

NOTES UPON SOME OF THE ḲURĀNIC MANUSCRIPTS IN THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY.

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THERE are sixty manuscripts in the John Rylands Library which deal with the Ḳurân. Forty-six contain the sacred text, and fourteen treat of exegesis, orthography, and good reading. All Islamic compositions referring to Hadith or oral traditions concerning the life and the sayings of the Prophet are excluded from the above heading.

I.

Among the first series of manuscripts we find some which commend themselves to the palæographer either on account of their very ancient date (VIIIth cent.) or the peculiarities of their script. More than one specimen of the writing which they exhibit is wanting in Dr. Moritz's valuable "Arabic Palæography" (1905), in the Palæographical Society's publications (1875-1883), and in other similar works.

There are also three volumes written from beginning to end in letters of gold, which by reason of the beauty of their execution will doubtless appeal to lovers of Eastern art. It would appear that the original collectors of these manuscripts displayed a special interest in this respect, with the result that many of the volumes easily take rank amongst the finest examples extant. One of these, which formerly belonged to Caussin of Perceval was brought from the East in 1858. It was regarded as one of the most noteworthy exhibits in the Paris exhibition of 1867, and several of its pages have been reproduced in colour in M. Prisse d'Avesnes' "Art Arabe". Furthermore, it has the distinction of being the largest Ḳurân known to exist, measuring as it does 860 × 540 mm.

There are two complete Ḳurâns written upon rolls of paper

of the following dimensions : diameter of the cylinder when the paper is rolled up, 16 mm. and 17 mm. respectively. Full length of the scrolls, 11 ft. 6½ in. and 12 ft. 3½ in. respectively, whilst the breadth is 60 mm. and 77 mm.

The rolls consist of a series of ornamentations, sometimes continuous and sometimes interrupted, whose lines of demarcation are the sacred text. The Sūrahs are introduced by the *Basmalah*, but there is no help to the eye to find them. Many such textual ornaments are shaped in red ink, but the text itself is in black. The words are so skilfully, but also so fantastically interwoven in the small blank spaces, that it is difficult to find out where a given verse is placed. The ḲurĀn seems to have been written in this curious manner, in order that it may make a good amulet to be worn by a Muḥammadan prince. Some few other libraries contain *curiositatis causâ* one of these rolls,¹ but so far as we can judge from the descriptions given by the scholars who catalogued them, they differ somewhat from those now in Manchester.

There is one very curious manuscript of the ḲurĀn which is deserving of special attention. It is that numbered Cod. 52 in the Crawford collection, and Cod. 133 in the Bland collection. It is written in an unusual form of slanting characters with very thick horizontal strokes. We doubt whether copies of the ḲurĀn written in this character of script are numerous.

It is the most curiously written ḲurĀn that we have ever met ; it contains some wonderful anomalies of spelling attributable perhaps to the carelessness of the scribe ; for instance, in Sūratul-Baḳarah, from verse 66 to verse 80, we find the following curiosities of spelling, which may easily touch the point of what we might call a *mistake*. كاد for كادوا ; first منها of v. 69 omitted ; final alif of قالوا omitted ; واذا الثريبي for فريق ; الصالعات for الصالعات ; واذ الثريبي for واذي الثريبي ; the second member of ميثاقتكم repeated twice.

The characteristic mark of this manuscript is that two nouns or a particle and a noun are frequently joined together, ex. gr. التتمسنا for التتمسنا ; بل هم for بلهم ; ال تمسنا . The letter ك, as is the case in many other manuscripts, is written like a ل, but a small ك is formed over it

¹ Cf. Cod. 571, p. 135, of Baron de Slane's "Catalogue des Manuscrits Arabes de la Bibliothèque Nationale" (1883-1895).

to distinguish it from the last letter. In case of two *Hamzas*, at the beginning of a word, the first one is often written separately ءاله for الله .

The text exhibits sometimes archaic spelling to be put side by side with the oldest copies of the *Ḳurân* that we possess, and sometimes it offers readings which, by their undoubted internal value, and by their simultaneous homogeneity with the other kindred languages, would point to a very early period in Arabic literature. On the other hand, the manuscript dating only from XIII-XVIth cent. may give rise by its carelessness to some perplexities on the ground of orthodoxy.

