The Fihrist of al-Nadim
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The Fihrist of al-Nadîm

A TENTH-CENTURY SURVEY OF MUSLIM CULTURE

Bayard Dodge EDITOR AND TRANSLATOR

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Foreword

by W. T. H. Jackson

When Bayard Dodge told me that some years ago the Records of Civilization had asked him to translate Al-Fihrist of al-Nadim I was immediately enthusiastic. Here, surely, was a work which fitted the purpose of the series as few others could do, for it provided a link of a unique kind between several civilizations. In this tenth-century work is a compendium of the knowledge possessed by a learned Arab of Baghdad, knowledge in great part derived from earlier cultures, particularly Hellenic and Roman. Not only is the work extremely valuable for a knowledge of the culture of medieval Islam and of the literary personalities of the period but it gives important information about the classical material available for transmission through Muslim culture to the Western world. Al-Fihrist is thus a true “record of civilization.”

To provide a translation of a work such as this requires not only a scholar but an enthusiast. Bayard Dodge is both. He has provided us with an excellent translation, but before doing so he had to set up a text to be translated, since earlier editions had taken no account of manuscripts which are now available. In this work, which has occupied many years of his life, Professor Dodge has earned the gratitude of scholars in many fields of endeavor, for he has made available to them knowledge which has heretofore been confined to the very few who could read Arabic and had access to a rare work.
Preface

In 1871 Gustav Flügel accomplished a masterly piece of work by publishing the Arabic text of Kitāb al-Fihrist, but unfortunately he lacked reliable copies of the principal manuscripts. I am, therefore, very grateful to the authorities of the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, as well as to friends at Robert College, Istanbul, and to Muhammad Rashād ‘Abd al-Muttalib of the League of Arab States for helping me to examine and to obtain photostat copies of the most important manuscripts of the book.

Because Al-Fihrist deals with almost every phase of medieval culture, it would require a staff of experts to do justice to the translation. However, with the help of generous friends I have done my best to make the work as accurate as possible.

I am grateful to Constantine K. Zarayk, Jibrail M. Jabour, Anis K. Frayha, and other members of the faculty of the American University of Beirut for their aid. I also wish to thank Philip K. Hitti, Farhat J. Ziadeh, and Samuel D. Aikins of Princeton University for helping me to understand some difficult passages. Elias Shoufani corrected the translation of a number of poems, as well as the transliteration in some of the especially difficult sections of the book.

Johann W. Fick very kindly sent me publications and notes, and Edward S. Kennedy and David Pingree helped me with the passages on mathematics and astronomy. Harald Ingholt of Yale University joined me in studying the Ǧābians. Mustafa Ziade of Cairo University and Mojtaba Minovi of Tehran have also been generous in giving me their help. I am also grateful to Reza Tajade of Tehran and Mahdi Nakosteen of the University of Colorado for sending me their books, which provide valuable material for an understanding
PREFACE

of the Arabic text of Al-Fihrist. Thanks are due, furthermore, to A. F. P. Hubsewé of Leiden, Louis Hambis of the Institut des Hautes Études Chinoise de l'Université de Paris, Herbert Franke of Munich, and E. H. Schafer of the University of California for suggestions about the passage on China.

This difficult and complicated book has been copyedited by Linnae Coss. She not only prepared every detail for the typesetter but she also discovered numerous errors, simplified the footnotes, corrected the Bibliography, and helped to give consistency to the translation of the book titles. I am most grateful for her perseverance, skill, and encouragement.

Because Al-Fihrist is a reference book, I have made the translation a literal one, seeking accuracy rather than literary style. I have also provided a number of aids for study, which are explained in the Introduction that follows this Preface.

The book is a unique specimen of literature, coming to us from medieval Baghdad. We know very little about the author and the sources from which he derived his vast amount of information. But all honor is due al-Nadim, who compiled this encyclopedic volume, for as the Prophet Muhammad said, "The ink of the learned is as precious as the blood of the martyr."

Princeton, New Jersey
July 1969

BAYARD DODGE

Introduction

THE SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION
FROM ARABIC INTO ENGLISH

The system used is the one described in Bulletin 49, November 1938, issued by the Cataloguing Service of the Library of Congress.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{lll}
alif (see note below) & b & \textdaggerleft\textdaggerright
 
ba' & \textdaggerleft & za' & \textdaggerleft\textdaggerright
 
as' & t & sin & q
 
tha' & dh & sh & h
 
tha' & j & sh & k
 
ra' & h & dahl & n
 
kha' & kh & dahl & w
 
tha' & d & ghayn & y
 
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

As a rule alif is transliterated according to the vowel which governs it. But alif with a maddah or a maqṣurah is a form transliterated as ã.

VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
short & long
faḍḥah & a & ã
kaḍrah & i & ï
ḍanūmah & u & ū
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Shaddah is indicated by a doubling of the consonant, but a double ã after kaḍrah is written as in kuḍīyah. The definite article is not written with a capital, except at the beginning of a sentence. The niṣbah is written ِ. Final ha' is written with h, rather than t, except when it is in construct state or in a few words like zahhīt, zakhīt, and Ghulât.
INTRODUCTION

In the Arabic text the titles of an author’s books are listed after the account of his life. In the translation each list is as a rule preceded by the phrase “among his books there were.” Moreover, before each book title the Arabic version has kitāb (book). This word is usually omitted in the English translation.

Words in brackets are explanatory material, added to clarify the meaning of the original text. Parentheses are used for equivalents of Arabic and English words, as well as for alternative translations and interpretations. There are few paragraph divisions and no quotation marks in the Arabic text.

There are two devices to indicate gaps in the text. When a word or a phrase has been purposely omitted by al-Nadim, who hoped to be able to fill the space at a later time, a long dash is used. When a word or a phrase is omitted because the original copy is garbled or missing, an ellipsis is inserted to indicate missing material.

THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography follows the main text of the book. It is strictly limited in size, with only a selected number of books mentioned. The authors are listed alphabetically, with the titles of their books placed after their names. All references in the footnotes, Glossary, and Biographical Index are to the names of these authors. When the titles of more than one book are given after the name of an author, the reference indicates which one of these books is involved. The size of the Bibliography has been limited by omitting most of the recently published editions of the medieval books mentioned in the text of Al-Fihrist.

THE GLOSSARY

Coming immediately after the Bibliography is the Glossary. It should be studied in connection with the religious sects and for an understanding of numerous technical terms. It also explains the significance of many of the book titles.

THE BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX

The names of men and women mentioned in Al-Fihrist are included in the Biographical Index, which comes directly after the

Glossary. It is in the form of a Who’s Who. In the main text of the book the part of the man’s name by which he is listed in the Biographical Index is printed in italics, unless the name is repeated in the same passage. Names which are garbled in the manuscripts or belong to unimportant characters of fiction are omitted.

It may seem strange to list Greek and Latin scholars with the Arab ones, but they belonged to the Muslim culture of medieval times, just as truly as they do to the scholarship of our modern world.

References will be found in the Biographical Index to throw light on the names of the persons included. The Encyclopaedia of Islam and standard works on history, literature, and biography give further information about the men and women mentioned in Al-Fihrist.

THE GENERAL INDEX

The General Index is placed at the end of the book, after the Biographical Index. It includes numerous topics and technical terms, as well as the names of tribes and geographical localities.

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

The author of Al-Fihrist was Abū al-Faraj Muhammad ibn Ishāq ibn Muhammād ibn Ishāq, but as a rule he is called al-Nadīm because he had the distinction of being a sadīd or court companion. As the surname of his father was Abī Ya‘qūb, he evidently had an elder brother named Ya‘qūb and probably had other brothers and sisters as well.

The year of his birth is unknown, but it cannot have been much after A.D. 915 and more likely was somewhat earlier. In Chapter VI, section 8, the author tells about meeting a scholar named Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Bardhā’ī, who explained the doctrine of the Mu‘azzalīyah and gave him a list of his legal books. If al-Nadīm, the author of Al-Fihrist, was mature enough to be interested in the doctrine of an unorthodox sect and books about the law, he must have been at least sixteen years of age, or probably a number of years older. Because this meeting occurred during the year 340 (A.D.

1 The men’s names mentioned in the Introduction can be found in the Biographical Index, where they are listed according to the part of the name given in italics. For information about al-Nadīm, see Goldhoffer, ZDMG, XXXVI (1882), 378-84; Füll, ZDMG, New Ser. IX, No. 2 (1930), 111-24; Ritter, Der Islam, XVII, No. 1 (February 1928), 15-28.
INTRODUCTION

When he was about six years old the author undoubtedly attended an elementary class attached to a mosque. One can visualize the little boy sitting on the ground in a group of other children, swaying back and forth as he repeated the verses of the Qur'an, which his teacher recited to be memorized. The child also must have learned how to write the verses on his board, erasing each verse when he learned how to copy it, in order to make the board clean for a new quotation. By the time he was ten years old he had probably memorized the entire Qur'an, so as to be prepared for study of a more mature nature.

It is reasonable to believe that al-Nadim joined a study circle in some important mosque to learn the intricacies of Arabic grammar and rhetoric as well as something about Qur'anic commentary, the Hadith or traditions of the Prophet, and rules for reciting the Qur'an in an authorized way. Before long he undoubtedly worked as an apprentice in his father's book shop, copying manuscripts, entertaining scholars, and helping to sell what they wanted to buy. Yaqút endorsed this idea when he wrote: "It is not unreasonable that he was a warāq who sold books."

