The spectacular find of fragments of Qur’ān MSS in a forgotten depository in the Great Mosque of Ṣanʿā (see Masāḥif Ṣanʿā, the catalogue of the exhibition held in the Kuwait National Museum in 1985 of a selection of the Qur’ān MSS discovered between two walls of the Great Mosque in Ṣanʿā, and also my review of it [in: MME I (1986), 123-4]), now some twenty years ago, has been one of the reasons for the renewed interest, both in and outside the Islamic world, in the early transmission of the text of the Qur’ān and in the codicology of old Qur’ānic fragments. The beginning of the scholarly assessment of the Ṣanʿā leaves has already led to the publication by H.-C. Graf von Bothmer of a codicological and art historical description of one of the most spectacular finds, the illustrated fragment1. The description of the collection as a whole, together with the restoration project, which under international sponsorship has been in progress for a number of years will ensure the physical survival of the MSS and their study by future generations. The question might be raised whether more finds as the Ṣanʿā discovery can be expected. The answer would be that it is unlikely that a collection of fragments of the same size and importance would be discovered. Ṣanʿā’s great mosque may reveal more of its secrets if more restoration work and repairs are being done, but it is improbable that similar finds will be discovered outside the Great Mosque, since there are no other buildings in the Yemen which have been a point of assembly for Yemeni Muslims for so long a time and which have served in the same way as a depository of discarded fragments.

The following contains an account of the discovery and my description of a number of Qur’ānic fragments from Dawrān in North Yemen, which may not be as ancient as the finds from Ṣanʿā, but which nevertheless retain a certain value because of the variety of scripts which they display. In the course of 1985 I met Mrs. Marianne Huurman, who showed to me a number of Qur’ānic fragments which she had found in Dawrān in 1984. She told me then (and later, in her letter of 12 January 1990), how she had found these.
had lost (fig. 6). He also told me that the inhabitants of
the refugee village did not, for the time being, intend to
return to the old town and rebuild it. They still vividly
remembered the horrors of the shaking earth and the
falling stones, and now felt safer in their sanāḍiq
(fig. 7). To this I may add that the changing socio-
economical circumstances in the Yemen no longer
necessitate rebuilding the town in exactly the same
shape and on the same location as it had been before.
Dawrān’s elevated position on the mountain had no
doubt come about a long time ago, by strategic
considerations. Nowadays, people in the Yemen prefer
to live at less distance from their fields and closer to the
roads. I never visited Dawrān again, so I do not know
what the Dawrānīs have now chosen, six years after the
earthquake: to restore the ruined old town or to build a
new town in place of the sanāḍiq, or to still be
accommodated as refugees.’

‘I continued my visit to the ruins. In the mosque,
pieces of alabaster which had been used in the windows
lay on the ground. Also on the ground I saw fragments
of paper in Arabic script. I took a few of these but it
proved to be impossible to reassemble the pages into
complete volumes or parts. They were all Qur’āns.

Only near the side-wall lay what seemed to be a few
complete copies, under the niches from where they
apparently had fallen. Their condition was poor, since
they probably had lain there already for almost a year,
during the rainy season and partly buried under piles of
rubble and stones. I collected some of the fragments,
although I felt a bit embarrassed doing so. I was in
So far Mrs. Huurman's story. The papers in Arabic script from the ruins of Dawrân's mosque proved to be a collection of thirty-four Qur'ânic fragments (and a few other materials) showing a great variety of styles of writing and page layout. The fragments may have originated from a depository similar to, but not as ancient as, the one in the Great Mosque of Šan'â’. That could explain the fact that there were only Qur'ânic fragments, and no fragments at all from other texts. Another argument in favour of this is the fact that most fragments were in a bad condition, possibly so even before the earthquake destroyed Dawrân. That there existed in the world of Islam several prescriptions and practices concerning the disposal of worn-out sacred books was recently summed up by Joseph Sadan in his article 'Genizah and Genizah-like Practices in Islamic and Jewish Traditions. Customs Concerning the Disposal of Worn-Out Sacred Books in the Middle Ages. According to an Ottoman Source', in: Bibliotheca Orientalis 43 (1986). 36-58.

In the following I will describe the Dawrân fragments briefly.

1. Three consecutive leaves from a Bihârî Qur'ân. Together they contain the text of Qur'ân II. 198 - II. 223. The leaves measure 550 × 330 mm (text area 405 × 218) and contain 17 lines to the page. The entire Qur'ân must have been a monumental piece of work. Lines 1, 9 and 17 are written in a larger script, which is a common feature, both in Bihârî and Yemeni manuscripts. The text area is delimited by a single blue and a double red frame. The text is written in black ink, with shallow vocalisation, also in black ink. The āyât are separated by gold discs with black outline and blue dots. Between the lines are abbreviations concerning the pronunciation, written in red ink. See figure 8.

The occurrence of these leaves, which must have been part of an impressive set of Bihârî agzâ', in the Yemen is perhaps not so remarkable as it appears to be at first sight or thought. It is not strange to find Indian materials, be it Qur'ân MSS or any other product of human manufacture, in South Arabia. That part of the Arabian peninsula has always had close connections with the Indian subcontinent. In fact, the area stretching from Somalia via the southern shores of Arabia and Iran to present-day Pakistan is in many ways a cultural, economical and demographical continuum. It has struck me that some Yemeni Qur'âns have a graphical appearance which suggest a stylistic relationship with the Bihârî Qur'âns. This needs more research, however, than I wanted to carry out in the scope of the present study. It may be mentioned in this respect that in the Library of the University of Leiden there is a Qur'ân MS (registered as Cod.Or. 20.530) which originates from the Yemen and which shows, in my opinion, influences of the Bihârî style of writing.
The Dawràn Qur’āns Nos. 2 and 34 (see below) could also have a stylistic relationship with the Bihāri way of writing. No doubt, more examples of this influence or connection may be found.

