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Whence Come Qur'ān Manuscripts? Determining the Regional Provenance of Early Qur'ānic Codices

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Abstract: In studies of early Qur'ānic manuscripts, determining the provenance of these manuscripts is a thorny issue because in most cases they lack endowment notes or colophons. The reports in early Islamic sources regarding textual variants of regional codices (*maṣāḥif al-amṣār*) may contribute to find a solution to this problem. A list of regional variants, mostly based on al-Dānī's *al-Muqni'*, can be found in NÖLDEKE et al.'s *The History of the Quran*. However, as the authors have stated, a comparison of some of the early Qur'ānic manuscripts in the *Topkapı Sarayı Museum* with this table of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* variants indicates that the traditional reports are unreliable for identifying the provenance of Qur'ānic manuscripts because none of these codices can be attributed to any particular region. The present article is an attempt to demonstrate that this problem results from relying solely on the data provided by al-Dānī and ignoring earlier and more significant sources, such as al-Sijistānī's *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*. It attempts to provide a new and more precise classification of regional variants by reading afresh the reports on the features of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār*, taking into account the sources which were not used by NÖLDEKE et al., especially al-Sijistānī's *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, thus making the list of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* variants more accurate, thereby the variants of each of these early Qur'ānic Codices tally more with the reports preserved for the characteristics of one of the *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* in literary sources. As the texts of the surviving manuscripts are not of a diverse nature we are able, with some certainty, to draw conclusions that substantiate the reports as to the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of different cities.

Keywords: Qur'ānic manuscripts, regional codices, *maṣāḥif al-amṣār*

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Introduction

According to the accounts attested in Islamic sources, aiming at establishing an authorized standard version of the sacred text of the Qurʾān, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān had copies of such an authorized text prepared and sent to major cities of Muslim lands.¹ The number of the copies has been reported from four to nine. According to all these reports, except the *muṣḥaf* that remained in Medina, copies were sent to Basra, Kufa, and Syria.² However, according to some reports, a copy was also sent to Mecca, Yemen, and Bahrain³ and even cities in Egypt and the city of Algiers.⁴ It is also said that the *muṣḥaf* kept by ʿUthmān was different from that of Medina,⁵ in which case another copy would be added to the *muṣḥafs* of ʿUthmān. There are various reports that there were disagreements between such *muṣḥafs* as to the addition or omission of a letter or two; for example, in Q 2:132 وَوَصَّىٰ were attested in certain *muṣḥafs* and وَأَوْصَىٰ in others; and in Q 57:24 اللَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَنِيُّ and اللَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَنِيُّ were to be found in different regional *muṣḥafs*.

In the reports on the regional *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* features and their variants, references have, at times, been made to the *maṣāḥif* variants of Ḥijāz, Syria (Shām), and Iraq in general, and to those of Medina, Mecca (Ḥijāz), Kufa, and Basra (Iraq) in particular where minor variants in the text of the Qurʾān exceed forty. However, mention has not been made in such reports as to the features of the *muṣḥafs* of Yemen, Bahrain, Egypt, and Algiers and their variants. Therefore, the present article deals with the regional *muṣḥafs* of Kufa, Basra (Iraq in general), Medina, Mecca (Ḥijāz in general), and Syria. Certain features of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān’s *muṣḥaf* and even the differences between it and the *muṣḥaf* of Medina recorded in other reports⁶ may corroborate the theory of discrepancies between ʿUthmān’s private *muṣḥaf* and that of Medina.

Such reports on *maṣāḥif* variants are attested in different sources. In his *al-Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm enumerates such books under the heading “Books Compiled on *Maṣāḥif* Variants” (*al-Kutub al-muʾallafa fi ikhtilāf al-maṣāḥif*)⁷ among

1 al-Bukhārī 1990, vol. 2, 100.

2 al-Dānī 1978, 19.

3 Ibn al-Jazarī, vol. 1, 7.

4 al-Yaʿqūbī, vol. 2, 170.

5 al-Sijistānī 1985, 46, 47.

6 Ibid.

7 These include: (1) al-Kisāʿī’s *Kitāb Ikhtilāf maṣāḥif ahl al-Madīna wa-ahl al-Kūfa wa-ahl al-Baṣra*; (2) Khalaf ibn Hishām’s *Ikhtilāf al-Maṣāḥif*; (3) al-Madāʾinī’s *Ikhtilāf al-Maṣāḥif wa-jamʿ al-Qurʾān*; (4) al-Farrā’s *Ikhtilāf ahl al-Kūfa waʾl-Baṣra waʾl-Shām fi ʾl-Maṣāḥif*; (5) Ibn Abi Dāwūd al-Sijistānī’s *Kitāb Ikhtilāf al-Maṣāḥif*; (6) Ibn ʿĀmir al-Yaḥṣubī’s *Kitāb Ikhtilāf Maṣāḥif al-Shām*

which only Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī's (230–316/844–928) *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* is extant. The earliest reports on *maṣāḥif* variants, besides al-Sijistānī's, could be found in *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* by Abū 'Ubayd Qāsim ibn Sallām (151–224/774–838). Another important source, extensively treating the *maṣāḥif* variants, is *al-Muqni'* by Abū 'Amr al-Dānī, an Andalusian scholar who flourished in the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries. Besides al-Dānī's *al-Muqni'*, other Andalusian sources, such as al-Mahdawī's *Hijā' al-Maṣāḥif* and Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn Najāḥ's *Mukhtaṣar al-Tabyīn li-Hijā' al-Tanzīl*, reveal similar features. Al-Dānī quotes extensively from the regional codices variants discussed in Abū 'Ubayd's book, but he does not appear to have had access to al-Sijistānī's book. Other sources, as Ibn Mujāhid's *Kitāb al-Sab'ah*, also provide useful data on the variants of regional *muṣḥafs*, although not in discrete chapters. These sources mainly discuss the orthographical conventions and/or the *maṣāḥif* variants of different cities as transmitted by their distinguished Qur'ān reciters. Such accounts, based on transmission chains, are for the most part reported by compilers who at times added their own observations of ancient *muṣḥafs* which that extant in their times.

The clues in the early Islamic sources regarding textual variants of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* may provide us with one of the most significant criteria for tracing the origin of early Qur'ānic manuscripts.⁸ In addition, a study of different schools of readings and verse numbering, orthographical styles, diacritical and vocalization marks,⁹ and the like may contribute to finding a solution to this problem. This article, however, concentrates on the accounts of textual variants of regional codices (*maṣāḥif al-amṣār*) attested in early Islamic sources.

The first point to be investigated is whether such variants are attested in the early Qur'ānic manuscripts dating from the first Islamic centuries. Granted that such variants are substantiated in the manuscripts, we need to fathom the reliability of the reports in which variants of regions are verified in any Qur'ān man-

wa'l-Ḥijāz wa'l-'Irāq; (7) Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Iṣfahānī's *Ikhtilāf al-Maṣāḥif* (Ibn al-Nadīm, 54).

⁸ For works that undertake such studies see, e.g. Y. DUTTON, An early *muṣḥaf* according to the reading of Ibn 'Āmir, *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 3 (2001); Y. DUTTON, "Some Notes on The British Library's Oldest Qur'an Manuscript" (Or. 2165)", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Vol. 6.1 (2004): 43–71. Marijn VAN PUTTEN, "Arabe 334a. A Vocalized Kufic Quran in a Non-canonical Hijazi Reading", *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts*; Vol. 10.3 (2019): 327–375. Intisar A. RABB, "A Non-Canonical Reading of the Qur'ān: Recognition & Authenticity (The Ḥimṣī Reading)", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Vol. 8.2 (2006): 84–127.

⁹ See Alain GEORGE, "Coloured Dots and the Question of Regional Origins in Early Qur'ans (Part I)", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Vol. 17.1 (2015):1–44 and idem, "Coloured Dots and the Question of Regional Origins in Early Qur'ans (Part II)", *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, Vol. 17.2 (2015): 75–102.

uscript. For instance, according to these reports, قَلِيلٌ in Q 4:66 was قَلِيلًا in Syrian *muṣḥafs*. Given that such reports are reliable, it is expected that this instance, along with other similar instances, are attested in every Syrian *muṣḥaf*. And if it be the case for all regions, the Islamic reports on *maṣāḥif* variants can be verified. Therefore, an investigation of the regional variants attested in a certain manuscript will localize its geographical provenance.

A list of regional variants mainly based on Abū ‘Amr al-Dānī’s *al-Muqni’ fī ma’rifat rasm maṣāḥif al-amṣār* is to be found in NÖLDEKE et al.’s *The History of the Quran*.¹⁰ Nevertheless, in this very book it is stated that the comparison made between this list and a number of early *muṣḥafs* in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, namely codex 50385 and codex *Medina 1a*, proves unsatisfactory:

Based on works of Koranic subjects containing lists of orthographic and textual variants of the individual *amṣār*, theoretically it ought to be easy to determine the distribution of the manuscripts among the main centres of Islamic culture. In practice, however, these criteria turn out to be unreliable. The investigation of several complete Korans in the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi showed that nearly all codices are miscellaneous texts. So far, I have come across only a single copy of the Koran, Saray 50386, which according to al-Dānī’s list of variants is to be identified as Medinan, but even this one has a non-Medinan variant in sūra Q 57:24. This would mean that it is methodologically wrong to desire to localize Koranic fragments on the basis of single variants.¹¹

The argument is well-founded, but where does the problem lie? Could it be claimed that Muslim scholars’ reports on the variants attested in regional *muṣḥafs* are unfounded and incompatible with the realities of the *muṣḥafs*? It will be demonstrated below that the problem arises from total reliance on the data provided by al-Dānī. However, by taking into account earlier and more significant sources like al-Sijistānī’s *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, we can have a more reliable guide. We will see that al-Sijistānī’s reports in *al-Maṣāḥif* are in various instances in disagreement with those of al-Dānī’s in *al-Muqni’*. Consequently, sometimes the circumstances surrounding the *muṣḥafs* of a given region, with regard to variants, may not be clearly specified and the list of the variants attested in regional *muṣḥafs* can be different from that prepared on the basis of al-Dānī’s reports. Based on all the reports, attempts will be made below to make an assessment of the instances agreed upon in all sources and to specify as to which variants the circumstances surrounding the *muṣḥafs* of different regions may be clearly identified. In cases of disagreement on some other variants, the circumstances around certain regions

¹⁰ NÖLDEKE 2013, 396–399.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 601.

are known, but those of others, resulting from contradictory reports, remain unclear.