Al-Nadim, however, was so much interested in his studies that he did not spend all of his time in the book store. An inscription on the title page of the Beatty MS records that he quoted, or was a pupil of, Abú Sa'íd al-Sinājī the jurist, Abū al-Farāj al-Iṣbahānī the famous compiler of poetry and literary anecdotes, and Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Muzahhābī, who was interested in history. Ibn Hāyarī says that al-Nadim had permission to quote Isma'īl al-Saffār, who was an authority for the Hadith, and  Ibrahim al-Ahāyārī points out that he also studied with al-Hasan ibn Sawwār, a logician who translated scientific books; Abū Ahmad, who was perhaps al-Husayn ibn Iṣḥāq ibn Karmīth the theologian and natural scientist; Yūnus al-Qadd, who translated classic works on mathematics, and Abī al-Hasan Muhammad ibn Yūsuf al-Naqqīt, a scholar interested in Greek science. Ibn Abī Usaybi'ah remarks that al-Nadim was a kāthib, which may mean that he was simply a writer. On the other hand it may

951/952), it is evident that al-Nadim's birth was about 913. He was, therefore, almost certainly born during the reign of al-Muqtadir, 908-912, or of al-Qāhir, 912-914, or, less likely, of al-Rādi, 914-940.

The author's father was called a warāq, which in his case evidently meant that he was a book dealer. As he seems to have been prosperous, it is likely that he presided over a large bookshop, which was almost certainly at Baghdad. It is easy to imagine how he commissioned his sons to buy manuscripts from other dealers and had his own scribes make copies of manuscripts for his customers.

A medieval manuscript was about the size of a modern book, but it was written by hand instead of being printed. The leaves were made of a paper of good quality, with writing on both sides. As a rule these pages were bound in a leather cover. The bookshop, like the old shops in al-Najaf, was probably on an upper story, where it formed a meeting place for scholars who came to examine the books, enjoy refreshments, and discuss academic problems.

Most authorities have taken it for granted that the father, as well as the son, was a nadīm, or court companion. Ibn Hāyarī refers to the author as Muhammad ibn Iṣḥāq ibn al-Nadīm. Ibn Abī Usaybi'ah mentions the author thirteen times. He on pages 57, 175, 207, 208, 209, 220, 244, and 309 he calls him Ibn al-Nadīm, but on other pages he refers to him as al-Nadīm. Yaqūt calls him Muhammad ibn Iṣḥāq al-Nadīm.

The main title of the authoritative Beatty manuscript is Kitāb al-Fihrist li-al-Nadīm. In the heading of Chapter II of this manuscript there is a curious clause, which also appears in the headings of the last three chapters of MS 1934. Following the words "The composition of Muḥammad ibn Iṣḥāq al-Nadīm" there is this clause, "Iṣḥāq being known as Abī Ya’qūb al-Warrāq."

One wonders if the author of Al-Fihrist added this ungrammatical phrase in order to make it clear that whereas he himself was a nadīm, or court companion, his father was merely a warāq, or book dealer. What seems to be certain is that both the father and the son were men of considerable importance and social standing.

See Bibliography, Hāyarī, Liʿūn al-Misān, Part 5, p. 72, l. 15.

See Usaybi'ah, 'Uṣūn al-Aṣbāb'.

See Yaqūt, Irshād, VI (6), p. 408.

See Yaqūt, Irshād, VI (6), p. 408.

See Usaybi'ah, Kitāb al-Iṣbaḥānī, Part 5, p. 72.

See Yaqūt, Irshād, VI (6), p. 408.

See Usaybi'ah, Kitāb al-Iṣbaḥānī, III (March 5, 1965), 196.

See Usaybi'ah, Part 1, p. 57.
imply that he was a government secretary, perhaps in the library or in the bureau for correspondence. Because al-Nadim was nicknamed Abū al-Faraj he must have been married, with at least one son and a home of his own in Baghdād.

Ibn Hajar says that al-Nadim was a Shi'ite,9 which statement is confirmed by the text of Al-Fihrist. In Chapter VI the author speaks of the Shi'as as al-khāṣṣīs or elite, while he refers to persons who were not Shi'ites as al-‘āmmīs or ignorant. In Al-Fihrist, moreover, the Sunnites are referred to as al-hashwūyīh, which is a contemptuous term for persons who blindly accept anthropomorphic ideas.10

When speaking about the father of al-Zubayyir Mus'ab ibn 'Abd Allāh, al-Nadim says that he was one of the most wicked of men, because he maligned the descendants of Ali.11

In the same passage in which Ibn Hajar calls al-Nadim a Shi'ite he also states that he was a Mu'tazili. Even if he was not an official member of this heretical sect, al-Nadim must have been very much interested in it, because such a large part of the fifth chapter of Al-Fihrist is devoted to it.

Because he was an Ismā'īli leader and attended an Ismā'īli meeting,12 some people have claimed that al-Nadim was one of the Ismā'īliyāh, but this idea does not seem to be a true one.