2. Two fragments from a Qur’ān, containing parts of the 9th and 10th guz’ (ff. 1-38a: VII, 89 - IX, 93) and the 17th guz’ (ff. 39a-42b: XXI, 92 - XXII, 18). From the illuminated page at the beginning of the first fragment it is clear that the entire text was divided into a number of separate volumes, with more than one guz’ per volume and with an illuminated double page at the beginning. At the end (f. 38a) is a page with a sort of colophon, without specific details; however. MS on paper; watermark: crown with a six-pointed star on top; 42 ff.; 205 x 150 mm (150 x 105); 9 lines to the page; black ink; a yaát divided by ochre discs; text set in a black and double red frame; usually quires consisting of 4 leaves; catchwords on every verso page; without binding; f. 38b originally blank, but now filled with scribbling in several hands.

3. Fragment from a Qur’ān, containing part of the 15th guz’ (XVII, 7 - XVIII, 63), with a lacuna of one leaf between ff. 4 and 5 (missing: XVII, 30-36). MS on paper; watermark: anchor (ff. 25-26); 29 ff.: 200 x 140 mm (135 x 85); 7 lines to the page; black ink; a yaát divided by ochre discs; text set in a black and double red frame; simply executed sûra heading on f. 17b; quires consisting of 4 sheets; without binding.

4. Fragment from a Qur’ān, containing part of the 15th guz’ (XVII, 16 - XVIII, 49). MS on paper; unidentified watermark; 12 ff.: 205 x 150 mm (155 x 90); 11 lines to the page; black ink; a yaát divided by red dots; text set in a single red frame; simply executed sûra heading on f. 8b; quires consisting of 4 sheets; without binding.

5. Fragment from a Qur’ān, containing part of the 24th guz’ (XXXIX, 69 - XLI, 11). MS on paper; watermark: shield with crescent with face; 4 ff.: 220 x 160 mm (180 x 100); 18 lines to the page; black ink; a yaát divided by dividers made of red dots; text set in a double red frame; no sûra headings on ff. 1a and 4b; on f. 2a are simply executed marginal ornaments; catchwords on every verso page; without binding; on f. 3b, a later hand has added XL, 66 in the margin, since the copyist had forgotten to include it in the text, probably due to homoiooteleuton.

6. Fragment from a Qur’ān, containing part of the 14th guz’ (XV, 11 - XVI, 92). MS on paper; watermark: three crescents; 6 ff.: 220 x 160 mm (180 x 95); 17 lines to the page; black ink; a yaát divided by dividers made of red dots; text set in a double red frame; no sûra headings on f. 3a; catchwords on every verso page; without binding; in the margin of f. 4a a later hand has added XVI, 33-35, since this had been forgotten by the copyist, probably due to homoiooteleuton; on f. 6a the same goes for XVI, 78-81.

7. Fragment from a Qur’ān, containing part of the 14th guz’ (XVI, 31 - 92). MS on paper; watermark: three crescents; 10 ff.: 200 x 150 mm (140 x 90); 7 lines to the page; black ink; script of calligraphic quality; ihmâl marks are used; a yaát divided by ochre discs with black outline and red dots; text set in a double red frame; without binding. See figure 9.

8. Fragment from a Qur’ān, containing the latter part of the 3rd guz’ (III, 18 - 91). MS on paper; unidentified watermark: 8 ff.: 205 x 150 mm (150 x 95); 13 lines to the page; black ink; script of calligraphic quality; a yaát divided by dividers made of red dots; without binding; on f. 8b is the colophon of the 3rd guz’, which does not contain any specific information, apart from a short prayer for the copyist (kātib) and manufacturer (āmil), and also for the reader and whoever prays for them. Kātib and āmil are here apparently considered as one and the same person (and different from the reader) as becomes clear from the use of the dualis in the Arabic text in the colophon. See figure 10.

9. Fragment from a Qur’ān, containing part of the 11th and 12th guz’ (X, 98 - XI, 109). MS on paper; watermark: three crescents; 8 ff.: 210 x 155 mm (155 x 105); 9 lines to the page; black ink with interlinear pronunciation marks in red; script of calligraphic quality; a yaát divided by dividers made of red dots; without binding; in the margins are several indicators of the aqzâ’ and their subdivisions, set in simple ornamentation; catchwords on every verso page. See figure 11.

10. Two fragments from the same Qur’ān, containing parts of the 7th (ff. 1-4: VI, 68-101) and the 29th guz’ (f. 5: XXVI, 49 - 85). MS on paper; 5 ff.: 205 x 150 mm (150 x 100); 11 lines to the page; black ink; a yaát divided by ochre discs with black outline and red dots; catchwords on every verso page; without binding.
11. Fragment from a Qurʾān, containing parts of the 21st ẓūl ṭabīb (XXXI, 1 - 30).
MS on paper; 4 ff.; 210 × 160 mm (150 × 100); 7 lines to the page; black ink, with interlinear abbreviations concerning the pronunciation in red ink; the word Allāh is written in red; ẓā‘īt divided by ochre discs with black outline and red dots; text set in a double red frame; ẓā‘īt divided by ochre discs with black outline and red dots; text set in a double red frame; without binding.

12. Fragment from a Qurʾān, containing part of the 26th ẓūl ṭabīb (XLVII, 8 - 38).
MS on paper; 2 ff.; 220 × 160 mm (170 × 110); 13 lines to the page; black ink; ẓā‘īt divided by ochre discs with black outline; text set in a double red frame; without binding.

