A MANUSCRIPT FROM THE LIBRARY OF THE
GHAZNAWID AMIR ‘ABD AL-RASHID

by

S. M. Stern

I. ABU BAKR MUHAMMAD B. ‘ABD ALLAH’S
BOOK ON THE PHYSICAL AND MORAL
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPHET

The University Library in Leiden possesses an Arabic MS. containing
a book on the Physical and Moral Characteristics of the Prophet—a
subject which belongs to the sphere of the science of Tradition and one
to which a number of books has been devoted. There were handed down
many traditions describing the Prophet’s physical appearance and his
moral character, and the books in question presented anthologies of these
traditions. The classical representative of the genre is the monograph
by one of the great authorities of the science of Tradition, al-Tirmidhi,
which was highly venerated by later generations. The author of our
book was merely an epigone compared with a “father” of the literature
of Tradition such as al-Tirmidhi, whose book was in fact among his
sources. Nor does he count among the great and famous such as abounded
also among the epigone authors of secondary compilations. His name:
Abu Bakr Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, seems totally
forgotten and the Leiden copy of his book seems to be the only one extant.
Not that the book is devoid of all interest. The traditions discussed in it
are of course also known from other sources, but the notes appended to
them—mainly of textual and philological character—refer to many early
authorities of the science of Tradition and Arabic philology. Indeed,

1 Kitâb Khilaf al-Nabî wa-Khalîfah, MS. no. 437, described in P. de Jong and M. J. de
Goeje, Catalogus Codicum Orientalium Bibliothecae Academicae Lugduno-Batavae, iv (1960),
pp. 60-6. (The book is not registered in Brockelmann’s History of Arabic Literature.)
I am most grateful to Dr. J. Parsons for taking the excellent photographs from this MS,
which is rather difficult to photograph, and for the authorities of the Leiden University
Library for their permission.

2 Kitâb al-Shamâ’il; see Brockelmann, i, 169-70. Supplement, i, 268-9.
the author vaunts the comprehensiveness of his lexicographical notes. I found no information whatsoever about the author. It is possible that I have not looked at all the right places and something will yet turn up; but it is evident that he was not an eminent scholar whose name would recur in the usual biographical sources. We can establish his background by examining the names of his teachers.

The teacher who is quoted most often as the authority for the traditions included in the book is Abū Sa‘īd ‘Uthmān son of Abū ‘Umar Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Sulaymān al-Sījistānī. He is not quite unknown, but it is rather his father, Abū ‘Umar, who was a scholar of some importance. He came from Nījāt, also called Nīḥā, a suburb of Zanjan in Sījistān, and studied, according to the historians, in Harāt, Marv, Balkh and Transoxiana. The exact date of his death is not given, but there is evidence that he was alive in 382/992-3. He had two sons ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, who transmitted his teaching—‘Uthmān being the teacher of our author.4 All the traditions quoted by our author in the name of Abū Sa‘īd ‘Uthmān, were transmitted by the latter from his father—as we shall see, our author probably met with Abū Sa‘īd in a book by Abū Sa‘īd’s father. In the ten years a great number of Abū ‘Umar’s authorities are named; I cannot enumerate them all, but choose a few names of particular interest. Abū ‘Umar heard from Abū Naṣr Muhammad b. Khuw b. Hāmid b. Dillāyā al-Tirmidhi the traditions about the Prophet’s description related by Abū Naṣr’s great patron, al-Tirmidhi, i.e., it seems, al-Tirmidhi’s Kitāb al-Shamā’il.5 In a footnote I give the

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4 P. 82: “These are the rare expressions in the tradition related by ‘All. Abū ‘Ubayd [al-Qāhira b. Sallām, third/ninth century rather than al-Harawi, of the fourth/ninth century, cf. below, p. 11] and others have begun to explain it, but have not assembled all the rare information (al-nehit wa’t-ghurur) assembled by me in this book. The sūrah Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī says rightly in the preface of his book [probably the book on the rare expressions in traditions, cf. below, p. 11]: ‘There remains a number of traditions which I was unable to explain and which I left so that God may disclose their secrets to those of His servants as He wills: every time has its own people and every generation its own knowledge’.”

