

FOUR ESSAYS ON
ART AND LITERATURE
IN ISLAM

THE L.A.MAYER MEMORIAL STUDIES
IN ISLAMIC ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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F. ROSENTHAL

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LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1971

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BY

F. ROSENTHAL

With 22 Plates



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FOREWORD

My sincere thanks are due to the many libraries which gave me access to their books and manuscripts, to the museums which permitted the reproduction of pictures, and to the individuals who provided much appreciated help. Among the latter, Richard Ettinghausen must be mentioned in the first place, not only because he was always ready to give excellent advice, but also because it was his suggestion that this little book be included in the new series dedicated to the memory of a great scholar. Further acknowledgments will be found in their proper places. My student, David King, assisted me in correcting proofs, a task made more difficult by the inconsistencies unavoidable in material put on paper at different times.

The second and third essays were originally published in *Ars Islamica* and *Ars Orientalis* (see below, pp. 48 and 62). Permission to reproduce them practically unchanged has been kindly granted.

It is hoped that the following pages will make it clear that Arabic literature can make a contribution to our knowledge of art and aesthetic feeling in Islam and that art and art objects, in turn, can contribute a good deal to the interpretation of Muslim literature. Not that this is a new idea or a particularly profound one. But it seems to me that it bears frequent re-stating as well as constant illustration by means of detailed investigations of the many minor and the few major aspects of it. There is no doubt in my mind that we shall thereby advance a few steps in groping our way toward an understanding of the complexities of mediaeval Muslim civilization and, perhaps, of civilization in general.

ON ART AND AESTHETICS IN GRAECO-ARABIC
WISDOM LITERATURE

Islam grew into a powerful civilization in a region that for many centuries had been dominated by Hellenistic ways of thought, spirituality, and artistic expression. In recent decades, a good deal of scholarly research and speculation has been invested into clarifying the facts and processes which helped Islam to assimilate the religious and intellectual heritage of the Hellenistic East and make it its own. Naturally, much work remains to be done. More material is certain to be discovered. Above all, more deeply probing analyses of causes and effects can be expected to be made in the future. In comparison to what is known by now in the realms of religion and science and scholarship, our insight into the extent and significance of the artistic heritage is rather limited. The artistic heritage met with much less sympathy in Islam, quite apart from the fact that it had already lost much ground under Christianity. Indeed, Islam, in keeping with the Near Eastern monotheistic tradition, was by and large hostile to it. This is a trite remark. Made without many qualifications, it may seem distinctly old-fashioned today. Many qualified scholars will object to it, considering it a half-truth at best. To be sure, this is precisely what it is, but it represents one half of the truth which must not be forgotten because of the other half. The artistic urge proved itself irrepressible and has found full and satisfactory expression in the ancient Near East as well as in mediaeval Islam. However, the currents working against it there were extremely strong. On occasion, we do encounter a Muslim attitude toward artistic remnants of pre-Islamic times which can be described as one of restrained admiration. In the main, the general attitude remained unresponsive and unfriendly. The result was neglect and destruction to a degree that barred the way toward any attitudinal change under the impact of the evidence still available. Not only as a religion but also as a social/economic organism, Islam became more and more remote from the artistic heritage of Hellenism. The latter aspect principally affected architecture, the former painting and sculpture and, to a lesser degree, music. Music, it may be said in passing, was in a much stronger position to

maintain itself in the eternal struggle of individual urges against societal demands.

The most authentic information about the survival and influence of pre-Islamic artistic forms and ideas in Muslim civilization is no doubt to be gained from a careful study of the preserved monuments. Literature can give us some, and, possibly, valuable, hints as to what was once known and then lost in later years. In particular, it can be expected to have preserved some information as to what Hellenistic ideas on the subject of art persisted and thus are to be reckoned with as being potentially effective in the Muslim environment. The Graeco-Arabic translation literature must be searched with this objective in mind. Some material will be found in the translations of complete texts. However, most of these texts remained restricted to a rather small group of scholars able to read and understand them. There is thus some doubt as to how widely effective they really were. The aesthetic theories of Aristotle had a definite impact. Again, how far that impact extended beyond the circle of the learned and still continued to retain its force remains a matter of speculation. On the other hand, there is a particular branch of the literary tradition connecting Islam with Hellenism which enjoyed general acceptance among Muslims and was read to the full extent of literacy. This was the so-called wisdom literature, represented at times by rather massive florilegia that contained the usually brief and pithy sayings attributed to the sages of the past and dealing with many aspects of human thought and behavior. A literary genre cultivated in the Near East from the earliest days of recorded history, it gained particular popularity in Islam through collections of sayings ascribed to Greek sages and often demonstrably going back to Greek sources. There were occasions, not very many, it is true, where the sages made remarks that in some way or other touched on aspects of art and aesthetics. These sayings may have been few in number, but they can be assumed to have insinuated themselves into the Muslim view of the world and to have taken hold there. This material deserves, I feel, at least a brief note such as is presented here. Its sole purpose is to collect some limited data which may prove useful once they are fitted into a larger context.

A question remains, and it is an important one. It is the extent to which non-Hellenistic material may have entered this literature and mingled with original Greek thought. The correct answer would seem to be that as far as artistic information and aesthetic ideas are

concerned, there is practically no danger of Islamic interference at the source. Some slight manipulation of the original material may have taken place in the course of transmission. This does not affect the basic character of the information or our right to consider and use it as Hellenistic artistic thought known in Islam.

1. ON PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

a. A famous anecdote contrasts the craft of the physician with that of the painter:

There was a painter in his days (that is, in the days of Diogenes) who gave up painting and became a physician. (Diogenes) said to him: "I suppose,¹ when you saw that mistakes in painting lie open before the eye, while mistakes in medicine are covered by the earth, you gave up painting and entered medicine."²

The anecdote is a version of the popular witticism that doctors bury their mistakes. It is directed against the fallibility of medicine and physicians.³ For this reason, it was interesting to the Muslims. For them, the entire body of Hellenistic medicine, in its scientific as well as its ethical and social aspects, was the least controversial field of "Greek" learning. The comparison of the societal value of painting with that of medicine must have struck mediaeval Muslims as rather odd. The humorous element in the anecdote was certainly enhanced by the fact that it made medicine yield to a marginal profession such as painting probably was in their eyes, even in the ninth century, the presumable date of the first appearance of the anecdote in Arabic. On the other hand, painters who were always to be found in the cultural centers of Muslim society will have enjoyed finding themselves mentioned rather honorably in such a distinguished company.

Another anecdote contrasting painting with medicine may be

¹ Ash-Shahrazūrī, *Rawdat al-afrah*, reads: "you did well to . . ."

² Cf. al-Mubashshir, 76. The slightly different versions in Ibn Hindū, Ms. Aya Sofya 2452, *ad* p. 129, l. 3 of the edition, have: ". . . because everybody sees the mistakes of painters, but not one in a thousand sees the mistakes of physicians," and, ". . . because everybody sees mistakes in painting, while mistakes in medicine are concealed by the earth."

³ The available Greek prototype of the anecdote ascribed to Nicocles or to Solon or to Stratoniscus speaks of physicians burying their mistakes but omits the reference to painting. Cf. *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, no. 412.

A similar joke compares medicine to wrestling: "There was a wrestler among the Greeks who was always thrown. He gave up wrestling and studied medicine. Socrates said: 'Now, it is he who throws others.'" Cf. Ibn Hindū, 81. Its Greek prototype is ascribed to Demosthenes in *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, no. 226, and to Diogenes in Diogenes Laertius, VI, 62.

mentioned, even if it did not enter wisdom literature. It is of Greek origin, although at this time I am unable to indicate its source in Greek literature:

... Erasistratus tells the following story about a painter. He (Erasistratus) used to know a painter who left his town and became a physician in another town. When he came there on a journey and saw him, he recognized him and asked him why he had given up his craft. (The former painter) replied: "I did it because I often despaired of (a cure for) a patient when I was leaving him. Then I came back and found him healthy again. But I never left a picture half-finished and then came back and found it completed."¹

The moral of this story is that medicine depends to a large part on chance and divine aid. Painting depends entirely on the skill of the painter. The element of humor found in Diogenes' remark is lacking. Painting here again has the edge over medicine. Understandably, however, this anecdote enjoyed far less popularity and most probably remained as good as unknown.

Two more anecdotes excoriating the unskilled painter may be added here:

A painter said to a philosopher: "If you were to plaster your house, I would paint it for you." The philosopher replied: "It needs plastering most, once you have painted it."²

While this anecdote deals with a painter of murals, the obtuse artist in the following anecdote was doing a painting or, possibly, illustrating a scroll. It would seem unlikely that he might have been intended to be a sculptor, although this possibility cannot be ruled out entirely:

(Philistion, the jester of King Alexander) said to Alexander: "I was passing by a painter who had in his hand a picture of a girl whom he had represented wearing many jewels. When I asked him about that, he replied: I was unable to make her beautiful. So, I made her rich."³

¹ The story is found in Abū l-Faraj 'Abdallāh b. at-Ṭayyib, *Commentary on Galen, De sectis (Firaq)*.

² Cf. at-Tanūkhī, fol. 202a. The slightly different version in Ibn Hindū, 104 f., is ascribed to an unidentified *Dymstf.* Ash-Shahrastānī, 306, trans., II, 151, ascribes it to Demosthenes. Ash-Shahrastānī's source can be assumed to have been the original version, which is not preserved, of Abū Sulaymān's *Ṣiwān*. The original Greek anecdote was intended to go back to Menander or, perhaps, to the musician Lasus of Hermione. Cf. *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, no. 405.

³ Cf. Ibn Hindū, 104. *Flistyn*, which is clearly Philistion, is the correct spelling of the name as indicated in the Ms. Aya Sofya 2452. An entertainer Philistides, about whom nothing further is known, is mentioned in connection with Alexander, cf. *PWRE*, s. v. However, Philistion, well known as a humorist and writer of mimes, is no doubt meant. He was erroneously placed in the time of King

In a numerical saying of the type, "Three are . . .," the incompetence of a painter who thinks of himself as an accomplished artist is described as consisting of "not knowing much about the mixing of colors, the composition of figures, and the rendition (that is, the role) of movements."¹ The remark occurs in one of many of such numerical sayings ascribed to the Indians. This may or may not be an accurate description of authorship. Greek-Byzantine inspiration, however, is not excluded and seems more likely.

b. Paintings must be viewed from the proper perspective, in order to reveal their true artistic value. This is the implication of a remark attributed to Ptolemy:

When a king invited Ptolemy for dinner, Ptolemy excused himself in these words: "Ptolemy's experience with kings is close to the experience of people who look at pictures. When they look at them from afar, they like them. But when they look at them from near-by, they do not consider them attractive."²

c. Paintings must show a skilful composition of the individual components, in order to give aesthetic pleasure to the viewer to the same degree to which a person who listens to a persuasive orator will enjoy his eloquence:

Someone said: "The intellect (or: reason) provides an orderly arrangement for various kinds of speech, like as a skilful painter (*muṣawwir*) provides an orderly arrangement of beautiful shapes (*ṣumar*)."³

The interpretation is somewhat tentative. Again, it would seem more likely that painting and pictures are meant, rather than sculptures. However, it is not stated what elements of composition the author of the remark had in mind when speaking of "beautiful shapes (or forms)," and without an explicit explanation, our possible guesses are of little value.

d. Illuminated scrolls are envisaged by the sage, occasionally identified as Socrates, who says:

The world (or, frequently: the people of the world) is like pictures in a scroll. When one is unfolded, the other is folded up.⁴

Alexander also by a Byzantine author, Georgius Monachus, who it seems thought of him as a philosopher. Cf. Reich, *Mimus*, I, 2, 428 f.

