

# Establishing the stemma: fact or fiction?

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Textual criticism is the means by which problems in reconstructing the original wording of a text, of which only relatively recent witnesses are preserved, can be solved. It is the way to approach the so-called 'lost manuscript of the author'. In a nutshell, it is these tasks which the philologist sets out to accomplish when he has decided to edit a text: reconstructing the original wording and approaching the author's copy. The definitions summarily quoted here are derived from the science of textual criticism as it has developed at the hands of classical scholars, that is: scholars of the two European languages of Classical Antiquity, Greek and Latin, and of the cultures connected with them<sup>1</sup>. Their methods have not remained confined to Greek and Latin, but have also been applied to the philology of Hebrew and the languages of the Christian Orient, and in the course of time to other Oriental languages as well. This science has reached, in the passing of the centuries, a stupendous refinement in its methods and an elaborate theoretical framework, due to the combined efforts of the generations of students of these languages. The scholar of classical languages may have recourse to the methods of textual criticism when he tries to reconstruct the original wording of a text which has been obscured, corrupted, or sometimes even lost in the passage of time. With the tools of his trade the classical philologist can try to approach the 'lost manuscript of the author'. With the correct application of its methods he can try to find his way back into history, a few centuries or more, and clean a text of some of the filth and impurities that have become attached to it by long and frequent use.

It is at once clear that this definition of textual criticism is based on a few presuppositions. The first and foremost of these is the supposition of the existence of a 'lost manuscript of the author'; the other, equally important one is the presumption that a long period has evolved between the lifetime of the author and the date of the oldest existing manuscript of the text which is the object of study. In classical philology these presuppositions are the basic and most central points of discussion<sup>2</sup>. Editors of classical Greek and Latin texts have no autographs at their disposal. These editors have also to bridge a gap of sometimes two millennia or more between the lifetime of their author and the date of the oldest manuscript extant. The transmission of classical texts is usually divided into four phases:

1. the autograph (always lost)
2. the phase of transmission in classical antiquity (always lost)
3. the Alexandrian (Hellenistic) recensions (sometimes preserved)
4. the medieval recension(s).

The Greek philologist first sets out to reconstruct the Hellenistic versions, which usually are the result of intense scholarly labour by the learned men of Alexandria or Pergamon. When he succeeds in doing this, he must then try to find his way further back, through the confusion and intricacies of the transmission of knowledge in the classical period, which more often than not consisted in the collation of manuscripts, instead of the more slavish copying of the later medieval period. Finally, he sets out to reach the period of his author. Generally speaking, these final two phases are not realized. The view has simply become too blurred, the looking-glass too steamed up to get even a glimpse of what was completed by the author on some day very long ago. A despairingly impossible task, it would seem, and hardly an activity which could have found so many enthusiastic devotees through the centuries. The way back into history, the path along which the philologist tries to find his author, or expressed more carefully, to the 'archetype', is called in this connection the 'stemma'.

But in the weakness of classical philology is contained its strength. The very impossibility of reaching the author's 'lost manuscript' or to attain the 'original wording' gives the scholar an immense freedom to exercise his wit and ingenuity, and to do this with almost complete impunity. How he extricates himself from the web of insoluble problems often reminds me of Baron Munchausen's escape from the mud in which he was about to drown, together with his horse. The Baron succeeds, or so he claims, by lifting himself by his own hair, and thus do the classical philologists succeed, as one can see from their text editions. Out of nothing they bring about something. One need not necessarily look at their act of creation with the same awe as the spectators of the Baron's trickery, but the two sorts of machinations have too much in common to ignore the connection.

In the following I will try to show to what extent the methods which were developed for the stemmatic exercises in the classical Greek and Latin studies are

relevant to the editing of Arabic texts. I believe that my more or less general remarks on Arabic texts are relevant to the editing of Persian and Turkish texts as well, and by extension to the other 'recent' (by which term I mean 'of the Islamic period') Middle Eastern languages. I will try to do this with the help of a number of examples which illustrate several situations in which the editors of an Arabic text have found themselves. Firstly, I will treat the philological approach to the edition of the *Qur'ān*, the first book in Arabic. Dogmatics and a great number of manuscripts are here the most conspicuous features. Secondly, I will treat the stemmatic exercises in the case of the presence of one textual witness only, that is, the so-called unique manuscript. Thirdly, I will summarily treat stemmatic problems in connection with texts of great length, whose manuscripts more or less complement one another. Finally, I will touch upon stemmatic problems in connection with texts of which numerous manuscripts have been preserved, and of the eclectic methods developed to solve these problems. I will conclude my argument by giving an answer to the question, whether or not the stemmatic method is useful for the philology of the Middle Eastern languages of the Islamic period.

#### THE EDITION OF THE *QUR'ĀN*

Judaism, Christianity and Islam are the religions of the Book. The Holy Books of these religions are the first or foremost books in their cultural tradition, and the science of philology first developed around these books as an auxiliary science, before it came to be considered a science worthy to be studied for its own sake. We come immediately to the heart of the problem when faced with the philological problems of textual criticism in connection with the Holy Books of these three religions. For the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Torah we encounter difficulties which are similar to those of the classical Greek and Latin texts: the available or reconstructed archetype is far removed from the time in which the texts came into being. For the Greek text of the New Testament this is also the case, albeit to a somewhat lesser extent: the interval of time is shorter. Here, however, the multitude of manuscript witnesses (more than five thousand manuscripts and fragments) makes it impossible even to begin an attempt at stemmatization. What Christian philologists decided to do with the text of the New Testament was to refrain from trying to establish a stemma, but adhere to a *textus receptus* which is based on a rather limited number of old manuscripts. For exegetical reasons use is made of the different variants, per variant or set of variants, as it suits the particular purpose of a philologist or theologian. I will show with

the example of Ibn al-Akfānī's Enumeration of the Sciences how this eclectic method may prove to be fruitful for the edition of Arabic texts of which many manuscripts have been preserved.

The philological situation of the *Qur'ān* is slightly different from that of the Torah and the New Testament. Both questions of archetype and length of interval seem easier to handle. Relatively more is known of the early history of Islam than seems to be known of the early history of Judaism and Christianity. And although much more information is available about the establishment of the text of the *Qur'ān*, no use has been made, so far, of the immense number of old *Qur'ān* manuscripts for the purpose of establishing a critical edition. To the Muslim, the *Qur'ān* is the uncreated word of God. But this uncreated word is, at least in its recorded form, also subject to the laws of philology, and the early Arab grammarians, theologians and philologists realized this from the outset. In the case of the *Qur'ān* the stemmatic problems are, in theory at least, easy to describe. The Holy Text goes back to a heavenly Well-Preserved Tablet, the Divine archetype, a *Lawḥ Maḥfūz*<sup>3</sup>. It is the literal text of this Tablet that was sent down to the Prophet Muḥammad and that we now know as the *Qur'ān*. Were it possible for mankind to maintain a flow of information from the Hereafter to this world, or to say it in Islamic terms: had the Divine Revelation not ended with the demise of the Prophet Muḥammad, comparison between the copies circulating on earth and the heavenly archetype would be a most convenient solution for all disputes.

