of the Book, with what Muhammad meant when he referred to his message as a “miseric” (tanzil) or as something sent down (VI.114, munazzal). Indeed we find this same verb used in the stories of the ancient Arab poets whose verses are likewise said to be “sent down” to them. Hassan b. Thabit, for example, tells how verses of weighty import were sent down to him from heaven in the night season. (Dīwān, ed. al-Barrāq, Cairo,1929, p.355).

The situation with regard to the second term is somewhat more complicated: awbāh is Form IV of a verb waabah “to indicate,” “to signify,” cognate with the Ethiopic wahbāy. Muhammad does not use the simple form of the verb though his common word for “revelation,” wahb, is properly the verbal noun of this simple form. awbā, however, is used in this primitive sense of “indicate” in XIX.11/12, where the afflicted Zechariah, who has been stricken dumb and cannot speak with his tongue, has to indicate by signs what is on his mind to say. Closely related to this is the meaning “to prompt,” i.e., to give direction by an indication from within.8 Thus Allah prompts Moses to cast down his staff that it may become a serpent (VII.117/114), prompts him to strike the rock to produce water (VII.60), prompts him to lead out the Israelites by night (XX.77/79; XXV.63), prompts him to smite the sea with his rod (XXVI.63), and prompts him and Aaron to make a qibla and appoint the prayer ritual (X.85). Likewise He prompted the mother of Moses to suckle the child (XXVIII.6), and later to send him forth in the ark (XX.26). Earlier he had prompted Isaac and Jacob to the doing of good deeds (XXI.78), and had prompted Noah to build the ark (XXIII.27). On the Day of Judgment He will prompt the Day to declare its news (XCIX.5). But it is not only Allah who thus directs by prompting from within, for Satan among jinn and men may prompt each other “to misel speech” (VI.112). In the light of this we should probably interpret such a passage as XXVI.129/131 as meaning that Allah prompted Muhammad to follow the creed of Abraham, i.e., it was not so much an express revelation as an inner prompting such as those felt by Noah or Isaac and Jacob.

A little further development of this notion of an indication from within is that in which Allah is said to have taught the bee in this manner where to build its house (XVI.68/70), and at the creation of the seven heavens and seven earths He indicated to

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8 Similarly in the Old Testament the false prophets are rebuked for claiming that God had spoken to them when He had not spoken (Jer.VI.14; XXI.6); Mic.XIII.1), and the New Testament in its turn warns of the coming of such false prophets (Matt.VII.15; XXIV.11/12; Mk.XII.22; I John IV.1).

9 Perhaps this distinction should not be pressed. Man, it will be remembered, was said to have taught that the Law and the Prophets were produced under the inspiration of the Evil Spirits (Acta Archange, cap.3.XI.XIII.XXl; Serapion of Thessalonica, 3xxvi; Tius of Bostra, Contra Manichaeos, III.32), so that it is not impossible that in Muhammad’s environment revelation even at the Scripture level may have been thought of as possible through Satanic inspiration.
THE QUR'ÄN AS SCRIPTURE

when he fears lest he may be neglecting somewhat of that to which he feels the prompting (XL.12/13), when he is under the urge of the call to become one of the "watchers" (XXXVII.70; cf.XLVI. 9/8), this seems to be nothing particularly different from the inner prompting felt by the mother of Moses (XX.38; XXXVII.7/6), nor indeed from that instruction from within which directed the bee where to set up its house (XVI.68/70). When, however, he speaks of his particular messages as the product of wāḥy (XXI.45/46; L.I.3/4; VII.205/202; VI.50; XLII.13/11; XVI.73/75; XIII.30/29; X.4), in particular the message concerning the uniqueness of Allah (XL.6/5; XXI.110; XVIII.110), that message of monotheism which he says was revealed to each of the Prophets (XXI.25; XXXIX.65); when he asserts that it is a message that he cannot alter (X.15/16) seeing that it is God-given; when he learns by wāḥy that the Jinn listened and believed (LXXII.18), and feels that he has to be on his guard lest he be tempted to invent on his own (XVII.73/75), and run the risk of having Allah take away the gift of wāḥy (XVII.86/88), then we are dealing with something not prompted from within but given from without.

On this second level awḥāḍ is practically identical with nazzala (anznala), and it is in this sense of the word that revelation is associated with Scripture. He says of it that it is some of the eternal Wisdom which Allah has pleased to reveal to him (XVII. 39/41), so that the regulations he lays down for the religious life of his community can claim are revealed to him from the "Book", i.e., the heavenly archetype of Scripture (XXIX.45/44; cf. VI.145/146). Similarly the stories about ancient Worthies and about Allah's judgment which he tells in his preaching, and says were given him by revelation (XL.49/51; XII.102/103; III.44/39), are doubtless meant to be understood as taken from the same source (XXVII.31/28). It is in this sense that he speaks of "Qur'ān" being given to him by wāḥy.

"We shall narrate to thee the best of narratives in revealing to thee this Qur'ān, even though thou wert before this one of the negligent" (XII.8).

"And thus we have revealed to thee an Arabic Qur'ān [that thou mightest warn the Mother of Cities and those around it, and mightest warn of the Day of Assembling, about which there is no doubt. One party (will be) in the Garden and one party in the Blazing Fire" (XII.17/5).

"Say: Allah is a witness between me and you. And this Qur'ān has been revealed to me that by it I might warn you and whomsoever it may reach" (VI.19).

So he is bidden recite what has been put into his mind of the Book of his Lord (XVIII.27/26), and warned not to be too hasty in speaking till the revelation that is being given him is completed (XX.114/115).

When we ask, therefore, what was Muhammad's conception of the mechanism whereby the material of Scripture was revealed, we have to deal with two conceptions which, for convenience of reference, we may label inspiration and revelation, the former being concerned with a prompting from within, and the latter with a bestowal from without. The former conception belongs mainly to the earlier stages of his prophetic activity and the latter to his later years.

The environment in which he spent his early years was one in which inspiration, as above defined, was well understood. Both poets and soothsayers (kāhibs) in the Arabia of that day were known to produce their rhyed rhythmic utterances in response to an inner prompting. The popular explanation of this was that they were "possessed," and because of being possessed by a Jinn or a Shaitān who forced them to utter their proclamations they were considered to be more or less mad. The interesting thing is that when Muhammad came forward with his earliest public pronouncements his contemporaries immediately recognized them as akin to those of the soothsayers and poets (II.29/30; XII.5; LIX.41/49) judging him to be Jinn-possessed, and therefore somewhat mad (LVIII.1; LXXI.2/2; XV.6; XXXVII.36/35; XLIV.14/15). It is not strange that they should have so judged. The saʿf style of rhymed rhetorical prose used in Muhammad's early pronouncements is hardly to be distinguished from that which we find preserved in the books of the later antiquarians as specimens of the pronouncements said to have come from the mouths of the ancient Arabian kāhibs. Moreover, the story preserved in the Sira and

[20] Goldziher has gathered material on this in an essay "Über die Vorge- schichte der Hiag-Poesie," in Be 1.108.4 übungen zur arabischen Philologie, Leiden, 1896. It will be remembered that in quite another area we have the statement of Democritus that is is impossible to produce good poetry without an inspiration akin to madness, (Diels, Fragmenta der Forschritther, I. 66).

[21] Specimens are given in al-Jabir, Kitāb al-Rayān wa-Tabyiin, (Cairo, 1920), Luq; al-Qalqashandi, Subh al-Aslāh, Lattii; al-Dhahabi, al-Mu'atta'raf, II.95. The lexicon says that this word saʿf meant originally the prolonged yawning of a female camel (al-shalḥ, sub. voc.), or the cooing of a pigeon (Lane, p. 190), and then was applied to a figure to the utterances of the soothsayers. It is worthy of note that the cognate Heb. meṣubāh is used in connection with the ecstatic utterances of the prophets (Hos.Ix.7; II Ki.XI.11; Jer.XXIX. 26), and also in 1 Sam.XXII.14/15, for the kind of madness David simulated at the Court of Achish of Gath.
the Hadith telling of his “first revelation,” pictures him as experiencing precisely what a poet was thought to experience when inspiration seized him. We read there how the angel came unexpectedly upon him, bidding him proclaim what is dictated to him. He resisted, so the angel seized him and choked him till he thought he would expire. This happened three times, till finally he submitted and recited at the angel’s dictation (Ibn Hisäh, Sira, pp. 153-155). Now we read of the poet Hassan b. Thäbi, who later became a sort of Court poet to Muhammad himself, that in his youth he had no thought of becoming a poet, but one day, in the streets of Madina, a female S’ilät-demon cast herself upon him, knelt on his chest, struggling with him and threatening to kill him, till she finally forced three verses out of him and started him on his career as a poet. (Su‘a‘I, Lsl-Mushhir, I, 277).

Ibn Hisäh was writing when the theory of angel mediation of all revelation was the orthodox theory, and so the choking is done in his story by an angel. Muhammad himself, however, would seem at first to have feared that his experience was a case of jinn-possession which had come upon him as suddenly and as unexpectedly as the coming of the S’ilät-demon on Hassan b. Thäbi. In the earliest account we have of this experience of his we read that it left him in a terror of apprehension lest it should mean that he was possessed, so that he even contemplated suicide by casting himself down from the mountain side. Hurrying home to Khadija he buried his head in her lap, and to her inquiry as to what had happened he said: “He of whom no one would ever have believed it has become a poet or one Jinns-posessed.” But Khadija comforted him, assuring him that Allah would never permit such a thing to happen to a person of his reputation, one who ever spoke the truth.

“Choked” is perhaps the best word to use here. Ibn Hisäh has the verb ghätta, but al-Bukhärä (Bkib, I, 5) has ghätta with t instead of t. Both verbs have the meaning “to plunge deep into water.” Though ghâta is used also of the gurgling sound of a cooking-pot, Ibn al-Athir, Nihâya, III, 188 says that both words mean the same thing, and suggests that we are to understand a choking for breath.

It is quoted from the early biography of Ibn Ihsän by Tahârî, Annals, LII, 118. In the bowdlerized edition of Ihn Hisäh the account of Muhammad’s fear and a considerable part of Khadija’s words of comfort have been omitted. The story was known, however, to the canonical Traditionists, (cf. al-Bukhärä, L & IV, 567), though there also considerations of reverence for the Prophet have caused the deletion of all reference to his particular fear and to the thoughts of suicide. Sprenger, Leben, I, 366-359, translates the whole passage from his copy of Tahârî. The pleasant tale told in the fira of Ihn Hisäh of how Khadija thought out a device to prove whether Muhammad’s visitor from the Unseen were demonic or angelic obviously arose after the identification of the source of revelation with Gabriel had been made.

The thought of suicide is seen by some writers in such Qur’ānic passages as XVIII, 53: XXV, 12, but these passages must in any case refer to events later in his ministry, and have no relevance to this “true revelation.”

returned not evil for evil, kept faith with his fellows, lived a good life and was always kind to relatives and friends. She then questioned him more closely, the story goes on to say, about the portentous thing which had terrified him, and when he told her about it she first gave him a word of cheer, suggesting that this experience might be something quite other than what he feared, and then sought counsel from her cousin Waraqa b.Nu‘abl. This Waraqa, who was well acquainted with the People of the Book and with their scriptures, immediately recognized that this experience of Muhammad was the same as was told of in those books in connection with the descent of the Nûmâs which came down upon Moses.

Though the tendential character of this story about Waraqa is quite obvious it may well embody a memory of the transition in Muhammad’s own thought from the concept of inspiration to that of revelation. The idea of inspiration belonged to the environment of his childhood and youth, the idea of revelation was something learned from fuller contact with the People of the Book. The Qur’ān itself shows how he needed assurance that he was not mad (LXVIII, 2). Perhaps those biographers are right who think that Muhammad had begun to produce “effusions” such as those we now have in Sîras GvLCv.LXXXVI,1-10: LXXXVII,1-9: C; XCVII; XCV; CHI etc., before the great experience that gave him his call to his mission. That would mean that he had two experiences, the first which was much the same as the experience of a poet or a kahhin, and then the great experience which convinced him that he had something more than just the message of a kahhin. It is then that he insists that his message is not something spoken out of mere impulse (LII, 3). He knows well that the Satans inspire wicked, lying persons and poets (XXVI, 221-224), but declares that this message of his is not the word of a poet (LXIX, 4), not something the Satans have heard and have brought down (XXVI, 210-212). It was from contact with the People of the Book that he had learned the distinction, so that the story about Waraqa may preserve a memory of this fact. Muhammad knows that other messengers before him among the communities known to the People of the Book had been considered by their contemporaries as Jinns possessed madmen. In particular he refers to this charge as levelled against Noah (LIV, 9), and against Moses (XXVI, 27-26; LII, 5) just as the Rabbinic tales tell of the mockery made of Noah’s mad-
ness in building such a thing as the Ark, and of the three occasions when the Israelites made protest at the madness of Moses' command to them, when he led them into the waters of the Red Sea, when he took them into the waterless wilderness, and when, in spite of the report of the spies, he insisted that they march into the land of Canaan. In Jdg.15:2 he says that no messenger had ever come to any people in earlier times without their having called him either a madman or a sorcerer, which reminds one of the popular judgment on the prophets in Hos.IX:7:

"the prophet is a fool: the man of the spirit is mad."