Even in cases of agreement between al-Sijistānī's and al-Dānī's accounts, there are various approaches to the explanation of the peculiarities of *muṣḥafs*. In his first and most significant report, al-Dānī considers each variant a peculiarity of a *muṣḥaf* of a region or two in contradistinction to other regions. This approach was adopted by NÖLDEKE et al. Nonetheless, al-Sijistānī and Abū 'Ubayd chose a different approach. For instance, in Q 3:133 al-Dānī opts for سارُعُوا without a preceding *wāw* as a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and the Ḥijāz, while other *muṣḥafs* unanimously had وَسارُعُوا and this peculiarity in the verse in question could be found in the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and the Ḥijāz (al-Dānī, 106). It may be inferred from al-Sijistānī's reports that سارُعُوا was attested in the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and the Ḥijāz and the form وَسارُعُوا was attested in those of Iraq where such *muṣḥafs* had distinctive features differing from those of Syria and the Ḥijāz. However, the present study aims at clarifying the question whether, with regard to any variant, a clear picture of the *muṣḥafs* of each region is reconstructible.

As mentioned above, NÖLDEKE et al.'s list of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* variants was primarily based on al-Dānī's *al-Muqni'*,¹² ignoring the more significant and earlier *al-Maṣāḥif* by al-Sijistānī, perhaps because he did not have access to it. It was based on this list of the regional variants of the *muṣḥafs* that attempts were made to discover an archetype of regional *muṣḥafs*. The first attempt was made in the book (*The History of the Quran*) itself, where it is assumed that the Medinan *muṣḥaf* was most likely the archetype.¹³ However, Michael COOK has recently tried to reconstruct a *stemma codicum* and an archetype of the regional *muṣḥafs*. He concluded that the Kufan codex was probably the archetype of the codices of Syria, Medina, and Basra.¹⁴ Such attempts to discover an archetype based on variants attested in *muṣḥafs* do not fall within the purview of this article. Instead, it focuses on a preceding stage, that is, providing a more precise list of variants of regional *muṣḥafs*.

To make an assessment of the merits of the new list, we will compare our results with some manuscripts surviving from the earliest Islamic centuries. It

¹² It is stated in the book that: "with recourse to those of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām and *al-Mabānī li-naẓm al-ma'ānī*" and also "As a safety check, the following odd variants have been taken into consideration: al-Zamakhsharī as well as the rather numerous references in *Kashf 'an wujūh al-qirā'āt* of Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib al-Qaysī (AHLWARDT, *Verzeichnis*, no. 578) further the *'Aqīla* and the *Ithāf*, and finally the works on variant readings since generally the *qirā'a* are indicative of the text of the home region of the respective reader." (NÖLDEKE 2013, 396, footnote 49)

¹³ NÖLDEKE 2013, 399.

¹⁴ COOK 2004, 89–104.

remains to be seen whether any particular and early *muṣḥaf* may demonstrate the peculiarities of a given region; for instance, may it show all the features of Syrian, Kufan, or Medinan *muṣḥafs*? Granted such a possibility, the veracity of Muslim reports can be substantiated. Such a list may contribute to pinpointing the provenance of a particular manuscript copy and, consequently, to discover the archetype. However, it needs to be borne in mind that in our investigations the readings of different reciters (*qirā'āt*) from a variety of regions will not be used since *maṣāḥif* variants do not always correspond to different readings of reciters from different regions; for instance, there are two different reading variants by 'Āṣim ibn Abī al-Najūd of Q 43:71, one narrated by Abū Bakr Shu'bah Ibn 'Ayyash (تَشْتَوِي) corresponding to Iraqi *muṣḥafs* and the other narrated by Ḥafṣ (تَشْتَوِيه) corresponding to those of Medina and Syria.¹⁵ It is also emphasized by al-Dānī in his *al-Muqni'* that in some instances reciters from a certain region followed the *muṣḥafs* of other regions.¹⁶ Accordingly, regional readings will not be treated in our discussion on *maṣāḥif al-amṣār*.

In order to prepare a more precise list of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* variants, we may begin with al-Sijistānī's *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, which was not used by NÖLDEKE et al., and then proceed to scrutinize the reports in Abū 'Ubayd's *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* and al-Dānī's *al-Muqni'*. An attempt will be made to investigate and unify the reports. References will be made at times to the data provided by Ibn Mujāhid in his *Kitāb al-Sab'ah* that deals with regional *muṣḥafs* rather than variant readings (*qirā'āt*).

Al-Sijistānī's Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif

Al-Sijistānī presents nine reports under the heading *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* variants:

- S1. The first report, given on the authority of 'Alī ibn Ḥamza al-Kisā'i, deals with differences of the Medinan, Kufan and Basran *muṣḥafs*, including the differences of Medinan *muṣḥafs* from those of the Iraqis (Kufans and Basrans) in eleven instances. The Medinans and the Basrans share six instances that differ from those of the Kufans.¹⁷ Three instances are shared by the Kufans and the Medinans, but they differ from the Basrans. Other instances are disputed by the three groups.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibn Mujāhid 1972, 588–589.

¹⁶ al-Dānī 1978, 117–118.

¹⁷ It is mentioned that in Q 47:18 the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa and Mecca (تَأْتِيهِمْ) are in contrast to those of Medina and Basra (تَأْتِيهِمْ); however, nobody in Kufa recite it as (تَأْتِيهِمْ).

¹⁸ al-Sijistānī 1985, 49, 50

- S2. In the second report, Khālid ibn Ismā'īl al-Muhājir reports that he asked Ḥamzah al-Zayyat: “وَالْجَارِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ” (Q 4:36) had been recorded in our codices instead of ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ. Should I read it ذَا?” He replied: “Do not read it but as ذِي.”¹⁹
- S3. In the third report on the authority of Khālid ibn Iyās and Sulaymān ibn Muslim, it is said that the Medinan reading differs from the *muṣḥaf* of 'Uthmān in twelve instances. Of these twelve variants, eleven are the same as those described in report S1 as differences of Medinans *muṣḥafs* from those of the Iraqis; and the other instance is that people of Ḥijāz record يُقُولُ in Q 5:53 without the preceding *wāw*.²⁰
- S4. According to the fourth report, 'Amr ibn 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd ibn Kathīr ibn Dīnār al-Ḥimsī quotes his father as saying that the Qur'ān reciters of Medina were asked about the variants of their *muṣḥafs*, and they replied that their reading was identical with that of the Iraqis except for twelve instances which are in harmony with the reading of the Syrians against that of the Iraqis. These variants are the same as those described in the above reports (S3 and S1).²¹
- S5. The fifth report, again relayed through the same transmission chain as the fourth report (S4) by 'Amr ibn 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd al-Ḥimsī, enumerates the same twelve instances reported by Medinan reciters as the variants of the Syrians.²²
- S6. In the sixth report on the authority of Sawāda ibn Ziyād, the said twelve variants (in S3, S4 and S5) along with five more, are reported as variants of the Medinans in contrast to the Iraqis²³ and one instance in Q 8:67 as the peculiarity of the Syrians.²⁴
- S7. In the seventh report, the exemplar copies of the Syrians and the people of the Ḥijāz are compared with those of the Iraqis. On the authority of Abū al-Barhas(sh)am al-Ḥimsī it is reported that 14 variants are shared by the Syrians and the people of the Ḥijāz as against the reading of the Iraqis. From among these fourteen, six variants are cited in the previous reports and

¹⁹ Ibid., 51. This instance also mentioned in the first report S1 on the authority of al-Kisā'ī where he said that ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ was recorded in the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa and some Kufans used to recite it ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ in the past, but today no one recites it except ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ.

²⁰ Ibid., 51.

²¹ Ibid., 52.

²² Ibid., 52.

²³ In this report, some of the characteristics that belong to Basra (such as the ones in 76:16; 23:87, 89 and 35:33) are mentioned as Iraqī characteristics.

²⁴ Ibid., 53, 54.

eight variants are new.²⁵ There are four variants peculiar to the Syrians and against the Iraqis.²⁶

- S8. In the eighth report, after quoting Mubashir ibn ‘Ubayd as stating that the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq have مَكْتَنِي unlike the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and the Ḥijāz, it is said “I did not hear anybody except Mubashir saying this.” Then it continued the Ḥadīth of Abū al-Barhas(sh)am al-Ḥimsī in which thirteen instances are reported where there is a difference between the *muṣḥafs* of the Syrians and people of the Ḥijāz on the one hand, and the exemplar codex of the Iraqis on the other.²⁷ Five of the instances mentioned in this report are among the twelve variants said in S3, S4, S5, and S6.²⁸

A comparison has been made so far between *muṣḥafs* of the Iraqis and other *muṣḥafs*. It seems that the *muṣḥaf* of the Ḥijāzi people²⁹ and that of the Syrians are mainly similar except for a few instances peculiar to that of the Syrians.

- S9. The ninth report is slightly different. It begins with the two variants of the *muṣḥaf* of Mecca as against Basra on the authority of Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī, and proceeds to enumerate nine differences between the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa and Basra.³⁰
- S10. The last report transmitted on the authority of ‘Alī ibn Ḥamza al-Kisā’ī treats the same instances as in S1, shared by the Basrans and the Medinans and differ from those of the Kufans and instances shared by the Kufans and the Medinans and differ from those of the Basrans.³¹ But in addition to these, it reports a peculiarity in Medianan *muṣḥafs* in Q 43:68 which states that عَبَادِي is recorded in the *muṣḥafs* of Medina.³²

²⁵ Ibid., 54, 55.

²⁶ One of the instances peculiar to the Syrians (Q 8:67) is also reported in the sixth report S6.

²⁷ In one case (Q 39:64), it is said that in the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Ḥijāz تَأْمُرُونِي is recorded and the same is recorded in the *muṣḥaf* of the Iraqis.

²⁸ Ibid., 55, 56.

²⁹ Some reports have “Medina” instead of “Ḥijāz.”

³⁰ Ibid., 57.

³¹ It seems that the instance in Q 76:16 here is wrongly mentioned as shared by Medinans and Basrans *muṣḥafs*; however, in S1 and as we will see in other books it is known as a peculiarity of the Basrans *muṣḥafs*. The instance in Q 4:36 contrary to S1 states that ذِي الْقُرْبَى was recorded in the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa.

³² Ibid., 58.