Al-Nadim mentions that he wrote one other book in addition to Al-Fihrist. In speaking about the excellencies of books he says, "I have dealt with this subject and similar ones in the chapter on writing and its instruments in a book which I have composed about descriptions and comparisons (al-usūd wa-al-taḥkīhā)."13 Evidently al-Nadim was so much interested in books and government work that he did not attempt to become a teacher. The inscription on the title page of the Beatty MS says that no one quoted him, which implies that he did not have students.

It is probable that while he was still a young man al-Nadim began to make a catalogue of authors and the names of their compositions for use in his father's bookstore. At the beginning of Chapter IV, section 2, he explains that, as other scholars have given details about the poets, what he himself aims to do is "to present the names of the poets and the amount of verses written by each poet among them . . . so that whoever desires to collect books and poems can have this information."

It is reasonable to believe that al-Nadim wrote notes about each author on a piece of paper. When dealing with a man who was a scholar rather than a poet he tried to give some biographical material, as well as the titles of the author's books. When speaking about the books of the Zaydiyah14 he says, "If some observer sees one of them while we are writing, I will add it in its proper place." In the course of time the notes must have been arranged according to subjects and in chronological sequence. Then, when enough of them had been collected, the author undertook to compile them in the form of chapters for his book.

As he grew older, al-Nadim evidently became interested in so many subjects about which he read in books, or which he learned about from friends and chance acquaintances, that he included a great deal of additional material with his notes about the poets and scholars. Thus, instead of being merely the catalogue for a bookshop, Al-Fihrist became an encyclopaedia of medieval Islamic culture.

We do not know to what extent al-Nadim searched for information in places other than Baghdad. He very likely visited al-Bayrām and al-Kūfah, as scholarship flourished in those cities during the eighth century. He may have gone to Aleppo, where Saff al-Dawlah, during the middle of the tenth century, created a center of literature and culture. It is not very likely that he visited Damascus or the famous cities of Persia and Khurāsān. What is certain, however, is that he spent some time at al-Mawṣil, probably when Nāṣir al-Dawlah was ruler of the region, between A.D. 929 and 968.

Al-Fihrist mentions that he met a book collector there. He also saw the tutor of the sons of Nāṣir al-Dawlah15 and a man named Muhammad ibn Hāshim, who was brought up in the environs of al-Mawṣil.16 He evidently visited the libraries of al-Mawṣil, as he
INTRODUCTION

found a fragment of one of Euclid's books in a private collection. It is obvious that al-Nadim was at al-Mawṣil before he completed his chapter about the poets, because he says that he saw a certain amount of poetry there. Sarton states that al-Nadim went to Istanbul, taking it for granted that Dār al-Rūm referred to the Byzantine city of Constantinople. But this is an error, as Dār al-Rūm really refers to the Greek Orthodox section of Baghdad. Najīr al-Dawlah, the ruler of al-Mawṣil, was a Shi'ite who was anxious to make his city a center of culture and learning. As al-Nadim was also a Shi'ite, it is possible that his service as a court companion was at al-Mawṣil. It is much more likely, however, that he went to al-Mawṣil to obtain books and that his life as a court companion was spent at Baghdad. What seems probable is that al-Nadim became attached to the court at the time of Mu'izz al-Dawlah, who, with the title of 'Amir al-Imarāt, overshadowed the puppet caliph and ruled at Baghdad from A.D. 945 to 967. He was a member of the Buwayh family and a sympathizer with the Shi'ites, so that it would have been natural for him to make a Shi'ite like al-Nadim a member of his court, perhaps connected with the royal library. If al-Nadim was a court companion in the palace of Mu'izz al-Dawlah, it is likely that he also served 'Izz al-Dawlah, the weak son and successor of Mu'izz al-Dawlah, until this son died in A.D. 977. Unfortunately we can only guess about these events in the life of al-Nadim, as we do not have accurate information about his biography.

It cannot have been very long after the death of 'Izz al-Dawlah that al-Nadim undertook the laborious task of arranging his mass of notes and compiling them in the form of a book. Near the end of Chapter II of Al-Fihrist, the author records: "This is the end of what we have composed of the first chapter of the book Al-Fihrist, until the time of the appearance of the new moon on Saturday of Sha'bān during the year three hundred and seventy-seven." This was probably December, 987.

Yaqūt cites this same year for the writing of Al-Fihrist. Near the end of Chapter II al-Nadim gives this date also for completion of the account of the scholars of grammar and language. Two other statements can be mentioned to confirm the accuracy of this date. In speaking about Abū al-Ḥasan 'Ali ibn Nājur, the author of Al-Fihrist says, "who died a few months ago." Ibn Taghri-Birdī gives the year three hundred and seventy-six (A.D. 986/987) as the time of this man's death. Then at the end of Chapter VI there is the statement in Al-Fihrist, "until our time, which is the year three hundred and seventy-seven." It is possible that al-Nadim did not complete the last chapters of his book until a year or two later. In Chapter IX he tells the story of a Christian monk who returned from China. As this monk did not reach Baghdad before the year three hundred and seventy-seven (A.D. 987/988), it is possible that Chapter IX was not written in its final form before A.D. 988 or 989. It seems to be certain that Al-Fihrist was completed by the year A.D. 990 at the latest, probably twelve or eighteen months before that time. This was just at the time when higher education was being established at the al-Jāmi' al-Azhār in Cairo and a little less than a century before the First Crusade. Hugh Capet was King of France, and Aethelred the Second was ruling in England.

