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THE STEMMA OF THE REGIONAL CODICES OF THE KORAN

1. Introduction

Is it possible to determine the stemma of the regional Koranic codices of the early Islamic period? In an earlier study, I made some rash observations on the question in a footnote,¹ largely adopting a stemma proposed by Nöldeke in 1860.² Since then, I have come to see that matters are less straightforward. Hence the present study.

The Muslim sources describe the preparation of an officially approved text of the Koran under the rule of the Caliph 'Uthmān (r. 23-35/644-656) and its subsequent distribution to the provinces. The Andalusian scholar Abū 'Amr al-Dānī (d. 444/1053) gives two accounts of this distribution.³ According to the first, 'Uthmān had four copies of the text prepared

1. M. Cook, "A Koranic codex inherited by Mālik from his grandfather", *Græco-Arabica* 7-8 (1999-2000) 93-105, here 101, n. 52. Since then, I have benefited from working through the material in a couple of my graduate seminars.

2. T. Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, Göttingen 1860, 242 (describing the proposed stemma as the most probable). This stemma reappears unchanged in T. Nöldeke *et al.*, *Geschichte des Qorāns*², 3, Leipzig 1926-1938, 15 (the relevant part of the work was revised by G. Bergsträsser). It is striking how much of the discussion of the regional codices found in the second edition of this work was already present in the first; but all further references will be to the second edition.

3. Dānī, *al-Muqni' fi rasm maṣāḥif al-anṣār*, ed. O. Pretzl, Istanbul 1932, 10.8. This work is cited hereafter as *Muqni'*. For other such accounts, see, for example, Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, ed. A. Jeffery in his *Materials for the history of the text of the Qur'ān*, Leyden 1937, 34.14, 34.17; this work is cited hereafter as *Maṣāḥif*.

(*ja'alahu 'alā arba' nusakh*); he sent one to Kūfa, one to Baṣra, one to Syria⁴ and kept one himself (*amsaka 'inda naṣiḥi wāḥida*). This, he says, is the more correct version and the view of most scholars. According to the second account, 'Uthmān prepared not four, but seven copies, and sent the extra ones to Mecca, Yemen and Bahrain; but Dānī does not give credence to this version.

Before we proceed further, we should note two ambiguities in these accounts. One is that it is not quite clear whether we are to think of the set of four (or seven) copies as including or excluding the archetype (that is to say, the text from which all the others derived, directly or indirectly). However, the statement that 'Uthmān kept one copy for himself would suggest that there was no archetype outside the set. The other ambiguity is that we are left uncertain as to whether we should regard the copy which 'Uthmān retained as his personal copy, or rather as that of Medina (on a par with those of Kūfa, Baṣra and Syria). The wording suggests the first, but analogy would lead us to expect the second.

For the moment, let us keep things simple by making three assumptions. First, we will set aside the second account given by Dānī and go by the first — just as he indicates we should do. Second, we will assume that the archetype is contained within the foursome. Third, we will take it that the copy which 'Uthmān retained was (or did double duty as) the Medinese copy. Accordingly, we are for the present concerned with four and only four regional codices. We can designate these as S (that sent to Syria), M (that retained by 'Uthmān in Medina), B (that sent to Baṣra) and K (that sent to Kūfa).

Of course, none of these four codices — S, M, B and K — survives today. We do, however, possess detailed accounts of the textual variants which distinguished these codices (or rather their regional off-spring).⁵ One such account is given by Dānī in a chapter on the subject.⁶ He runs through the Koran identifying thirty-six points at which such variants occur and, in each case, he informs us of the regional readings.⁷ This is not a large

4. Elsewhere its destination is specified as Ḥimṣ (*Muqni'*, 109.13, 121.2).

5. The sources regularly speak of, say, "the codices of the Baṣrans", but hardly ever refer to variations within a such regional group (for an exception, see *Muqni'*, 109.18 on Q4:36). For practical purposes, we can accordingly succumb to the convenience of speaking of "the Baṣran codex", and similarly for the other regional textual traditions.

6. *Muqni'*, 108-116.

number for a text as long as the Koran; the proportion of words affected is less than one in two thousand. The number of distinct readings at any given point never exceeds two, each regional codex having one or the other. Dānī is not alone in preserving this information. For example, substantially the same data are to be found in works of Ibn Abī Dāwūd (d. 316/929)⁸ and Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 224/838f),⁹ and they are reproduced in the standard modern history of the Koran.¹⁰ There are some discrepancies between the various sources, but we need consider them only as they become relevant to our concerns. Let us proceed codex by codex.