5 A biography of Abū ‘Umar is found in Yaḍayt’s ṭabaqāt al-‘Arab, vi, 324-5, as a short note in his Geographical Dictionary, s.v. “Nīḥā” (iv, 824). The Ta’wil Shībūn (ed. Balkh, p. 20) includes among the famous men of Sījistān Abū Sa‘īd b. Abū ‘Umar al-Niqāšt, Abū ‘Umar al-Niqāšt, and Abū ‘Umar al-Niqāšt, and Abū ‘Umar al-Niqāšt b. Abū ‘Umar al-Niqāšt. (The editor’s note, who wrongly takes Yaḍayt’s note in the Geographical Dictionary to mean that ‘Umar was the brother, not the son, of Abū ‘Umar, should be disregarded.) Yaḍayt includes among the teachers of Abū ‘Umar also Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī, whom we shall meet repeatedly. For ‘Umar, son of Abū ‘Umar, see also below, 12 note 22.

Abū Naṣr gave the lecture attended by Abū ‘Umar al-Sījistānī in his house in Tirmidh” (p. 22). I found no information about Abū Naṣr. Since his father and great

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names of those masters of Abū ‘Umar of whom it is stated where he met them,4 the towns are Balkh, Tirmidh and Nasaf, and this confirms and completes Yaḍayt’s statement about Abū ‘Umar’s journeys in Khurāsān and Transoxiana in search of knowledge.

Another teacher of our author was Abū Tālib ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Muhammad, whose name occurs almost as frequently as that of Abū Sa‘īd ‘Uthmān al-Sījistānī. His fame, however, did not reach beyond his immediate circle, since his name seems to have escaped the attention of the compilers of biographical repertories. Our author heard from him traditions related by the famous scholar Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī (died 386/996 or 387/998), who taught in Sījistān and other parts of Eastern Iran.5

Other teachers of the author, less often mentioned by him, were Abū Sa‘īd al-Khaṭṭābī, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Sījistānī, about whom I found no information, and Abūl-Hasan ‘Ali b. Abī al-Hasan b. Yahyā, about whom I found only that he was from Sījistān and related traditions from al-Khaṭṭābī in that country.6 Abū ‘Abd al-Rahmān Ḥanbal b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal al-Fārisī (I have no information about him) is only quoted twice (pp. 83-4 and 145).

Most of the author’s teachers were, then, from Sījistān, and he himself was obviously also a native of either Sījistān or a neighbouring region, and possible a resident of Ghazna. It is not surprising that the library of the amir of Ghazna—for which, as we shall see, the MS. was written—should have included a volume by a local author, though that author’s fame did not spread beyond his own country. The exegesis at the beginning of the book: ‘Thus says Abū Bakr Muhammad the son of Abū Aliī the son of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, may God be pleased with him and his parents’

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grandfather bears rare Iranian names I consulted F. Justi’s Joränisches Namenbuch, where I did indeed find him under “Nīḥā” and “Dīlāy” (pp. 172, 84). This bears eloquent witness of Justi’s learning and comprehensive use of the sources—but does not help us, since Justi’s authority was the catalogue of the Leiden Library, where in the description of our MS. this scholar’s name is quoted.

Abū Ḥanīfā al-Risāqīr, from whom Abū ‘Umar heard a tradition “in Bana, a village belonging to Tirmidh” (see Yaḍayt, i, 788) (p. 261); ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Muhammad b. Aḥṭaya al-Aḥwāfī, whom he heard in Tirmidh (p. 325); Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Khuwādī, whom he heard in Balkh (pp. 340, 388); Abū Bakr Muhammad b. Ḥāmid al-Warrānī, whom he also heard in Balkh (p. 384); ‘Abd al-Mu‘īn b. Khālid, whom he heard in Nasaf (p. 308).

6 For al-Khaṭṭābī see Brockelmann, i, 174, Supplement, i, 376. On p. 332 the author quotes an observation of al-Khaṭṭābī about a luminous stone which he had seen in Ukhbūtah in the province of Ushbana.

7 Yaḍayt, ṭabaqāt al-‘Arab, ii, 83 (in biography of al-Khaṭṭābī).
suggests that the MS. was copied after the author’s death.9

With the help of my old notes, taken in Leiden many years ago, I can
give a brief description of the work. It is ordered according to the primary
authorities to which the various traditions are ascribed. After an intro-
duction, the traditions ascribed to ‘Ali are given (pp. 21 fl.). Then follow
the traditions ascribed to ‘A’isha (pp. 83 ff.), Hind bint Abi Hāla (pp.
144 ff.), Umm Ma’bad (pp. 197 fl.), Anas b. Mālik (pp. 255 ff.) On p. 258
there begins a series of paragraphs discussing the traditions concerning
the Prophet’s use of various kinds of perfume. Then there follow additional
traditions from Anas (pp. 285 ff.), traditions from al-Bara’ b. ‘Azh (p.
302), Jābir b. Samuel (pp. 303 ff.), Abū Hurayra (pp. 341 ff.), al-’Abbās
b. Khālid (pp. 346 ff.), Abū Ṭalāyā (pp. 350 ff.), Rabī’ya (pp. 352 ff.),
Abī Sa’id al-Khadr (pp. 353 ff.), Abū Allāh b. Ḥarith (pp. 356 ff.),
Qurt b. Rabī’a (pp. 364 ff.), Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh (pp. 366 ff.), Hind bint
Jawn (pp. 376 ff.). At the end (pp. 378 fl.) there are some traditions
about the miraculous quality of the Prophet’s sweat etc. and (pp. 385 ff.)
his luminosity in the dark.