Ibn Ḥajar says that a certain Abū Tāhir al-Karkhī gave the date for al-Nadim's death as the year four hundred and thirty-eight (A.D. 1047), but he said of this statement, "he was not reliable about this." Ibn Ḥajar also quotes other assertions which seem to be equally unreliable.  

17 Chap. VII, section 3, near n. 5.
18 Chap. V, section 4, near n. 93 and n. 96; also Chap. V, section 5.
19 Chap. IV, section 3, near n. 5.
20 Chap. IX, section 3, n. 49; Sarton I, 662.
21 Chap. I, section 3, near n. 133.
INTRODUCTION

It seems inevitable that if al-Nadim had lived until A.D. 1047 he would have added to Al-Fihrist some of the great names of the eleventh century, such as Ibn Sinā and al-Bīrūnī, as well as something about the famous Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'. Furthermore, al-Nadim left blank spaces in his manuscript, to be filled in as he could obtain further information. Evidently he died before he was able to include new data in these blank spaces.

Accordingly, the note on the title page of the Beatty manuscript is probably correct. It says of al-Nadim that "he died on Wednesday, the tenth [day] from the end of Sha'bi in the year three hundred and eighty (A.D. 990/991)." As this note was almost certainly written by the great historian al-Maqritī, it has real importance and seems to be reliable. It is reasonable to believe that when al-Nadim died the original copy of his manuscript was placed in the royal library at Baghdad, while other copies made by scribes about the time of his death were assigned to his family bookstore, where some of them were probably sold to customers who came to purchase interesting books. Farmer says: "Yaqūt (d. 626/1229) averred that he used a copy of the Fihrist in the handwriting of al-Nadīm himself. The lexicographer al-Ṣaḥānī (650/1252) made a similar claim. Either of these autograph copies may have been in the Caliph's library, which was destroyed utterly at the sacking of Baghdad in 656/1258." 7a

7a Beatty MS has been made available so recently that these authorities have obviously never had a chance to study it. As many of the persons mentioned in this paragraph and those which follow lived after Al-Fihrist was written, their names are not included in the Biographical Index, although some of them are mentioned in the Bibliography.
7b This passage probably means that al-Nadīm died on the nineteenth day of the eighth month of the lunar year, which began March 31, 900. The first seven lunar months have 207 days, which added to the nineteenth day of the eighth month makes a total of 225 days. The solar calendar date for March 31 is November 12, 900. This seems to have been the true date for al-Nadīm's death.
7c Abū al-ʿAbbās Almād ibn Abī Ḥafṣ al-Qādirī al-Maqritī was born at Balkh in 1595. He was an official of Damascus but later lived in Egypt, where he died in 1244. He was one of the greatest of the medieval Egyptian historians. See Zīrīlī, I, 172; "al-Maqritī," Enc. Islam, IV, 175.
INTRODUCTION

The principal manuscripts available for his use were: (i) the old Paris manuscript, containing four chapters; (ii) the copy of a manuscript in Istanbul, which de Slane had transcribed, by a scribe named Ahmad al-Migri for use in Paris; (iii) two copies in Vienna; (iv) several fragments in Leyden. Flügel realized that his manuscripts were incomplete, and it is true that he lacked part of the material about the Mu'tazilah sects, given in Chapter V, section 1, of the translation, as well as source material for other less important passages. As Flügel has described the manuscripts which he used in detail, it does not seem to be worth while to repeat what he wrote in his vorwort.

The principal manuscripts available for use at the present time are the following.

The Beatty Manuscript. This manuscript is No. 3315 in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. It comprises the first half of the book, ending with an account of al-Nāshī al-Kabīr in Chapter V, section 1. There are 119 folios, with writing on both front and back of each leaf. As several pages are left blank, there are 234 pages of text, each measuring 22 by 16.5 cm and averaging twenty-five lines to the page. The handwriting is in the form of an old nāshī script, clear, well marked, and transcribed with a good quality of black ink. The titles are also written in black, in a similar script but in large letters. The paper is fairly thick, smooth, and of a dark cream color. As the Chester Beatty Library has had the pages bound in leather and carefully repaired by a skilful technician, the manuscript does not appear to be as old as it really is. It contains the material about the Mu'tazilah omitted by Flügel, but even in this excellent manuscript certain pages are lacking.