The Prophet Muḥammad, however, was the last of the prophets, and therefore establishing the critical edition of the *Qur'ānic* text has been left to man alone, without any metaphysical help. The history of the 'Uṭmānic redaction of the text is known. The almost simultaneous emergence of an ever-growing corpus of variant readings is a well-known fact as well; some of these variants received, in due time, canonical sanction or recognition. In the 3rd/9th century efforts were made to establish a *textus receptus* of the *Qur'ān*, with the preservation of the value of the then existing variant readings. Somewhat later, Ibn Muḡāhid devised a system under which seven canonical sets of variant readings were all seven equally accepted<sup>4</sup>. Later scholars tried to enlarge this set of seven to ten sets of readings or even more, but none of these additional sets gained the same degree of acceptance which the first seven enjoy up to the present day. It is at once clear that such an expanding corpus of variant readings brings us further and further from the original wording or pronunciation.

Flügel's edition of 1834 is eclectic in the sense that it is a contamination of several fixed sets of variant readings. In doing so, Flügel produced a text that

cannot be accepted in the Muslim tradition of textual transmission of the *Qur'ān*. The Cairo edition of 1925 produces, as faithfully as humanly possible, the Ḥaḥḥ-Āḥim version, which came into being in the first half of the 2nd/8th century. The task to trace back the history of the *Qur'ān* to deep into the first century of its existence, with help from the available source-material, has not, however, been undertaken by Muslim scholars, nor by others for that matter. A German project, whose aim some fifty or more years ago was to collect all the variant readings taken from old *Qur'ān* manuscripts and, on the basis of this collection, establish an apparatus criticus of the *Qur'ān*, was interrupted by the Second World War and was never resumed. In recent years enormous amounts of old *Qur'ān* fragments have come to light. As far as I know, no effort is being made to use these manuscripts in a systematic way to collect information on the early history of the text of the *Qur'ān*; however, it is questionable whether these numerous old fragments would produce any original variant readings.

Summing up, we see that the critical edition of the Holy Book of Islam is effectively hindered by Muslim theological and dogmatic considerations, and that no practical effort is being undertaken today, or was allowed to be done in the past, to come to a systematic research of textual material of the *Qur'ān*. Strangely enough, collecting old *Qur'ān* manuscripts is very much in vogue nowadays, but the obvious and unavoidable conclusion that these manuscripts could serve textual criticism in connection with the *Qur'ān* is not drawn. They are treated as holy objects, not as philological research material.

#### THE 'UNIQUE' MANUSCRIPT

I now come to speak about those texts for which there is only one textual witness, the so-called unique manuscript. In the case of the bibliography of Middle Eastern literatures, this term 'unique' has only a limited meaning. Numerous collections of manuscripts have still not been described, or are not known at all; thus one must be constantly prepared to have another MS of a text believed to be preserved in one manuscript only, be found. In addition to this exists the problem of the numerous quotations in other works, which may provide parallel witnesses. In Arabic literature in particular, this is something to be reckoned with. For these reasons alone, the use of a 'unique' MS for a text edition is already a hazardous affair, but more difficulties may be encountered.

It is especially in regard to 'unique' manuscripts that the creativity of the editor can be fully deployed. Unique manuscripts are the private hunting grounds of their editors, since they are not hampered in their activities by an excess of textual witnesses. Many of the most interesting texts in Arabic literature have,

strangely enough, been preserved in a single MS only, which makes it the more important to reflect on this situation. In the following I will treat, in chronological order, three texts which have been edited on the basis of a single manuscript, and I will give an account of their fate at the hands of their editors.

#### IBN ḤAZM'S *TAWQ AL-ḤAMĀMA*

Firstly, there is the case of Ibn Ḥazm's *Tawq al-Ḥamāma*. This work, 'The Ring of the Dove', a treatise on love and lovers, was compiled in the first half of the 11th century by the Andalusian author Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), who is more widely known for his works on comparative religion and Zāhirite law. The book is preserved in one MS only. It is kept in Leiden University Library<sup>5</sup> and was purchased by Levinus Warner in the 1650s or 1660s in Istanbul. It was copied, possibly in Syria, some three centuries after the author's compilation. In the meantime a transliteration from Andalusian or Magribī script into Oriental script must have taken place, and part of the poetry was skipped for esthetic reasons by some medieval editor, possibly the copyist of the Leiden MS himself<sup>6</sup>. This is a great loss, since it is in this book that Ibn Ḥazm had collected much of his own poetry. A considerable amount of Ibn Ḥazm's poetical efforts must have been lost due to this editorial cutting in the 14th century. That the MS nevertheless has great value does not need to be stressed, but at the same time the quality of the text is occasionally rather uneven. The publication history of the book, which has easily become one of the highlights of Arabic literature, can be summarized as follows. The first appearance of the text, apart from its mention in the successive printed catalogues of the Leiden library, is by R. Dozy, in 1861<sup>7</sup>, when he translated a passage from the MS in his *Histoire des musulmans d'Espagne*. In 1914 the first edition was published by Pétrof; this is a faithful rendering of the MS with a few emendations. Then follow in all some nine editions, all produced in the Middle East, which testify of the impact of the text<sup>8</sup>. It is possible that more editions of the text such as the two undated Tunisian ones, which were produced for educational purposes, are in circulation, for numerous editions for use in secondary schools must have been published in the recent decades. In my list they are mentioned for curiosity's sake only. In these editions, passages which were not considered suitable for teenagers have been omitted. No serious philological work has been done to produce these popular, often considerably bowdlerized, versions. If we were still in the manuscript age, such a version could become important if it were, by accident, the only textual witness to survive.