Abū 'Ubayd's Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān

In his *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* Abū 'Ubayd narrates three reports detailing the variants of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār*:

- A1. According to the first report, on the authority of Ismā'il ibn Ja'far al-Madā'inī, the *muṣḥafs* of the Iraqis and the people of the Ḥijāz³³ include twelve variants.³⁴ Eleven instances out of twelve, enumerated by Abū 'Ubayd, are repeated in the first report S1 and all those twelve instances are in the S3, S4, S5, and S6 accounts of *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*.
- A2. In the second report Abū 'Ubayd, on the authority of ibn 'Amir al-Yaḥṣubī as well as Abu Dardā', enumerates 28 variants between the *muṣḥafs* of the Syrians and that of the Iraqis and proceeds to state that some of such instances are shared by the Syrians and the Medinans, but there are instances that are not shared. However, he does not specify which variants are shared by the *muṣḥafs* of the Ḥijāz³⁵ but he enumerates ten instances (Q 3:133; Q 5:53, 54; Q 9:107; Q 18:36; Q 26:217; Q 40:26; Q 42:30; Q 57:24; Q 91:15) here as differences between the *muṣḥafs* of the Syrians and that of the Iraqis which he enumerated earlier in A1 as differences between the *muṣḥafs* of the people of the Ḥijāz and that of the Iraqis.

Except for three instances (Q 7:90; Q 10:96 and Q 27:67), the rest are also known from *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*.

- A3. Abū 'Ubayd, having enumerated the variants of the *muṣḥafs* of the Ḥijāz and also the differences between the variants of the *muṣḥafs* of the Syrians and those of the Iraqis, touches, in the third report, upon the differences between the *muṣḥafs* of the Iraqis, that is, those of Kufa and Basra. There are only five instances of such variants.³⁶

Al-Dānī's al-Muqni'

Abū 'Amr al-Dānī discussed the variants of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* in a chapter entitled “The Variants of the *Muṣḥafs* of the Peoples of the Ḥijāz, Iraq, and Syria Copied

³³ However, “the people of Ḥijāz” substitute “the Medinans” in the text of the report when mention is made of the variants.

³⁴ Abū 'Ubayd 1995, vol. 2, 156.

³⁵ Ibid., vol. 2, 158–160.

³⁶ Ibid., vol. 2, 161.

from the Exemplar with [their] Additions and Omissions” (*bāb dhikr mā ikhtalafat fihi maṣāḥif ahl al-Ḥijāz wa’l-‘Iraq wa’l-Shām al-muntasakha min al-imām bi-l-zi-yāda wa’l-nuqṣān*). As may be seen, the majority of the reports in *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* and *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān* are primarily concerned with the differences between the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz and Syria on the one side, and those of Iraq on the other. Such an approach is not adopted in al-Dānī’s reports in his *al-Muqni’*. Al-Dānī is not particularly interested in making comparisons between *muṣḥafs*; rather, he pursues the features of a particular *muṣḥaf* and regards a variant as a peculiarity of a *muṣḥaf* or two in contrast to other *muṣḥafs*.

- D1. His most important and detailed report lacks the transmission chain recounted on the authority of various anonymous masters. He simply says: *hādha al-bāb sami’nāhu min ghayr wāhid min shuyūkhinā*. In this report, he further mentions the peculiarities of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār*.³⁷ Al-Dānī incorporates additions that are not to be found in the two books *al-Maṣāḥif* and *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*.
- D2. Having completed his detailed report, al-Dānī repeats Abū ‘Ubayd’s first report (A1) relayed from Ismā’il ibn Ja‘far al-Madā’inī by his own transmission chain from Abū ‘Ubayd regarding the twelve points of divergence between the people of Ḥijāz and the Iraqis.³⁸
- D3. Then, in another report he enumerates again the seven variants of the *muṣḥaf* of Mecca on the authority of Ibn Mujāhid that he had mentioned earlier in D1.³⁹
- D4. He repeats Abū ‘Ubayd’s second report (A2) by his own transmission chain from Abū ‘Ubayd about the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of the Syrians. Although he states that there are 28 variants, he enumerates only 27 variants and omits one in Q 7:90.⁴⁰
- D5. He reports, on the authority of Abū ‘Ubayd, five differences between the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa and Basra corresponding to the third report in *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān* (A3).⁴¹

³⁷ al-Dānī 1978, 106–112.

³⁸ Ibid., 112–114.

³⁹ Ibid., 114.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 114–116.

⁴¹ Ibid., 116.

- D6. Al-Dānī further narrates a report on the authority of those who had seen the *muṣḥaf* of Mālik ibn Anas' grandfather⁴² that had been copied when the *muṣḥafs* of 'Uthmān had been transcribed.⁴³
- D7. Al-Dānī then refers to a report on the authority of Nāfi' al-Madanī about two features of the exemplar (*Imām*) *muṣḥaf*.⁴⁴
- D8. Al-Dānī's quoting of Abū Ḥātim shows some peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of different cities.⁴⁵ In this report, only one instance in Q 4:171 is exactly in accordance with the report quoted by al-Sijistānī from Abū Ḥātim (S9). Compared to al-Sijistānī's report, the case in Q 9:100 with *نَجْرِي مِنْ نَحْيِهَا*, instead of being mentioned as a peculiarity of Meccan *muṣḥafs*, says that *نَجْرِي نَحْيِهَا* without *مِنْ* is one of the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of the people of Ḥims that 'Uthmān sent to Syria. He then quotes four other features of the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥims (Syria) that are not mentioned in S9.
- D9. Al-Dānī's last report, narrated on the authority of Abū Ḥaywa al-Shāmī, shows three peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria.⁴⁶

The Exemplar (*Imām*) *Muṣḥaf* or 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān's *Muṣḥaf*

The above mentioned reports occasionally refer to an exemplar (*imām*) *muṣḥaf*, otherwise identified as 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān's *muṣḥaf*. What is intended by either of these two terms is ambiguous. In his *al-Maṣāḥif*, al-Sijistānī reports the same twelve variants between the *muṣḥafs* of the Medinans and those of the Iraqis (in S3, S4, S5, S6 and A1) as the variants between the *muṣḥafs* of the Medinans and 'Uthmān's *muṣḥaf*.⁴⁷ It seems that the exemplar (*imām*) *muṣḥaf* is most similar to the Iraqi *muṣḥaf*. Further, quotations like “I saw thus in the exemplar, the *muṣḥaf* of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān (*kadhālika rāyтуha fī al-imām muṣḥaf 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān*), are attested in some reports in *al-Muqni'* that compare the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of a certain region with 'Uthmān's *muṣḥaf*.⁴⁸ Three instances in *al-Muqni'*

⁴² For more information on *muṣḥaf* of Mālik ibn Anas' grandfather, see COOK, Michael 1999–2000, 93–105.

⁴³ al-Dānī 1978, 116.

⁴⁴ Loc. cit.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 116–117.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 117.

⁴⁷ al-Sijistānī 1985, 46, 47.

⁴⁸ al-Dānī 1978, 106.

confirm the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq that had earlier been attributed by al-Sijistānī to ‘Uthmān’s *muṣḥaf*: اللّٰهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ (Q 57:24);⁴⁹ أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ (Q 40:26);⁵⁰ and وَلَا يَخَافُ (Q 91:15).⁵⁰ Further, quoting five instances from Abu ‘Ubayd, he reports his observations on the *imām muṣḥaf*, from which three instances are in contradiction to al-Sijistānī’s reports. One of these instances is not attested in al-Sijistānī’s reports and another instance is confirmed by al-Sijistānī as well. These instances are the following:

1. As in the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Medina, Q 2:132 in the *muṣḥaf* of ‘Uthmān has وَوَصَّىٰ⁵¹ whereas this does not correspond to al-Sijistānī’s report according to which, similar to the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq, the *muṣḥaf* of ‘Uthmān reads وَوَصَّىٰ.
2. Similar to the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Medina, يَرْئِدُ in Q 5:54 has two *dāls*,⁵² whereas it does not correspond to al-Sijistānī’s report according to which, similar to the *muṣḥafs* of Iraqis, the *muṣḥaf* of ‘Uthmān has one *dāl* يَرْدٌ.
3. Similar to the *muṣḥafs* of Medina and Syria, تَشْتَوِيهِ in Q 43:71 is recorded with two *hā’s*,⁵³ which does not correspond to al-Sijistānī’s report according to which, similar to the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq, the *muṣḥaf* of ‘Uthmān reads تَشْتَوِيهِ.
4. The form لِّلّٰهِ is recorded without *alif* in the verses Q 23:87, 89 in the *muṣḥaf* of ‘Uthmān.⁵⁴ This instance was also mentioned by al-Sijistānī.⁵⁵
5. Similar to the *muṣḥaf* of Syrians, the verse Q 55:12 is recorded in ‘Uthmān’s *muṣḥaf* as: ذَا الْعَصْفِ.⁵⁶ However, this instance is not mentioned by al-Sijistānī.

Assessment of Regional Muṣḥaf Variants Reports

A comparison of the reports contained in *al-Maṣāḥif*, *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*, and *al-Muqni’* will lead to the following conclusions:

In thirteen variants, the feature of the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq is in contrast to those of Syria and Ḥijāz (shared between the two): Q 2:132; Q 3:133; Q 5:53, 54; Q 9:107; Q 18:36; Q 26:217; Q 40:26; Q 42:30; Q 43:68; Q 43:71; Q 57:24; and Q 91:15. All these instances are considered by NÖLDEKE as representing a peculiarity of Medina and

⁴⁹ Ibid., 110.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 116.

⁵¹ Ibid., 106.

⁵² Ibid., 107.

⁵³ Ibid., 111.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 109.

⁵⁵ al-Sijistānī 1985,47.

⁵⁶ al-Dānī 1978, 112.

Damascus against the others.⁵⁷ Except for one case in Q 40:26 where he, following al-Dānī, believes that *أُوْأُنْ* is a Kufan peculiarity.⁵⁸ Abū ‘Ubayd, however, regards it as a peculiarity of Iraqi *muṣḥafs* (Kufa and Basra) in general terms, and it is also considered as a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa and Basra by al-Sijistānī. Accordingly, the present author, unlike NÖLDEKE, regards it as a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq (Kufa and Basra).

