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# ARABIC LETTERS IN PRE-MODERN TIMES A SURVEY WITH COMMENTED SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

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## *Abstract*

The aim of this paper is to give a survey of Arabic letters in pre-modern times. While the number of letters in other classical Semitic languages such as Hebrew or older varieties of Aramaic (Biblical Aramaic, Imperial Aramaic, Syriac), not to mention pre-modern Ethiopic languages (Ge'ez and Old Amharic), is limited, it is not so with Arabic letters. On the contrary, the problem connected with Arabic letters in pre-modern times is their great number and variety on the one hand and regional and chronological disparity on the other. Therefore, after a definition of “letter”, this paper will begin with a survey of the corpus of Arabic letters. After that, matters of language, phraseology and style as well as script will be discussed, and finally the value of Arabic letters as a source for cultural, social and political history will be touched upon.

## 1 Definition of “letter”

Before discussing letters in any civilization, a definition seems necessary. In my view, a letter is a text written by a person or on behalf of a person (in both cases the sender) on a piece of papyrus, paper, wood, bone or any other suitable material that is transmitted to another person (the addressee). The writer of a given letter and the sender thereof may either be the same or different persons. Details will be given below as the actual situation depends on certain parameters that have to be discussed first.

Seen in this light, an Arabic petition is not a letter *stricto sensu* as it usually was handed over by the sender himself to an official person, who could be a judge, an emir or a ruler. Also, there was not an answer proper to a petition either, as the official usually ordered a third person to take certain measures or to look into the affair. Similarly, it seems inappropriate to regard requests for *fatwas* (legal opinions) handed over to jurists as letters. Correspondingly, neither decrees nor *fatwas* should be regarded as letters, or at least not as letters in the strict sense of the word.

Consequently, I shall not take account of these categories which admittedly have much in common with “real” letters without being letters in the definition given above.

## 2 Corpus

Pre-modern Arabic letters can be divided into two groups according to their manner of transmission. On the one hand, there are *original* letters still extant, and on the other there are non-original letters handed down in *copial* or *literary transmission*. Though this difference seems to be of a rather secondary nature it is actually, as will be shown, of paramount importance.

### 2.1 *Original letters*

No original Arabic letters dating from pre-Islamic times are known. Alleged original letters on parchment sent by the Prophet Muḥammad are clumsy forgeries, as anybody familiar with the palaeography of early Arabic original documents can easily discern. The question of whether certain conclusions as to the reconstruction of pre-Islamic formularies can be drawn from the letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad in historical sources will be discussed below.

For the background of the following summarising remarks, the reader is referred to the selected *Bibliography ad 2*. There, he will find important editions of original Arabic letters on papyrus and paper in an arrangement according to regions. These regions are Egypt, Syria, Iraq and the eastern regions, North Africa and al-Andalus.

This sequence of regions echoes the fact that most original letters come from Egypt while relatively few original letters are preserved from Syria and none from Iraq. So Umayyad Syria and Abbasid Iraq, which had been the centres of the Islamic world till the Mongolian conquest are clearly underrepresented while the western periphery is overrepresented.

For the items indicated in the *Bibliography*, information as to the contents of the letters and the existence or missing of photographs, which are indispensable for the evaluation of the edited texts, is given.

### 2.1.1 Egypt

Most original letters from Egypt date from the seventh to twelfth centuries CE, especially the ninth century. With the exception of senders and sometimes addressees of official letters, the senders and the addressees are otherwise unknown persons belonging to the middle class.

Good examples are the three letters on *figs. 6.1–6.3*. The first is an official letter sent on behalf of the Egyptian governor Qurra b. Šarīk to Basileios, pargarch of the province Aphrodito (Išqawh) (dated 91/[710]), the second concerns a financial transaction (9th century), and the third is a letter of recommendation in favour of a stranger (12th century).

The number of edited original Arabic letters from pre-modern Egypt is sufficient for any analysis of language, phraseology and style, and they contain precious information on the social and economic history of Egypt. Actually most original letters come from Egypt, and this has even lead to Arabic papyrology being wrongly associated with the editing of documents of Egyptian provenience, which is by no means justified, as we do have documents from regions other than Egypt.

While most official letters are concerned with matters of tax in the broadest sense, private letters fall into commercial letters and private letters proper, without a clear difference between the two fields in many letters as the senders and the addressees often belonged to the same families or were otherwise closely connected.

In the case of private letters (in the broadest sense, including commercial letters), the senders of letters usually wrote their letters themselves, with the exception of female senders where one often has the impression that their letters may have been written on behalf of them by other persons, either relatives or professional letter writers.

Typical addressees of letters sent by *males* are other males (without any restriction as to status or relationship), while female addressees are rare (mostly the mothers of the senders). Letters sent to the senders' wives are almost non-existing, and senders mention their wives, if at all, rather *en passant* in letters sent to their relatives. Correspondingly, the mention of female members of the male addressee's household (wife or wives, female relatives) is usually avoided or paraphrased, using formulations such as "those who are with you" (*man qibalaka*).



Typical addressees of letters sent by *females* are other females (with a restriction to relatives or friends) while male addressees are extremely rare and in most cases sons of the female senders.

But not only the range of possible addressees of female senders is more restricted than is the case with the addressees of male senders but also the contents of their letters. While letters of male senders may concern *any* subject, from business to private affairs, letters of female senders are usually confined to family affairs. Furthermore, the style of letters sent by female senders is often emotional, with many of them apparently serving no other purpose than that of strengthening the bonds of kin and friendship between the female sender and the female addressee. Often greetings are given to numerous persons, and husbands and sons of the female addressees may be mentioned, especially in prayers to the effect that God may preserve them to the addressee.

Worth mentioning is also that, as far as can be judged by the mention of toponyms in the addresses and the texts themselves, the letters found in Egypt were mainly sent by Egyptians within Egypt, with few exceptions concerning letters sent by Egyptians travelling abroad to addressees in Egypt.

### 2.1.2 *The Cairo Genizah*

In the context of original letters from Egypt, the corpus of the Cairo Genizah, originally preserved in the Ibn Ezra synagogue of Old Cairo and now dispersed over Western libraries, should not remain unmentioned. This corpus comprises a huge number of letters written in Arabic language but mostly Hebrew script by Jews mainly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In contrast to the letters written by their Muslim contemporaries, many of the senders and addressees of these letters are well-known persons.

Many of the Genizah letters were written by persons dwelling in or hailing from North Africa (especially from what is today Tunisia) and al-Andalus and thus potentially reflect North African and Andalusian language and style rather than Egyptian usage. Other letters preserved in the Genizah were sent from Syria and Iraq and from as far as Aden or even India, as well as from European towns such as Saloniki.

Therefore, it would be rash to assume that the language and style of all letters preserved in the Cairo Genizah reflect Egyptian usage; rather, in every single case the regional background of the sender must be considered. Seen thus, Genizah letters to some extent may close gaps in the epistolary evidence of other regions such as North Africa and al-Andalus as well as Syria and Iraq but investi-

gations aiming at ascertaining regional differences in the Genizah material are still lacking. In terms of a purely linguistic approach, I recently came to the result that a special usage of the relative pronoun *alladī* as a conjunction meaning “that” in Genizah letters has parallels in modern Tunisian dialects rather than in today’s Cairene Arabic (DIEM, 2007).

Of special importance is also the fact that the Hebrew script of the Arabic Genizah letters in which the Arabic language is used is considerably less ambiguous than the Arabic script. A good example of how helpful the Hebrew script of the Genizah documents can be in this respect is the following one. While in the case of *وكتب عدوك*, which is part of prayers in favour of the addressee, one might wonder (and the present writer did so, when he first came across this grapheme) how the unpointed first grapheme has to be interpreted, Genizah texts have the unambiguous Hebrew *וכבת עֲדוֹךְ* *w-kbt ‘dwk*, so that the ambiguous *كتب عدوك* has to be read as *وكتب عدوك* “and may He humiliate your enemy”. There are many other examples where the Hebrew script can be helpful. Consider, for example, the following expression in the *inscriptio* of letters: *يا سدى وسدى*. The Genizah equivalent in Hebrew script is *יאסדי וסנדי*, which means that we have to read *يا سدى وسدى* “o my lord and support.”

The higher degree of ambiguity of the Arabic script as compared to the Hebrew script is due to the fact that in the Arabic script many letters secondarily merged that originally had been different in the Nabatean Aramaic script, from which the Arabic script developed, while they remained different in the Hebrew script.

Another advantage of the Genizah letters, as compared with Arabic letters, is that many of them are dated, which is almost never the case with Arabic private letters.

Two important editions of Genizah letters by Moshe Gil (GIL, 1983; GIL, 1997) are mentioned at the end of *Bibliography ad 2.1.2*. For a translation of commercial letters, see GOITEIN, 1973.

### 2.1.3 Syria in the sense of al-Mamālik aš-Šāmīya “the Syrians ‘Kingdoms’” of Mamlūk times

In comparison with the Egyptian original letters, the Syrian ones are very limited in number. Chronologically there are two distinct groups. There are letters edited by Grohmann in his *Arabic Papyri from Hirbet el-Mird* (GROHMANN, 1963) that come from the seventh and eighth centuries, and there are letters published by the Sourdels (SOURDEL, 1973; SOURDEL/SOURDEL-THOMINE, 1981) and al-

<sup>c</sup>Asalī (AL-<sup>c</sup>ASALĪ, 1983) most of which date from Mamlūk times (thirteenth to sixteenth centuries). As for the ninth to twelfth centuries, no original letters have been edited so far from that period.

This gap can possibly be closed by Genizah letters written by Jews from Syria to Egypt (for details see *Bibliography ad 2.1.2*) but special investigations are still missing. As many of the senders of those letters hailed from other regions, especially Egypt and the Islamic West, the background of the senders of these letters would have to be taken account of before drawing conclusions.

While, apart from officials, the senders and addressees of the early letters edited by Grohmann are otherwise unknown persons, those of the Mamlūk letters are mostly well-known scholars and emirs.

#### *2.1.4 Iraq and the eastern regions*

To my knowledge, no original letters from Iraq have been published so far. As for Central Asia, an official letter from the eighth century was edited by Ignats Kratchkovskij half a century ago (KRATCHKOVSKIJ, 1955).

Supplementary evidence is potentially provided by Genizah letters written by Jews from Iraq and Iran to Egypt, again with the reservation as in the case of Syria, that the background of the senders would have to be ascertained before drawing conclusions as to the existence of regional peculiarities of epistolary style reflected in those letters.

#### *2.1.5 North-Africa and al-Andalus*

With very few exceptions, the original letters from that region published so far were sent on behalf of North African rulers and Naṣrid rulers of Granada to the kings of Aragon and the Republic of Pisa, dating from the fourteenth century and later. Private original letters from al-Andalus are rare and all of them date from the late or last stage of Arab presence in Spain.

For Genizah letters written in Arabic by Jews dwelling in or hailing from North Africa and al-Andalus, see § 2.1.2.

### 2.1.6 Summary

Summing up, it may be stated that it is the western periphery of the Islamic lands where original letters have been preserved (Egypt, North Africa and al-Andalus) rather than Syria and Iraq, that were the centres of the Umayyad and the Abbasid dynasties and played a decisive role in the formation of Islamic civilization, not to mention the eastern regions.