A number of translations of 'The Ring of the Dove' has appeared as well, and I mention these in my list,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَبِهِ اسْتَعِينُ  
 قَالَ أَبُو مُحَمَّدٍ عَمَّا لَمْ يَنْهَى عَنْهُ . أَفْضَلُ مَا ابْتَدَى بِهِ حَمْدُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ  
 بِمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ ثُمَّ الصَّلَاةُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ خَاصَّةً وَعَلَى جَمْعِ أَنْبِيَائِهِ  
 عَامَّةً . وَبَعْدَ عَمْدِنَا اللَّهُ وَابَالٍ مِنَ الْحَبِيرَةِ وَالْحَقْلَنَا مَا لَطَفْنَا بِهِ لَنَا  
 بِهِ وَقَبْلُكَ لَنَا مِنْ جَمَلِ عَمَلِهِ دَلِيلًا هَادِيًا إِلَى طَاعَتِهِ وَوَعْدًا مِنْ تَوْفِيقِهِ  
 بِالْإِبْرَاهِيمِ فَاعْرِضْ مِنْ مَعَانِيهِ وَلَا تَلْطَفْ إِلَى الضَّعْفِ عَزَائِمِنَا وَخَوْرِقَانَا وَوَقْفَانَا  
 فِي الْبَدْرِ دُرَارِينَا وَسُوَاخْتِيَارِنَا وَقَلْبِهِ تَمِيمِنَا وَفَسَادِهَا هَوَايَانَا  
 كِتَابُكَ دَرَدَنِي مِنْ مَدِينَةِ الْمَرِيَّةِ إِلَى الْمَسْكَنِ بِحَضْرَةِ شَاطِبِيَةَ تَدْرُسُ  
 حَالِي مَا سَرَفَنِي وَحَمَدَتِ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَيْهِ وَأَسْتَدِينْتَهُ لَكَ  
 وَأَسْتَزِدُّهُ فَيَلْتَمِسُ لِي لِمَا لَمْ يَشَأَنَّ أَنْ يَطَّلِعْ عَلَى حَسْرَتِكَ وَقَدْ تَلَمَّحْتُ بِمَعْلَمِكَ عَلَى عِدِّ  
 الشُّبَّةِ وَبِنَائِي الْبَابَ وَتَخْطُ الْمَنْزِلَ وَطَوْلُ الْمَسَافَةِ وَغَوْلُ الطَّرِيقِ فِي  
 دُونَ هَذَا مَا سَلَى الْمَشْتَاقُ وَنَسَى الدَّلَالَاتِ مِنْ مَسْجِدِ الْوَفَا مَشْأَلِ  
 وَرَعَى بِالنَّوَالِدِيَّةِ وَوَدَّ الْمَوَدَاتِ وَخَوَّ النَّشَاءَ وَجَبَّ الصَّبِيَّ وَكَاتَبَتْ  
 مَوْدَتَهُ تَعَالَى . وَالْمَعَانِيَةُ أَهْمُ بَيْنَنَا مِنْ ذَلِكَ مَا غَرَّ عَلَيْهِ حَامِدُونَ  
 وَشَارُونَ وَكَاتَبَتْ مَنَارِيكَ فِي حَامَاتِ رَائِدِهِ عَلَى مَا عَمِدْتَهُ مِنْ سَارِدِيكَ

مُسْتَفْتٍ إِلَيَّ بِأَقْبَالِ غَرَضِكَ وَأَطْلَعْتَنِي عَلَى مَعْنَى مَبْدُوكَ بِحَبِيَّةٍ لَمْ تَزَلْ عَلَيْنَا  
 مِنْ مَشَارِكِهَا فِي جُلُوكَ وَمُرْكٍ وَسُرْكٍ وَجَمْرِكَ عُدُوكَ الْوَدَّ الصَّحْبُ  
 الَّتِي أَنْتَ عَلَى أَضْعَافٍ لَا تُحْسَبُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ جَزَائِعُهَا مَقَابِلَتُهُ مِثْلُهُ فِي ذَلِكَ  
 أَمْرٌ مَخَاطِبُ الْعَبِيدِ اللَّهُ بِعَدْلِ الرَّحْمَنِ الْمَغْنَمِ بِرَأْسِ الْمُؤْتَمِرِينَ النَّاصِرِ  
 رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ فِي كَلِمَاتِي طَوِيلَةٍ وَكَانَ لِي بِصَدِيقًا  
 أَوْدَكَ وَدَالِيسٍ فِيهِ غَضَّاصَةٌ وَبِقَضِّ تَوَدَّاتِ الرِّجَالِ سَرَا بَت  
 وَأَنْجَحْتِكَ الصَّحْبُ الصَّحْبُ فِي الْخَشْيِ لَوْ ذَكَ نَقَشُ ظَاهِرٍ وَكَانَ بَت  
 فَلَوْ هَانَتْ رَوْحِي هَوَاكَ أَمْلَعْتَهُ وَمَرَّقَ الْكُفْرَ عِنْدَ مَا بَت  
 وَمَالِي غَيْرَ الْوَدِّ مِنْكَ أَرَادَهُ وَلَا فِي سِوَاةِ لِي إِلَيْكَ خَطَا بَت  
 أَدَا جَزَنَةً فَلَا رُفْنَ جَمْعًا وَالْوَرَى مَبَاءً وَكَانَ الْبِلَادُ ذَبَا بَت  
 وَكَأَلَمْتَنِي أَعْرَكَ اللَّهُ أَنْ أَصْفَلَ رِسَالَهُ فِي صِفَةِ الْحَبِيبِ وَمَعَانِيهِ  
 وَأَسْبَابِهِ وَأَعْرَاضِهِ وَمَا يَبْقَعُ فِيهِ وَلَهُ عَلَى سَبِيلِ الْحَقِيقَةِ لَمْ تَزَلْ تَدْرُسُ  
 لَكِنْ تَمُورِدًا لِمَا حَضَرَ فِي عِلْمِهِ وَحَسْبُ وَهُوَ عَدِ حَيْثُ تَلَمَّحْتُ حَفِيظًا وَسَعَةً  
 بَابِي فِيهَا أَذْرَهُ . فَبَدْرَتِ لِي مِرْغُوبِي وَلَوْلَا الْأَجَابُ لَكَ لِمَا  
 تَكَلَّفْتَهُ فَمَدَّ مِنْ الْفَقْرِ وَالْأَوْبَانِ مَعَ قَصْرِ عَمَارَتِنَا الْأَصْرَ فَمَا الْأَهْمَاءُ

because many a translator had to emend the text before he could produce a satisfactory interpretation. A translator is even more committed than the editor in this, as the latter can just write a question-mark or leave the passage unintelligible when he is at his wits' end, whereas the translator is more obliged to show what the meaning of the text is. In addition to this a number of scholars have published lists with emendations. The most important of these are by I. Goldziher (1915), William Marçais (1928), C. Brockelmann (1932) and Qasim al-Samarrai (1983).

I mention all these contributions to the textual criticism of Ibn Ḥazm's treatise to show that there has been in the past seventy-five years a combined effort to improve the quality of the Arabic text. An entire corpus of texts, the collective product of scholarly creativity, has emerged around this book. It is this very corpus of texts that sometimes overshadows the fact that our connection with the author is warranted only by the Leiden MS with its obvious three limitations, namely, the period of three centuries which passed between the lifetime of the author and the manufacture of the MS, the transliteration from Western to Oriental Arabic script and, finally, the omission of much of the poetry whereby the original work has come down to us in a mutilated form.

From the stemmatic point of view the situation was very simple. Until the publication of the first edition by Pétrof (1914) there was one unique manuscript, and a few parallel witnesses, mainly quotations in similar works, none of which gives better readings in the crucial places. The development after 1914 has two aspects. Firstly, the emergence of a multitude of textual emendations, made by editors, translators and others. And secondly, the production of new editions. It is clear from the comparison of some significantly difficult passages that the study of the transmission of the text has received a new impetus in the recent editions. However, none of the editors since Pétrof states clearly that he used the MS. The anonymous uncritical edition adds some new corrupt passages, while the editions by Bercher, Şayrafī, Makkī and Sa'd contain a number of corrections which were made without recourse to the MS, and which are hardly justified by paleographic evidence. Their deviations from the MS result more often than not in a severe trivializing of the text. Iḥsān 'Abbās's edition of 1980 is unique in that he implicitly admits not to have made use of the MS itself. He was apparently able to display all his ingenuity in textual criticism on the basis of the corpus of texts that has come into being since the publication of the first edition in 1914. His edition has been acclaimed as the best one published so far<sup>9</sup>. But what is really startling in this series of editions of Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma* is that, without exception, no editor after Pétrof has taken the trouble to consult the, still unique, manuscript. This is easily illustrated by an inadvertent omission by Pétrof of the otherwise

insignificant words *'alā dālik*. None of the above-mentioned editions has these words, precisely because the words are so insignificant for the understanding of the text. They are, however, conclusive enough evidence of the fact that no editor has thought it worthwhile to consult the manuscript anymore and supplete Pétrof's omission<sup>10</sup>.