¹ Cf. Miskawayh, *Jāwīdhān Khiradh*, 94.

² Cf. Ibn Durayd, trans. Rosenthal, 45 f.; Abū Sulaymān, *Ṣiwān*, fol. 41 b; Ibn Hindū, 124 f.; al-Mubashshir, 254.

³ Cf. Miskawayh, *Jāwīdhān Khiradh*, 266.

⁴ Hunayn, fol. 41a, trans. (German), 88 f.; al-Mubashshir, 100. Ibn al-Mu'tazz quoted this remark in his *Kitāb al-Ādāb*, ed. Krachkovsky, VI, 53. In the name

The terms used here such as *ṣaḥīfah* “scroll” and “folding” and “unfolding,” make us think of illustrated scrolls, and not books in the form of codices. This is also the likely interpretation of these terms in their occurrences in the Qur’ān 21:104/104 and 81:10/10, although they have been understood as referring to documents or sheets. Later on, they were seen as books, and the folding and unfolding of the heavenly books containing the records of human deeds is often described. We cannot say when the prototype of this saying is to be dated, but it would seem probable that it goes back far into Greek antiquity. Thus, scrolls with ample illustrations were originally intended. Scrolls were still known in early Islamic times. Even then, they may have already been used to a rather limited extent. About the ninth century, they disappear entirely, with the exception of usually short documents that were rolled up and which at times may have contained something that could be called an illustration.¹ In and near the region where Islam established itself, profusely illustrated magical scrolls remained in common use, for instance, among the Mandaeans in Iraq and Iran and among the Ethiopians. They were hardly known to the ordinary Muslim reader for whom the quoted saying was a particularly popular one. He probably visualized the saying as referring to illuminated books, such as, for instance, an illustrated manuscript of al-Mubashshir’s work in which he might have read it.

Ḥunayn tells us about books and scrolls written with golden and colored letters which had as frontispieces miniatures of philosophers seated on daises with their students standing in front of them—a most accurate description of a type of book illustration well known to us.² Whether scrolls or books were in Ḥunayn’s mind is not quite clear. Books were, of course, more familiar to him.

of Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, it is quoted in several other works referred to by Krachkovsky. Cf. also ath-Tha‘ālibi, *Ghurār*, 153, who refers to Ibn al-Mu‘tazz’ work under the title of *Short Aphorisms*. Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, of course, did not claim to be the author of the saying. He customarily does not indicate the names of his authorities in his work. For the *Short Aphorisms*, cf. *EI*, 2nd ed., s.v. Ibn al-Mu‘tazz.

¹ For a fifteenth-century example, cf. R. Ettinghausen, *Hilāl*, in *EI*, 2nd ed., Vol. III, pl. XV. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York owns a scroll dated 1058/1648 which shows in particular the genealogies of Biblical figures and Ottoman Sultāns (No. 67.272) (R. Ettinghausen).

² The Munich Ms. of Ḥunayn is incomplete in the beginning and does not contain this passage, cf. Ḥunayn, trans. (Hebrew), 3, (German), 51 f. The Hebrew text speaks first of *mēgillōt* “scrolls,” then of *seḥer* “book,” then of both.

Cf. the reproductions from the Topkapusaray Ms. of al-Mubashshir in Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*.

e. Ḥunayn speaks of golden temples with golden pictures (*ṣuwar*) and of golden temples decorated with a variety of pictures. These pictures attracted attention and served to relax those looking at them.¹ It is not quite clear whether paintings or sculptures are meant. The verb *n-q-sh* used by Ḥunayn in connection with the decor of Jewish synagogues suggests sculpture. It could mean painting and reflect the dim memory of paintings in synagogues as known from Dura-Europos and elsewhere. However, sculptural ornamentation would seem more likely. The verb *ṣ-w-r* used in connection with Christian churches is most likely to refer to paintings, unless, as is also possible, statues are meant. The verb *ṣ-w-q* used in connection with mosques apparently refers to any kind of decor, whether painting or woodwork or stone ornamentation.

Another type of public edifice which was often adorned with paintings was the public bath. Like the institution of the bath itself, the painting of public baths was one of the hardiest survivals of Hellenistic artistic custom in the Islamic Near East. It is mentioned in various places, sometimes as obscene and sometimes as having a beneficial influence on the habits and the health of the people who frequent the baths. The wisdom literature refers to an example of the latter type of murals in a bath:

Polemo (Afimūn) said to a painter who was painting a bath: "Do a good job of painting, for the painting of baths was invented for the common people, so that upon leaving they will take time to look at the beauty of the paintings. Thus, when they dress, they are not in a hurry to get out. (If they were to do that,) the cold air would affect them in the winter, and the hot air in the summer."²

The alleged author of this statement was famous as a physiognomer. Physiognomy was thought of as particularly qualified to interpret the psychological significance of the external features of living individuals or, as we can see here and elsewhere, of painted shapes. We must not forget that the ideal painting, as stated repeatedly, was the one that was most lifelike and therefore the perfect double of the living original.

f. The physiognomists are also to be credited with the rather detailed descriptions of the appearance and the remarkable personal

¹ Cf. Ḥunayn, fols. 4a, 8b-9a, trans. (German), 58, 61 f. For the latter passage, cf. also Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 104.

² Cf. al-Mubashshir, 313; Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 191.

traits of ancient scholars which we find attached at the end of each individual's biography in the work of al-Mubashshir. These descriptions do not owe their origin to painted portraits. However, in view of the close connection between physiognomy and painting, it is very well possible that in Antiquity there existed portraits painted to agree with what the physiognomists believed to be the true expression of the character of a given sage. It is immaterial in this connection whether the preserved Islamic illustrations in al-Mubashshir attempt or do not attempt to match the various descriptions. It is a fact that it was believed that such physiognomically true portraits could and did exist, as shown also by the famous anecdote concerning the physiognomist and Socrates/Hippocrates.¹ And there can be no doubt that Muslims in reading those descriptions were under the impression that they were derived from pictorial representations.

There is, further, the tradition of pictorial representations of allegories, as, for instance, the *Tabula Cebetis*, preserved in its Arabic form in Miskawayh's *Jāwīdhān Khiradh* and published already in the seventeenth century by J. Elichmann. In the iconography of the ancient philosophers, the allegorical tradition found expression in such reports as that by the tenth-century al-Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir, that there existed "somewhere a picture of Aristotle holding in his hand a book in which there was written: 'I used to drink wine, and my thirst was not quenched, but when I knew the Creator, my thirst was quenched without drinking.'" ²

g. Portrait painting or sculpture was, on the other hand, also expected to flatter the individual who had his portrait done. This desire could be castigated as an admission of the unworthiness of that individual's true appearance. Strangely enough, it is Anaximenes of Miletus to whom an anecdote embodying this sentiment is ascribed:

He saw a youth going to a painting (sculpture) (?) to which (he wanted) his picture to be similar. (Anaximenes) said: "How great is your desire not to resemble your own form!" ³

¹ Cf. Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 342 f. In connection with Socrates the anecdote also occurs in a work of wisdom literature, *al-Mukhtār*, fol. 23a-b.

² Cf. al-Muṭahhar, *Badʿ*, II, 91.

³ Cf. Abū Sulaymān, *Ṣiwān*, fol. 11b. I am not sure whether I have understood this saying correctly. The word translated "painting (sculpture)" is *muṣawwar*. The ordinary reading *muṣawwir* "painter" would make sense only if one assumes an omission, such as "going to a painter <with a picture>."

In contrast with the physiognomists' belief in the existence of paintings able to illuminate their subjects' character is the belief that painters are unable to capture true inner beauty in their work:

Gregory said: "Painters are able to imitate and often to improve upon outward beauty by means of paint. Nobody, however, can imitate inner beauty, except him who possesses it in reality."¹

Painting here is described as a superficial imitation of nature. It is even accused of tending to falsify nature. It may be significant that the saying is ascribed to a sage whose name marks him as a Christian and who is probably to be identified with Gregory of Nyssa. The lack of confidence in the ability of artists to penetrate the spiritual reality of things was an attitude congenial to Christianity. Muslims also felt this irrelevance of art vis-à-vis true human values and its inability to express them. The physiognomists' approach toward painting was based, it would seem, fundamentally on magical ideas and was not as such an artistic one. In Islam, the ancient belief that painting possessed the ability to see beyond the outward shell survived only for magical purposes. For instance, someone who followed the advice of painting a likeness of a useless friend on the wall and spitting upon it,² certainly saw in such painting for magical purposes the means of creating a truer reality than mere outward appearance was ever able to reveal.

2. ART OBJECTS

Wisdom literature has very little occasion to talk about objects of artistic interest. The beauty of pearls and jewels is mentioned in order to draw the moral that the ability to see this beauty is required for its proper appreciation.³ An ox of clay was supposedly fashioned by someone whose name appears to have ended in -archus, as a substitute for the barbarian custom of offering living animals to dead idols.⁴ This has a parallel in a similar action ascribed by Greek tradi-

¹ Cf. Abū Sulaymān, *Ṣiwān*, fol. 43b; al-Mubashshir, 307, cf. Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 184; ash-Shahrestāni, 305, trans., II, 150.

² Cf. Ibn al-Buḥturī, *Uns*.

³ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 303, 315 f., 306; Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 179 (no. 79), 193 (no. 125), 183 (no. 72). Cf. also Ibn Hindū, in Ms. Aya Sofya 2452, *ad* p. 118, l. 8 of the edition.

⁴ Cf. Ibn Durayd, trans. Rosenthal, 35 f., where Greek parallels are mentioned; Abū Sulaymān, *Ṣiwān*, fol. 43a; al-Mubashshir, 303, cf. Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 179.