2. The Syrian codex

The Syrian case is a simple one.¹¹ There is one set of points (sixteen in number) at which S is isolated (that is to say, its readings are not found in M, B, or K). And there is a second set of points (thirteen in number) at which it agrees with M against B and K.¹² It never agrees with B or K against M.¹³

We can accordingly characterize S by listing the points at which it has isolated readings (leaving the readings it shares with M against B and K to our discussion of M). These readings are as follows:¹⁴

(S1)	Q2:116	<i>qālū</i> (for <i>wa-qālū</i>).
(S2)	Q3:184	<i>bi'l-bayyināti wa-bi'l-zuburi wa-bi'l-kiṭābi</i> (for

7. Thirty-six is my count. Dānī lists variants at forty-three points, but six definitely and one arguably oppose the Meccan codex to four foursome, and are thus irrelevant to us at this stage. The arguable case is Q47:18 (C7 in the list of Meccan variants given in section 9 below).

8. *Maṣāḥif*, 39-49.

9. Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, Beirut 1991, 196-200. This work is cited hereafter as *Faḍā'il*.

10. Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 11-14.

11. See Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 15.

12. I leave aside Q23:85-89 (B1).

13. I leave aside Q91:15 (M13).

14. Ibn Abī Dāwūd quotes a list (*Maṣāḥif*, 44.14) in which many of these readings are ascribed also to M (the first such case is at 44.17, the last at 47.11). This looks like massive confusion, since the readings of M are well-attested in actual codices, and I disregard it. For a couple of stray readings ascribed to S, without adequate comparative data from the other codices, see *Muqni'*, 121.4, and *Maṣāḥif*, 44.13, 45.19 (on Q8:67); *Muqni'*, 121.5 (on Q18:77). I disregard these.

(S3)	Q4:66	<i>bi'l-bayyinātū wa-'l-zuburī wa-'l-kiṭābi</i> . ¹⁵ <i>mā fa'alūhu illā qalīlan minhum</i> (where the rest have <i>qalīlu</i>).
(S4)	Q6:32	<i>wa-la-dāru 'l-ākhiratī</i> (for <i>wa-la-l-dāru 'l-ākhiratū</i>). ¹⁶
(S5)	Q6:137	<i>shurakā' ihim</i> (for <i>shurakā' uhum</i>).
(S6)	Q7:3	<i>yataḥakkarūn</i> (for <i>tadhakkarūn</i> or <i>tadhakkārūn</i>). ¹⁷
(S7)	Q7:43	<i>mā</i> (for <i>wa-mā</i>).
(S8)	Q7:75	<i>wa-qāla</i> (for <i>qāla</i>).
(S9)	Q7:141	<i>anjākum</i> (for <i>anjaynākum</i>).
(S10)	Q10:22	<i>yanshurukum</i> (for <i>yusayyirukum</i>).
(S11)	Q17:93	<i>qāla</i> (for <i>qul</i>). ¹⁸
(S12)	Q39:64	<i>ta'murūnānī</i> (for <i>ta'murūnnī</i>).
(S13)	Q40:21	<i>minhum</i> (for <i>minhum</i>).
(S14)	Q55:12	<i>dhā 'l-'asfi</i> (for <i>dhū 'l-'asfi</i>).
(S15)	Q55:78	<i>dhū 'l-jalālī</i> (for <i>dhī 'l-jalālī</i>).
(S16)	Q57:10	<i>kullun</i> (for <i>kullān</i>).

We can leave aside for now the interesting question whether any of these readings can be classed as right or wrong.

3. The Medinese codex

The picture in the Medinese case differs significantly from the Syrian. Whereas S has sixteen isolated readings, M has none; at any given point we will find it to side either with S or with B. We can accordingly characterise it by listing the thirteen readings in which it differs from B. These readings are as follows:¹⁹

(M1)	Q2:132	<i>wa-awṣā</i> (for <i>wa-waṣṣā</i>).
(M2)	Q3:133	<i>sāri'ū</i> (for <i>wa-sāri'ū</i>).
(M3)	Q5:53	<i>yaqūlu</i> (for <i>wa-yaqūlu</i>).
(M4)	Q5:54	<i>yartadid</i> (for <i>yartadda</i>).