## 2.2 *Letters preserved in copial or literary transmission*

### 2.2.1 *The art of letter writing*

There are almost countless Arabic letters from the pre-modern period of Islam, especially from the eleventh to fifteenth centuries, that are preserved in copial or literary transmission. These letters were usually composed by well-known “styl-ists” (by which term I mean persons who mastered the art of writing letters in an elevated literary style), who were often also successful poets. The letters composed by these more or less professional stylists fall into the category of private letters of their own and, more often, letters on behalf of rulers or emirs whom they served as viziers or secretaries, or other members of the upper class.<sup>1</sup> In fact, many or most of them made a livelihood from writing elaborate letters for the upper class or composing encomiastic poetry, or both.

These letters were preserved either because of their outstanding literary qualities or because of their documentary value. Often the letters of stylists were compiled into “collected letters” in their lifetime or soon after their death, others were cited in full or in excerpts in style manuals or anthologies and again others in historiographic works.

In the classical period of Islam, the art of letter writing (*ʿinšāʿ*) was considered one of the essential qualities of an educated man (*ʿadīb*). Accordingly, letters written in a literary style were a central literary genre, second in importance to poetry only. Beginning with the eleventh century, letters of this high stylistic level became more and more mannered. The prose stylists, who, as mentioned above, were often also poets, increasingly used the rhetorical devices typical of poetry, such as rhyme, parallelism and assonance; comparison, metaphor and allegory; *tağnīs* (phonetical identity or similarity of two words but marked difference in meaning) and *tawriya* (one word or a sequence of words to be understood in two different meanings at the same time), as well as other stylistic devices. This means that for successfully dealing with letters of this kind a good

1 For another sub-category of letters preserved in literary transmission, see below § 2.2.4.

knowledge of the literary language, especially poetry, is indispensable and definitely more helpful than palaeographic expertise, which, in its turn, is indispensable for the reading of original letters.

The letters composed by stylists vary, falling into many more categories than original letters, e.g., those from Egypt. Letters were written on an abundance of occasions, among them, e.g., letters of congratulation (on marriage, birth of a boy or a girl, appointment to an office, return from a journey or campaign, moving into a new house, etc.), letters of condolence (on the death of relatives, wives, concubines, friends, etc.), letters of friendship, and so on, each category falling into numerous sub-categories. On the other hand, what we do not find in this corpus are business and commercial letters. If financial affairs are mentioned at all, it is in a very subtle style alluding to such things rather than explicitly mentioning them.

With rare exceptions, literary letters were written and sent by males to males. Only rarely do we find letters sent by males to females, mostly letters of congratulation or condolence sent, e.g., to high-ranking female members of the court, addressing them with honouring titles as “the high veil” (*as-sitr ar-rafiʿ*) and formulated in a submissive style.

### 2.2.2 *Regional and chronological distribution*

The regional and chronological distribution of stylists can be conceived of as follows:<sup>2</sup>

<i>Region</i>	<i>Period</i>
Umayyad Syria	8th c
Iraq	8th–10th cs
Iran and Central Asia	10th and 12th cs
Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Syria and Egypt	11th–15th cs
al-Andalus and North Africa	11th–14th cs
Yemen	13th c (marginal)
Anatolia	15th c (marginal)

This regional distribution reflects the way the art of letter writing as a literary genre spread from Umayyad Syria over Abbasid Iraq to the east and the west thereof, that is Iran and Central Asia on the one hand, and Egypt, North Africa and al-Andalus on the other, furthermore from Egypt to Yemen. In terms of

2 For details, see DIEM, 2005: 773f.

number, most letters come from Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Syria and Egypt, closely followed by those from al-Andalus and North Africa.

For a list of about a hundred stylists with some basic biographical and bibliographical data, the reader is referred to DIEM, 2005, 762–773.

### 2.2.3 Shortcomings

Compared to letters preserved as original texts, letters handed down in copial or literary transmission have two potential shortcomings:

(a) In letters cited in collections, anthologies and other genres of *belles lettres* because of their literary value, names of persons and places as well as dates are often anonymised since it was style, not the contents that the compilers and readers of those works were interested in. Consequently, such letters are of a limited documentary value from a historian's point of view.

(b) In letters cited in historiographic or related contexts because of their documentary value, there is a clear tendency to omit passages considered “superfluous”, such as the address, the *inscriptio*, prayers in favour of the addressee or third persons and the final formulae. Consequently, the documentary value of such letters is retained whereas their stylistic value can be reduced.

Thus the editor of a given letter preserved in copial or literary transmission can never be absolutely sure that it is the full original text that is at his disposal. Additionally, more often than not the texts of such letters exhibit textual differences according to different sources, a phenomenon typical of any literary text transmitted in manuscripts.

Another problem connected with letters in copial or literary transmission are distortions of the text, which are due to the fact that both medieval copyists and modern editors were not always sufficiently familiar with the style of this kind of letters. Thus, a great part of the editions is not reliable.

One example of many is the following passage from Fathīya an-Nabarāwī's edition of a collection of letters by al-Qādī al-Fādīl on the basis of the unique Cambridge manuscript (AL-QĀDĪ AL-FĀDIL, 1980:74f. / ms. fol. 12r).

In an-Nabarāwī's edition, the passage reads:

والله تعالى لا يخليني من لقائه وإن خلاني الله فلا يخليني من كتابه، ولا يعد منى سعادة قربه  
وإن أعد فيها فلا يعد منى على البعد فضائل خطابيه

Though the general meaning is clear, the text after كتابه is hardly correct. In fact, the manuscript has the following text:



والله تعالى لا يخليني من لقائه وإن خلاني الله فلا يخليني من كتابه، ولا يعدمني سعادة قربه  
وإن أعدمنيها فلا يعدمني على البعد فضل خطابه

Although the ductus of the manuscript is absolutely simple and clear, the editor committed no less than four ugly mistakes.

The translation of this nice passage with its *parallelismus membrorum* is then:

May God Almighty not bereave me of meeting him (sc. the addressee), and if He bereaves me (of meeting him), may He (at least) not bereave me of his letter. / And may He not deprive me of the happiness of his nearness, and if He deprives me of it, may He not deprive me, in spite of his remoteness, of his message!

*Kitāb* and *ḥiṭāb* are often used as a rhyming pair of synonyms meaning “letter”.

#### 2.2.4 Another category of letters preserved in literary transmission: scholarly letters (*rasāʾil*)

At the Zurich Symposium on Letters in the Near East, where I read a short version of this paper, Professor Ulrich Rudolph drew my attention to what he thinks might be a third category of letters, namely erudite writings on philosophy and other scholarly topics sent in the form of letters which, apart from introductory formulae, are usually written in a normal prose language lacking the peculiarities typical of *ʿinšāʿ*. All of these letters were handed down in literary transmission as were the literary ones.

In my opinion, most texts of this kind have to be considered “pseudo letters”, that is, scholarly texts in the form of letters which, however, in contrast to real letters, were never intended to be sent to an individual addressee (arab. *risāla* pl. *rasāʾil*, “Sendschreiben”). Nevertheless the possibility must not be excluded that the literary genre of the *risāla* had developed from actual letters in which scholars presented their ideas to colleagues. In this case we would indeed have another category of letters that might be called “scholarly letters”. Examples of this kind of letters are the *Rasāʾil* of Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī (died after 400/1009), who was an encyclopaedist.

There may even have existed a zone of transition between literary and scholarly letters. Typical examples thereof are the letters sent by the poet and stylist Abū l-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (died 449/1058) to the Fāṭimid chief missionary (*dāʿī d-duʿāh*) Hibat Allāh aš-Šīrāzī, in which he defended his aversion to eating meat and his compassionate attitude towards animals, which the chief missionary

maintained to be in contradiction to the Qurʾān and the rules of Islam. In terms of contents and method, al-Maʿarrī's letters are scholarly writings, in terms of style specimina of a highly mannered kind of *ʿinšāʿ* including quotation of poetry.

### 3 Epistolary language, phraseology and style

#### 3.1 Introduction

A first survey of the conventions and formulae of Egyptian *original* letters of the seventh to ninth centuries was carried out by Karl Jahn (JAHN, 1937). After him, most editors of original Arabic letters have paid little or no attention to language, phraseology and style, and consequently most editions have no glossaries at all or glossaries of a limited scope. The only comprehensive glossaries are still those in the six volumes DIEM, 1991–1997 (see *Bibliography ad 2.1.1*). Furthermore, a dictionary compiled by Diem and Radenberg (DIEM/RADENBERG, 1995) from Goitein's *Mediterranean Society* can sometimes be useful, as the bulk of Goitein's quotations come from Genizah letters written in Arabic. A description and analysis of the so-called epistolary perfect (*katabtu ʿilayka* "I am writing to you") is DIEM, 2004a.<sup>3</sup> Some information on addresses in the Genizah letters is given in WORMAN, 1907 and GOLDZIER, 1908.

The style and phraseology of *letters composed by stylists* have so far not found much interest either, as most Western Arabists were interested in the contents of the letters only and Arab editors did not pay attention to matters of style either. A translation and analysis of the stylistic aspects and structures of numerous passages from letters written by stylists, with special regard to regional peculiarities, is found in DIEM, 2005.

For a list of metonymies used in literary letters, see DIEM, 2005:850, and for lists of the *secunda comparationis* of comparisons and metaphors, see DIEM, 2005: 851–855 and DIEM, 2002: 251–261.

3 I seize here the opportunity to add some information about the epistolary perfect in Ethiopic. When writing the article on the epistolary perfect, I had no information about the existence or non-existence of the epistolary perfect in Geez. A letter edited and translated by Manfred Kropp (KROPP, 2003: 125–146) does contain an epistolary perfect (p. 130, first line of the text), translated by Kropp as "Dieser Brief ist geschrieben und geschickt von einem Armen und Elenden etc." (p. 132).



### 3.2 *Common features*

In general, it may be stated that pre-modern Arabic letters, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever they were written, share specific common features, while there are also marked differences according to regions, periods and genres. By *specific* common features, I do not mean features that are typical of letters as such in any civilization (e.g. the existence of an addressee) but features that are typical of *Arabic* letters, while they are not necessarily found in other civilizations.

The *specific common features* of Arabic letters are:

a) The obligatory initial *Basmalah* (*bi-smi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīmi*).

b) The use of the epistolary perfect (*katabtu ʿilayka* “I am writing you” and similar expressions).

c) The use of prayers (*duʿāʾ* pl. *ʿadʿiyah*) in favour of the addressee and third persons mentioned in the letter. Even prayers syntactically referring to the sender of the letter, such as *ḡuʿiltu fidāka* “May I be made your ransom (from evil)”, are intended in favour of the addressee. However, prayers can be missing, as, e.g. in the letters of the Egyptian governor Qurrah b. Šarīk to the Christian pagarch Basileos.

d) The existence of a common basic epistolary vocabulary comprising, e.g., words such as *kitāb* “letter” and the expression of greetings by means of the word *salām* “peace”.

### 3.3 *Different features*

Differences can, *ceteris paribus*, exist between letters of the same genre from different regions, or between different genres of letters in a given region at a given time, or between letters of the same genre in a given region belonging to different periods. In the following, some examples will be adduced.

