the author’s name. If we look for similar instances in the edition, we see references to the author preceded by the word wâlidi, my father, in vol. 32, pp. 29, 88, 152 and 223. These instances exactly match the beginnings of the four ajâ’iz in the Leiden fragment, and similar sentences do not occur in the text in between these instances. From this it follows that a number of volumes of the Marrakech MS and of the Azhar MS go back to the son’s copy.

We have already seen that some doubt could be cast on the credentials of the son’s copy as preserved in the Leiden fragment. The question must be asked whether more can be known about the Leiden fragment with the help of the edition. A conspicuous feature of the Leiden fragment is the frequent occurrence of marginal notes, with even two small inserts. The duchus of the main text in the Leiden fragment is regular, very expert, even of calligraphic quality, almost entirely without diacritics, and with many ligatures and connections which are unusual or even not allowed at all in ‘normal’ script. The main text does not give the impression of being a draft copy. The marginal notes, and the text on the two inserts, however, are in such different script, that one may even ask whether these were really written by the copyist, the author’s son al-Qâsim. Whether or not, their script can only be characterized as rather irregular, not calligraphic at all, and they look very much as if they were intended as a draft version. The use of these marginal additions in the copies which were made from the son’s copy as preserved in the Leiden fragment must be the subject of further analysis.

Conclusion
With such a huge work as Ibn ‘Asâkir’s ‘History of the City of Damascus’ the transmission and distribution of the text from the very beginning posed all sorts of problems. In the present essay an attempt has been made to show how the author’s contemporaries and direct descendants have coped with this and supervised the distribution of the text through reading sessions; a popular way of distributing text in 12th century Damascus. Examples of protocols of these readers’ sessions have been edited. A theory about copyright avant la lettre has been proposed.

In the past half century an impressive scholarly effort has been undertaken to make the full text of the ‘History’ available. The relationship of parts of the editions with the manuscripts has been discussed. Aspects of the interdependence of some of the manuscripts of the ‘History’, now kept in libraries all over the world, have been studied. With the help of the son’s copy of his father’s work, relations between some of the manuscripts of Ibn ‘Asâkir’s monumental work have been reconstructed.

29 See the resume of these rules and al-'Amrawî’s description of how he coped with them in practice in his preface to vol. 1, pp. 43ff. See also the book with guidelines by 'Abd al-Salîm Harûn on the subject.
31 'Abd al-'Allah ibn Qays ibn Makhrama, corresponding with f. 25b of the Leiden fragment.
32 Edition, vol. 32, p. 288, which part of the text is based on the Marrakech manuscript.
Bibliography


New evidence about Umayyad book hands
François Déroche
En souvenir de notre première rencontre, à Tarabya.

While some research has been devoted to the ījāza 1 book hands summarily described in Ibn al-Nadîm’s account of the scripts of Makkah and Madīna and identified as early as the mid 19th century on qur'ānic fragments now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France collection, little has been done to investigate more precisely the scripts used during the Umayyad period for the transcription of manuscripts. Salāh al-Dīn al-Munajjiḍ is one of the very few scholars to have attempted in his Dirāsāt fī Ta’rikh al-Khatt al-‘Arabī2 to unravel the puzzle. Although his study also covered epigraphy and papyrology which provided a safer ground with a fair amount of clearly dated material, he also embarked on a survey of the manuscript material attributed to the years from the beginning of Islam to the end of the Umayyad period. He was able to dismiss the Qur‘āns — or fragments of Qur‘ān — attributed to the Rightly Guided caliphs, but also those said to have been written by the imāms Ḥusayn and Zayn al-‘Abīdīn.3

Other qur'ānic manuscripts bearing colophons of this period were also proven later copies with a forged colophon. Al-Munajjiḍ’s contribution was not limited to a critical examination of spurious material. He also suggested that some documents could be considered as representative of Umayyad

1 This word is not found in Ibn al-Nadîm: it has been coined by Western scholars in order to avoid distinguishing between Makkān and Madīnān scripts which must have looked very much alike. M. Amari who described most of the early Qur'ānic fragments of the Parisian collection as written in “écriture du Hijājī” (W. de Slane, Catalogue des manuscrits arabes, Paris, 1883-95, p. 89 sqq.), states only once that a manuscript was written in the “écriture de Ménas” (7) (ms Paris, BNF Arabe 334, no.5; W. de Slane, op.cit., p. 89 sqq.; F. Déroche, Catalogue des manuscrits arabes, Deuxième partie t. 1,1, Les manuscrits du Coran, Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique, Paris, 1983, p. 81, no 53 and pl. XIV). The first use of the adjective hijājī under its German form hijätmisch, appears in G. Bergsträsser and O. Pretzl’s contribution to the second edition of the Geschichte des Qorans, III, Leipzig, 1936, p. 254, where the authors attribute it to J. Karabacek (referring to “Julius Eising’s Sinaitische Inschriften”, WZKM 5, 1891, p. 323; but Karabacek only speaks of “die mekkanische Mutterschrift”).


book hands; he was shown by Solange Ory some of the material kept in the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul (Şam Evraki collection) published some of it as examples of the nūrī hand, while others were said to be masha." He drew the attention of his readers to the fact that some of these early qur'ānic fragments had the basamula written alone on the first line of the sūra.

A quarter of a century later, what can be said of the Arabic book hands in use during the Umayyad times? After a short presentation of the nature of the evidence available to us, we shall turn to the authors who have been dealing with this topic, then to the scholarly literature before reviewing the manuscripts themselves. It has to be noted here that the lower time limit, namely the date of the collapse of the Umayyad dynasty, cannot be connected with a sharp change in the scripts: this event and its consequences certainly had an impact, but it could only be felt gradually.

The documents (i.e. the manuscripts or fragments of manuscripts) which will be investigated here are undated. Colophons (the statement by the copyist of his identity and/or of the date of completion of his work) are found either at the beginning or at the end of the copy: in all the cases we know of, the end is missing and so is the beginning, with one exception. Actually, no dated manuscript (i.e. with a colophon or at least a note providing a terminus ante quem) earlier than the 3rd/9th century has been published, although mention has been made of copies dated to the 2nd/8th century — and even to the 1st/7th century. Among the latter the various qur'ānic fragments attributed to 'Ali, 'Uthmān and the like figure prominently: al-Munajjid has given strong arguments against these attributions, so that it seems unnecessary to discuss them again. But this does not mean that no evidence from these early dates survived; the material which we shall use has been preserved thanks to legal provisions which helped to establish safe deposits for discarded manuscripts, mainly qur'ānic fragments. The present paper will not offer definite answers about the scripts in use during the reign of the Umayyad caliphs; it will only attempt to review the evidence available and explore the possibilities of dating it.

Textual sources do mention early copies of the Qur'ān and al-Munajjid listed the evidence he found in the sources. Ibn abī Dā'ūd and al-Dihāshī record for instance the name of Mālik ibn Dīnār who used to transcribe the text of the Qur'ān for a fee. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, he died in 130/747-8. We also hear of Khūlid ibn Abū al-Hayyāj who was commissioned by the caliph ‘Umar II to copy the Qur'ān in gold script — the caliph deciding in the

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New evidence about Umayyad book hands end not to buy the copy, as he found it too expensive. In al-Jashshāyī there is an anecdote about a kāthib who fell into disgrace and had to sell the silver binding of his Qur'ān.9 Mention of early copies of other works has also been made by al-Munajjid who refers to a text by al-Dihāshī saying that Ahmad ibn Hanbal had seen texts (kiṭbāt) in the hand of Shu‘ayb ibn Hamza who wrote down the hadith under al-Zurī’s dictation.10 The most important piece of evidence for us is certainly the short description found in Ibn al-Nadīm’s Fihris “The first of the Arab scripts was the script of Makkah, the next of al-Madinah, then of al- Başrah, and then of Kufah. For the alis of the scripts of Makkah and al-Madinah there is a turning of the hand to the right and lengthening of the strokes, one form having a slight slant... Scripts of copies of the Qur’ān: those of Makkah, the people of al-Madinah, the Nīm, the Muthallath, and the Mawdawwar. Also those of al-Kufah and al- Başrah, and the Masq, the Tajāwīd, the Siwcat, the Masūn, the Munābādī...”.11 As al-Munajjid observed, this passage is of no great help in establishing a chronology of the scripts quoted, excepting a terminus a quo. It remained anyhow largely ignored by later Oriental authors writing about the Arabic script, with the notable exception of Ḥajjī Khalīfa who incorporated it into a passage of his Kāshf al-Zānīn devoted to the history of the Arabic script. Slightly later, Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy had access to both Ibn al-Nadīm’s text and Ḥajjī Khalīfa’s shortened version of it and published the short account in the Mémoires de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.12 With this meagre evidence at hand, scholars have been trying since the end of the 18th century to identify the earliest Arabic scripts. Misled by later descriptions in Arabic sources on the history of the early Arabic script, they believed that kuﬁc was indeed the forerunner of all later developments.13 It

9 Ibid.


13 Ed. S. Yaltikaya and R. Bilge, I, Istanbul, 1360/1941, col. 710. The author does not quote entirely the passage but avoids a few words, the meaning of which was understood later by N. Abbott as “extended vertical strokes” (The rise of the North Arabic script and its Qur’ānic development, Chicago, 1939, p. 18).


15 This is for instance the case with J.C.G. Adler, whose Descriptio codicium quodamdam cuficorum, partes Conihi exhibitement in Bibliotheca regii Hafensis et videre de scriptura cufica Arabica observationes nova... published in 1781 in Athens is the most developed account on this question. It aroused the criticism of Silvestre de Sacy whose information was more accurate. On the history of the discovery of the earliest qu’ānic manuscripts, see F.
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is not clear whether Silvestre de Sacy actually had access to specimens of what was to be called later hijāzī, a few leaves were part of the collection which Jean-Joseph Marcel acquired while being a member of the French expedition to Egypt and took back with him to France. Anyhow, the cautiousness of de Sacy’s statements about kufic suggests that he was aware of a more complex picture than the one offered by Adler a few years earlier.

It was left to the great Italian arabisch Michele Amari to identify various examples of what he came to call “écriture du Hijâzī” among the collection of Jean-Louis Asselin de Cherville, a French consular agent who spent a few years in Cairo at the beginning of the 19th century and bought there a large amount of early Qur’ānic fragments on parchment with the aim of establishing an Arabic palaeography. Asselin’s untimely death prevented him from completing his project and his manuscripts were purchased from his heirs by the Bibliothèque Royale in Paris. Amari, then an exile in France, was in charge of putting some order into the collection and was able to identify various examples of the hijāzī style on Qur’ānic fragments in the Parisian collection. He also noticed that their script bore a great similarity to the newly published Arabic papyri. His conclusions remained unnoticed by later scholars: Nabb Abbott and Adolf Grohmann later reached similar conclusions without being aware of Amari’s work. A dating to the 17th century was suggested by the author.

In the second part of the 19th century, research on the early Arabic script almost came to a halt, with the exception of a suggestion by Joseph von Karabacek that the script of MS Or. 2165, then in the British Museum, was an example of the mā’il script mentioned in Ibn al-Nadīm’s account. Gerard Endress has later pointed out that this word was a copyist’s emendation of Ibn al-Nadīm’s text and that the earlier manuscripts used by Rida Tajaddud for his edition of this text gives instead māniḥāfi. It should therefore be avoided. Slightly later, in 1914, the publication by Alphonse Mingana and Agnes Smith of Leaves from three ancient Qurāns, possibly pre-Othōmānic aroused criticism because the authors overestimated the variants they found.