We see here a curious development in the reverse direction. In the course of time the textual material has only increased, and before long it will become necessary to make a stemma of the printed editions (which is not as simple as it sounds to judge from the highly confusing evidence I gathered from an experimental collation of a small part of the text) and a critical apparatus of their variant readings, while the unique MS will have its rest in the Leiden library, unused, made superfluous, and, in the opinion of editors and students of the text, unnecessary.

#### USĀMA IBN MUNQID'S MEMOIRS

Another classic of Arabic literature is the *Kitāb al-ʿIṭibār*, the Memoirs of the 12th-century Syrian warrior and man of letters, Usāma ibn Munqid (d. 584/1188). This work also depends on one single MS, and an incomplete one at that, for its textual transmission. It is preserved in the library of the Escorial in Spain, where it was discovered, about one century ago, by Hartwig Derenbourg. Its previous provenance is unknown. Upon its discovery the MS was incomplete at the beginning: some quires were missing, and there were some lacunae in the middle. The missing leaves in the middle were later discovered and added by Derenbourg to the MS. Today, however, the MS is misbound. The quires at the beginning have never been found. The lively and personal style of these Memoirs makes it one of the most readable books of the classical period. All of the historians of the Crusades use it for its details of daily life and its candid psychology of the Islamic adversaries of the Crusaders. The publication history of the book is roughly as follows. In the 1880s the edition and French translation were published by Hartwig Derenbourg, who also wrote a biography of the author. Then follow editions by Ph.K. Hitti (1931) and by Qāsim al-Sāmarrāī (1987). Several translations had been published before Hitti's edition, but these depended more on Derenbourg's translation than on his Arabic text. The recent Arabic edition and the recently published translations testify to the continuing appeal and attraction of Usāma's Memoirs. Hitti's edition has always been the basis for the later translations, since it was clearly an improvement on Derenbourg's pioneering first edition. Moreover, a recent article by G. Rex Smith on the hunting scenes in Usāma's Memoirs gives emendations concerning technical terms employed in hunting. Al-Sāmarrāī's edition of the text is one more step for-

ward, especially since it combines a diligent copy of the manuscript with an intelligent interpretation of the difficult readings. In this respect al-Sāmarrā'ī's edition will probably prevent the Memoirs from having the fate of Ibn Ḥazm's *The Ring of the Dove*. However, this edition also leaves much to be desired. One of its most striking features is the editor's uncritical addition of passages, allegedly from the lost part at the beginning of the *Kitāb al-ʿItibār*, but in fact collected from contemporary and later historians. There is no reason to assume that most of the twelve fragments given by al-Sāmarrā'ī<sup>11</sup> were ever part of Usāma's *Kitāb al-ʿItibār*, and in one case the editor even admits as much<sup>12</sup>. It is not unthinkable that a next editor will include these passages in the corpus of the text, thereby canonizing them as it were. Other peculiarities in this recent edition are the editor's utter disregard for the division of paragraphs in the manuscript, and the entire lack of indications of marginal additions in the manuscript. The latter have been added to the text of the edition without any critical acknowledgment. That the edition numbers the pages of the manuscript in a different way from the folio numbers as they appear in the manuscript itself is only a minor inexactitude, but this adds to the impression of general sloppiness. The *Middle Arabic elements in Usāma's language* are, in al-Sāmarrā'ī's opinion, caused by a copyist, and he postpones his judgment on this question, until more manuscript witnesses of the text are found<sup>13</sup>. He seems to be unaware, however, of I. Schen's arguments on the subject.

The Memoirs were probably meant by Usāma as a kind of family history, to be read and recounted in the family circle. The only extant MS originates from Usāma's descendants. It contains a copy of the colophon by Usāma's great-grandson, and contains also the copy of an *iğāza* by Usāma's favourite son Murhaf, who has acted on more than one occasion as his father's literary executor. The MS is written in a tiny and somewhat shaky hand, apparently from the 13th century, and the ductus is almost entirely devoid of punctuation. Where there is punctuation at all, it is usually superfluous for the understanding of the text. This, in addition to the uniqueness of the incomplete MS, makes the chain of transmission of the text even more feeble.

Derenbourg's edition was the work of a pioneer, and it is only understandable that Hitti, working some fifty years later, found many instances which he could correct. Hitti did not, however, correct only Derenbourg, the editor, but he thought it fit to correct the author as well in what he considered the numerous mistakes in the MS. Of what nature are these so-called mistakes? Usāma ibn Munqid̄ was, apart from his reputation as a brave warrior and an accomplished and fearless hunter, also a litterateur of renown. He wrote at least some 34 works on several subjects, which can mostly be classified as *adab*, and of these

some eight appear to have survived<sup>14</sup>. Usāma's mastery of the Arabic literary language is evident from his works. How could it then be that his Memoirs occasionally show numerous breaches of the rules of the morphology and syntax of classical Arabic? The answer is simple, and is here given along the lines set out by Schen. In the Memoirs are large passages written in Middle Arabic, that is, the spoken Arabic as it developed from the spread of Islam in the 7th century till the emergence of the modern colloquials. Hitti, however, could not accept the divergences of classical Arabic usage which he encountered in the MS, and he started correcting these. He was able to do this only on the morphological level, by adding the *alif* after the indefinite direct object, or by adding the *nūn* after shortened verbal forms, or by correcting the spelling of the numerals, to name but a few examples. Only in a limited number of instances does he account for these alterations in his apparatus criticus. It is self-evident that Hitti had no chance to make similar alterations on the syntactical level of the text. Here as well, Middle Arabic features are overwhelmingly present. Had Hitti wished to 'correct' the text on the syntactical level as well, he would have been obliged to reformulate entire passages of Usāma's text, much to the detriment, probably, of the lively and direct style of the Memoirs. That Hitti considered these deviations from classical usage to be mistakes which could not be ascribed to Usāma, follows from his subsequent attempt to find the culprit. According to Hitti, this must have been a negligent or ignorant copyist or secretary of Usāma. Why this incapable man maltreated only certain passages, and left others untouched, is explained by Hitti with ingenuous reasoning. Originally, he contends, the entire text of the Memoirs was dictated by Usāma, who was then more than ninety years old. The copyist or secretary made numerous mistakes and these were corrected by Usāma's son Murhaf and possibly by other members of the family as well. Somehow, this correction work was not completed. So far the essence of Hitti's explanation. That the Memoirs were dictated seems probable, but that the copyist or secretary spoiled Usāma's polished speech is improbable. A much more satisfactory explanation for the occurrence of Middle Arabic in Usāma's Memoirs has been proposed by Schen. The Memoirs did not fit into any of the categories of Arabic prose literature in Usāma's time, and so he probably felt it unnecessary to maintain his *fushḥā* at all times. At the same time, while dictating his Memoirs and reviving his memories, he must have switched continuously back and forth between *fushḥā* and his own daily tongue, using the full range of linguistic levels in between these two extremes. The question, therefore, is rather, as Schen has put it, why are there so few non-Classical elements in the text<sup>15</sup>?