It will be remembered how Shemaiah the Nehelemite wrote to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest reminding him of his duty to punish with prison and the stocks "every man that is mad and maketh himself a prophet" (Jer.XXIX:25-27). Likewise in the New Testament we find that the contemporaries of Jesus reacted to his preaching by saying: "He hath a devil and is mad. Why hear ye him?" (Jno.X:20), and even his friends are represented as having at one time thought that he was "dervous "beside himself" (Mk.III:21 ff.).

But not all prophetic experience was on this level. In every case it was concerned with a breaking through of the Unseen with a message to be delivered. That message might be nothing more than information about the whereabouts of someone's stray ass (1 Sam. IX:6 ff.), or it might be a matter of oracles of blessing and cursing (Num.XXIII,XXIV), or a prediction of coming woe (Jnoah III:4), but it might be on the level of the impassioned utterances of an Amos or a Jeremiah. If the Prophet were a true prophet it was always a message from God, however humble a matter it might seem in our judgment. It might be the Holy One Himself who broke through from the Unseen and without any intermediary gave the message. He spoke with Adam in the earthly Paradise (Gen.III:8 ff). He spoke personally to Abraham when He called him to go out on his great venture of faith (Gen.XXIV:7). He spoke with Moses...
very little about the Spirit (XVI.85/87); save that it has some connection with Allah’s "amr, and is angelic in nature. Later on he identifies it with the Holy Spirit (rūḥ al-Qudus, XVI.104/104), which (or who) was the strengthener of Jesus (IL8/81,253/254; V.110/109). The reason is clear. In the Old Testament it is, as we have seen, the "spirit" which is the agent in mediating the prophetic message. Yet often enough in the Old Testament it is a special angelic visitant who speaks with the prophets. It was such an angel of the Lord who spoke with Hagar and the child Ishmael in the wilderness (Gen.XVI), who spoke with Abraham at the test of sacrificing Isaac (Gen.XXII.11ff.), who spoke to Balaam (Numb.XXII. 35),26 to Gad (I Chron.XXI.18), to Elijah (II KI.1.3) and to Zechariah (Zech.1.1ff.). In the Book of Daniel this angel is identified with Gabriel (IX.21ff.), and it is Gabriel who in the Gospel is the messenger from the Lord to announce the birth both of John the Baptist and of Jesus (Lk.1.17,46). In Sūra XIX.17 it was Allah’s Spirit who made the announcement to Mary, so that we have the ground for the identification of the Spirit with Gabriel, and are prepared for II.97/91 where it is Gabriel who brings down the message to Muhammad’s heart,27 and LXVI.4 where he is Muham- 
mad’s angelic patron.

In the later theological tracts it is Gabriel who, as the angel of revelation, is entrusted with the task of transmitting from the heavenly archetype of Scripture the message that was given to each Prophet as he appeared to undertake his mission, and it was Gabriel who for the twenty odd years of Muhammad’s prophetic activity visited him from time to time to transmit to him the “words of Allah” he was to proclaim in his preaching and leave as his Scripture for his community. This particular association of Gabriel with the matter of revelation is peculiar to Islam,28 but there can be little doubt that it was suggested by the activity of Gabriel in delivering messages from heaven as pictured in the Book of Daniel and the Gospel of Luke. Some steps in this direction had been taken already in the Rabbinic writings, where pious fancy had seen Gabriel in the messenger who in Gen.XXVII.15 showed the way to Joseph,29 taught him the seventy languages (Sota 50b), and cared for and instructed Moses in Egypt (Exod. R.L.67b).

Having come thus far in our discussion we are in a position to answer the question of how Muhammed conceived the mechanism of revelation whereby Scripture became available to men. In Sūra VI.93 we read—

"Who has done greater wrong than he who has invented a falsehood about Allah, or says: ‘I have received a revelation,’ when nothing has been revealed to him; and he who says: ‘I shall have sent down (to me) the like of what Allah has sent down?’"

and again in XLII.51/50 we read—

"It is not for a human that Allah should speak to him save by way, or from behind a veil, or should send a messenger to reveal by His permission what He wills . . . . and thus have We revealed to thee a spirit (rūḥ) from Our affair (‘amr), for thou didst not know what Scripture (kitāb) or Faith (‘imān) was. But We have made it a light to guide whom We will of Our servants, and thou, indeed, wilt guide to a straight path.”

In these two passages we have all the essential elements. Scripture is necessary that men may be rightly guided (VI.157/158; III.4/6) to that “straight path,” may know and understand the “way of God” (they could never have found by the exercise of their own intelligence. To know and walk this way is to walk in the safety of true religion, to be in the Faith. It is the function of Scripture to record what Allah has been pleased to reveal about this Faith. The initiative in the matter is with Allah. He could have left men without guidance, but in His mercy He has at various points in history chosen humans to whom He has revealed messages which He wished them to set forth as guidance for their fellows. These chosen servants are His messengers, His prophets, and so significant is their office that evil-minded men will falsely pretend to have also had such a revelation for human guidance. No greater wrong than this can be conceived, for instead of guiding men such pretenders would be leading them astray from the “straight path.” There are three ways in which Allah can convey such a message to His chosen messenger.

(1) He may speak with him in personal converse at a personal interview, when there is naught but the Veil between Allah and His Servant (II.255/254). It was thus that He spoke with Moses (IV.164/162; VII.144/141),30 and thus did He speak with Muham-

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26 It is perhaps worth remembering that where in the Hebrew text of these chapters of Numbers it is an angel who speaks to Balaam, in the Aramaic Targums it is a Memra from God who meets Balaam in the way.

27 Thus the “faithful spirit” of XXVI.103 is identified with Gabriel, likewise the “one strong in power” of IL15, and the “noble messenger” of LXXIII.10 (unless the noble messenger here refers to Muhammad himself, as in LXIX.40). It will be noticed that the phrase “beside Him of the Throne established” in LXXLI.10 is much the same as Gabriel says of himself in LL1.19 à ḫāraṣṣṭ ūrah jawwās rūḥ ṭaḥāf, a phrase to which Strack-Billerdick II.97 bring Rabbinic parallels.

28 It is common to both Sunni and Shia Islam. For the Shia doctrine see Ibn Bibawi al as translated by A. A. Fyfe, A Shi’ite Creed, pp.84,85.

29 Targ.Yer.1 on the passage.

30 The reference is to the theophany at Sinai (Ex.XIX.30).
mad on the famous night of the Mi'raj or Heavenly Journey. Perhaps we are also meant to understand that He spoke thus with Adam in personal converse in the Garden (II.31/29, 37/55). (2)

(2) Or He may speak by way, giving inspiration from within much as He inspires the bees in the matter of house building, or inspires the heavens and the earth as to their cosmic functions. In manner this is not very different from the way in which the poets and soothsayers are inspired, though in the case of Allah's messengers the source is divine not demonic and the material given is heavenly instruction.

(3) Or He may send a celestial messenger. There seems to have been some confusion at first in Muhammad's mind as to whether this was just any angel or a special celestial being. Later he identifies this messenger with the Holy Spirit, and finally with Gabriel.

In all this we are dealing with matters commonly discussed among those People of the Book with whom Muhammad was in contact during his formative period. Among them all three methods were associated with God's revelation of Himself to men. He spoke directly to Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen.III), and He spoke to Moses (Ex.XXXXIV.34) both at the Bush (Ex.III,IV) and at Sinai (Ex.XIX), as well as to others among His servants such as Abraham (Gen.XXXVII), Jacob (Gen.XXXVIII) and David (I Ki.VI.12). At a later period reverence for the Divine introduced the notion of the Veil that hung between the Divine Presence and creatures who dwelled near. But God also prompted from within those servants whom He sent, thus giving them what they were assured was the word of the Lord. Ezekiel says of his experience—

"Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thy house . . . . . . but when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and shalt say unto them: Thus saith the Lord God. He that heareth let him hear," (Ezek.III.24,27).

And the Lord also sent His angels with His heavenly message to

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"The older Commentators on the passage II.259/256, e.g., al-Baṣīrī, mention only Moses and Muhammad as those to whom Allah spoke face to face. Later writers, however, such as al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī III, and al-Khaḍājī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Qādī, II.350, add Adam to them.

"The New Testament writers also note this, cf. Mark.IX, 6; John.XX.

"The Qur'ānic bīhāb corresponds to the nīfām and the qargh of the Rabbinic texts (Hag.182, Gen.R.LIII; Lev.R.XXIII; Midrash Tehillim at end of Ps.); II Enoch X,L.B, the bar gôda of the Mandaean texts, and the ʾātratapap of the early Christian and Gnostic tractates (see the Index to Miss Bays' Gnostic Gnostic Treatises, p.197). This same word bīḥāb is used for the veil before the Presence in the Arabic text of the Samaritan Mōād Musāb (ed. S. Miller, p.13).

"The evidence for this is assembled in Būrūk Bābur II.6.

"It is significant that in XXVIII.68 we have the statement that he had no expectation that Scripture would ever be given him, cf. in this connection also XXIX.69, 70.

"In this connection we may also note II.213/209 which states that whenever Allah sent a Prophet He sent him with Scripture, and remind ourselves that in connection with the covenant with the Prophets III.68/69 regards the giving of Scripture and Wisdom as part of Allah's Covenant obligations.

"Cf. the oft repeated taunt at the Meccans that they can produce no Scriptural authority for their religious ideas and practices (XXXVII.157; LXVIII.37; XXXIV.44/48)."
something over which men should meditate, and which the intelligent should ever keep in mind (XXXVII.29/8). It is not strange, therefore that belief in Scriptures sent from Allah should be laid down as a fundamental belief for Muhammad's followers (II.177/172; IV.136/135). But ultimately all Scripture is one, for there was one archetypal Book of which the Scriptures of the various Prophets were but portions (XVIII.27/46; III.24/29; II.231; XXXIII.16; XIX.76; LXI.8/9; V.148; IV.147/51/54). Moreover, Muslims are to believe in the entire Book (II.119/113; V.59/64), as Muhammad himself was bidden believe in whatever Scripture Allah had sent down (XII.15/14).

What then does the Qur'an have to say about these portions of the archetypal Scripture which were sent down to his predecessors, and in which he and they believe? In XII.38 we read that each age had its Scripture,28 but in VI.156/157 the Arabs seem to know that Scripture has been sent down to only two previous peoples, an idea which would fit in very well with passages we have already considered, such as II.196/190; LVII.46; IV.54/57, which suggest that the receiving of Scripture was a matter confined to the two groups of the Ahl al-Kitab.40 Thus the regulation for Muslims is that they believe in what was sent down to the People of the Book (XXIX.46/55; II.4/5; IV.196/193; XLII.15/11; V.59/64). This assumes that they were in a position to discover what was in those previous Scriptures, just as the injunction to Muhammad to consult those who read Scripture when he is in doubt about what is being revealed to him (N.94) assumes that such Scripture readers were readily available. Yet the only Scriptures mentioned by name in the Qur'an, apart from two early references to the Scrolls (pahuf) of Abraham and Moses (LXXXVII.19; LII.35/37/38), whose meaning is doubtful,41 are the Taurah of Moses, the Zubair of David and the Injil of Jesus.

i) Of the Taurah we read that it was "sent down" like other revelation material (III.8/65/58/87; V.44/48 etc.), to be the

28 When in XLV.17/27 it says that on the Day every nation will be summoned to its own Book, this might seem to carry out this idea that each group will have to give an accounting of its response to the Scripture sent for its guidance. Kitab in this verse, however, may not mean Scripture, but may refer to the Record Book in which the records of nations as well as of individuals are written.

40 This is the strongest argument in favour of the idea that such messengers as Had, Sahib, Shu'aib must be meant to represent Old Testament characters.

41 If it is insisted that these pahuf must have been writings circulating under the names of Moses and Abraham, one can only suggest that the reference may be to some such works as the Apocalypse of Abraham and the Apocalypse of Moses, or the Testament of Abraham and the Testament of Moses. In XX.145, however, an-pahuf al-5in apparently means nothing more than "previous Scripturns," so that the reference in LXXXVII.19 and LII.35/38, as may be merely to the Old Testament Scriptures.