A large number of passages have been either erased or covered over with thin pieces of paper, throughout the volume, which numbers 882 pages, with eleven lines to the page, and measures 223×170 mm. As no later hand has touched it for the purpose of readjusting its lines to suit the standard text, since the space occupied by the lines which have been purposely erased is left in blank, it would perhaps be useful to inquire as to the nature of the text eliminated in this strange manner.

Generally, when words have been obliterated, the space which they occupied is, as stated above, left blank, but a letter or two, at times a word or two, have been added by a later hand at the beginning and at the end of this space, to harmonize the text with the *textus receptus* of the *Ḳurân*. It is not, therefore, the first copyist who is responsible for all these changes. The following four instances will serve as specimens.

Fol. 24b. There is one line blotted out which perhaps contained a text in addition to that of the *Ḳurân*, since the end of the line (في ذلك) and the beginning of the other line after the blank (ان ارادوا II, 227) correspond exactly to the standard text.

Fol. 42a. A line has been blotted out; the last word of the blank space is (معكم III, 75) and the first word of the other line لنؤمنن ; but after معكم the letter *waw* stands alone and ought to be joined with the following word لنؤمنن which is preceded by the blank line. This points to the probability of one line and a half having been purposely obliterated.

Fol. 43b. Two lines and a half have been blotted out; the last

word of the blank space is (مقام III, 91) ; the first word of the other line (ابراهيم) is found in the middle of the third line, leaving room for three or four more words.

Fol. 109b. One line in the middle of the page has many obliterated words between خالصة and يوم (VII, 30), so that other words existed between the two ; moreover some letters appear from the erased words which cannot be safely supplied.

It may not be out of place here to remark that in the *al-Muḳni'* of ad-Dāni (d. A.H. 444), there are some interesting variants of the Ḳurān about which, as is commonly admitted, al-Baiḍhāwī maintains silence. If the hope, expressed by a few scholars, for a critical edition of the sacred book of Islām, is some day to be realized, Dāni's composition will be found useful. A glance at one chapter of the manuscript under notice reveals three variant readings not mentioned by al-Baiḍhāwī :—

Sūrah VII, 27 ; our MS., fol. 96b, gives the reading وقال instead of قال.

Sūrah X, 23 ; our MS., fol. 97a, gives the reading ينشركم instead of يسيركم.

Sūrah XLII, 29 ; our MS., fol. 100a, gives the reading بما كسبت instead of فيما كسبت.

II.

Among the second series of manuscripts there are some very useful ones. If we mistake not, some of them are very rare and three unique, since they are not represented in the catalogue of the rich Berlin collection compiled by W. Ahlwardt (1887-1899) and consisting of ten large volumes. Neither are they found in the catalogue of the "Bibliothèque Nationale," compiled (1883-1895) by Baron de Slane, nor in the two catalogues of the British Museum, by Cureton (1846), and by Dr. Rieu (1872 and 1894). They are also absent from the Library of Gotha, whose descriptive catalogue is due to Dr. W. Pertsch (1878-1892), from Flügel's catalogue of the Imperial Library of Vienna (1865-1867), and finally from the Khedivial Library of Cairo (A.H. 1310), etc. In the following pages we shall offer a few remarks on each of these MSS numbered respectively 347, 601, 337, and 729 :—

A.

Cod. 347 has for its title *حجة الاسلام*, "Proof of Islâm". It is written in a clear Naskhi, and deals with the good writing and the pronunciation of the *Qurân*, arranged in sections under the *Sûrah* headings. The author is called Muḥammad Badrul-Islâm, who explains the aim of his book in sentences which we translate thus:—

"When I noticed that many people have neither the leisure nor the wish to peruse detailed books treating of the transcription of the *Qurân*, I compiled, in an abridged form, a small book, from such reliable compositions as the *Itkân*, the *Shâtîbyyah*, the *Mudakḳik* and the *Djazaryyah*. I collected also interesting traditions which will appeal to the heart of the high and the common people, and which would be a source of meditation to men of understanding and thought. I entitled it: 'Proof of Islâm,' in the transcription of a text corresponding to that of the Imâm.¹