16 "Quoique ce nom (sc. Kufic) ait prévalu et que l’on s’en serve communément pour désigner toutes les écritures arabes antérieures à celles qu’inventa Ibn Moḳāk, il est certain que c’est donner à l’épigraphe de Carthage une signification trop illimitée" (op. cit., p. 309).


19 Julius Euting’s Sinaitische Inschriften, WZKM 5, 1891, p. 311-326.


21 She repeatedly emphasizes that Makkān and Medinan scripts are very close, but she only once uses hijāzī, as a quotation of the catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale collection (op. cit., p. 23).

22 P. 60, n. 3.


25 Loc. cit.


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de France was the first volume, the second being MS Or. 2165 of the British Library.28

After this short survey of the sources and scholarly literature on the early Arabic scripts, let us turn to the actual written documents of the period, manuscripts and fragments of manuscripts as well as to the inscriptions, papyri and coins which are available to the palaeographer as comparative material and are of crucial importance since they are sometimes dated.

As for the manuscripts, a style known as bijzai has been identified and is generally considered as the earliest Arabic script from the Islamic period. Even if, as already noted by Jeffery, the sequence in Ibn al-Nadîm’s description might reflect religious preconceptions, the text itself describes features which can only be found occurring simultaneously in the earliest stage of the Arabic script, namely the shafts bent to the right, the lower hook of the alif and the lengthening of the strokes. We shall therefore first survey a sample of the scripts which exhibit these features, then examine other elements related to them and pointing to their antiquity. A comparison with the scripts of other early documents could help to strengthen the chronological position of the bijzai style, but we shall postpone for the moment the discussion about when in which the time span it was used to copy the Qur’an: the Pihrist gives no indication on this and we deem it more advisable to examine this point in the light of the other scripts which can be attributed to the Umayyad period.

All the Qur’âns in bijzai style that we could examine are written in long lines, whereas a layout in columns was also known in other contemporary Middle Eastern manuscript traditions. The early codices were vertical, and not always as will become the rule from the beginning of the 3rd/9th century onwards. Instances of oblong Qur’anic manuscripts in the bijzai style do exist, but seem to belong to a later development.29 As a rule, the qalam used by the copyists is thinner with respect to the height of the letters, than becomes the rule for the scripts of the 3rd/9th century. Last, the orthography is peculiar and the rasim, (i.e. the consonantal skeleton of the Qur’anic text) is different from the text of the modern vulgar: the most obvious difference is the lack of alif for the notation of آ, qala being written: qal-al-dâm, instead of the modern qal-al-if-dâm. The spacing of the letters or groups of letters is rather regular and disregards entirely their being part of a word or not: there is actually as much space between the alif and the lam of the Arabic article al-as between the same alif and the preceding word. As a consequence, words can be divided at the end of a line when there is not enough space left, provided that the word includes a letter which does not require connection to the next one – e.g. lâ/lâhu/â which can be divided either after the initial alif or between dhîl and ya.

A very distinctive feature of the bijzai style is the diversity of the hands. The number of examples of this style which have come down to us is limited and one could argue that this diversity only reflects various scripts in use at the same time, a situation more or less similar to the ‘Six Pens’ of the classical Arabic calligraphy and corroborated by Ibn al-Nadîm’s list of early scripts which has been quoted previously. It is not sure that this explanation is tenable: the cases of team work in some of the copies show that the various hands may maintain their differences instead of trying to look as similar as possible to one another.31 We shall therefore concentrate on a few examples of the bijzai style and give more room to fragments or manuscripts written by two copyists in order to highlight the variations found in strictly contemporary hands. A description of the bijzai style is anyhow a somewhat perilous experiment. The shape of the individual letters varies greatly from one manuscript to another and within the same manuscript, but the material selected here will always illustrate the three points of Ibn al-Nadîm’s description.

I - The manuscript Paris BNF Arabe 328a exemplifies two hands, each characterized by a different pen, with a nib which does not exceed 1.5 mm in width. The first one (A; fig.1) writes all the shafts with a marked slant, while the second one (B; fig.2) only marks off with a slant the alif, the râ and the final or isolated kâf. This letter is written in three strokes: two of them constitute its lower part in the shape of a hair pin, the lowest one being markedly longer than the other one which is very slightly oriented upwards. From its extremity surges the third stroke, at almost right angle and slanting to the right. The two copyists write the final min in a very different way: copyist A writes a circle, with or without a small downwards falling tail, copyist B grafts a small horizontal stroke onto the circular shaped letter. On the follis transcribed by A, the final nûn is an open curve, with its stroke almost horizontal; B writes the letter in the shape of a half circle. Aâtâb is written with the two lâms well separated from one another; in the final hâ’ the loop is well developed.

II - In a fragment from San’â, DAM 01-25.13, the first of two hands (C; fig.3) writes as an almost stuff-like alif, with a barely perceptible turning of the hand at its lower end, close to what can be observed on MS London, BL Or. 2165; the second hand (D; fig.4) usually indicates clearly the lower hook of the letter. The tail of final qâf in some instances reaches the lower line. The shape of the final or isolated ëlêm is similar to the one described above, but C writes the upper stroke of the harp-shaped almost parallel to the lower one, while D makes an angle of 40 to 50°. The final min is oval, with a small downwards falling tail which varies from a rectangular shape to a triangular one; D only writes the final min with a triangular downwards oriented tail. The final nûn is almost identical in both cases: an almost set square shape, with a shorter lower part.

III - In some cases, the alif is written as a curve: the fragment San’â, DAM 01-29.1 is representative of this ductus.34 In the Šâm Efrâ‘ik collection, the alifs of no. 2977 are written in an even more pronounced curve: it is still

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28 F. Déroche and S. Noja Nosedo, op.cit. for Arabe 328a; the second volume by the same authors reproduces the f. 1-61 of the manuscript London, British Library Or. 2165 (F. Déroche and S. Noja Nosedo, Le manuscrit Or. 2165 de la British Library [Sources de la transmission manuscrite du texte coranique I, Les manuscrits de style bijzai, 2/1], Lese, 2002).


30 See for instance the fragment Paris, BNF Arabe 326a (F. Déroche, op.cit, p. 59, no 1).

31 Compare in the ismâ‘ilite of Arabie 328a (F. Déroche and S. Noja Nosedo, op.cit.) the f.1-28a with the f. 28b-30a, for instance.

32 F. Déroche, op.cit., p. 59-60, no 2.


Fig. 1 MS Paris, BNF Arabe 328a, f. 12: Qur'ān IV, 25-33. Hand A.

Fig. 2 MS Paris, BNF Arabe 328a, f. 32 vor: Qur'ān VII, 53-64. Hand B.
Fig. 3 Fragment Şan’a’, DAM 01-25.1, f. 1 vo: Qur’ān VII, 37-44. Hand C.

Fig. 4 Fragment Şan’a’, DAM 01-25.1, f. 2 ro: Qur’ān VII, 204-VIII, 17. Hand D.
possible to identify a lower hook, but the upper part of the letter becomes
closer to the horizontal and almost tangent with the upper line (Fig.5). The
shape of the final kāf is almost identical to that described previously, the
lower stroke being sometimes shortened.

IV. The possibility cannot be excluded that MS London, BL Or. 2165, the
so-called māṭir Qur'ān (Fig.6), is also the result of teamwork. If this is actually
the case, the effort to produce a copy written in an homogeneous style has to
be underlined; the copyist or copyists were using a qalam with a 2 mm broad
nib, its strokes being therefore thicker than those of Arabe 328a. However
Or. 2165 (Figs. 4 and 6) exemplifies the variations one encounters with the
hijāzi style, even on the same page. The isolated alif, which is supposed to
be the hallmark of the so-called māṭir, is not limited to a simple staff shape; a
closer examination reveals that it also appears with a short lower hook,
closer to the alif commonly found in other Qur'āns – and particularly with
hand C of Ṣanʿāʾī, DAM 01-25.1 (Fig.3). The final or isolated kāf maintains
the same shape as previously described; the two variants found in Arabe
328a (Figs.1 and 2) appear again. At least three shapes of final mim can be
noticed, one purely circular, without any tail, a second one with a short
triangular tail at the level of the base line to the left of the letter, and a third
one, vertical, thick and short.

VI. While the book hands which have been described so far could provide
us with strong arguments to substantiate the claim that hijāzi is characterised
by its variability and changes from one manuscript to another, a script
displaying the characteristics which Ibn al-Nadīm defined as the hallmark
of hijāzi and which appears as B 1a (Fig.7) in our typology of the early qur'ānic
scripts, has been used in various copies of the Qur'ān. Its alif is slightly
slanting to the right, as the other shafts also do, and it has a lower return. Its
final mim is circular, with its horizontal tail lying on the base line; the
medial hāʾ looks like a half circle, with its diameter as the back of the letter
and the two ‘eyes’ located one above and the other below the base line. The
nūn is markedly curved. In B 1a, the final or isolated kāf does not keep the
asymmetrical hairpin shape typical of the previously described scripts: the
upper and lower strokes are parallel and their length is identical, or almost
identical. As a whole the script gives the impression of greater regularity.

Some of the examples are written on oblong folios of parchment.

VII. As a last example of a script which meets the requirements of Ibn
al-Nadīm’s description, the fragment Paris, BNF Arabe 334c (Fig.8) is
quite different from everything described above. As a whole, the letters are
shorter, but the shafts retain a slight slant to the right. The lower hook of the
alif is more developed. The lower stroke of the final or isolated kāf is only
slightly longer than the upper one. The final nūn is no longer curved, but
broken into three segments of which the central one is oblique.

As early as the middle of the 19th century, Amari had noticed that hijāzi
was very similar to the script of the papyri, or as he stated in his study, ‘à

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35 See the facsimile edition by F. Déroche and S. Noja Nosedo, op.cit., passim.
36 Paris, BNF Arabe 331 (F. Déroche, op.cit., p. 67 and pl. IX); also Istanbul, TIEM SE 87
(S. al-Munajjid, op.cit., p. 93), Ṣanʿāʾī, DAM 00-29.1 and possibly 00-18.3 (Masāḥif Ṣanʿāʾ, p.
58, no 11 and p. 54, no 23).
37 F. Déroche, op.cit., p. 64 and pl. VII.

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Fig. 6 MS London, BL. Or. 2165, f. 23 vo: Qurʾān XI, 114-XII, 8.

Fig. 7 Fragment Istanbul, TIEM SE 52, f. 1 ro: Qurʾān XXII, 46-54.
l’exception des alifs et des lâms, perpendiculaires dans le papyrus et inclinés dans les fragments du Coran, les caractères se ressemblent autant que cela est possible entre un manuscrit de lettre confidentielle et de grands exemplaires d’un livre sacré destinés aux mosquées. It is a chirodritic script, i.e. the base line plainly reflects the movements of the copyist’s hand which follow more or less the most economical way of connecting two letters – elongations set aside. Amari already recognised this component which he tried to characterise through a reference to naskhi – although he did not feel confident of this word.