An instrument of torture in the shape of a hollow copper cow could hardly be considered an art object. It was intended for putting criminals in it and roast-

tion to Empedocles. (Wooden) statues of Heracles were disrespectfully treated according to a humorous antireligious sally translated into Arabic and accepted into Muslim wisdom literature.¹ The existence of statues (of deities) is occasionally mentioned, as, for instance, in the remark ascribed to Aristotle:

A man without intelligence is like a statue (*imthāl*) without spirit.²

A silent youth is exhorted by Simonides to talk more, since "silence belongs to idols. Human beings make conversation,"³ and so on. Ḥunayn professes to know about seated statues of dead kings clad in various kinds of garments and wearing golden crowns and jewelry,⁴ apparently an echo of the custom to erect statues in gymnasia and academies, rather than an allusion to funerary sculpture. Also, some of the decor of pre-Islamic sanctuaries mentioned by Ḥunayn may have been sculptural as well as pictorial.⁵ The fictional life of King Alexander, one of the great *exempla* of political wisdom and of the transitoriness of human grandeur, speaks about a golden box, a golden casket, and the famous eggs of gold which became proverbial.⁶ No further details as to the possible artistic execution of these objects are given. The catalogue of gifts sent by the Chinese Emperor to Alexander includes 200 skins (*jild*) with pictorial representations. Some manuscripts read garments (*hullab*) instead of skins. But the list has no information about the artistic workmanship, if any, that might have gone into these valuable objects.⁷ Other lists of diplomatic gifts found in Arabic literature⁸ are a little more informative in this respect.

ing them to death, while their cries coming from inside sounded as if the animal were bellowing. Instead of rewarding its vicious inventor, King Dionysius had him put to death in it. Cf. Abū Sulaymān, *Ṣiwān*, according to the recension of as-Sāwī, preserved in the Istanbul Ms. Fatih 3222. This popular motif appears with variations in 'Abbāsīd history.

¹ Cf. Ibn Durayd, trans. Rosenthal, 51 f.

² Ibn Hindū, 66 f. For the *tamāthīl* and *aṣnām* in temples mentioned in Abū Sulaymān, *Ṣiwān*, fol. 58a, cf. J. L. Kraemer, *A Lost Passage from Philoponus' Contra Aristotelem*, in *JAOS*, LXXXV (1965), 325 f.

³ Abū Sulaymān, *Ṣiwān*, fol. 43b; Ibn Hindū, 119.

⁴ Ḥunayn, fol. 20b, trans. (German), 72. Funerary and other sculpture from Palmyra, for instance, would, however, fit the description.

⁵ Cf. above, p. 7.

⁶ Ḥunayn, fols. 86a, 90a, trans. (German), 177 ff.; al-Mubashshir, 227 f. (?), 226, 240, cf. also Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 349 f.; ash-Shahrastānī, 305, trans., II, 188, etc.

⁷ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 237.

⁸ Cf., in particular, ar-Rashīd, *Dhakḥā'ir*. See also *EI*, 2nd ed., *s.v.* hiba.

3. AESTHETIC VALUES

“God, being beautiful, loves beauty.”¹

The never-ending discussion of beauty could be cut short by a witty remark ascribed to Aristotle in Greek tradition and among the Arabs to an as yet unidentified *H'r'frn* (Chairemon?):

Asked how it came about that we enjoy looking at a beautiful human being, he replied: “Surely, this is a blind man’s question.”²

The original Greek versions phrase the question somewhat differently. They speak about “spending so much time among those who are beautiful,” or the love for them, or the great liking to talk to them.³ In Arabic, it is “looking.” It is not possible to say that this was a variation going back to a Muslim who was aware of the importance attached to the visual enjoyment of beauty especially in Šūfism. An exact model of the saying as phrased in Arabic may have existed somewhere in Greek literature. All the variations constitute an interesting example of how much thought was given to finding the formulation that would make a witty remark most effective in the telling.

The central theme, however, was no longer physical beauty. The fateful process which had begun in Greece with the pre-Socratic philosophers and continued relentlessly to the last days of Hellenistic Neo-Pythagoreanism and Neo-Platonism had been leading to the almost exclusive equation of beautiful with, on the one hand, “useful,” and, on the other, “inner beauty,” that is, good, ethically or spiritually.⁴ The value of purely sensual beauty for producing nobility of character was not entirely lost to Muslims studying the Graeco-Arabic wisdom literature. It is, it seems, rarely mentioned. However, a passage of the *Kitāb as-Sa‘ādab* speaking of educational precepts

¹ It should be noted that the problem of beauty as it appears in Muslim literature in general is not under discussion here. The *hadīth* on the divine name of “beautiful” expresses the Prophet’s sanction of a well groomed, neat appearance. In this sense, it is also used later on to stress, for instance, the need of teaching assistants for neatness in dress and bearing. Cf. *Concordance*, I, 373b19, 22 f.; as-Sam‘ānī, *Adab al-implā*, 25. For “the Good Beyond (= God)” as the source of beauty, cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, I, 6, 9, and Proclus, *In Plat. Theol.*, II, 11.

² Abū Sulaymān, *Šiwān*, fol. 47a.

³ Cf. Diogenes Laertius, V, 20; Stobaeus, IV, 485; *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, no. 141.

⁴ The combination of both usefulness and inner beauty as constituting true beauty finds admirable expression in the verses of Euripides, quoted by Stobaeus, IV, 490:

Reason one must consider, reason. What good is
Handsome when one does not have a beautiful mind.

attributed to Plato has one that stresses the necessity of producing for the ears and the eyes of young people “good words, virtuous deeds, splendid pictures (or forms, *ṣuwar*), and beautiful (*ḥasan*) shapes.” Someone, apparently a Greek commentator whose comments are constantly interspersed in this section of the *Kitāb as-Sa‘ādah*, adds that it is therefore “necessary for the teacher to prevent artisans and painters (or sculptors, engravers, *muṣawwir*) from using a vessel or something having a bad (*radī*) shape or from painting upon something an ugly (*samij*) form (*ṣūrah*).”¹

The transformation of “beautiful” into “useful” or “ethically or spiritually good” was completed when the Greek wisdom literature, which served as the source of Arabic wisdom literature, was composed.² It struck a most responsive chord in Semitic monotheism, which earlier had helped it along on its long career through Hellenism. In all Muslim wisdom literature, the equation of beautiful with material and spiritual values rules supreme. Arabic linguistic usage concurs with it. As in other languages—one thinks in the first place of Greek *kalos*—, there is no sharp distinction between the common words for “good” and “beautiful” (principally, *ḥasan* and *jamil*),³ as there is none between the common words for “bad” and “ugly” (principally, *sharr*, *radī* and *qabīḥ*). There are some terms for “good,” such as *jayyid*, which are less easily employed in any aesthetic sense. For “beautiful,” there is no really unambiguous term. Various specific circumlocutions are required to describe aesthetic beauty.⁴ The Semitic etymology for the roots of all these words might help

¹ Cf. *as-Sa‘ādah*, 341.

² Cf., for instance, the short paragraphs on beauty in Antonius Melissa, cols. 959-962, and Maximus Confessor, cols. 925-928. The situation differs somewhat in the two-part chapter on beauty in Stobaeus, IV, 481-494. However, as expected, it also leans heavily toward statements extolling inner beauty.

³ English “beauty” goes ultimately back to Latin *bellus*, which is generally considered a diminutive of *bonus* “good.” Cf. P. Monteil, *Beau et laid en latin* (Paris 1964, *Études et Commentaires*, 54), which also throws some general light on the problem of the development of terms for aesthetic beauty in the Indo-European languages.

⁴ D. H. H. Ingalls, *Words for Beauty in Classical Sanskrit Poetry*, in *Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown*, 87-107 (New Haven 1962, *American Oriental Series* 47), notes that there is no word in Sanskrit for the English word “beauty” but a great number of suitable terms and circumlocutions. I suspect that a study of the ways in which the concept of beauty is expressed in all the Semitic languages would yield a somewhat similar result. Closely related as they are, the Semitic languages as a whole must be considered for such a study. Arabic itself shows the Greek influence which produces categories similar to or identical with our own in this as in so many other respects.

a little in understanding their innate thrust. Unfortunately, in nearly all cases, we do not know it. It seems safe to say that originally no abstract aesthetic or intellectual concept was involved. In view of the Akkadian cognates, there can be little doubt that the more original meaning of *jamil* "beautiful" was "obliging, kind," and the like.¹ It is still used in Arabic, as, for instance, *al-qawl al-jamil* "kind words."²

a. Beautiful objects: The wisdom literature has occasion to speak of beautiful flowers which give pleasure to the eye. This happens, for instance, in a lengthy saying attributed to Šāb, the mythical eponym of the Šābiāns, or to the Church Father, Basilus:

Do not take from everybody everything he has to offer. Rather, you must take from a person who is praiseworthy in all his qualities everything he has to offer, and from a person who is praiseworthy in one thing only, only that one thing. Pleasure is derived from apples not only because of their smell, but also because they can be eaten. Pleasure is derived from some flowers because of their smell, from others, such as the oleander, not because of their smell but from looking at them. Pleasure is derived from the fruit of the palm tree, and in the case of the rose bush, from its flowers, after one has protected himself against its thorns. This being so, you must take from a person who is praiseworthy in speech and intelligence all he has to offer, and from a person who is praiseworthy only in speech, just his praiseworthy speech. In addition, consider your own capabilities whether you are capable of taking it. The bee is capable of sucking honey from flowers. Man is not.³

In a saying attributed to Aristotle, a person who collects everything praiseworthy is compared to the citrus tree which combines a beautiful appearance with sweet smell and edible fruit.⁴

Socrates, asked about women, replied that "they are like the oleander, possessing brilliance and splendor, but if the unwary

¹ Cf. *The Assyrian Dictionary*, s.v. *gammilu* and related forms, listed under *gamālu*. Apparently, the root has to be separated from the root *k-m-l* "to be perfect," even if it is possible, though quite uncertain, that in Hebrew *g-m-l* the two roots have coalesced, as assumed by some of the older Hebrew lexicographers of modern times.

² Cf., for instance, Ullmann, *Menandersentenzen*, 42, no. 204.

³ Ibn Hindū, 95 f. (Basilus); al-Mubashshir, 27, 307, cf. Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 184. Al-Mubashshir refers to this saying also in the introduction of his work. For the basic version, of which the text quoted is an elaboration, cf. Ibn Durayd, trans. Rosenthal, 38 f.; Ibn Hindū, in Ms. Aya Sofya 2452, ad p. 126, l. 7 of the edition (**rstynws* = Aristippus ?); al-Mubashshir, 202.

⁴ Cf. *al-Mukhtār*, fol. 60a.

person eats it, it kills him.”¹ And the deceptiveness of a handsome appearance is again compared to that of the oleander in a saying ascribed to Aristotle.²

An aesthetic appreciation of the beauty of flowers is also indicated by the comparison of the effect exercised by this beauty with the effect of inspiring music:

Plato said to a musician: “Compose for us the spring with its blossoms and flowers of all kinds.”³

In some of these instances, the equation of beauty with usefulness is transparent. Sensual enjoyment may be the first reaction to the beauty of flowers, but it must be tempered with an appreciation of their possible usefulness or the lack of it.