A few indications about the written sources used by the author may
complete this summary description of his book. We have seen that his
chief oral authority was Abū Sa’id ‘Uthmān b. Abī ‘Umar Muḥammad al-
Sijistānī, who transmitted to our author traditions from his father Abī
‘Umar. From some references10 it results that these traditions were
contained in a book compiled by Abī ‘Umar, the subject of which was
perhaps the same as that of our author: the traditions containing the
description of the Prophet. The traditions from al-Tirmidhī’s al-Shamā’il,
which we have seen our author derived from Abī ‘Umar, were probably
included in that book.11 We have seen that two of the teachers of our

9 It is true that the formula rasūlullāh ‘aswā’ can also be used after the name of a living
person (J. Goldziher, “Über die Epoche der Muhammedaner.” Zeitschrift der deutschen
morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1896, p. 122, note 1), but this usage is very rare and is here
excluded by the addition of the reference to the parents.

spelt just as I have written,” p. 379. The books by Abī ‘Umar enumerated by Yaqtī
seem to belong—to judge from their titles—to bellus, so that the book referred to
by our author can be identified by none of them.

11 Since the author also refers to particular spellings in al-Tirmidhī’s book (e.g. p. 327:
“[I found it written thus in Abī Ḥadb’s book.”] it is obvious that he also read it directly,
without doubt with his master Abū Sa’īd, who handed it down from his father Abī ‘Umar.
(Or was Abī ‘Umar derived the traditions of al-Tirmidhī, as we have seen, from Abū Naṣr Mu-
ḥammad?) There is nothing strange in Abī ‘Umar including traditions from al-Tirmidhī
in his own compilation which he read with his son, but reading with his son al-Tirmidhī’s
book,

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author were disciples of al-Khaṭṭābī, so that it is natural that he used
the writings of that famous traditionist.12 Many traditions are said to
be extracted from “the book” of an older authority, Ibn Abī Khay-
thama.13

In his comments the author uses a number of special works on
gharib al-hadīth, rare words in Tradition. He says that he took the
commentary on the tradition of Hind bint Abī Hāla from “Ibn Qutayba’s
book” (Ibn Qutayba’s famous book on rare words is obviously meant),
making, however, additions of his own (p. 197). The commentary on
Umūm Mā‘bad’s tradition is taken from “Ibn Qutayba and other scholars
(p. 205). As we have seen, the author used al-Khaṭṭābī’s book on the
subject; he also quotes the famous Gharīb al-Hadīth by Abī ‘Ubayd al-
Harrawī, who was a disciple of al-Khaṭṭābī and was thus an older con-
temporary of the author.14 Of other philological works we may mention
some book by Abū Mūsā al-Ḥāmid and another by al-Azhari, both perused
in the autograph.15 Ibn Jinnī is also quoted.16 Of lesser authors an
autograph by the sheikh Abū Bakr,17 or Abū Bakr al-Hanbali,18 is often
quoted; its title is sometimes specified as al-Sawāhid,19 and on one
occasion the information is vouchedsafe that its author died before the
final revision of the book.20 I think this author is identical with Abī
Bakr 'Abd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥanbali, who composed a dirge on al-Khaṭṭābī and was thus a contemporary of the author's teachers. There are mentioned the "Baghdādī Notes" by a certain Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Umar b. Abī 'Umar, whom I cannot identify.