13. Fragments from a Qurʾān, containing parts of the 11th ẓūl ṭabīb (IX, 94-95 and IX, 118-120). The title-page of the 11th ẓūl ṭabīb is preserved, and from this it can be concluded that the fragments originate from a Qurʾān which was executed in 15 bound ẓūl ṭabīb.
MS on paper; watermark: three crescents; 2 ff.; 200 × 145 mm (150 × 95); 7 lines to the page; black ink with outlines on several of the letters in red and ochre; ẓā‘īt divided by dividers made of ochre and red elements; text set in a double black frame which is sometimes filled with ochre; without binding.
On f. 1a (the title-page of the ẓūl ṭabīb) is a long waqf-note. The text begins with an enumeration of the three things by which a man survives: a gift, like a Qurʾān MS from which recitation is done, good offspring which prays for him and, finally, knowledge which is profitable to others. The name of the waqf may be read as al-sayyād Ahmad b. ʾAbd al-Rahmān b. Sinār [?], al-Qaraḍī [?], from Qaryat al-Burg [?]. The beneficiaries of the waqf are his children, and then the other inhabitants of the village. The note is dated 1151/1738-9. See figure 12.

14. Fragment from a Qurʾān, containing part of the 14th ẓūl ṭabīb (XV, 20-52).
MS on paper; watermark: simple motif made of curved lines; 2 ff.; 200 × 145 mm (150 × 90); 8 lines to the page; black ink; ẓā‘īt divided by dividers made of ochre with black outline and red elements; text set in a double black frame; without binding.

15. Fragment from a Qurʾān, containing part of the 14th ẓūl ṭabīb (XV, 66-87).
MS on paper; unidentified corner-mark, possibly a monogram; 1 f.; 200 × 150 mm (140 × 90); 9 lines to the page; black ink; ẓā‘īt divided by dividers made of ochre with green and red elements; text set in a double black frame; without binding.

16. Fragment from a Qurʾān, containing part of the 9th ẓūl ṭabīb (IX, 65-69).
MS on paper; possibly indigenous paper, and the fragment gives an old impression; 1 f.; 220 × 165 mm (190 × 120); 9 lines to the page; black ink; script of calligraphic quality; between the lines are abbreviations concerning the pronunciation, written in red; ẓā‘īt divided by gold discs with outline in red; without binding. See figure 13.

17. Fragment from a Qurʾān, containing part of the 16th ẓūl ṭabīb (XIX, 49-60).
MS on paper; 1 f.; 210 × 155 mm (155 × 100); 11 lines to the page; black ink; interlinear abbreviations concerning the pronunciation: ẓā‘īt divided by black discs with red elements; text set in a double black frame; without binding.

18. Fragment from a Qurʾān, containing part of the 1st ẓūl ṭabīb (II, 25-27).
MS on paper; unidentified watermark; 1 f.; 220 × 160 mm (160 × 100); 8 lines to the page; black ink; catchword on the verso page; interlinear abbreviations concerning the pronunciation: ẓā‘īt divided by dividers made of ochre and red dots; text set in a black and a double red frame; without binding. See figure 14.

19. Fragment from a Qurʾān, containing part of the 7th ẓūl ṭabīb (VI, 54-68).
MS on paper; 1 f.; 200 × 150 mm (160 × 110); 11 lines to the page; black ink; a system of red and yellow signs is used to indicate the pronunciation or recitation; ẓā‘īt divided by discs made of ochre with a black outline and a dot in the centre; without binding. See figure 15.

20. Damaged fragment from a Qurʾān, containing part of the 28th ẓūl ṭabīb (LXI, 11 - LXII, 10).
MS on paper; 1 f.; 270 × 175 mm (220 × 120); 19 lines to the page; every now and then a line of text is written in a larger script, apparently in order to create an attractive layout (see for the same feature Dawran fragment No. 1); black ink with rubrics; simply executed sūrah headings; ẓā‘īt divided by discs in red ink;
21. **Fragment from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 1st ġuz' (II. 1-17).**

MS on paper; 1 f.: 215 × 130 mm (175 × 115); 16 lines to the page; black ink with rubrics; recto page with beginning of sūrat al-Baqara is illuminated; āyāt divided by discs in black ink with red elements; without binding.

22. **Fragment from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 17th ġuz' (XXI. 1-6).**

MS on paper; 1 f.: 260 × 165 mm (195 × 95); 11 lines to the page; black ink with rubrics; written in a script of calligraphic quality; the first line of text is written in a larger script; interlinear abbreviations concerning the pronunciation; recto page is the title-page of the 17th ġuz'; from the title-page and the waqf-note it becomes clear that the present fragment originates from a set of 15 volumes of two āqčā each; āyāt divided by discs in ochre ink with black outline and red dots; part of the paper has disappeared, with some loss of text; on the verso side, above the text, is a waqf-note, linking this Qur'ān to the mosque of Dawrān; without binding. See figure 16.

23. **Fragment from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 17th ġuz' (LI. 13 - LII. 3).**

MS on paper; 1 f.: 230 × 165 mm (175 × 110); 17 lines to the page; black ink; āyāt divided by discs in black ink written over the text; without binding.

24. **Fragment from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 1st ġuz' (II. 96-111).**

MS on paper; 1 f.: 195 × 140 mm (150 × 110); 14 lines to the page; black ink; āyāt divided by discs in black ink with red elements; interlinear abbreviations concerning the pronunciation; text on the verso page is set in a double red frame; without binding.

25. **Damaged fragment from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 29th ġuz' (LXXIII. 6-20).**

MS on paper; 1 f.: 175 × 140 mm (145 × 95); 9 lines to the page; black ink; āyāt divided by small discs in red; text set in a black and a double red frame; without binding.