#### 3.3.1 *Regional differences*

From the reign of the Almohads till the fall of Granada, a special feature of North African and Andalusī letters concerns the prayer following an initial expression in the sense of “I am writing you”, i.e. *katabtu ʿilayka*, *kitābī ʿilayka* and similar expressions derived from the root *ktb*. In the Islamic West, such expressions were continued in official letters and, less frequently, in private letters, by a prayer in favour of the addressee built on the same root *ktb* but in the slightly different meaning that God shall predestine something in favour of the

addressee. In DIEM, 2005: 550–613, I have adduced more than two hundred items of this type, consisting of thirteen main types with additional subtypes. With the exception of half a dozen examples, all items are found in letters from North Africa and Granada. Thus, this root echo prayer can be considered something typical of that region, as had already been stated by al-Qalqaṣandī (died 821/1418) (DIEM, 2005: 576f.).

As an example, consider the following passage in an original letter by the Naṣrid Ismāʿīl I (reigned 713–725/[1314–1324]) from 721/[1321] to Jacob II of Aragon, which I have chosen because of its simplicity; many examples are longer and stylistically more refined. The example is given with my German translation; in English, it would be much more difficult to find suitable rhymes.

*ʿammā baʿdu fa-ʿinnā katabnāhu ʿilaykum – kataba llāhu lakum min hidāyatihi ʿawḍaḥahā / wa-min ʿināyatihi l-muršidati ʿasʿadahā wa-ʿanḡaḥahā – min Ḥamrāʾi Ġarnāṭata.*

Aber danach: Wir *schreiben* Euch diesen (Brief) – Gott *schreibe* und bestimme Euch, daß Er Euch auf deutlichste Weise lenkt / und Euch Seine glücklichste und erfolgreichste rechtweisende Fürsorge schenkt – aus der Alhambra von Granada etc.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.3.2 Differences between genres

In official letters of the seventh century and later from Egypt, the date is usually given, mostly in complete form. In contrast to this, the date is usually *missing* from Egyptian private and business letters written by Muslims. Only rarely do we find in those letters an indication of the day of the week or the month. Also, the way the date is indicated is different. In official letters, the date is given at the end in the form of “Written + date” (*kutiba* + date) or, especially in the seventh century, in the form of “Written by N.N. + date” (*kataba fulānun* + date), whereas in private and business letters we find the indication of the day or the month at the beginning of the letter, e.g. “I am writing you – may God grant you a long life – on Friday in health and well-being etc.” (*katabtu ʿilayka – ʿaṭāla llāhu baqāʾaka – yawma l-ḡumʿati fī ʿāfiyatin wa-salāmatin*).

However, as mentioned above, in Genizah letters the date is often indicated, usually according to the Jewish calendar, which greatly enhances their value as a historical source.

4 ALARCÓN 1940: no 13,3f. = DIEM, 2005: 567 *sub* ktb no. 35.

### 3.3.3 Chronological differences

Considering letters from Egypt, we see that many epistolary conventions changed in the course of time, with a clear tendency to more stylistic refinement.

A good example is the introductory part of private letters following the obligatory *Basmalah*. In the seventh and the beginning of the eighth centuries, letters of any kind, after the *Basmalah*, usually begin with the formula “Peace upon you! I praise unto thee God, besides Whom there is no (other) God” (*salāmun ʿalayka fa-ʿinnī ʾaḥmadu ʾilayka llāha llaḏī lā ʾilāha ʾillā huwa*), with certain variants as well as omissions for non-Muslim addressees.<sup>5</sup> An example of this kind is found in BECKER, 1906: no. 1 (dated 91/[710], fig. 6.1a–b) which has the short formula *fa-ʿinnī ʾaḥmadu llāha llaḏī lā ʾilāha ʾillā huwa* “I praise God besides whom there is no (other) God” due to the fact that it was sent to a Christian addressee.

Then, from the eighth century onwards, private letters, after the *Basmalah*, usually begin with a long prayer for the addressee. After that, the main text of the letter sets in with a *ktb*-expression in the sense of “I am writing you”, followed by a short prayer in favour of the addressee. This type is represented by DIEM, 1991: no. 32 (ninth century, fig. 6.2).

Again later, we find in letters to superior persons the so-called *taqbīl*, e.g. “The slave kisses the ground in front of our lord and patron” or “The slave kisses the exalted hand of our lord and patron” (*al-mamlūku yuqabbilu l-ʾarḏa ʾamāma sayyidinā wa-mawlānā viz. al-mamlūku yuqabbilu l-yada l-ʿāliyata s-saydīyata l-mawlawīyata*). These formulae had originated in official letters and mirror the *proskynesis* at the royal court. We also have expressions such as “The slave serves our lord and patron” (*al-mamlūku yaḥdumu sayyidanā wa-mawlānā*) and similar expressions of humility that can be supposed to have primarily belonged to official letters. A formula of this type occurs in DIEM, 1991: no. 48 (twelfth century, fig. 6.3): “Der Sklave ihrer höchst bedeutsamen hohen Exzellenz, des Richters und Rechtsgelehrten Waḡīhaddīn – Gott festige ihr Glück und unterwerfe ihren Neider – tut ihr kund, daß der Überbringer dieses Schreibens etc.” (*ʿabdu l-ḥaḍrati s-sāmiyati l-aḡallīyati l-qāḍawīyati l-faḡhīyati l-waḡhīyati tabbata llāhu suʿūdahā wa-kabata ḥasūdahā yunhī ilayhā anna mūṣilahā*).

More individual formulations are also possible. Private letters composed by Egyptian and Syrian stylists of the twelfth century and later often begin with poetry alluding to the topic of the letter, mostly verses by al-Mutanabbī or other poets of similar reputation, but also verses composed by the senders themselves.

5 See also below § 4.

Other letters begin with general statements alluding to the topic of the letters. So, e.g., a letter of recommendation may begin with the statement “To extend help to others – may God grant our lord and patron long life – is a token of nobility” etc.

Another example of chronological diversity is the subsequent development of expressions meaning “letter” in Egypt and Syria.

In the seventh century and later, we find the simple *kitāb* “letter”, but from the end of the eighth century other expressions developed that belonged to a more refined style (ls = letter sent, i.e. expression used by the sender for his own letter; lr = letter received, i.e. expression used by the sender for a letter received):

<i>Arabic term</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Used for</i>	<i>Remark</i>
<i>kitāb</i>	“letter”	ls/lr	basic designation
<i>ruqʿah</i>	“slip, scrap”	ls/lr	originally used for ls
<i>ḥiṭāb</i>	“addressing”	ls/lr	often rhyming with <i>kitāb</i>
<i>hādīhi l-ʿaḥruf</i>	“these few letters”	ls	polite style
<i>hādīhi l-ʿaṣṭur</i>	“these few lines”	ls	polite style
<i>ḥidma</i>	“service”	ls	subservient style
<i>ʿubūdīya</i>	“slavery”	ls	subservient style
<i>muṣarrifa</i>	“honouring one”	lr	subservient style
<i>mukātabah</i>	“correspondence”	ls/lr	polite style in official letters
<i>kitābah</i>	“correspondence”	ls/lr	polite style in official letters

Designations for special letters, e.g.

<i>bušrā</i> etc.	“tidings of joy”	ls/lr	polite style
<i>tahniʿah</i> etc.	“congratulation”	ls/lr	polite style

Similar specific features can be found in letters from other regions. To conclude, it can be stated with certainty that in terms of phraseology and style there is not “the Arabic letter”, but an abundance of epistolary conventions varying according to region, time and genre.

#### 4 Archaic features in letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad in literary tradition

As stated above, letters on parchment ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad are not authentic for palaeographic reasons.

As to letters ascribed to the first caliphs, generals and other officials in literary sources, we should mind what Albrecht Noth stated in his seminal study about early Islamic historiography (NOTH, 1973) on the grounds of plausibility:

Es kann nach alledem nicht mehr zweifelhaft sein, daß der Brief ein formales Element der frühislamischen Überlieferung gewesen ist und ihm nicht der Charakter eines historischen Dokuments zugesprochen werden kann (p. 73f.).

On the other hand, Noth regards letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad in literary sources as authentic in principle (p. 72), without, however, expounding the reasons leading him to this conclusion.

While many Western scholars are sceptical about the trustworthiness of Islamic tradition, as far as details are concerned, others hold the opinion that there is a kernel of truth to traditions about the Prophet Muḥammad, which, however, it can be extremely difficult or even impossible to find out in a given case. Actually, more than one letter ascribed to the prophet in literary sources must be considered non-authentic on historical or stylistic grounds, such as the prophet's alleged correspondence with the emperor of Ethiopia or letters written in rhymed prose, a stylistic device that came into existence many centuries later.

However, apart from the question of historic authenticity of a given letter, there is another aspect to the problem. Even if the historicity of letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad is questionable or uncertain, they might nevertheless reflect epistolary conventions of early Islam and the decades before. In concrete terms, if letters ascribed to Muḥammad have formulaic features not found in original letters of the seventh century these deviant features may be supposed to reflect archaic epistolary conventions which became obsolete soon after Muḥammad's death or possibly already in his lifetime and thus were not preserved in original letters of the seventh century.

As examples, I chose introductory formulae. For each type and subtype, I shall give the evidence of original letters and of the letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad and then draw conclusions.<sup>6</sup>

6 For the sources, see *Bibliographies* ad 2 and ad 4.

4.1 *Introductory formula salāmun °alayka fa-°innī °aḥmadu llāha llaḏī lā °ilāha °illā huwa including expanded and shortened variants*

4.1.1 *Muslim addressee*

4.1.1.1 *Complete formula*

*Salāmun °alayka fa-°innī °aḥmadu °ilayka llāha llaḏī lā °ilāha °illā huwa:* Original letters from the seventh and eighth centuries: JAHN, 1937: no. 2–5, 9, 12; RĀGIB, 1978–1980: no. 1–2, 4, 8–12; GROHMANN, 1963: no. 18, 43; DIEM, 1993: no. 9, 18, 33; DIEM, 1997: no. 23, 25, 49, 72–73, 75, etc. Letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad: ḤAMĪD ALLĀH, 1956: no. 47, 59, 80, 99, 103, etc. Variants: *as-salāmu °alayka °ayyuhā l-°amīru wa-raḥmatu llāhi fa-°innī °aḥmadu °ilayka llāha llaḏī lā °ilāha °illā huwa:* Original letter from the early eighth century: KRATCHKOVSKIĬ, 1955 (100/[718–719]). *As-salāmu °alayka yā-rasūla llāhi wa-raḥmatu llāhi wa-barakātuhu fa-°innī °aḥmadu °ilayka llāha llaḏī lā °ilāha °illā huwa:* Letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad: ḤAMĪD ALLĀH, 1956.

4.1.1.2 *Short formula without salām*

*Fa-°innī °aḥmadu °ilayka llāha llaḏī lā °ilāha °illā huwa:* Original letters from the seventh and eighth centuries: GROHMANN, 1963: no. 31–32 and perhaps some other fragmentary letters, mostly official ones. Letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad: not attested.

4.1.2 *Non-Muslim addressee*

4.1.2.1 *Complete formula which, however, does not refer to the addressee but to Muslims only*

*Salāmun °alā °awliyā°i llāhi wa-°ahli ṭā°atihi ... wa-°aḥmadu<sup>7</sup> °ilayhimu llāha llaḏī lā °ilāha °illā huwa:* Original letter from the eighth century: HINDS/SAK-KOUT, 1981 (141/[758]). Letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad: not attested.