". . . It occurs in the *Ḥadith* that Gabriel—peace be with him—said: 'Recite the *Qurân* in seven letters, each one being sufficient and efficient'. Ibn Mas'ūd said that this *Qurân* came down in seven letters, each one having an apparent sense and one requiring development (*Ḍahrun wa Baṭnun*). If you say: 'What does he mean by seven letters?' I shall answer that many opinions have been expressed about that. . . . And Abu 'Ubaidah said: 'The seven letters mean the seven dialects of the language of the Arabs'. It does not imply that there are seven ways in which a letter may be found; this has not been heard of at all, but it does mean that these seven dialects are disseminated here and there in the *Qurân*. Some of them are in the dialect of *Quraysh*, some of them in the dialect of *Hawâzen*, some of them in the dialect of *Hudhail*, some of them in the dialect of *Yaman*, some of them in the dialect of *Dūs*, and some of them in the dialect of *Tamim*. Some say that these seven letters are the seven readings that the seven Imâms have adopted; one of these is 'Âṣim b. Abin-Nujūd, and the name of his mother is Bahdalat, and he is called 'Âṣim son of Bahdalat; the second is Ḥamzah, son of Ḥabîb az-Zayyât; the third is 'Ali b. Ḥamzah al Kisâ'i; all these three were from *Kūfah*. The fourth is 'Abdallah b. Kathîr, the

¹ The Imâm is the Caliph 'Othmân under whose authority the *Qurân* was finally compiled.

imâm of Maccah ; the fifth is Nafi' b. 'Abdur-Rahmân b. Mas'ûd, the imâm of Madinah ; the sixth is 'Amr. b. al-'Ālâ', the imâm of Baṣrah, and his nickname is al-'Ariân (= the naked) b. 'Ammâr b. al-'Ariân, and his surname is Abu 'Amr ; the seventh is 'Abdallah b. 'Āmer, the imâm of Damascus.

“ . . . Authors differ as to the number of the copies that 'Othmân sent to various countries. It is a well-known tradition that they were five ; b. Dâoûd, referring to Ḥamzah az-Zayyât, said that 'Othmân sent four copies ; b. Abi Dâoûd said also : 'I heard abu Ḥâtim of Sijistan say : "He wrote seven copies that he sent to Maccah, to Damascus, to Yaman, to Baḥrain, to Baṣrah, and to Kûfah ; and he retained one in Madinah, and it is found at present in the *Enlightened Meadow* ”.

“ . . . Yazid b. Abi Ḥabib reports that the amanuensis of 'Amr. b. al-'Āṣ wrote to (the caliph) 'Umar—may Allah be pleased with him—*Bismillah*, without forming distinctly the (letter) *Sîn*, and 'Umar—may Allah be pleased with him—struck him ; he has been asked, with what did the Amir of the faithful strike you ? he said : He struck me with a *Sîn*.”

B.

The title of Cod. 601 is حاشية على البيضاوي, “Glosses on Al-Baiḍhâwi”. The volume consists of glosses on part of *Anwârut-Tanzîl* of al-Baiḍhâwi. Three rhymed lines are found at the end of the MS. in the hand of a man weakened by age, with a note which we translate as follows :—

“ (The book) has been finished by the hand of its writer Aḥmad Shihâbud-Dîn b. Muḥammad al-Miṣri—may God forgive his sins.”

The manuscript is, therefore, an autograph of the first author. There is an inscription in Turkish which shows that at the time when it was added (about A.H. 1075) the author was already dead : بو حاشيه شهابك اخريده شهاب مرحومك خط لطيفلى واردر. In the pages which follow this note we are informed that a certain Sulaimân bought the book in 1192, for the sum of seven piastres and a half. In the catalogue of the Khedivial Library (pp. 181-182) mention is made of this Shihâb as author of a commentary on Al-Baiḍhâwi. He is there given the surname of Al-Khaffajî, and he is said to have died in A.H. 1069. The author of our manuscript might

be identified with him, but the books, judging from the quotation of the first words of the text, are different ; they seem to represent two independent works by the same writer. An edition of the manuscript at Cairo was printed at Bulak (A.H. 1283) with Al-Baidhâwi's text. From fol. 7b and fol. 8a we translate the following extract :—