It is certain that in these thirteen instances the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq do not correspond to the *muṣḥafs* of Medina and Syria; however, rather than Medina, mention is made of Ḥijāz in reports S7 and S8. Abū ‘Ubayd’s former report opens with the statement that the variants of the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz and Syria are different from those of Iraq. Granted that the variants are attested in the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz, that is, those of Mecca and Medina, the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq are different from those of Mecca, Medina, and Syria; and compared with the *muṣḥafs* of other regions, those of Iraq demonstrate peculiarities. It is to be noted that in his *Kitāb al-Sab‘a*, Ibn Mujāhid independently presents material as to the *muṣḥafs* of Mecca. He maintains that some of those instances, for example, Q 9:107; Q 57:24 and Q 91:15, are shared by the *muṣḥafs* of Mecca and Iraq,⁵⁹ but he believes that some other instances, for example, Q 5:53 and Q 18:36, are peculiar to the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq different from those of Mecca, Medina, and Syria.⁶⁰ Therefore, we are not certain about other instances attested in the *muṣḥafs* of Mecca.

We are facing a particular situation with regards to another set of twelve variants (Q 2:116; Q 3:184; Q 6:137; Q 7:3, 43, 75, 141, 195; Q 40:21; Q 55:12, 78; Q 57:10). Some of these variants are referred to by al-Sijistānī in report no. 7 (S7) and some others are attested in report no. 8 (S8); both being on the authority of Abū al-Barhas(sh)am al-Ḥimṣī as the peculiarities of the Iraqi *muṣḥafs*, in contrast to those of Syria and Ḥijāz (shared between the two); whereas in the second report, presented in *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*, it is mentioned as a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria. It was mentioned above that in the opening of his report Abū ‘Ubayd emphasizes that some of such instances are shared by the Syrians and the Medinans, but there are instances that they do not share; however, he does not precisely specify which variants are shared by the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz.⁶¹ Abū ‘Ubayd’s report is incorporated in al-Dānī’s fourth report (D4). Similarly, these instances are attested in the latter’s first report (D1) as peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria. Two other

57 NÖLDEKE considers the variant in Q 18:36 to be a peculiarity of Medina, Mecca, and Damascus against the others.

58 NÖLDEKE 2013, 396–399.

59 Ibn Mujāhid 1972, 318, 627, 689.

60 Ibid., 245, 390.

61 Abū ‘Ubayd 1995, vol. 2, 158–160.

instances (Q 7:195 and Q 57:10) from among those twelve instances are not attested in Abū ‘Ubayd’s report (A2), but they are to be found in al-Dānī’s first report (D1).

For instance, according to al-Sijistānī’s report (S7), the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq read *قَالُوا وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ* in Q 2:116; that is, their peculiarity is that they have a *wāw* preceding *قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ*. Abū ‘Ubayd, nevertheless, in his report (A2) considers *قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ* without *wāw* as a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria. The same report is to be found in al-Dānī’s D4. Such peculiarities of various regions may not be easily verified, since, granted the validity of al-Sijistānī’s report, we need to acknowledge that *قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ*, without *wāw* was shared by all the *muṣḥafs* copied in Syria and Ḥijāz (Mecca and Medina), and the form *قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ* was exceptionally attested in the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq. According to Abū ‘Ubayd and al-Dānī, however, *قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ* without *wāw* was only attested in Syrian *muṣḥafs*. It is specified in both reports that *قَالُوا* and *وَقَالُوا* were attested in Syrian and Iraqi *muṣḥafs*, respectively, but the forms used in the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz are unknown. It is reported by al-Sijistānī that the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz were similar to those of Syria, but al-Dānī reports that the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz were similar to those of Iraq. It is not precisely specified by Abū ‘Ubayd whether such a feature was shared by the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Ḥijāz. Therefore, we do not have a clear picture of the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz. The same is true of the twelve instances of variants. As a result, based on an assessment of such reports, it may be stated that we have solely a clear picture of the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq and Syria, but such clarity is not attested in those variants as reflected in the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz. Further, we do not precisely know whether the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz were similar to those of Iraq; and those of Syria had but a unique variant, or the variant was shared by Syria and Ḥijāz and that variant was a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq. However, NÖLDEKE et al. lists eleven instances, from among the twelve instances, of the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria, but as to Q 7:195, the variant is missing in his list.

An assessment of the reports indicates that four variants (Q 4:66; Q 6:32; Q 8:67; Q 10:22) are peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria; however, the variant in Q 10:22 may not be readily considered a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria since it is also reported that Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf’s reformist measures included changing *يُنشِرُكُمْ* to *يُسَيِّرُكُمْ*.⁶² So, one may not ignore the possibility that, as a result of antedating such reforms, some *muṣḥafs* had *يُنشِرُكُمْ*. In his second report (A2), Abū ‘Ubayd reckons the instance in Q 27:67 (*إِنَّا* with two *nuns*) as a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and the same report is quoted by al-Dānī from Abū ‘Ubayd (D4).⁶³ He also considers *قَالَ الْمَلَأَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا* without preceding *wāw* in Q 7:90 as a peculiarity of

⁶² al-Sijistānī 1985, 59.

⁶³ This instance is not recorded in NÖLDEKE’s list.

the *muṣḥafs* of Syria,⁶⁴ but this instance is not known from *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* and al-Muqni'. Besides the six variants in question, two others (Q 18:77 [لَتَّخَذَتْ with two *lāms*],⁶⁵ Q 74:33 [إِذَا أُذْبِرَ instead of [أُذْبِرَ]]⁶⁶), only according to al-Dānī (D8 and D9), were peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria.⁶⁷

Based on a single report (D8), narrated by al-Dānī, ائْتُونَ (without *yā'* (in Q 12:50⁶⁸ is a variant peculiar to Medina.⁶⁹

An assessment of the reports demonstrates that there exists a Kufan peculiarity in Q 6:63 (أَنْجَانًا); Q 36:35 (عَمِلْتُ), and in Q 46:15 (إِحْسَانًا) where the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa are in contrast to those of Medina and Basra. In Q 47:18, the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa and Mecca (تَأْتِيَهُمْ) are in contrast to those of Medina and Basra (تَأْتِيَهُمْ).⁷⁰ Two variants are attested as the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Mecca in contrast to other *muṣḥafs*: Q 9:100 (تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا)⁷¹ and Q 4:171⁷² (رَسُولِهِ). Besides this variant, al-Dānī, quoting Ibn Mujāhid, refers to other peculiarities in the *muṣḥafs* of Mecca as to Q 21:30 (أَلَمْ يَرَ); Q 25:25 (نُنزَّلُ); Q 27:21 (لِيَأْتِيَنَّيَ), and Q 28:37 (قَالَ مُوسَى)⁷³ that are not mentioned by Abū 'Ubayd and al-Sijistānī. Since all these instances are reported by al-Dānī on the authority of Ibn Mujāhid, all these variants attested in Ibn Mujāhid's *al-Sab'a* are considered as Ibn Kathīr's readings that are peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Mecca.⁷⁴

In Q 35:33 and Q 76:16, the *muṣḥafs* of Basra show peculiarities in contrast to Kufa and Medina. Two extra *alifs* in Q 23:87, 89 are indicative of a peculiarity that is in contrast to the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa, Medina, and Syria. However, the addition of these two *alifs* to الله, besides being reported as a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of

64 This instance is not recorded in NÖLDEKE's list.

65 The reading لَتَّخَذَتْ with two *lāms* is not attributed to any of the seven anonymous Qur'ān readers in *al-Sab'a*.

66 There is no reference by Ibn Mujāhid as to a reading by an extra *alif* attributed to any of the seven anonymous Qur'ān readers.

67 These two instances are not recorded in NÖLDEKE's list.

68 This instance is also not recorded in NÖLDEKE's list.

69 al-Dānī 1978, 116.

70 This instance is considered as disputed in NÖLDEKE's list (398). Also, it is stated by al-Sijistānī that nobody in Kufa recite it as (تَأْتِيَهُمْ).

71 This is also considered by Ibn Mujāhid to be a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Mecca (Ibn Mujāhid, 317).

72 It is to be noted that the instance attested in Q 4:171 is not to be found in NÖLDEKE et al.'s list but the four instances that are only recorded in al-Dānī's list: Q 21:30 (أَلَمْ يَرَ); Q 25:25 (نُنزَّلُ); Q 27:21 (لِيَأْتِيَنَّيَ), and Q 28:37 (قَالَ مُوسَى). (NÖLDEKE 397, 398).

73 Two more instances mentioned by al-Dānī; nevertheless, I don't consider the instance in Q 17:93 (قَالَ سُبْحَانَ) as variants but simply a *rasm* difference as to the deletion or retention of medial *alif*. Furthermore, Q 17:93 (قَالَ سُبْحَانَ) along with 18:95 (مَكْنِي) are disputed instances.

74 Ibn Mujāhid 1972, 428, 464, 479, 494.

Basra, are considered in some reports to be the reformist measures adopted by such figures as Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf⁷⁵ and Naṣr ibn ‘Āṣim al-Laythī.⁷⁶ Some contradictory or ambiguous reports in Q 4:36; Q 18:95; and Q 39:64 as to the above variants fail to provide a clear depiction; however, as to Q 39:64, NÖLDEKE et al. consider *تَأْمُرُونِي* in the list of variants a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria;⁷⁷ also concerning Q 18:95, he regards *مَكَّنِي* as a peculiarity of Meccan *muṣḥafs*.⁷⁸ The disputed instances are briefly demonstrated in Table 1.

Tab. 1: Contradictory or ambiguous reports in Q 39:64; Q 18:95; Q 4:36

	– <i>Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif</i>	– al-Muqni‘	– al-Sab‘a
Q 4:36	– Kufa <i>ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ</i> (S1, S2) – Kufa <i>ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ</i> (S10)	– Some Kufan <i>muṣḥafs</i> <i>ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ</i> (D1)	
Q 18:95	– Syria and Ḥijāz <i>مَكَّنِي</i> against Iraq <i>مَكَّنِي</i> ⁷⁹ (S8)	– Mecca <i>مَكَّنِي</i> against the others <i>مَكَّنِي</i> (D1)	– <i>مَكَّنِي</i> is only Ibn Kathīr’s reading and it was like- wise in the <i>muṣḥafs</i> of Mecca (400)
Q 39:64	– Syria and Ḥijāz <i>تَأْمُرُونِي</i> and Iraq as well <i>تَأْمُرُونِي</i> (S8)	– Syria <i>تَأْمُرُونِي</i> against the others <i>تَأْمُرُونِي</i> (D1)	– Disputed reading. There is no mention of the <i>muṣḥafs</i> (563).