The main heading of the Beatty Manuscript is Kitāb al-Fihrist li-al-Nāshī. It is in an oblong design with white letters and a gold background somewhat decorated. Alongside this oblong space there are two lines of notes, written in a small script. The upper line is not clear enough to be read accurately. The lower line has, "Ahmad ibn

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81 See also Flügel, ZDMG, XIII (1859), 339-450; Fück, Anh., IV, Nos. 3 and 4 (February 1951), 81-144.
82 Some of the missing segments are Chap. I, section 1, see n. 59; Chap. I, section 3, see also n. 59; Chap. IV, section 2, see n. 103; Chap. V, section 1, see n. 1.
INTRODUCTION

Ali al-Maqrizi 824. This evidently means that the manuscript became the possession of the famous historian Ahmad ibn 'Ali al-Maqrizi.

Somewhat below the main heading there are two other notes in small script. One of them reads “from the books of Ahmad ibn ‘Ali”; the other, “at Damascus 825.” It is known that al-Maqrizi went to Damascus about 810 (A.D. 1407/1408) to serve in government posts and returned to Cairo some ten years later. He may have written these notes at Cairo or perhaps on some occasion when he returned to Damascus for a visit.

There is also written on the title page, going from the bottom to the top and in the right-hand margin, a longer inscription, which was probably written by al-Maqrizi. This inscription has been translated as follows:

The author of this book was Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad ibn Abī Ya’qūb Isḥāq ibn Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq al-Warrāq known as al-Nadīm. He quoted Abī Sa‘īd al-Sirāfī, Abu al-Faraj al-Isḥāqī, Abī ‘Abd Allāh al-Marzubānī and others, but nobody quoted him. He died on Wednesday, the tenth (day) from the end of Sha‘bān, in the year three hundred and eighty (A.D. 990). He was suspected of being a Shi‘ī, may Allāh forgive him.

There are certain other notes on the title page, but they are evidently not in the handwriting of al-Maqrizi and are illegible.

Below the main heading on the title page and in large handwriting, written over a small inscription of al-Maqrizi, there is the following statement, which designates the manuscript as a mortmain, established by Abūnā Pāhār al-Jazzārī, who died in A.D. 1804.

A Waqf of Allāh Almighty

Al-Jā‘īji Abūnā Pāhār al-Jazzārī had made this book a waqf, pious foundation and trust in the Mosque of al-Mubārak at ‘Akka, the praiseworthy.

the Ahmadiyah, for the seeking of learning . . . . He establishes it as a true and legal waqf, so that it will not be removed, sold or exchanged . . . upon Allah, for Allah is the hearing and knowing.

This inscription was deciphered with the help of a scholar from ‘Akka, but even he could not translate accurately the two places which have been left blank.

On the title page of each chapter other than the first there is written under the heading and close to the left hand margin, hiṣāyat khaṭ al-muṣārīf, which means “an imitation of the handwriting of the author.” Under this inscription there is a copy of the signature of the author, “His (God’s) servant, Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq.”

Beginning with the back of folio 9 and at the end of every tenth folio which follows, there is written on the lower margin, ’irid (compared). This means that the copy was compared with the original manuscript at the end of each lot of paper. For some reason the same word appears at the end of folio 8 and also at the termination of Chapter IX. At the bottom of folio 69 the inscription is extended to read: “Compared with the original of the author, transcribed from it and confirmed, thanks be to Allāh, Lord of the Knowing.” At the end of folio 99, there is a similar inscription with the following variation: “Compared with the original, which is in the handwriting of the author, transcribed from it and confirmed.”

Arabic scholars have explained that when a medieval scribe copied a manuscript he reproduced not only the words but also the handwriting of the author and the arrangement of the page. These inscriptions in the Beatty Manuscript were evidently made by a scribe who transcribed the book from the original copy, which was written by al-Nadīm himself in his own handwriting. It is not certain, but not unlikely, that the Beatty Manuscript was transcribed before al-Nadīm died, under his personal supervision. As he was a court companion, probably connected with the royal library, he very naturally may have deposited the original copy of Al-Fihrist in that institution. At the same time, he almost certainly would have had

See Acre,Islamic Research Association Miscellany, I (1948), 20, where he states: “The author signed his copy in this manner at the beginning of each separate part. The transcription has moreover been collated with the author’s autograph.”

35 For al-Maqrizi, see n. 29.
36 The signature should be compared with the copy given in Part I, section 1, p. 961, of al-Maqrizi’s history, Khadīj al-Sulīkh li-Ma’rifat Darwāl al-Mulūk, edited by Muqāfah Zāde, Cairo, Lajnat al-Ta’ṣīl, 1956.
37 For the significance of this passage, see the preceding statement about the life of al-Nadīm.
copies made for the family bookstore, so that they could be used as
catalogues and sold to customers. Thus it is reasonable to guess that
the Beatty Manuscript was transcribed during the final months of
the life of al-Nadim or soon afterwards. The manuscript, for in-
stance, lacks the statement that al-Sabi’ “died before the year three
hundred and eighty (A.D. 990),” although this item of information is
in the Flügel edition.87

If the original manuscript, written in al-Nadim’s own hand-
writing, was placed in the royal library at Baghdad, it undoubtedly
was destroyed when the Mongols sacked the city in A.D. 1258. The
Beatty Manuscript, on the other hand, was evidently a copy, which
was probably sold to some customer and taken to Damascus, where
it escaped the destruction of Baghdad and during the year A.D. 825
became the possession of the historian al-Maqrīzī.