7 The reading *wa-°aḥmadu* instead of the usual *fa-°aḥmadu* is questionable.

#### 4.1.2.2 Short formula without ʾilayka

*Salāmun ʿalayka fa-ʾinnī ʾaḥmadu llāha lladī lā ʾilāha ʾillā huwa*: Original letter from the seventh or eighth centuries: DIEM, 1993: no. 4. Letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad: not attested.

#### 4.1.2.3 Short formula without salām and ʾilayka

*Fa-ʾinnī ʾaḥmadu llāha lladī lā ʾilāha ʾillā huwa*: Original letters from the early eighth century: Qurra-letters passim (89–91/[707–709]). Letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad: not attested.

#### 4.1.3 Conclusion

The formula does occur in letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad but there are fewer subtypes than in the original letters from the seventh and early eighth centuries. Unless we suppose that it was in the first decades of the Islamic era, which begins in the year 622 CE, that this formula came into being, which *per se* is not plausible, we should assume that it continues an older tradition from the beginnings of Islam and perhaps before. However, this conclusion would be true even if we did not have letters ascribed to the prophet Muḥammad.

#### 4.2 Introductory formula *salāmun ʿalā mani ttabaʿa l-hudā* etc. (various continuations) in letters to non-Muslim addressees

Original letters: not attested as an introductory but as a final formula (*wa-s-salāmu ʿalā mani ttabaʿa l-hudā*) in the Qurrah letters. Letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad and other persons: ḤAMĪD ALLĀH, 1956: no. 22, 26, 37, 53, 56, etc. These letters belong to a special type of letter in which Muḥammad asks the addressee(s) to convert to Islam.

Conclusion: Considering that this formula does not occur in original letters of the seventh century as an introductory but only as a final formula, its being used as an introductory formula in the letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad and other persons of his time might be considered authentic.

#### 4.3 Introductory formula *silmun ʾanta* (ʾantum), followed by *fa-ʾinnī ʾaḥmadu ʾilayka llāha lladī lā ʾilāha ʾillā huwa* or other formulae

Original letters: not attested. Letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad or other persons: ḤAMĪD ALLĀH, 1956: no. 21, 30, 60, 67, 107, 111, 347 (caliph ʿUṭmān)



Conclusion: *silmun* is an invariable verbal noun used as an epithet meaning “being at peace”. So, *silmun ʾanta (ʾantum)* has essentially the same meaning as *salāmun ʿalayka*. As the specific formula *silmun ʾanta (ʾantum)* is missing from original letters from the seventh century, its occurrence in letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad cannot be due to later epistolary conventions. Nor is it plausible to assume that this formula was “invented” later as it occurs in different letters and sources. Therefore, it is safe to assume that *silmun ʾanta (ʾantum)* is an authentic early Islamic introductory formula. Furthermore, considering that it is, with the exception of one letter ascribed to ʿUṭmān, the third caliph, not attested in literary tradition for persons after Muḥammad and not at all in original letters, it may be concluded that even at Muḥammad’s time it was becoming obsolete. From this it may be concluded that *silmun ʾanta (ʾantum)* predates Islam and was replaced by *salāmun ʿalayka* at the beginnings of Islam for the simple reason that *salāmun ʿalā* is a typical Qurʾānic expression.

These examples prove that the letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad in literary sources may contain archaic features which did not survive in Arabic epistolography. The next question would be whether the letters where the *formulae* reflect authentic pre-Islamic or early Islamic scribal conventions are also more authentic in terms of *contents*.

## 5 Script

As mentioned above, the language and style of Arabic letters gradually become more refined in the course of time, especially in official letters and in private letters of a non-commercial nature.

The same is true of the script of letters. While in the seventh and eighth centuries the script of letters usually is distinct and thus poses no major problems for the decipherment of the texts, it tends to become more and more cursive in the subsequent centuries. This tendency is clearly visible in the three letters in *figs. 6.1–6.3*. While the script of the first letter (dated 91/[709], *fig. 6.1a–b*) is distinct, the script of the second letter (ninth century, *fig. 6.2*) already exhibits a certain amount of cursivity, especially in the prayers due to their formulaic character. In the third letter (twelfth century, *fig. 6.3*), the script is highly cursive with even words often being connected by means of ligatures.

By *cursivity*, we understand a tendency of the writers to simplify letters, to omit teeth, e.g. the teeth of the *sīn* and the *šīn*, to connect letters to the letters



following them where in normal script this is not possible (*alif*, *dāl/dāl*, *rāʾ/zāy*, *wāw*) and to connect words. It may even be said that in Egypt and Syria the ability to write letters (and other documents) in cursive script was considered as essential for an educated person as good style was.

This leads to the seemingly paradoxical situation that for the reading of many late original letters, it is the cursive script rather than language and style that poses problems. In marked contrast to this, letters secondarily handed down in copial and literary transmission pose problems of style rather than of palaeography.

For the development of the Arabic script in pre-Islamic inscriptions and early Islamic documents (papyri and inscriptions), Beatrice Gruendler's excellent study (GRUENDLER, 1993) may be consulted. However, no survey of or investigation into later cursive forms exists so far.

## 6 Letters as a source for Islamic cultural, social and political history

Finally, a look at Arabic letters as a source for Islamic cultural, social and political history may be useful.

The special value of original letters sent by and to persons of the middle class lies in that they contain information on the language, mentality, and social and economic situation of a broad section of the population which usually is more or less neglected in literary sources. Seen in this light, the information to be derived from original letters sent by members of the middle class is of paramount importance for the understanding of many aspects of Arab pre-modern everyday life.

In general, with the exception of the Genizah letters written by Jews in Arabic language and Hebrew script, Arabic letters, original and non-original ones, have not been taken account of to the extent they would have deserved. In the following, I will mention some exceptions.

### 6.1 *History of Arabic*

A linguistic study largely based on letters is Simon Hopkin's book on the grammar of Early Arabic (HOPKINS, 1984).

### 6.2 *Semasiology and cultural history*

In a book dedicated to the semasiological and cultural aspects of *tašrīf* as a designation of honorary robes, I have translated numerous passages from original and non-original letters, paying attention to both the stylistic and cultural aspects of the texts (DIEM, 2002).

### 6.3 *History*

A study of letters from a historical perspective is Christopher Bürgel's well-known study on the correspondence of the Būyid ʿAḏud ad-Dawlah (BÜRGEL, 1965).

### 6.4 *Social history*

A major work on cultural and social history that heavily draws on Geniza letters is Shelomo Dov Goitein's seminal *A Mediterranean Society* in five volumes, where he describes the Jewish communities of Egypt and other Islamic countries on the basis of the Genizah documents (GOITEIN, 1967–88). Nothing comparable could be achieved with Arabic letters written by Muslims in Arabic script for several reasons:

- (1) The number of original Arabic letters edited so far is considerably smaller than that of the Genizah letters.
- (2) The corpus of Arabic letters lacks coherence, as with few exceptions, no archives survived or can be reconstructed.
- (3) In many cases it is not known where the documents were found in Egypt.

A book comparable to Goitein's *Mediterranean Society* to some extent, though much more limited in material and scope and primarily devoted to commercial aspects, is Li GUO's study, which is based on the Arabic documents from Quseir (GUO, 2004).

### 6.5 *History of mentalities*

In a book on Arabic funerary inscriptions, I have considered original letters of condolence written by Jews as preserved in the Cairo Genizah on the one hand and letters of condolence composed by Muslim stylists handed down in copial and literary transmission (DIEM, 2004b).

### 6.6 *Islamic law*

Recently, Rüdiger Lohker in his study of “Islamisches Völkerrecht” (law of nations, international law) in pre-modern times took account of the correspondence between the Muslim Naşrids of Granada and North African rulers and the Christian kings of Aragon (LOHLKER, 2006). In a book on the theory and practice of what is called *salam* (“Terminkauf”; purchase with advance payment), that appeared in print in the same year, I have also considered the evidence of original letters from Egypt (DIEM, 2006b).

## Bibliography

### *Ad 2.1 Original letters*

#### *Ad 2.1.1 Egypt*

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Edition of the famous official correspondence of the Egyptian governor Qurrah b. Šarik with the pagarch Basileos as preserved in the Heidelberg collection. Photographs of all documents. For this edition and the subsequent editions of other parts of this governor's correspondence as well as for emendations, see my article "Philologisches zu den arabischen Aphrodito-Papyri." In: *Der Islam* 61 (1984): 251–275.

DIEM, Werner

- 1991 *Arabische Briefe auf Papyrus und Papier aus der Heidelberger Papyrus-Sammlung*. (Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Kommission für Papyrus-Editionen). Wiesbaden.
- 1993 *Arabische Briefe aus dem 7. bis 10. Jahrhundert*. (Corpus Papyrorum Raineri, vol. 16). Vienna.
- 1995 *Arabische Geschäftsbriefe des 10. bis 14. Jahrhunderts aus der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek in Wien*. (Documenta Arabica antiqua, vol. 1). Wiesbaden.
- 1996a *Arabische Privatbriefe des 9. bis 15. Jahrhunderts aus der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek in Wien*. (Documenta Arabica antiqua, vol. 2). Wiesbaden.
- 1996b *Arabische amtliche Briefe des 10. bis 16. Jahrhunderts aus der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek in Wien*. (Documenta Arabica antiqua, vol. 3). Wiesbaden.
- 1997 *Arabische Briefe des 7. bis 13. Jahrhunderts aus den Staatlichen Museen Berlin*. (Documenta Arabica antiqua, vol. 4). Wiesbaden.  
Photographs of all documents in each volume. So far, my volumes as mentioned above are the only ones containing comprehensive glossaries, with special regard to epistolary expressions and formulae as well as prayers in favour of the addressees.

DIETRICH, Albert

- 1955 *Arabische Briefe aus der Papyrussammlung der Hamburger Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek*. (Veröffentlichungen aus der Hamburger Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, vol. 5). Hamburg.  
An important work by an eminent philologist. Photographs of part of the documents.

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GROHMANN, Adolf

1955 *Arabic Papyri in the Egyptian Library*. Vol. 5. Cairo.

The volume is devoted to business letters. Photographs of part of the documents. The editions are not always reliable as Grohmann was not familiar enough with the style of Arabic letters.

GUO, Li

2004 *Commerce, Culture, and Community in a Red Sea Port in the Thirteenth Century. The Arabic Documents from Quseir*. (Islamic History and Civilization. Studies and Texts 52). Leiden/Boston.

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JAHN, Karl

1937 "Vom frühislamischen Briefwesen." In: *Archiv Orientalní* 9: 153–200.

One of the first publications of this kind, with many letters belonging to the eighth century. Photographs of some of the documents. For emendations, see Giorgio LEVI DELLA VIDA: "Remarks on a recent edition of Arabic papyrus letters." In: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 64 (1944): 127–137. The editions contain many misreadings, only part of which have been emended by Levi della Vida.

KHAN, Geoffrey

1992 *Arabic Papyri. Selected Material from the Khalili Collection*. (Studies in the Khalili Collection, vol. 1). Oxford.

Some of the documents are private and business letters. Photographs of all documents. For emendations, see my articles "Philologisches zu den Khalili-Papyri." In: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 83 (1993): 39–81; 84 (1994): 57–92.

1993a *Bills, Letters and Deeds. Arabic Papyri of the 7th to 11th Centuries*. (The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, vol. 6). Oxford.

Catalogue of the Khalili collection with photographs of all documents, edited and not yet edited, among them numerous letters.