In his analysis of P. Michaëli.des no 324, Grohmann tried to isolate the various elements which were similar in the papyrus of the 1st/2nd century and the hijazi style. alifr. dâl, jâr were singled out as particularly significant. The shape of the final or isolated kaf is a further element of similarity. On the base line, the kaf’s horizontal tail extends to the left beyond the point where the upper component turns sharply towards the upper line: on qur’anic fragments in hijazi style, the gap between the lower and upper parts of what looks like an hairpin remains controlled, whereas on documents of the 1st/2nd century it is widely open; D hand on the Sami’ fragment writes this letter in a very similar way to the shape found on the papyri. From PER Inv. Ar. Pap. 94, dated to 22/643, to later instances in the first century (e.g. a letter dated Jumâda II 9/1 April 710) this shape of final or isolated kaf is well attested. It must indeed be very old, since the inscription of Jabal Usays, dated 528 AD, provides an instance of such a shape in pre-Islamic times. Diacritical dots were known to the copyists who used them according to various patterns: in manuscripts written by two or more copyists, it is not infrequent to notice that each of them had his own way of putting diacritical dots, with regard either to their density, or to the individual letters receiving the dots.

38 M. Amari, op.cit., p. 17.
40 M. Amari, op.cit., p. 16.
41 We have been unable to trace the papyrus: it is apparently no longer in the Michaëlides collection which is now kept in Cambridge (I owe this information to Dr Geoffrey Khan whom I thank for his help).
44 B. Moritz, Arabic palaeography, Cairo, 1905, pl. 105, 1. 8 and 10. G. Khan has collected interesting instances dated to the 2nd century (op.cit., p. 36-38, but also on p. 30, dated 141).
45 A. Grohmann, Arabische Paläographie II [Österreichische Akademie des Wissenschaften, Phil.-historische Klasse, Denkschriften, 94/2], Vienna, 1971), fig. 7d.
46 This question needs further investigation.
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Other features also point to an early date. In many instances, these manuscripts and fragments have no illumination whatsoever. Between the sūras, a line left blank is often the rule; in a few cases, a crude geometrical ornament, drawn in ink, fills the space left vacant at the end of the last line of a sūra40, or the line between the two sūras.41 On the other hand, the division of the verses is precisely indicated by dots drawn with ink.42 Devices used for the separation of the sūras are usually inspired by very simple geometrical shapes, also in ink. The treatment of the basmala is peculiar: in some of the manuscripts, it is written alone on the first line of the sūra with a verse marker after al-raḥmān; then, on the next line, the next verse begins and the rest of the sūra is written continuously.43 This presentation of the basmala is not universally accepted: on MS Paris, BNF Arabe 328a, the basmala stands alone only when it is on the first line of a page;44 in the other cases, the text is written continuously.45

The codicology of the qur’ānic manuscripts in bijāzi style is still in its inception and its development is somewhat hindered by the fragmentary state of most of the evidence. One of the few almost complete manuscripts, London, BL Or. 2165, with 121 folios, has been restored, so that the present state of the qur’ānic is doubtful. The qur’ānic structure needs further investigation; its diversity might be paralleled with that of the script, the beginning of the Islamic manuscript tradition being a period of experiments, quite different from the picture we get from the 3rd to 9th century with its almost unanimous adoption of the 10 folios, with all the rectors of the first half of the qur’ānic being hair side. In the case of Or. 2165, the qur’ānic might have been made of a larger number of folios. Those of MS Paris, BNF Arabe 328a contain 8 folios, with a flesh side as the first recto of each qur’ānic and a sequence usually in accordance with Gregory’s rule. The varying number of lines is clearly deliberate: in many instances, the folios were ruled beforehand in order to guide the script.

40 See for instance Şan‘ı, DAM, 01-25.1 (Masāḥīf Şan‘ı, p. 59-60, no 3), Paris, BNF Arabe 328a, f. 30b or 39b (F. Déroche and S. Noja Nosed, op.cit., p. 131 or 168).
41 Istanbul, TİEM ŞE 87 and 89 (S. al-Munajjid, op.cit., p. 93 and 92); Şan‘ı, DAM 01-29.1 (Masāḥīf Şan‘ı, p. 58, no 11); also, if from the same group of fragments, H.C. von Bothmer, K.H. Ohlig and G.R. Puin, op.cit., p. 39, fig 6).
42 Istanbul, TİEM ŞE 85 (S. al-Munajjid, op.cit., p. 94).
43 On this point, there seems to be a discrepancy between the texts about early Qur’āns quoted by A. Jeffery and the actual manuscripts where dots in the same ink as the text itself are found (A. Jeffery, op.cit., p. 195).
44 Istanbul, TİEM ŞE 89 (S. al-Munajjid, op.cit., p. 92); Şan‘ı, DAM 00-29.1 (Masāḥīf Şan‘ı, p. 58, no 11).
45 See f. 5ba, 60a and 66a.

New evidence about Umayyad book hands

It seems more probable that the bijāzi style gives us the picture of an age unaffected by official rules governing the script, unconcerned by a teaching of writing aiming at a perfect imitation of the model. Each scribe was writing in his way, following, a general rule as to the appearance of the script, but sole master of the execution of its details. This becomes particularly obvious in the cases of teamwork analysed previously. In a presentation of the fragments from Şan‘ı, Von Bothmer stresses the link between the variation in the number of the lines in the same manuscript and the collaboration of two or more copyists: among the 208 groups of fragments with a varying number of lines, a sizeable number was the result of teamwork, but the author does not elaborate on the proportion of fragments in the bijāzi style to which this remark applies.48

The reform of the chancery of the Empire under Abd al-Malik and the introduction of Arabic as the official language with the correlative use of the Arabic script was not without influence on the manuscripts, although it proves difficult to trace.49 Since the 1980’s, the development of the study of early qur’ānic fragments and manuscripts has led to the identification of some of them as possibly produced during the Umayyad period. Von Bothmer has been advocating the use of art historical analysis of the illumination as a way of dating; his careful study of the group of fragments Şan‘ı, DAM 20-33.1 led him to the conclusion that they were to be dated to the last decade of the 1st to 2nd decade of the 9th century, more precisely to the last years of al-Walid’s reign. Based on the study of the illumination, but also of the script, he added a C14 date “between 657 and 690.”50

The script of the Şan‘ı Umayyad Qur’ān (fig.9) reflects a high level of workmanship: it is clearly an écriture composée. The strokes are notably thicker than those found on bijāzi style fragments. The letters are regularly spaced on the page, with the horizontal component emphasized mainly by the use of elongation, particularly of those letters with two parallel strokes (like dāl, sād etc.). The alif is rather stout, with a conspicuous lower hook. The final or isolated kāf retains the shape characterised by the longer lower stroke; the shaft is markedly vertical. The final mim is somewhat flattened on the line, with a triangular tail set on the base line, but "integrated" into the body of the letter.

Another script could also be representative of the Umayyad book hands (fig.10). The discovery of a fair amount of folios from a Qur’ān with illuminated sīra headings (it will be referred to now as the Damascus Umayyad Qur’ān”) was instrumental in establishing its date.51 The illumination of this Qur’ān relies on motifs which find their parallels with the mosaics of the Dome of

51 There is no statement regarding the qur’ānic script which can be compared to that expressed by al-Walid ibn Abd al-Malik, according to al-Jahshiyārī: the caliph asked for his letters a larger size of papyrus and a more beautiful script (I. Lutz, op.cit., p. 94).
53 This name is only given by reference to the collection to which it belongs.
54 Istanbul, TİEM ŞE 321; see F. Déroche, “A Qur’ān from Umayyad times”, MME (in the print) where its datation is discussed. The name of Damascus is used here as a reference to the place where it has been found; the same applies to the Şan‘ı Umayyad manuscript.
Fig. 9  Fragment Ṣan‘ā’, DAM 20-33.1 (the Ṣan‘ā’ Umayyad Qur‘ān): Qur‘ān LXIX, 6-22 (Photograph by H. C. Graf von Bothmer – © H. C. Graf von Bothmer).

Fig. 10  Fragment Paris, BNF Arabe 330c, f. 13 ro: Qur‘ān XVI, 7-12.
the Rock (fig. 11). The orthography is slightly more developed than that found in the manuscripts and fragments in ḥāṣāṣaṣi style. The format is still vertical. A tendency towards a greater homogeneity in the number of lines per page is obvious. The letters are spread over the page thanks to an extensive use of the elongation of the horizontal connections or to a regular spacing of the letters or groups of letters irrespective of their being part of a word or not. In keeping with the use observed in the manuscripts and fragments in ḥāṣāṣi style, words can be divided at the end of a line when there is not enough space left, provided that the word includes a letter which does not require connection with the next one.

The script itself still bears some similarities with the ḥāṣāṣi. Although the writing instrument is slightly thicker than the one usually associated with ḥāṣāṣi (between 1.5 and 2 mm), the ratio between the height of the script and its thickness is still quite high and as a whole its appearance is close to that of MS BL Or. 2165 (fig. 6). The shafts (lām, ḥāf) tend to be vertical, although there are still some tendencies to have them slanting to the right; an exception is the shaft of the letters tāʾ/šā’d which remains oblique. The lām in isolated position was apparently somewhat problematic for the copyists of the time who hesitated between two shapes. In some instances, the lower horizontal stroke is located below the base line—similar to the final lām. In other cases, this part of the letter is drawn on the base line; the shape cannot be mistaken for a kāf since, as we have already seen, the latter is written in a very different way in its isolated and final positions. The isolated lām with its lower tail on the base line is already found in ḥāṣāṣi manuscripts. It significantly appears on 'Abd al-Malik's milestones nos 1 and 3 in Max van Berchem's publication, whereas the other shape has been used on milestone no 2. By far the most original letter is the final or isolated mīm which is devoid of any tail—so much so that it has been rejected in some fragments, a later hand added these tails in order to make the script more "legible"; in this case, the parallel is obvious with the ḥāṣāṣi style, or at least with a tendency found in some manuscripts, particularly London, BL Or. 2165 and hand A of Paris, BNF Arabe 328a.

In final or isolated positions, final qāf is typically ended with a noticeable down-falling tail the extremity of which sometimes reaches the lower line where it disrupts the text. Its generous curve reminds us of the same letter found on the Umayyad milestones, particularly on no 1 where the shape of the letter is almost identical to that of our fragments. The asymmetric hairpin shape of final or isolated kāf is increased by the lengthening of the lower stroke. The closest comparable items can be found on dated inscriptions. On three of 'Abd al-Malik's milestones, the name of the caliph ends with a similar kāf which also appears on the mosaic inscription of the Dome of the Rock or on the plate at the northern entrance of the Dome. 62

60 M. van Berchem, Matériaux pour un Corpus inscriptionum arabicarum, 2e partie, Syrie du Sud, Jerusalem "ville", l/1, Le Caire, 1922, p. 17-29; also in A. Grohmann, op. cit., p. 83, fig. 48, n. d.
61 Ibid. A later instance appears in an official letter dated 141/758 (reproduced in Khan, op. cit., p. 30).
62 M. van Berchem, Matériaux pour un Corpus inscriptionum arabicarum, 2e partie, Syrie du Sud, III/1, Le Caire, 1930, pl. XI, no 216 (l. 3 for instance); also in A. Grohmann, op. cit., pl. XII/1.
the script also suggests some official effort: the Qur’anic fragments written with it or with its variants have been identified in sufficient number to suggest that it was successfully spread within part the Empire.\(^{25}\)

Even if the colour of the ink has no bearing on the script itself, a feature of some of the Qur’ans possibly dated to the Umayyad period should be mentioned here. As pointed out by Al-Manajid, some of the manuscripts he considered as Umayyad tend to have the basmla written alone on the first line of the sura (fig. 12), a feature found on some of the manuscripts in hijazi style.\(^{26}\) Some of the Qur’as we suggested as typical of the Umayyad period associate this way of writing the basmla with the use of red ink;\(^{27}\) in other cases, the first line is also occupied by the beginning of what would be considered in modern usage as the first verse of the sura and is entirely written in red (fig. 13). A further step in the use of coloured inks was to copy in red the last line of the sura, then to leave a blank space between it and the next one which begins with a first line in red. More sophisticated manuscripts even go further, combining green and red inks in order to stress the end of a sura and the beginning of the next one (fig. 14).