42 Scripture for the Children of Israel (XLVI.16/15; XL-3/36; II.4/44/41), giving them Allah's guidance (XVII.2; XXXI.23; XL-55/56). It was later than the time of Abraham (III.53/58), and is specifically the Book of Moses (XI.17/20; XLVI.12/11), though Aaron's name is associated with his in this matter (XXI.48/49; XXXVII.117). It is described as a light and a warning to the God-fearing (XXI.48/49; XLVI.54/55), for it was given for men's enlightenment (XXIV.45/45). It is called an Imam (XL.17/20; XLVI.12/11) and a mercy (VI.154/155; XI.17/20; XLVI.12/11), a dhikra (XL-54/50), a light (V.91; V.44/48) and a guidance (VI.154/155; V.44/48). It contains the hukm of Allah (V.43/47), a tafsir44 of every matter (VI.154/155; VII.145/146), teaching the Children of Israel much that neither they nor their fathers knew (VI.91). It is a completion (tama)m for everyone who would do right (VI.154/155), and contains Allah's pledged promise of Paradise for such as will devote their persons and their substance to Him (IX.111/112). Nevertheless it is but a portion of the Kitab of Allah (V.44/48). In particular it contained the Law for the Children of Israel, for it was the Taurah which contained the law of retaliation (V.43/49), the food regulations they had to observe (III.93/87), the prohibition of usury (IV.181/183; V.42/46), etc. It is doubtless what is meant by the Tablets written out by Allah for Moses,46 since they also are called a guidance and a mercy, a monition concerning all things which Moses is to command the people to observe (V.145/144; 154/155).

After the time of Moses this Taurah was inherited by the Prophets among the Children of Israel who judged the people according to it (V.44/48). Later Allah taught it to Jesus (III.49/49) for Jesus to confirm it (L-XI.6/III.50/44; V.46/50) as it was read and studied by his contemporaries (III.79/73). Later still it was inherited by the doctors and teachers of the Jews,47 who were its keepers and witnesses to it, and who judged the people of their

42 So we are to understand that the Taurah is meant in numerous passages such as XXIII.49/51; XXV.55/57; XVII.4 which speak of the Book that was given to Moses.

43 Possibly it is meant by "the truth" in VII.159.

44 Bell translates tafsir as "a clear setting forth." It is said of the Qur'an in X.93/98 and XII.111.

45 XVI.11/19 says that Allah had told Muhammad about the things He had made forbidden to the Jews, while the reference would be to the Torah.

46 In later Rabbinic teaching the Tablets given to Moses at Sinai contained not merely the Ten Commandments but the whole Torah. See on this Ginsberg's Legends of the Jews, III.27; VII.86.

47 The words he uses here are two technical words of Jewish origin, rabbinayin and abban, the plurals of Rabind and Hiber, both derived from words in common use among the Jews for their teachers. See Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an, pp.117 and 43.
community according to it (V.44/48). Finally it came down to the Jews of Arabia, Muhammad's contemporaries, who had copies that he challenged them to bring out and read (III.95/87), for he claimed that in it was a word-picture of the perfect Muslim (XLVIII.19), a teaching with regard to that Day of Meeting about which the Arabs laughed when he preached of it (VII.154/155), and a description of himself as the expected Prophet (VII.175/176, 190). His Jewish contemporaries used to read it in (I.4/1/75/76, V.43/47; VII.169/168), knowing that it was something revealed from the Lord (II.76/71), but obstinately they say that they will believe in it but in nothing that has come after it (II.91/89). Sūra V.45/49 quotes Exod.XXII.25-27, and it is possible that parts of V.32/35 and XVII.2/4 are meant to be quotations from the Taurah.

ii) The Zabur was the Book given to David (XVII.56/57; I.65/61), a "blessed Book" sent down to him (XXXVIII.89/93), since he was one of Abraham's rightly-guided progeny (VI.84/87) and thus among those to whom Allah gave the gifts of Scripture, Wisdom and Prophecy (VI.89). As such he was taught by Allah (II.251/252). The Zabur is actually quoted in Sūra XXI.105, where the words "My righteous servants shall inherit the earth" is a quotation from Ps.XXXVII.29. When Sūra V.78/82 says that the unbelieving among the Jews were cursed by the tongue of David this may possibly be a reference to certain imprecatory Psalms, though it is more likely to be a generalization.

iii) The Injil is the revelation given to Jesus, who was taught by it (III.48/49; XVII.17; IV.69/50). Like other Scriptures it was "sent down" (III.65/68; V.47/51), and like them it was intended to give guidance and light (V.46/50; cf.XII.3/4), and to give warning (IV.46/50). It agrees with the Taurah in giving a word-picture of the perfect Muslim (XLVIII.28), in containing Allah's pledged promise of Paradise (IX.111/112), and in having in it a description of Muhammad as the coming Prophet (VII.157/156). This agreement is not strange since it was intended as a confirmation of the Taurah (V.46/50). From Jesus the disciples received it and believed in it (III.95/96), and the Christians are to judge according to it (V.47/51).

In each case, it will have been noticed, the Scripture is thought of as a body of material given from without to one individual.

Thus it may be the Gospel that is meant by the "enlightening Book" in XXXV.25/26.

Since in this passage Allah is speaking to Moses this is a reference to a Book not yet in existence among men, unless we are to believe, as has sometimes been suggested, that Muhammad at one time believed that Moses and Jesus were roughly contemporary, and only later learned that Jesus was a much later prophet.

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"Since a σημείον was given to Moses (cf.Jno.1:17) this is doubtless the origin of the Nāmūs in the W生姜a story already mentioned.

"Isaiah is quoted as the Law in 1 Cor.XIV.12, and the Psalms similarly in Jno.X.34; cf. also Jno.XII.44; XV.25; IV Ezra XIV.11, and the Taaludic passages Sam.49, b. and Mered Koton 52.

"See Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān, p.149.

"Ibid. p.12.

"Ibid. p.255.

"In Foreign Vocabulary, p.112. I favored the derivation from širāt "writing," but scholars now seem more inclined to think that it is a corruption of širāt, "preaching."

"Ibid. p.259.

"Ibid. p.329.

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Moreover the Injil is thought of as, like the Taurah, something to be observed, being thus the Law for the Christian community as the Torah was the Law for the Jews. The names used for these three Scriptures are words borrowed from the religious vocabulary of the Ahl al-Kitāb. Taurah is the Heb. Torah, meaning "instruction," which among the Jews early came to be used as a technical term for the Law (ονόματος), and by extension for the whole of the Old Testament. Zabūr is an Arabic corruption of the Hebrew word mezūrā, doubtless under the influence of the genuine Arabic word Zubār. Injil is širāt, but passed on to Arabic through the Ethiopic wāntēl. Both the names Muḥammad uses for his own "lessons" of Scripture are likewise words taken from the technical religious vocabulary of the People of the Book. Qur'ān being the Syriac qeryānā, used in the Syriac speaking Church for the "readings" used as Scripture lessons, and Sūra being a distortion of another Syriac word. The more general word for Scripture, viz. Kitāb was also derived from the same source, as was the word fursūn which in II.53/50; XXI.48/49 is associated with Moses, in I.4/5 with both the Taurah and the Injil, and in XXV.1; II.185/181 with the revelation to Muhammad.

It is not surprising therefore to see how closely Muḥammad's thought of his own Book follows this picture he had formed from what he had learned about the Scriptures of the Ahl al-Kitāb. Like them his Scripture is derived from the celestial archetype (XLIII.4/5; LVII.78/77; and cf. LII.3; XVIII.7/9), from which, like them, it is "sent down" (LVIII.79; XLIV.3/4; XCIII.2; II.185/181; XXVI.119; XXXIX.1; XXI.3/4), though it also consists of only portions of that divine original (XXIV.3/4; XXXV.3/4). It was brought down, as they were, by angelic mediation (XXVI.195; XLVII.104). Thus it is truly only a slu. (LI.4). Its message, like theirs, is something taught by the Merciful One Himself (LV.11), so it is a book of warning (X.73/73; XXVI.119; XXVI.1; XXXVII.3/9; XXXVIII.3/4).
XXXVI, 70), as well as of good tidings (XXVII, 71; XV, 89, 91, 102, 104). Like its predecessors it is a mercy (XXVII, 77, 79; XV, 20, 19; XVI, 63, 66, 89, 91), and a light (XIII, 52; L, 8; IV, 174), to give men guidance (IX, 135; XVII, 3; XXVII, 9; II, 97, 91; XVI, 89, 91, 102, 104; XII, 111), leading them out of darkness into light (XIV, 1) and into the paths of Allah (XIV, 1; XXXIV, 6). It contains Allah's command (LXV, 4, 5, 8), so that like the earlier Scriptures it is a book of Law, containing Allah's legal prescription (farâda, IV, 11, 12, 24, 38; IX, 60), His ordinance (usulîna, IV, 12, 16), His precepts (bâdêt, IV, 13, 17; II, 187, 218, 189, 230; IX, 77, 78), and His injunctions (kitâb, IV, 18, 88; cf. 66, 69). That is, it contains Allah's instructions for the Muslim community (IV, 127, 128) just as the Torah contained those for the Children of Israel and the Gospel those for the Christians. So Muhammad is to give judgment according to it (V, 48, 52, 54) as the Children of Israel were to be judged by the Taurah and the Christians by the Injil. For this reason the Qur'an is placed on a level with those two Scriptures (IX, 111, 112; c. XXVIII, 48, 49; II, 58, 130), and as the Gospel came to confirm the Torah so the Qur'an has come to confirm the Holy Scriptures (II, 89, 93; XII, 111; X, 57, 58; XXXV, 31, 32). It is thus clear that as Muhammad claimed to be in the succession of the earlier Prophets as messengers called to summon men to the "way of God," so his Book, the Qur'an is considered to be in the succession of the earlier Scriptures which men read to find what had been revealed from heaven as to that "way of God." It remains to see how both his conception of his own office and his conception of a Scripture connected with that office went beyond the teaching of the People of the Book.

It is not infrequently urged against Western scholarship that in its investigation of Muhammad and his message it concerns itself too closely with tracing the origins of the various elements which enter into that teaching, and does not sufficiently consider what Muhammad himself made of the material he had at his disposal as he moulded it for the service of his mission and for the use of his community after him. Shakespeare often enough took over plots from stories more or less familiar to his audiences, even themes which had already been used by his predecessors in the dramatic art, but the dramas that have become part of world literature are the fruit of Shakespeare's own handling of that material. It is doubtless true that Shakespeare had read Francis de Belleforest's version of the Hamlet story from the Historia Danica of Saxo Grammaticus, and he may have seen, perhaps even have acted in, the play about Hamlet which was popular in London in his youth. Yet the Hamlet we know and admire is what Shakespeare made out of the earlier material he found to his hand. So in discussing the Qur'an as Scripture it is not enough to show that Muhammad took over from his contemporaries a particular theory of the nature of Scripture, and one particular form of the doctrine of a prophetic order with which Scripture revelation was associated, as well as a concept of the mechanism of revelation whereby Scripture was made available to mankind, we must ask what Muhammad did with all this as he built Scripture into the religion of the community he was organizing in Arabia.

It is necessary to insist again that it was a religious mission which Muhammad came forward to undertake among his people, the Arabs. We must regard him as quite as sincerely convinced of his "call" to this mission as Martin Luther and John Wesley were to theirs, and as fully prepared as they were to give all they could to the carrying through of his mission. Like them, however, he was a child of his age and environment, who thought and planned the details concerned with the working out of his mission in terms of the religious life of his contemporary world. Part of contemporary life in the more advanced religious communities of his day was the use of Scripture, and so part of what he was to do for his religious community was to provide them with a Scripture. This Scripture is in our hands as the Qur'an.

We have may not be precisely what he would have wished to leave with his community as the Kitâb, for he died before he had issued it as an authoritative collection, and we cannot be absolutely sure that what his successors gathered together and issued after his death was just what he would have wished it to be. Orthodox theory insists that it is, and in any case it is all that we have as his Kitâb, so to it we must look for the answers to our final questions.
THE QUR'AN AS SCRIPTURE

The first of them is—how does Muhammad relate his Scripture to the earlier Scriptures which were in the hands of his contemporaries?

He claims that what he has proclaimed was “sent down” as a message to his contemporaries, just as earlier Scripture was “sent down” to earlier peoples (XXI.10; V.49; II.82/83; V.66/70). It is intended to give his Arab contemporaries the substance of what had been given these earlier communities in their Scriptures, so he declares that its message is substantially what was in the earlier Books (LXXXVII.18/19; XLII.13/16; VI.165/166; IV.6/71). It is thus a confirmation of them (XII.111; X.37/38; VI.92; XXXIV.31/32; IV.47/49), and their safe-guard (V.48/49). Therefore it is explicitly put on the same level as the Torah and the Injil (IX.111/112), and the members of his community are instructed that they must believe in the earlier Scripture revelations as well as in what has been “sent down” to Muhammad (II.3/38/8ff., 136/139; III.84/78; IV.60/63.136/155.162/160; V.59/64).