1993b *Arabic Legal and Administrative Documents in the Cambridge Geniza Collections*. (Cambridge Library Geniza Series, vol. 10). Cambridge.

The volume also contains correspondence from Fāṭimid times. Photographs of some documents.

LEVI DELLA VIDA, Giorgio

- 1981 *Arabic Papyri in the University Museum in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania)*. (Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, vol. 378. Memorie Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche Serie VIII, vol. 25,1). Rome.

The volume contains about 40 private letters. Photographs of part of the documents. For an edition of no. 113 (unedited in Levi della Vida's volume) according to plate XVIII, see my article 'Ein mamlūkischer Brief aus der Sammlung des University Museum in Philadelphia.' In: *Le Muséon* 99 (1986): 131–143.

MARGOLIOUTH, David Samuel

- 1933 *Catalogue of Arabic Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester*. Manchester.

The volume contains numerous private and official letters. Photographs of a few documents. In general, the editions are not very reliable. Also, Margoliouth did not use the papyrological brackets already known at his time for indicating lacunae etc.

RĀĠIB, Yūsuf

- 1978–1980 "Lettres arabes." In: *Annales islamologiques* 14: 15–35; 16: 1–29.

These two articles are of special importance as they focus on early letters from the seventh and eighth centuries. Photographs of all documents.

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### Ad 2.1.2 The Cairo Genizah

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GIL, Moshe

- 1983 *Palestine during the First Muslim Period (634–1099)*. Vol. 1–3. (Publications of the Diaspora Research Institute, vol. 41; 57; 58). Tel Aviv.
- 1997 *In the Kingdom of Ishmael*. Vol. 1. *Studies in Jewish History in Islamic Lands in the Early Middle Ages*. Vol. 2. *Texts from the Cairo Geniza. The Jews of Iraq and Persia (nos. 1–101). Letters of Jewish Merchants (nos. 102–303)*. Vol. 3. *Texts from the Cairo Geniza. Letters of Jewish Merchants (nos. 304–607)*. Vol. 4. *Texts from the Cairo Geniza. Letters of Jewish Merchants (nos. 608–846)*. Jerusalem.

GOITEIN, Shelomo Dov

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SHAKED, Shaul

- 1964 *A Tentative Bibliography of Geniza Documents*. (Etudes Juives, vol. 5). The Hague.
- Though meanwhile outdated, this bibliography can still be helpful.

### Ad 2.1.3 Syria

AL-<sup>°</sup>ASALĪ, Kāmil Ḡamīl

- 1983 *Waṭā'iq maqdisīyah tāriḥīyah. Ma'a muqaddimah ḥawl ba'd al-maṣādir al-<sup>°</sup>awwalīyah li-tārīḥ al-Quds*. Vol. 1. Amman.
- This first of three volumes contains some official letters. Photographs of all documents. For emendations, see my article "Philologisches zu mamlūkischen Erlassen, Eingaben und Dienstschriften des Jerusalemer al-Ḥaram aš-šarīf." In: *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik* 33 (1997): 7–67.

GROHMANN, Adolf

- 1963 *Arabic Papyri from Ḥirbet el-Mird*. (Bibliothèque du Muséon, vol. 52). Louvain.
- According to Grohmann, Ḥirbet el-Mird lies "two hours west of the Dead Sea from the mouth of the Jordan" (p. XI). The volume contains official and private letters from the seventh and eighth centuries which count among the earliest found so far. Photographs of all documents.

SOURDEL, Dominique

- 1973 "Deux documents relatifs à la communauté hanbalite de Damas." In: *Bulletin d' Etudes Orientales* 25: 142–151.

This article contains the edition of a letter from the thirteenth century with a photograph.

SOURDEL, Dominique / Janine SOURDEL-THOMINE

- 1981 "Nouvelle lettre d'un docteur hanbalite de Damas à l'époque ayyoubide." In: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40: 265–276.

This article contains the edition of a letter from the thirteenth century with a photograph.

For Genizah letters written by Jews from Syria to Egypt that might fill the chronological gap for Syria, see GIL, 1983, as in *Bibliography ad 2.1.2*.

#### *Ad 2.1.4 Iraq and the eastern regions*

No original letters from Iraq have been published so far. As for Central Asia, an official letter from the year 100/[718–719] has been published by Ignats Kratchkovsky:

Крачковский, Игнатий Юлианович

- 1955 *Древнейший арабский документ из Средней Азии*. In: *Избранные сочинения*, Vol. 1, Moscow 1955, str. 182–211.

For supplementary evidence provided by Genizah letters sent by Jews from Syria to Egypt, see GIL, 1997, as in the *Bibliography ad 2.1.2*.

#### *Ad 2.1.5 North-Africa and al-Andalus*

ALARCÓN Y SANTÓN, Maximiliano A. / Ramón GARCÍA DE LINARES

- 1940 *Los documentos árabes diplomáticos del Archivo de la Corona de Aragón*. Madrid.

Official letters from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries sent by the Naṣrīds of Granada, North-African rulers (Marīnids and Ḥafṣīds) and Mamlūk rulers to the kings of Aragon, as well as other documents. This is the most comprehensive corpus of official Arabic letters preserved. Apart from typographical errors that can easily be corrected, the texts seem to be reliable. No photographs.

AMARI, Michele

- 1863 *I diplomati arabi del R. Archivio fiorentino*. Florence.

Official letters dating from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries that were sent by North



African rulers (mainly Almohads) as well as Egyptian rulers (Ayyūbids and Mamlūks) to the Republic of Pisa and, rarely, vice versa. The collection also contains some commercial letters sent from North Africa to Pisa. No photographs. There are only few misreadings that can easily be corrected.

HOENERBACH, Wilhelm

1965 *Spanisch-arabische Urkunden aus der Zeit der Naṣriden und Moriscos*. (Bonner Orientalistische Studien, vol. 15). Bonn.

The volume also contains two private letters from the sixteenth century with photographs.

A few other private letters, all from the late period of al-Andalus, have been published by Spanish scholars. Supplementary evidence is contained in Genizah letters written by Jews from North Africa and al-Andalus to Egypt or Jews hailing from there.

#### *Ad 2.2 Letters preserved in copial or literary tradition*

Only collections of letters and similar specific writings are cited below. Numerous other letters are found in books of *adab* and historiographic works. Letters composed by Arab stylists cover the whole of the Islamic lands, from Central Asia to Morocco and al-Andalus. \* = outstanding stylist of his time.

°ABD AL-ḤAMĪD B. YAḤYĀ

1988 *Rasā'il* = °*Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā al-kātib wa-mā tabaqqā min rasā'ilihi wa-rasā'ili Sālim* °*Abī l-°Alā*°. Ed. Iḥsān °Abbās. Beirut.

\*ABŪ L-°ALĀ° AL-MA°ARRĪ

1982 *Rasā'il* (°Abbās) = *Rasā'il* °*Abī l-°Alā*° *al-Ma°arrī. al-Ḡuz° al-°awwal*. Ed. Iḥsān °Abbās. Beirut/Cairo.

1894 *Rasā'il* (°Aṭīyah) = *Rasā'il* °*Abī l-°Alā*° *al-Ma°arrī*. Edd. Šāhīn °Aṭīyah / Aḥmad °Abbās al-Azhārī. Beirut.

1976 *Rasā'il* (Ḥalīfah) = *Rasā'il* °*Abī l-°Alā*° *al-Ma°arrī*. Ed. °Abd al-Karīm Ḥalīfah. Vol. 1–3. Amman.

1966 *Rasā'il* (Ḥalūf) = °*Adwā° alā r-rasā'il al-mutabādalāh bayna dā°ī d-du°āh al-fāṭimī Hibat Allāh aš-Širāzī wa-°Abī l-°Alā*° *al-Ma°arrī*. Ed. °Alī Muḥammad Ḥalūf. Damascus.

1898 *Rasā'il* (Margoliouth) = *The Letters of* °*Abu 'l-°Alā of Ma°arrat al-Nu°mān*. *Edited from the Leyden Manuscript with the Life of the Author by al-Dhahabī, and with Translation, Notes, Indices, and Biography*. Ed. David Samuel Margoliouth. Oxford.

- 1989 *Rasā'il* (al-Qāḍī) = °*Ithāf al-fuḍalā' bi-rasā'il °Abī l-°Alā'*. Ed. Muḥammad °Abd al-Ḥalīm al-Qāḍī. Cairo.

ABŪ ḤAYYĀN AT-TAWḤĪDĪ

- 1985 *Rasā'il* = *Rasā'il °Abī Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī muṣaddarah bi-dirāsah °an ḥayātih wa-°ātārih wa-°adabih*. Ed. Ibrāhīm al-Kaylānī. Damascus.

ABŪ HILĀL AL-°ASKARĪ

- 1994 *Ma°ānī* = Abū Hilāl al-°Askarī: *Dīwān al-ma°ānī*. Vol. 1–2. Ed. Aḥmad Ḥasan Bašğ. Beirut.

ABŪ L-ḤUSAYN AŞ-ŞĀBĪ°

- 1983 *Ġurar* = Abū l-Ḥusayn Hilāl b. al-Muḥassin aŞ-ŞābĪ°: *Ġurar al-balāğah*. Vol. 1–2. Ed. As°ad Ḍubyān. Beirut.

\*ABŪ IŞḤĀQ AŞ-ŞĀBĪ°

- 1898 *Muḥtār* = *al-Muḥtār min Rasā'il °Abī °Işḥāq °Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl b. Zahrūn aŞ-ŞābĪ°*. Vol. 1. Ed. Šakīb Arslān. B°abda 1898 / °Beirut n.d.

ABŪ ZAYD AL-FĀZĀZĪ

- 1991 *Ātār* = °*Ātār °Abī Zayd al-Fāzāzī al-°Andalusī. Nuşuş °adabīyah min al-qarn al-ḥiğrī as-sābi° ġama°ahā ba°du talāmīdih fī ḥayātih*. Ed. °Abd al-Ḥamīd °Abd Allāh al-Ḥarāmah. Beirut.

\*AḤMAD B. YŪSUF

- 1997 *Rasā'il* = °Alī Ibrāhīm Abū Zayd: °*Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-kātib al-wazīr. Dirāsah °uslūbīyah fī °ātārihi n-naṭrīyah. at-Taḥmīdāt – ad-dīwānīyāt – at-tawqī°āt – ar-rasā'il*. Cairo.

AL-°AṬṬĀR

- 1250/[1834] °*Inšā'* = Abū °Alī Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-°Aṭṭār: *al-°Inšā'*. Būlāq.

AL-BİŞṬĀMĪ

- 1299/[1881] *Tarassul* = °Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Bişṭāmī: *Kitāb Manāhiğ at-tawassul fī mabāhiğ at-tarassul*. Constantinople.

DANDAŞ

- 1988 *Dawr al-Murābiṭīn* = °Işmat °Abd al-Laṭīf Dandaş: *Dawr al-Murābiṭīn fī naşr al-°islām fī ġarb °Ifriqiya 430–515 h – 1038–1121 m ma° naşr wa-taḥqīq rasā'il °Abī Bakr Ibn al-°Arabī*. (as-Silsilah al-Ğāmi°īyah). Beirut.

FIKRĪ

- 1966 °*Inšā'* = °Alī Fikrī: °*Inšā' al-mukātabāt al-Fikrīyah wa-l-murāsalāt al-°arabīyah*. Cairo.