A further evolution should also be mentioned here, even if we cannot state with complete confidence that it appeared strictly speaking during the Umayyad period. A first instance is a group of fragments in the oblong format, with whole lines written either with the usual brown ink, or with red, or with green (fig. 15). On the fragment shown here, lines 1, 3, 5-7, 9, 11-12, 14 and 16 are in brown; lines 2, 6, 10 and 15 are in red, 4, 8 and 13 in green. The copyist of the group of fragments SE 362 was even more ambitious. Here, the script retains a slightly slanting appearance reminiscent of the hijazi style; some of the letter shapes (final mim and nun) are close to the Umayyad scripts. As was the case with the fragment which has been briefly described previously, some pages exhibit lines of alternating colours. On some others, the copyist started changing the colour of the ink within a line: in fig. 16, lines 1 and 2 start brown, then change to red, lines 3 and 5 shifting from red to brown. Line 4 begins with a few letters in red, the next word (Allah) is in green, then it goes back to red... On line 3, the copyist has taken advantage of the fact that the last letter of the word al-qawm is isolated to write it with another colour; on line 7, he goes a step further and changes the colour for the dhal of tatikhidh which is connected to the preceding letter. This very peculiar technique allowed him to create geometric patterns on the page with the help of these variations of colour.

Let us now turn back to the chronology of the scripts. The Umayyad scripts connected with the Damascus Umayyad Qur’an can provide now a rather firm chronological reference. The illumination, the script and the 10-bifolios quire structure of this manuscript seem to coincide in indicating that it is indeed a very old manuscript. Its date of copy can be defined first through its close relationship to the mosaics of two major Umayyad buildings of Greater Syria, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Great Mosque in Damascus. The former was built under ‘Abd-al-Malik and finished in 72/691-692; the bwork for the latter started in 87 or 88/705-707 during the

\(^{25}\) A few groups of fragments with this script have been identified in the Damascus collection (catalogue currently in its final stage of compilation), but also in other libraries.

\(^{26}\) See above.

\(^{27}\) An instance has been published in Le Monde de la Bible 115 (Nov.-Dec. 1998), p. 35.
Fig. 13  Fragment Istanbul, TIEM SE 8365: Qur'an LIII, 46-LIV, 8.

Fig. 14  Fragment Istanbul, TIEM SE 12995: Qur'an IV, 176-V, 2.
regime of al-Walid but was carried out under his brother Sulaymān. The ornaments and tiles on the manuscript are clearly related to the mosaics of the two monuments. The illuminators were clearly familiar with contemporaneous trends; were they following these trends or creating a new style? Considering the status of the Damascus Umayyad Qurān, which was evidently produced for a wealthy patron, but with far less means than the person who commissioned the Umayyad Qurān (DAM 20-33.1), we suggest that its illumination took over an already established repertoire.

The script itself also gives some clues for the dating of the manuscript. As we have seen, it still includes hijāzi features, but it has been regularised in every respect. The most typical liyāla shapes are well attested in the contemporaneous papyri, but the most important parallel is provided by the milestones bearing the name of ‘Abd al-Malik. Here, again, the reign of the great caliph constitutes a termīnus a quo for our manuscript which reflects the reforms involving the Arabic script undertaken at that time; the Damascus Umayyad Qurān shows a deliberate attempt to give a stately appearance to the script by reshaping the old hijāzi. This is particularly clear when we compare one of the most significant letters of this period, namely the final or isolated kāf. The obvious effort to give a more regular appearance to the letter makes the difference between the shape in hijāzi style and its Umayyad equivalent where the upper and lower strokes have become as strictly parallel as possible. Moreover, the lower strokes are longer than they ever were in the hijāzi style. This feature may have simply come into fashion, but one should not exclude the possibility that better training gave copyists new skills which allowed them to significantly lengthen the horizontal strokes. We tentatively suggest in the light of the preceding remarks that the Damascus Umayyad Qurān was produced at the earliest after 72/691-692, or more probably during the last quarter of the 2nd/early 3rd century.

The orthography found in the manuscripts and fragments of this group is clearly more developed than the one of the Qurāns in hijāzi style. The orthography is neither completely in accordance with that of the modern versions, nor fully coherent from one folio to another; it is not the result of the collaboration of two or more scribes, some of the discrepancies occurring on the same page or within the same codicological unit. It could be seen as an intermediary stage between the scriptio defectiva and the more developed one which will gain the upper hand during the 3rd/8th and 4th/9th centuries. The remarks on the script of the Damascus Umayyad Qurān indicate that it is a development from the hijāzi style: typical hijāzi letter shapes such as the final or isolated kāf and mim but also final qāf have been retained and adapted to a new aesthetics.

The hijāzi style has to be now examined in the light of these observations. In the past, with the exception of two attempts at dating it into the first half of the 1st/7th century, scholars generally limited themselves to the mere

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66 This hypothesis was upheld by A. Mizgara and A.S. Lewis in their Leaves from three ancient Qurāns, possibly pre-Othūmānic, Cambridge, 1914. In a less scholarly publication, it has been said that a Qurānic palimpsest “dateable to the middle of the first century AH (seventh century AD) . . . may well have formed part of one of the Uthmanic codices . . . and it is quite possible that it was written by one of the companions of the Prophet” (Sottle’s, sale of 22nd and 23rd October 1992, lot 551; same folio sold at Christie’s 1st May 2001, lot 12).

67 W. de Stael, op.cit., p. 93.

68 Loc.cit.


71 For a while, the Qurān remained the only text which was transcribed in codex form.
which was initiated by the third caliph, 'Uthmān. Team work also points in the same direction. The comparatively high rate of collaboration might be an answer to the need of producing quickly a large number of copies of the sacred text in order to keep pace with the growth of the community.

Part of the manuscripts in būjā'ī style, e.g., our numbers I to IV, can be attributed to the Umayyad period; on the other hand, the position of B Ia (number V) remains unclear, although it fits Ibn al-Nadīm's description, while our number VI is obviously an instance of the survival of this style during the 2nd/8th century. The Ṣanā'ī and Damascus Umayyad Qur'āns are witness of the inventiveness of the copyists and scribes of that period: in a comparatively short time, they were able to entirely reshape the Arabic script and establish the foundations of calligraphy. More research is certainly needed in order to identify other Umayyad book hands and to define more accurately their chronology. Arabic sources dealing with this period may still provide us with new evidence about professional or amateur copyists of the Qur'ān, which will reinforce the picture of manuscript production during Umayyad times; still, they will be of little help in the identification of the actual scripts which will rely on a more thorough study of the manuscripts. The material which has been discussed so far is limited to Qur'āns. Did manuscripts of other texts survive? The controversy about the beginning of Arabic literature has obviously some influence on this question: for some scholars, there is simply no other text in manuscript shape at this time than that of the Qur'ān, while others believe that texts were already circulating.

As far as we can judge, no fragment or codex with a non Qur'ānic text can be attributed to the Umayyad period.

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A Yemeni codex from the library of Sharaf al-Dīn al-Hajmī (d.1140/1727)

Adam Gacek

Among recent acquisitions of the Islamic Studies Library, McGill University, is a Yemeni codex (shelf no.226). The manuscript, and especially its first part, represents an excellent example of early 12th/18th century Yemeni bookmaking and scholarship. From the codicological point of view it is interesting to note that it was written on European watermarked paper, although some insets are on Arab, most probably Yemeni, paper. Also, the textblock is composed of quaternions as opposed to the quinions which were more common in the main Arab lands. A long list of former owners found in ownership statements is of especial value to the history of this copy. From the palaeographical point of view we notice, for example, the partial pointing of letters and marks for muḥāmal-letters, practices which were more common in medieval manuscripts. And last, but not least, from the scholarly point of view, the first text contains a reading-note and carries a variety of emendations and glosses. It shows that the medieval practice of transmitting texts in the presence of a teacher was carried on in Yemen into the 12th/18th century. And if we compare the recommendations given by medieval scholars on how to correct manuscripts, we will find that many of these recommendations are put here into practice.

The original owners

The volume is made up of two codices that were later bound together. The first half of the codex (ff.1-88) is of later date than the second half (ff.89-169), the former having been commissioned by Ḥusayn ibn Ahmad al-Hajmī (f.86b), and the latter copied for his father Shams al-Dīn Ahmad ibn Nāṣir al-Hajmī (f.155b).

Ḥusayn al-Hajmī was a qāṭī and vizier of several Ẓaydī Imams from the end of the 11th/17th and early 12th/18th centuries. In the present manuscript he is variably referred to as Sharaf al-Islām wa al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-qāṭī Ahmad al-Hajmī (f.88b), Ḥusayn ibn Ahmad al-Hajmī (three autographs, f.86b, f.88a, f.88b) and Ḥusayn ibn Ahmad ibn Nāṣir al-Hajmī (f.1a). Muḥammad Zābārah gives his name as al-Ḥusayn ibn Ahmad ibn Nāṣir al-Hajmī al-


A Yemeni codex from the library of Sharaf al-Din al-Haymi

lines and the chain lines are 22 mm apart. This type however bears no watermark. The paper used for the flyleaves, with chain lines 20 mm apart, bears an intricate hitherto unidentified watermark. As regards the insrets, which are placed only in the first half, the paper is as follows:
a) after f.16 (p.33): laid European, with chain lines 22 mm apart, no watermark.
b) after f.17 (p.35): the same as 'a', but no chain lines visible.
c) after f.21 (p.43): laid European, with the watermark: crown-star-crescent.
d) after f.67 (p.135, loose): same as 'c'.
e) after f.71 (p.143): laid Arab paper without chain lines, approx. 8 lines per cm; lines are irregular and fading in places..
f) after f.72 (p.144, two insrets): same as 'c'.
g) after f.74: same as 'e' and 'f'.
h) after f.86: same as 'e', 'f', and 'g'.

The codex has no original foliation. Catchwords appear on the verso of all folios outside the rule-border. The leaves were ruled by means of a ruling board (mistara) (see e.g. ff.87 and 88) including an outer border. The codex was bound in red leather with a traditional flap with center-medallions and on-laid pendants. The lower cover and the flap are severed from the spine and badly damaged.

The contents is identified by a title-contents' inscription on its head-edge, namely: Sharh al-Khams al-Mi'ah wa Asbab al-Nuzul wa al-Naskh wa al-Mansūkh fi al-Qur'ān. This piece of information is also repeated over an ownership statement on the inside of the upper cover (see ownership statements' no. 1 below). In its present state it consists of four main compartments, the last one being incomplete. The first three are: Shafi'i al-A'īl by al-Najri, Asbab al-Nuzul by al-Nisaburi and al-Naskh wa al-Mansūkh by Hibat Allah ibn Salamah. In addition, the Shafi'i Al-A'īl contains a gloss (hāshiyah) in the hand of al-Dabwi.