If this were all, we could say that the relation of the Qur'an to other Scriptures was that it was an Arabic version of the message already given in them. The claim for it, however, goes further than this, for we find it stated that its message is intended to make clear what had been sent down to previous messengers (XVI.44/46/64/66; X.37/38), clearing up for the people of the earlier religious communities those matters about which they differ (XXVII.76/78; III.83/22). This is practically a claim to supersede previous Scripture, and Muhammad says that the people of knowledge among those earlier communities recognize in his message the promise of their Lord (XVII.108).

What promise of their Lord? Obviously Muhammad must have learned that in their Scriptures there was some promise which he could interpret his mission as fulfilling. But how had he learned such a thing as this? Certain things in our previous discussion may have suggested that perhaps Muhammad’s closer contact was with Scripture in the hands of Christians, but careful examination of the matter makes it quite plain that the Book with which he had most contact was that in the possession of his Jewish contemporaries. He had seen that book in their hands (IV.47/47), knew that they studied it (VII.166/168; II.76/71), and heard it recited (II.44/41). He also knew that they were accustomed to write the Torah on parchment (VI.91; II.79/79). Quite possibly it was in his earlier days that he first saw Scripture in the hands of the Ahl al-Kitab, for in early passages of the Qur'an he refers to Scripture as something in sūfūf (LXXX.13; XXXIV.54; LXXXVII.18/19; LIII.36/37; XVIII.2). That Scripture is for him always something written out (XXIX.46/47; XXXIV.41/43; VI.155/156; LII.33) would fit with either the Jewish or the Christian Holy Book, but the sūfūf rather suggests Jewish scrolls. It is also significant that he refers more particularly to the Torah as that which preceded his own revelation (XII.17/20; XLVI.12/12; II.41/43; III.3/3), and to his teaching as the confirmation in Arabic of the Torah (XLVII.12/12; II.41/43/89/88).

Now it is evident that he was anxious to gain a closer acquaintance with this Book of the Jewish community, but was thwarted by some of their leaders. He complains that they show the parchments but conceal much (VII.49), so he challenges them to bring out the Book and read it (III.48/47). That he had learned something of the legal prescriptions of their Law appears from the statement in VI.118/119 about slaughtering for food, and he could hardly have ventured the statement that when their learned men hear the message he is setting forth in his preaching they recognize it (XXVI.197; cf.IV.130/160; XLVII.6/6), unless he knew well that he was reproducing something he had learned from their Book. It is possible that at first the Jewish leaders welcomed his inquiries about their Scriptures, and became uncooperative only when they discovered the import of his own claims to be in the prophet succession.4

Sūra II.76/71 makes it plain that some of them objected to Muhammad and his followers being told what was in their Scriptures, but apparently he persisted in his attempts. He knows that among them are unlearned folk from whom it is useless to seek information since they know nothing of Scripture but its stories (II.78/73). What is most curious is that he seems to have attempted to purchase from some of the Jews transcripts of matter from their Scripture, only to find after they had taken the money that they had deceived him, V.44/48, which is dealing with the Torah, repudiates the selling of Allah’s verses for a small price, and this is explained by II.79/79:

“Woe to those who write out Scripture with their hands, and say: ‘This is from Allah,’ that they may buy with it some small gain. Woe to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for the gain they make.’”

In Madinan passages there are several references to the tampering with Scripture.

III.79/79: “Among them is a group who torture Scripture with their tongues that ye may suppose it to be from Scripture, though it is not from the Scriptures. They say: ‘It is from Allah,’ though it is not from Allah. They utter a lie against Allah, and know that they are so doing.”

4. A. U. A. which states that they were envious that Allah should have sent down His grace to Muhammad; and II.109/109 which suggests that in their envy they tried to win back some of his converts.

5. Bell in his note on this passage suggests that it refers to the oral Law which the Jews wished to place on the same level as Scripture. That, however, hardly fits the words indicating some gain made by selling what they had written. This gain is referred to again in III.187/184.
The Qur'an as Scripture

V.13/16: "they change the words from their places, and have forgotten part of that of which they were reminded? Thus will not cease to come upon treachery on their part, save a few among them, but pardon them, and overlook it."

V.41/45: "they change the words from their places, and say: If ye are given this, accept it, but if ye are not given it, beware". . . . These are they whose hearts Allah desires not to purify."

II.75/70: "there was a group of them who would hear the word of Allah, then they would change it, after they had understood it, and would do this knowingly."

IV.44/47: "Hast thou not seen those who were given a portion of the Scripture purchasing error and desiring that ye should err from the way? Allah well knows your enemies, and Allah suffices as a patron, Allah suffices as a helper. Some among those who profess Judaism change the words from their places, and say: ‘We hear and we rebel,’ and ‘Hear’ something that is not audible, and ‘Shepherd us’—torturing (it) with their tongues, and violating religion. Had they said, ‘We hear and we obey,’ and ‘hear’ and ‘regard us’ it had been better for them and more correct, but Allah has cursed them with their unbelief."

The key words to the understanding of these passages are barrafa “to change,” and lamadd “to torture.” Each radical in the root of a Semitic word is a harf, and to make play with these radicals in a word would be to do what is meant by barrafa. Thus to change an ‘ain to a ghain would change ba’ul, a husband, into baghul, a male thief, or metathesis kallama, "he spoke," might become kannama “he completed.” Lamadd is properly “to twist,” so that to twist a thing with the tongue

\*i.e. they forget that there are injunctions forbidding such tampering with Scripture.

These seem to be three examples of what he means by making changes in the text, with what he regarded as the correct text in the latter part of the verse. The first of them samma’i wa ‘asairi is given in II.6/19 as what the Children of Israel said when the covenant was made with them at Sinai, and in that passage Muhammad interprets the episode of the golden calf as their punishment for having said “We hear and disobey,” when they should have said “We hear and obey.” He later learned that these later words are what they actually did say, and speaks of it with approval (V.17/40; IV.6/69), as it was the phrase he recommended members of his community to use (XXIV.43/40; II.69). Thus it would seem that when he first learned the phrase from the Jews his informants deliberately misled him as to the words “we will do and be obedient” in Ex.XXIV.7, a deception about which he afterwards found out. The second means ghina muqarna at least to a reference to the Shenah which the Jews around him pronounced so distinctly that he could not catch it. Possibly all three words are what they said, i.e., when he wanted to learn the Shenah they would commence correctly with the "Hear," but then instead of completing it as he expected, they would make it run: "Hear!—what you are not going to hear." The third lamadd is mentioned also in II.103/96, where he urges them to say muncut instead of muncat. It apparently refers to some passage containing "behold," "look," "regard" or some such word in Hebrew, which instead of translating by ra’atu munaqat averts, they perverted into ra’atu with an ‘ain, which gave the wrong meaning. So he chides them that they did not use the verb so much when speaking in Arabic rendering, and had not understood it properly. A different explanation of these passages is given by J. Obermann in an article "Koran and Agada" in JASSLVII, (1941) pp. 23-48.

would mean much the same thing as barrafa. It would thus seem that all these passages refer to Muhammad’s contact with Jewish contemporaries who knew the Scriptures, presumably in Hebrew, and translated portions for him into Arabic, but unwittingly altered words so as to deceive him. We have already noted passages which show that certain groups among the Ahl al-Kitab resented Muhammad’s claim to have a revelation, and the continuation of II.75/70 actually shows us the change from friendliness to opposition, and anger that some among them still continued to tell him about their Scripture.

II.76/71: “When they meet those who have believed (i.e., the followers of Muhammad) they say: ‘We (too) have believed;’ but when they get alone with one another they say: ‘Do ye converse with them about what God hath revealed to you, that they may dispute with you before your Lord? Have ye no sense?’

77/78: Know they not that Allah knows what they keep secret as well as what they let out?"

The Prophet’s Arab opponents knew of these attempts to learn about Scripture from the Ahl al-Kitab. Not content with asserting that the substance of his message was but a refresh of the "tales of the ancients" (LXXXIII.13; LXVIII.13; XLVI.17/18; XXVI.68/70; XXIII.8/85; XVI.42/46; VIII.31; VI.25), they even claimed to know that his message was only a devising of his in which others helped him, for he used to have copied down these “tales of the ancients,” sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the evening, as they were recited to him (XXV.4/5/6). To this his only reply is that One who knows what is secret in heaven and on earth has sent it down (XXV.6/7). Then when they charge that they know he is taught by a human (XVI.103/103), his reply is that the language of the person to whom they are referring is foreign whereas his message is in plain Arabic speech.

In any case it is obvious that Muhammad did learn a good deal about the great characters of Scripture, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, Jesus and John Baptist, as well

\*There is a well-known tradition, which al-Balawi quotes in his comment on II.72, relaying how Muhammad used to visit the Jewish Bed Hamudashah, and one may assume that in his day they were accustomed to do as they did in ‘Umar’s day, read their Scriptures in Hebrew and give the meaning in Arabic. See the Seb ’al al-Balashi III.198.

\*This is the same kind of answer as was made by the founder of the Mormons when his unfriendly critics pointed out that the speeches of Nephi in his Book contained quotations from the Westminster Catechism, and one may assume that in his day they were accustomed to do as they did in ‘Umar’s day, read their Scriptures in Hebrew and give the meaning in Arabic. See the Seb ’al al-Balashi III.198.

\*Tradition has preserved the names of a number of foreigners with whom Muhammed was said to have been in contact in Mecca, any one of whom may have been the person referred to in the verse. Al-Tahbut assembles these traditions in his Commentary on this verse, and the various references to them are given in the volume From the Pyramids to Paul, New York, 1955, pp. 98-100.
as certain elements of the religious teaching of both the Jews and the Christians. The fact that what he learned of these revered characters came more often from uncannical than from canonical sources, and that certain elements in the teachings of these religions were sadly misunderstood, is of less moment to our discussion than the fact that this material is incorporated in his Scripture as revelation given to him in continuation and confirmation of previous Scripture. It must have been evident to any in his audience who had close acquaintance with the Old or the New Testament that his accounts of Biblical matters were far from accurate. There is evidence, indeed, in the Sira that on more than one occasion certain Jews in his audience made merry over his ignorance of Biblical matters. How then was he to justify his Scripture against them?

Could we answer that question fully we should have our final answer as to his doctrine of Scripture. Perhaps we can answer it in part, for we have a hint of the answer in the passage already mentioned where Muhammad says that the people of knowledge among these other communities recognize in his message the promise of their Lord (XVII.108). But what promise of their Lord?

Muhammad knows that the Jews disputed among themselves about the Book, and were in doubt and questioning (XL.I.45; XI.110/112; X.95; XL.V.17/16). He knows also that they and the Christians differed about Scriptural matters (II.125/107), so that on the Day of Resurrection Allah will have to decide between them on these matters. But if Scripture is really the same message revealed from the archetypal Book through the succession of prophets whom Allah sent, why should there be these questionings and doubts and disputes? Surely the only answer is that men have corrupted the message of the prophets. It will be remembered that this was the charge preferred against the Jews in earlier days by the Ebionites, those Judaeo-Christians whose communities to the east of the Jordan seem to have been still active even later than the 5th century, and to whose teachings the Qur’an presents at times such close resemblances. Their charge was that “false pericopes” had been introduced into the Old Testament in order to validate later Jewish teaching and practice, so that only by the removal of these “corruptions” could the teachings of the original revelation be recovered. According to the Ebionites it was the function of that angelic being whom they called the True Prophet, to care for the revelation of this original faith. This being was very closely associated with Adam, as appeared in the bearer of

 relação to both Abraham and Moses, and was in a way incarnated in Jesus. Now in Deut. XVIII.15 is the promise by Moses:

“A prophet will the Lord thy God raise up unto thee from the midst of thee, from thy brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken.”

and in Jno.XIV.6 is the promise by Jesus:

“But the Paraclete, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.”

In LXX.6 we have the well-known passage where Muhammad identifies himself with the promised Paraclete, so that in VII.157/159 we could well see his identification of himself with the promised prophet of Deuteronomy. This then would be the “promise of their Lord” which they should have recognized. If so it could well be the point of his chiding them for concealing the truth when they knew it (III.71/64; cf.II.42/99-101/41).

Possibly some contact with Ebionite teaching in North Arabia gave the pattern for Muhammad’s thought in this connection. The prophetic succession from Adam to Jesus and then to himself, with its curious emphasis on the names of Adam, Noah, Abraham, the Tribes and Moses in the succession, the angelic figure associated with the transmission of revelation whom he equates with Gabriel and the Holy Spirit, the emphasis on the “heavenly book,” the docetic Christology, and the charge of corrupting Scripture, all point in this direction. His own interpretation of the promise, however, would seem to be original, and is for us the important thing, for it gave a ground on which he might base his claim that his Scripture was the final revelation.