ḤAMMĀDAH

- <sup>4</sup>1985 *Waṭā'iq al-°aşr al-°abbāsī al-°awwal* = Muḥammad Māhir Ḥammādah: *al-Waṭā'iq as-siyāsīyah al-°ā'idah li-l-°aşr al-°abbāsī al-*

- <sup>2</sup>1983 *ʿawwal. Dirāsah wa-nuṣūṣ. (Silsilat Waṭāʾiq al-ʾIslām, vol. 2). Beirut.*  
*Waṭāʾiq al-ʿaṣr al-mamlūkī = Muḥammad Māhir Ḥammādah: al-Waṭāʾiq as-siyāsīyah wa-l-ʾidārīyah li-l-ʿaṣr al-mamlūkī 656–922 h – 1258–1516 m. Dirāsah wa-nuṣūṣ. (Silsilat Waṭāʾiq al-ʾIslām, vol. 1). Beirut.*
- <sup>2</sup>1986 *al-Waṭāʾiq fī l-ʾAndalus wa-šimālī ʾIfriqiyah = al-Waṭāʾiq as-siyāsīyah wa-l-ʾidārīyah fī l-ʾAndalus wa-šimālī ʾIfriqiyah 64–897 h – 683–1492 m. Dirāsah wa-nuṣūṣ. (Silsilat Waṭāʾiq al-ʾIslām, vol. 7). Beirut.*
- <sup>3</sup>1986 *Waṭāʾiq al-ḥurūb aṣ-ṣalībīyah = Waṭāʾiq al-ḥurūb aṣ-ṣalībīyah wa-l-ḡazw al-muḡūlī li-l-ʿālam al-ʾislāmī. (Silsilat Waṭāʾiq al-ʾIslām, vol. 5). Beirut.*
- <sup>2</sup>1985 *Waṭāʾiq al-ʿuhūd al-fāṭimīyah wa-l-ʾatābakīyah wa-l-ʾayyūbīyah = al-Waṭāʾiq as-siyāsīyah wa-l-ʾidārīyah li-l-ʿuhūd al-fāṭimīyah wa-l-ʾatābakīyah wa-l-ʾayyūbīyah. Dirāsah wa-nuṣūṣ. (Silsilat Waṭāʾiq al-ʾIslām, vol. 4). Beirut.*
- <sup>3</sup>1985 *Waṭāʾiq al-ʿuṣūr al-ʿabbāsīyah = al-Waṭāʾiq as-siyāsīyah wa-l-ʾidārīyah al-ʿāʾidah li-l-ʿuṣūr al-ʿabbāsīyah al-mutatābiʿah 347–656 h / 861–1258 m. Dirāsah wa-nuṣūṣ. (Silsilat Waṭāʾiq al-ʾIslām, vol. 3). Beirut.*

## AL-ḤŌYĪ

- 1963 *Ḡunyat al-kātib and Rusūm ar-rasāʾil = Ḥasan b. ʿAbdīl-muʾmin el-Hōyī: Gunyetuʾl-kātib ve munyetuʾt-ṭālib. Rusūmuʾr-resāʾil ve nucūmuʾl-fazāʾil. Ed. Adnan Sadık Erzi. (Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, vol. 40. Selçukîler Devrine âid inşa eserleri, vol. 1a). Ankara.*

## \*AL-ḤUMAYDĪ

- 1985 *Tashīl = al-Ḥumaydī Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Futūḥ b. ʿAbd Allāh: Tashīl as-sabīl ʾilā taʿallum at-tarsīl. (Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science. Series C. Facsimile Editions, vol. 8). Frankfurt am Main.*

## \*AL-ḤUWĀRIZMĪ

- [1879] (1970) *Rasāʾil = Rasāʾil ʾAbī Bakr al-Ḥuwārizmī. Beirut. (Reprint of the edition Constantinople 1297/[1879]).*

## \*IBN ABĪ L-ḤIṢĀL

- 1987 *Rasāʾil = Rasāʾil Ibn ʾAbī l-Ḥiṣāl. Ed. Muḥammad Riḍwān ad-Dāyah Damascus.*

## \*IBN AL-AṬĪR

- 1959–62 *Maṭal* = Ḍiyā° ad-Dīn Ibn al-Aṭīr: *al-Maṭal as-sā°ir fī °adab al-kātib wa-š-šā°ir*. Vol. 1–4. Edd. Aḥmad al-Ḥūfī / Badawī Ṭabbāta. Cairo.
- 1959 *Rasā°il* (al-Maqdisī) = *Rasā°il Ibn al-°Aṭīr. Tunšaru li-°awwali mar-ratin °an maḥṭūṭatin tarġi°u °ilā l-qarni s-sābi°i l-hiġriyi*. Ed. °Anīs al-Maqdisī. Beirut.
- n.d. *Rasā°il* (al-Qaysī/Nāġī) [I] = *Rasā°il Ibn al-°Aṭīr Ḍiyā° ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. °Abd Allāh al-Karīm al-Ġazarī 558 h – 637 h. Tunšaru li-°awwali marrah*. Edd. Nūrī Ḥammūdī al-Qaysī / Hilāl Nāġī. (Manšūrāt Ġāmi°at al-Mawṣil. Nadwat °Abnā° al-°Aṭīr). Mossul.
- 1982 *Rasā°il* (Nāġī) II = *Dīwān rasā°il Ḍiyā° ad-Dīn Ibn al-°Aṭīr. al-Ġuz° at-ṭānī*. Ed. Hilāl Nāġī. (Manšūrāt Ġāmi°at al-Mawṣil. Kulliyat al-°Ādāb. Nadwat °Abnā° al-°Aṭīr). Mossul.

## IBN FAḌL ALLĀH AL-°UMARĪ

- 1988/2002 *Masālik* = Faḍl Allāh al-°Umarī: *Masālik al-°abšār fī mamālik al-°amšār. as-Sifr at-ṭānī °ašar*. (Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science. Series C. Facsimile Editions, vol. 46, 12). Frankfurt am Main / Ed. Ibrāhīm Šālīḥ. Abū Zaby.
- 1988 *Masālik* = *Masālik al-°abšār fī mamālik al-°amšār. as-Sifr at-ṭālīt °ašar*. (Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science. Series C. Facsimile Editions, vol. 46, 13). Frankfurt am Main.

## \*IBN AL-ḤAṬĪB

- 1319/1973–77 *°Iḥāṭah* = *al-°Iḥāṭah fī °aḥbār Ġarnāṭah*. Vol. 1–2. Cairo 1319. Ed. Muḥammad °Abd Allāh °Inān. Vol. 1–4. °Cairo 1973–1977.
- 1912–15/1980–81 *Rayḥānah* (GR) / (°Inān) = Gaspar Remiro: “Correspondencia diplomática entre Granada y Fez (Siglo XIV).” [Partial edition of Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb's *Rayḥānat al-kuttāb*.] In: *Revista del Centro de Estudios Históricos de Granada y su Reino* II 3 (1912) – V 4 (1915) / Ḍū l-wizāratayn Lisān ad-Dīn al-Ḥaṭīb: *Rayḥānat al-kuttāb wa-tuḥfat al-muntāb*. Vol. 1–2. Ed. Muḥammad °Abd Allāh °Inān. Cairo.

## \*IBN ḤIĠĠAH

- 2005 *Qahwah* = IBN ḤIĠĠAH. *Kitāb Qahwat al-°inšā°*. Ed. R. Vesely. (Bibliotheca Islamica, vol. 36). Berlin.

## IBN AL-MU°TAZZ

- 1946 *Rasā°il* = *Rasā°il Ibn al-Mu°tazz fī n-naqd wa-l-°adab wa-l-iġtimā°*. Ed. Muḥammad °Abd al-Mun°im Ḥafāġī. Cairo.

## IBN NĀZIR AL-ĞAYŞ

- 1987 *Tatqīf* = aš-Šayḥ Taqīy ad-Dīn °Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Muḥibb ad-Dīn Muḥammad at-Tamīmī al-Ḥalabī aš-šahīr bi-bn Nāzir al-Ğayş: *Kitāb Tatqīf at-taʿrīf bi-l-muṣṭalaḥ aš-šarīf*. Ed. Rudolf Vesely. Cairo.

## \*IBN NUBĀTAH

- 1972 *Maṭlaʿ* = Ğamāl ad-Dīn Ibn Nubātah al-Miṣrī: *Maṭlaʿ al-fawāʿid wa-maġmaʿ al-farāʿid*. Ed. °Umar Mūsā Bāšā. Damascus.
- ms. *Muṭawwaq* = Saġʿ al-muṭawwaq. Ms. Berlin 8645.
- ms. *Taʿlīq* = *Taʿlīq ad-dīwān li-sanat ṭalāṭ wa-ʿarbaʿīn wa-sabʿi-miʿah li-š-šayḥ al-ʿimām al-ʿālim al-ʿallāmah Ğamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Nubātah al-Miṣrī raḥimahu llāhu taʿālā raḥmatan wāsiʿatan. at-Tawāqīʿ al-kutub al-ʿadʿiyah aš-ṣudūr*. Ms. Berlin 8640.

## IBN ŠARĪFAH

- 1966 Abū l-Muṭarrif = Muḥammad b. Šarīfah: °Abū l-Muṭarrif °Aḥmad b. °Amīrah al-Maḥzūmī. *Ḥayātuhu wa-ʿāṭāruhu*. Rabat.

## \*IBN WUŠMGĪR

- 1341/[1922] *Kamāl al-balāġah* = Šams al-Maʿālī Qābūs b. Wušmgīr: *Kamāl al-balāġah taʿlīf °Abd ar-Raḥmān b. °Alī al-Yazdādī*. Cairo.

## KURD °ALĪ

- 1913 *Rasāʿil al-bulaġāʿ* = Muḥammad Kurd °Alī: *Rasāʿil al-bulaġāʿ*. Cairo.

## LÉVI-PROVENÇAL

- 1941 *Documents inédits* = Évariste Lévi-Provençal: *Trente-sept lettres officielles almohades*. Rabat.

## MAKKĪ

- 1959-60/2004 “Waṭāʿiq °an °aṣr al-Murābiṭīn” = Maḥmūd °Alī Makkī: “Waṭāʿiq tāriḥīyah ġadīdah °an °aṣr al-Murābiṭīn.” In: *Revista del Instituto de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid* 7–8: 109–198 / Cairo 2004.

## MU°NIS

- 1955 *Nuṣūṣ siyāsīyah* = Ḥusayn Mu°nis: “Nuṣūṣ siyāsīyah °an fatrat al-intiqāl min al-Murābiṭīn °ilā l-Muwahḥidīn °ay min 520/1126 °ilā 540/1145.” In: *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid* 3: 97–140.

## AN-NAḤḤĀS

- 1990 *Šināʿat al-kuttāb* = Abū Ğaʿfar Aḥmad an-Naḥḥās: *Šināʿat al-kuttāb*. Ed. Badr Aḥmad Ḍayf. Beirut.

## AN-NAYFAR

- 1298/[1880] *Durr* = °Alī an-Nayfar at-Tūnisī: *Kitāb ad-Durr al-manẓūm fī kayfīyat katb ar-rusūm*. Tunis.

N.N.

1954 *as-Siğillāt al-Mustanşirīyah* = *as-Siğillāt al-Mustanşirīyah. Siğillātun wa-tawqīʿātun wa-kutubun li-mawlānā l-ʿimāmi l-Mustanşiri bi-llāhi ʿamīri l-muʿminīna – ṣalawātu llāhi ʿalayhi – ʿilā duʿāti l-Yamani wa-ğayrihim – qaddasa llāhu ʿarwāḥa ġamīʿi l-muʿminīna*. Ed. ʿAbd al-Munʿim Māğid. Cairo.