II. THE MANUSCRIPT

So much for the text. As for the splendid MS. which contains the text, it has a colophon from which we learn the identity of the scribe who wrote—and presumably also illuminated—it: Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Rāfi‘ī, the waqī‘ī, "in Ghazna, may God preserve it ". The waqī‘ī was a professional copyist and bookseller—the shopkeepers in the market of stationers (ṣāq al-ṣawā‘iq) naturally enough themselves produced their own wares. There was good reason why in this case our bookseller of Ghazna made an effort to produce a book as beautiful as he could make it: his customer was not a scholar who would not care too much about the look of his textbook and who would not usually be able to afford a luxury copy, but the amīr of Ghazna himself, the ruler of a great empire, in fact the son of Muḥammad of Ghazna. To tell the truth, the Ghaznavīd empire had sadly declined from its mighty state under Muḥammad by the time of Abū al-Rashid, his son and third successor—but even so its ruler would expect a copy worthy of a library which must have included many books owned by his father, that great patron of literature.

We learn of the provenance of the book from the library of the amīr of Ghazna from his ex-libris on the title-page. In fact the title-page is taken up by two ex-libris: one of the amīr Abū al-Rashīd in six lines, the other of a certain rich merchant, written between the first and second lines of the other ex-libris. In order to explain this anomaly I assume that the ruler's ex-libris originally contained two more lines which were later erased to give way to the ex-libris of a subsequent owner; we shall see that an examination of the titles of the rulers as they appear in the

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18 Vāqī‘ī, Irshād al-Arīb, ii. 87. On p. 108 in our book it is related that Abū Bakr "asked Abū Muḥammad al-Sṭāhī", whom I cannot, however, identify.
19 P. 16 (his autograph is that of al-Ṣāqī al-Baghdādi)., p. 191. (While reading the proofs I realize that Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Umar is probably the brother of Abū Ṣāqī al-'Utbūm al-Siṣṭānī, see 8 note i.) A poem by one of the moderns "is quoted on the authority of a certain sheikh Muḥammad b. Abī Yūsuf (p. 301), and on p. 276 a verse " by one of the moderns " with a laqīn in the word "al is quoted from Abū'l-Fadl al-Baṣrī, who is probably some other than Abū'l-Fadl al-Baṣrī, the court poet of the Ghaznavīd, and himself one of the chief representatives of laqīn poetry.
20 The alternative that Muḥammad b. Rāfi‘ī was a craftsman permanently employed at the amīr's court cannot, of course, be ruled out.

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ex-libris confirms this assumption.44

The ex-libris of 'Abd al-Rashīd as it stands now reads:

[Two lines containing the ex-libris of the merchant Muḥammad b. Shībī]

For the library of the amīr, the king, who glorifies God's religion, and aids God's caliph [... two lines containing the ex-libris of the merchant ...] Abū Mansūr 'Abd al-Rashīd, the son of the Right Hand of the Empire, Trusty Keeper of the Islamic Religion, Abū'l-Qāsim Malāmūn, the son of the Helper of Religion—Assistant of the Commander of the Faithful; may God prolong his life and give glory to his victories.

This MS. is not at all easy to read this text, which is written in gold against the background of a scrolling: the colour is badly damaged and it took several sessions during my stay in Leiden in 1951 to make out the script, by catching the reflection of the faded gold near a window. It was only after having done the work that I noticed that I had a predecessor nearly a century ago. Whereas in the catalogue of the Arabic MSS. of the Leiden Library (dated 1866) it was stated that the MS. was written for "some prince", in an appendix (dated 1877) it was added45 that during a visit J. von Karaback had made an attempt to decipher the ex-libris and read part of it, establishing the identity of the prince as the Ghaznavīd 'Abd al-Rashīd. Since, however, he was unable to read some words, and others he read incorrectly, I do not regret the efforts spent upon the ex-libris, of which I can now offer a fairly certain text.

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44 The alternative would be to assume that the book was made for the merchant and was then acquired by the amīr, whose ex-libris was then written above and below that of the merchant. This is rather unlikely in itself, and the fact that some elements, which should figure in the title of the amīr, are absent, seems to clinch the argument in favour of the explanation offered in the text.
45 At the end of vol. vi/7 of the catalogue (published by M. Th. Houtsma in 1877); see p. 229.
III. THE TITLES IN THE EX-LIBRIS