The instances in Q 10:96 (*كَلِمَاتُ / كَلِمَتُ*), Q 17:93 (*قَالَ / قُلْ*), Q 13:42 (*الْكَافِرُ / الْكَافِرَاتُ*), Q 21:4 (*قَالَ / قُلْ*) and Q 23:112, 114 (*قَالَ / قُلْ*) are not considered here as variants since addition or omission of the medial *alif* is orthographical and widely attested in similar instances in *muṣḥafs*.

The list of textual variants of regional codices (*maṣāḥif al-amṣār*) are briefly demonstrated in Table 2.

⁷⁵ al-Sijistāni 1985, 59.

⁷⁶ al-Dāni 1978, 109.

⁷⁷ NÖLDEKE 2013, 398.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 397.

⁷⁹ In his edition of *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, based on two manuscripts of the Zāhiriyya and Chester Beatty Libraries, Muḥibb al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Subḥān Wā‘iz (Dār al-Baṣā‘ir al-Islāmiyya al-Ulā, 2002, 272) says that the form *مَكَّنِي*, representing the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq, is attested in the Chester Beatty manuscript.

Tab. 2: The list of textual variants of regional codices

		Iraq		Hijāz		Syria	Imām	Nöldeke et al. 's <i>The History of the Qur'ān</i>
		Kufa	Basra	Medina	Mecca			
1	Q 2:116	وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ	وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ	قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ / (S7, A2?) وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ	قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ / (S7, A2?) وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ	قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ		Damascus وَقَالُوا the rest
2	Q 2:132	وَوَصَّى	وَوَصَّى	وَأَوْصَى	وَأَوْصَى (S7)	وَأَوْصَى	وَوَصَّى (al-Sijistānī) وَأَوْصَى (al-Dānī) وَأَوْصَى (Nöldeke)	Medina and Damascus وَأَوْصَى The rest وَوَصَّى
3	Q 3:133	وَسَارِعُوا	وَسَارِعُوا	سَارِعُوا	سَارِعُوا (S7)	سَارِعُوا	وَسَارِعُوا (al-Sijistānī) سَارِعُوا (Nöldeke)	Medina and Damascus سَارِعُوا The rest وَسَارِعُوا (Nöldeke)
4	Q 3:184	الرُّبْرِ	الرُّبْرِ	بِالرُّبْرِ / (S7, A2?) الرُّبْرِ	بِالرُّبْرِ (S7, A2?) الرُّبْرِ / الرُّبْرِ	بِالرُّبْرِ		Damascus بِالرُّبْرِ The rest الرُّبْرِ
5	Q 4:66	قَلِيلٌ	قَلِيلٌ			قَلِيلاً		Damascus قَلِيلاً The rest قَلِيلٌ
6	Q 4:171		رُسُلِهِ (S9)		رُسُولِهِ (D8, S9)			
7	Q 5:53	وَيَقُولُ	وَيَقُولُ	يَقُولُ	يَقُولُ (D1, S7, Ibn Mujāhid, 245)	يَقُولُ	وَيَقُولُ (al-Sijistānī)	Damascus, Medina and Mecca يَقُولُ The rest وَيَقُولُ

Tab. 2 (continued)

		Iraq		Hijāz		Syria	Imām	Nöldeke et al. 's <i>The History of the Qur'ān</i>
		Kufa	Basra	Medina	Mecca			
8	Q 5:54	يَرْتَدُّ	يَرْتَدُّ	يَرْتَدُّ	يَرْتَدُّ (S7)	يَرْتَدُّ	يَرْتَدُّ (al-Sijistāni) (al-Dāni) يَرْتَدُّ (Nöldeke)	Medina and Damascus يَرْتَدُّ The rest
9	Q 6:32	لُدَارُ				لُدَارُ		Damascus لُدَارُ The rest
10	Q 6:63	أُنْجَانَا The rest أُنْجِينَنَا	أُنْجِينَنَا	أُنْجِينَنَا				Kufa أُنْجِينَا (أُنْجَانَا) The rest أُنْجِينَنَا
11	Q 6:137	شُرَكَائِهِمْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ	شُرَكَائِهِمْ	شُرَكَائِهِمْ / (S7, A2?) شُرَكَائِهِمْ	شُرَكَائِهِمْ / (S7, A2?) شُرَكَائِهِمْ	شُرَكَائِهِمْ		Damascus شُرَكَائِهِمْ The rest شُرَكَائِهِمْ
12	Q 7:3	تَنْذَرُونَ	تَنْذَرُونَ	يَتَذَكَّرُونَ / (S7, A2?) تَذَكَّرُونَ	يَتَذَكَّرُونَ / (S7, A2?) تَذَكَّرُونَ	يَتَذَكَّرُونَ		Damascus تَنْذَرُونَ The rest تَذَكَّرُونَ
13	Q 7:43	وَمَا كُنَّا	وَمَا كُنَّا	مَا كُنَّا (S7, A2?) / وَمَا كُنَّا	مَا كُنَّا (S7, A2?) / وَمَا كُنَّا	مَا كُنَّا		Damascus مَا كُنَّا The rest وَمَا كُنَّا
14	Q 7:75	قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا	قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا	وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا / (S7, A2?) قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا	وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا / (S7, A2?) قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا	وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا		Damascus وَقَالَ The rest قَالَ

Tab. 2 (continued)

		Iraq		Ḥijāz		Syria	Imām	Nöldeke et al. 's <i>The History of the Qur'ān</i>
		Kufa	Basra	Medina	Mecca			
15	Q 7:90					قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا (without <i>wāw</i>) (A2) The rest وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا		
16	Q 7:141	أَنْجِنَاكُمْ	أَنْجِنَاكُمْ	أَنْجَاكُمْ / (S7,A2?) أَنْجِنَاكُمْ	أَنْجَاكُمْ / (S7, A2?) أَنْجِنَاكُمْ	أَنْجَاكُمْ		Damascus (أَنْجَاكُمْ) انجيكم The rest (أَنْجِنَاكُمْ) انجينكم
17	Q 7:195	كَيُؤْنِ	كَيُؤْنِ	/ (S7) كَيُؤْنِ كَيُؤْنِ	/ (S7) كَيُؤْنِ كَيُؤْنِ	كَيُؤْنِ		
18	Q 8:67	لِنَبِيٍّ	لِنَبِيٍّ			لِلنَّبِيِّ		
19	Q 9:100		تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا (S9)		تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا (S9,D1,D3)	تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا (D8)		Mecca The rest تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا
20	Q 9:107	وَالَّذِينَ	وَالَّذِينَ	الَّذِينَ	/ (S7) الَّذِينَ وَالَّذِينَ (Ibn Mujāhid, 318)	الَّذِينَ	وَالَّذِينَ (al-Sijistāni)	Medina and Damascus الَّذِينَ وَالَّذِينَ
21	Q 10:22 ⁸⁰	يُسَيِّرُكُمْ	يُسَيِّرُكُمْ			يُنشِرُكُمْ The rest يُسَيِّرُكُمْ		Damascus يُنشِرُكُمْ The rest يُسَيِّرُكُمْ

⁸⁰ This variant is also considered in some reports as the reformist measures adopted by Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf.

Tab. 2 (continued)

		Iraq		Hijāz		Syria	Imām	Nöldeke et al. 's <i>The History of the Qurān</i>
		Kufa	Basra	Medina	Mecca			
22	Q 12:50			الثَّوْنِ The rest (D7)				
23	Q 18:36	مِنْهَا	مِنْهَا	مِنْهُمَا	مِنْهُمَا (S7, Ibn Mujāhid, 390)	مِنْهُمَا	مِنْهَا (al-Sijistānī)	Medina, Mecca & Damascus مِنْهَا مِنْهُمَا the rest
24	Q 18:77					لَتَلَّخَذُنَّ The rest (لَا تَلَّخَذُنَّ) (D8, D9)		
25	Q 21:30				أَلَمْ يَرَ The rest (D1) أَوَلَمْ يَرَ			Mecca أَلَمْ يَرَ The rest
26	Q 23:87, 89 ⁸¹	سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ	سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ	سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ	سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ (S8)	سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ	سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ (al-Dānī, al-Sijistānī)	الله The rest الله
27	Q 25:25				نُنزَّلُ The rest (D1) نُزِّلُ			Mecca نُنزَّلُ The rest نُزِّلُ

⁸¹ This variant is also deemed in some reports the reformist measures adopted by Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf or Naṣr ibn 'Āṣim al-Laythī.

Tab. 2 (continued)

		Iraq		Hijāz		Syria	Imām	Nöldeke et al. 's <i>The History of the Qur'ān</i>
		Kufa	Basra	Medina	Mecca			
28	Q 26:217	وَتَوَكَّلْ	وَتَوَكَّلْ	فَتَوَكَّلْ	فَتَوَكَّلْ (S8)	فَتَوَكَّلْ	وَتَوَكَّلْ (al-Sijjānī)	فَتَوَكَّلْ Medina and Damascus وَتَوَكَّلْ The rest
29	Q 27:21				لِيَأْتِيَنَّيَ لِيَأْتِيَنَّيَ The rest (D1)			لِيَأْتِيَنَّيَ Mecca لِيَأْتِيَنَّيَ The rest
30	Q 27:67					إِنَّا The rest انا (أَنَا/أَعِنَّا) (A2, D4)		
31	Q 28:37				قَالَ مُوسَى The rest وَقَالَ مُوسَى (D1)			قال Mecca و قال The rest
32	Q 35:33	لَوْلُوا	لَوْلُوا	لَوْلُوا				
33	Q 36:35	عَمِلْتُمْ	عَمِلْتُمْ	عَمِلْتُمْ				عَمِلْتُمْ Kufa عَمِلْتُمْ The rest
34	Q 40:21	أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ	أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ	أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ / (S8,A2?) مِنْهُمْ	أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ / (S8,A2?) أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ	أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ		أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ Damascus أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ The rest

Tab. 2 (continued)

