

---

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Sergio Noja Nosedá et François Déroche. *Sources de la Transmission Manuscrite du Texte Coranique, Les manuscrits de style hijāzī*. Vol. 2.1. Lesa: Fondazione Ferni Noja Nosedá Studi Arabo Islamici, 2001. LXXIV + 256 pp.** Review of the *Introduction*, with special attention to the sections *Comparisons between individual manuscripts and the Vulgate* and *Some ideas for a provisional conclusion*

In this volume, Dr. Sergio Noja Nosedá has continued the fine precedent begun in the first volume of the *Sources* series by including informative and historically important articles with the text of *hijāzī* Qurʾān manuscripts. After opening with a short history of the contributions of Silvestre de Sacy and Michel Amari to Qurʾān studies, Dr. Noja Nosedá provides a helpful description of the Qurʾān script entitled *hijāzī* (p. XIV) and an analysis of its relation to the scripts described in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*. He also includes a summary of the current state of knowledge concerning this early Qurʾān script together with questions that remain unsolved.

This is followed by a brief section entitled "Collections containing manuscripts in the *hijāzī* style" (p. XIX). Here he presents an important observation shared by himself and Dr. Déroche that when the contents of known extant *hijāzī* manuscripts are surveyed (excluding the Ṣanaʿāʾ finds) substantial portions of the Qurʾān are not represented, particularly from *sūra* 77 through 114. This writer found himself wanting more description of the contents of the manuscripts and also more reflection from Dr. Noja Nosedá as to the significance of this observation, and of any other general observations that he and Dr. Déroche could share. A table describing the contents of the extant *hijāzī* manuscripts and their location would be an excellent addition to a future volume.

The next section (p. XX) gives information concerning the Amari project that supplements what is found in the first volume. Dr. Noja Nosedá gives a de-

scription of the contents and uses of the CD-ROMs accompanying the volumes. A useful feature of the CD-ROMs is that their Arabic text files are named according to the folio page to which they relate. A further refinement could be to add a brief description of the contents of the Qurʾān portion represented by each folio, either on its facing text page, and/or in the title of the text file on the CD-ROM.

The next section is "Comparisons between individual manuscripts and the Vulgate" (p. XXIII). This is an excellent beginning to a topic that these volumes make possible, and should be supplemented and expanded in future volumes. This section describes the absence of the perpendicular *alif*, which is perhaps the most noticeable difference encountered when initially surveying the text. Its importance in the history of the transmission of the text and in the development of Arabic orthography is well deserving of the mention it receives. Also, an intriguing software package is mentioned and demonstrated, "IL COMPARATORE", for making comparisons between the text in the facsimile and the "Vulgate" of the King Fuʾād edition. A brief but very helpful list shows the variety of words in which this variant of missing perpendicular *alifs* is found.

My only criticisms of this section are that first, it could have been expanded to provide a sampling of other kinds of orthographic variants. For instance, there are other variants concerning *alif*, as well as variants concerning the use and orthography of *yāʾ* in its various forms. General observations similar to Dr. Puin's concerning the Ṣanaʿāʾ texts in his article in Stefan Wild's book<sup>2</sup> would have been helpful. Second, it was left unstated as to if "IL COMPARATORE" is available to scholars or if it is being developed further.

Also, as the series of volumes grows, it could be mentioned how these particular variants compare to those in other volumes in the series. For instance, in volume 1 which presents Paris BN 328a, the tail of the *yāʾ* often returns to the right under the line of text, as with

---

<sup>1</sup> Like where it is found added in words like شيء : ساء Vol. 2.1, fol. 31b, line 8 in 14:38. BN 328a also has this spelling at Vol. 1, fol. 53a, line 17.

<sup>2</sup> Gerd-R. Puin, "Observations on early Qurʾān manuscripts in Ṣanaʿāʾ", *The Qurʾān as Text*, ed. by S. Wild (Leiden, 1996), pp. 107–11.