The ex-libris is not only valuable as a monument of Islamic art in itself and as evidence for the date and provenance of the MS., but also provides information about the titles born by 'Abd al-Rashid and his grandfather Sabuktakin (Sebiiktigin). In a thorough article entitled "The Titulature of the Early Ghaznavids" C. E. Bosworth reviewed the evidence available on the subject. Some uncertainty remained about Sabuktakin's title, and I do not think that Bosworth has drawn the right conclusion. In 384/994 Sabuktakin and his son Mahmud helped the Samanid amir Nuh b. Mansur defeat the rebellious generals Abu 'Ali and Fakir, and as a reward, Sabuktakin was given a new title. There is, however, some doubt about what the title exactly was: there is no question but that it was composed with "Nasir", "the Helper of...", but there is a conflict of evidence about the second part. According to Bosworth "Nasir al-Dawla is probably the original form, and the din component [making it Nasir al-Din wa'l-Dawla] may have been added to it in popular usage soon after his death or even during his lifetime". The evidence seems to me to impose quite different conclusions. The title Nasir al-Din wa'l-Dawla is attested by weighty authorities. Abu'l-Fath al-Busti, Sabuktakin's intimate court poet calls him by this title in his dirge, and the same form is given by al-Biruni and Gardizi, both writers who lived under the early Ghaznavids. It is true that this full title was often abbreviated—net, however, into Nasir al-Dawla, but into Nasir al-Din. Abu'l-Fath, in a second dirge, employs the form Nasir al-Din al-Lah, which is merely a poetical variant of Nasir al-Din, as is the form Nasir al-Din, which occurs in an anomalous dirge. These are contemporary passages. A few years after Sabuktakin's death, Firdayi, in the chapter of the Shakht-nama containing the dedication to Mahmud of Ghazna refers to Mahmud's brother Nasr as "the son of him who is called Nasir al-Din." Similarly, al-Uthbi, speaking of the same prince, has Nasr b. Nasir al-Din, and speaking of a third brother, Isma'Il b. Nasir al-Din. Farrukhi, court panegyrist of the Ghaznavids, calls Mahmud "son of Nasir al-Din" and Yisu 'ul "son of Nasir-i-Din", and also in the headings of numerous poems dedicated to these and other members of Sabuktakin's dynasty he is always referred to as Nasir al-Din. Our ex-libris confirms that in the court of Ghazna, in referring to the ancestor of the dynasty, the shortened form Nasir al-Din was used.

There is only one apparent exception. In describing the bestowal of the title upon Sabuktakin, al-Uthbi according to the printed text gives it as Nasir al-Dawla. This is strange, since it goes against all the other contemporary evidence, and also, as we have seen, against al-Uthbi's own usage in other passages of his book. Thus there is good reason to assume that the text is incorrect, and this is confirmed by the fact that the coming to his court. Gardizi wrote in Ghazna under the reign of 'Abd al-Rashid. The passages are in al-Biruni's Chronology (Al-Idhar al-Bikayya, ed. Sachau), p. 134, and in Gardizi's History (Zayn al-Akhla, ed. M. Nazim), p. 62. On pp. 59 and 63, however, Gardizi writes Nasir al-Din.

Abu'l-Fath's second dirge and the one by the anonymous poet are quoted by al-Uthbi after Abu'l-Fath's first dirge, i. 263.

Ed. Vallier, i. 14, line 230. 23 P. 339. He also quotes (p. 332) a poem composed by himself in which he calls the prince Nasr b. al-arifi Nasir al-Din Allah using a "poetical" form similar to the one used by Abu'l-Fath. When Jurjini, Tabashiri Nasir, ed. W. Nasr, v. 8 (transl. H. G. Rawerty, p. 70) gives Sabuktakin's title as Nasir al-Din Allah, he probably had some such poem in mind. Nasir al-Mulk (Tabish al-nama, p. 126) also gives Sabuktakin the title Nasir al-Din through his account of its bestowal in erroneous.

See for example Dindsch (Feurer 1892), p. 86 i. 3 (Mahmud); p. 140 i. 14, 142 i. 5, 143 i. 14, p. 330 i. 5 (Yusuf), and also no need to give references for the very numerous headings. Also the Ziyyarit Kay Khatra in his Oldi-nama calls his father-in-law "Mahmud son of Nasir al-Din" (ed. Levy, p. 6).

19 i. 193.
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IV. THE CALLIGRAPHY OF THE MANUSCRIPT

The historical information incidentally provided by the ex-libris—however trifling—is welcome, but incomparably greater is the artistic importance of the manuscript, in regard mainly to its writing, but also to its illumination.