Beautiful clothes no doubt provided aesthetical pleasure. Such pleasure, however, was to harmonize with the amount of culture possessed by their wearers:

Seeing a man who was wearing magnificent clothes but hearing him use solecisms in his speech, (Pythagoras) said: “Either you speak in a manner similar to your dress, or you wear a garment similar to your speech.”⁴

Beautiful clothes may also have the effect of underlining the unworthiness of their wearer,⁵ or they may enhance the beauty of a particular quality their wearer possesses, such as eloquence.⁶

b. Beauty in human beings is what most concerns the wisdom literature. The main theme is clearly stated in a saying ascribed to Plato that

Complete beauty (*ḥusn*) and complete ugliness in this world lie in the composition of the powers of the soul, and not in the composition of the limbs of the body and the face.⁷

¹ Cf. Ḥunayn, fol. 54a, trans. (German), 100; al-Mubashshir, 115.

² Cf. *al-Mukhtār*, fol. 60a; Miskawayh, *Jāwīdhān Khiradh*, 269.

³ Cf. Ḥunayn, fol. 38b, trans. (German), 79. Cf. also the Manisa Ms. 1705, fol. 125a, where the text reads: “. . . the spring with its blossoms and its colors (*aṣbāgh*).” For the Manisa manuscript, cf. F. Rosenthal, in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, CX (1966), 216 ff.

⁴ Cf. Ibn Hindū, 133; al-Mubashshir, 68.

⁵ Cf. Ibn Hindū, 110, citing Diogenes.

⁶ Cf. Ḥunayn, fol. 77b, trans. (German), 120.

⁷ Cf. Ibn Hindū, 26. It should be noted that the large collection of Platonic sayings to be found in the edition of Ibn Hindū, 22, l. 5, to 65, l. 6, is not contained in Ms. Aya Sofya 2452. It may be an addition by the editor of Ibn Hindū which he took from some other collection of Platonic dicta.

The theme that love is the desire for beauty is also commonly elaborated.¹

Wisdom sayings have much to say about the beauty of women. The tendency is always to minimize or deprecate its value as against the value of virtue, for instance:

Seeing a beautiful woman, (Diogenes) said: "Little good, much evil."²

Or, according to another version of the same saying:

Seeing a woman small of stature and beautiful of face, he said: "Small good, big evil."³

The second version is much wittier than the first rather pointless version. That it is also the original form of the remark is confirmed by the Greek text which reads: Seeing a beautiful and small woman, Aristippus said: "Small good, big evil."⁴

(Zeno) said: "An intelligent man should not marry a beautiful (*ḥashnā*) woman, for she will have many lovers and despise her husband."⁵

This is obviously a mutilated variation of the often repeated Greek witticism, which involves a play on words, that marrying a beautiful woman means marrying a public woman (*koinēn*), while marrying an ugly woman is a punishment (*poinēn*).⁶

The outward beauty of a woman may seem attractive, but Socrates advises his smitten student that he should turn her inside out and he would see how ugly she really is.⁷

Much is made of the danger in feminine beauty, as one would expect in view of the pronounced misogynic outlook of the wisdom literature. Even greater attention, however, is directed toward bringing out the worthlessness of beauty in human beings in general,

¹ Cf., for instance, Ḥunayn, fol. 44a, trans. (German), 91.

² Cf. Ḥunayn, fol. 126a, trans. (German), 123; *as-Sa'ūdab*, 84; al-Mubashshir, 75.

³ Ibn Hindū, 112.

⁴ Antonius Melissa, col. 1087 f., where the editor's text originally had: "small evil, big good." The correction is certainly necessary. Mannebach, *Fragments*, 72, has no comment.

Among related sayings ascribed to Diogenes, there is his reply when "asked what is bad in life: 'A beautiful woman.'" Cf. *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, no. 189.

⁵ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 43.

⁶ Cf. Stobaeus, IV, 497.

⁷ Cf. Ḥunayn, fol. 49b, trans. (German), 96; Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Ṭibb an-nufūs*, trans. Halkin, 132 f.

unless such beauty is redeemed by good behavior, knowledge, and praiseworthy actions. Beauty of character and beauty of face go together, the former belonging to the soul and the latter to the body, as Plato said: "He whose form is ugly has a bad character."¹ However, this idea is not generally accepted. Ugliness in human beings may be offset by their virtue, as best exemplified by the figure of Socrates. Since pride in one's beauty can cause a person to neglect the cultivation of his character and intelligence, the general conclusion may be drawn, as was supposedly done by Aristotle in the presence of Alexander, that

Beauty is harmful to the person who possesses it, and useful to the person who looks at it.²

It may be noted that the Pythagorean Dius in his work on beauty cited the sentiment that it was preferable to have someone else possess beauty than be handsome oneself.³

Among the numerous sayings from the wisdom literature elaborating on the theme, only some of the more salient ones may be cited:

Someone said to Socrates: "How ugly is your face!" Socrates replied: "I did not own ugly constitution(s), so that I could be blamed for it, nor did I own startling beauty of face, so that I could be praised for it. Whatever I did own, I have tried to improve and beautify to perfection, just as you have tried to perfection to make the repulsive endowment owned by you uglier and more detestable."⁴

Another, pithier version of the same statement reads:

The story goes that a Sophist said to Socrates: "How ugly you are!" Socrates replied: "It was not up to you to make your figure beautiful, so that you deserve praise, nor was it up to me to make my figure ugly, so that I deserve blame."⁵

Another saying, which is often quoted:

Seeing a bad man who had a handsome face, (Diogenes) exclaimed: "Good is the house, and bad the inhabitant,"⁶

was supposed to have exercised great influence among Muslims, so much so that, as al-Māwardī remarks, it was reflected in a verse by

¹ Cf. Ḥunayn, fols. 65b-66a, trans. (German), 109.

² Cf. al-Mubashshir, 203. Ibn Hindū, 66, reads: "Beauty is bad for the one who possesses it, and good for others."

³ Cf. Stobaeus, IV, 488.

⁴ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 117; ash-Shahrastānī, 332, trans., II, 199 (Diogenes).

⁵ Ibn Hindū, 81; *as-Sa'ādah*, 170 (abridged, in the name of Diogenes); *al-Mukhtār*, fols. 17b-18a.

⁶ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 76. Cf. also Ḥunayn, fol. 125b, trans. (German), 122; Ibn Durayd, trans. Rosenthal, 32; Ibn Hindū, 107 f., 113.

the poet, Jaḥzah (d. 324/936), where he speaks of “an inhabited mansion and a mind like a ruin.”¹

Where the Greek original mentions something like “transferring the lovers of the body to the beauty of the soul,” the Arabic version reads:

Seeing a youth with a handsome face studying philosophy, (Diogenes) said: “You have done well to join the love for the beauty (*ḥusn*) of your soul to the love for the beauty of your face.”²

Diogenes is credited with further sayings on beauty and virtue. Thus, addressing Alexander, he said:

Do not be proud of your beauty, your good (or beautiful) armor, and your fine mount, but make it a point that your pride rest in bringing out what is great and generous in your nature.³

Again, it is Diogenes to whom the following saying is ascribed:

Seeing a youth of good education and behavior but ugly of face, he said: “Your virtuous qualities of soul have gathered beautiful qualities (*maḥāsīn*) for your face.”⁴

The idea is also turned around, though no longer presented in the name of Diogenes on every particular occasion. It appears in two versions, both of which seem to have had their own Greek prototype no longer available to us:

Seeing a handsome youth of little education, (Demosthenes) said: “The beautiful qualities of your face have been deprived of virtuous qualities of your soul,”⁵ or, Seeing a well-educated man with an ugly face, (Diogenes) said: “Your virtuous qualities of soul have been deprived of beautiful qualities of your face.”⁶

It is, indeed, a good education that makes man the most beautiful (*aḥsan*) of animals.⁷

In addition to education, man must have intelligence in order to be beautiful. The Arabic translation of the *monostichoī* attributed to Menander includes the verse:

¹ Cf. al-Māwardī, 104 (Cairo 1315).

² Cf. Ibn Durayd, trans. Rosenthal, 33, where Greek parallels such as Diogenes Laertius, VI, 58, and *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, no. 176, are listed; Abū Sulaymān, *Ṣiwān*, in the recension of as-Sāwī, Ms. Fatih 3222; Ibn Hindū, 111; al-Mubashshir, 82.

³ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 76.

⁴ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 74.

⁵ Cf. Abū Sulaymān, *Ṣiwān*, fol. 48a.

⁶ Cf. Ibn Hindū, 106.

⁷ Cf. Ibn Durayd, trans. Rosenthal, 37 f., where Greek parallels are listed; Ibn Hindū, 66; al-Mubashshir, 201.

How beautiful is beauty, if its possessor possesses intelligence and moderation.¹

But beauty also requires good actions. Beauty in a person whose actions are not right is no beauty. A handsome face obligates its owner to act handsomely. In the *Exhortation for Young Men*, a Pythagoreanizing treatise ascribed to Plato and adopted by Miskawayh into his work on wisdom, the Greek philosopher tells the youths in search of an education that "they should not look at the beauty of a face where there is a bad way of action, but they should look at the action."²

"Son," Socrates addressed one of his students, "if your face is handsome (*hasan*), you must do good deeds comparable in beauty to your face. If your face is ugly, beware of combining your ugly face with ugly actions."³

The same idea is expressed in the very popular notion of self-examination in a mirror. It appears in various forms, of which the following may be quoted:

(Plato, or some other Greek sage) said: "A man must look at his face in the mirror. If it is handsome (*hasan*), he will find it ugly to add to it an ugly action. If it is ugly, he will find it ugly to combine between two ugly things."⁴

No exactly corresponding Greek prototype to either this or the preceding saying is available. The mirror is the characteristic element in the Greek versions, but otherwise, they seem to contain features of both the Arabic texts translated here.⁵ Other uses of the mirror to explain the relationship between external and true beauty exist, for instance:

¹ Cf. Ullmann, *Menandersentenzen*, 57, no. 336.

² Cf. Miskawayh, *Jawā'idhān Khirādh*, 273 f., cf. F. Rosenthal, in *Orientalia*, N.S. X (1941), 392, n. 2.

³ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 116.

⁴ Cf. Hunayn, fol. 145a, trans. (German), 150 f. (Solon); at-Tawhīdī, *Imtā'c*, II, 47 (Diogenes); Ibn Hindū, 9 f. (Plato); al-Mubashshir, 160 (Plato), 279 (as an addition at the end of the sayings of Aesop); *al-Mukhbīār*, fol. 28a-b (Plato); ash-Shahrastānī, 310, trans., II, 158 (Democritus). Cf. also Ibn Buṭlān, in Schacht-Meyerothof (below, p. 60, n. 2), 63 (Ar. text), etc.