15. Another version of this variant drops the third *bi-* (*Muqni'*, 109.14).

16. In origin this may be no more than an orthographic variant (Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 12, n. 3).

17. For these alternative pronunciations of the majority reading, see Ibn Mujāhid, *Kitāb al-sab'a fi 'l-qirā'āt*, ed. S. Dif, Cairo 1980, 278 n. 1. This work is cited hereafter as *Sab'a*.

18. This is also found ascribed to K in one source (*Maṣāliḥ*, 48.3). I disregard this.

19. Again I disregard Q23:85-89 (B1).

(M5)	Q9:107	<i>alladhīna</i> (for <i>wa-'lladhīna</i>).
(M6)	Q18:36	<i>minhumā</i> (for <i>minhā</i>).
(M7)	Q26:217	<i>fa-tawakkal</i> (for <i>wa-tawakkal</i>).
(M8)	Q40:26	<i>wa-an</i> (for <i>aw an</i>). ²⁰
(M9)	Q42:30	<i>bi-mā</i> (for <i>fa-bi-mā</i>).
(M10)	Q43:68	<i>yā-'ibādī</i> with final <i>yā'</i> (for <i>yā-'ibādī</i> without final <i>yā'</i>). ²¹
(M11)	Q43:71	<i>tashahīhi</i> (for <i>tashahī</i>).
(M12)	Q57:24	<i>fa-inna 'llāha 'l-ghaniyyu</i> (for <i>fa-ina 'llāha huwa 'l-ghaniyyu</i>).
(M13)	Q91:15	<i>fa-lā</i> (for <i>wa-lā</i>). ²²

Again we can defer the question whether any of these readings can be pronounced right or wrong.

4. The Baṣran codex

The Baṣran codex is in a significant way the mirror image of the Medinese codex. Like M, B has no isolated readings,²³ at every point, it agrees either with K or with M — but never with S against M (just as M agrees at every point with either S or B, but never with K against B). We have no need to list the points at which B differs from M, since we have already listed them in considering M; nor do we need to list the points at

20. Dānī gives *aw an* as an isolated Kūfaḥ reading, implying that *wa-an* was the Baṣran reading (*Muqni'*, 114.1) and this is supported by the reading of the Baṣran Abū 'Amr (*Sab'a*, 569 no. 6). But Dānī later quotes a list in which *aw an* is described as the reading of 'the people of Iraq' (*Muqni'*, 117.5; similarly *Maṣāliḥ*, 46.20, and *Fadā'il*, 197.3); Ibn Abī Dāwūd quotes a list which states explicitly that both the Kūfans and the Baṣrans read *aw an* (*Maṣāliḥ*, 40.1); and such was also the reading of the Baṣran Ya'qūb al-Ḥaḍramī (Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr fi 'l-qirā'āt al-'ashr*, ed. 'A. M. al-Ḍabbā', 2, Cairo n.d., 365.6).

21. *Muqni'*, 114.7. I include this orthographic variant only because Dānī does so without countermanding it; it does not normally appear in lists of the differences between M and B (see, for example, *Muqni'*, 117.6).

22. The text of Dānī's *Muqni'* as we have it would make this an isolated Medinese reading (116.1). But it seems clear that *wa-'l-Shāmi* has dropped out here (see *Muqni'*, 119.15, noted hereto in the German section, 30; *Maṣāliḥ*, 47.12; *Fadā'il*, 199.8; *Sab'a*, 689 no. 2).

23. As noted in Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 15.

which B differs from K, since we will list them when discussing K.

There is, however, a fly in the ointment which would disrupt the analysis just given. The data in our sources do in fact present us with one isolated Baṣran reading:

- (B1) Q23:85-89 *lillāhi, allāhu, allāhu* (for *lillāhi* thrice).

Apart from the fact that this would be the *only* isolated Baṣran reading, the sources preserve accounts according to which the two additional *alifs* of B were inserted at a secondary stage.²⁴ Dāmī rejects these accounts with some consternation, and the fact that they ascribe the insertion to three different people does not inspire great confidence. But the accounts fit the textual evidence and I shall accordingly ignore this reading.