The book counts among the important documents of Arabic calligraphy, since, together with a few other MSS., it bears witness to a decisive stage in its history. In the early centuries of Islam we have to distinguish between three kinds of script—leaving aside epigraphical writing. First there is the variety of scripts used for the Koran—all called conventionally, though rather inaccurately, Kufic. Secondly, there are the scripts, showing variations according to their time and place, used in copying books. Thirdly, we have the more cursive scripts used for letters, documents, and notes, out of which were evolved in the chanceries various formal scripts. The eleventh-twelfth century specimens confirm

simpler (and older) type, since they regularly precede in the complete series the more complex ones. Gardizi gives as ‘Abd al-Rashid’s title Sulh-i Mu’azzam ‘Izz al-Dawla wa-Zayn al-Milla Sayyf Allah Mu’izz Din Allah. The coins only show the simple titles: ‘Izz al-Dawla wa-Zayn al-Milla Sayyf Allah. It seems obvious to me that the titles ‘Izz al-Dawla wa-Zayn al-Milla Sayyf Allah did in fact figure in the two lines (between the present lines 1 and 2) which were subsequently erased in order to make place for the ex-libris of the merchant Zayn al-Din. Since they would not have filled the two lines, we may assume that there were a few more words, more preliminary epithets for instance, such as “the great, the victorious” etc. The title Nasir Amir al-Mu’minin, “Assistant of the Commander of the Faithful”, which—as titles of this type always does—comes at the very end, was not hitherto attested for ‘Abd al-Rashid. 41

There is no critical edition of the text. The old Manchester MS. (John Rylands Library, fo. 298, dated 569 [1173], and the fair copy MS. Oxford 811 (7th-11th century) ) have, as the printed text:

The more recent Oxford 675 (Jamal a. I. 1042) reads, however:

(The reading of the Manchester MS. was kindly ascertained for me by Dr. J. D. Latham.)

41 One can explain how the original Nāṣir al-Din was changed into Nāṣir al-Dawla: al-Uthn relates in the same passage that Mahmūd was given the title of Sayf al-Dawla, and I suggest that this caused some copyist to write Nāṣir al-Dawla by a sort of attraction.

42 Ibn al-Athir, is. 72, and Ibn Khallikān in the title of the article on Mahmūd of Ghazna (see above, p. 14 note 26).

43 This is a quotation from Bosworth, who thus motivates his conclusion that the form with dawla was the original title of Sabuktakin.


45 P. 69.
that chancery script, in contrast to the Koranic and book scripts, always
affected a certain cursiveness of ductus, though a highly stylized cursive-
ness. In the fourth century of the Hijra (tenth century A.D.) there was
introduced a new Koranic script, which I proposed to call "rhomboid" script.
This was at the beginning used side by side with the "Kufic," which by the end of the fourth/seventh century went out of use. The rhomboid script survived until the sixth/seventh century, but gave way
in its turn to a competitor which appeared at the beginning of the fifth/
eleventh century: the naskh script. Here we have a somewhat different
process from that which brought the rhomboid script into use. This script was a new invention, which the naskh script of course was not: it is, as its name shows, the "copying" or book hand. The novelty consisted in the new function of the naskh as a Koranic script, which was also accompanied by an improvement of the naskh in order to fit it for its new part. The first extant Koran in naskh was written by the famous
calligrapher Ibn al-Bawwâb in 391/1000-1. It is likely that in the improvement of the naskh script Ibn al-Bawwâb had predecessors in the
fourth/seventh century, but it is perhaps not far fetched to ascribe to him
the novelty of using a naskh still further regularized by him for copying
the Koran. The next earliest Korans in naskh are the copies preserved

in the British Museum, the Chester Beatty Library and the Türk ve İslam
Eserleri Müzesi and discussed by Rice on pp. 24-7, belonging to the third
decade of the fifth Islamic century.

This elevation of the naskh to the rank of a Koranic script and the
fashion introduced (it seems) by Ibn al-Bawwâb of employing it in
illuminated luxury Korans gave rise to use of naskh also in non-Koranic
luxury books. We have not enough materials to be able to say with
certainty which was the script usually employed for luxury books (other
than Korans) in the early centuries of Islam. From the fifth/eleventh
century onwards naskh is employed for luxury copies—i.e. illuminated
books written for the libraries of rulers, high dignitaries, or other rich
men. There is in the Bodleian Library in Oxford a copy of Miskawî's
Adâb al-Furs dated 439/1047 which is the earliest luxury MS. of a
Koranic text known to me written in the new style. Our MS. is second
in the chronological order. The lay-out of these two MSS. is related to
that of the Koran MSS. insofar as they have rosettes dividing the sentences
(corresponding to the verse-divisors in the Koran), panels for chapter
headings, marginal palmettes. A copy of Salâma b. Jandal's collected
poems, which belongs here through the use of calligraphic naskh, can be
dated to between 445/1053 and 456/1063—probably to 455 or 456/1063-4.
Its lay-out, however, follows a different pattern: whereas the commentary
is written in naskh, the verses are in large characters said to be thuluth.}