The text of the manuscript (matn) begins with the Kātiib Shafi'i Al-A'īl fi Sharh al-Khams al-Mi'ah min al-Tanzil (ff.1a-86b) by Fakhr al-Din 'Abd- Allah ibn Muhammad ibn al-Qasim al-Najri (d. 877/1472). A biographical note (tarjamah) on the author -- taken from a work of Ahmad ibn Sa'idi ibn Abi al-Rajil (d.1092/1681) -- is inscribed on the verso of the second flyleaf. The text mentions the following works by al-Najri: Muktasar al-Thamarat ath'ālā Abah-Abah, al-Miqrafi tilm al-Kalim sharh al-Maqaddimah, i.e. Muqaddimat al-Bahr, Misqāh iilà al-Ghaybat, Sharh Muqaddimat al-Tashil li-ibn Malik, and al-Mi'yar (i.e. Mi'yar a'ghwār al-athām). (see fig.1)

The text of the manuscript (matn) begins with the hasmahal followed directly by a quote from the Qur'an, sūrat al-Baqarah, v.5 (inna alladhina kafarī sawā 'a'īn). (see fig.2)

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4 Taken most probably from his Matla al-Budur wa-Majma al-Bahith, an alphabetically arranged and yet unpublished biographical dictionary (EI, new ed. 2005: 685-9).

5 For another list of titles see A. Alhajj and S.T. Rasmussen, Catalogue of Arabic manuscripts: codices arabiaddita & codices sinomuentari arabici (Copenhagen, 1995): 27, 30 (Arabic).

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Abu Talib ibn al-Muttabib was a member of the Quraysh tribe, and is traditionally regarded as the foremost military commander of the early Islamic community. He fought alongside Abu Bakr in the Battle of Badr and later led the Muslim forces in the Battle of Uhud. Abu Talib is also known for his role in protecting and fostering the growth of the Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) early years of prophethood.

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The text continues with a description of the codex and its condition. It mentions that the codex consists of two clearly distinguishable parts: the first part was recently paginated using a ball pen, and the second part was copied by two different scribes on a number of different types of European paper. The codex was used in a number of cases for insrets.

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The textile block consists of quaternions (quires of 4 bifolia, i.e., 8 folia each); the last two however are disbound and the end is missing. The exact collational formula would thus read: 21V (16V, 1V, 7-16V). Tipped into the textile block moreover are several insrets containing glosses. The paper in the first half is creamy-buff, glossy and thick. The chain lines (some 28mm apart) run vertically. Traces of a watermark are visible in the upper, outer corners (see ff. 47, 65). The paper in the second half is of 3 different types. The first (ff.89-115, 118-120, 122, 124-125, 127, 130-136) is less glossy, rougher with chain lines 30 mm apart and thicker laid lines. A well-shaped three-centimeter watermark is visible in the middle of ff.110. The other type of paper (ff. 116-117, middle bifolium) is lighter, glossier and the chain lines are 22 mm apart. The watermark (barely visible and unidentified) is in the gutter. The third type (ff.121, 123, 126, 128-129, 137-169) has very fine laid

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7 For a description of this type of notation see Deroche, Manuel, 78-79.
Fig. 1 Shafi‘i al-‘Ali b. al-Najri (title page)

Fig. 2 Shafi‘i al-‘Ali b. al-Najri (first page, f.1b)
The manuscript was copied (nāql) for (bi-‘ināyat mālikib) al-Husayn ibn Ahmad al-Haymi on Wednesday (yawm al-rabū’), perhaps (la‘alāhah) 22u Jumādā al-akhir 1113/1701 by (bi-qalam) ‘Abd-Allāh ibn Yahyā al-Khushni (or perhaps al-Khayshani, al-Khishani). This polychrome manuscript is elegantly illuminated. It begins with a framed title-page surrounded by numerous ownership statements. The main text is preceded by an illuminated headpiece in the shape of a dome executed in blue, green, red and white colours. It carries the inscription: Sūrat al-Baqarah Madaniyyah, in white on green background. The chapter headings, enclosed in rectangular panels, are written in green, yellow and/or black. The gold ink or leaf was not used. The chapters are also inscribed in the left hand upper corners of all rectos of leaves. Furthermore, interesting or significant parts of the text are indicated by side-heads (nabāb). They are introduced by the word fu‘ādāh or the phrase qit ‘alā, often unpointed (see e.g., ff. 22a, 23a, 56b, 59b, 59b, 63b, 71b).

The text is framed in triple rule-borders (blue on the outside and red on the inside). The use of multiple colours gives the manuscript a very elegant effect. The text is written in an elegant naskh hand andrubricated throughout. The naskh often employs a head-serif (tarwīs) on the letter lām of the definite article. The head-serif is also sometimes visible on the alif and other letters and its use appears to be unsystematic. The text is not always fully pointed. Furthermore, some unpointed letters (al-hurūf al-mu‘nalma) are marked. For example, the letter tā’ and the final form of the letter dāl are written with a subscript dot in each case, while the letters hā, rā, sīn, sād, and ‘ayn often have a superscript v-sign. Other orthographic peculiarities include a sukūn over the long ī. This script gives a general impression of being influenced by riqā‘. Rubrication is used for the text of the Qur’an, as well as abbreviations (rumūz). The calligrapher also resorts to oversizing extended horizontal strokes in red ink (especially in the words qitā, minhā) and writes some words in a larger script in bold.

The abbreviations used in the text are not explained. They appear, however, to be standard abbreviations used in Zaydi jurisprudence.11 In the introduction to his al-Bahr al-Zakkhār ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Husayn ibn al-Mutçādā d.840/1437 gives a very long list of abbreviations used in this work.12 Not all of these abbreviations feature in the present manuscript. In fact there are some, that are not mentioned in the al-Bahr al-Zakkhār. Among the abbreviations we find:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ābū Ḥanīfah</td>
<td>Ābū al-Shāfi‘ī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ābū al-Mu‘āwiyah</td>
<td>Ābū al-Abbas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ābū ‘Abd Allāh</td>
<td>Ābū Yusuf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ābū ‘Abd-Allāh</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This copy is provided with extensive glosses (marginal and interlinear) written in several hands in black and red ink. The main gloss written in black in a small but clear hand, was supplied by (tahshiyah bi-khurt) Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Dabāy. The gloss is dated, Thursday, the last day (sādīq) of Ramādān, 1114/1703 (d.86b). Al-Dabāy (from Dabāw or Dabāw), who died two years after the completion of this gloss (1116/1704-5), was a pupil

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12 Şan’a, Dār al-Ḥikmah al-Yamanīyyah, 1: 8-18.

13 of Ahmad ibn Ṣaliḥ ibn ‘Abd al-Rūjāl from whom he requested an i‘lām. He is the author of a large didactic poem (turjūtah) entitled Ḥādīth al-Jawhrār fi Sūrat al-‘Imām al-Nāṣir. He is also credited with a compilation of a dīvān of poetry by Ahmad ibn Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Mawwari (d.1079/1660) entitled al-Durr al-Thamīn min Asbār al-Qāḍī Ahmad ibn Sa‘d al-Dīn. The glosses are introduced by a horizontal stroke with an up-turned hook at its end or the initial form of the letter hā’ (for hāshiyah) with a superscript number. The end of the gloss can be found indicated by a number of methods: a) (circle with a dot inside) b) (or its logograph), (for itahā) c) (or source + or ) d) (for itahā)

Most of the glosses indicate the original source of the citation referring either to a word from the title or to a shortened version of the author’s name. For example, Kawākib (= al-Kawākib al-Nuyuyrah) by ‘Imād al-Dīn Yahyā ibn Ahmad ibn al-Muẓaffar fl.8/14th cent., Ghāyith (= al-Ghayth al-midār by Ahmad ibn Yahyā ibn al-Murtuḍā al-Mahdī, d.840/1437), Hīdāyāh (Hīdāyat al-Akhrār by Ḥabīb ibn Muhammad ibn al-Wazīr, d. 914/1508), Ibn Rāwī (= ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd-Allāh, fl.10/14th cent.), Ibn Bāhān (= Muhammad ibn Yahyā, d.957/1550). Some names are preceded by the letter bā‘ (isolated form), which most probably stands for bāshiyah. Some glosses are marked with one-letter abbreviations (ṣīgā) (see e.g., f. 11b, 12a, 17b, 23b), which most probably are the same as used in the text. Most of the marginal glosses are quotations from Thamarit, most probably al-Thamārī al-Yānī, al-Akbām al-Wādibah al-Qādī by ‘Uṣuf ibn Ahmad ibn Uṭmān Majd al-Dīn al-Yamnī (d.832/1428). (see fig. 3)

The text was read by Husayn al-Haymi in the presence of his teacher Muhammad ibn ‘Abd-Allāh ibn al-Husayn ibn Amīr al-Muṭrūnin, in Shabān 1113/1702 in Şan’a. A qa‘ir al-statment in his hand is inscribed on f. 87b (on the left hand side of the colophon). It reads as follows: tammat qa‘ir al-imām ‘āli ‘ayyidī Fakhr al-Islām wa al-Dīn Muhammad ibn ‘Abd-Allāh ibn al-Husayn ibn Amīr al-Mu‘ṭrūnin hamāhu Allah fī ghurrat Shībīn satat 1113 hamāhu Allah bi al-khayrī bi-māhrūṣat Šan’a al-maḥmīyāh wa salā Allah ‘āli Muhammad wa alīhu katabahu al-faqīh Husayn ibn Ahmad al-Haymi ‘āli Allah lahu. (see fig. 4)

The text was collated by at least two different hands (see the word balagha, ff. 10b, 19b, 19b, and 20b) and contains a number of emendations.
A Yamani codex from the library of Shami al-Din al-Hanbal (682-756 AH). The 18th-century manuscript of the Sīrat al-Nāṣirī, a biography of the Abbasid caliphs, published by the Library of Congress. The manuscript is written in black ink on parchment paper with Arabic script. The text is divided into paragraphs and contains marginal notes. The manuscript is held in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
number of omissions signaled, these being indicated in the text by the v-mark and a numeral and in the margin by the superscript numeral. The end of each omission is indicated by ﾁ. There are also two variants marked (ff. 153b and 155b). They are indicated in the text by t and in the margin by the abbreviation ﾁ (unpointed). In addition, there is one cappacographical error inscribed in the margin (f. 150b) with a superscript ﾁ (for bayan). The original colophon ends with a string of five logographs of the word ﺗم (amen, ﴿f一丝). There are also some cancellations (darb) by means of a pen stroke above a word or a group of words.

3. The third text (ff. 156-169a) entitled ﺪلا ﺮا ﺪا ﺪا م ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪa (ff. 160/109). The main composition is preceded by an ascription beginning:

١٠٨٤/١٦٧٣. It was copied by the same scribe as no. 2 on Friday, perhaps 27th of Jumada al-awwal. The text is rubricated throughout with the side-heads also written in red. There are a number of omissions in the margin ending with ﺭ (or ﺭ) and with the v-sign (caret) used as a reference mark in the text. There are also some lacunae in the copy (ff. 161b-162a, 156b, 166a, 167a, 167b, 168b: (unpointed or partially pointed)). As in the previous copy cancellations (darb) are indicated by a line above a word or group of words.