5. The Kūfan codex

If the Baṣran codex is a mirror image of the Medinese, the Kūfan codex is a mirror image of the Syrian — in qualitative, though not in quantitative terms.²⁵ That is to say, the readings of K are either isolated or shared with B; K never agrees with M or S against B. (The only significant exception to this would be the reading we just considered when discussing B and rejected as secondary; had we accepted it, we would have K agreeing with S and M against B.)²⁶ We can accordingly characterize K by listing its isolated readings, which number six (in contrast to the sixteen of S). They are as follows:²⁷

- (K1) Q6:63 *anjānā*²⁸ (for *anjaytanā*).

24. See Cook, "Koranic Codex", 98 n. 41; also *Maṣāḥif*, 50.1, 118.1 (ascribing the insertion to Ḥajjāj).

25. Cf. Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 15. Contrast the implausible Syrian claim that the copies sent to Syria and Baṣra, unlike that sent to Kūfa, were checked ('*urīda*) before being dispatched (*Maṣāḥif*, 35.13).

26. The insignificant exception would be the stray ascription of the reading *qāla* for *qul* in Q17:93 (S11) to K. Both the ascription and the difference are marginal.

27. I leave aside Q47:18 (C7), where the ascription of the reading *ta'ihim* to the Kūfan codex seems doubtful. I likewise disregard Q40:26 (M8). Neither appears in the lists of intra-Iraqi differences (*Muqni'*, 119.18; *Faḍā'il*, 119.11). For a stray instance of an isolated reading ascribed to K in Q4:36, see above, note 5, and *Maṣāḥif*, 40.21 (but contrast 48.11).

28. Written '*ujyn*' (*Muqni'*, 110.11).

- (K2) Q21:4 *qāla* (for *qul*).
 (K3) Q23:112 *qul* (for *qāla*).²⁹
 (K4) Q23:114 exactly as Q23:112.
 (K5) Q36:35 '*amilat* (for '*amilat-hu*).³⁰
 (K6) Q46:15 *iḥsānan* (for *ḥusnan*).

Note that three of these variants are of marginal significance, involving merely the alternation of *qāla* and *qul* — in origin no more than a matter of vocalisation. Again we can defer the question whether any of these variants can be classed as right or wrong.

6. Flies in the ointment

For most of the thirty-six points at which variants occur, the transmission is unambiguous. But at some points, as we have seen, there is confusion, which in each case I have resolved one way or the other. In terms of their effect on the presentation of the data above, these cases are of two kinds.³¹

First, there are cases which would alter somewhat the precise numbers of isolated or shared readings given above, but would have no effect on the structural relationships we have discerned. One case in point is the reading *aw an* in Q40:26 (M8), which I have treated as common to B and K, the alternative being to treat it as an isolated reading of K. Another is the reading *ta'ihim* in Q47:18 (listed below as C7, a Meccan reading), which I have disregarded altogether; the alternative is to add it to the isolated readings of K.

Second, there are two cases which, if resolved differently, would break the structural relationships we have found. One is the reading *allāhu* for *lillāhi* at two points in Q23:85-89 (B1), if we were to accept it as original to B, which would then display an isolated reading. The other case is the

29. Of the three classical Kūfan reciters, two — Ḥamza and Kisā'ī — read this as *qul*, whereas one ('Āṣim) read it as *qāla* (*Sab'a*, 449 no. 19). Since the reading in the standard Egyptian printings of the Koran follows 'Āṣim, we find it so vocalised there.

30. Here the reading of Ḥafṣ from 'Āṣim (in contrast to those of Ḥamza, Kisā'ī and Abū Bakr from 'Āṣim) agreed with the non-Kūfan text (*Sab'a*, 540 no. 6), so it is no surprise to find the latter in the Egyptian Koran.

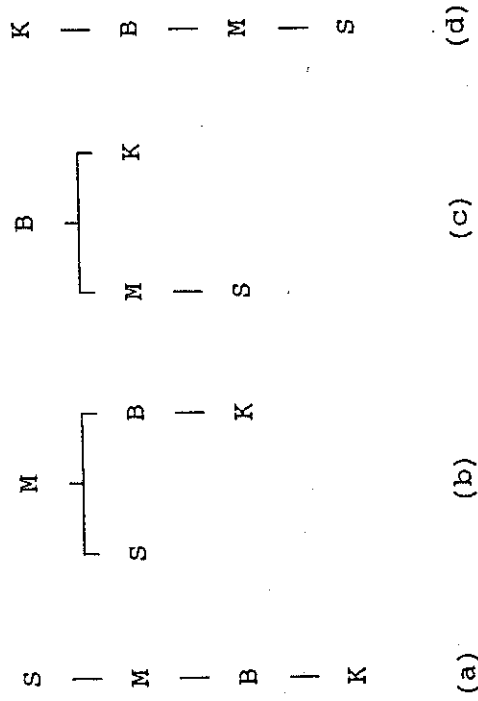
31. I leave out of consideration some cases in which the attestation is marginal, or the variation likely to be trivial (in particular the alternation of *qāla* and *qul*; for this, see Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 16).