Incidentally the use of the thuluth script in luxury books is due to a
similar adaptation as that of the naskh. The naskh was adapted from its
original sphere (ordinary secular books) to a new one: Korans and other
luxury books. The thuluth was originally a chancery script, which was
also adapted for the same new uses. Ibn al-Bawwâb was famous for his

followers of Ibn al-Bawwâb is said to have been famous for his Koranic script (Yaqtâl, al-Farûk al-İrâb, v. 304, quoted by Rice, p. 10). Al-İrâb (for whose specimens of calligraphy see below, p. 30 note 85) gives a specimen of the Naskh script according to the manner of Ibn al-Bawwâb (pp. 34-7) which on the whole corresponds fairly well to the script of the
Chester Beatty MS. (This usage has to be distinguished from the older one, where "script of the naskh" refers to the so-called "Kufic" scripts.) The name "Koranic script" suggests that the naskh used by Ibn al-Bawwâb and his school for Korans was of a particular kind, distinguished from ordinary naskh. This point needs further clarification.

I hope to discuss this MS. in the near future.
improvement of various chancery scripts, the thuluth amongst them, and one may perhaps risk the conjecture that the use of thuluth in books was also due to his example.

Let us, however, come back to our MS. which is in naskh script. Not, however, in the style developed for the naskh by Ibn al-Bawwāb and accepted as canonical by his followers. The script of our MS. is strikingly idiosyncratic and shows that at the period the "manner of Ibn al-Bawwāb" (tarkīt Ibn al-Bawwāb) did not out individuate. The scribe of the MS. and his copyist have accepted the new idea that the ordinary book hand, the naskh, may, if given extra care, be used for luxury MSS., but did not yet think it essential to conform to the actual style of the standard naskh going back to Ibn al-Bawwāb. The scribe probably based the script of this MS. on his ordinary handwriting which he used for copying cheaper books commissioned by lesser persons. For the luxury MS. destined for the library of the amīr he gave his own handwriting a calligraphic quality rather than adapting Ibn al-Bawwāb's style. Strict followers of the school of Ibn al-Bawwāb would have no doubt condemned the calligraphy as unorthodox and therefore inferior, but I cannot help feeling—though it would be futile to try to award marks—that in writing and lay-out our MS. can vie with Ibn al-Bawwāb's Koran and the other luxury MSS. of its period.

Where it falls off is the illumination, which cannot stand comparison with the richness and refinement of the illumination in Ibn al-Bawwāb's

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44 See for example the passage (indicated above, p. 18 note 46) from the anonymous treatise on calligraphy. There exist specimens by later calligraphers exemplifying various scripts "in the manner of Ibn al-Bawwāb", which seem to go back through many intervening media, of course—to originals in the hand of Ibn al-Bawwāb. A collection made by Ibn al-Tūrī for the Muftīs of al-Qalā'ah al-Gharbi is available in a facsimile edition: Jāmī' Makārik Kībat al-Kutub, published by S. al-Munajjīd, Beirut 1962, and can give an approximate idea of the various scripts.

45 The diwan of Sa'īda b. Jandal bears a colophon purporting to be in the hand of Ibn al-Bawwāb. According to Rice this is a forgery, but may reflect the fact that authentic MSS. by Ibn al-Bawwāb were written in alternating thuluth and naskh. A MS. entirely in thuluth, allegedly by Ibn al-Bawwāb, is a forgery (Rice, p. 27). So are probably two others, accepted as genuine by A. Shihāy al-Urūr, who has written a naive book on Ibn al-Bawwāb, in which all the colophons allegedly containing signatures of Ibn al-Bawwāb are taken on their face value (see the Arabic translation, al-Khāṣṣā'ī al-Baghdādī, "Ali b. Hamd al-urūrī, "Ibn al-Bawwāb, Baghdad 1958, pp. 24 ff. [no. 1], p. 53 [no. 8]). I know of yet another thuluth MS. presumably forged on his name: Munich 701 of which I possess photographs. These MSS. may point to the existence of genuine MSS. written by Ibn al-Bawwāb in thuluth.

V. THE LATER VICISSITUDES OF THE MANUSCRIPT

The volume does not seem to have remained long in the library of the Ghaznawids. Its first subsequent owner was a rich merchant whose ex-libris occupies, if my conjecture is acceptable, the place of the second and third lines of the original ex-libris of 'Abd al-Rashīdī. The new ex-libris reads:

"Belongs to the sheikh Zakī al-Dīn, Glory of the Merchants, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Shībīl al-Himṣī". This text is in Kuфи script, which I shall not attempt to date accurately, but I hardly think it would be later than the twelfth century. The new owner bears the name "al-Himṣī"—so that he, or his family, came from Himṣ in Syria; where he actually lived is unknown.