Here we see a text which has received in the course of time quite a bit of text critical attention, although

much more could be desired. Hitti's training in classical Arabic prevented him from realizing what a unique document of Middle Arabic he had in his hand, and he started to 'correct' the manuscript. The edition by al-Sāmarrāī will probably save the Memoirs from the fate that befell Ibn Ḥazm's *Tawq al-Hamāma*: a multitude of indirect editions, with a MS fallen into oblivion.

#### THE *IFĀDĀ* OF 'ABD AL-LAṬĪF AL-BAĠDĀDĪ

This work on the history of Egypt, with autobiographical traits, was written at the beginning of the 13th century A.D. It is preserved, again, in a single MS, which is now kept in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Apart from being unique, it is also an autograph copy and written in a clear hand. Thus would there seem to be no stemmatic problems at hand. What more can one want? The first publication of the entire text was produced by Joseph White (Tübingen 1789), and this was followed by a number of other editions, of parts or the whole of the text, and translations into several European languages<sup>16</sup>.

'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, who died in 1231, has on at least two occasions fallen into the hands of English spiritualists. He has manifested himself in the 1920s through a medium during numerous seances as 'the great Persian doctor', and became famous, in spiritualist circles at least, for his ability to cure those who had been given up by medical science<sup>17</sup>. He manifested himself once more in the early 1960s, and saw to it that a photocopy of his *Ifāda* was deposited in the British Library, where it was supposedly more readily available to the general public than in Oxford. To the English couple which had come under his influence (or he under theirs?) he also sent, as he had promised, a compatriot of his from Baghdad, to assist with the English translation. Together they completed the translation, which was published on the pages opposite the facsimile edition of the unique manuscript<sup>18</sup>. As such it is a useful book, both for the English reader and the Arabist. One may surmise that 'Abd al-Laṭīf was even instrumental in explaining difficult passages to his translators, and that he may have had a hand in the two lists at the end of the book, where marginal notes in the MS are distinguished into two groups, namely those that are not by the author and those that are<sup>19</sup>.

Here we see a case where nothing could go amiss, and where all stemmatic problems were solved beforehand, as we have as our oldest and unique MS an autograph of the author. The author's spiritual resurrection, however, has only succeeded in mystifying a case which was so clear from the outset.

#### THE EDITION OF LONG TEXTS

A few words may be said on the editing of very long texts. They are seldom preserved in complete copies, and usually must be reconstructed out of complementing fragments which may belong to entirely different textual families. The result of such editing is a text which was probably never conceived by the author in the form in which it is eventually published.

An example of such a text is the *Ta'rik* by M. b. Ḡarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923). It occupies more than 2500 pages in print. The edition was a project of international co-operation which lasted for more than twenty years and in which more than ten European scholars participated. The necessary manuscripts were gathered from European and Middle Eastern libraries, and some were even purchased when the project was already well under way. Some of these manuscripts complement each other, while others show an overlap of text. In addition to these manuscripts, the editors also used medieval excerpts of the great work, quotations in other chronicles and parallel texts<sup>20</sup>. It is at once clear that under the circumstances which De Goeje describes<sup>21</sup> there can be no question of any stemmatic procedure. The editors simply had to use whatever text they could lay their hands on, and they continued to do so, even when the publication of some of the volumes was already completed. Editing a text as al-Ṭabarī's History could only be done in a purely pragmatical way, with an utter disregard for the stemmatic exigencies.

#### THE EDITION OF TEXTS PRESERVED IN NUMEROUS MANUSCRIPTS: THE EXAMPLE OF IBN AL-AKFĀNĪ'S *IRŠĀD AL-QĀṢID*

It would seem that the stemmatic procedure can be applied in its most ideal form in the case of editing a text on the basis of a great number of manuscripts. I will test this hypothesis with the help of one example, an Arabic text with which I have become, in the past few years, fairly well acquainted. It is the Enumeration of the Sciences, *Iršād al-Qāṣid ilā Asnā al-Maqāṣid* ('the guidance for him who aspires to the highest aims'), written by the Egyptian physician Ibn al-Akfānī (died of the plague in 749/1348, when he was at least 65 years old). He is the author of some thirty books, of which around twenty are preserved. His works can roughly be divided into books on medicine and books on other scientific subjects. The first category comprises all sub-divisions of medicine, but most notably ophthalmology. In fact, Ibn al-Akfānī may be considered the last of the great Arab ophthalmologists, ending a tradition of over five centuries. He

occupied the post of supplies officer in the Maṣṣūrī Hospital in Cairo, and also had a private practice. At some stage in his life he seems to have been a kind of society doctor. The other category of his works contains a wide range of subjects: not only arithmetic, physiognomy, mineralogy and alchemy, but also the exegesis of the *Qur'ān* and Counsels for the Company of Kings. His fame rests on his medical writings, but his popularity on a small introduction to the division of the sciences, the encyclopedia which I use here for my example. We are reasonably well informed about his life and work because of his having been a friend of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḳalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, whose biographical works give extensive information on his friendship with Ibn al-Akfānī; from another work by al-Ṣafadī it is even possible to get an impression of the conversational topics of the two friends. For the compilation of his Encyclopedia, Ibn al-Akfānī leaned mainly on the shorter philosophical works of Ibn Sīnā and to a lesser extent on al-Fārābī's *Iḥṣā' al-'Ulūm*, but he digested their materials into something of his own, an attractive introduction with a useful bibliography. His book has become, in turn, a major source for Ṭāšköprüzāda's *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda*, which in its turn was extensively used by Kātib Celebi in his *Kaṣf al-Zunūn*. The dependence of Kātib Celebi and Ṭāšköprüzāda on this work by Ibn al-Akfānī is so extensive that textual problems in both works may sometimes be solved by comparing them with the relevant passages from Ibn al-Akfānī's *Irṣād al-Qāṣid*. Thus far this historical introduction, which gives some impression of Ibn al-Akfānī's central position in a scientific and bibliographical tradition<sup>22</sup>.

In the course of my research on this text, I came to realize that many hundreds of manuscripts of the work must have been made before its popularity slowly waned because of the emergence of more extensive similar works. When I first started collecting references to the manuscripts of Ibn al-Akfānī's encyclopedia with a view to establishing a critical edition of the text, I found some forty of them, scattered all over the world. In the meantime I have found some thirty more. I was able to obtain microfilms of about half of this total of seventy odd and I have inspected a considerable number of manuscripts by autopsy. I have collated significant passages, but was not, in the event, able to establish a stemma on the basis of the material which was available to me<sup>23</sup>. Only on a few occasions could I prove the direct relationship between two manuscripts, whereby the more recent one could then be eliminated. When my efforts to establish a stemma on the basis of the materials which I had at my disposal failed, I had to make a decision of a practical nature, if I wished to continue with my critical edition. I did not entertain very high expectations about the results to be obtained from more collation work, even were I to obtain films of manu-

scripts in Istanbul, Medina or Rampur, to name but a few of the places which are notorious in regard to the acquisition of microfilms. That I had been forced in only a short span of time to include some thirty more manuscripts in my survey, and this simply due to the progress of Arabic bibliography in recent years, was, in a way, not a reason for optimism either. I could only expect that increasingly more manuscripts would come to light, a process which has proved to be true ever since I started my survey. On account of these two practical reasons, I abandoned the idea of stemmatization and decided, instead, to make a selection of manuscripts based on secondary characteristics only, by which I mean dates and other proofs of an early association or relationship of the manuscript with the author. I decided to take only 14th-century manuscripts and manuscripts with an *iğāza* from the author as the basis for my edition. I have reason to believe that no such manuscripts were among those which I could not obtain in microfilm, although one can never be sure about something one has not seen. In the end my selection yielded seven manuscripts, and I will here summarize their characteristics.