4. This final composition (ff. 169a-b), entitled ﺪلا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪا ﺪa (ff. 159/1200) is incomplete. It consists of only 1 folio

Fig. 6. al-Nasikh wa al-Mansukh/ Ibn Salamah (end of the text, and colophon, f. 169a) and al-Rusukh/ Ibn al-Jawzī (beginning of the text)

The later owners

As mentioned above, the second half of the codex was copied for Ahmad ibn Nasir al-Haymi, while the first half was commissioned by his son Husayn. From Husayn in 1144/1731 the manuscript passed into the hands of his son Yahyā (no. 9). In 1228/1813 it appears to have been in the hands of a certain Jamāl al-Dīn 'Ali ibn 'Abd-Allāh ibn 'Amīr al-Mu'minīn al-Mutawakkīl Ahmad (no. 3) and in 1232/1817 it came into the possession of Muhammad ibn al-Mahdi (no. 8). In 1251/1835-6 it was passed on to al-Mawla al-Mansūr bi-Allāh ibn 'Ali (no. 6). By 1264/1848 it was in the hands of 'Abd-Allāh ibn Yahyā ibn al-Mu'ayyad (see nos. 1, 5, 10, 13). In 1308/1891 Yahyā ibn 'Abd-Allāh (son of 'Abd-Allāh ibn Yahyā ibn al-Mu'ayyad) sold it for four and a quarter riyals to Ahmad ibn 'Abd-Allāh al-Jindārī, through the agency of the bookseller Muhṣin al-Ruqayyī (nos. 2, 11, 12, 14, 15), who in the same year (1308/1891) sold it to Ahmad ibn Qāsim Hamīd al-Dīn. In 1318/1900 it was made a walk of the library of Ahmad ibn Qāsim (no. 4).

21 GAL, L. 305, SI. 335. Also Løvgren, Catalogue, no. 528 B.I.
22 GAL, SI. 914.
Ahmad al-Jindarī was a well-known Yemeni scholar who died 1337 (1918-9),
while Mu'īṣīn al-Ruqayȳī appears to have been the father of 'Abd al-Razzāq, the 
khāṭīb of Jāmī' Sānʻī (d.1323/1905).

Ownership statements:
1. Top of the inner upper cover: Sharḥ al-khams al-miʻād al-ayyāh līl- Najīrī 
īlah? \(\text{?}\) Asbāb muṣūl al-Qur'ān līl-Nāsibārī līl-ayyāh līl- 
Nāschkh wa al-
mansūkh (underneath) sār al-jamī‘ mīlak sayyīdī 'Abd- Allāh ibn 
Yahyā ibn al-Mu/min al-Mu'ayyad wa-safqahu Allāh basbāmīr rūsīmat bi-ta'īrīkh.
2. [1a, left-hand corner]: al-Ḥamd li-Allāh mimīmā munna Allāh bi-hi 'alā 
'abdīhu wa ibn 'abdīhu Ahmad ibn Qīsim Hamīd al-Dīn wa-
saqahu Allāh wa hādhā bi-al-shīrā bi-wāsīṭat dalāl al-kutab al-faqīḥ al-
fiqī Ṭuṣīn al-Ruqayȳī bi-jāmī‘ al-ṣahīh sanat 1308 [1891].
3. [1a, lower margin]: 'abduhu ... al-ḥamd li-Allāh wāḥdahu ... al-
Walad al-Mubārak al-Sālīh al-Rashīd al-Naṣīr al-Ṣalāh wa al-Dīn 'Ali 
ibn 'Abd-Allāh ibn Amir al-Mu'min al-Mutawakkīl Ahmad ibn Amir 
al-Mu'min al-Maṣūr bi-Allāh 'Ali ibn Amir al-Mu'min al-Mahdi 
a-'Abbas as-lababuhi Allāh wa at-tāma'bituhi? ilāma'ni? jussam? 'i sa'ī bi-
'shirin shahr [cancellation] Rahib yawm al-khamis fī sanat thāmīniyāh 
wa 'shirin wa mi'atayn wa al [i.e. Friday 27] Rahib 1228 [added later] 
wa kāna wāfīnabī yawm al-rūhānī fī shahr Jumādī al-akhir sanat sār'at 
wa 'shahr Kampūsh al-Mu'min fī sanat [i.e. Monday Jamam II, 128/ 
1278/170].
4. (fol.1a, top): min khīzānāt al-mamālik li-Allāh Ahmad ibn Qīsim Hamīd 
al-Dīn wa-safqahu Allāh wa hāyi waqīf min jumlat al-khīzanāh 
li-wājī Allāh ... (?) min? shahr Rabi' bi-Awwal sanat 1318 [1900] [1 
[intaḥār or hirjīyah?]
5. (fol.1a, top left hand side): al-Ḥamd li-Allāh wāḥdahu wa-sallā Allāh 
wasaq 'alā sayyīdīn Muḥammad wa-'abī rum bī-dhū sārāt hādhīhi al-nuṣkhah 
al-āqīmah al-mubārakah min kutub sayyīdi 'Abd-Allāh ibn Yahyā ibn al-
Mu'ayyad bi-Allāh wa-safqahu Allāh al-muhājir fī masjid al-maḍrasah bi-
madinat Sādā bi-al-shīrā bi-al-ṣaḥīḥ fī-wāsīṭat al-dalāl Mināl 
al-Sukkārī bi-ta'īrīkh shahr Rajab sanat 1264 [1848].
6. (fol.1a, below the preceding): al-Ḥamd li-Allāh min kutub sayyīdi 
'Ali ibn Amir al-Mu'min bi-jāmī‘ al-ṣahīh sanat 1251 [1835-6].
7. (fol.1a, a): al-Ḥamd li-Allāh mulk (or malakahu?) al-abd al-faqīr ilā Allāh 
subhānahu Husayn ibn Ahmad ibn Nāṣīr al-Ḥaymī 'afā Allāh anhuun wa-
sallā Allāh 'alā Muhammad wa-'abī intahā (circle with a dot).
8. (fol.1a, t. of the preceding): al-Ḥamd li-Allāh thumma sārā fī 
mulk sayyīdī al-Malik Sayf al-Nalāhāf 'Īz al-Īslām Muḥammad ibn Amir 
al-Mu'min bi-jāmī‘ al-ṣahīh bi-al-? ... (?) an al-dalāl (?) al-sayyı? (?) al-Mawālī 
Amir al-Mu'min al-Maṣūr al-Dīn Allāh ibn al-sayyı al-Ḫim ... (?) shahr 
Dhul al-Qa'd sanat 1232 [1871].

22 Al-Muqaffa, Mu'jam, 131-132.
24 Al-Maqaffa, Mu'jam, 272.
Knowledge of book sizes and formats (qat’) is vital to the study of codicology and the cataloguing of manuscripts. Nowadays size is measured in centimetres, but in the past scholars used special terms to distinguish between volumes of different dimensions.

Fakhr al-Dīn Alī ibn Hūsain Wā‘īq Kāshīfī (d.939/1532-3) wrote in the biography of Khwāja Muhammad Pārsā:

His Eminence Khwāja Muhammad Pārsā said, turning to Khwāja ‘Īsām al-Dīn, “The Musnad in question is available in Your Excellency’s library on such and such a shelf under such and such a book; its size (qat’) is like this, and its cover is like that."

The designation of book size usually followed the size of the paper on which the texts had been transcribed. In other words, the term for the size of quires of a broadside sheet of folded paper (jabag) without a binding was the same as that for bound papers. Different sizes came into existence because of scarcity: the high price of paper resulted in its being folded untrimmed.

The size of a quire depended on the number of times the paper was folded—once, twice, three or four times. It is clear that at one stage each region or workshop had different sized sheets of paper. Al-Qalqashandi (d.821/1418) in his Subh al-A’shā defines the sizes of paper used in Egyptian and Syrian governmental offices in dhīrā’, a unit of measurement common in the 3rd/9th century. In a unique manuscript collection of Safavid firmans and correspondence dating from the 11th and 12th/17th and 18th centuries, the sizes of the firmans are given as shihār, asba’, dhār’ (or dhīrā’) and girih: the size selected depended upon the office and rank of the addressee.

Since it was one of the criteria for describing a manuscript and distinguishing it from other copies, size was specified as part of the physical description of a book in classical Iranian library practice. Such descriptions are known as

Book and Paper Sizes in Persian and Arabic Texts

biography of Muḥammad ibn ʿImrān al-Marzubānī Ibn al-Nadīm writes:

...the number of folios being 6000, in Ibn-al-Marzubani’s handwriting, in 60 volumes of sulaymānī [paper].

In using the word sulaymānī for the volume of the book, here again Ibn al-Nadīm apparently means the size of the book rather than the style of binding used.

In the entry for Abū-al-ʿAtīya he says:

...والذي رأيت من شعره بالمولل ليف وعرضين جزءًا، آن الصادق الطلحي، يتحب إسمه ...واقبلما

What I saw of his poetry in Mosul came to more than twenty volumes in half-talhibi in Ibn Ammar’s handwriting ... and what I saw indicates that his [complete] works amount to thirty juz.

Here the use of the term talhibi after the word juz—usually meaning 8-10 leaves or one gathering (kurāsa)—means that talhibi refers to a size of paper, marking the number of lines of poetry for each poet.

The Terminology of Book Sizes

In order to differentiate between the various kinds of paper and manuscript format sizes and their designations, I have drawn up an alphabetical list of paper-size terms encountered in classical texts. Some of these words are taken from the terminology of book-binders and bibliographers as conveyed by word of mouth. The list is arranged according to the Arabic alphabet:

1. Bāzībāndi (بازنبندی) armband. This was an extra-small size. Copies of the Qur’an written on such paper were worn on the arm as talismans.
2. Buzurg (بزرگ) large. This term is frequently encountered in the registration of manuscripts. Buzurg denotes a vertical length of over 25cm.
3. Baghdādī (بغدادی) Baghdad. Paper-making was common in Baghdad from the late 2nd century onwards. The term baghdādī signifies the type and size of paper made there. Karabacek gives the dimensions as 109.9 x 73cm.9

Both al-Qalqashandi and the great statesman, author and patron of learning, Rashid al-Din Faḍl Allah Ḥamadānī (d.718/1318-19), refer to baghdādī-size paper. Rashīd al-Dīn, who had established a paper-mill in his social and scientific centre, Rab-i Rashidi,10 stipulated in the deed of endowment that each year two copies of the Qur’an should be transcribed both in large baghdādī-yi bāl size and also in qir-i faq-i buzurg-i baghdādī,11 and that two copies of each of his works should be produced every year.

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4 Ḥarḥ al-maṣāḥiḥ, vol. 9, pp. 149-150.
5 Madīnat al-ʿAṣr, vol. 4, pp. 149-150.
6 The description of manuscripts without any historical descriptions, giving only their approximate sizes in centimeters.
8 This catalogue, dating from ca.662 (1264), is now in the Malik National Library in Tehran, MS 2463. Projekt Ahsan’s article on the subject was published in Tabāqat-i Īslāmī, vol. 2, nos. 1 and 2, (1374h/1974-6), pp. 477-502.
9 1302-1324 CE = 697-919 AH = 7th century.
10 See the text of the manuscript, which is in the handwriting of the author, in the manuscript collection of the Maliki National Library in Tehran, MS 2463.
Each year a complete copy of each [work] must be written accurately on the most fine and superb paper in qaf-’i ḥāl-i buzurg-i baghdādī in a neat hand, and collated with the original copy kept in the Rahb-i Rashidi library.

In the introduction to another work, Latāfiyy al-Ḥaqāʾiq, which includes a comprehensive list of his writings, Rashid al-Din mentions qaf-’i ḥāl-i baghdādī once and qaf-’i buzurg-i ḥāl-i baghdādī twice.

And he had laid down the condition that from the revenue of the endowments of that Gate of Piety, each year a complete copy of all the collection of the Rashidiyya Centre and other books composed by our beloved Master, honours of his victories, should be transcribed on fine and superb paper in qaf-’i ḥāl-i baghdādī, and sent to one of the great cities in the lands of Islam.

After enumerating his writings, Rashid al-Din adds:

A complete copy of each [work] should be written accurately on the most fine and superb paper in qaf-’i ḥāl-i buzurg-i baghdādī in a neat hand.

And each theologian appointed there should transcribe a copy of these books for himself in qaf-’i ḥāl-i buzurg-i baghdādī.