reading *fa-lā* in Q91:15 (M13); if we did not ascribe this also to S, it would be isolated in M. It is thus encouraging that there is adequate reason to reject the undesirable alternative in the first case and strong reason to reject it in the second.

7. Constructing a stemma for S, M, B and K

Let us now introduce some terms for subsets of the foursome. We can call S and K the outlying codices; M and B the central codices; S and M the western codices; and B and K the eastern codices.

Using these terms, the pattern of the data presented above can be summed up as follows. The readings of each outlying codex are either isolated or identical with those of the central codex of its geographical group. The readings of each central codex are never isolated, but agree with those of either the outlying codex of its own geographical group, or the other central codex. The question is then which of the numerous conceivable stemmas are compatible with these facts. The answer is four distinct stemmas, each of which is uniquely determined as soon as we choose which codex to place at the top:



This may seem a frustrating result, and to an extent it is. But it does achieve something. The number of conceivable stemmas for the foursome, even on the assumption we made earlier, is no less than sixty;³² the data have done us the favour of reducing these sixty to four.

Is it possible to go beyond this and seek to reduce these four possible stemmas to one? Nöldeke certainly thought so: after an insightful but all too brief discussion, he opted for (b) as the most probable solution.³³ But why (b)? He undoubtedly had his reasons, but what they were is somewhat unclear.³⁴ So we are on our own.

Further progress depends on being able to identify points at which one of the variants looks right and the other wrong; cases where both seem equally admissible will no longer help us. The problem is that most of the variants we are dealing with are indeed of this neutral kind and none evince the stunning clarity that would enable us to exclaim: "God could never have said *that*, He could only have said *this*."³⁵ I will not attempt to discuss each variant, or any of them in detail; the curious reader should go to the Koranic contexts and make an independent assessment. In what follows I shall simply pick out those points at which I think there is reason to prefer one variant to the other.

Let us start with the isolated readings of S. There are two things to notice. One is that there is no case in which one has the sense that the reading of S is the right one. The other is that about half the variants of S look wrong. This involves some subjectivity of judgement, but my own list of more or less wrong Syrian variants would run: (S3), (S5),³⁶ (S9), (S11), (S13), (S14), (S15), (S16).

Next we come to the points at which M differs from B. Here,

32. There are $4 \times 3 \times 2 = 24$ conceivable unilinear stemmas (that is, stemmas of the type to which [a] and [d] belong); $4 \times 3 \times 2 = 24$ conceivable forked stemmas in which the fork immediately follows the archetype (that is, stemmas of the type to which [b] and [c] belong); and $4 \times 3 = 12$ conceivable forked stemmas in which the fork does not immediately follow the archetype (not illustrated, since none of them are possible).

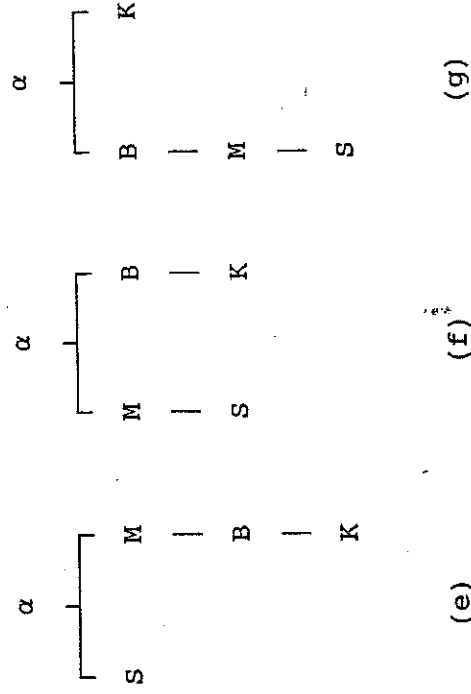
33. Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 15. No other stemma is considered.