26. **Fragment from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 27th ġuz' (LII. 10-35).**

MS on paper; 1 f.: 200 × 145 mm (165 × 100); 12 lines to the page; black ink; āyāt divided by discs in black and red; in the margin of the verso page is a medallion containing the indication of the quarter of the ġuz'; text set in a black and a red frame; without binding.

27. **Quire from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 7th ġuz' (V. 106 - VI. 93).**

MS on paper; 10 f.: 160 × 110 mm (140 × 80); 15 lines to the page; black ink; āyāt occasionally divided by red signs, but mostly by a sign in black ink which resembles the Arabic five; on several pages marginal corrections of scribal errors have been written; text set in a black and a red frame; a later hand has added the sūra headings on the top of each recto page; without binding.

28. **Fragment from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 16th ġuz' (XIX. 25-33).**

MS on paper; 1 f.: 150 × 105 mm (115 × 75); 9 lines to the page; black ink with use of red outline on some of the letters; āyāt divided by a floral ornament in ochre with three dots in it in red; text is provided with ihmāl marks; interlinear abbreviations concerning the pronunciation; without binding.

29. **Fragment from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 14th ġuz' (XV. 85 - XVI. 13).**

MS on paper; watermark: crown; 4 ff.: 150 × 100 mm (100 × 70); 7 lines to the page; black ink with rubrics; āyāt divided by ochre discs with red outline; simply executed sūra heading on f. 2b; the word Allāh and the šahāda are written in red; without binding. See figure 17.

30. **Fragment from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 33rd and 34th ġuz' (XXXVII. 1- XLI. 7).**

MS on paper; 68 ff.: 150 × 105 mm (90 × 60); 7 lines to the page; black ink with rubrics; letters are occasionally outlined in red; āyāt divided by three red dots; simply executed sūra headings on ff. 16a, 28b, 47b, 67b, written in red; interlinear abbreviations in red ink concerning the pronunciation; without binding, but traces of the back are still visible.

31. **Fragment from a Qur'ān, containing part of the 3rd and the whole of the 4th ġuz' (III. 40 - IV. 23).**

MS on paper; watermark: crowned coat of arms (e.g. f. 6); 15 ff.: 270 × 195 mm (225 × 130); 13 lines to the page; black ink; occasional use of ihmāl marks; āyāt divided by an ochre disc with black outline and three red dots; simply executed sūra heading on f. 12a, written in red; interlinear abbreviations, signs and words in red ink concerning the pronunciation; on f. 14b is the colophon marking the end of the 4th ġuz'.
occasional occurrence of catchwords on the verso pages; Oriental leather binding with flap; a rather recent hand has written the sûra titles in the top margins of the recto sides of many of the leaves; waqf-notes mentioning the destination of the MS as the mosque of the town of Dawrán on ff. 1b, 2a, 13a; also waqf-notes with specific information on leaves pasted to the inside of the boards; the word waqf is written above the text on a number of pages; profuse scribbling on the leaves pasted inside the boards. See figure 18.


MS on paper; at least three copyists are involved and they have used several types of paper: 1. ff.: 155 × 115 mm; the work of the three copyists is distributed as follows: 1. ff. 1b-9b: text area 100 × 60 mm. 15-17 lines to the page, occasional use of red elements as dividers between the āyāt, text set in a double red frame, sometimes also in a black frame, catchwords on the verso pages; 2. ff. 10a-89b, watermark: three crescents; counter-mark: FR (f. 82), text area 110 × 75 mm. 13 lines to the page, ihmāl signs are used, vowels appear to have been added separately, occasional use of red ink (for a frame or sûra heading), open discs in the same ink as the text are used as dividers between the āyāt, catchwords on the verso pages; 3. ff. 90a-177a. text area 120 × 75 mm, 13 lines to the page, ihmāl signs are used, occasionally the text is not set in a frame, catchwords on the verso pages; Oriental leather binding with traces of a flap.

On f. 177a is the colophon of this first volume of the set. The copyist of the aḡzā' 1-10 is mentioned: al-sayyid Šāhār b. Sālih al-hagī, and the copyist of aḡzā' 11-15 mentions himself: al-sayyid ‘Āfī b. Ahmad b. ‘Abdallāh ... [?] b. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Ḥišrīhīm b. ‘Abdallāh b. M. al-Mu‘āfī al-Lāhimī. This information does not exactly fit with the evidence of the MS itself, as the last-mentioned copyist already starts working in the 8th ʿuḍ’ (VI. 148). The person who commissioned the Qur’ān is also mentioned: al-sayyid M. b. M. b. ʿAbdallāh b. Šamāl b. Yaḥyā b. Ḥasayn al-Lāhimī. On ff. 177b-177b is a fragment of a story, not written by one of the previously mentioned copyists. See figure 19.

33. Small-sized Qur’ān of which the beginning is missing (I. 1 - II. 50).

MS on paper; several hundreds of unnumbered leaves; 100 × 70 mm (90 × 55); 16 lines to the page; black ink, sûra headings in red; text set in a double red frame; leather binding, of which only the front board and the back are preserved.

On the last page is the colophon. A date of completion of the MS is mentioned there: 17 labī ʿ1111/1699, and also the name of the person who commissioned the MS, though this is hardly legible now: sīdī al-ṣayyīk al-ḡālī al-ṣarīf al-Dārin ...[?].

34. Qur’ān of which aḡzā' 1-2, part of 3, and 28-30 are now missing. Also a few lacunae in the middle of the MS, between ff. 73-74 (VIII. 66 - IX. 15), ff. 195-196 (XXIX. 59 - XXX. 1).

MS on paper: 271 ff.: 215 × 160 mm (170 × 105); 14 lines to the page; black ink, with occasional outline in red ink; interlinear abbreviations concerning the pronunciation; occasionally lines are written in a much greater script which is sometimes filled with ochre colouring; this and the ornate marginal indications often give the pages of the MS a wild appearance; ihmāl signs are used: sûra headings usually in red ink; āyāt are dived by ochre discs with black outline and usually with four red dots; text set in a double red frame, and yet another, outer, frame; without binding, but traces of it are still visible. See figure 20.