A. Bologna, University Library, Marsigli collection No. 3406 (1)<sup>24</sup>, dated 1007-8/1599, copied in Aqḥiṣār (Prusac in Bosnia) from al-Ṣafadī's authorized autograph of 737/1336, which contained the author's *iğāza*. From al-Ṣafadī's own information<sup>25</sup> it is clear that he had read the work with the author already as early as 729/1329, which is, by the way, the earliest known mention of the *Irṣād al-Qāṣid*. The Bologna manuscript is an authenticated textual witness in the second degree, though it is not an old one.

B. Cambridge, University Library, Or. 1428 (10)<sup>26</sup>, dated 749/1348 (the year of the death of the author) and copied in Damascus. Selected here because of its age. No other association with the author.

C. El Escorial, No. 949<sup>27</sup>. Written in Andalusian or Mağribī script. Not dated, but possibly 14th or 15th century. At the end of the manuscript is the copy of the author's *iğāza*, dated 741/1340. Both an old and authenticated manuscript: a witness in the second degree.

D. Jerusalem, Dār al-Ḳaṭīb<sup>28</sup>, a private collection which was dispersed after the Israeli occupation of Old-Jerusalem in 1967. The present whereabouts of the manuscript are unknown. Dated 788/1386, copied in al-Mizza, near Damascus, it contains in the colophon a copy of a copy of the author's *iğāza*. In this *iğāza* is contained a list of works by Ibn al-Akfānī which is the most complete one we have. The Jerusalem MS is both an old and authenticated manuscript witness in the third degree. The text presents several serious lacunae, however.

E. Leningrad, Public Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, No. 721<sup>29</sup>. The manuscript is not dated, but was apparently made shortly after the death of the author.

It was copied by someone who says he was a copyist (*nāsik*) to the author. The MS was selected both because of its age and association with the author.

F. Paris, National Library, Arabe 2331<sup>30</sup>. It is dated 779/1378 and was selected because of its age only.

G. Princeton, University Library, Yahuda collection, No. 551<sup>31</sup>. The MS is not dated, but was possibly copied in the 8th/14th century, which is an estimate done on paleographical grounds only. It was selected for the edition because of its age.

There is still another MS with association value, which is now preserved in al-Kizāna al-Ḥasaniyya, the Royal Library, in Rabat as No. 7174<sup>32</sup>. In its colophon is a statement that it was copied from the authenticated copy of al-Ṣafadī, but subsequent collation with the other MSS of the *Iršād al-Qāṣid* proved that the variant readings of the Rabat MS were too weak to be followed. The Rabat MS has thus an explicitly stated association with the author, though it is not clear to what degree, but I decided, in the event, to ignore the MS because of its mediocre textual value.

In limiting myself to these seven manuscripts for the establishing of the critical edition, I have consciously taken the risk that I might overlook a recent manuscript which has a direct link to a very early manuscript. But with seven old and/or important manuscripts at my disposal I felt I could take that risk. Comparison of these seven manuscripts shows that none was directly dependent on one of the others; in other words, none could be eliminated. I had, therefore, to include all seven in my apparatus criticus. The fact that we have three authenticated versions (ACD) does not even mean that these three form a closely interrelated group. Numerous authenticated manuscripts must have circulated, since the work was read to the author during a period of at least eleven years and probably much longer. Other groups of manuscripts with common readings are AB, FG, AFG, ABCG, ABCF, ABDG, DEFG, CDEG, and many others, as the clusters of sigla in my critical apparatus show. None of these variant readings has a great impact on the meaning of the text, but it is simply impossible to give a survey of the textual history, even on the basis of these old and direct witnesses. This can be explained on the basis of the assumption that so many authenticated copies circulated during the lifetime of the author that it was, at the time of his death, already impossible to reconstruct an 'author's copy'. It is more the development as embodied in the seven above-mentioned manuscripts which must be considered as the archetype of the text. This gave me the freedom to switch back and forth in my critical edition from one set of variant readings to another, and I considered it defensible providing I mentioned the other readings in my apparatus. It is what I would like to call an eclectic method, a controversial method perhaps, but the only one that could be applied in this particular case. The controversial aspect lies in the fact that no text is

produced that was as such written by the author. For texts, however, which are preserved in many manuscripts, it is probably the only method which at least gives some result. And I doubt whether the philologist would ever succeed in establishing a text which would be acceptable to the author.

#### ANOTHER TEXT PRESERVED IN NUMEROUS MANUSCRIPTS: THE *1001 NIGHTS*

The *1001 Nights* is a book with an intriguing textual history. It has been preserved in numerous manuscripts, and there is an aspect of oral transmission, both on the linguistic and narrative level. In this paper, I wanted to briefly touch upon complications with the stemma when an oral tradition is involved. In two cases which I have already mentioned here, there is indeed an oral aspect: Usāma's Memoirs were most probably dictated, and a few variant readings in Ibn al-Akfānī's encyclopedia can be identified as oral additions during the reading to the author. These are listed in the margin of al-Ṣafadī's manuscript as *min fam al-muṣannif* ('from the mouth of the author'), and occur also in one of the other manuscripts, but then as part of the text. The whole process of transmission of knowledge, as it was known in the Arab Middle Ages, has an oral component in it: texts were read to the author or with the author. As an example of oral tradition I had selected the *1001 Nights*. I was curious to see the confrontation of the rules that have been developed for the study of oral literature with the ideas of classical philology as they are embodied in the recently published critical edition by Muhsin Mahdi of the earliest known Arabic version of the *1001 Nights*. However, the fact that the third part of the introduction by Muhsin Mahdi to his edition had still not appeared by the time this paper went to the typesetter (though his critical apparatus with a description of the manuscripts he used is available since 1984), makes it difficult to give an entirely conclusive argument on the subject. That must wait until Mahdi's third volume has appeared. Some general and preliminary remarks are not out of place, however.