34. He makes a tantalising reference to his recourse to "the tradition" ("mit Hinzuziehung der Tradition"). But what relevant information does the tradition have to offer us?

35. This point is noted in Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 14.

36. For the vocalisation of the context by Ibn 'Amir, see *Sab'a*, 270 no. 54; for the strained Syrian understanding of the verse, see *Faḍā'il*, 198.6. Nöldeke describes the reading as "sprachlich kaum möglich" (*Geschichte*, 12 n. 5).

Where introducing a hypothetical archetype makes a real difference is that it allows us to construct stemmas in which α is followed immediately by a fork.³⁷ How many prongs could such a fork have? There is no way in which four or even three of the regional codices could branch off immediately from α ; for were that the case, we could expect to find at least one central codex displaying isolated readings, and at least one outlying codex agreeing with a member of the other geographical group. But a two-pronged fork is perfectly in order. Out of sixty-one conceivable stemmas of this type,³⁸ three are possible:



37. In principle, we might insert a hypothetical codex (call it β) at some lower point in a stemma. There would be two ways to do this. First, given a relationship of the form M—S (S as a copy of M), we could expand this to M— β —S; but this would be pointless. Second, we could construct a fork in which, say, M and S were alike copies of β ; but this would be impossible, or at best implausible. Any such fork should produce two codices each of which has isolated readings; but the only codices with such readings are S and K, and these are more closely related to the corresponding central codices than they are to each other.

38. The conceivable stemmas are: all four copied immediately from α (one case, not possible); three so copied, the other being copied from one of the three (twelve cases, none possible); two so copied, the other two being copied one from each of

unfortunately, I have no sense that at any point one of the variants is right and the other wrong.

Finally, there are the isolated readings of K. Here there is less to go on than in the case of S; the variants tend to be neutral or the differences marginal. The one case that help us is Q46:15 (K6), where the *ihsānan* of K seems the better reading.

In other words, if we assume that texts start right and become corrupted as they are copied, we can infer with some confidence that S was copied from M and at the same time suggest that B was copied from K. The first inference would eliminate stemma (a); the second, less certain inference would eliminate all but (d). In short, we find for (b), (c) or (d), with a preference for (d). But there is a catch. We assumed that the text started right and was corrupted; but it is also possible that, within the foursome, it started corrupted and was subjected to sensible corrections (as well as some random variation) on the part of the scribes; the wrong readings I have pointed to are not, after all, ones that only a philologist could improve on and they may therefore not be significant for the purpose in hand. If we recognise this as a possibility, then we are still left with four possible stemmas.

There is one other possibility, though it may be a remote one. If we had readings from non-ʿUthmānic codices at the points in question, these might help us to identify one of a given pair of variants as original and the other as secondary. I know of no such readings, but perhaps the earliest fragments from Ṣanʿāʾ will have something to offer.

8. An archetype outside the foursome?

We have assumed so far that there was one codex among the four from which the others were copied, directly or indirectly. But what if this was not the case? Let us consider this possibility in two ways: first in the abstract and second in terms of the data provided by Dānī and the other sources regarding the textual variants found in the codex they refer to as the *imām* — a term we can translate as “archetype”.

There is, of course, nothing to be gained by inserting a hypothetical archetype — call it α — above any of the four stemmas considered above. If one of these four stemmas were established, then no doubt we would tend to assume that the codex at the top was itself copied from an earlier exemplar of some kind; but we would have nothing further to say about that exemplar.

Can we eliminate any of these on the assumption that superior variants are more likely to be original? Here the inferiority of S does not help; if we were willing to argue from the one plausible instance of the superiority of K, we could eliminate (e) and (f).

What then of the variants ascribed in our sources to the *inām* — the “codex of ‘Uṭhmān”, as Dānī sometimes glosses the term in his citations?³⁹ There are two basic problems here. The first that we are only given readings from the *inām* at a limited number of points, typically ones at which M and B differ. The second is that different sources give different — and indeed contradictory — information.