35. A leather binding with flap and simple blind tooling, containing one blank flyleaf and one flyleaf with a taʿwil of the āyāt al-kursī (Qur’ān II. 255). The binding measures 145 × 95 mm. The insides of the boards are pasted with leaves from a small-sized Qur’ān (text area per page: 70 × 50 mm).

36. Also found were two fragments of bindings and a fragment of paper, probably a flyleaf.

Firstly, there is a front board made of leather with blind tooling and a coloured medallion, measuring 200 × 140 mm, with the seal of Solomon drawn several times on the leaf which is pasted to the inside of the board.

Secondly, there is an end board made of leather with blind tooling, measuring 205 × 145 mm, with scribbling (mostly the basmāla) on the leaf which is pasted to the inside of the board.

The fragment of the flyleaf measures 205 × 125 mm and has texts (prayers) on both sides.
Fig. 8. Dawrān fragment No. 1. Leaf from a large Bihārī Qur'ān (probably India, 15th century), showing II. 206-213. Reduced.
Fig. 9. Dawrân fragment No. 7. ff. 5b-6a. Yemeni Qur'ān. showing XVI. 62-69.
Fig. 10. Dawrān fragment No. 8, f. 8b. Yemeni Qur'ān, showing III, 90-91, and the colophon marking the end of the 3rd guz'.
Fig. 11. Dawrān fragment No. 9, f. 1b. Yemeni Qur’ān, showing X.106 - XI.3 with heading of sūra XI (Hûd), and the marking of the beginning of the 5th guzʿ in the margin.
Fig. 12. Dawrán fragment No. 13. Yemeni Quràn, showing the title-page of the 6th volume out of a set of 15 volumes, therefore introducing the 11th got. Also showing the Wadjijja, dated 1151/1739.
Fig. 13. Dawrán fragment No. 16, recto side. Old Yemeni Qur'ān on Middle-Eastern paper, showing IX, 65-67.
Fig. 14. Dawrân fragment No. 18, recto side. Yemeni Qurʾān, showing II. 25-26. In the margin an ornament with the word ʿumm.
Fig. 15. دَارِنَانَوُهُانِق. لَوْأَسَمَّيْتَ لَدَعَلْتُكُمَّ عَدْلَةً، إِنْ تَأْكُلُوا مَنْ فَتَرِكْتُمْ مِنْهُ إِلَّا مَنْ فَتَرِكْتُهُ مَنْ لَعَلْتُ وَقَّعَتْ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ نُورُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ ضُرِّعَ لِلَّدَمَّائِنَ. (16:54-60).
Fig. 16. Dāwān Fragment No. 22, verso side. Yemeni Qur'ān showing XXI, 1-6. From the title-page on the recto side (not shown) and the vāqīf note above the text it becomes clear that this is the first volume of a series of 15 volumes of 2 agzā each, therefore showing the beginning of the 17th gr. Dāwān’s mosque is mentioned in the vāqīf note.
Fig. 17. Dauran fragment No. 29, ff. 2b-3a. Yemeni Qur'an, showing XV.99 - XVI.5. In the margin of f. 2b is a marking rub'.
Fig. 18. Dawrán fragment No. 31, f. 2a. Yemeni Qur'ān, showing III, 55-64. Above the text is a waqf-note in which Dawrán’s mosque is mentioned.
Fig. 19. Dawrān fragment No. 32, ff. 176b-177a. Yemeni Qur'ān, showing XVIII, 65-74. On f. 177a is the colophon marking the end of the first volume (of a set of two volumes), with a colophon in which two copyists and the person who commissioned the MS are mentioned by name.
Fig. 20. Dawrān fragment No. 34, ff. 69b-70a. Yemeni Qurʿān, showing VIII.198 - IX.7. In the margin of f. 69b an ornament with ʿṣalṭa (for VIII.206), and in the margin of f. 70a an ornament with ʿrūḥ. 
Arabic Manuscripts in distress: The Frankfurter Facsimile Series

The Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science in Frankfurt am Main (Federal Republic of Germany), which is connected to the Johan Wolfgang Goethe University in the same town, has published since around 1984 an impressive number of series of books as well as a specialized journal, the Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften. The director of the institute, to whom we owe all these commendable activities, is Professor Fuat Sezgin. He is, needless to say, well known as the author of the indispensable standard work Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums, which Messrs. Brill of Leiden began publishing in 1967 and of which nine impressive volumes have since appeared. Professor Sezgin's Geschichte focusses on the written output of Arab authors till approximately the year 1000 AD and provides its readers, often for the first time, with extensive bibliographical information on collections in the Orient which have either not yet been described or, if so, not adequately. The student of early Arabic literature is sometimes tantalized by the inaccessibility of the very MSS of whose existence he first learned in Professor Sezgin's work. It is therefore greatly to be applauded that Professor Sezgin decided, a few years ago, to publish a series of facsimile editions of important Arabic manuscripts. And, it must be added, this has been done at a remarkable and imitable pace indeed. Up to 1989, some 42 titles in 53 volumes have appeared in Series C, Facsimile Editions, of the Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science. As the series mainly contains reproductions from MSS in the well-guarded libraries of Turkey, Professor Sezgin is the more to be thanked. A quick count of the origins of the original MSS reproduced up to now in the series shows the following provenances:

Bursa, İl Halk Kütüphanesi: 1 MS.
Damascus, Zahiriya Library: 1 MS.
Edirne, Selimiye Kütüphanesi: 1 MS.
El Escorial Library: 1 MS.
Istanbul, Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi: 2 MSS.
Istanbul, Koprülü Kütüphanesi: 3 MSS.
Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi: 1 MS.
Istanbul, Süleymaniyê Kütüphanesi: 20 MSS.
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayi Müzesi: 12 MSS.
Istanbul, Universite Kütüphanesi: 1 MS.
Leiden, University Library: 2 MSS.
Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek: 1 MS.