⁵ Cf. Diogenes Laertius, II, 53 (Socrates): "He thought that young men should constantly look into the mirror, so that if they were handsome, they might become worthy, and if they were ugly, they might cover up their ugly appearance."

Stobaeus, II, 218: "Socrates exhorted the young men to look frequently into the mirror, and the handsome ones to make (their) character and behavior similar to (their) appearance, but the ugly ones to cover up (their) ugliness through good character and behavior." Similarly, in the name of Bias: Stobaeus, III, 121 f., and again differently, Stobaeus, III, 558.

Some sage said: "Take some of your sincere friends as a mirror for your natural qualifications and actions, like as you are accustomed to use polished metal (lit., iron) for your face. It is more necessary for you that your nature and actions are all right than that you improve your appearance (*taḥsīn ṣūratika*)." ¹

The simile of the mirror is also used to explain that true inner beauty can be recognized and appreciated only by the identical kind of beauty. A rusty mirror does not recognize real beauty. A loose woman taunted Socrates because of his ugly face. The sage took care of her with these words: "If you were not one of those rusty mirrors, my beauty would be apparent to you." ²

Beauty and ugliness may be identified with certain character qualities or modes of behavior. "Bashfulness is to beauty what the gate is to the city." ³ Lust, understandably, is always castigated as ugly. ⁴ It is the dangerous complement of physical beauty. ⁵ As described by Plutarch, anger is likewise ugly, and so is drunkenness. ⁶

It comes as no surprise to find art and beauty submerged by intellectualism, which distinguishes human beings from animals. This, after all, is the main theme of wisdom literature. It is also hardly surprising that there is little incidental reference to art in this literature which served as the principal vehicle for the propagation of popular ethics. No real conclusion can be drawn from the material presented here. Its chief interest is its existence.

Antonius Melissa, cols. 916 f., and Maximus Confessor, cols. 927 f. (Plutarch): "Bend over a mirror and have a good look. If you look handsome, do things worthy of it. If you look ugly, improve (your) deficient appearance through virtue."

¹ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 335.

² Cf. al-Mubashshir, 109. Slightly different in Ḥunayn, fol. 54b, trans. (German), 100; Ibn Hindū, 79; Ibn 'Aqnīn, *Ṭibb an-nufūs*, trans. Halkin, 134 f.

³ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 317; Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 194, where the Greek saying of Demades describing bashfulness as the acropolis of beauty is referred to.

⁴ Cf. Ibn Durayd, trans. Rosenthal, 46; Abū Sulaymān, *Ṣiwān*, fol. 48b; Ibn Hindū, in Ms. Aya Sofya 2452, see Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 369, n. 73; al-Mubashshir, 321, cf. Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 186, no. 89.

⁵ Cf. *al-Mukbtār*, fol. 22b: "(Socrates) said: 'Son, do not use physical beauty (*ḥusn taṣwīr aṭ-ṭabā'i*) as a vehicle for lustful desires.'"

⁶ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 321; Rosenthal, *Fortleben*, 198.

ABŪ ḤAYYĀN AT-TAWḤĪDĪ ON PENMANSHIP

The work of Abū Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī (d. after 1009-10) is as yet comparatively little known. There can, however, be no doubt that at-Tawḥīdī is one of the foremost representatives of Arabic prose literature. His style, though at times heavy and overloaded, bristles with sparkling phrases. At-Tawḥīdī appears to have been dominated by a rare desire to achieve intellectual independence, and the ideas he put on paper are the result of much searching meditation.

The little treatise on calligraphy which is here published deserves special attention on account of the fact that it claims at-Tawḥīdī as its author. The question of the genuineness of this claim, therefore, is one of major concern to us. There appears to be no bibliographical reference to the existence of a treatise on penmanship by at-Tawḥīdī. Moreover, in the introduction of the present work, mention is made of a certain Yāqūt who can be no other than Yāqūt al-Musta‘simī, the famous calligrapher of the thirteenth century.¹ There is, however, an erasure in the manuscript, and the name of Yāqūt seems to be a later addition, although the original reading of the passage remains to be ascertained.

On the other hand, some observations in favor of at-Tawḥīdī's authorship suggest themselves. Language and style are those of at-Tawḥīdī. The manner in which reference is made to his teacher, Abū Sulaymān as-Sijistānī,² is characteristic of his writings. The predilection for sayings of a philosophical character, displayed in the treatise, also is in keeping with the assumption of at-Tawḥīdī's authorship. Finally, it may be pointed out that, as far as it was possible to check them, none of the numerous references to contemporaries of at-Tawḥīdī and the older authorities quoted by him would militate against the assumption of his authorship (with the sole exception of the reference to Yāqūt, mentioned above).

There is, consequently, no sufficient reason to reject the manuscript's attribution of the treatise to at-Tawḥīdī. However, it cannot be

¹ Four calligraphers by the name of Yāqūt are mentioned by Ṭāshkōprüzādeh, I, 57 f. All of them are said to have flourished at a time much later than that of at-Tawḥīdī.

² See below saying no. 9.

denied that some more positive evidence in favor of his authorship would be welcome. If, for instance, a confirmation of the statement on the different styles of writing which appears in the introduction of the treatise could be found elsewhere, it would go far to silence any remaining doubts. There always remains a remote possibility that the present text was compiled from excerpts of other works by at-Tawḥīdī.

The treatise consists of two parts. The first part (pp. 23-33) is restricted to the statements on calligraphy which the author professes to have learned from prominent men of his time. These statements as a rule deal with the technical aspects of the art of penmanship. The second part (pp. 34-48) contains a collection of the choicest remarks of various authors concerning the aesthetic aspects of calligraphy and the practical importance of writing, although technical sayings, too, are not entirely absent.

Arabic writers on the subject of calligraphy provide many parallel passages, especially for the second part. There are, however, few exact parallels. Certain changes of, and additions to, what seems to have been the original saying are frequently encountered. These are minor differences, but according to Arabic literary standards such differences profoundly influence the aesthetic value of the sayings in question.

There exists a close connection between the treatise and the works of certain other authors who lived either before or after at-Tawḥīdī's time. Thus, the sayings attributed to the ancient Greeks (nos. 56 ff.) are also in Ḥunayn.¹ It is possible that Ḥunayn was the direct source of at-Tawḥīdī. The matter probably is much more complicated, however, for there also seems to exist some connection between the treatise and Abū Sulaymān's *Ṣiwān*.² Since Abū Sulaymān appears to be independent of Ḥunayn, the assumption of a common source for both Ḥunayn and the *Ṣiwān* might be justified.

Aṣ-Ṣūlī contains much related material. Nothing, however, suggests a direct relationship between at-Tawḥīdī and aṣ-Ṣūlī, except the fact that the sayings nos. 28-30, 35-36, and 44-45, are in aṣ-Ṣūlī in the same sequence in which they appear in at-Tawḥīdī. A similar observation can be made with regard to *ʿIqd*, II, 156 ff., in which the sayings nos. 28, 29, 32 (as well as 69 and 71) follow upon each other as they do in at-Tawḥīdī; but the two authors differ considerably with regard to the exact wording of the sayings.

¹ Ḥunayn appears to have been the source of al-Qalqashandī.

² The *Ṣiwān* was used by ash-Shahrestānī.

The existence of a common source is obvious in the case of at-Tawḥīdī's nos. 1-4 (first paragraph) and of Muḥammad b. 'Abd-ar-Raḥmān's *Lum'ab*, 76 ff. The latter does not depend directly upon at-Tawḥīdī, for, in addition to many other minor divergencies, the *Lum'ab* also mentions the name, which is not known to at-Tawḥīdī, of the authority that is credited with saying no. 2. The common source might be the *Tuḥfat al-wāmiq*, a treatise on calligraphy by Abū l-Ḥusayn Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Barbarī, but there is no evidence to prove the correctness of this assumption.

In view of the identical sequence in which certain sayings appear in both authors, a common source also suggests itself for at-Tawḥīdī, nos. 24, 25, 27, 28, and 31, and al-Balawī, I, 78.

Only one manuscript of at-Tawḥīdī's treatise is known to exist. It was written by a certain Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥasan al-Bawwāb al-Baghdādī at the end of the month of Ramaḍān, 728 (beginning of August, 1328). The manuscript is preserved in the Konsular-Akademie in Vienna.¹

According to the inventory of his "Nachlass," H. Thorbecke prepared a copy of the treatise.² It is not stated which manuscript was copied by Thorbecke, and I had no opportunity to study the material left by him. It is, however, virtually certain that Thorbecke had no other manuscript at his disposal than that from Vienna. He was familiar with the Viennese manuscript through his interest in Abū Miḥjan, whose *Diwān* the manuscript also contains.

Through the courtesy of the Konsular-Akademie I was able to copy at-Tawḥīdī's treatise in the Oriental Reading Room of the Preussische Staatsbibliothek in Berlin a number of years ago. I have had no recent opportunity to compare my copy with the original manuscript.³ When I prepared the copy, I thought that I had done it rather accurately. I am no longer so sure of that. A renewed collation of the manuscript might provide the correct explanation of some doubtful passages. Other passages will have to wait for someone

¹ Cf. H. Krafft, *Die arabischen, persischen, und türkischen Handschriften der k.k. orientalischen Akademie zu Wien* (Vienna 1842), No. 11. Cf. also C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* I, 244, and *Supplement* (Weimar-Berlin 1898-1902, Leiden 1937-42).

² A. Müller-A. Socin, *Heinrich Thorbecke's wissenschaftlicher Nachlass*, in *ZDMG* XLV (1891), 482.

³ The Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informs me that the catalogue of the Konsular-Akademie which is needed to locate the manuscript was lost during the war (letter of November 20, 1946). [A photostat of the Viennese Ms., in the library of Fu'ād I University in Gizah, No. 24090, could be checked very cursorily].

better equipped than I am to deal with the intricacies of the subject matter and of tenth-century literary Arabic.¹

ABŪ ḤAYYĀN AŞ-ŞŪFĪ'S EPISTLE ON PENMANSHIP

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,
in Whom we put our trust*

The Sheikh Abū Ḥayyān 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-'Abbās at-Tawḥīdī aŞ-Şūfī al-Baghdādī—God show mercy unto him—says:

I once was—God grant you a long and always pleasant life—in the house of some high official where a discussion about handwriting was going on. Handwriting was described, its various parts were commented upon, its different aspects were analyzed, and the methods of 'Irāqī² and other calligraphers were characterized. That high official himself had an inimitable and unrivaled handwriting.