Thus Dānī gives eight readings from the *inām*. Five are on the authority of Abū ‘Ubayd, who tells us that he had himself seen the *inām* — or, as he puts it in one instance, “the one which is called the *inām*”.⁴⁰ Three of these readings show the *inām* as having a western text in Q2:132 (M1), Q5:54 (M4) and Q43:71 (M11). One shows the *inām* as not sharing the inserted *alifs* of B in Q23:85–89 (B1). And one shows the *inām* as not sharing the isolated reading of S in Q55:12 (S14). In other words, Abū ‘Ubayd’s *inām* always agrees with M, and in one instance disagrees with S. This means that it could not be the α of (g); and it does not fit well as that of (e) or (f), since we would then expect it to agree at times with S in (e) or B in (f) — though the number of readings is too small for confidence. Dānī’s remaining variants stem from other sources. One reports from the *inām* the reading *aw an* in Q40:26 (M8);⁴¹ this makes the *inām* side with the eastern group (or less likely with K alone). Another transmits eastern readings at Q57:24 (M12) and Q91:15 (M13).⁴² These eastern readings can be multiplied by turning to lists quoted by Ibn Abī Dāwūd, which show agreement with B at all points.⁴³

In other words, the tradition is split as to whether the *inām* had a text of an eastern or western type, and a strong suspicion arises that we have to do with ordinary regional codices mistakenly identified by later generations as

these (twelve cases, one possible); two so copied, the other two being copied from one of these (twelve cases, none possible); two so copied, a third from one of these two, and the fourth from the third (twenty-four cases, two possible).

39. *Muqni’*, 109.4, 114.3, 115.12.

40. *Muqni’*, 115.12.

41. *Muqni’*, 114.2.

42. *Muqni’*, 120.13.

43. *Maṣāḥif*, 37.6, 37.19, 41.11 (these lists do not cover the orthographic variation in Q43:68 [M10]). Note also *Maṣāḥif*, 38.20 on Q2:132 (M1).

the *inām*. There is indeed a report that the *inām* was lost at the time that ‘Uṭhmān was killed.⁴⁴ In short, the data we are given regarding the text of the *inām* cannot help us.

9. The Meccan codex

It will be remembered that Dānī’s second, rejected account of the distribution of the codices adds three further copies to the four of the first version, specifying that they went to Mecca, Yemen and Bahrayn. In transmitting the data on the variants of the regional codices, the sources make no mention of any codices associated with Yemen or Bahrayn. But they regularly give us information about the Meccan codex.⁴⁵ Let us call it C, and see how its variants relate to those of the foursome.

We may begin with the outlying codices. Here C is distant from both S and K. There is only one case of C sharing an isolated reading of S, and it is not significant (*qāla* for *qul* in Q17:93 [S11]). There are two doubtful points at which C might share an isolated reading of K. One is Q40:26 (M8), where there is good reason to consider the variant to belong also to B. The other is Q47:18 (C7), where the Kūfan reading is questionable.

What then of the relationship between C and the central codices? Where M and B differ, C usually agrees with B. Thus there are at least nine points at which it sides with B against M. At two points, however, it sides with M against B: in Q5:53 (M3) and Q18:36 (M6). And in two cases matters are in doubt: in Q40:26 (M8), where there is some uncertainty regarding the reading of B; and in Q43:68 (M10), where the doubt is about the reading of C.⁴⁶

Finally, there are seven (or at least five) points at which C is isolated. They are as follows:⁴⁷

(C1) Q9:100 *min taḥīṭihā* (for *taḥṭahā*).⁴⁸

44. See Cook, “Koranic Codex”, 100 n. 48, with further references for the fate of the *inām*.

45. Note, however, that at two points Dānī resorts to drawing inferences about the readings of the Meccan codex for lack of adequate information (*Muqni’*, 113.2, 114.9).

46. *Muqni’*, 114.9.

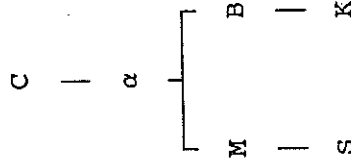
47. For a stray reading ascribed to C without adequate comparative data from the other codices, see *Muqni’*, 121.1 and *Maṣāḥif*, 47.16 (on Q4:171).

48. *Muqni’*, 111.7 (the editor has misidentified the verse, as also at 117.16).

(C2)	Q18:95	<i>makkanani</i> (for <i>makkanū</i>). ⁴⁹
(C3)	Q21:30	<i>a-lam</i> (for <i>a-wa-lam</i>).
(C4)	Q25:25	<i>nunazilu</i> (for <i>nuzila</i>).
(C5)	Q27:21	<i>la-ya'tiyannani</i> (for <i>la-ya'tiyanni</i>).
(C6)	Q28:37	<i>qāla</i> (for <i>wa-qāla</i>).
(C7)	Q47:18	<i>ta'tihim</i> (for <i>ta'tiyahum</i>). ⁵⁰

None of these variants looks superior.