The users of the series will be able to avoid time-consuming detours through the Turkish bureaucratic channels by using the facsimile edition instead of the original MS. However, this works only if two precondi-
tions are fulfilled: The facsimile edition must be an exact replica of the original, and each volume should contain a good codicological description of the original MS. Only then can a facsimile edition take the place of the original MS, which, of course, always remains the ultimate reference for any substantial research. In the following I have laid down my experiences while comparing a number of the facsimile editions with the original manuscripts. This research, I am afraid to say, has resulted for me in a severe disappointment with respect to the soundness of Professor Sezgin's facsimile project. I will let a few of the manuscripts speak for themselves.

I compared MS Ayasofya 3036, which is kept in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul, with volume 33, part 1, of the Frankfurter series (Frankfurt 1986). This volume contains the reproduction of the Ayasofya MS 3036 which is in fact a small part only of what is left of the multi-volume History of Aleppo by Kamâl al-Dîn Ibn al-'Adîm (d. 660/1262, cf. GAL G I. 332), entitled Buğyat al-Talab fî Ta'rik Halab, aptly translated in the edition as 'Everything Desirable about the History of Aleppo'. Further volumes are planned for publication, but these must be made on the basis of manuscripts which are kept in other libraries: the Ayasofya collection only contains this volume, which is considered as a sort of geographical introduction to the Buğyat al-Talab, written by Ibn al-'Adîm after he had completed his main work. The Ayasofya MS is said to be Ibn al-'Adîm's autograph, but for the moment I have my doubts about that. The facsimile edition contains 514 pp. of Arabic text in facsimile and 4 pp. (in both English and Arabic) of introduction by Fuat Sezgin. The volume is published in the typography and the technical specifications which are uniform for the entire series.

The first surprise is at the very beginning. The original manuscript contains 4 pages before the beginning of the text, which are filled by notes of one of the owners, M. b. M. b. M. al-Ḥamāwī al-Hanāfī, who also wrote an interesting note on his qirā'a or riwāya (directly from al-Maqṣūrāt!) of this MS on p. 5 of the manuscript (= p. 1 of the edition) and other notes dated Cairo 856/1452 (ed. pp. 1 and 51) and Cairo 842/1438-39 (ed. p. 11). These four preliminary pages have been left out without any justification. Among other things they contain a Fasl fi Fawā'id al-Ta'rikh, in which the owner mentions the gist of what the reader may expect to find in the main text. While going through the original manuscript and the edition, I saw that pp. 14 and 15 of the MS (between pp. 10-11 of the edition), which contain notes in the same hand, had been skipped as well by the editor. The texts on all these lacking pages are admittedly not by Ibn al-'Adîm and that is probably why the editor has omitted them. Just the same I would have liked to have been told about their existence, so that I could have decided for myself whether or not they are worthwhile reading.
Another surprise, from the very start, is the pagination of the MS. This has been altered in the edition. On p. 4 of his introduction, Professor Sezgin says: 'The sequence of folios with their older pagination has been retained by us '. The sequence of the folios may be unchanged, although the aforementioned 6 pages are missing, but not all the previously applied number systems. When we look at the MS we see that it is, firstly, foliated in Arabic, with folio numbers in the upper left corner of each recto page. These have more often than not been wholly or partly removed by the facsimilist. Then the pages have, probably at a later date, been numbered in Arabic, with numbers which are usually written in the outer margins, somewhere halfway down the page. About half of these, usually those on the verso pages, have been removed by the facsimilist as well. Professor Sezgin has, however, cast over the text a new system of pagination, which is printed on top of each page. In this new pagination, no account is given of the older numbering systems, and the reader is left to his wits when he sees unexplained gaps in the older pagination.

Another difference between original manuscript and edition is that the aspect of some of the openings of the MS has occasionally undergone radical changes. Sometimes the marginal notes on one page are aligned with the first line of text on the opposite page. This gives an extremely unbalanced impression. One may observe this on pp. 118-119, 132-133, 152-153, 164-165, 376-377 of the edition. Needless to say, in the MS the blocks of main text are always exactly aligned to one another. Another curious feature is the fact that many lines of text, as represented in the edition, appear to be written not in a straight, but in a somewhat concave line. The MS has, of course, only straight lines and one cannot escape the conclusion that the MS was too tightly bound to allow proper photographing. Now, all these remarks are of an entirely formal nature only. Of course I would have liked Professor Sezgin to have given me a somewhat detailed description of the physical appearance of the MS (not even the dimensions of the MS are given, let alone other codicological information which some scholars consider as important), but these lesser inconveniences should not affect our appreciation of Ibn al-`Adîm's text itself as it is presented in facsimile by Professor Sezgin.