1989 *Rasāʾil ʿandalusīyah* = *Rasāʾil ʿandalusīyah*. Ed. Fawzī Saʿd ʿĪsā. Alexandria.

1994 *Rasāʾil ʿandalusīyah ġadīdah* = *Rasāʾil ʿandalusīyah ġadīdah (ʿaṣr al-Murābiṭīn)*. Ed. Ḥayāh Qārah. Şafşāwin.

n.d. *Rasāʾil wa-maqāmāt ʿandalusīyah* = *Rasāʾil wa-maqāmāt ʿandalusīyah*. Ed. Fawzī Saʿd ʿĪsā. Alexandria.

\*AL-QĀḌĪ AL-FĀḌIL

1980 *Rasāʾil (Nabarāwī)* = *Fathīyah an-Nabarāwī: ʿInšāʾ al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil. Dirāsah wa-taḥqīq wa-taʿlīq*. Cairo.

1984 *Rasāʾil (Nağaş)* = Muḥammad Nağaş: *Rasāʾil ʿan al-ḥarb wa-s-salām min tarassul al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil iḥtiyār Muwaffaq ad-Dīn Ibn ad-Dībāğī*. Cairo.

AL-QALQAŞANDĪ

1913–18/1987 *Şubḥ* = Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Qalqaşandī: *Şubḥ al-ʿaʿşā fī şināʿat al-ʿinşā*. Vol. 1–14. Cairo / Vol. 1–14. Ed. Yūsuf ʿAlī. Beirut.

\*AŞ-ŞAFADĪ

ms. *Alḥān* = Şalāḥ ad-Dīn Ḥalīl b. Aybak aş-Şafadī: *Alḥān as-sawāğīʿ bayn al-bādīʿ wa-l-murāğīʿ*. Parts 1–4. Ms. Berlin 8631.

aş-Şafadī's private correspondence, part of it in the form of poems, the rest in rhymed prose.

ŞAFWAT

<sup>2</sup>1971 *Ğamharat rasāʾil al-ʿarab* = Aḥmad Zakī Şafwat: *Ğamharat rasāʾil al-ʿarab fī ʿuṣūr al-ʿarabīyah az-zāhirah*. Vol. 1–4. Cairo.

\*AŞ-ŞĀḤIB B. ʿABBĀD

1982 *Fuṣūl* = aş-Şāḥib b. ʿAbbād: *al-Fuṣūl al-ʿadabīyah*. Ed. Muḥammad Ḥasan ʿĀl Yāsīn. Damascus.

1946 *Rasāʾil* = *Rasāʾil aş-Şāḥib b. ʿAbbād*. Edd. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ʿAzzām / Şawqī Ḍayf. [Cairo 1946].

SAʿĪD B. ḤUMAYD

1971 *Rasāʾil* = Yūnus Aḥmad as-Sāmarrāʾī: *Rasāʾil Saʿīd b. Ḥumayd wa-ʿaṣṣāruhu*. Bagdad.

## AŠ-ŠANTARĪNĪ

- 1979 *Daḥīrah* = Abū l-Ḥasan °Alī b. Bassām aš-Šantarīnī: *ad-Daḥīrah fī mahāsin °ahl al-ḡazīrah*. Vol. 1–4. Ed. Iḥsān °Abbās. Beirut.

Important source containing the bibliographical data as well as letters and poems of stylists and poets of al-Andalus and North Africa.

## AŠ-ŠAYYĀL

- <sup>2</sup>1965 *Maḡmū°at al-waṭā°iq al-fāṭimīyah* = Ġamāl ad-Dīn aš-Šayyāl: *al-Waṭā°iq at-tārīḥīyah li-Miṣr al-°islāmīyah*. Vol. 1. *Maḡmū°at al-waṭā°iq al-fāṭimīyah*. Cairo.

## AŠ-ŠIRĀZĪ

- ms. *Rasā°il* = *Kitābun fīhi rasā°ilu l-wazīri °Abī l-Qāsimi °Abdi l-°Azīzi š-Šīrāzīyi l-kātibi – raḥimahu llāhu*. Ms. Berlin 8625.

## AŠ-ŠULĪ

- 1936 *Aš°ār °awlād al-ḥulafā°* = Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā aš-Šulī: *°Aš°ār °awlād al-ḥulafā° wa-°aḥbāruhum*. Ed. J. Heyworth-Dunne. Cairo.

## \*AL-WATWĀṬ

- 1315 *Rasā°il* = *Maḡmū°at rasā°il Rašīd ad-Dīn al-Waṭwāṭ*. 1–2. Ed. Muḥammad Effendī Fahmī. Cairo.

*Ad 3 Epistolary language, phraseology and style*

## DIEM, Werner

- 2002 *Ehrendes Kleid und ehrendes Wort. Studien zu tašrīf in mamlūkischer und vormamlūkischer Zeit*. (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, vol. 54, 2). Würzburg.

Quotation and translation of numerous passages from letters, most of them composed by renowned stylists and handed down in literary transmission. Arabic rhymed prose is translated in rhymed form. A chapter is devoted to the stylistic devices (pp. 135–218), and there is a list of the *secundae comparationis* of comparisons and metaphors (pp. 251–261).

- 2004a “katabtu °ilayka „Ich schreibe Dir“ und Verwandtes. Ein Beitrag zur Phraseologie des arabischen Briefes unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Briefperfekts.” In: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 154 (2004): 285–345.

Investigation into the so-called epistolary perfect in Arabic letters, based on evidence from original letters and letters transmitted in copial or literary transmission, with the evidence of other Semitic languages also being discussed.



- 2005 *Wurzelrepetition und Wunschsatz. Untersuchungen zur Stilgeschichte des arabischen Dokuments des 7. bis 20. Jahrhunderts.* Wiesbaden.

Analysis of the stylistic aspects and structures of numerous passages from letters, especially letters written by stylists, with special regard to regional peculiarities. Arabic rhymed prose is translated in rhymed form. For lists of metonymies and of *secundae comparationis*, see p. 850 and pp. 851–855 respectively.

- 2006a “*bāsiṭ* und *bāsiṭah* als Bezeichnungen der Hand im mamlūkenzeitlichen Arabisch” In: *Loquentes linguis. Studi linguistici e orientali in onore di / Linguistic and Oriental Studies in Honour of / Lingvistikaj kaj orientaj studoj honore al Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti*. Edd. Pier Giorgio Borbone / Alessandro Mengozzi / Mauro Tosco. Wiesbaden: 241–253.

DIEM, Werner / Hans-Peter RADENBERG

- 1995 *A Dictionary of the Arabic Material of S. D. Goitein's A Mediterranean Society.*

The bulk of Goitein's quotations in his *Mediterranean Society* come from Genizah letters written in Arabic. Thus, this dictionary can also be helpful for the language and style of letters.

GOLDZIH, Ignaz

- 1908 “*Mélanges Judéo-Arabs. XXX. Formules dans les lettres de Gueniza.*” In: *Revue des Études Juives* 55: 54–57.

Some observations on and additions to Worman's article; for this, see below.

KROPP, Manfred

- 2003 “‘Ein klein wenig weißt Du ja schon, mein Herr, ...!’ Der Beschwerdebrief eines äthiopischen Mönches an Ras Mikael Sehul als Beispiel äthiopischer Briefkunst und deren Verwendung in der Historiographie.” In: *Bote und Brief. Sprachliche Systeme der Informationsübermittlung im Spannungsfeld von Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit*. Ed. Andreas Wagner. (Nordostafrikanische/Westasiatische Studien, vol. 4). Frankfurt am Main: 125–146.

JAHN, Karl

- 1937 “Vom frühislamischen Briefwesen.” In: *Archiv Orientální* 9: 153–200.  
This study contains a survey of the structures and formulae of Arabic letters from the seventh to ninth centuries (pp. 153–173).

WORMAN, Ernest James

- 1907 “Forms of address in Genizah letters.” In: *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 19: 721–743.

On addresses in Aramaic, Arabic or a mixed language in the Genizah letters.



*Ad 4 Archaic features in letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad  
in literary tradition*

HAMĪD ALLĀH, Muḥammad

<sup>2</sup>1956 *Mağmūʿat al-waṭāʾiq as-siyāsīyah li-l-ʿahd an-nabawī wa-l-ḥilāfah ar-rāšidah*. Cairo.

Collection of letters ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad and the first caliphs in literary sources as well as letters on parchment allegedly sent by the Prophet Muḥammad.

NOTH, Albrecht

1973 *Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen und Tendenzen frühislamischer Geschichtsüberlieferung*. Vol. 1: *Themen und Formen*. Bonn.

For the non-authenticity of letters ascribed to the first caliphs and emirs of that period in literary sources, see pp. 71–80.

*Ad 5 Script*

GROHMANN, Adolf

1971 *Arabische Paläographie*. II. Teil. *Das Schriftwesen. Die Lapidarschrift*. Graz/Wien/Köln.

Though Grohmann's important study mainly deals with inscriptions, it can sometimes also be helpful for texts on papyrus and paper.

1963 *Arabic Papyri from Ḥirbet el-Mird* (see *Bibliography ad 2.1.3*).

The volume contains a detailed palaeographical analysis of the documents found in Ḥirbet el-Mird with drawings (pp. XIII–XLI).

GRUENDLER, Beatrice

1993 *The Development of the Arabic Scripts from the Nabatean Era to the First Islamic Century According to Dated Texts*. (Harvard Semitic Studies, vol. 43). Atlanta.

An excellent study with drawings of all forms of letters as attested in pre-Islamic and early Islamic inscriptions and papyri.

KHAN, Geoffrey

1992 *Arabic Papyri. Selected Material from the Khalili Collection*. (Studies in the Khalili Collection, vol. 1). Oxford.

In the chapter "Script" pp. 27–46, photographs from early papyri are given for each letter, and the development of the script is discussed.

*Ad 6 Letters as a source for Islamic cultural, social and political history*

BÜRCEL, Christoph

1965 *Die Hofkorrespondenz ʿAḍud ad-Dawlas und ihr Verhältnis zu anderen historischen Quellen der frühen Būyiden*. Wiesbaden.

DIEM, Werner

- 2002 *Ehrendes Kleid und ehrendes Wort*, see *Bibliography ad 3*.

Quotation, translation and analysis of numerous passages from letters in the context of a discussion of robes of honour and the semasiology of the term *tašrīf* which, besides the better known term *hilʿa*, designated robes of honour and other things such as swords that were given together with them by rulers and emirs.

- 2004b *The Living and the Dead in Islam. Studies in Arabic Epitaphs*. Vol. 1: *Epitaphs as Texts*. Wiesbaden.

For letters of condolence, see Vol. 3: *Indices*. Wiesbaden 2004, pp. 119f. *sub* Letters of condolence. For letters of congratulation, see p. 120 *sub* Letters of congratulation.

- 2006b *Arabischer Terminkauf. Ein Beitrag zur Rechts- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte Ägyptens im 8. bis 14. Jahrhundert*. Wiesbaden.

The evidence of original letters from Egypt is taken account of.

GOITEIN, Shelomo Dov

- 1967–88 *A Mediterranean Society. The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*. Vol. 1–5. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London.