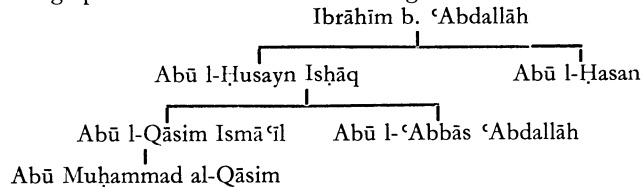
On that occasion I ventured forth with some remarks on the subject, most of which I had learned from Abū Muḥammad al-Barbarī,³ the copyist⁴ here with us in Baghdād. He excelled in his craft, which he had inherited from his father and his father's brother—the root which is grafted⁵ upon some virtues and vices brings forth wonders and

¹ Many relevant works have not been available. The following would appear to be of special significance: 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd-al-'Azīz al-Baghdādī (ninth century), *Kitāb al-Kuttāb*, cf. W. Björkman, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Staatskanzlei im islamischen Ägypten*, 8 f. (Hamburg 1928). A work ascribed to Ibn Muqlah contained in a manuscript in Tunis, Ms. or. 672, cf. Mohamed Torki, *Un Texte inédit attribué à Ibn Moqla, Actes du XVIII^e congrès intern. des orientalistes*, p. 243 f. (Leiden 1932). (Tamīm b. ?) al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs (d. 1061), *'Umdat al-kuttāb*, contained in a manuscript in Chicago, Oriental Institute A-12060, which was used by N. Abbott, and in other manuscripts, cf. Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, I, 473.

In the following edition and translation, I have numbered the individual sayings and, occasionally, passages within the sayings that contain enumerations.

² Al-'Irāq refers to the southern part of present-day Iraq. The northwestern mountainous part is called al-Jabal or al-Jibāl.

³ According to *Fihrist*, 13, and Yāqūt, *Irshād*, VI, 59-61, this famous family of calligraphers consisted of the following members:



⁴ N. Abbott, *Arabic Palaeography*, in *Ars Islamica*, VIII (1941), 68, stated that *muḥarrir* means "calligrapher" rather than "clean copyist."

⁵ According to the dictionaries, *washaja* ("to be entwined") should have a plural subject. Since the text uses the singular, the above translation seems justified.

hits upon marvels. I connected those remarks with some gleanings concerning the very nicest and most sophisticated arrangement of the letters, which I had learned from noble personalities, excellent calligraphers, and mature penmen, and which had been reaped by the calamus from the ancient masters. In their time attention was paid to the improvement of the basic forms of the different kinds of Kūfic writing. There were twelve such basic forms: (1) al-Ismā'īlī, (2) al-Makkī, (3) al-Madanī, (4) al-Andalusī, (5) ash-Sha'mī, (6) al-'Irāqī, (7) al-'Abbāsī, (8) al-Baghdādī, (9) al-Musha'ab, (10) ar-Rayḥānī, (11) al-Mujarrad, and (12) al-Miṣrī.¹ Some of these Arabic styles of writing have been used in ancient times, and some have been created at a recent date. The different modern styles (have their origin in the fact that their prototypes) were handed down on the authority of the men around Muḥammad in an uninterrupted chain of transmitters unto Ibn Muqlah² and Yāqūt (*sic*) [and others] who modified them according to their own judgment.

I was—God grant you a long life—in the salon of Ibn al-Barbarī,³ which was crowded with calligraphers and penmen, and each of them set out to reveal the choice sayings that lay hidden within him.

1. One of them said: The best calamus⁴ is the one which had been able to ripen in its body, the water of which had dried up in its rind, which was cut after throwing off its seeds, the pith of which is tough, and the bulk of which is heavy.⁵

¹ Most of these names are derived from the names of cities or countries: Mecca, Medina, Spain, Syria, Iraq, Baghdād, and Egypt. *Musha'ab* may be interpreted as “branching out,” or the like, and *mujarrad* means “stripped (plain).” Ismā'īlī and Rayḥānī refer to personalities, the latter probably to 'Alī b. 'Ubaydah ar-Rayḥānī. The 'Abbāsī style might have been named after the 'Abbāsids.

Robertson, in the introductory remarks to his translation of Muḥammad b. 'Abd-ar-Raḥmān, *Lum'ab*, 63 f., only mentions al-Makkī, al-Madanī, al-Andalusī, al-'Irāqī, and ar-Rayḥānī. Al-Baṭalyawī, 88 ff., refers to ash-Sha'mī. Cf. also Ḥājji Khalifah, III, 149 f.

² The famous calligrapher and statesman, Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. 'Alī (d. 940). Regarding Yāqūt, see p. 20 n. 1.

³ It is doubtful whether Ibn al-Barbarī is identical with the “high official” mentioned in the beginning. However, it seems unlikely that at-Tawḥīdī here refers not to the gathering in the home of the “high official,” but to an earlier one in the home of Ibn al-Barbarī. Should Ibn al-Barbarī be corrected to some other name, such as Ibn al-Yazīdī?

⁴ An instructive reproduction of a Muslim calamus is contained in Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*, I, pl. A. Cf. also A.F.J. Herbin, *Développements des principes de la langue arabe moderne* pls. I and II (Paris 1803), and R. Blankertz, *Schreibwerkzeug und Schriftform*, *Abh. und Ber. d. deutschen Museums* V, fasc. 4, Abh. 46 (Munich 1933).

⁵ Cf. Āmulī, I, 11; al-Qalqashandī, II, 443; Muḥammad b. 'Abd-ar-Raḥmān, *Lum'ab*, 76.

2. Another said: The calamus which is nibbed obliquely produces a weaker and more elegant handwriting; the one which is nibbed evenly a stronger and clearer one; an intermediate one combines one of the two qualities of the first kind with one of the second. By length in the head ¹ of the calamus the light hand is assisted in writing fast; by shortness the reverse. ²

3. Another said: The nibbing consists of four different processes:

(1) The opening (*al-faṭḥ*). In a tough calamus the hollowing is done deeper, in a soft one less deep, and in a medium one betwixt and between.

(2) The paring (*an-naḥṭ*) consists of two kinds: that of the sides of the calamus, and that of its core. That of the sides should be even with regard to both edges ³ and should not be inclined (?) toward one of the two parts created by the split (of the pen point), ⁴ because this would weaken the edge of that particular part. The pith, too, of the calamus in its core should be evenly distributed, and the split should be central to the *jilfab* ⁵ of the calamus, whether it be thin or thick.

(3) The splitting (*ash-shaqq*), too, depends on the kind of calamus available. If it is tough, most of the *jilfab* should be split; if it is soft, about one-third of it, and if it is of a medium quality, something betwixt and between. ⁶

(4) The cutting of the point (*al-qatṭ*) is done in different ways: oblique, even, upright, and inclined. ⁷ The best is the oblique one with a medium slant. Some ⁸ people tend toward roundness in cutting the point, and praise it and are eager to achieve it. I mean by "round" that no trace of bias is visible and that your hand holds the knife

¹ For the definition of the "head" of the calamus, cf. al-Qalqashandī, II, 447: ". . . to nib at the head of the calamus, i.e., where it gets thinner." *Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, II, 121: "By *jilfab* (see below) the opening of the head of the calamus is meant," Cf. also al-Ḥuṣrī, II, 234. Ms. Spoer, p. 4: "The thick part of the reed (*unbūb*)."

² Cf. Muḥammad b. 'Abd-ar-Raḥmān, *Lum'ah*, 76, where Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Barbarī is credited with this saying; Ms. Spoer, p. 5.

³ "The two edges (*sim*) of the calamus are its nibbed sides (Ibn Durustawayh, 93)."

⁴ "The *shaqq* of the calamus is the cleft between its two *sim* (Ibn Durustawayh, 93)."

⁵ "The *jilfab* (*julfab*) of the calamus extends from the beginning of the two *sim* to where the nibbing ends (Ibn Durustawayh, 93)." Consequently, *jilfab* refers to the whole part of the calamus which is cut away in order to make the calamus fit for writing.

⁶ Cf. Ms. Spoer, p. 3.

⁷ Cf. Ibn Durustawayh, 93.

⁸ Is there an omission in the manuscript in this passage ?

evenly and does not in the least lean toward any one side.¹ The upright one consists in the perfect evenness of both the rind and the pith. The one inclined in its relation to either the pith or the rind is not recommendable.²

4. The noble vizier and expert penman,³ Abū ‘Alī b. Muqlah said, describing the calamus: Lengthen the *jilfab* and make it good, and nib the point obliquely and to the right.⁴ For the point determines the handwriting.

The penman needs seven⁵ things: a handwriting that is stripped (plain) through *taḥqīq*, embellished by *taḥdīq*, perfected by *taḥwīq*, adorned by *takbrīq*, improved by *tashqīq*, ameliorated by *tadqīq*, and distinguished by *tafrīq*.

These are the principles and basic forms of handwriting which include its different aspects and subdivisions. Every calamus produces results only as good as its quality warrants—those going down to the watering place are the equivalent of those who come back—if God wills.

(1) Stripped (plain) through *taḥqīq* (attempting accuracy, or normalcy) means giving a distinct shape to all letters, those which are not arranged and those which are,⁶ those which are not connected and those which are, with their long strokes and their short strokes, their apertures and curvatures, until it looks as if they smiled and showed

¹ The last part of this sentence would seem to refer to the “even” *qatt*, of which nothing more is said.

² Cf. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān, *Lum‘ah*, 77; Ms. Marsh 202, fol. 128a. On the four kinds of nibbing the calamus, cf. also Āmulī, I, 12, and Sirāj al-Ḥasanī, fol. 28 ff.

³ *Kātib*, of course, also means “secretary.” The latter translation is here used for *kātib* in those cases in which it is the only title attached to the name of a person.

⁴ A slightly different version of this saying appears below no. 47. Most parallel passages show something of a mixture between nos. 4 and 47, in that the wording corresponds more closely to that in no. 4, while the introductory remarks of no. 47, mentioning ‘Abd-al-Ḥamid b. Yaḥyā, have been retained. Cf. *Iqd*, II, 155; al-Jahshiyāri, fol. 41b; aṣ-Ṣulī, 72; at-Tanūkhī, fol. 158b; ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Thimār*, 156; ar-Rāghib, I, 68; *Ta‘rīkh Dimashq*, II, 121; Ibn Khallikān, trans., II, 175; al-Lakhmī, fol. 9a; Ibn Kathīr, X, 55; Ibn Nubātah, I, 259; al-Qalqashandī, II, 449; Sirāj al-Ḥasanī, fol. 70a; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān, *Lum‘ah*, 79, also 69 and 70, n. 30; al-‘Almawī, 133; Ms. Marsh 202, fol. 128b; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 76b.

It is not quite clear whether the remainder of this long saying also belongs to Ibn Muqlah.

⁵ While seven items are enumerated in this place, the following detailed explanation mentions ten.

⁶ Arranged in words ?

front teeth that are wide apart one from another, or laughed and displayed beautifully cultivated gardens.

This concerns all the letters altogether. I am going to mention hereafter that which only concerns individual letters.

(2) *Ṭaḥḍīq* (“making eyeballs”¹) means the perfect execution of the *ḥāʾ*, *kbāʾ*, *jīm*, and similar letters, with regard to their inner white part and their protection (?)² from underneath, from above, and from their sides, whether they are mixed with other letters or standing out alone by themselves, until they are like wide-open eyeballs.