Alas, publishing in facsimile is not everybody's cup of tea, and a number of mishaps have befallen Ibn al-`Adîm's text as well, thereby inexcusably affecting the contents and seriously impairing the value of the edition. We will mention a few of these accidents. The inner margins of the pages on the right hand have, generally speaking, suffered most in this edition. On quite a number of occasions, words or even entire phrases have become optically distorted, and are therefore hardly legible. Sometimes they have even been wholly or partly cut off. The reader has simply to do without them, autograph or not. This phenomenon may be observed in varying degrees (to give but a few references: on pp. 54, 59, 156, 168, 174, 183, 208, 246, 270, 352, 400, but by no means on those pages alone). Another example of incomplete rendering: On p. 59 of the edition the remnants of a word ending in -tu may be seen in the inner margin. The MS has here on f. 31a (= p. 63): *u bîr tu*, which could be read without difficulty as it is written in the clear hand of the copyist. One more example: On p. 54 (= MS f. 28b or p. 58) line 6 ends abruptly like this: *Qâla li` Ali b. Abî Bakr* (Abî Bakr said to me), but then the contents of the communication by this 'Ali b. Abî Bakr is not revealed. Fault of the author or copyist? Wrong! The sentence is continued in the margin of the manuscript and would appear to read: *أغروي وجلبه يعني أن تاكية كان معداً منا* [\.\.\.]. I must admit that I am not sure of the reading nor of the interpretation of these nine words, but I maintain that they are found in the MS but somehow have disappeared from the facsimile edition. The most saddening discovery, however, in this facsimile volume (if we may still call it that) is the unexplained disappearance of two entire pages from the original manuscript. Between pp. 437-438 of the edition, the MS has yet ff. 226b-227a. Professor Sezgin could have discovered this lacuna in the edition if he had only looked at the page numbers in the MS, but he apparently does not read, or even look at, the texts of which he is the editor. In the edition, the Arabic pagination of the MS jumps from 439 to 442. For the benefit of the subscribers to Professor Sezgin's series we herewith publish these 'missing' pages. I may be allowed to quote in this respect a line from Professor Sezgin' preface to another of his facsimile editions (volume 42, preface, note 6) and apply it to what I have found in his own editorial work in this volume: 'I abstain from detailed appraisal of the major and minor errors contained in this edition, leaving the verdict to the reader [...].'

It will be understandable that at this stage of research my initial enthusiasm and admiration for Professor Sezgin's facsimile project had changed into a feeling of deception. The only question which I then wanted to answer was: Is the procedure chosen by Professor Sezgin in the highly unreliable facsimile edition of MS Ayasofya 3036 an exception or the rule? To find the answer I turned to the two MSS of the library of the University of Leiden which are reproduced in the series.

I first compared volume 36 of the series with the Leiden MS Or. 287. This MS contains the unique text of the anthology in prose and poetry, entitled *Ganharat al-Islâm Dît al-Nâir wa-al-Nizân*, which was compiled by al-Sayzârî (died after 622/1225, cf. GAS II, 80) for the last Ayyûbid king of the Yemen. The Leiden MS
Fig. 1. MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya 3036, ff. 226b-227a. Ibn al-'Adim, Buğ yat al-Ţalab fi Ta’rik Ĥalab. The two pages which are lacking in the Frankfurt facsimile edition, where they should have been reproduced between pp. 437-8.
was completed, according to the colophon on f. 263b (ed. p. 526), on Saturday, 23 Šawwāl 699/1300 and is, therefore, an old witness of the texts contained in the anthology. For several texts, the anthology is the only extant witness. The edition counts 526 pp. of Arabic text, and 2 pages (both in Arabic and English) for the introduction by Fuat Sezgin. The volume is also provided with a table of contents and a select index on personal names.

What immediately struck me was the difference in size between MS and edition. The reproduction is published as a common octavo book (the paper measures 23.5 × 15 cm) and the MS has the leisurely size of 29.5 × 21 cm. The facsimile edition would appear to have been reduced to 80%. The reality is more complicated, however. Comparing the text areas of some pages in the edition with the corresponding pages in the original MS revealed that there are numerous different rates of reduction in use, sometimes even on opposite pages, next to one another. Without wishing to dwell on this technical matter I observed in a random selection of pages of the edition the following reduction rates: 58% (p. 90), 64% (p. 283), 65% (p. 245), 66% (p. 232), 67% (p. 282), 70% (p. 233) and 72% (p. 244), which is a remarkable tour de force. One would think that for a facsimile edition it is only necessary to make good photographic prints and then reproduce these. Not so in Frankfurt am Main, where each and every page of a manuscript gets its own individual treatment. Generally speaking one may be sure that if opposite pages in the edition have a different length of text, they are of the same length in the original MS, but have, for reasons which are really beyond my comprehension, been reproduced at different rates of reduction. In this facsimile volume, as in the previously reviewed volume, the original foliation has been removed by the facsimilist. The original MS has clear European folio numbers of recent date (probably 19th or 20th century) at the left top of each leaf, but the pages in the edition are now numbered with figures printed at the bottom of the page. I consider this an unwise procedure on the part of the facsimilist. He knows, or should have known, that the MS has been kept for more than three centuries in the Leiden library, and that it has quite often been quoted and even partly edited. All published references to date have been made to the folio numbers in the original MS, and now all of a sudden these references must be converted to the system of page numbers which Professor Sezgin thinks useful to impose on the MS.

Some of the catchwords (which sometimes occur on the verso pages of the original MS) have been arbitrarily removed by the facsimilist (ed. pp. 12, 38, 56, 98, 122), and in one case a catchword has even jumped in the edition to another page (ed. p. 83 shows the catchword which should have been given on ed. p. 86!). Marginal additions have been carefully removed (e.g. ed. p. 98 = MS f. 49b; ed. p. 467 = MS f. 234a), and many quire marks have received another place on the first recto page of the quires, probably in order to ensure that the text would not become too wide for the pages of the edition. In the course of this process, the quire marks on ed. p. 127 (MS f. 64a, for the 9th quire) and p. 239 (MS f. 120a, for the 16th quire) have disappeared altogether, although they are available in the original MS. In a few cases damaged text has been repaired in the edition (pp. 113, 114, 120, at the bottom). Glosses have been cut away (pp. 324 and 325 of the edition, ff. 162b-163a of the MS). The European owner's slip of Levinus Warner (the learned Dutch diplomat who purchased the MS in Istanbul in the middle of the 17th century), which was pasted on the title-page (f. 1a) of the original MS, has disappeared from the reproduction (ed. p. 1). I will abstain from listing all other signs of such editorial excesses of Professor Sezgin as it would make too long and tedious a list.