We know nothing about the history of the manuscript until it
was placed in the library of the great mosque at ’Akka, when the
notorious Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzār was ruling there at the time of
Napoleon Bonaparte. After the fall of Ahmad Pasha, the manuscript
was evidently stolen from the mosque. It was probably at this time
that it became divided, as the Beatty Manuscript includes only the
first half of Al-Fihrist. In the course of time the dealer Yahudah
sold this first half to Sir Chester Beatty, who placed it in his library
at Dublin.88

Manuscript 1934. This manuscript comprises the last half of Al-Fihrist.
It begins with an account of al-Wasiyy in Chapter V, section 2, and
continues to the inscription, which indicates the completion of the
book. An Arabic number is on top of each page, and a modern
number has also been stamped for each of the one hundred and
eighty-eight folios. As there are some empty pages, only three
hundred and sixty-two of them contain writing. There is no proper
title page. The first page contains only an Ottoman seal, a recent
rendering of the name of the book and its author, with some notes
which are too indistinct to be deciphered accurately.

87 See Chap. III, section 2, n. 207.
88 See the catalogue of the Beatty Library, in the section entitled “A Handlist of
the Arabic Manuscripts,” Vol. II, p. 31 (Dublin, Walker, 1955 ff.).
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This manuscript is identical with the Beatty Manuscript in almost every detail. The handwriting is the same, the pages are the same size, and similar inscriptions are introduced to show that the copy has been checked with the original. The same ungrammatical form appears in Chapter II of the Beatty Manuscript and Chapters VIII, IX, and X of Manuscript 1934. This is the phrase already mentioned, "Muḥammad ibn ʿIshāq al-Nadīm, ʿIshāq known as Abū Yaʿqūb al-Warrāq."

Many scholars think that this manuscript is the other half of the Beatty Manuscript, but Professor Mojtaba Minovi of Tehran, who saw the Beatty Manuscript before it was repaired, considers that copy to be much older than Manuscript 1934. Manuscript 1934 forms part of the Shadid 'Ali Pasha collection, which is now cared for in the library adjacent to the Sulaymānīyah Mosque at Istanbul. In the library catalogue it is described as "Suleymaniye G. Kitabhanesi kimi Shehit Ali Pasha 1934."

The Beatty Manuscript, which comprises the first half of Al-Fihrist, and Manuscript 1934, which contains the last half, are the two most authoritative and important sources for a knowledge of the book.

Manuscript 1135. This manuscript contains Chapter I, section 1, of Al-Fihrist, as well as the last four chapters of the book. Both the table of contents and the numbering of the chapters are incorrect. Chapter I, section 1, and Chapter VII are grouped together as the first part of the book, and the last three chapters are designated II, III, and IV, instead of eight, nine, and ten.

There are a hundred and eighteen folios, written on the front and back, with modern numbers stamped on them. There are no empty spaces to be filled in, as is the case with the other manuscripts. Each page is 25.5 by 18.5 cm in size. The handwriting is well formed, similar to the naskh script of the manuscripts already mentioned. As this copy is incomplete, it was evidently transcribed from parts of some older version. It contains some book titles omitted in the earlier sources.

This manuscript is located in the Köprüli Library at Istanbul, where it is catalogued as No. 1135. A date is ascribed to it, which is given as "Rabi’ al-Thani 600." This is equivalent to the fourth month of A.D. 1203/1204. Stamped on the manuscript are numerous seals of the Ottoman period, the principal one containing the name Kādirli. The title page bears the heading given at the beginning of Chapter I in the translation. It is written in black ink, whereas the subtitles and names of authors are in red.

Manuscript 1134. This manuscript is in the Köprüli Library at Istanbul, catalogued as No. 1134. It is written on good paper, each page measuring 20.3 by 15 cm, and is divided into two separate parts. The first might easily be a copy of Chapter I, section 1, as given in Manuscript 1135. The second part contains what is probably most of Manuscript 1934. This version does not seem to be as old and authentic as the other copies.

The Tonk Manuscript. This transcription of a portion of Al-Fihrist is in the Sa’diyah Library at Tonk, where it originally belonged to the Nabob of the region. Tonk is a city of Rajasthan, a hundred and twenty-five miles southwest of Agra. The manuscript contains forty-four folios, with writing on the front and back of each page. At the beginning there is a page which is empty except for some blurred seal and a title, written in small letters: "Fihrist of Accounts of the Scholars and the Names of Their Compositions," followed by the name of al-Nadim partially blotted out.