(3) *Ṭaḥwīq* (“encircling”) means rounding front, middle, and tail of the *wāw*, *fāʾ*, *qāf*, and similar letters, so as to provide those letters with elegance and to increase their comeliness.

(4) *Takhrīq* (“piercing”) means keeping open the loops of the *ḥāʾ*, *ʿayn*, *ghayn*, and similar letters, however they occur, either alone by themselves or together with others of their kind, so as to make recognizable their distinct shape and their opening (even) to weak eyes.

(5) *Taʿrīq* (“causing to take root”?)³ means bringing out the *nūn*, *yāʾ*, and similar letters, which occur at the end of words such as *min*, *ʿan*, *fī*, *matā*, *ilā*, and *ʿalā*, so that it is as if they were woven upon a single loom.

(6) *Tashqīq* (? , “splitting”) means enveloping⁴ the *ṣād*, *ḍād*, *kāf*, *tāʾ*, *zāʾ*, and similar letters in a way that their proportion and equilibrium is preserved, for correctness and elegance of shape depend on proportion and equilibrium. In general, as it has been said, handwriting is spiritual geometry by means of a corporeal instrument.⁵

(7) *Tanmīq* (“embellishing”) means writing all letters in a neat fashion, whether they are separate or connected, safeguarding them from faulty⁶ execution, and spending much care upon their evenness (?).

¹ Or “pupils.” In this context, however, “eyeballs” appears to be more appropriate.

² The text is uncertain.

³ According to Ibn Durustawayh, 64 ff., *taʿrīq* (*muʿarraq*) refers to the curved strokes which extend below the line in certain letters such as *sīm* and *nūn*. Cf. also R. Dozy, *Supplément*, II, 121.

⁴ *Takannuf* (if this should be the correct reading, rather than *takasbshuf* or something similar) could also mean “protecting.”

⁵ This remark is repeated below no. 56, in the name of Euclid. Without the attribution to an ancient authority the saying appears in ath-Thaʿālibī, *Tamthīl*, 20, but cf. Ms. Paris, fol. 57b, where the name of Euclid appears; al-Māwardī, 21; Āmulī, I, 10, quoted by T. W. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, 2 (Oxford 1928); Sirāj al-Ḥasanī, fol. 13a.

⁶ “Of an unequal quality.”

(8) *Tawfiq* (“arranging suitably”) means keeping the lines straight in the beginning, middle, end, and below and above, so as to give them harmony and avoid any discordance.

(9) *Tadqiq* (“exactness”) means demarcating the tails of the letters, by letting one’s hand go,¹ and by employing the edge of the calamus and turning it around either with its front, or with one of its edges or with both edges, either with application of pressure or without, so as to increase the beauty, splendor, sparkle, and brilliance of the letters.

(10) *Tafriq* (“division”)² means preventing the letters from encroaching one upon the other and from getting mixed up one with the other, so as to keep the body of each letter separate from that of the other while achieving harmony through the excellency of their shapes.

These points are sufficient for a penman, provided that he is by nature adaptable, agreeable in his doings, of a sweet character, and of an unassuming disposition.

5. I heard the calligrapher, Abū l-Ḥasan al-A‘sar (?)³ say: Handwriting can be divided into four kinds. The first kind is *al-muḥaqqaq* (“accurate,” or “normal”),⁴ which can be written with a thick, medium, and fine calamus, whether it is nibbed obliquely or straight. Next there comes semi-*muḥaqqaq*, which can be written with the same kinds of calamus. Then *al-mursal* (“flowing”?),⁵ which can be written with the same kinds of calamus, and then semi-*mursal*, which can also be written with the same kinds of calamus. He said: Try to avoid that (the handwriting with) a thick calamus becomes coarse, (the one with) a medium one incoherent, and (the one with) a thin one weak.

6. The professor (?)⁶ at Bāb aṭ-Ṭāq⁷ once said to the book-

¹ A similar expression is used in no. 11 below. It seems to signify “writing fast with broad, flowing strokes.” Cf. Sirāj al-Ḥasanī, fol. 163a, who defines *irsāl* as a fast and steady forward movement of the hand, and Ḥājji Khalifah, III, 156.

² Cf. Ibn Durustawayh, 65.

³ The identity of this person and the correct form of his name remain to be ascertained.

⁴ C. Huart, and following him, E. Robertson write *muḥaqqiq*. *Muḥaqqaq* appears preferable. Cf. also “Calligraphy. A. An Outline History,” in Pope, *Survey*, II, 1707 ff. Abbott, *op. cit.*, 65 ff.

⁵ Cf. n. 1. Robertson, *ad* Muḥammad b. ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān, *Lum‘ah*, 61 and 71, renders *mursal* with “prolonged.”

⁶ *Al-mudarris*. Or is this a proper name?

⁷ The Greenwich Village or Bloomsbury of Baghdād. Cf., for instance, at-Tawḥidī, *apud* al-Qiftī, 88; *idem*, *Muqābasāt*, 169 and 186.

dealer, ¹ Ibn al-Khallāl ²: Hey you! If you have nibbed your calamus obliquely, do not use pressure, but if you have nibbed it straight, never let your hand relax. Your handwriting, despite its elegance, suffers from the fact that there is more pith to your calamus than necessary. You also display an unusual haste in writing, which points to carelessness. Do not do that. For one well-written line is more useful to you and pays you more than ten hasty pages.

7. I heard him say on another occasion: Handwriting with gall ink as a rule has a destructive influence (upon the quality of the writing).

8. I heard the secretary, Ibn Sūrīn ³ say: Some people think that the constant application of *mashq* ⁴ improves the handwriting. I do not think that this opinion corresponds to the facts, or is in agreement with the truth, or deserves acceptance. The constant application of *mashq* means an uninterrupted movement with a disregard for the right proportions. This causes disorder, which results from the hand being tired. It has often made the calamus aggressive, or caused the writing tool to be rebellious.

9. I heard ‘Alī b. Ja‘far, ⁵ secretary to aṭ-Ṭā‘i‘, who had a good handwriting with an inclination toward round forms, say: There is nothing more useful for a calligrapher than to avoid using his hand for lifting up or putting down a thing, especially if it is heavy. If the movements assimilate themselves to the letters and the letters get buried in the movements, the essential traits of the forms of the handwriting and of the shape of the letters will be safeguarded only inasmuch as they have become filled with them, and their bodies will

¹ A *warrāq* also produced his merchandise himself by copying or by having others copy manuscripts for him.

² The identity of this person and the correct form of his name remain to be ascertained. A certain Ibn al-Khallāl al-Baṣri is mentioned by at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā‘*, II, 58. Yāqūt, *Irsbād*, XIV, 245, mentioned a certain copyist, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Khallāl, who died in the year 991-92.

³ He is mentioned by at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā‘*, III, 212 f.

⁴ *Mashq* also occurs in nos. 21, 35, and 90 below. Cf., especially, aṣ-Ṣūlī, 55 f., 123, and 137, and al-Baṭalyawsi, 89 and 94. It may be roughly translated by “scribbling,” although originally no deprecatory meaning was inherent in the term. Later authors appear to be uncertain regarding the exact meaning of the term. O. Rescher, in his translation of al-Māwardī, I, 85, n. 5, said that *mashq* seems to signify a “verschlungene Schnellschrift” which omits diacritical points and connects unconnected letters. M. Steinschneider, *Vorlesungen über die Kunde hebräischer Handschriften*, 30 f. (Leipzig 1897), also happens to refer to the term.

⁵ He is mentioned in at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā‘*, I, 62.

be protected only inasmuch as they have been put in relation to them.¹ He said: Recently, I lifted a whip with my hand several times and cracked it over the head of my mount. As a result my handwriting was changed for a while.

When I told this story to Abū Sulaymān,² he said: What a wonderful remark! As if it had been made with regard to a musician. A musician weighs the different musical movements (κίνησις). Sometimes he mixes the heavy (πυκνή) movement with the light (ἀραιά) one, sometimes he takes away (ἀφαίρεσις) the light movement from the heavy one, and sometimes he lifts (ἔρσις) one of them up to the other by adding a beat (χρόνος) or subtracting a beat.³ In his craft he proceeds with the finest degree of sensitivity possible in sensory perception. The fine part of sensory perception is connected with the fine soul, even as the coarse part of the soul is connected with the coarse⁴ part of sensory perception.

Abū Sulaymān expressed himself better than that, but there is a more fitting place for it elsewhere.

10. I heard Abū Ishāq aṣ-Ṣābi'⁵ say: Whenever I prepared the clean copy of a document immediately after I had drafted it, I noticed some discordance in my handwriting, some oscillation in my calamus, and some heaviness⁶ in my hand. But when I rested for a little while after I finished the draft, or took a nap, I succeeded in preparing the clean copy as correctly as I could wish, nor did I make any mistakes.

11. I heard az-Zuhrī,⁷ who had been in contact with Ibn Muqlah,

¹ If I correctly understand this difficult passage, the author intends to say that an exertion of the hand causes the handwriting to undergo a change, though it remains essentially unchanged. Has a negation been omitted, and should one translate: "...will *not* be safeguarded, since they..."

² Cf. above, p. 20.

³ My friend, Eric Werner, has kindly supplied the Greek equivalents. He refers me to Euclid (in *Musici scriptores Graeci*, 148 [Leipzig 1895]); Aristides Quintilianus, *De musica*, ed. R. Schaefke, 217 and 293 (Berlin 1937); and Sa'adyāh, cf. E. Werner and I. Sonne, *The Philosophy and Theory of Music in Judaeo-Arabic Literature*, in *Hebrew Union College Ann.*, XVI (1941), 302 (fifth and sixth mode), 317, paras. 154 and 162, as well as H. G. Farmer, *Sa'adyah Gaon on the Influence of Music*, 18 ff. (London 1943) (from al-Kindī, *Risālah fī ajzā' khabariyāt al-mūsīqī*).

⁴ Ms: "fine."

⁵ I.e., Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl aṣ-Ṣābi' (d. 994).

⁶ Or "negligence."

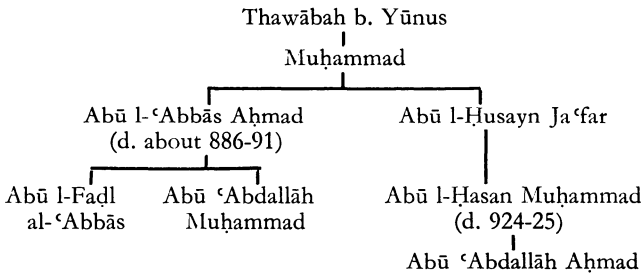
⁷ The identity of this person remains to be established. A certain Abū Bakr az-Zuhrī is mentioned in at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā'*, III, 213, a certain az-Zuhayrī, *ibid.*, I, 63, and III, 196.