The Scriptures known to his contemporaries were in the hands of the Jews and the Christians. Though the Jews followed the revelation as it had been delivered to Moses in the Torah, and the Christians that delivered to Jesus in the Injil, both Jews and Christians claimed to have Abraham as their father. Yet as he came in contact with these groups in his milieu he found that—


* In later Muslim writings Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses are associated with Jesus and Muhammad as a special group set apart among the prophets and distinguished by the title wilayah.

* These connections were pointed out by A. Schiatter in a paper, “Die Entwicklung des jüdischen Christentums zum Islam,” in Rehot. Miss. Mag. fur 1918, pp. 231-261, and have had attention called to them more recently by H. J. Schoeps in a section “Ebionitische Elemente im Islam” in his *Theol. u. Gesch.* pp. 531-544.

* K. Ahrens, *Muhammad als Religionstifter*, p. 106, thinks we can see how Muhammad from what he learned of Jewish and Christian teaching was led to fix his attention on Abraham whose religion was anterior to both.

* Cf. Matt. III.5; Jn.XII.35-39 (with Strack-Billerbeck’s Kommentar, I.116 ff.); Gal.3.13. It is noteworthy that the writers of the genealogy of Jesus in Matt. 1. begin his line of descent of Jesus as Saviour with Abraham.
and in particular they disputed about Abraham (III.65/68). Consequently he went back to this Abraham from whom both Jews and Christians derived, but from whose teaching both must manifestly have departed, and interprets his religion as a restoration of the “faith of Abraham.” The steps of the argument are plain:

1) The gift of Scripture as a revelation of “the way of Allah” was a gift peculiarly associated with the family of Abraham (XXIX.47/48; cf. LVII.26; IV.54/57).

2) The message given by revelation to Muhammad is that he follow the religion (milâ) of Abraham (XVI.123/124; III.95/96; cf.IV.125/124; III.68/69; VI.161/162).

3) This religion of Abraham was what had already been given to Noah (XLII.13/11; XXXVII.8/81), and was later given to Moses and Jesus (XLII.13/11; cf. LVII.27).

4) It was revealed again to Muhammad, whose message is thus essentially that revealed to these earlier prophets and founders of communities (LXXV.2/2; LXXVI.18/19).

5) This Abrahamic faith is the “right religion” (din gymam, VI.161/162), since Abraham was a Ḥanîf (VI.161/162; II.135/129; III.67/60,59/89; XVI.120/121,123/124), was a Muslim (III.67/60; cf.XXII.78/77), and was in particular distinguished as being “one of the associates” (VI.161/162; III.67/60,59/89; XVI.120/121,123/124; II.135/129). For this reason Allah made him a model (imâm) of right religion to guide others (II.132/13), so that none but the debased of soul would mislike this faith of Abraham (II.139/13).

6) This religion Abraham bequeathed to his descendants (II.132/126), promising that those who followed him should be of him (XIV.36/39). The Jews and Christians of Muhammed’s day, however, who disputed about Abraham (III.65/68) have clearly departed from that original faith, so that Muhammad can declare that it is something different from the religion of contemporary Jews and Christians (II.135/129; III.67/60).

7) Abraham had foreseen this defection of later days and had prayed that an Apostle might be raised up from his people to rehearse Allah’s signs to them, teach them Scripture, and purify them (II.129/123).

That prayer had now been answered in the coming of Muhammad. He was raised up from among the Arabs whom the Jews recognized to be of the descendants of the Patriarch through Ishmael (Baba mursi’s 86b). He was sent to rehearse Allah’s signs (II.151/146; LXII.2; III.64/158; LXV.11), to purify them (II.151/146; III.64/158; LXII.2), and to instruct them in Scripture and wisdom (idem, and see LV.5; XVII.39/41), that wisdom (iḥkâma) which is especially associated with the line of Abraham (IV.54/57). Therefore his community is the true succession to the umma of Abraham, walking in that “straight path” (ṣaṣrār al-mustaqâma) into which Allah had guided Abraham (XVI.121/122). It is they who are the “Handis to Allah” (XXII.51/52), the true Muslims, to whom the greatest of all sins is that of “association” (shirk), for it is in this faith of Abraham which is laid upon Muhammad’s followers (XXII.78/77), who are to find in him and in those who followed him their finest example (LX.4,6).

One consequence of this position was that Abraham had now to be brought into association with the developing cultus of Muhammad’s religion, and this was secured by linking his story to that of the ancient shrine at Mecca which Muhammad, after his breach with the Jews and the Christians, had made the cult center for his community.14 In a fairly early Madinan passage which was later worked over (XIV.55/58) we find Abraham represented as praying that “this land” be kept secure, and that he and his sons be kept free from idolatry, after which prayer he states that he has caused some of his descendants to settle in the valley of the Sacred House. In XXII.26/27 it is Allah who makes the site of the Sacred House habitable for Abraham, bids him purify it and prepare it for the pilgrimage rites and the common folk to the pilgrimage. In II.125/112ff. Ishmael is associated with Abraham in the building of the Sacred House and in the preparation of it for the rites of the pilgrimage to this place, which in III.96/90 is declared to be the first such Sacred House founded for this purpose.

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14 On this matter of the change of the qibla see Bell, Origin of Islam, p. 144. It was Snouck Huregruche in his Het Mahanahe Fent, pp. 48ff., who drew particular attention to this sudden change in the Qur’anic picture of Abraham, who in the early Sūras is mentioned, as also Ishmael, merely as one of the vague religious figures of the past, but after the breach with the Jews suddenly becomes associated with Arabia and the Arabs, builds the Ka‘ba and is the first of the Muslims.
This brings us face to face with a very important element in the development of Muhammad's conception of his Qur'an as Scripture. These additions to the Abraham story are given out as "revealed" in the same way as other Scripture material was revealed. The earlier material concerning the Abraham story was "Scripture" inasmuch as it was reproducing in Arabic what was told among the Ahl al-Kitāb about Abraham, even though parts of it came from legendary lore rather than from the Biblical account. Now, however, "Scripture" has expanded to include Muhammad's own additions to the story made in the interests of developing the cultus for his community.

A second consequence was that it brought about a further definition of Muhammad's own position with regard to Scripture. Scripture, as he understood the matter, was always associated with the labors of Allah's messengers the Prophets, to whom revelation was mediated by an angelic minister. From early in his ministry, as we have seen, he had spoken of himself as both rasūl and nabi, claiming to have been called to his mission by that angelic minister (JLIII-18). All the various functions ascribed to the prophets in the Scriptures of the People of the Book are pronounced similarly ascribed to himself. But if he is the fulfillment of the promise to the People of the Book, and the Apostle whom Abraham had prayed might be raised up, then he is the final link in the prophetic succession, and ipso facto his Scripture the final revelation for mankind. In IV.108/60 we find him spoken of as on the same level as the other members of the prophetic succession; in II.108/60 as in particular on a level with Moses, and in IX.113/114ff. as on a level with Abraham, but in XXXIII.40 he is the "seal of the prophets."

This latter may have been an expression already familiar to his contemporaries. The word itself—ḥākam—which is used in the Qur'an only in this passage, is a word derived from Aramāic, where we find "sāl" used in the sense of obsequia, finis, conclusio. The claim to be the final member of the prophetic chain, the bond of the final revelation, had been made by others before him. It is implicit in the Christian claim that God who in earlier days had spoken through the prophets had spoken a final word in the message of Jesus. Explicitly, however, Ṭabari has claimed that he was the last in the succession of messengers from God, so that in the Arabic sources it is recorded that his followers called him "the Seal of the Prophets." As such Ṭabari has issued his own Scriptures and had set forth a "new law" for his community. This is what Muhammad does. He will enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong (VII.125/695), will instruct his community in Scripture and in wisdom (II.151/146; III.164/158; LXXII.2), will care for his community (IX.128/199; V.55/60), establishing dietary laws for them to follow (II.172/167E; V.3/48; VII.157/156); and being the arbiter will decide differences that arise among them (IV.59/62E/59/58). But more than that, it is now he who will decide also among those who still hold to former Scriptures (LXII.15/14), seeing that he has the commission to be Allah's further and bringer of good tidings to them also (V.19/28). Thus he can claim, as Ṭabari had claimed, that his religion is to be victorious over all other religions (IX.33).

This naturally gives the Prophet a position of peculiar authority. What more natural, then, than that this position of authority be given confirmation by revelation. Late Madinan passages in the Qur'an have many such "revelations" with reference to the position of the Prophet in the community and the indulgences he may claim for himself in this privileged status. The community is informed that his dignity must be guarded (XXXIII.53E; LXXVII.2; LXXIX.7), that he must not be treated as on the same level with ordinary believers (XXIV.68E; XXXII.93E; IX.58E; LXXVII.6). He is allowed special matrimonial privileges (XXXIII.50/49E), and his disposition

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of Darius the king (Zech. VII), those were all revelations concerned with immediate circumstances. But neither Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah or any other Old Testament prophet thought of his pronouncements as destined to form part of a Book of Scripture for a community. It was the community, long after these prophets had passed away, which gathered up those among their pronouncements in which, though originally addressed to local and particular situations, they nevertheless heard a message of God which had eternal validity. It was this recognition by the community of the element of eternal validity which made them Scripture.

It was for this reason that later thought among the People of the Book tended more and more to regard the message of the divine messenger as a whole, rather than as piecemeal revelations. In Rabbinic thought it was the whole Torah, not just the Ten Commandments, that was given at Sinai. The compiler of IV Ezra pictures Ezra and his scribes at one session producing the twenty-four canonical and the seventy reserved books (IV Ezra.XIV.47-48), just as the writer of Slavonic Enoch represents the Patriarch dictating his visions to his sons. Thus we can understand why Muhammad’s contemporaries raised the objection that if his preachments are indeed Scripture that ought to have been sent down all at once (XXV.33/54). He however knew from experience that “inspiration” seize a man unexpectedly, and he was aware that proclamations from a religious leader are needed as circumstances arise, so he insists that his revelation is parcelled out piecemeal (XXV.34-35; XVII.166/167). The problem facing him was that of adjusting a conception of inspiration derived from one source to a concept of Scripture derived from another, without any clear perception of the nature of the problem. The parallel here with the case of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon is striking.

One inevitable consequence of such a situation, where the prophet himself is setting forth his pronouncements as Scripture for his community, is that the community finds itself bound to regard as eternal validity pronouncements made in particular situations of limited and temporary relevance, and often made with little understanding of what they involve when no longer connected with those local and temporary situations. A typical example in the case of the Qur’ān is that of the nabi’ in Sūra IX.57, where the exigencies of the war with the Meccans called forth an abrogation of the custom of intercalation that had been introduced into Arabia in pre-Islamic days in order to bring the lunar months into accord with the seasons of the solar year, and by this abrogation has bound the Muslim community for all time.

Ex. Rabba, xxviii, 6 goes even further and suggests that all the messages of the later prophets were also given there.
to a lagging lunar calendar. The regulations concerning polygamy, the veiling of women and slave concubinage were framed similarly in terms of a local situation. But local situations are subject to change, and at times in the Prophet's own lifetime the problems involved in changing situations arose. On his theory of Scripture how were they to be solved? By reference to the archetypal Book, for since this was with Allah He could confirm or abrogate what He wishes (XIII.39).

This notion of abrogation was not itself new. Paul in his Epistles had taught a doctrine of abrogatio legis in the sense that the ordinances which had been promulgated by one messenger from God were no longer valid as a whole when a new messenger had come with a fresh revelation of "the way of God" for a new generation of men. Thus Paul declares that the numerous regulations of the Law of Moses were a pedagogus to prepare men for the new law of Jesus, but many of them were abrogated by that new law proclaimed by Jesus (Rom. II—X; Gal. III—V). So Montanus in Asia Minor, and Mani in Mesopotamia, though they admitted the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, taught that they were superseded by certain of their own teachings, and so proceeded to lay down laws and ordinances for the new communities they believed they were called to found. If, therefore, Muhammad were a newly sent messenger from Allah, his formulation of regulations for the religious and social life of his community would be a natural consequence of his mission, and these regulations would abrogate, for those who followed him, the regulations which had previously been following. Jesus had said: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you" (Matt. V.21 E.), a more perfect formulation of the law being given to supersede a less perfect form. So for Muhammad to have made proclamation of new community legislation was quite in keeping with his claim to prophetic office. Those who did not believe in him might raise questions each time something new was proclaimed (IX.182/185, 187/188), just as the Jews had raised questions at the new teaching of Jesus. The Meccans might even scoff at his proclamations (IX.65/66; V.57/62), telling him that he is uttering vanity (XXX.58). They might deny that he was sent from Allah (XIII.43) and say: "O Allah, if this be from Thee, rain down upon us stones from heaven" (VIII.37). But in this he was but meeting with what bringers of revelation before him had met (III.184/181), so his teaching of an abrogatio legis was in principle no different from that of those other messengers in whose succession he claimed to stand, for Allah who did the sending of the message could abrogate or confirm as He chose (XIII.39).