What Rashid al-Din means by qaf-’i ḥāl is the same size in which the endowment certificate of Rab-’i Rashidi itself had been written. This manuscript, measuring 27 x 36cm is still extant. Its original dimensions were a little larger than they are now because the margins were trimmed down in the binding.

It is worth mentioning that the term qaf-’i ḥāl is also found in the Persian translation, made in 603/1206-7 by Abū al-Sharaf Nāṣīṣh ibn Zaḥr Ḫurḍāshāqī, of a history of Sultan Mahmurd of Ghazna, Tarjuma-yi Tārīkh-i Yaminī. The manuscript referred to is a commentary on the Qurʾān composed by order of Amir Khālaf.

And the book consists of 100 volumes in qaf-’i ḥāl for which a long life would need to be devoted to [complete] its copying; and it cannot be accomplished even in a prolonged period of time, unless with the assistance of [many] copyists, their transcription being possible in many different hands.

It should be noted that what is meant by ḥāl is the present copy that one is reading from, and not of course the one transcribed from.

Al-Qalqashandī in his Subḥ al-Aʾshā describes two types of paper (waraq) of baghdādī size: complete (qaf-’al-baghdādī al-kāmil) and incomplete (qaf-’al-baghdādī al-naqṣ). By his account, the length of a baghdādī sheet was one and a half dhīrāt.

4. Baghali (باغله side pocket). A small size, generally used for Qurʾān carried in the pocket. There are two documented examples of the use of this term. The first is a line of verse by Avjī Kashmīrī (d.1032/1622-3):

‘Ashāqīn-rā barā-yi bāfe-i badan
Dāgh bar sīna muṣḥaf-i baghali-st’

Lovers have the Holy Book branded upon their breasts in baghali-size, for the protection of their bodies.

The other example, which mentions three baghali Qurʾāns, is to be found in the registration document of the shrine of Shaykh Saṭī at Ardabīl, Ganji-yi Saṭī, written in 57/1772-8.

The registration note (sūrat-ı ard) of the Aštān-i Quds-i Raḍāwī, the Holy Shrine of the Imam All-All-Raidī in Mashhad, written in 1272/1855-6 under the auspices of ‘Adūd al-Malik, the acting trustee of the Shrine, mentions qaf-’i baghali-yi kūchik (small baghali size), and baghali-yi murabba’ (square baghali). Baghali is shorter than jībī.

5. Bayḍā’ī (ببدی). This term does not indicate a book size but refers to the format of books sewn along the width of the paper. The European equivalent term is oblong (or landscape). It appears that oblong Qurʾāns written on leather were the earliest examples. Bayḍā’īs were found in a great number of sizes and were used for copying prayers, poems and short treatises. Such anthologies became increasingly common from the Safavid era onwards under this name.

6. Pāḥūf (بانو) overcoat-size. This term was coined around 1970 to denote a type of book longer than pocket size. It is used in the catalogue of manuscripts in the Majlis Library, Tehran.

7. Thulūth (ثلث one-third). Ibn Tūwās (d.664/1265-6) writes in his Saʿdaʾ al-Sulṭān of a Qurʾān in thulūth size. In Subḥ al-ʾAṣḥāʾ, al-Qalqashandī defines qaf-’al-thulūth as follows:

And its ṣūq is one-eighth. Ibn Tūwās mentions seven copies of a book in thulūth size and one other in a smaller size. In his ‘Uyūn al-Anbī’, Ibn Aḥī Ṭūṣṭānī (d.668/1270) states in the notice of Ibn Sīnā: ‘And the book of the prophetic was written in a size similar to thulūth.

8. Thumīm (ثُمَم) one-eighth. In the bibliography of his library, Saḍr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī alludes to a copy of al-Iṣḥār by Ibn Ṣinnā in one volume of thumīm size: “Fi muṣḥaf qaf-’al-thumīm.” It seems that in Qunayt al-Munya li-Tāṭmīna al-Ghurayba by Najm al-Dīn Mubātir ibn Muḥammad al-Zahhārid ibn al-Ḥaǧāzīnī al-Ḥanāfī, the phrase waṭrīq thumānīyya means the same size as thumīm. Mutammān, in a

References:

19 Zuhār al-Dīn Ahmad, Pākāstān men Forsī adab (Lahore, n.d.), p. 373.
22 Kohler, op. cit., p. 83.
24 Kohler, op. cit., p. 83.
26 Afsīr, ʿAfsīr-i Khudāšah-yi Qūnawī, no. 98.
27 According to Muḥammad Taqī Dānīshpazhūhī, who saw a manuscript of the work in
line of poetry by Anvari Abiwardi (d.585/1189-90), was probably the Iranian equivalent.

9. Jānāmūzā (ماجر) prayer-mat. The registration note of the Library of the Āstān-i Quds-i Rādāwī mentions jānāmūzā-yi murabbā and jānāmūzā-yi wazīrī, meaning respectively the square paper-mat and the ministerial prayer-mat.

10. Dil-šahār (شهری, two-thirds). This is one of the old size categories cited by al-Qāqashandī. The dimensions, however, cannot be determined.

11. Jībi (جیب pocket-size). This is one of the terms that came to be commonly used in the 14th/20th century for small-sized books.

12. Chārāk (چارک quarter, one-fourth). A Qurān-i chārāk on deer skin is mentioned in Qānjina-yi Safī. It must refer to the size of the manuscript.

13. Chahār-miṣqāt (چهار میشک) (quadriptych). This term refers exclusively to manuscripts of voluminous poetic works such as the Shāhnāma of Ferdowsī and the Khamsa of Nizāmī. In manuscripts of this size, each written line contains four hemistichs, or two couplets (bayt). There are two old citations in this case. One is in the registration of manuscript no. 1339 in the Central Library of Tehran University, a Shāhnāma dated 1001/1592-3. The other is in Safīna-yi Khāshgā, a tadbikātā of poets completed in 1147/1734-5, which says of Bidel Dehlavī: “He had his collected works written in a quadriptych, chahār-miṣqāt.” The word is repeated in another passage in the Safīna. The same term is also frequently used in the bibliography of Mubīb al-Lubāb, for example on pp. 69, 163, 207, 223, 415 and 425.

14. Hamāyīli (حمايي, balsatic) is another small format, for manuscripts to be worn around the neck or on the shoulder. Most were normally Qurān prayers or prayers, and had leather covers. The earliest citation is in Rāhāt al-Sadār wa Ayāt al-Surūr by Muhammad ibn ‘Ali ibn Sulaymān Rāwandi, a history composed in 559/1163. The author reports that his maternal uncle, Zayn al-Dīn Malik al-Ulāmā Māhmūd ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Ali Rawandi, presented a manuscript of the Qurān in hamāyīli size to the King of Mazandaran: “the beauty of the handwriting was such that even the great calligraphers Ibn Bawwāb and Ibn Muqla could not have produced anything one-thousandth as good.” Secondly, Sadr al-Dīn Qunawī describes, in his catalogue of his library, a hamāyīli Qurān written by his brother.[35]

15. Khishī (كشي square brick format) by khishī means formats which are usually the size of common square bricks, there being no significant difference between their length and width. Nowadays in Iran school notebooks are generally made in this size and are called daftar-i khishī. It seems that the term murabbā (square, q.v.) is another form of khishī.

Ibn Tāwīs in his works mentions five copies in rub’i and larger than that.[36] In the catalogue of his library, Sadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī mentions one copy of the Qurān in the hand of Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-ītāqī in qa’t al-rub’, two manuscripts in rub size, and two in mujallādāt rub’āya (rub volumes).[37] The word occurs as rub’i in some texts, such as Nuzhat al-Arwāh wa Rawdat al-Aṭāf by Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Shahrāzūrī (d.687/1287-88). The writer, recounting the life of Ibn Sīna and commenting on his work on logic – Kitāb al-Najāt – states that the Shākyli wrote five pamphlets in rub’i size in answer to criticism by scholars from Shirāz.[38] The term rub’i is also employed by Rashīd al-Dīn, who writes in Lāyīf al-Haqqāqī: “He busied himself for two or three days, whenever he had the opportunity, by writing it [what the King had asked him to do], and in about three or four days composed approximately 20 pamphlets of rub’i size on the subject.” In the Shrine Library of Fatima Mas‘ūma at Qom there are 17 juz’ of a Qurān written in a rub’ānī on band or on the shoulder. Mostly were normally Qurān prayers or prayers, and had leather covers. The earliest citation is in Rāhāt al-Sadār wa Ayāt al-Surūr by Muhammad ibn ‘Ali ibn Sulaymān Rāwandi, a history composed in 559/1163. The author reports that his maternal uncle, Zayn al-Dīn Malik al-Ulāmā Māhmūd ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Ali Rawandi, presented a manuscript of the Qurān in hamāyīli size to the King of Mazandaran: “the beauty of the handwriting was such that even the great calligraphers Ibn Bawwāb and Ibn Muqla could not have produced anything one-thousandth as good.” Secondly, Sadr al-Dīn Qunawī describes, in his catalogue of his library, a hamāyīli Qurān written by his brother.[35]

16. Khuffī (حذاء high boots). This was an oblong size for fitting into high boots (chaqma, muza). Ismā‘īl Jurjāni (d.531/1136-7) entitled one of his well-known medical works Khuffī-yi ‘Alī.[39]

17. Rub’i (ربع one-fourth, quart). The earliest record of the term is in al-Dhakhrū’i wa al-Tafāh, written by Qādī al-Rashīd Ibn al-Zabār in the 5th/11th century:

Itan 1708: "..."
20. Sultanī (شاهنشاه) (royal). Large sizes, approximate to that of a broadside sheet are called sultanī. The writer has not found the term in any old texts. 21. Selaynānī (سليماني). As stated above, this was cited by Ibn al-Nadim.

22. Shānī (شاه). In Subh al-'Aṣḥāb this is mentioned as al-qaṭ al-shāmī, one of the paper sizes -used though not often- in government offices. Al-Qalqashandi refers to one type of shānī as al-qaṭ al-saghīr: paper of a size suitable for attaching to the legs of a carrier pigeon.

23. Saghīr (صغر) (small). This size of paper is known as kūchāk in Persian while khūrd (another Persian word) was the name used in India. Sadr al-Dīn al-Qānawī uses the term saghīr for four books (nos. 21, 36, 50 and 74) and saghīr-i tālibān, long saghīr, for one (no. 67). Al-Qalqashandi gives the size of saghīr as one-fourth of a dhū'āt. For other kūchāk sizes see Table 1. It seems that saghīr in this sense is what Ibn Tawās had in mind in Sād al-Sādūd, where he describes that manuscript as muqalladā saghīrat al-qālib, a volume of saghīr format.

24. Tālibān (طالبان). This term occurs only in Ibn Tawās's works, such as Sād al-sa'd, al-Mudhāyaqa and Muhāj al-Dā'awārī. Kohlerberg found only four references, and comments that the term has not been found in any other source.

25. Taḥī (طه). As stated above, this term is cited by Ibn al-Nadim.

26. Tūmārī (طوری) (scrolled). This is a term for scrolled papers and has no relationship to size.

27. Fir'awānī (فریوانی). As stated above, this term is used by Ibn al-Nadim and seems to imply the type and place of manufacturing of a given paper. It can also be found in Ibn Abī Usayyibī's 'Uyūn al-Anbā'ī. See also murabbā above.