“ About (al-Baidhâwi's) saying : ‘ This is not accurate because (the Prophet)—prayer and peace be with him—stoned two Jews ’—he (al-Baidhâwi) refers to what is in al-Bukhâri who quotes ‘ Abdallah b. ‘ Umar as saying : ‘ The Jews came to God's Prophet and told him that a man and a woman from amongst them had committed adultery ’. God's Prophet said to them : ‘ What do you find in the Torah about stoning ? ’ They answered : ‘ They must be stripped of their garments and be scourged ’. Then ‘ Abdallah b. Salâm said : ‘ You have lied ; it is written that they should be stoned ’. They brought the Torah, and they opened it, and one of them put his hand on the verse containing the stoning. Then ‘ Abdallah b. Salâm said to him : ‘ Lift up your hand ’ ; and he lifted up his hand, and, behold, the verse of the stoning was found in it. Then they said : ‘ It is true, O Muḥammad, the verse of stoning is found in it ’. God's Prophet ordered, therefore, that they should be stoned.”

C.

The title of Cod. 337 is بحر العشق, “ Sea of Love ”.¹ This title may be misleading, because the book is simply a commentary on Sūrat Yūsuf (XII). The author's name is not given. The manuscript was written in Lahore, by a certain Ḥaidar, surnamed Amir Muḍhaffar al-Khaibar, 1233 A.H. Some of the characteristics of the narration will be gathered from the following anecdotal tradition :—

“ And God the Most High revealed unto Joseph that he would send Gabriel with a message containing greetings and the information that God would reward him on account of Jacob his father. And Gabriel reached him before the she-camel, and offered him condolence as God the Most High had ordered him. And God the Most High had appointed an angel to protect the she-camel till she came to Joseph. And God the Most High caused her to speak. And she

¹ From the citation of the first words of the text, this manuscript is not identical with that found in the Khedivial Library (ibid. p. 218, Cod. 255).

spoke in Hebrew and said : 'Peace be with you, O Joseph, your father will greet you in the day of the Resurrection, and he is pleased with you'. He was much afflicted with that, and he mourned during three days. The she-camel wept on Jacob. Then (Joseph) said : 'My Lord, Thou hast given me power, and thou hast taught me the interpretation of ḥadiths ; Creator of heavens and of earth, thou art my Protector in this world, and in the world to come, grant that I should die Moslem'. He asked for death at that time, and God sent Gabriel to him and said to him : 'God the Most High says that you will not die until from you, and from your child, and from your child's child, you may count six hundred (persons). At that time, your life will end.' Then he called the inhabitants of Egypt into Islām."

D.

The title of Cod. 729 is *كنز العباد في شرح الاوراد*, "Treasury of Worshippers in a Commentary on the Awrāds".

Written in a rough Naskhi, about A.D. 1630. The margins are generally injured by worms, so also are many letters of the text itself. The last four leaves are supplied in a modern hand.

The Awrāds are the familiar citations from the Ḳurān occurring in some invocations of daily worship. A commentary was written upon them by the celebrated doctor 'Umar b. Yaḥya as-Suhrawardi. The present work is a commentary by 'Ali b. Aḥmad al-Ghūri, in mingled Arabic and Persian, upon the commentary of Suhrawardi. A similar work is mentioned by Haji Khalifa (*Haji Khalifae Lexicon Encyclopaedicum et Bibliographicum*; edit. Flügel, Vol. V, pp. 254-255; two incomplete copies exist also in the Library of the India Office (cf. codd. 363, 364 in Loth's Cat.).

From the contents of the present work it would appear to have a more appropriate place under the heading "Law," but the title, referring to divisions in the sacred text, justifies its inclusion under the heading "Ḳurānic literature". On the leaf preceding the first page of the text, there is a list of the sections of the book. From the following titles of a few chapters, it will be inferred that the author deals with points of casuistry and with Muḥammadan legislation in general :—

"A chapter on sneezing. A chapter on greetings. A chapter

on forgiveness. A chapter on the traveller's prayer. A chapter on usury. A chapter on marriage. Dhikr in the month of Sha'bân. Dhikr in the month of Ramadhân. A chapter on what spoils the fasting. A chapter on the prayer of Friday, . . ." etc.

On fol. 75b. we find the following passage :—

"If some one sneezes, he must thank God and say : 'Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds ; praise be to God in all events' ; he is not to say other things. People who are present ought to say : 'May God have pity on you' ; then the sneezer will say : 'May God forgive me and you, or, lead you in the right way and make good your condition'. He must not say other things. In the '*Awârif*,¹ in the thirtieth chapter (the Prophet)—peace be with him—said : 'He who sneezes or experiences a yawn and says : "Praise be to God in all events," God will take away from him seventy diseases, the easiest of which is elephantiasis. . . .

