

From Bāwīt to Marw: Documents from the Medieval Muslim World

Islamic History and Civilization

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From Bāwīṭ to Marw

Documents from the Medieval Muslim World

Edited by

Andreas Kaplony
Daniel Potthast
Cornelia Römer



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Preface

Most visitors to Vienna become enthusiastic about the beauty and splendor of the Habsburg palaces. In contrast, it is the basement of the Neue Hofburg that papyrologists rhapsodize about, for it is home to one of the world's largest collections of papyri and papers of the history of Egypt, from the fifteenth century BCE to the sixteenth century CE: 180,000 documents held by the Austrian National Library, mostly written in Hieratic/Demotic/Coptic, in Greek, and in Arabic. Most of these documents were unearthed in the Fayyūm and in Middle Egypt, and then acquired in Cairo and brought to Vienna by Theodor Graf (1840–1903), a Viennese rug-factory owner and dealer in Orientalia from the Arabic-Islamic period. Upon advice from Professor Josef von Karabacek (1845–1918), they were resold to a prominent member of the ruling dynasty, Archduke Rainer of Austria (1827–1913).

The Arabic part of the Sammlung Papyri Erzherzog Rainer (PER) today encompasses some 80,000 Arabic papyri and papers, i.e., about one third of all preserved worldwide. Through the kindness of Professor Cornelia Römer, host of the 2009 conference of the International Society for Arabic Papyrology (ISAP) in Vienna and then director of the Department of Papyri of the Austrian National Library, many conference participants spent some additional days in the collection's reading room, and this familiarity with the originals gave the 2009 conference a very distinctive flavor.

There was a second distinctive aspect to holding the 2009 conference in Vienna. For us, it meant returning to the birthplace of Arabic papyrology as an academic field, to the city where Adolf Grohmann (1887–1977) worked for over forty years: before and during World War I as a student and PhD candidate, and until the end of World War II as a professor of Arabic in Prague who traveled frequently to read documents in Vienna and Cairo.¹ To this day, many of the blotting papers protecting original papyri and papers in the national libraries of Austria and Egypt carry Grohmann's preliminary pencil readings. The opportunity to see Grohmann's annotations with our own eyes made us (not to mention our Egyptian colleagues) feel very much at home.

1 Lucian Reinfandt, "The Political Papyrologist: Adolf Grohmann (1887–1977)," in *Sources and Approaches Across Disciplines in Near Eastern Studies: Proceedings of the 24th Congress Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Leipzig 2008*, ed. Verena Klemm, Nuha al-Sha'ar et al., Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, vol. 215 (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 251–269.

Today we are experiencing a renaissance of Arabic papyrology. This has been demonstrated by the founding of ISAP at the Cairo conference (2002); by its subsequent conferences in Granada (2004), Alexandria (2006), Vienna (2009), Tunis (2012), and Munich (2014); and by the papyrology summer schools held in Vienna (2007) and Cairo and Alexandria (2010). How productive Arabic papyrology has become is evident in a quick glance at the ISAP Checklist and the Arabic Papyrology Bibliography.² This revival relies on the standards set by Werner Diem, Geoffrey Khan, Yūsuf Rāḡib, Gladys Frantz-Murphy, Dominique Sourdel, and Janine Sourdel-Thomine, all of whom have supported our initiative with friendly advice. Some were even able to come to Vienna in 2009, and their presence gave our meeting a third, very important note.

Finally, Cornelia Römer and her team overwhelmed us with their gracious hospitality. Careful preparation and charming accuracy made the conference a pleasure. Not to mention a number of surprises: we were allowed to admire, in the manuscript collection of the Austrian National Library, a number of Arabic codices; we spent a wonderful evening in the marvelous surroundings of the Egyptian embassy; and a member of the municipal council of the City of Vienna opened an elegant reception in the City Hall with an address in perfect Arabic. We are much indebted to our hosts and to the generous support provided by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research, and Economy, the Austrian Academy of the Sciences, the Gerda Henkel-Stiftung, the Österreich-Ägyptische Gesellschaft, and the City of Vienna.

The publication of the conference proceedings comes later than anticipated. Hinrich Biesterfeld, Sebastian Günther, and Wadād al-Qāḏī most kindly accepted this volume into the Series *Islamic History and Civilization*, but for the last three years, academic resettling absorbed most of my spare time. Only good advice from Wadād al-Qāḏī, and active support from Daniel Potthast unblocked the situation, and Eugenio Garosi helped with the index. Finally, Victoria Scott, Kathy van Vliet at Brill, and Johannes Rustenburg at TAT Zetwerk made (almost) all our wishes become reality. Thank you!

The following eight contributions span a wide field. Most deal mainly with Egypt up to the third/ninth century from an Arabic or a Coptic perspective, while some add literary sources or enlarge the geographical frame. This has been one of our main intents from the very beginning: to make Arabic papy-

2 The ISAP Checklist: www.naher-osten.lmu.de/isap/isap_checklist. The (Full) Arabic Papyrology Bibliography: www.naher-osten.lmu.de/apb.

rology a full member of the wider family of papyrology *and* to integrate it fully into Arabic and Islamic studies.³

Andreas Kaplony

Munich, December 5, 2014

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- 3 Some presentations at the 2009 conference have been published elsewhere: Geoffrey Khan, “The Medieval Arabic Documents from Qaṣr Ibrīm,” in *Qasr Ibrim between Egypt and Africa: Studies in Cultural Exchange (NINO Symposium, Leiden, 11–12 December 2009)*, ed. J. van der Vliet and J.L. Hagen (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 145–156; Patrick Sängler and Dieter Weber, “Der Lebensmittelhaushalt des Herrn Saralaneoazan/Šahr-Ālānyōzān: Neuedition von zwei Speiselisten und einem Geschäftsbrief auf dem sassanidischen Ägypten,” *Archiv für Papyrusforschung und verwandte Gebiete* 58 (2012): 81–96; Petra Sijpesteijn, “Une nouvelle lettre de Qurra b. Šarik: P.Sorb. inv. 2345,” *Annales Islamologiques* 45 (2011): 257–268; and Frank R. Trombley, “Fiscal Documents from the Muslim Conquest of Egypt: Military Supplies and Administrative Documents, ca. 639–644,” *Revue des études byzantines* 71 (2013): 5–38.

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