		Iraq		Hijāz		Syria	Imām	Nöldeke et al. 's <i>The History of the Qurān</i>
		Kufa	Basra	Medina	Mecca			
35	Q 40:26	أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ	أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ	وَأَنْ يُظْهِرَ	وَأَنْ يُظْهِرَ (S8)	وَأَنْ يُظْهِرَ	أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ (al-Sijistānī)	Kufa وَأَنْ يُظْهِرَ The rest
36	Q 42:30	فِيمَا	فِيمَا	بِمَا	بِمَا (S8)	بِمَا	فِيمَا (al-Sijistānī)	Medina and Damascus فِيمَا The rest
37	Q 43:68	عِبَادِ	عِبَادِ	عِبَادِي	عِبَادِي (S8)	عِبَادِي		
38	Q 43:71	تَسْتَهِي	تَسْتَهِي	تَسْتَهِيهِ	تَسْتَهِيهِ (S8)	تَسْتَهِيهِ	تَسْتَهِي (al-Sijistānī) تَسْتَهِيهِ (al-Dānī) تَسْتَهِيهِ (Nöldeke)	Medina and Damascus تَسْتَهِيهِ تَسْتَهِي The rest
39	Q 46:15	إِحْسَانًا	حُسْنًا	حُسْنًا				Kufa إِحْسَانًا The rest حُسْنًا
40	Q 47:18	تَأْتِيهِمْ	تَأْتِيهِمْ	تَأْتِيهِمْ	تَأْتِيهِمْ			Disputed
41	Q 55:12	ذُو الْعَصْفِ	ذُو الْعَصْفِ	ذَا الْعَصْفِ / (S8,A2?) ذُو الْعَصْفِ	ذَا الْعَصْفِ / (S8,A2?) ذُو الْعَصْفِ	ذَا الْعَصْفِ	ذَا الْعَصْفِ (al-Dānī)	Damascus ذَا The rest ذُو

Tab. 2 (continued)

		Iraq		Hijāz		Syria	Imām	Nöldeke et al. 's <i>The History of the Qur'ān</i>
		Kufa	Basra	Medina	Mecca			
42	Q 55:78	ذِي الْجَلَالِ	ذِي الْجَلَالِ	ذُو الْجَلَالِ / (S8,A2?) ذِي الْجَلَالِ	ذُو الْجَلَالِ / (S8,A2?) الْجَلَالِ	ذُو الْجَلَالِ		ذُو The rest ذِي
43	Q 57:10	كُلًّا	كُلًّا	كُلُّ (S8) / كُلًّا	كُلُّ (S8) / كُلًّا	كُلُّ		كُلُّ The rest كُلًّا
44	Q 57:24	اللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ	اللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ	اللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ	اللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ (S8) اللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ (Ibn Mujāhid, 627)	اللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ	اللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ (al-Sijistānī)	اللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ Medina and Damascus The rest اللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ
45	Q 74:33					إِذَا أَدْبَرَ The rest إِذْ أَدْبَرَ (D8)		
46	Q 76:16	قَوَارِيرًا	قَوَارِيرًا ⁸²	قَوَارِيرًا	قَوَارِيرًا ⁸³			
47	Q 91:15	وَلَا يَخَافُ	وَلَا يَخَافُ	فَلَا يَخَافُ	فَلَا يَخَافُ / (S8) وَلَا يَخَافُ (Ibn Mujāhid, 689)	فَلَا يَخَافُ	وَلَا يَخَافُ (al-Sijistānī)	فَلَا Medina and Damascus The rest وَلَا

⁸² The second one without *alif*. But al-Dānī, elsewhere points out that in the old *muṣḥafs* of Basra the second one was also with *alif*. (al-Dānī, 1978, 46)

⁸³ loc. cit.

Facts Reflected in Early Qur'anic Manuscripts

The new list is to be compared with some of the early surviving *muṣḥafs* containing considerable parts of the text of the Qur'ān in order to see the extent to which the list may contribute to our pursuit of the earliest Qur'ān manuscripts.

To this end, all the variants need to be individually studied in minute detail. Later corrections and various writing styles must also be considered. In investigating the variants, we need to examine the correspondences of the variants in question to the *muṣḥafs* of a particular region, and in cases where we do not precisely know how was that variant written in the *muṣḥafs* of a certain region, for example, as to the twelve instances which may not be identified in considering the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz, we may safely say that a given variant corresponds to the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and the manuscript may not be of Iraqi provenance or vice versa.

Let us begin with the *muṣḥaf* Medina 1a of the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, one of the cases used in NÖLDEKE et al.'s *The History of the Quran* as indicative of the inadequacy of the lists of variants in *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* for determining the origin of the Qur'ān manuscripts. According to the authors, the verses Q 2:116; Q 3:133;⁸⁴ Q 10:22; Q 40:21; Q 55:12, 78; and Q 57:10 are all based on the text of the *muṣḥaf* of Syria. The *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Medina share the variants in the verses Q 3:133; Q 5:53–54; Q 9:107; Q 18:36; Q 26:217; Q 42:30; Q 43:71; Q 57:24; and Q 91:15. Once in Q 18:95 the codex has a Meccan peculiarity. The variant in Q 6:63 may be peculiar to Kufa. In contrast, six variants of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria in Q 4:66; Q 6:32, 137; Q 39:64; and Q 7:75, 141 are not attested in this manuscript. The verse Q 6:137 has *شُرَكَاهُمْ* rather than *شُرَكَائِهِمْ* or *شُرَكَائِهِمْ*. Accordingly, the *Muṣḥaf Medina 1* may not be attributed to any particular region.⁸⁵

*“It can safely be said that the codex belongs to the inner circle formed by the groups of Medina, Damascus, and Mecca, but on the basis of the lists it is not possible to be more specific.”*⁸⁶

We may proceed to pursue this codex and examine the expected variants of regional *muṣḥafs* based on the material contained in the book. The items in Q 2:116; Q 40:21; Q 55:12, 78; and Q 57:10 that the author considers as characteristics of Syrian *muṣḥafs* as well as Q 6:137; Q 7:75; and Q 7:141 are among the items as to which we lack precise information about the qualities of the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz. Q 10:22 is one of those cases that may be related to subsequent reformist measures.

⁸⁴ The instance Q 3:133 is mistakenly mentioned here because it is mentioned later as a variant shared by Syrians and Medinans.

⁸⁵ NÖLDEKE 2013, 601, 602.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 602.

As the authors have stated, the variants in the verses Q 3:133; Q 5:53–54; Q 9:107; Q 18:36; Q 26:217; Q 42:30; Q 43:71; Q 57:24; and Q 91:15 are shared by Syrian and Medinan *muṣḥafs* and differ from those of Iraq. Accordingly, it can be safely said that the text of the manuscript is not of Iraqi provenance. The authors are not certain as to the peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa attested in Q 6:63, but they hesitatingly say that it may be Kufan. Q 18:95; and Q 39:64 are instances which we cannot be certain of its being a Meccan or Syrian peculiarity because of contradictory or ambiguous reports.⁸⁷ The lack of the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria in Q 4:66; and Q 6:32 indicates that this manuscript cannot be Syrian. The only possibility is that it may be of Hijāzi provenance.

A manuscript entitled Saray Medina 1a can be accessed online on the Corpus Coranicum's website;⁸⁸ however, it is not clear if this is the same manuscript that is mentioned in the book. The folios include Q 2:116; Q 3:133; and Q 5:53–54 do not exist on the website. Furthermore, some of the features mentioned for the manuscript Saray Medina 1a in the book are different from what can be seen in the manuscript Saray Medina 1a of the Corpus Coranicum website. According to the book, the variants in Q 10:22; Q 40:21; and Q 55:12, 78 should be in accordance with Syria, while these items on the website are: ذُو الْعَصْفِ؛ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ؛ يُسَيِّرُكُمْ and ذِي الْجَلَالِ، respectively. None of them concur with the *muṣḥafs* of Syria. Case Q 6:63, which the book doubtfully calls Kufi, can be clearly seen as اُنْحَبِئْنَا (Fig. 1), which indicates that the *muṣḥaf* is not Kufan; rather, it represents the peculiarities attested in Medinan or Basran *muṣḥafs*.

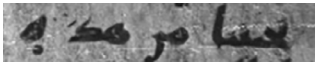


Fig. 1: اُنْحَبِئْنَا in Q 6:63 in Saray Medina 1a.

None of the cases in this manuscript are against its Hijāzi origin. While there are instances which prove that the manuscript does not have the characteristics of Syria, Kufa, or Basra, الَّذِينَ in Q 9:107; مِنْهُمَا in Q 18:36; فَتَوَكَّلْ in Q 26:217; وَ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ in Q 40:26; بِمَا in Q 42:30; عِبَادِي in Q 43:68; نَسْتَوِيهِ in Q 43:71; اللَّهُ الْعَنِيُّ in Q 57:24; and فَلَا يُخَافُ in Q 91:15 indicate that this codex does not correspond to the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq. اُنْحَبِئْنَا in Q 6:63; عَمَلْتُهُ in Q 36:35; and حُسْنًا in Q 46:15 reveal that the manuscript lacks the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa. There is تَأْتِيهِمْ in Q 47:18 that corresponds to the *muṣḥafs* of Medina and Basra but it is dissimilar to those of Mecca and Kufa.

⁸⁷ See Table 1.

⁸⁸ <https://corpuscoranicum.de/handschriften/index/sure/006/vers/060/handschrift/56>

However, *فَوَارِيرًا* in Q 76:16; *لَوْلُوا* in Q 35:33; and *سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ* in the verses Q 23:87, 89 show that the manuscript also lacks the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Basra. The instances as to which we have no precise information nor do we know much about the qualities of the *muṣḥafs* of Hijāz are transcribed as: *شُرَكَاهُمْ* in Q 6:137; *وَمَا كُنَّا* in Q 7:43; *يَتَذَكَّرُونَ / يَتَذَكَّرُونَ* in Q 7:3;⁸⁹ *قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا* in Q 7:75; *أَنْحِينَاكُمْ* in Q 7:141; *يَكِيدُونَ* in Q 7:195; *أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ* in Q 40:21; *دَوَّالْعَصْفِ* in Q 55:12; *ذِي الْجَلَالِ* in Q 55:78; and *كُلُّ* in Q 57:10.

The form *شُرَكَاهُمْ* in Q 6:137 corresponds neither to the *muṣḥafs* of Syria (*شُرَكَائِهِمْ*) nor to those of Iraq (*شُرَكَائِهِمْ*) (Fig. 2).