What can we conclude from this? The fact that C shows agreements with both central codices means that it cannot have been copied exclusively from either. Still less can it have been copied from S or K, since it regularly agrees with the others against each. In other words, it cannot be placed within any of the seven possible stemmas as a derivative codex. Nor can it be identified with α in those stemmas, since the chances that two independent copies of C would agree against its isolated readings are minimal. In fact the only possible stemma uniting C with the foursome would be the following:



(h)

This, of course, assumes that the three possible agreements of C with the outlying codices are to be discarded, and uses α to remove the isolated readings of C before they can be inherited by either M or B. The fact that none of the isolated readings of C looks superior counts somewhat against

49. A deviant tradition would make this also an Iraqi reading (*Maṣāḥif*, 46.7).

50. Unless this is also the reading of K, but this seems doubtful (*Mugni'*, 115.4; *Masāhif*, 40.18, 48.20).

this clumsy stemma and we can probably set it aside. If we do that, the way is open to classifying C as a product of contamination. Specifically, C looks like a confluence of B and M, with B predominant.⁵¹

10. Conclusion

As we have seen, the data supplied by the Muslim scholars do not enable us to determine the stemma of the regional codices. But they do eliminate a large number of the conceivable stemmas — ‘well over a hundred’ — and they allow some weighting of probabilities among those that remain. The most attractive stemma is perhaps (d), in which K is the archetype — but not by a wide margin.

What implications do these findings have — or not have — for the history of the Koran? Four points are perhaps worth making.

First, the answer to the question which of the foursome (if any) was the archetype has no significant historical implications.⁵² To see this, let us assume that four copies were indeed prepared in Medina and then distributed. In this situation, there is no real reason why the archetype, assuming it was among them, should be the one chosen to remain in Medina. There might well have been an intention to keep the best copy in Medina; but this could have led to the retention of the most attractive copy, rather than of the archetype.

Second, Dānī and others speak of the regional codices as "copied from the *inām*."⁵³ If by this is meant that each of the copies was made directly from the *inām* (be the *inām* one of the foursome or not), then this is demonstrably wrong.

Third, the single most striking feature of the variants reported for the foursome is the lack of any serious indication of contamination between their texts. This must count against any suggestion that the variants were invented.⁵⁴ For to fabricate a set of variants free of the appearance of

51. In other words, it is an eclectic text: (Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 15). It is unlikely to be a composite text in the manner of Mälik's grandfather's codex (see Cook, "Koranische Codex", 99), since the two agreements with M against B are sandwiched between agreements with B against M.

52 Perhaps Nöldeke had missed this point (cf. above, n. 34).

53. *Muqni'*, 108.16 (*al-muntasakha min al-inān*); also *Muqni'*, 2.10; *Maṣāliḥ*, 39.8; and cf. *Fadā'il*, 200.5 and *Muqni'*, 116.4.

54. It is also a testimony to the continuing accuracy of the variants.

contamination, the early Muslim scholars would have needed some kind of operational understanding of the mechanics of textual transmission — the logic of stemmas and contamination. We know that their successors, the authors of our sources, did not possess this; indeed it was not to be found in any scholarly culture until the last few centuries. We can accordingly infer that we have to do with genuine transmissions from an archetype.⁵⁵

Finally, our examination of C tends to support Dānī's rejection of his second account of the distribution of the codices. It is most likely that C is a contaminated text, and this would go well with a later origin.

55. Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 9.

This group of studies written by distinguished scholars and presented to Professor Vassilios Christides is a special issue of volumes IX and X of *Graeco-Arabica*, a journal published by the "Institute for Graeco-Oriental and African Studies" (IGOAS), Greece.

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GRAECO-ARABICA
VOLUMES IX – X
Athens, Greece, 2004

ISSN 1108-4103

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GRAECO-ARABICA
FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOUR OF V. CHRISTIDES
ΤΙΜΗΤΙΚΟΣ ΤΟΜΟΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ ΧΡΗΣΤΙΔΗ

VOLUMES IX – X
ΤΟΜΟΙ IX – X

EDITED BY
GEORGE K. LIVADAS

ATHENS / ΑΘΗΝΑ 2004