28. Muthammān (مثامن) (one-eighth). Anwārī Abū Wardī (d.858/1454) includes this expression in a line of poetry, apparently referring to the thunā size discussed earlier: Kūthākī-sti muthammān bi-khātāt-i man khādim chu ashk u chitra-i man jild-ash az dirin u burūn (There is a small muthammān book in my, your servant's, hand. Its inside and outside covers are like my tears and my face.)

29. Murabbā (مربی). This is the same as rub' and rub', as the phrase awrāq al-rub' al-fir'awānī quarter sheets in Ibn Abī Usayyibī's 'Uyūn al-Anbā'ī were rendered by al-Shahrūzārī in Nuzhat al-Arwāh as murabbāt.
32. Mašuri (Arabic). ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Sam‘ānī (d. 562/1166) in his al-Anṣāb comments on the adjective kāhghadī that mašuri paper was named after Abū al-Fadl Mašur ibn Naṣr ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kāhghadī.58

About one hundred years earlier, Uṣūr al-Ma‘ālī Kaykā‘as recounted in his Qābil‘-nāmā (written in 475/1082-3), in an anecdote about Sultan Mahmūd of Ghazna (reg. 366-421/998-1030), that the Caliph’s messenger had an audience with the King and “handed to Sultan Mahmūd a letter written on about one bundle (dāsta) of paper in mašuri size, scroiled and sealed.” This occurrence of the word shows that it was intended to indicate a size of paper.

Papers in mašuri size were well known throughout the Islamic world.59

The size was mentioned by al-Qalqashandi as “a paper size known as mašuri whose width amounts to one fourth of a dhū‘i.”60 He also refers to its half and third sizes.61

Those are terms equivalent to muṣafā, denoting a size obtained by halving the main paper: that is, folding it once. We find mention of it in the following texts, arranged in chronological order:

Hīd al-Sībī (d. 448/1056-7), in his Rusūn Dār al-Khilāfā, regards muṣafā papers as sizes on which viziers wrote to Caliphs.62 He writes:

Ibn Fudaq, in his Tarīkh-i Bayhaq, states: “I have designated it Lubāb al-Anṣāb wa Aqlāb al-Iqābb, a work comprising two volumes of niṣfī size.”63

Ibn Tāwūs speaks of manuscripts as being in niṣf al-warāqa or half-sheet, niṣf al-warāqa al-kabīr or half broadside sheet and niṣf al-thunn, half of one eighth.64

Al-Qalqashandi in Subh al-A‘ṣā'ī also mentions qat’ niṣf hamawī and qat’ niṣf mašuri.65 Hamawī is the attribute adjective of Hamawī, a city in Syria.66

34. Waraq al-tayy (bird-paper) was a small-sized paper, which like al-qat’ al-saghir (see 22 above) could be attached to a pigeon’s leg.67

35. Waziri (ministerial). This term is as old as sūfī. Its origins, however, are unknown. The earliest citations appear in the registrations of two manuscripts: a copy of Minhāj al-Salāb by ‘Allāmah al-Hill, transcribed in the 11th/17th century and registered in the 45th year of the same century belonging to the Qom Shrine68; and one of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī’s Baharīstān, transcribed in the 11th/17th century and registered in the 15th year of the same century, belonging to the John Rylands Library in Manchester. Waziri paper is still in common use, and measures 24 x 18 cm.

Conclusion

The above list of manuscript folio sizes in Persian and Arabic texts shows that the names coined for them are of five main types:

1. Named after proper names: baghdādī, ḥāmawī, šāmī, (geographical) and sūfī, sulaymānī, šāhī, tūbī, ṣulṭānī, mašuri, waziri (derived from personal names or official titles).

2. Pertaining to objects: khīḍī (brick), ṣhī (book-rest), raq‘i (note), waraq al-ta‘ī (bird).

3. Pertaining to numerical adjectives: thulūth (one third), thunn (one eighth), chārakī (one quarter), chahār-miṣrī (one quadruply), du-thulūth (two thirds), raq and raq‘ (one quarter), mutamman (one eighth), munabbāj (one quarter), square, muṣafā (bissector), niṣf (one half).

4. Relating to the containers of the manuscripts: bāzūndārī (armlet), baghāli (side-pocket), jībī (pocket), hamālī (baldric), hung from the neck or shoulder) and kīfī (high boots).

5. Pertaining to the vertical size of the paper or manuscript: sāfīr (kūchik = khur = small), kābir (buzurg = kalān = large), waṣaṣ (miyāna, mutawasṣī = demi, medium-sized).

The original sources for paper sizes are limited to (i) classical texts, (ii) registers written on manuscripts and (iii) word of mouth. It is no wonder that there is no mention of sizes in al-Fihrist of al-Shaykh al-Tūṣi, al-Fihrist of al-Iṣbīlī, al-Fihrist of Muntaqab al-Dīn, Fīhrist al-Qutub wa al-Rasā‘īl of al-Maṣ‘ūdī, or Kashi al-Zamān by Ḥājī Khalīfa. This is obviously because these categories concern the physical dimensions of manuscripts rather than books as texts (nāṣūr, mutā‘īn), whereas the works in question are bibliographical in nature.

Table I examines 26 typical manuscripts, showing their vertical dimensions that have registers. It is apparent from the table that Iranian librarians classify manuscripts with a vertical length of 30-36 cm. as large (buzurg), those measuring 19-30 cm. as medium (miyāna, mutawasṣī); and those less than 15 cm. long as small (kūchik).

There are, however, three instances in Table 1 of the writers of registers being confused or making errors in measuring the length of the writers: they are nos. 7, 16 and 17.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Size in Cms</th>
<th>Traditional Book Size</th>
<th>Title of the Book</th>
<th>Collection and Number</th>
<th>Year of Registration</th>
<th>Type of Paper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.6 x 24</td>
<td>Bozorg</td>
<td>Habib al-Siyar</td>
<td>Sani Lib., 78</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>Samargandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 x 3.5</td>
<td>Chabīr</td>
<td>Shahrūmān</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 1339</td>
<td>1315</td>
<td>Dowlatabād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 x 23</td>
<td>Bozorg</td>
<td>Tafṣīr</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 4211</td>
<td>1333</td>
<td>Aḵkili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 x 22.5</td>
<td>Bozorg</td>
<td>Rowdār al-Safi</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 8132</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Kamzīri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 x 24</td>
<td>Bozorg</td>
<td>Al-Ḥerār al-Yamānī</td>
<td>Qom Shrine, 165</td>
<td>1108</td>
<td>Aḏūlāshībī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 x 19.5</td>
<td>Bozorg</td>
<td>Mavṣūl al-Ṣafīyyāt</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 4607</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Dowlatabād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9 x 18</td>
<td>Bozorg</td>
<td>Munawwāʿūt</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 3908</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Dowlatabād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 x 18</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Fashāh-e Bisdī-al</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 4769</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Samargandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 x 18</td>
<td>Bozorg</td>
<td>Kamīl al-Tābīr</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 7934</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Kashmīri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 x 15.5</td>
<td>Bozorg</td>
<td>Divān-e Othlī</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 4573</td>
<td>1104</td>
<td>Samargandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 x 15.2</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Divān-e Faydī</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 4757</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Kashmīri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 x 14</td>
<td>Mīyānī</td>
<td>Kolbīṣīt-e Qīrōm</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 4575</td>
<td>1104</td>
<td>Samargandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 x 15.2</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Khūnīs-e Nāvāji</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 4692</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Samargandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 x 14.8</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Tabīsht al-Hasīf</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 3895</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>Samargandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 x 13.5</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Navādar al-Eṣḥāq</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 2462</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>Dowlatabād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 x 13.5</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Nāṣīf al-Raḥīm</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 2921</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>Dowlatabād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 x 12.5</td>
<td>Bozorg</td>
<td>Ḥādiyya-y  Shali (of  Ṣafi)</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 3345</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Alvān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 x 15.5</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Divān-e Shāshūr</td>
<td>Sani Lib., 589</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Dowlatabād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 x 12</td>
<td>Kūchak</td>
<td>Divān-e Vāʿez</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 3899</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Dowlatabād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 x 13</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Varaq-e Ṣadāḥ</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 3221</td>
<td>1106</td>
<td>Estāḵbālī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 x 13.5</td>
<td>Motawass- e- Ashīr</td>
<td>Mājmaʿīr</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 2822</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Dowlatabād</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 x 12.5</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Shaft-e Mubābī al-Qašāf</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 3019</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>Kashmīri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 x 12.4</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Bagīh-e Bāzī</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 1685</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Samargandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 x 13</td>
<td>Kūchak</td>
<td>Davūdīnah-e Emīn</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 4948</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>Samargandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 x 11</td>
<td>Kūchak</td>
<td>Övān al-Shāruf</td>
<td>Markazi Lib., 2957</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>Qālābī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 x 8</td>
<td>Kūchak</td>
<td>Nār al-Maḥbūrān</td>
<td>Malek Lib., 5153</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>Aḵkili</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of book sizes, as well as the possibility of their being roughly estimated, is greater in a list of registrations of the manuscripts at Radavi Holy Shrine. For example, there are various terms such as baghtī (three types), jāmānātī (three types), raḥif (nine types), murabbā (seven types), and vārajī (four types). See Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Sizes</th>
<th>Vāṣat</th>
<th>Murabbā</th>
<th>Raḥif</th>
<th>Jāmānātī</th>
<th>Baghtī</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Vāṣat</td>
<td>Murabbā</td>
<td>Raḥif</td>
<td>Jāmānātī</td>
<td>Baghtī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raḥif</td>
<td>Raḥif</td>
<td>Raḥif</td>
<td>Raḥif</td>
<td>Raḥif</td>
<td>Raḥif</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jāmānātī</td>
<td>Jāmānātī</td>
<td>Jāmānātī</td>
<td>Jāmānātī</td>
<td>Jāmānātī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth mentioning at this point the two examples on the broadside sheets of paper. The first is a description of Rashid al-Din Faddh Allah Hamadani (d.718) in the introduction of his Lāṭifīf al-Haqīqī about broadside sheets devoted to the drawing of maps six times larger than the common sheets of the time which were apparently manufactured in the Rashidiyye paper-mill in Tabriz. He wrote:

And I ordered the manufacture of large sheets of paper as I wished to record the map of the lands of the world scientifically, arranged and put down in such a way as to be easily found and understood, and including places not completely covered by others. I deemed it necessary to provide larger sheets for the job, in order to display the survey at its best, the entire regions being clearly surveyed, drawing the maps on larger sheets to enable inquirers to observe some of their features. Each of these sheets was as large as six broadside papers, tabqas. Once such a large size was ready I wished to collect all my works and get them written in one single volume, grouping them together to leave as a memorial. To serve Arabic speakers, all the works have been translated into Arabic, transcribing single copies in that language. Books written originally in Persian have been translated into Arabic and included in this codex so as to be of benefit to everybody. The codex is called Jami’ al-Ṭasnīf-e Rashidi, Rashidi’s Comprehensive Works.63

63 Rashid al-Din Faddh Allah Hamadani, Lāṭifīf al-Haqīqī, p. 3.
The second example is what Badi’uni wrote in his Montakhab al-Tawārijh or Tārikh-e Badi’uni, written in 1004 and which was later quoted by Kashi Cham Ekhlas in Tadhkere-yi Hamishe Bahr (written in 1136). It is about a copy of Qeese-yi Amir Hamze that had been transcribed in Akbar Shah’s library in ten volumes and its miniatures painted by Mir Sayyede Ali Jodqey-e Tahbizi. Each paper was gez or dharr, and each manuscript was equal to a large box. Papers in such a size were apparently the largest available at that time.

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