"It is written in the Ḥadith that the sneezer deserves an utterance of prayer if he praises God when sneezing. If his companion has prayed for him, let him say : 'May God lead you in the right way and make good your condition'. In the Ḥadith also it is written that he who sneezes three consecutive times, faith is solid in his heart. It is reported, too, in the Ḥadith that if one sneezes more than three times, you can utter a prayer for him if you like, and if you like you may dispense with it. . . . It is reported that the Prophet—peace be with him—said : 'Sneezing is from God and yawning is from Satan. If some one from amongst you yawns, let him put his hand on his mouth ; and if he says : Ah, ah, Satan will laugh 'in his belly' (or) 'within him'.

Fol. 139a :—

"'Abdallah b. 'Umar is reported to have said that to swear by a thing other than God is an infidelity. He said also : 'Nobody is allowed to swear except in case of necessity'. It is written in the Shir'ah : 'He who wishes to swear in truth, let him swear by God and be quiet. An oath taken by a thing other than God is a hidden infidelity. Let no one swear by his father, or by the life of somebody, or by the Ka'bah, or by his swerving from Islâm ; because he who does that truly will not return to Islâm safely ; and if he swears mendaciously, infidelity will cling to him'. In the *Hidâyah* (title

¹ Title of a work written by Suhrawardi.

of a well-known work) it is written : ‘ An oath taken in the name of God is right and lawful ’ ; there also is the following saying of (the Prophet)—peace be with him—‘ He who swears falsely by God, God will get him into the fire.’ ”

From fol. 146a :—

“ Hospitality is one of the ways of acting in Islām. If a man enters, as a guest, the house of his brother who is a believer, a thousand blessings and a thousand mercies enter with him. The first man who received guests is the Beloved One of God—peace be with him. He had built a house with four gates looking in the four directions of the earth. He used to go one mile or two miles in search of a guest. He did not eat (or, did not go away)¹ except with a guest. He did not show, in his hospitality, any preference to the rich, by excluding the poor. He used to know his guests with accuracy one day or two days before his invitation. He did not call from one family the father without the son and the brother, if they were grown up. . . . He never invited a man who, to his knowledge, would cause uneasiness to the other guests.”

On fol. 56a we read the following passage written about Sūrah XXXIII, v. 9 sqq. :—

“ The story runs thus : When the Prophet of God—may God pray on him and give him peace—returned from a certain conflict with one of the brave of Madinah, he made a covenant with Bani Kuraidhah and Nadhir² that they should not be for him nor against him ; but they broke their engagement in the following manner : Ḥayya b. Akḥṭab rode to Maccah with some of his companions and stirred up Abu Sufiān to fight against the Prophet. Then he went to Ghatafān and bani Kinānah and incited them also for the battle. In this way he formed seven armies which numbered, it is said, fifteen thousand men, who came and alighted near Madinah. Then (b. Akḥṭab) came to Bani Kuraidhah who had for chieftain Ka‘b b. Asad. He went to him and said : ‘ I have brought you all Kuraish, Kinānah, and Ghatafān ; break, therefore, the covenant which exists between you and Muḥammad’. He did not cease until (Ka‘b) broke the covenant and tore up the paper.

¹ The MS. has يقطر, but this may be a mistake for يفتقر.

² MS. بني النضير but fol. 56b بني النضر.

“The news reached the Prophet—peace be with him—who consulted his companions ; they agreed to fight against them and to leave Madinah. Then Salmân rose up and said : ‘Did we not entrench ourselves, in the land of Persia, when horses frightened us ? Do not you want us, O Prophet of God—peace be with you—to dig trenches round Madinah ?’ Then the Prophet of God—peace be with him—went out with the inhabitants of Madinah, and the Prophet of God—peace be with him—took a pickaxe in his hands and said the formula : ‘In the name of God with whom we began ; if we had another one besides him, we should have been unhappy’. They dug trenches, and the *Companions* came and went to the back of them. They fought seven days. From the Infidels ‘Amr b. ‘Abduwaihi was killed ; he was a warrior from amongst their chieftains. It is in that time that the Prophet of God—peace be with him—missed four of his prayers, on account of his occupation in the war. . . .”