In the Qur'an, however, we find a quite different application of the principle of abrogation. The two relevant passages are—

XVI.101/102: "And when We substitute a verse in place of a verse—and Allah knows best what He sends down—they say: 'Thou art only a fabricator.' Nay, but most of them have no knowledge.

II.105/106: "Whatever verse We cancel or cause (thou) to forget, We bring one better than it or its like. Dost thou not know that Allah is powerful over everything?"

The point in both passages is that an earlier proclamation is being superseded by a later one. The first passage would seem to refer to some deliberate alteration of an ordinance by Muhammad, while the other at least suggests that in issuing some injunction he had forgotten an earlier statement of his own with which this new injunction was in conflict, so that when he was reminded of it this was necessary to explain the conflict. In any case these verses form the basis for one section of the Masora of the Qur'an, viz., that known as nāṣiḥa. manṣūkh, which collects the various verses of the Qur'an whose statements stand in real or apparent contradiction with one another, and arranges them to show which are the abrogating and which the abrogated verses.

Finally, in the culture of his environment, Muhammad seems to have found a further ground on which to establish the superiority of his Scripture to all other Scriptures. If he is the seal of the prophets his religion must obviously be victorious over the other religions (IX.33, cf. LVIII.24), and consequently his Scripture superior to theirs.


* How this is both a confirmation of God's law and an abrogation of the Mosaic law is discussed in the Apostolic Constitutions, Bl. VI, §§ 22 and 25.

* For Montanus see Lawlor in EKE VIII.88; for Mani see Alexander of Lyoplea, cap. v and Acta Archelai, cap. xii.

* al-Wāhidī, Āṣāb an-Nasrī, Cairo, 1913 A.H., pp. 211, 212 says that the tradition with regard to the first passage was that unbelievers objected that Muhammad at one time bade his followers do such and such, but later forbade it, or eased the regulations for them, and on p. 23 says with regard to the second passage that unbelievers used to point out how Muhammad would say one thing on one day and then go back on it another day, which to them proved that he was only producing things out of his own head not giving revelation material that he had received from Allah.

* There were works being written on this subject before the middle of the second Islamic century, if we can trust the lists in Fihrist p. 57. The subject occupied the attention of no less distinguished authorities than Ibn al-Kalbī (c. 810) and Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Qāsim b-Sallām (d. 922). One of the best known treatises is that by Ibn Sa'īna written on the margin of al-Wāhidī's Āṣāb an-Nasrī, and often quoted in Nībālakah-Sayyid al-nāṣīḥah under the name of Hībatāllah.

* So in the Turfan fragment 8 q. 18 f. Mani's religion is to rule over all others and in the fragment T II D 186 (Andreas-Hemming, II.415) Mani enumerates the points in which his religion is superior to previous religions.
An exalted conception of the regard in which Scripture should be had seems to have been with him at an early period. We find Scripture referred to as honorable (karm, LV.177/78), glorious (majid, L.1), sublime (azzu, XL.41), blessed (mubarak, V.98, 155/156), which none should touch but the purified (LV.79/78). It is taught by the Merciful Himself (LV.1.6), so that at its recital men ought to do obeisance (mujud, LXXXIV.21). It is to be recited in appropriate intonation (tartil, LXXIII.4), to which men should listen in silence (VII.204/209).

Much of this may have come to him along with his general concept of Scripture from the People of the Book, and that some of it did so come from them is clear from LI.21:

"Had We sent down this Qur’an upon a mountain, thou would have seen it humbling itself, cleaving asunder out of fear of Allah,

which is but a reproduction of the Rabbinic legends about Sinai being humble for the reception of the Torah, not proud and disdainful like Tabor and Hermon and Carmel, and about how it was wrenched from its anchorage in earth when the Torah came to be delivered upon it. The People of the Book, however, were by no means prepared to accept Muhammad’s "revelations" as on a level with those in the Books in their possession, even though he claims that Allah has put things in his message in order to convince the Ahi al-Kitab and remove their doubts (LXXIV.91f). Allah desires, he tells them, that those who have "the knowledge" may know that this is the truth from their Lord, that they may believe in it and their hearts acquiesce in it (XXII.64/65). Some of them apparently misunderstood passages which speak of the learned among the Children of Israel recognizing his message (XXVI.197; XXVIII.57/58; XXX.42/43; XLVI.10/9; VI.14/14; XIII.36) may mean no more than that they recognized the stories about various Biblical characters which he told in his preaching, but when we read in XVII.107/108f. (cf. XIII.36) that those to whom "the knowledge" has been given fall down in obeisance when they hear it recited, fall on their faces weeping, and in V.83/86f. that the Christians with tears hail the message, and beg Allah to write them down as those that bear witness to it, this, if it can be taken at face value, indicates a much deeper impression made by his message. This need not be a surprise. At a much later date the curious Messianic mission of Sabbatai Zevi in 1666 caused such a tide of emotion as "never was seen before, nor will be again till the true redemption comes," and the present writer can remember from his boyhood stories of the extravagant emotions stirred in certain groups when John Dowie announced himself in Australia as the Elijah whose coming was promised. A less stirring work than Millennial Dawn would be hard to imagine, yet in our own generation Russellite propagandists tell of folk so overcome at hearing it read that they fall on their faces weeping.

As a whole, however, the People of the Book were unresponsive (X.15/16; IV.61/64; LII.89/89ff.; LII/76/171; XLII.13/126/25; IX.124/125), indeed were rather contemptuous of its claims to be Scriptural (X.15/16; VII.208/208; XII.196/196; XIII.43; IX.125/190), or to be more anything than his own invention (XXIV.4/5; XXI.6; X.98/99; XL.16/16; 37; XXII.6/4; XLVI.8/7); calling it a medley of dreams (XII.5), a vain babbling (XXIV.30/32), the uttering of vanity (XXX.38). Since it but increases them in unbelief (V.64/69/67/72), he concludes that Allah has placed a veil between him and them when he recites it (XVII.45/47; XVIII.57/55; cf. XXXI.5/4; VLI.25/28), and is encouraged by the assurance that the time will come when men will recognize his message (XXVII.88). Indeed, though men reject it, the Jinn turn aside to hearken to it (XLVI.98/98), recognizing that it is a marvellous discourse (LXXII.12/4; XVLI.90/90).

The Qur’an is Scripture

On this latter point, that of its marvellousness, Islam has built a claim to the Qur’an’s uniqueness among books of Scripture. The Merciful Himself taught it (LV.118), but so did He teach Scripture to Moses (VII.145/142), and to Jesus (III.4/45). It is true pages, in which are true Scriptures (XCIII.6), but that was the claim they also made. It was "sent down," but so were the other Scriptures. It rectified the "signs" of Allah, but so did they. In it Allah set forth every kind of similitude (XVIII.89/91), but the mithall was characteristic also of the Scriptures of the Jews and the Christians. If he can claim that it is something that could not have been devised save by Allah (X.37/39), the same was true of them, for Amos long be...
THE QUR'āN AS SCRIPTURE

whose signs are clear (XXII.16), and which will make plain those matters about which the people ask (V.101). This is why it was a marvellous discourse, and inimitable.

"It is then not enough for them that We have sent down to thee the Book to be recited to them! Verily in that there is a mercy and a reminder for a community which believes" (XXIX.51/50).

There is no statement in the Qur'ān that this has anything miraculous about it, beyond the fact that all revelation is in itself miraculous. Yet it is called a "clear sign" ( sûra XXIX.49/48) and sûra is the word for "miracle," so that at an early date Islamic orthodoxy developed a theory that the uniqueness of the Qur'ān lay in the miraculousness of its matchless perfection as an Arabic composition. The outstanding cultural accomplishment of the pagan Arabs had been their poetry. The Qur'ān is not poetry (XXXVI.69). It is in the rhymed prose of rhythmic structure in which the ancient soothsayers used to set forth their gnomic wisdom, and which perhaps was a survival of a very ancient Semitic form for the proclamation of religious utterances. As Muḥammad used it to set forth the final restatement of the original faith of Abraham, however, it reached perfection, which not Jinn and men combined could emulate. This is the famous doctrine of l'fāz al-Qur'ān, which to the present day has been the strongest factor working against any real critical approach among Muslim peoples to the study of the Qur'ān as Scripture.

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"This was argued with great learning by Dr. H. Müller in his Die Propheten in ihrer ursprünglichen Form; die Grundgesetze der Urämischen Poet e erchlossen und nachgeraten in Bibel, Keilschriften und Koran, Wien, 1895.

44 See the Oechot Zaddikim quoted in Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews, V.417.

45 It is certain that no Arabic version of either the Old or the New Testament was current in Muhammad's day, though it is not impossible that in North Arabia some attempts at rendering portions of it into Arabic had been made. Perhaps Sūra XI.44 reflects the fact that his audiences were accustomed to Scripture in a non-Arabic form.
THE TEXTUAL HISTORY
OF THE QUR’AN*

Wherever we find a religion that has a Scripture, that fact presents scholarship with the problem of the textual history of that Scripture. There are no exceptions to this among the historic religions. In the case of Buddhism, for example, we have the problem of the Pali Canon, the Sanskrit Canon, the Tibetan Canon, and the Chinese Canon. In the case of Zoroastrianism there is the liveliest dispute among Iranian scholars at this very moment as to the Avestan text, and, as we well know, the text of the Pahlavi books is an exceedingly complicated problem. Each generation of students for the last hundred years has found itself faced with new problems concerning the text of the Old Testament, and our own memories are still fresh with the excitement caused by the discovery of the Chester Beatty Papyri and the Ryland’s Gospel Fragment, both of which raised lively discussions on matters related to the textual history of the New Testament. Whether we face the text of the Book of the Dead, coming from the ancient Egyptian religion, or the text of the Qur’an coming from the youngest of the great historic religions, we have the problem of the history of the text.

In the case of none of the historic religions do we have the autographs of the original Scriptures. What we have in our hands are the documents that have come down in the various communities, and which have been more or less tampered with in transmission. This tampering does not mean tampering with evil intent; it may, indeed, have been with very good intent, but nevertheless it was tampering. The Avesta, for example, was written out in Sassanian times in a new alphabet based on the characters of Sassanian Pahlavi, and we have no knowledge whatever of what the original Avestan script was like. Similarly the Hebrew Scriptures as we know them are in the “square script”, but this was not the script used when their originals were written. Moreover, the “pointing” that is in the text of all our copies is a relatively recent addition to the text, and at least three varieties of this “pointing” are known. When we come to the Qur’an, we find

* Lecture delivered on 21st October, 1946, at a meeting of the Middle East Society of Jerusalem, under the Chairmanship of Aref Bey el Aref, O.B.E., Assistant District Commissioner.
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When this was done he had four copies of it made and sent one to Kūfa, one to Bayrah, one to Damascus, and one to Mecca, and ordered all other copies in existence to be destroyed. All our modern copies are the direct descendants of this standard official text of ʿUthmān. Indeed, the Egyptian standard text of 1342 A.H. expressly says —

“its consonantal text has been taken from what the Massorah has transmitted as to the Codices which were sent by ʿUthmān to Bayrah, Kūfa, Damascus, and Mecca, and the Codex which he made for the people of Madīna, and that which he kept for himself, and the Codices which were copied from those.”

This is not, however, the history of the text as modern scholarship reads it.

To begin with, it is quite certain that when the Prophet died there was no collected, collated, arranged body of material of his revelations. What we have is what could be gathered together somewhat later by the leaders of the community when they began to feel the need of a collection of the Prophet’s proclamations, and by that time much of it was lost, and other portions could only be recorded in fragmentary form. There is a quite definite and early Tradition, found in several sources, which says, “The Prophet of Allah was taken before any collection of the Qurʾān had been made”. Muslim orthodoxy holds that the Prophet himself could neither read nor write, but in our generation both Professor Torrey of Yale and Dr. Richard Bell of Edinburgh, working independently of each other, have concluded that the internal evidence in the Qurʾān itself points to the fact that he could write, and that for some time before his death he had been busy preparing material for a Kūfah, which he would leave to his people as their Scripture, to be to them what the Torah was to the Jews or the Injil to the Christians. There is, indeed, an unwritten tradition current among the Shiʿites, that the Prophet had made a collection of passages of his revelations written on leaves and silk parchments, and just before his death told his son-in-law All where this material was kept hidden behind his couch, and bade him take it and publish it in Codex form. It is not impossible that there was such a beginning at a collection of revelation material by the Prophet himself, and it is also possible that Dr. Bell may be right in thinking that some at least of this material can be detected in our present Qurʾān. Nevertheless there was certainly no Qurʾān existing as a collected, arranged, edited book, when the Prophet died.