After a pious phrase this copy starts with a poem in Chapter III. It ends with a short passage about an unimportant author named Plutarch in Chapter VII.99 There is a postscript which reads:

The second section of the Book Al-Fihrist has ended, with the help of Allah Almighty and his kindness. If Allah Almighty so wills, there will follow it in the third section an account of Yahyā al-Naywī. It has been transcribed by Huseyn ibn 'Abd Allah, the nephew of Yahyā al-Jawhari, thanks be to the Lord of the Knowing.

The numbering of the sections does not correspond with that of the other manuscripts, but in all of the versions an account of Yahyā al-Nawrī comes directly after the point where the Tonk manuscript ends. The name mentioned at the end of the postscript is evidently

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that of the copyist. This manuscript is so well described in an article written by Johann Flick that it is necessary to mention only a few facts in this introduction.

The manuscript lacks a segment of material from Chapter IV and Chapter V. The point in Chapter V, section 1, where the manuscript recommences corresponds to folio 10, at the top of the reverse side. Between that point and the beginning of manuscript 1934 the Tonk Manuscript contains material lacking in the other versions. It is because of this additional material that this transcription is valuable.

The Tonk Manuscript, moreover, gives the list of book titles of Ibn al-Mu’allim. This list is lacking in the Flügel edition at the bottom of page 197, as well as in the other manuscripts and in the compilation of al-Tusi. For other material which is unique in the Tonk Manuscript, see Chapter V, section 5, notes 145, 188, and 189. Note 198 indicates that al-Tusi drew upon sources similar to those used by the scribe of the Tonk Manuscript. Ibn Hajar also quotes items which he evidently found in the part of Al-Fihrist unique to the Tonk Manuscript. Except for this additional material, this manuscript is not as valuable as the others, as the handwriting is not always clear and there are many clerical errors.

Manuscript 4437. This is in La Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, Fonds Arabe, 1953 catalogue, page 340 (cf. 5886, fol. 128, vo. 130), No. 4437. This transcription contains the first part of Al-Fihrist and is dated six hundred and twenty-seven (A.D. 1229/1230). It has 237 folios, each page measuring 20 by 13.5 cm, with sixteen lines to the page. It ends with a statement of intention to continue with the fifth chapter and a prayer for Muhammad and his family. This is probably the copy referred to by Flügel in his Vorwort as the "Old Paris Manuscript," comprising Chapters I to IV. Flügel must have depended to a large extent on this manuscript for the part of his text between his pages one and a hundred and seventy-two. In fact the pious ending is exactly like that given in the Flügel edition on the top of page 172.

Manuscript 4458. This is also in La Bibliothèque nationale, Fonds Arabe, 1953, catalogue page 342 (cf. 5886, fol. 128, vo. 130), No. 4458. This copy starts with Chapter V, section 5. The title is identical with that given by Flügel. There are 246 folios, each measuring 24 by 16 cm. It continues to the end of the book and closes with a note stating that it was confirmed as correct by the copyist Aḥmad al-Miṣrī. The manuscript is marked as being copied in 1846 under the supervision of de Slane, from a manuscript in the Library Kieprülulu in Istanbul. The handwriting is clear, but the headings are not separated as distinctly as they are in the Flügel text and there seem to be numerous clerical errors. In the headings for the last three chapters the name of al-Nadīm is given in the same specialized and ungrammatical way that it is given in Manuscript 1934. De Slane evidently had this copy made by a scribe at Istanbul from Manuscript 1134 or perhaps from the more accurate Manuscript 1934, which originally was in the Köprülulu Library before it was moved to the library by the Sulaymānīyah Mosque.

Vienna Manuscript No. 33. This manuscript comprises part of Chapter V, but omits part of the material about the Mu’tazila. It continues to the end of the book. This manuscript and the two which follow are described in greater detail by Flügel in his Vorwort.

Vienna Manuscript No. 34. This copy contains part of Chapter I, part of Chapter VII, and the last three chapters.

The Leyden Manuscript. Flügel gives this as No. 2. He also found at Leyden some unimportant and unsatisfactory fragments.

The Tanjir Manuscript. This is a recent and unimportant copy, which is described in Majallat Mālid al-Khwāṣṣ al-Arabiyyah, published by the League of Arab States at Cairo, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 179.
Ahmad Taymûr Pasha Appendix. This consists of some extra pages purchased by Ahmad Taymûr Pasha after his attention had been directed to them by a publication issued in Germany in 1889. These pages were published as an appendix to the Egyptian edition of Al-Fihrist at Cairo, by the Rahmaniyyah Press, in 1929.

Because of the wars and revolutions in medieval times and the insects which thrive in warm climates, great numbers of valuable manuscripts have been lost. It is unfortunate that no complete manuscript exists of a book as important as Kitâb al-Fihrist of al-Nadîm.