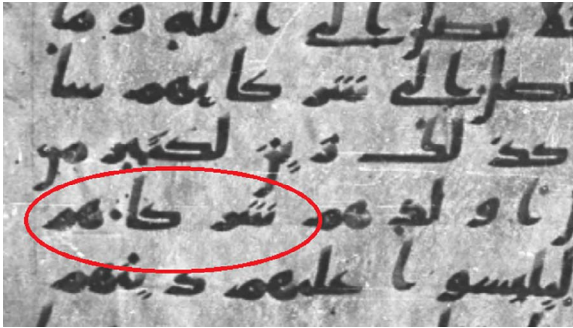


Fig. 2: The form *شُرَكَاهُمْ* in Q 6:137 in Saray Medina 1a.

لَتَّخَذْتِ in Q 10:22;⁹⁰ *يُسَيِّرُكُمْ* in Q 8:67; *لِنَبِيٍّ* with one *lām* in Q 7:90; *وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا* in Q 18:77; *أَيْنَا* in Q 27:67; and; *إِذْ أُتْبِرَ* in Q 74:33 indicate that this *muṣḥaf* lacks the variant particular to the *muṣḥafs* of Syria.

تَأْتِيهِمْ in Q 47:18 indicate the *muṣḥaf* is not Meccan.

The verse Q 9:100 has *تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا* and the *مِنْ* has been whitened and its vacancy is visible (Fig. 3) as to which two possibilities may be suggested:

⁸⁹ Traces of correction can be seen in Q 7: 3 and it is not clear what the original state of the version was.

⁹⁰ Traces of correction can be seen here.

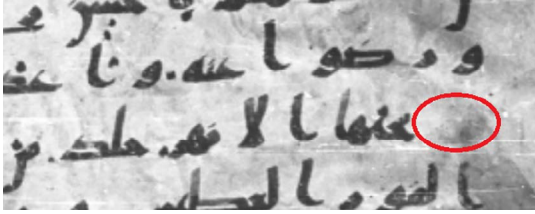


Fig. 3: The *من* has been faded away in Q 9:100 in Saray Medina 1a

First, the copyist had transcribed *مَنْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا* but he later corrected his mistake by obliterating the *من*. This mistake may have occurred due to the frequent repetition of the phrase *مَنْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا* in the Qur'ān. As the scribe has done elsewhere in a case that has nothing to do with regional variants in Q 10:2, first mistakenly wrote *وقال* and then the *wāw* was erased (Fig. 4).

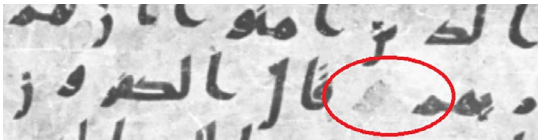


Fig. 4: The *و* has been deleted in 10:2 in Saray Medina 1a

Second, the manuscript originally had *مَنْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا* but a corrector might have erased the *من*. The former and the latter suggestions are indicative of a Medinan and a Meccan provenance, respectively. Since the other Meccan characteristics are not attested in this manuscript, it seems that the first possibility is more feasible. Accordingly, in spite of the fact that Saray Medina 1a has multiple different hands, the Hijāzi, or more specifically, Medinan provenance of this manuscript lies within the bounds of possibility. Other codices that are similarly considered to belong to the Hijāzi, or more specifically Medinan provenance, will probably show similar characteristics.

We may proceed with perusing the codex attributed to 'Uthmān Bin 'Affān in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum⁹¹ and examining the expected variants of regional *muṣḥafs*. All variants of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* are to be found in this codex.

⁹¹ Facsimile edition of this manuscript has been prepared by Dr. Tayyar ALTİKULAÇ: ALTİKULAÇ, Tayyar (2007), *Al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharif: Attributed to 'Uthmān Bin 'Affān* (The Copy at the Topkapı Palace Museum), Organization of the Islamic Conference Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture: Istanbul.

The twelve instances as to that we lack precise information about the qualities of the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz are transcribed as: وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ in Q 2:116; الرُّبْرِ in Q 3:184; أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ in Q 6:137; نُنَكِّرُونَ in Q 7:3; وَمَا كُنَّا in Q 7:43; قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا in Q 7:75; كِيدُونَ in Q 7:141; أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ in Q 40:21; دُوَالْعَصْفِ in Q 55:12; فِي الْجَلَالِ in Q 55:78; and كَلُّ in Q 57:10. Ten of these twelve items are attested in Saray Medina 1a and they are written in exactly the same way. It should be noted that the form شُرَكَاهُمْ in Q 6:137, exactly like Saray Medina 1a, corresponds neither to the *muṣḥaf* of Syria (شُرَكَائِهِمْ) nor to that of Iraq (شُرَكَائِهِمْ). قَلِيلٌ without final *alif* in the verse Q 4:66; لَدَارُ with two *lām* in Q 6:32; وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا in Q 7:90; لِنَبِيِّ with one *lām* in Q 8:67; لَتَّخَذَتْ in Q 18:77; وَأَعْنَا in Q 27:67; and إِذْ أَدْبَرَ in Q 74:33 indicate that this *muṣḥaf* lacks the variant particular to the *muṣḥafs* of Syria. In Q 10:22, the form يَنْشُرُكُمْ is seemingly transcribed which is said to be a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria or it might have been originally يَنْشُرُكُمْ in some *muṣḥafs* (possibly other than those of Iraq) and it was later changed to يُسَيِّرُكُمْ by Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf. Accordingly, this peculiarity may not be attributed with certitude to Syria.⁹² وَأَوْصَى in Q 2:132; سَارِعُوا in Q 3:133; يَقُولُ in Q 5:53; يَرْتَدِدُ with two *dāls* in Q 5:54; الَّذِينَ in Q 9:107; فِي مَنَّهُمَا in Q 18:36; فَتَوَكَّلْ in Q 26:217; وَأَنْ يُظْهِرَ in Q 40:26; بِمَا in Q 42:30; عَبَادِي in Q 43:68; تَنْشِئْتَهُ فِي in Q 43:71; and الْغَنِيُّ in Q 57:24 indicate that this codex does not correspond to the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq. Later corrections can be seen in this codex. Attempts have been made to make it consistent with the Iraqi *muṣḥafs*. For example, Q 3:133 originally has no *wāw*, corresponding to the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Medina but a *wāw* has been added thereto by a later hand (Fig. 5).

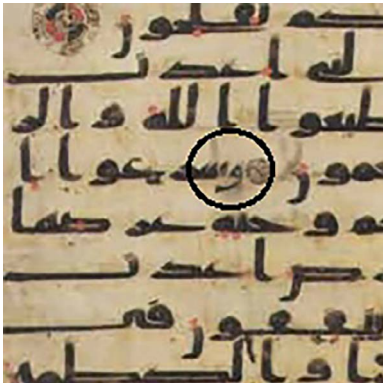


Fig. 5: The *wāw* in Q 3:133 has been added by a later hand in the codex attributed to ‘Uthmān in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum

⁹² This form is also attested in other manuscripts of Ḥijāzī provenance, e.g., MS No. 18 of Āstān-i Quds.

Verse Q 5:53 had first been copied in the style of the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz and Syria, but the *wāw* was added by a later hand (Fig. 6), thus changing it to a *muṣḥaf* of Iraq (وَيَقُولُ). So, the original manuscript is to be attributed to Ḥijāz or Syria.⁹³

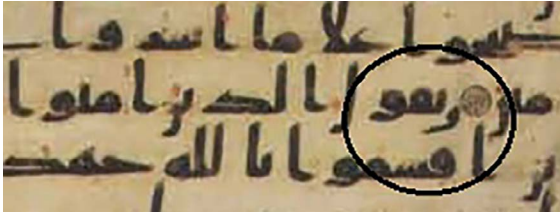


Fig. 6: The *wāw* in Q 5:53 has been added by a later hand.

Furthermore, *أَنْجَيْنَا* in Q 6:63; *عَمَلْتُهُ* in Q 36:35; and *حُسْنًا* in Q 46:15 indicate that the *muṣḥaf* is not Kufan, but it represents the peculiarities attested in Medinan or Basran *muṣḥafs*. However, *قَوَارِيرًا* in Q 76:16 and *لَوْلَا* in Q 35:33 demonstrate that the manuscript lacks the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Basra. The verses Q 23:87, 89 do not correspond to the *muṣḥafs* of Basra and later corrections were not made to them. Meccan peculiarities are not to be found in *تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا* in Q 9:100 and *أَوْ لَمْ يَرَ* in Q 21:30; *رُسُلُهُ* in Q 4:171; *لِيَأْتِيَنِي* in Q 27:21; *وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ* in Q 28:37; and *نُزِّلَ* in Q 25:25. There is *تَأْتِيَهُمْ* in Q 47:18 that corresponds to the *muṣḥafs* of Medina and Basra but it is dissimilar to those of Mecca and Kufa. It was mentioned above that the manuscript generally shows no peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq.

The observations and analyses above lead us to the conclusion that this *muṣḥaf* was originally of Medinan provenance. The only instance going against the Medinan provenance of the manuscript is *وَلَا يَخَافُ* in Q 91:15 that represents the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq or possibly those of Mecca (Fig. 7).⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the space between *ف* and *لَا* could have been erased and the *fā'* changed to *ل*, thus changing it to a *muṣḥaf* of Iraq. Therefore, this *muṣḥaf* of the Qur'ān, based on our list, is Medinan, probably except for one instance in Q 91:15.

⁹³ The later addition of *wāw* preceding *يَقُولُ* is not recorded by ALTİKULAÇ in the table of the variants of the *muṣḥafs*.

⁹⁴ Considering that, according to Ibn Mujāhid (689), the Meccan and Iraqi *muṣḥafs* read *وَلَا يَخَافُ*.



Fig. 7: وَلَا يَخَافُ in Q 91:15

Another codex examined presently is manuscript No. 18 and another part No. 4116 in Mashhad, Iran, which is one of the oldest Qur'ān manuscripts in the Library of the Āstān-i Quds-i Raḡawī whose transcription is attributed to 'Alī ibn abi Ṭālib. Numerous variants of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* are found in it. KARIMI-NIA showed that the Codex Mashhad generally corresponds to Medinan *muṣḥafs*.⁹⁵

Just as in the previous two manuscripts, there are many subsequent corrections in this manuscript to convert it into Iraḡi. For instance, in the verse Q 3:133, سَارِعُوا lacks the introductory *wāw* that corresponds to the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Ḥijāz. However, the *wāw* was added by a later hand to make it correspond to the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8: The *wāw* in Q 3:133 has been added by a later hand in manuscript No. 18 of Āstān-i Quds-i Raḡawī.