First of all, it must be clearly understood that the stories of the *Arabian Nights* are part of a continuous tradition of story-telling both in and outside the Middle East. The edition of the Arabic text by Mahdi, however, is an attempt not to reconstruct a corpus of oral literature, but to record the oldest known written version of the stories, which is not *ipso facto* the earliest one. And how could the editor do otherwise? The manuscripts are the only solid witnesses available, and these yield the best information when subjected to the philological procedures of collation and stemmatization. The recently published edition does not, therefore, give much extra information on matters concerning oral literature and its transmission in a historical

perspective. On the contrary, Professor Mahdi rejects the excuses provided by the theorists of oral literature to account for the fact that there is no *aṣl* for a book like the *1001 Nights*: '... people who, out of laziness, refrain from research and examination, and who all too hastily come with idle talk before they have formulated the principles on which their opinions are based. They aver that the *1001 Nights* has no original version, except for that which was told by story-tellers and for that which was transmitted orally. The book is, as they see it, just like running water, which takes the colour of the place over which it flows. They think that there is no text and no book, and that the editor, the printer, the translator and the reader have a right to fool around with the text when they edit, print, translate and read it. They pay no heed to those editors who occupy themselves with textual criticism of the printed editions and the composition of the manuscripts, and who maintain that it is useful to read these and try to solve the riddles they present, to locate them in space and time, and then to edit the old version, with the omission of that which has been added to it at a later date. The latter are the ones who separate the sound from the faulty, and they do indeed revert to the rules laid down for textual criticism when they make an effort to block the proliferation of defects, to correct mistakes, to impose order on the chaos of variant readings without mixing them up, and to refer to transmissions of the text without inventing them.'<sup>33</sup> These are hard words, but entirely justified when one reads the subsequent account by Professor Mahdi of how the *1001 Nights* has fared at the hands of their Occidental and Oriental students and editors. It was, indeed, high time that someone took the trouble to go back to the earliest known sources and discard all later additions and corruptions in the text.

That the collection of stories, now known as the *1001 Nights*, is much older than the earliest sources mentioned by Muhsin Mahdi in his preface<sup>34</sup>, is evidenced by a 9th-century fragment of a story<sup>35</sup>. In fact, the 'earliest known sources' mentioned by Mahdi are characterised by N. Abbott as the 'final stages of the growing collection.' But there is no contradiction in this since Mahdi is not concerned with a few lines of text as they are preserved in the Chicago fragment so extensively studied by Abbott, but rather with the earliest written recording of the entire corpus of stories which constitute the *1001 Nights*. That corpus was, in his opinion, composed in the 13th/14th century. Discussion about what earlier versions must have contained must remain in the realm of speculation. In the establishment of his text, Mahdi has employed sound philological method by applying textual criticism to a hoard of manuscripts and by establishing divisions and sub-divisions in the chains of transmission of the text. A number of considerations that played a role in the edition of the *1001 Nights* are given by Mahdi in his Arabic introduction<sup>36</sup>. On the one hand, he

contends, the *1001 Nights* is a book like any other, with a manuscript basis which can be subjected to a treatment of textual criticism. On the other hand, it is a book without an author, that has been treated in as many different ways as there are copyists of the manuscripts in which the text is preserved. The editor should, therefore, study each manuscript carefully and eliminate the additions made by the copyists. This textual criticism must result in the selection of one manuscript to serve as the unique basis of the edition. No 'corrections' or deviations from the original language and composition may be made, although what is lacking or what has been added or corrected, either on the basis of the manuscripts or by the editor's sound judgment, must be indicated. It is a method which presented itself to Professor Mahdi while he was working on the manuscripts.

He started to collect manuscripts of the so-called late Egyptian family (descending from the earlier corpus which is now lost). It proved to be possible to distinguish an Egyptian and a Syrian branch. Criticism of connecting and distinguishing readings was important in order to allocate each manuscript properly. At the same time, distinction had to be made between the old versions (*ummahāt*), which we do not know except for some titles and a number of stories, and the desired archetype (*nusḩat al-umm*). The composition of the Arabic text of the *1001 Nights*, as we know it, is estimated by Mahdi as having taken place not earlier than the 7th/14th century. He postulates a manuscript, *al-nusḩa al-dastūr*, to which all other manuscripts go back, but which does not itself exist anymore (if it ever existed in the first place and is not merely an abstraction for a certain phase in the history of the text). The Syrian and Egyptian branches, and a mixed tradition as well, are more or less reconstructed by Mahdi, again with the postulation of key-manuscript versions. One of the criteria used is the estimated age of a manuscript. With distinguishing variant readings the difference between the Syrian and Egyptian line of transmission is established; whenever they have peculiarities in common, these go back to the *dastūr*. Theoretically speaking, the editor had a free choice of readings whenever these two lines of transmission did not agree, but in fact he has chosen to present the Syrian tradition, with use of the Egyptian branch only if there is a serious flaw in the Syrian branch.

All this gives evidence of an enormous amount of collation and comparison of a great number of manuscripts. Numerous linguistic, paleographical and codicological difficulties had to be first recognized, and then tackled. The text that is, eventually, produced by Mahdi is as faithful a reproduction of this Syrian branch as possible. One final remark must be made, however. All manuscripts used by Professor Mahdi are preserved in European libraries. Are they really the only ones available, or is the manuscriptal basis on which Professor Mahdi builds his impressive edifice in

fact too shallow? In other words: was the selection of the manuscripts, even of those that were eventually not used at all, based on stemmatic considerations, or just on their easy availability?

#### CONCLUSION

I have summed up some of the rules of classical philology, with emphasis on its two central points of reasoning. These were: there are no autographs and the period between the author and the archetype is immensely long. Textual criticism, with its procedure of criticism of connecting readings (*Bindfehler*) and distinguishing readings (*Trennfehler*), is the answer to the problem posed by these two circumstances. The result of textual criticism is a stemma. The textbooks on textual criticism which we use, if we use them at all, are written from this perspective. I proceeded to show that these two presuppositions of classical philology are not equally valid for the philology of Middle Eastern languages. In addition I pointed out that the bibliography of Middle Eastern literatures is only in a beginning phase.

A number of examples of the transmission of Arabic texts, in which somehow the establishment of the stemma was not as simple as it would seem to be, followed. I mentioned some aspects of the criticism on the *Qur'ān* text and continued with a more or less anecdotal survey of the work done on three unique MSS of a text: Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma*, Usāma's Memoirs and the History of Egypt by 'Abd al-Laṭīf. Thereupon I briefly mentioned the problems connected with the edition of very large texts, with mention of al-Ṭabarī's Annals and, later, the *1001 Nights*. I have dwelled with some length upon problems connected with the edition of texts of which many manuscripts are preserved, and I have taken Ibn al-Akfānī's Encyclopedia and, again, the recent edition of the *1001 Nights* as a case in point. Finally I hinted, but not more than that, at the difficulties connected with texts which are transmitted from an oral tradition and mentioned in this connection the corpus of stories of the *1001 Nights* as an example.

It is clear from all these examples that establishing the stemma is not the easy thing our textbooks make us believe it is. One hardly ever sees a success in this field, which goes to show that the stemmatic procedure can seldom be conducted till the very end, that is by establishing a neat stemma, which is the final verdict on the history of a particular text. The title of my paper already contains an opinion. Had I had no doubt about the soundness and safety of the stemmatic method, I would not have questioned it, and would not have asked: is it fact or is it fiction? This opposition seems, I admit, somewhat artificial. I have tried, however, to question the uncritical adoption of a procedure developed in a certain field of scholarship

(classical studies) by another field of scholarship (Middle Eastern philology), where conditions are different. I have tried to demonstrate that it is seldom feasible in practice to adhere to the rigid rules of textual criticism as propounded by our textbooks<sup>37</sup>, whose authors have no eye for the rich palette of possibilities other than establishing a stemma.