A major work on cultural and social history that heavily draws on original letters written by Jews in Arabic language but Hebrew script.

GUO, Li

- 2004 *Commerce, Culture, and Community in a Red Sea Port in the Thirteenth Century. The Arabic Documents from Quseir*. Boston.

The study, which is based on original letters, is to some extent comparable to Goitein's *Mediterranean Society* (see preceding item) but much more limited in material and scope apart from its primarily being devoted to commercial aspects only.

HOPKINS, Simon

- 1984 *Studies in the Grammar of Early Arabic Based upon Papyri Datable to before 300 A. H. / 912 A. D.* Oxford.

An important linguistic study mainly based on original letters.

LOHLKER, Rüdiger

- 2006 *Islamisches Völkerrecht. Studien am Beispiel Granada*. Bremen.

The book, inter alia, is based on an investigation into original letters sent by the Naṣrids of Granada and North African rulers to the Christian kings of Aragon.

## Figures

الله لا اله الا هو  
 هو فرد م سر يك يسر  
 هو اسعوه فالى احمد  
 الله لا اله الا هو  
 اما بعد فابعد  
 مر ( لرو ما عد علمه  
 وعد استا حر د الح  
 عطا عطا عطا الخ  
 عطا عطا عطا الخ  
 سر الله فالى احمد  
 كسر عطا عطا عطا  
 مر الخ عطا عطا عطا  
 فالى احمد  
 ولا اعرف ما الخ  
 ما فلا ولا كسر له جسر  
 فاراهل ار كسر

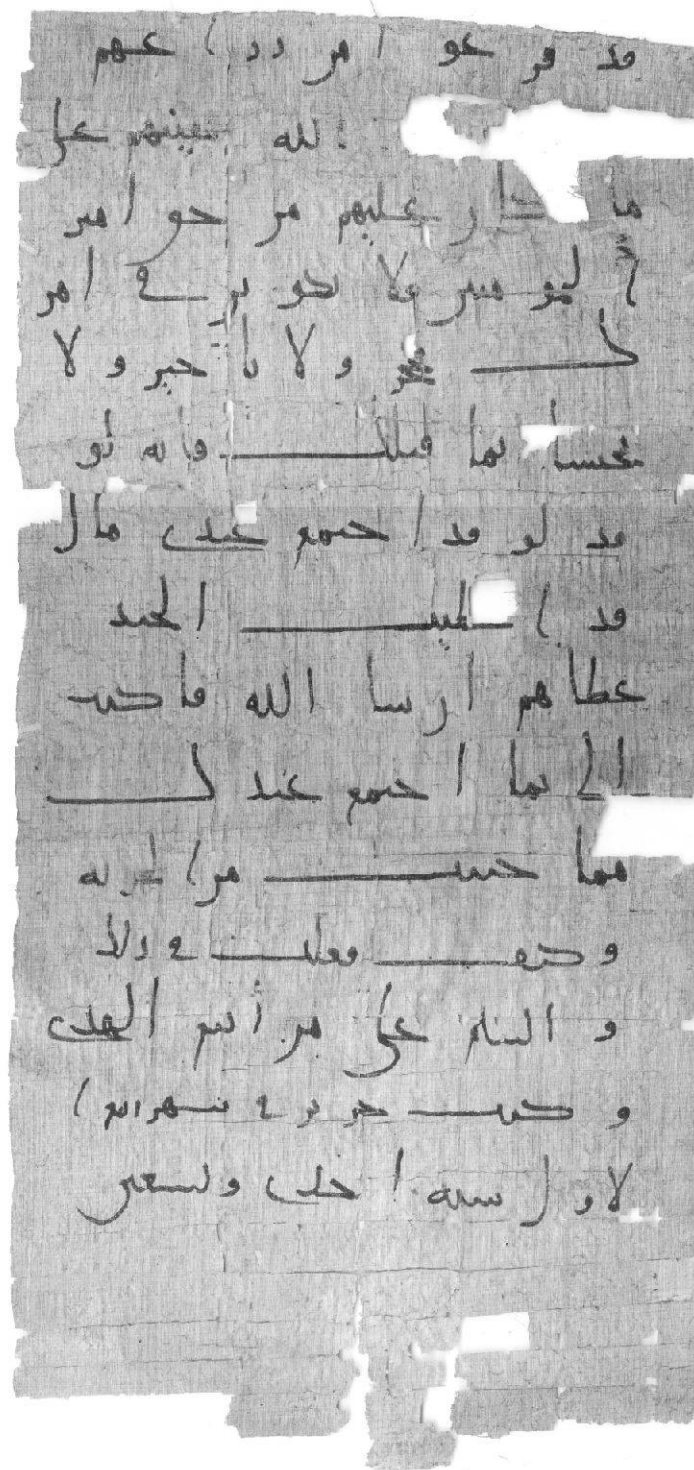


Fig. 6.1a–b: Official letter (upper and lower half) of the Egyptian governor Qurra b. Šarīk to Basileios, pagarch of the province Aphrodito (Iṣqawh). Dated 91/[710]. BECKER, 1906: no. 1. (Photograph by courtesy of the Institut für Papyrologie der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, inv. Arab. 1–2).

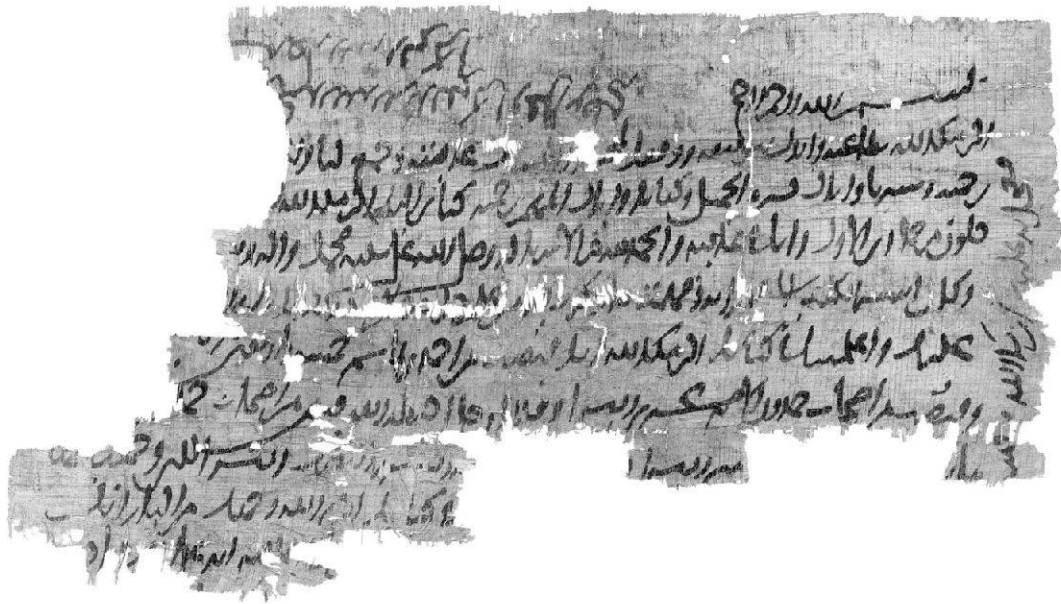


Fig. 6.2: Letter about a financial transaction, 9th century. DIEM, 1991: no. 32 (Photograph by courtesy of the Institut für Papyrologie der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, inv. Arab. 120).

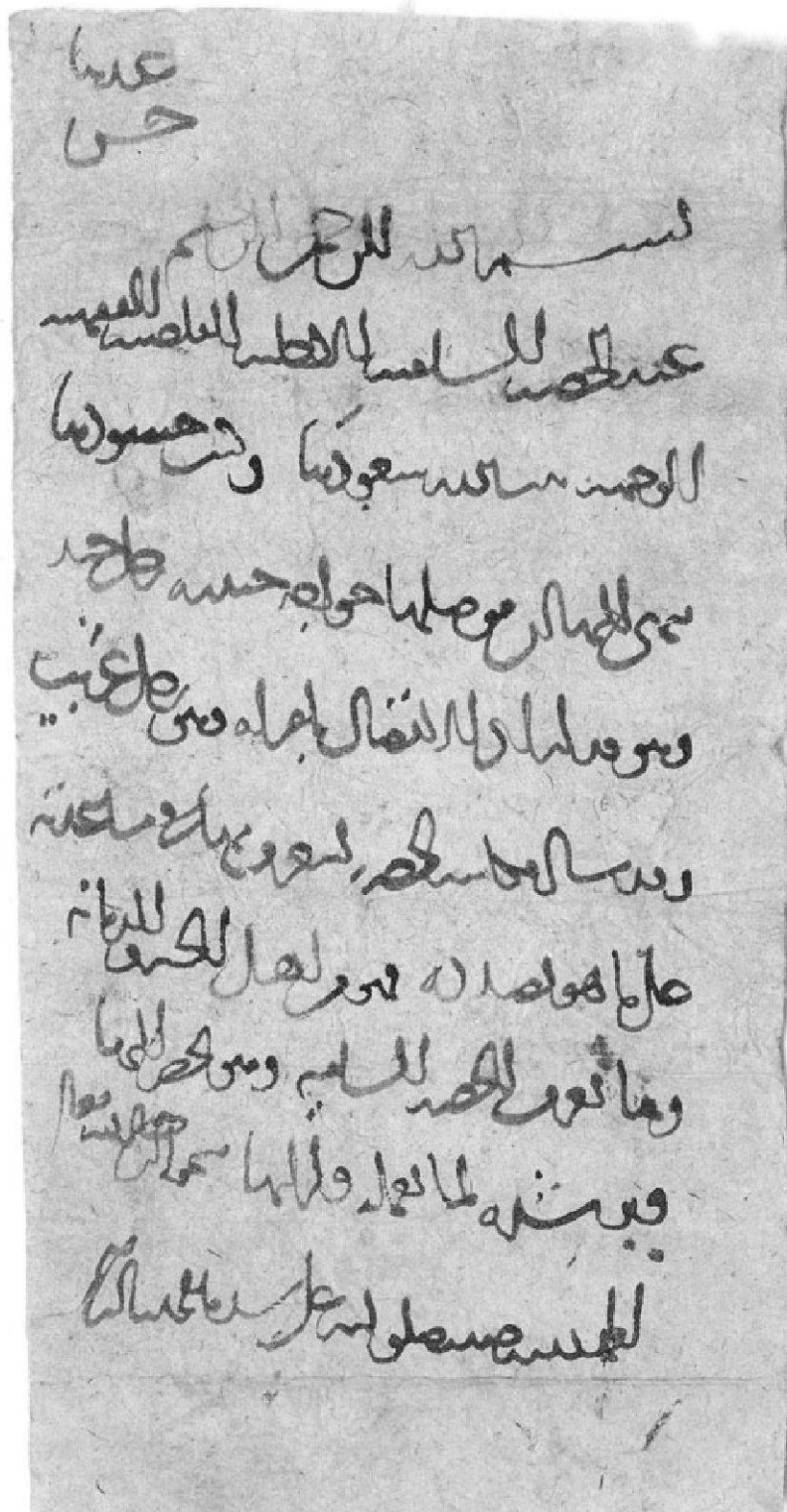


Fig. 6.3: Letter of recommendation. 12th century. DIEM, 1991: no. 48 (Photograph by courtesy of the Institut für Papyrologie der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, inv. Arab. 470).