At first the leaders of the community, who had charge of the community affairs after the Prophet had gone, did not seem to have felt the need for any collection of the revelations. It was only after the community began to settle down to the new situ-
ation in which it found itself, that the need for a record of these revelations began to make itself felt. While the Prophet was alive, the fountain of revelation, so to speak, was still open. New injunctions might at any time come to abrogate earlier injunctions which were no longer adequate for the developing life of the community; or fresh revelations might be forthcoming to meet new situations that were arising. The rapidly developing community life in Madina had meant that the Muslim community was continually being faced with unexpected community problems, and they had grown accustomed to coming to the Prophet for instruction, and for the solution of their problems. The customary form for these instructions to take was that of revelations. With the death of the Prophet, however, the source of revelations automatically ceased to flow, and his immediate successors had to perform to direct community affairs in accordance with what was known of revelations that had been given.

But what revelation material was available to these early successors of the Prophet? There were some passages, particularly passages of a legalistic character, that the Prophet had himself ordered to be written down, and which were still in the possession of the community. There were also some passages of a liturgical nature which were used in the daily prayer services, and which, whether written down or not, would have been memorized by a goodly number of members of the community. There may have been passages in written form among the Prophet’s own possessions. There certainly were many passages of revelation which individual members of the community had written down, not because the Prophet had ordered them to do so, but because they themselves were interested in having them in written form. Then there was the memory of the community. That tradition is probably sound which says that the revelations proclaimed by the Prophet were with few exceptions relatively short, and there would have been many members of the community who could remember numbers of revelations given forth on various occasions. When the early leaders of the community needed to know if there were any injunctions extant regarding one matter or another, it was to these sources of information that they turned.

Perhaps even in the Prophet’s own lifetime there were certain members of the community who took an interest in “collecting” the pronouncements of their Prophet. In this there is nothing unusual. It was precisely this that in the earliest Christian community provided those collections of “Sayings of Jesus”, that we find among the basic material of the Gospels. Certainly after the Prophet’s death we find certain members of the community interested in increasing their collections of the pronouncements of the Prophet, and these presently came to be known as the Qur’ān—the Reciters, who became a kind of depository of revelations to whom the civic leaders could turn for information, when such was needed, as to whether there was any revelation which might decide how they should deal with such and such a situation. Some of these Qur’āns might have chosen to memorize as much as they could discover of the various revelations, while others chose rather to commit their collections to written form. There has been a suggestion that the Prophet himself had begun to organize a body of Qur’āns, who were to be the guardians of revelation, but the evidence adduced for this is extremely tenuous and the early history of the Qur’ān is still veiled in the greatest obscurity.

Here, however, we have our first stage in the history of the text of the Qur’ān. There could not be a definite text while the Prophet was still alive, and abrogation of earlier material or additions of fresh material were always possible. With his death, however, that situation ended, and we have what was preserved of the revelation material, partly in written form, partly in oral form, in the hands of the community, and tending to become the special care of a small body of specialists. Tradition says that it was the sudden danger of the loss of these specialists that led to the next stage in the history of the text. We read that at the Battle of Yamāmah in the year 12 A.H., so many of the Qur’āns were among the slain that ‘Umar suddenly awoke to the fact that a few more battles like that of Yamāmah might mean that a great portion of the revelation material would be irretrievably lost, and so he came to the Caliph Abū Bakr and urged him on the necessity of getting this material that was in the possession of the Qur’ān assembled and written down in some fixed form. But it was too late. As it is we find numerous references in tradition to verses which were “lost on the Day of Yamāmah”. Abū Bakr, the story continues, demurred, asking who was he that should do a thing which the Prophet himself had not done, and about which he had left no commandment. ‘Umar, however, convinced him, and he summoned Zaid b. Thābit, who had been an amanuensis of the Prophet, and bade him assemble from the community all that any of them had of the revelations of the Prophet, and write them out in goodly form. Zaid, it is said, also demurred, asking what business they had undertaking to do a thing which the Prophet had not seen fit to do, and about which he had left no commandment. ‘Umar, however, convinced him also of the urgency and necessity of the task, and Zaid, so the tradition records, set about assembling the material from leaves, from white stones, from the shoulder-blades of camels, and from the breasts of men. In other words, he assembled the material available, both oral and written, in an attempt at a first definitive text of the revelations.

The text thus obtained Tradition regards as officially promulgated by Abū Bakr, and so the first Recension of the text of the Qur’ān. Modern criticism is willing to accept the fact that
Abū Bakr had a collection of revelation material made for him and, may be, committed the making of it to Zaid b. Thābit. It is not willing to accept, however, the claim that this was an official recension of the text. All we can admit is that it was a private collection put together for the first Caliph Abū Bakr. Some scholars deny even this, and maintain that Zaid’s work was done for the third Caliph, 'Uthmān, but as ‘Uthmān was persona non grata to the later Traditionists, they invented a first recension by Abū Bakr so that ‘Uthmān might not have the honour of having made the first Recension. Someone, however, must have made the collection that Ḥafṣah, the daughter of ‘Umar, later produced to form part of the material used in ‘Uthmān’s recension, so that we must think of some private collection made either by Abū Bakr or ‘Umar, and it may well have been by the first Caliph—but it was a private, not an official undertaking.

As a matter of fact, there were others besides Zaid b. Thābit who had busied themselves with this task of assembling in Codex form a complete collection of what still survived of the revelation material which now makes up the Qur’ān. Tradition knows the names of several of these, e.g. Sūlim b. Mu‘āqib, who was killed at the battle of Yemāmah, and who, tradition says, was the first to make such an attempt at setting all his material down in Codex form; ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who is said to have endeavoured to arrange the revelations in their chronological order; Anas b. Mālik, whose Codex may have been based on that of his uncle Abū Zaid, who was well known as one of the early collectors of revelation; Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘ārī, whose Codex was a large one, and was familiarly given the name of Luḥāb al-Quṭbī; and various others, including the two famous Codices of Ubay b. Ka‘b and of ‘Abdallāh b. Mas‘ūd, from both of which a great body of variant readings has survived. It is frequently asserted that the verb jama‘a “to collect”, as used in this connection, means only Ḥafṣa‘a “to memorize”. The verb, it is true, can have this meaning, but since ‘Alī is said to have packed up what he “collected” on his camel and brought it along; since what Abū Mūsā had “collected” was something that had a nickname; and since the friends of Ibn Mas‘ūd at Kūfa supported him in his refusal to give up what he had “collected” to be burned, it is quite clear that we are dealing with collections that were in written form. In the case of the Codices of ‘Alī, Ubay and Ibn Mas‘ūd, indeed, we find tradition which processes to give the order in which the revelation material was arranged in their Codices, an order which differed considerably from that found in our present Qur’ān.

The most important fact that Tradition has preserved in connection with these early Codices, however, is the fact that certain of them came to attain the position of metropolitan Codices. Thus we read that the people of Kūfa came to regard the Codex of Ibn Mas‘ūd as in a sense their Recension of the Qur’ān, the people of Basra the Codex of Abī Mūsā, the people of Damascenus the Codex of one Muqīd b. al-Awād, and the Syrians other than the folk of Damascenus, the Codex of Ubay. This is exactly what might have been expected, and has a close parallel in the case of the New Testament, where the texts that go under the name of the Alexandrian text, the Neutral text, the Western text, the Caesarean text, were recensions of the text, differing slightly from one another, and favouring certain groups of variant readings, which had grown up and come into use in certain important centres of Church life. As Kūfa, Basra, Damascenus, and Homs began to develop into important centres of the Islamic community, it was quite natural that they, as well as Mecca and Madina, would want their own collection or revelation material, and the Tradition reflects the fact that different recensions of the material came into use at these different centres. Such recensions, while embracing in general the same body of material, always differ from one another in the inclusion or exclusion of certain material, and in their choice among a multitude of variant readings, and this holds of these early metropolitan Codices of Islam. Thus we know that the Codex of Ibn Mas‘ūd omitted Sūras I, CXIII and CXIV, and that both the Codices of Ubay and Abī Mūsā included two short Sūras, which are not in our present text, while a considerable body of variant readings from these Codices is to be gathered from the grammatical, lexical, exegetical and masoretic literature of later generations which still remembered and discussed them. There were once, indeed, a number of special works, under the name of Kitāb al-Maṣābīḥ, which specially discussed this stage of the Old Codices, and it was a fortunate accident which enabled the present writer to discover and publish the text of the sole surviving example of these, the Codex Book of Ibn Abī Dāwūd.

It was the existence of these variants in the texts used in different centres that led to the next stage in the history of the text. The story in which the memory of this is enshrined is that Hudhayfah b. al-Yaman, on being sent to the armies that were fighting in Ḥijāz, was horrified to find the Kūfis and Syrians disputing over the correct reading in passages that they were using in their devotional services, and in some cases even denying that what the others were using was really part of the Qur’ān. In his distress he returned to the Caliph ‘Uthmān at Madina and said—“Overtake this people before they differ over the Qur’ān the way the Jews and Christians differ over their Scripture.” ‘Uthmān was persuaded, and sending for Zaid b. Thābit, laid on him the task of making this official recension. Tradition says that he did four things in this connection. First he made an announcement in the mosque calling on all who had any revelation material to bring it to Zaid b. Thābit. Second, he sent to Ḥafṣah to get the
material that had come down to her from her father 'Umar. Ḥafṣah produced this from under her bed, and it was found that the worms had eaten it in places, but apparently its material was used for 'Uthmān’s recension and then returned to Ḥafṣah, for at her funeral the Governor, Marwān, who had tried in vain to get it from her during her lifetime, demanded it of her brother and destroyed it, fearing, she said, that if it got abroad, the readings that ‘Uthmān desired to repress would recommence. Third, he appointed a Committee to work with Zaid b. Thabit, to scrutinize all the material sent in, to accept only that for which two witnesses could be found, and to see that what was written was written out in the genuine Quraish dialect. Fourth, when the work was completed he had copies made and sent to the great metropolitan centres, with orders that all other Codices or portions of revelation material in circulation be destroyed. Some traditionists tell us that this was known as “the year of the destruction of the Codices”, and for long afterwards we hear echoes of the bitter hostility of the Qurāʾi to ‘Uthmān because of his work in thus canonizing the Madinan text tradition and prohibiting the use of any other.

‘Uthmān’s official Recension gained rapid and almost universal acceptance. Only in Kifā we do we hear of any considerable support for one of the earlier texts, for there the text of Ibn Masʿud continued for some time to dispute the authority of the new canonical text, but even Kifā had finally to come into line with the rest of Islam, and accept the Madinan text. It is always arguable that as Madīna was the Prophet’s own city, and was the home of the majority of “Old Muslims” who had been closest to the Prophet, the Madinan text tradition had all the chances of being the best available type of text. It is worth emphasizing, however, that at the time it was only one of several types of text tradition in existence, and ‘Uthmān’s work in recording it in a definite and final form, closed a stage in the history of the text. Up till that time had been the period of the Old Codices, but from then on we trace the history of one Codex only, that which represents the official Recension of ‘Uthmān. Attempts have been made to avoid this conclusion by claiming that all that ‘Uthmān did was to remove dialectal peculiarities that had crept into the pronunciation of the Qurāʾ as it was recited, and have a standard-ized type of text written out in the pure dialect of the Quraish. This matter of Quraish dialect is indeed mentioned in the traditions referring to this Recension, but to pretend that it was merely a matter of dialectal variations is to run counter to the whole purport of the accounts. The vast majority of dialectal variations would not have been represented in the written form at all, and so would not have necessitated a new text. The stories of Zaid and his colleagues working on the text make it perfectly clear that they were regarded as recording a text de novo, for we read that at times when there was only one witness available for a certain passage they would wait till another witness who knew that passage had come back from the war, or wherever he had been, and recite it to them; and there were discussions among them as to where certain passages belonged in the collection. Finally, the mass of variant readings that has survived to us from the Codices of Ukāi and Ibn Masʿud, shows that they were real textual variants and not mere dialectal peculiarities.

The text that ‘Uthmān canonized, however, was a bare consonantal text, with marks to show verse endings, and but a few points to distinguish consonants, no marks of vowels, and no orthographic signs of any kind. Unfortunately we do not know the precise kind of script in which it was written. The earliest fragments of Qurʾānic MSS which survive to us are all written in a kind of script that grew up in the city of Kifā as a special script for the writing of Qurʾāns, and which we call the Kifā script. None of these fragments, however, can be dated earlier than the second century of the Hijrah, and it is, indeed, doubtful if any are really older than the third century. One often reads of there being still in existence Qurʾāns written by the hands of ‘Uthmān, or of ‘Ali, or of ‘Aff’s sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, but such attributions are merely the fruit of pious imagination. The late Professor Bergsträsser collected some twenty references to claims made by different centres of Islam to possess the famous Codex of ‘Uthmān himself, which he was reading when assassin-ated, and whose pages were discoloured by his blood.