Up to here, objections of an entirely formal nature have been raised, but an important question remains: is the text of al-Šayzarī's Jamharat al-islām reproduced in a sound way? If so, most of my previous remarks, however true they may be, would be of marginal value only. Alas, disaster has struck in the text itself as well. The facsimilist has reversed, inadvertently I presume, the order of pp. 263-264. For a correct understanding of the text, one should first read p. 264, and only then p. 263 (cf. MS, f. 132a-132b). One shudders, as one has already shuddered before in the case of the forgotten pages of MS Ayasofya 3036, at the thought of what the effect of this misleading facsimile edition will be on an innocent editor who blindly puts his or her trust in Professor Sezgin's cut-and-paste work. One more aspect of Professor Sezgin's modus operandi may be briefly mentioned here. At the end of his introduction, Professor Sezgin writes: 'It is a source of satisfaction to be able to publish the Jamharat al-islām in the Institute's series [...]'. What kind of morbid satisfaction is this, I would be inclined to ask, since Professor Sezgin knew perfectly well at the time he wrote these lines that permission had been explicitly withheld from him to publish the presently reviewed facsimile edition, because the Leiden library was in the process of negotiating with another publisher for a facsimile edition (without the abovementioned faults and inexactitudes, of course), of the Leiden MS Or. 287.

The third, and last, example of Professor Sezgin's editorial technique which we will examine is provided by volume 11 of the series. It contains a commentary by Ibn al-Haytam (died c. 432/1041, cf. GAS V, 358) on Euclid's Elementa. The work is entitled Kitāb fi Hall Šukūk Kitāb Uṣūlīs fi al-Uṣūl wa-Šarḥ Maʿānīhī. It contains 407 pages of Arabic text, plus an introduction
Fig. 2. The Frankfurt edition of Ibn al-Haytam’s commentary on Euclid’s *Elementa*, pp. 244-5. On p. 244 is the reproduction of MS Leiden, University Library, Or. 516, f. 207b. The last line on p. 244, however, is only the first half of the first line of MS Leiden, Or. 516, f. 208a. On p. 245 of the facsimile edition, the Arabic text of Ibn al-Haytam’s commentary is seamlessly continued with a page taken from MS Istanbul, University Library, A. 800.

Fig. 3. MS Leiden Or. 516, ff. 207b-208a, Ibn al-Haytam’s commentary on Euclid’s *Elementa*. Compare these pages with pp. 244-5 of the facsimile edition as reproduced above, fig. 2.
Now that we are familiar with Professor Sezgin's methods it need not surprise us anymore that the quire mark of MS f. 199a has been removed on ed. p. 227, just like all the original folio numbers. What is more serious, however, is that the Leiden part of the text has been cut out exactly from the MS in order to serve as the textual complement of the Istanbul MS. One may observe this on p. 198 of the edition, where the Leiden text begins, in the middle of a sentence, and on p. 244 where it abruptly ends, whereas the text is continued on p. 245 by a page from the Istanbul MS. This can, of course, only be observed when one compares the Leiden MS with the edition. From neither MS is the original pagination or foliation given, and Professor Sezgin has given the Arabic text consecutive page numbers. He has thereby created a sort of hybrid facsimile volume made of texts from possibly different textual traditions, but in such a way that no one can easily distinguish which part is from the Istanbul MS and which part from the Leiden MS. All the reader has to go on is the difference in script. This makes the edition unquotable for conscientious scholars.

On p. 244 of the edition one sees the reproduction of MS f. 207b (plus the first half of the first line of f. 208a!), followed on p. 245 by the sequel which is taken from the Istanbul manuscript. As all this may appear too fantastic for words I herewith publish a photograph of the two openings and let the reader compare and see for himself.

In this volume, too, there is something fishy in the acknowledgments. On p. 3 of the introduction, the editors thank "... the administration of the Leiden University Library for allowing us to photograph the texts." The ambiguity of this statement only becomes clear if one knows that Professor Sezgin never photographed the text. He just ordered, and after a while received, a microfilm from the Leiden library, which he is allowed, as is the standard rule in that library, to use for research purposes, but not for publication without prior written permission. It is superfluous to say that such permission was never asked, nor given for that matter.

A few things remain to be said. I hope that I have sufficiently demonstrated that the three volumes of the Frankfurter facsimile series, which I selected at random from the whole series, do not live up to scholarly standards. In two of the three, text has either been forgotten to be included or has indeed been included, but with pages given in the wrong order. It would not surprise me at all to find examples of the errors found in the abovementioned editions, plus an extra assortment of unexpected ones, in all the other volumes of the series. This basic untrustworthiness of the series renders it a monumental pile of unreliable trash. All this misuse of MSS can no longer be regarded as incidental when it occurs with such frequency and with such consistency. It is no longer a matter of occasional sloppiness, which in itself is inexcusable. It is rather the illustration of the editor's supreme disrespect of texts and the requirements for a philological and codicological approach of MS material. It is a barbarous tampering with MSS and is, in fact, an insult to the readers who are mature enough to judge for themselves what they will read and what not. Still, the basic idea of the series as I put it in my opening paragraph is a good one. It is, therefore, the more to be regretted that Professor Sezgin has made such a terrible mess of it. Advice from a knowledgeable and experienced publisher, or the installation of a supervisory board, could have prevented all this mishap. But as it stands now, the Frankfurter facsimile series is a Fehlleistung in the field of scholarly publishing on an as yet unheard of scale.

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