⁹⁵ See Morteza KARIMI-NIA, "A New Document in the Early History of the Qur'ān, Codex Mashhad, an 'Uthmānic Text of the Qur'ān in Ibn Mas'ūd's Arrangement of Sūras", *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts*, Volume 10 (2019): Issue 3 (Nov 2019): 292–326.

In the verse Q 5:53, **يَقُولُ** is not preceded by the *wāw* that corresponds to the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Ḥijāz, even though the *wāw* was added by a later hand (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9: The *wāw* in Q 5:53 has been added by a later hand in manuscript No. 18 of Āstān-i Quds-i Raḍawī.

The verse Q 9:107 has **الَّذِينَ** without *wāw* and corresponds to the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Ḥijāz. The *wāw* was added by a later hand (Fig. 10).

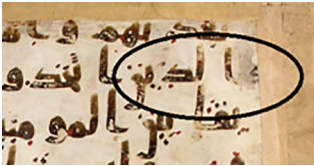


Fig. 10: The *wāw* in Q 9:107 has been added by a later hand in manuscript No. 18 of Āstān-i Quds-i Raḍawī.

The instances as to which we have no precise information about the qualities of the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz are transcribed as: **أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ** in Q 40:21; **وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ** in Q 2:116; **الرُّبْرِ** in Q 3:184; **تَذَكَّرُونَ** in Q 7:3; **وَمَا كُنَّا** in Q 7:43; **اسْتَكْبَرُوا** in Q 7:75; **أَنْجِبْنَاكُمْ** in Q 7:141; and **كَيْدُونَ** in Q 7:195. They correspond exactly to the Saray Medina 1a and the codex attributed to ‘Uthmān Bin ‘Affān in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum. The only difference with the two previous manuscripts is in Q 57:10 (**كُلًّا**).

Just like Saray Medina 1a, the verse Q 9:100 has **تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا** and the word **مِنْ** has been obliterated (Fig. 11). Here again two possibilities may be suggested. However, this is not going against the Ḥijāzi provenance of the manuscript; it can only be effective in determining whether the version is Meccan or Medinan. Considering that none of the Meccan peculiarities are attested here, this manuscript is probably of Medinan provenance.



Fig. 11: The مِنْ in Q 9:100 has been quite faded away.

We saw that these three manuscripts, which – according to Table 2 – probably belong to Medina, show very similar characteristics. Interestingly enough, even at Q 18:95, the form مَكْنِي is attested in all three.

The qualities of the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq and Syria are much more accurate in the reports compared to the *muṣḥafs* of the Ḥijāz. Therefore, it should be much easier to identify the Iraqi and Syrian *muṣḥafs*. For example, all the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq are well represented in the codex attributed to ‘Uthmān Bin ‘Affān in the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul⁹⁶ and none of the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Medina are attested in this *muṣḥaf*.⁹⁷

قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ in Q 2:116; وَوَصَّى in Q 2:132; وَسَارُعُوا in Q 3:133; الرَّبُّ in Q 3:184; قَلِيلٌ in Q 4:66; شُرَكَائِهِمْ in Q 4:137; رُسُلِهِ in Q 4:171; وَيَقُولُ in Q 5:53; يَرْئِدُ in Q 5:54; لِلدَّارِ in Q 6:32; سُرَّكَاؤُهُمْ in Q 6:137; نَتَكَّرُونَ in Q 7:3; وَمَا كُنَّا in Q 7:43; قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا in Q 7:75; كِيدُونَ in Q 7:195; لِنَبِيِّ in Q 8:67; تَجْرِي تَحْتَهَا in Q 9:100; وَالَّذِينَ in Q 9:107; يُسَبِّرُكُمْ in Q 10:22; انْتُونِي in Q 12:50; مِنْهَا in Q 18:36; لَتَأْتِيََنَّ in Q 18:77; أَوْ لَمْ يَرَ in Q 21:30; نَزَلَ in Q 25:25; وَتَوَكَّلْ in Q 26:217; لِيَأْتِيََنَّ in Q 27:21; أَنِنَّا in Q 27:67; وَقَالَ مُوسَى in Q 28:37; أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ in Q 40:21; أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ in Q 40:26; دُو الْعَصْفِ in Q 55:12; فِيْمَا in Q 42:30; عِبَادِ in Q 43:68; تَنْتَسِيهِ in Q 43:71; تَأْتِيَهُمْ in Q 47:18; ذُو الْعَصْفِ in Q 55:12; وَلَا يَخَافُ in Q 91:15 demonstrate that no Meccan, Medinan, or Syrian peculiarity is represented in this manuscript.

It may be safely argued that the manuscript is of Iraqi provenance, but none of the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa are attested in Q 6:63; Q 36:35; Q 46:15; and Q 47:18, and the said instances appear as حُسْنًا; عَمَلُهُ; أَنْحَبْتَنَا thus corresponding to the *muṣḥafs* of Basra. Further Basran peculiarities are represented in this manuscript: سَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ with *alif* in Q 23:87, 89; لَوْلُو without *alif* in Q 35:33; and قَوَارِيرَ without *alif* in Q 76:16; so it is certainly of Basran provenance.

⁹⁶ Facsimile edition of this manuscript has been prepared by Dr. Tayyar ALTİKULAÇ: ALTİKULAÇ, Tayyar (2007), *Hiz. Osman'a Nisbet Edilen Mushaf-ı Şerif* (Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi Nüshası), Volumes I and II, İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi (İSAM): İstanbul (Turkey).

⁹⁷ This manuscript represents all the variants of maṣāḥif al-amṣār, except for the instance in Q 7:141, whose folio was later replaced.

Conclusion

Following the efforts made to determine the origin of the early Qur'ān manuscripts, we have shown that by making the list of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* variants more accurate (i.e., by combining reports from all sources, discarding incomprehensible, contradictory, and isolated reports), the variants of each of these early Qur'ānic codices would tally more with the reports preserved for the characteristics of one of the *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* in literary sources. Based on a new list of regional variants, it was suggested that the texts of the surviving manuscripts are clearly indicative of a particular region; and this therefore provides us with a powerful tool for determining the provenance of early Qur'ān manuscripts. In addition, it proves the reliability of the reports recorded in literary sources.

According to the above-depicted table of *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* variants, 47 such variants are attested in surviving reports; nevertheless, the precise qualities of all of the *maṣāḥif al-amṣār* are not identified in every said variant. The *muṣḥafs* of Iraq (Kufa and Basra) are more elaborately described and their variants are readily identified. The qualities of the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq are evident in almost every variant. The differences between Kufan and Basran *muṣḥafs* are also reported. The *muṣḥafs* of Iraq in general (Kufa and Basra) have thirteen peculiarities compared to other *muṣḥafs* (in: Q 2:132; Q 3:133; Q 5:53, 54; Q 9:107; Q 18:36; Q 26:217; Q 40:26; Q 42:30; Q 43:68; Q 43:71; Q 57:24; and Q 91:15). The *muṣḥafs* of Kufa (in: Q 6:63; Q 36:35; Q 46:15; and Q 47:18⁹⁸) and Basra (in: Q 35:33; Q 76:16; and Q 23:87, 89) each have 4 or 3 more peculiarities in addition to thirteen peculiarities.

The qualities of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria in the treatment of disputed instances, except for four instances that we are not certain about, are evident because these four instances are only based on a single account (Q 27:67; Q 7:90; Q 18:77 and Q 74:33). But the same is not found in the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz, that is, those of Meccan and Medinan provenance. We have little information about the *muṣḥafs* of Mecca. The name of Mecca is less used compared to Iraq, Syria, and Medina, and in many cases no information is available. However, rather than Medina, mention is made of Ḥijāz in some reports, and if the validity of using this term is ascertained we can consider Ḥijāz as Mecca and Medina. There are also variants that are listed based on a single account as the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Mecca and Medina (Q 12:50 for Medina and Q 21:30; Q 25:25; Q 27:21; and Q 28:37 for Mecca).

This new list, in turn, can be made even more accurate and plausible by studying more codices and comparing them with each other. For example, the qual-

⁹⁸ In Q 47:18 the *muṣḥafs* of Kufa and Mecca (تَأْتِيهِمْ) are in contrast to those of Medina and Basra (تَأْتِيَهُمْ).

ities of the *muṣḥafs* of Ḥijāz as to the twelve instances that we lack precise information about can be determined in this way, thus we will get a clearer picture of the differences between the regional codices. If it is established that each of these items are shared between the Iraqi and Ḥijāzi *muṣḥafs*, a peculiarity will be added to the peculiarities of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria that we mentioned earlier (Q 4:66; Q 6:32; Q 8:67; Q 10:22; Q 27:67; Q 7:90; Q 18:77; and Q 74:33),⁹⁹ and if it turns out that any of these items is shared between Syria and Ḥijāz, a peculiarity will be added to those of the Iraqi *muṣḥafs*.

If more codices are studied, it may also be possible to determine how valid the single reports are. For instance, it can be seen that a Medinan peculiarity based on a single report narrated by al-Dānī الثَّوْنِ (without *yā'*) in Q 12:50 is not attested in any of the three Medinan manuscripts studied here. As another example, قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا without the preceding *wāw* in Q 7:90, which was considered only by Abū 'Ubayd as a peculiarity of the *muṣḥafs* of Syria, is not attested in Syrian *muṣḥafs* such as Arabe.328a or Or.2165. However, only by studying a large number of copies can one make a definite comment on these cases. In any event, one can see that the *muṣḥafs* of Syria and Iraq, with 36 differences, have the highest degree of disagreement among them (of course, this is so if we accept 4 Syrian peculiarities as being based on a single report, otherwise it would come down to 32).

Studying the surviving early Qur'ān manuscripts may help depict the trend towards the Iraqi manuscripts and the peculiarities reported on the 'Uthmānic exemplar (*imām*) *muṣḥaf* wherein later additions were made to standardize earlier manuscripts that more closely resembled the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq. Therefore, one may assume that the *muṣḥafs* of Iraq were gradually established as the standard *muṣḥaf* used by copyists. This new list still awaits refutation and corroboration, and comparing it with other manuscripts may contribute to shedding further light on this issue.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank Mehdy Shaddel and Marijn van Putten for giving valuable input on an earlier version of this paper.

⁹⁹ Of course, it should be kept in mind that there are still four questionable instances because they are only based on a single account (Q 27:67; Q 7:90; Q 18:77; and Q 74:33).

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