Faced with a bare consonantal text the reader obviously had to interpret it. He had to decide whether a certain sign was a sād or a sīn, a qād or a qād, a fā or a gīf, and so on; and when he had settled that he had further to decide whether to read a verbal form as an active or a passive, whether to treat a certain word as a verb or a noun, since it might be either, and so on. In the first generation this problem would not have been so serious for the Qurāʾ, for memory of what the text should be would in many passages decide the matter of how it was to be pointed and vocalized, and where the pauses that governed the meaning should be. Theoretically one could suppose that this oral tradition as to how the text should be read could be transmitted carefully from generation to generation, as was the case with the old poetry, but actually the enormous body of variant readings that has been recorded proves that there was no consistent tradition on this matter transmitted. From the date of the publication of ‘Uthmān’s official text till the year 322 A.H. we are in the period of Ḥikāyā or “free choice”, and it is very curious that though the ‘Uthmānic text is now taken as the basis, many famous savants, even to the end of this period, were accustomed to state their preference in
certain passages for readings from one or other of the old non-
Uthmânî Codices. As we might have expected we find that the
ikhtiyâr of certain famous teachers tended to be perpetuated by
their students and won acceptance in more or less extensive circles,
so that before long we begin to hear of students studying the riwâ-
ya of So-and-so as to hârijî, and the riwâya of So-and-so as to
qirâ'a, i.e. their scheme, first of pointing and then of vowe-
lung the unpointed unwovelled text. This again tended to crystallize
at the great centres where students congregated, so that soon we
begin to hear of the tradition of the Kifans, or the traditions of
the Başrans, or Syrians, etc. as to the correct way of pointing
and voweuling the text, this meaning the tradition that had come
to dominate in their Schools in which Qur'ânic learning was cul-
tivated. At a fairly early date we hear of three principles emerging
and being laid down to guide the ikhtiyâr, viz. māj bârî, 'arabiyya,
and kisâl. That is, the reading proposed must be one that will
check with the consonantal text, will be in consonance with the
laws of Arabic grammar, and be a reading that has come down
from some reputable authority. There was, of course, dispute
about these rules. Some claimed that so long as a reading was
good Arabic and made good sense it did not matter whether it
came from the Uthmânî Codex or one of the other Old Codices,
ous they also came from the time of the Prophet. Some were
contemplateous of kisâl, but that a reading must be sound Arabic
fiction was naturally accepted by all.

The next stage was to indicate these readings in the text itself.
One did not have to mark them in the text, of course, for once
they had been memorized properly the Reader could take up
a copy of the consonantal text and read according to what he had
memorized. Memory, however, is a very treacherous thing, and
very soon the custom was introduced, based apparently on a
practice in vogue among the Christians using Syriac Scriptures,
of marking the readings by a system of dots, black and coloured.
Tradition makes it clear that there was very considerable oppo-
rion to the introduction of these points into the Codices, this be-
ing regarded as "innovation" and so smacking of heresy. There
is no unanimity as to who first introduced the systems of points,
the favourite names in connection therewith being those of Yahyâ
b. Ya'amâr and Nasr b. Âqimâ. There was at first a period of fluid-
ity, and we actually have some fragments of Codices in which by
the use of vari-coloured dots different possibilities of pointing
one and the same word are indicated, while the great majority
of words have no points marked at all. This suggests that at first
only those words would be pointed where there was some un-
certainty as to what the correct reading should be. That the prac-
tice of pointing came to be generally accepted and consistently
carried through the whole of a Codex is said to be due to the
activity of the famous official Al-Hajjâj b. Yâqûb, who was per-
haps the most remarkable figure in Islam during the Caliphate
of 'Abd al-Malik. When we come to examine the accounts of the
activity of Al-Hajjâj in this matter, however, we discover to our
surprise that the evidence points strongly to the fact that his
work was not confined to fixing more precisely the text of the
Qur'ân by a set of points showing how it was to be
read, but he seems to have made an entirely new Recension of
the Qur'ân, having copies of his new text sent to the great metropol-
itan centres, and ordering the destruction of earlier copies in
existence there, much as Uthmân had done earlier. Moreover this
new text promulgated by Al-Hajjâj seems to have undergone more
or less extensive alterations. The Christian writer al-Kindî in his
polemical work known as the Apology of al-Kindî, makes a con-
troversial point out of the alterations he claimed that al-Hajjâj,
as everyone knew, had made in the text of the Qur'ân, but this
was regarded by scholars as just a polemical exaggeration such
as one might expect in a controversial writing. However, in the
Kitâb al-Masâbîrî of Ibn Abî Dâwûd, already mentioned, we have
recorded in a special chapter a list of readings in our Qur'ân text
which are due to alterations made by al-Hajjâj. If this is so, our
textus receptus is not based on the Recension of Uthmân, but
that on that of al-Hajjâj b. Yâqûb.

The limitation of ikhtiyâr came in the year 322 A.H., when
the WâJs Ibn Muyâlah and Ibn 'Isâ, guided by the great savant
Ibn Mâjâhîd, settled on seven systems of reading the text, and
decided that these alone were canonical, permissible ways of
pointing and voweuling the text. Their decision did not go un-
challenged, but the severe punishment meted out to two famous
scholars, Ibn Mâqâm and Ibn Shanâkîhîd, who persisted in their
right to ikhtiyâr, and to read, if they saw fit, readings from the
Old Codices, soon convinced the Readers that the period of ikh-
tiyâr was over, and they were faced with a limitation which mark-
ed a new stage in the history of the text.

The Seven Systems chosen by Ibn Mâjâhîd were those of
Nâfî, of the Madinan School, Ibn Kâthir of the Meccan School,
Ibn 'Amîr of the Syran School, Abû 'Amir of the Başran School,
and 'Aqîmî, Hanza and Al-Kisâ'î of the Kifan School. His choice
was not unchallenged. Some seriously objected to the fact that
there were three among the seven from the Kifans School, and
desired one of them to be replaced by a reader from another
School, some favouring Abû Ja'far of the Madinan School, and
others Ya'qûb of the Başran School. In particular the position of
al-Kisâ'î in the group was challenged, and the candidate of
Khalîf of the Kifan School was for long vigorously pressed. Ibn
Majâhîd's choice, however, held, and the systems of his seven
are still the canonical Seven, though in many instances the ma-
soritic works continue, e.g. in the famous work an-Nasr of Ibn al-Jazari, to record the variants of the Ten, i.e. the Seven with the three whose candidacy was pressed. Some masoretic works, indeed, preserved fourteen systems, including besides the Ten the readings of four other Readers, Ibn Muyashin of Mecca, al-Hasan of Basra, al-Yazdir of Basra, and al’Amash of Kufa, whose systems had had some backing as more worthy to be included in the Seven and made canonical than some of those chosen by Ibn Mujahid, but which had failed to find any very general acceptance. The famous work al-lithai of al-Banai, for example, records the readings of all fourteen. Here and there yet other chumants were supported, but for reasons which are not at all clear, Ibn Mujahid was able to gain official support for his seven, and within half a century they had gained very wide acceptance.

We do not have the systems of any of these seven in the form given it by its founder. These seven systems were transmitted in the Schools, and very shortly after their acceptance as canonical we find a great many riwaqas in existence as to how each of them read. In the case of one or two of them the riwaqas were very considerable in number. By the time that ad-Dani, who died in 444 A.H. came to write his Ta’sr, two riwaqas from each of the seven had been chosen as canonical, and as alone having official sanction. As to how these were chosen we have no information whatever, and at present cannot even venture a guess. All we know is that the process of fixing the text ne varietur had gone this further stage, and as such had been recorded by ad-Dani. For Nafi’ were chosen the riwaqas of Qifin and Wadi; for Ibn Khatir the riwaqas of Qumabil and al-Jazari; for Ibn Amir the riwaqas of Ibn Dhakwani and Hisham; for Abi ‘Amr the riwaqas of ad-Douri and as-Sanai; for Hasana the riwaqas of Khalaf and Khalif; for Asim the riwaqas of Hafiz and Abi Bakr; for al-Kisai the riwaqas of ad-Douri and Abi ‘Amr. Any reading from any of these riwaqas is canonical. No official decision that we know of was taken to establish these particular riwaqas as alone permissible, and so the use of the word “canonical” is not quite accurate, but these riwaqas did come to take a position of unique authority for which we have no more appropriate word than canonical. As such, one or other of them would be followed when scribes were writing new Codices and indicating therein the pointing and the vowelings.

These systems for marking the readings, however, were not the only signs now added to the text. Signs for verse endings appear in the very earliest fragments of Codices in our possession, though there was by no means universal agreement as to where these pausal marks fell, so that this now comes to be a matter to be settled in the Schools, and the masoretic record tables of Kifan verse endings, or Ba’aran or Syrian or Madinan verse end-
oddsities of orthography which they must be careful to reproduce in their copies, even though they may know that these are mistakes. Thus in XIX,2 must be written with final ب instead of ب in XVIII,36 لِسْنَكَنا has to be written with a long اً at the end instead of the normal لِسْنَكَنَا: in XX,95 یَسَوْمُ بِأَنْ ۡفُلَدَ ۚ اَلْبَيْنَ ۡعِنْامَا; in XVIII,47 ۡفَلَدَ بِذِلِكَ وَ ۡمِنْ اَلْبَيْنَ and so on. Who the scribe of this standard exemplar was, and how it was chosen, are questions we cannot as yet answer. The orthodox theory is that these peculiarities were already present in the Inām, the standard consonantal text prepared by the orders of ‘Uthmān, but as these peculiarities do not always appear in the early fragments of Kufic Codices it is doubtful if this is so.

All the Seven systems mentioned above are equally canonical, and the Qurʾān may be recited according to either of the riśāyas chosen for each. No written text, however, can express in the text all the variants of all the seven. There are a few known examples of fragments of Kufic Codices where, by the use of differently coloured dots, variant readings in the case of individual words are recorded. There are also some MSS known with marginal annotations which give a selection of the variant readings from among the Seven, or even from among the Ten. The usual, and in fact the only feasible practice, however, is to have the text written according to one of the systems from among the Seven. No systematic survey of all Qurʾānic MSS with a view to determining their type of text, has ever been made, but so far as they have been examined the result is to show that only three of the possible fourteen riśāyas are known to have had any considerable vogue in the writing of Codices. In the Sudan up to a generation ago, there were apparently texts written according to the Basran system of ad-Dūrī. In North Africa, from Tripoli along to Morocco, the common form of text found in the MSS, and in many lithographed editions, is the Madinan tradition of Warsh. Everywhere else in the Muslim world the only type of text found in use is that of the Kūfīn Ḥāfṣ the rāwī of ʿĀsim. This Ḥāfṣ text has in recent years entirely superseded that of ad-Dūrī in the Sudan, and is rapidly superseding that of Warsh in North Africa. Thus we

reach the end of the history of the text of the Qurʾān with the practical dominance of the text tradition of Ḥāfṣ as the textus receptus for all Islam. It was in view of this that the Egyptian standard edition of 1944 A.H. made an attempt to clear the text from modernisations of orthography and an overloading of masoretic markings, and restore as far as possible a pure type of Ḥāfṣ text. Owing to the use by its editors of relatively later authorities instead of going back to the earliest sources of our information as to this Ḥāfṣ text, they have not quite succeeded in producing a pure type of Ḥāfṣ text, but it is better than anything else available, and very much superior to the Flügel text, which has been used almost exclusively by European savants since it first appeared in 1894.

The next stage will be that of a critical text. The ideal would be to print on one page a bare consonantal text in the Kufic script, based on the oldest MSS available to us, with a critically edited Ḥāfṣ text facing it on the opposite page, and with a complete collection of all known variant readings given at the foot of the page. The present writer was collaborating with the late Professor Bergsträsser on such a project, and a beginning had been made on both the connected problems. The writer has gone through all the printed literature and a good deal of MSS material to collect all the variant readings. Bergsträsser established at Munich a Qurʾānic Archive in which he commenced to gather photographs of all early Qurʾānic MSS, and of all masoretic material connected therewith. After his untimely death this Archive was continued and developed by his successor Otto Pretzl, but Pretzl was killed outside Sebastopol during this late War, and the whole of the Archive at Munich was destroyed by bomb action and fire, so that the whole of that gigantic task has to be started over again from the beginning. It is thus extremely doubtful if our generation will see the completion of a really critical edition of the text of the Qurʾān.
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