Does this mean, then, that I totally reject the principles of stemmatization? Not as far as their theoretical value is concerned. The evaluation of variant readings is the philologist's only instrument and cannot but remain so. My argument is rather of a pedagogical nature. It is hardly ever possible to establish in practice a carefree and unstrained stemma. The editor of an Arabic text must know this and cannot but acquiesce in this. If, however, he believes without scepticism that which is said in the textbooks on textual criticism written for the students of classical languages he will, ultimately, lose his way in the labyrinth of, theoretically sound, considerations. With the help of a somewhat anecdotal treatment of a number of medieval Arabic texts I have tried, by advocating a more pragmatical approach, to give some counterweight to the theoretical approach, which must in most cases remain an unattainable ideal.

#### NOTES

\* This is the somewhat expanded version of my paper presented at the Symposium on Textual Tradition and the Editing of Persian and Turkish Texts, Leiden, 16-18 October 1986. Shortly after the conference new relevant materials became available to me. I have used these in this printed version. The study by D.W. Morray on Usāma b. Munqid came to my attention after I had completed the final version of this paper.

\*\* I am grateful to Professor H.J. de Jonge of Leiden University for giving me bibliographical advice, in the summer of 1986, on the textual criticism of the New Testament.

<sup>1</sup> *Textüberlieferung*, p. 209. For the application of the eclectic method to the textual criticism of the New Testament, see Aland & Aland, especially pp. 283, 293; Bruce M. Metzger, pp. 175-179: 'Eclecticism, or "Rational Criticism"', and pp. 209-210: 'Basic Criteria for the Evaluation of Variant Readings'.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Paul Maas, *Textkritik*.

<sup>3</sup> Mentioned only once in the *Qur'ān* (85:22). Al-Zamaḡṣārī's *al-Kaššaf* explains that it is preserved (*mahfūz*) from coming into the hands of the Satans, but al-Bayḏāwī omits this, explicitly explaining *mahfūz* as being preserved from textual corruption, *tahrīf*. The juxtaposition of these two explanations, while considering the dependence of al-Bayḏāwī on al-Zamaḡṣārī's *tafsīr*, produces, quite appropriately, the equation of textual corruption with the effect of satanic hands.

<sup>4</sup> Died 324/936, cf. *GAS* I, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Cod. Or. 927, see Voorhoeve, *Handlist*, p. 377.

<sup>6</sup> This is attested by the colophon, f. 138b.

<sup>7</sup> Here reference is made to the *Nouvelle édition revue et mise à jour* par E. Lévi-Provençal (3 vols), Leiden 1932. Vol. 2, pp. 326 ff.

<sup>8</sup> See the chronological list of editions and translations in my list of bibliographical references.

<sup>9</sup> Al-Samarrai (1983), p. 57: 'The edition of 'Abbās is the best one published so far; it contains several emendations of the text not to be found in the earlier editions.' If having new emendations is decisive for being a better edition, all previous editions were the 'best one published so far' until they were superseded by the next one. Al-Samarrai does not, of course, say that a better edition is a good edition. That may only be said of a text which is directly based on the MS(S) and for which all previous textual criticism has been taken into account. Iḥsān 'Abbās's edition is clearly not a critical edition in this sense since it was not made in that way, and it does not therefore distinguish itself, methodologically speaking, from its predecessors. In addition, may I be allowed to remark that al-Samarrai's is a surprisingly benign statement when one compares it to the numerous venomous attacks on (non-Arab) scholars which he has launched on several occasions in the past fifteen years or so. Iḥsān 'Abbās may truly be glad that he does not (by right of birth?) figure on al-Samarrai's hit list.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. f. 2a, line 3, and see the illustration. I include this illustration so that it can serve as a sort of litmus test for the degree of authenticity of future editions.

Not only in the case of Ibn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma*, but in many other editions as well, is it alarming to see what the preservation of the literary cultural heritage in the Arab world means in practice: rushing a text, which was hastily and unsystematically copied from a previous edition or from a MS which happened to be at hand, through the press and putting one's name on the title-page as the learned editor. The great majority of editions of medieval Arabic texts is entirely untrustworthy, which is a deplorable state of affairs.

<sup>11</sup> Pp. 15-23 of al-Samarrai's edition.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*, p. 18, note 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*, Introduction, pp. 22-3.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Samarrai, in an appendix to his edition, quotes 34 titles, taken from a list in al-Maqrīzī's *Kitāb al-Muqaffā*.

<sup>15</sup> Schen, p. 222.

<sup>16</sup> See the chronological survey in my list of references.

<sup>17</sup> See the cases reported by R.H. Saunders.

<sup>18</sup> *The Eastern key. Kitāb al-Ifādah wa'l-I'tibār of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baḡhdādī*. Translated into English by Kamal Hafuth Zand and John A. and Ivy E. Videan. London 1965.

<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 284-5.

<sup>20</sup> See: M.J. de Goeje's introduction (1901).

<sup>21</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. xxii ff.

<sup>22</sup> See for further and fuller details my articles and book on Ibn al-Akfānī.

<sup>23</sup> It is, in fact, this failure that prompted me to investigate the validity of the stemmatic method. The present paper is the result of that research.

<sup>24</sup> See the catalogue by V. Rosen, p. 106, No. 457.

<sup>25</sup> *Al-Wāfī bi-al-Wafayāt*, vol. 2 (ed. S. Dederling, Istanbul 1949), p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> See A.J. Arberry, *Second Supplementary Hand-list*, p. 36, No. 220 (a).

<sup>27</sup> See the catalogue by Derenbourg and Renaud, vol. II/3, pp. 81-2.

<sup>28</sup> See Fu'ād Sayyid in his catalogue of microfilms of the Arab League, vol. IV, pp. 79-80.

<sup>29</sup> See the *Indices* by Salemann and Rosen, p. 26.

<sup>30</sup> See the catalogue by De Slane, p. 409.

<sup>31</sup> See the catalogue by Mach, p. 4, No. 13.

<sup>32</sup> See the catalogue by M. al-'Arabī al-Ḳaṭṭābī, volume 4, pp. 124-5, No. 251.

<sup>33</sup> Part 1, (*muqaddima*), p. 13.

<sup>34</sup> Part 1. Arabic text (Leiden 1984), p. viii: '... not even a fragment of a *1001 Nights* story has survived from that earlier period.'

<sup>35</sup> See Nabia Abbott, 'A Ninth-Century Fragment ...', especially pp. 163-4 on the successive steps in the evolution of the collection of stories.

<sup>36</sup> Part 1 (Arabic text), *muqaddima*, especially pp. 24-34.

<sup>37</sup> A notable exception is Martin L. West, *Textual Criticism* (1973). West admits the existence of an open recension (his term), that is when the 'manuscripts in which worthwhile variants (other than emendations) appear for the first time, are not related perspicuously and do not allow us to construct an archetype' (pp. 37-8).

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