A slightly later owner put his motto into the upper left corner:

"Mūsā b. Yaghmūrūr trusts in the forgiving God". The last two letters of Yaghmūrūr have been cut away, but fortunately they can be supplied, since the name is to rhyme with al-ghafir. There was a famous amīr of this name in the reign of the Ayyūbid ruler al-Kāmil, and I think it most probable that we have here his ex-
A MS. from the Library of a Ghaznavid Amir

libris; if so the MS. has found its way to Egypt by the first half of the thirteenth century. Nothing can be said about the other owners: Muhammad (with undeciphered nisbas), Sa’id b. ‘Ali, Hasan al-Faqiri. Finally, in the seventeenth century, the MS. was acquired in Istanbul by L. Warner, who bequeathed it to the University of Leiden.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATES

The dimensions of the book are 24.5 x 16.7 cms., with only insignificant differences in the various folios. The written surface measures ca. 18 x 11 cms., and there are 10 or 9 lines to each page.

Fig. 1 shows the page with the ex-libris. As I have said, the ex-libris of ’Abd al-Rashid is in bad condition, and since most of the gold of the writing has disappeared, it can hardly be read in the photograph. The outlines of the scrolling are in red, which is then filled in with gold. The three-dots ornament is in blue, and the frame of the ex-libris is also blue.46

The ex-libris of the merchant Muhammad b. Shibli al-Himsi has also deteriorated, but is clearly legible. It is in a panel in a frame with ornament of dots. The four corners are cut off and contain fleurons.

The verso of fol. 1 (Fig. 2) and the recto of fol. 2 (Fig. 3) contain the title of the book on two almost, though not entirely, mirroring panels with knobs (familiar from MSS. of the Koran). The sides of the panels are prolonged downwards to form, with a corresponding horizontal border, a frame for the whole of the page, furnished with an ornament of dots. In the outer lower corner of both pages half of the upper knob is repeated. The colours employed in the panels, knobs, and frames, are gold, red, blue, green.

There follows on fol. 2v the basmala and the author’s name, all in thick gold letters framed within black contours. The text then begins with the author’s preface.

The next plates provide specimens of the text and at the same time illustrate the style of the chapter-headings, which are in golden letters within black outlines of a different style from the writing of the text, with palmettes of various shapes on the margin opposite them. These palmettes only occur near the beginning of the volume, on pp. 8, 21, 26, 28. Afterwards the scribe made his task easier by omitting them.

46 If my conjecture that the panel with the ex-libris of the merchant Muhammad b. Shibli is later addition, the two lines above and below it, separating it from the first scrolling of the large ex-libris above, and the five below, must also be a later addition.
3. Title (Left page)

2. Title (Right page)
The frame of the palmettes is in blue, the scrolling inside is filled in gold within black outlines, the ground behind is partly left empty, partly coloured in red and green.

Fig. 4 shows p. 8, containing the end of the author's preface and the beginning of the chapter on the meaning of the words *khilaq* and *khulq*, physical and moral characteristics, respectively. Fig. 5 shows p. 21, with the beginning of the chapter containing the traditions about the description of the Prophet ascribed to 'Ali b. Abi Talib. The first tradition is derived from al-Tirmidhi's *Shama'il* (Cairo 1889, p. 19) through the usual *isnad*: al-Tirmidhi—Abü Nasr Muhammed b. Khwâ—Abû 'Umar Muhammed b. Ahmad al-Sijistânî—his son Abû Saîd—the author. At the beginning of p. 26, reproduced in Fig. 6, we see the end of the quotation, viz. al-Tirmidhi's critical remark about the tradition: "Abû Isâ [i.e. al-Tirmidhi] says: This is a beautiful and correct hadith"—the adjectives being of course the technical terms employed in the science of Tradition for the designation of the most trustworthy traditions. There follows a note by the author on one of the authorities occurring in the chain of the tradition. The chapter-heading announces additional readings for the tradition discussed before.

Fig. 7 shows the beginning of the next chapter, still dealing with the tradition related from 'Ali; its subject-matter is apparent from the heading: "The explanation of the rare words occurring in these traditions."

Finally, in Fig. 8 there can be seen the last page (p. 387) of the text, with the colophon giving the name of the scribe, Abû Bakr Muhammad b. Abû Raîf the stationer, and indicating Ghazna as the place in which the copy was made.