Ibn az-Zanjī,¹ and the Banū Thawābah² say: He who has acquired a thorough knowledge of the unconnected letters and then has learned to connect two letters, then three, then four, and so on, to the ultimate number of connected letters that are found in words, such as, for instance, *fa-sa-yukfīkahum*,³ . . .,⁴ and who has further become acquainted with words which contain combinations of letters that are similar to each other, such as *ḥaṭaṭtu*, . . .,⁴ and the great number of similar cases, can in my opinion be expected to reach the highest summit of calligraphy. He said: The decisive factor is the ability to keep the ends of the lines straight, to make even the beginnings of the letters,⁵ to preserve order and arrangement, to avoid precipitation, to show forcefulness while letting oneself go, and to let one's hand go⁶ while using a forcefully compact writing.

12. I heard al-ʿAsjadī⁷ say: The embroidered cloth of handwriting is its evenness. Its design is its shape.⁸ Its coloring is the well-measured arrangement of the black (writing) on the white (paper of the page).⁹ Its elegance is the preservation of its individual components in the composition of the whole.

¹ He may be identical with Abū ʿAbdallāh b. az-Zanjī, who is mentioned below no. 15.

² Yāqūt, *Irshād*, IV, 146, 155; VII, 186 ff.; XVII, 97 (cf. also *Fibrīst*, 187 f.), mentioned some members of the Thawābah family. Their mutual relationship is indicated in the following table:



At-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ*, repeatedly mentioned Abū l-Haytham al-ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad b. Thawābah (d. 915-16). He also referred to a certain Sulaymān b. Thawābah (*Imtāʿ*, III, 7). Their relationship, if any, to the other members of the Thawābah family is not clear.

³ Qurʾān 2:137/131.

⁴ Here follow other examples.

⁵ In the beginnings of the lines?

⁶ Cf. p. 28, n. 1.

⁷ Cf. at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ*, I, 48, and *idem*, *Ṣadāqah*, 7, 51, 131.

⁸ "Vowel signs" could hardly be meant here.

⁹ The text page. For this meaning of *taqdīr*, cf. al-Baṭalyawṣī, 68. *Istiwāʾ at-taḥdīr* is mentioned as one of the conditions of a good handwriting by Ibn Durustawayh, 73.

13. I heard the secretary, Ibn al-Marzubān,¹ who was a good stylist,² say: Handwriting is a difficult geometry and an exacting craft. If it is elegant, it is weak. If it is solid, it is easily washed off (?). If it is big, it is coarse. If it is thin, it looks scattered, and if it is round, it is thick. A shape that combines all the qualities, the largest and smallest, can be devised only in exceptional and rare cases.

14. I heard Ibn al-Musharraf al-Baghdādī³ say: I have seen the handwriting of al-Ma'mūn's secretary, Aḥmad b. Abī Khālid,⁴ which the Byzantine king used to take out and exhibit among his treasures on the day of his festival.⁵ He said: Aḥmad b. Abī Khālid's *alifs* and *lāms* were as upright and straight as could be; the only blemish I could find in the letters of his handwriting was in the connected *wāws* and the unconnected *yā's*. He said: I have also seen the handwriting of Ibrāhīm b. al-'Abbās,⁶ which was very weak but most elegant and fascinating. He said: I have also seen the handwriting of Dhū r-Ri'āsatayn,⁷ which was superb; but he did not write with either a medium or a thick calamus. He said: Neither the people of the east nor those of the west⁸ have a handwriting which would deserve description.

15. The secretary, Abū 'Abdallāh b. az-Zanjī,⁹ whom I saw in

¹ He may be the well-known writer, Muḥammad b. 'Imrān al-Marzubānī (d. 994), who is also referred to as Ibn al-Marzubān. However, at-Tawḥīdī, who was acquainted with him, always calls him al-Marzubānī in his other works.

Another *kātib* by the name of Ibn al-Marzubān, Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. al-Marzubān ash-Shirāzī, also lived in this period, cf. the introduction of the editors to at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā'*, I, 13.

² In the text *baligh*, *balāghab* ("eloquent, eloquence,") as a rule refers to the written, and not to the spoken word. In the majority of cases, therefore, a translation "(good) stylist, style" is indicated.

³ The identity of this person remains to be ascertained.

⁴ Aḥmad b. Abī Khālid al-Aḥwal (d. 825-26), *kātib* of al-Ma'mūn.

⁵ This story is referred to by aṣ-Ṣūlī, 45. Ath-Tha'ālībī, *Thimār*, 167, stated that a document written by Ibn Muqlah and pertaining to a certain truce between the Muslims and the Byzantines was greatly admired by the Byzantines and was exhibited on their holidays.

⁶ I.e., aṣ-Ṣūlī (d. 857), a granduncle of the author of *Adab al-kuttāb*.

⁷ I.e., al-Faḍl b. Sahl (d. 818), vizier of al-Ma'mūn. The *Ri'āsi* style of writing is named after him, cf., for instance, Yāqūt, *Irshād*, VI, 60.

⁸ The countries east and west of al-'Irāq. For this usage of *masbriq* and *maghrib* in the tenth century, cf., for instance, Miskawayh, in H. F. Amedroz and D. S. Margoliouth, *The Eclipse of the 'Abbasid Caliphate*, I, 42 (Oxford, 1920-21), and at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā'*, II, 181.

⁹ He might be identical with Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Ismā'il az-Zanjī, who died in 946. At-Tawḥīdī was born before 932. Thus, he might have known Abū 'Abdallāh. However, Ibrāhīm b. al-Marzubān (deposed in 979) can under

Azerbaijan while he was working for the Sallārid Ibrāhīm b. al-Marzubān, said to us: The handwriting which is most satisfactory and fulfills the greatest number of conditions of a good handwriting is the one in use with our colleagues in the Iraq. When I asked him about his opinion concerning the handwriting of Ibn Muqlah, he said: He is a prophet in the field of handwriting; it was poured upon his hand, even as it was revealed to the bees to make their honey cells hexagonal.¹

16. When I asked Abū l-Jamal,² who was a secretary to Naṣr-ad-dawlah Shāshnikīr,³ about the difference between the handwriting of the people of the Jabal and that of the people of the ʿIrāq,⁴ he said: A difference which cannot remain concealed to a person that has eyes to see, and which does not admit of any doubt or uncertainty. The handwriting of our colleagues is resplendent and brilliant. The handwriting of the people of the Jabal, on the other hand, is . . . (?). If an upright stroke by chance turns out right, it looks as if it were a mistake and the rest were correct. Furthermore, the execution of the rest of the letters lacks sparkle in that handwriting. Everything is somehow mixed up. It has no beauty.

17. I heard Abū Tammām az-Zaynabī,⁵ whose handwriting was good and whose style original, say in reply to the question where he had acquired his handwriting and style: I took Abū ʿAlī b. Muqlah as a model for my handwriting, even though I am far from realizing his high aspirations and unable to come near him. As to my style, Hāshimī origin has made for nobility, and the imitation of the Banū Thawābah has been instructive.

If I should mention all such remarks that I have learned from the masters of this métier and the great men of this craft, it would take much time and space. In the following section, therefore, I shall

no circumstances have been referred to as the ruler of Azerbaijan prior to the death of al-Marzubān in 957. If this identification is correct, one must resort to the difficult assumption that Abū ʿAbdallāh was employed by Ibrāhīm before the latter assumed power. Cf. V. Minorsky, in *EI*, s.v. Musāfirids.

¹ Cf. Qurʾān 16:68/70; ad-Damīrī, I, 283, s.v. *nahl*.

² The correct form of the name of this person remains to be ascertained. Ibn al-Ḥiml, secretary to Naṣr-ad-dawlah Shāshnikīr, is mentioned by at-Tawḥīdī, *Ṣadāqah*, 32. A certain Abū l-Jml appears in at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ*, I, 66.

³ Ms.: Naṣīr. Shāshnikīr is Iranian *chāshnigīr*. The same word appears to occur in at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ*, III, 215. It is identical with the later title *jāshnakīr*.

⁴ Cf. p. 23, n. 2. Comparisons between the qualities of ʿIrāqīs and Jabalīs were quite a popular topic in at-Tawḥīdī's circle, cf., for instance, *Imtāʿ*, I, 62.

⁵ The chief caḍī, al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb ash-Sharīf (d. 982-83). Cf. also at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ*, III, 100, 153, 213.

hand down unto you bons mots of the wise and the learned which are concerned with the description of handwriting and which might give experience to him who studies handwriting. You will thus be warned to make strenuous efforts in this respect and to choose the handwriting which is most perfect with regard to its power and strength. The most important thing is an adaptable nature, a strong will, and previous divine inspiration.

18. An ancient authority said: A good handwriting gives added clarity to truth.¹

19. With regard to the word of God—Great is His praise—: “. . . adding to the creation what He pleaseth,”² Qatādah³ said that a good handwriting was intended.⁴

20. A tradition handed down on the authority of Wahb⁵ says: If a man writes *bi-smi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*, and writes it very well and carefully, God will pardon him.⁶

21. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb—God show favor unto him—said: The worst way of reading aloud is spluttering, and the worst way of writing is scribbling (*mashq*).⁷

22. ‘Umar said: The best handwriting is that which is clearest,⁸ and the clearest handwriting is that which is best.

23. ‘Abbās⁹ said: Handwriting is the tongue of the hand.¹⁰ Style is the tongue of the intellect. The intellect is the tongue of good actions and qualities. And good actions and qualities are the perfection of man.

¹ Cf. al-‘Askarī, *Ma‘ānī*, II, 86; al-Māwardī, 22; al-Lakhmī, fol. 16a (in the name of Muḥammad); an-Nuwayrī, VII, 14 (where this saying is reported in the name of the Caliph ‘Alī); Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 74a (in the name of Muḥammad); Ms. Spoer, p. 3.

² Qur’ān 35:1/1.

³ Qatādah b. Di‘āmah (d. 735).

⁴ Cf. al-Lakhmī, fol. 16a; an-Nuwayrī, VII, 13; as-Suyūṭī, *Muḥbir*, II, 179 f.; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 74b.

⁵ Wahb b. Munabbih (d. about 732).

⁶ Cf. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān, *Lum‘ah*, 75 f. Theologians frequently extol the merit inherent in the constant and careful application of the various religious formulas, cf. as-Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 868 f.

⁷ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 56; al-Māwardī, 22; al-‘Almawī, 133. On *mashq*, cf. p. 29, n. 4.

⁸ Cf. al-‘Almawī, 133. Without the name of the caliph this saying appears below no. 68, where further parallel passages are indicated.

⁹ The identity of this person remains to be ascertained. Parallel passages mentioned ‘Ubaydallāh b. al-‘Abbās b. al-Ḥasan al-‘Alawī.

¹⁰ Cf. Ibn al-Mudabbir, 42; aṣ-Ṣūlī, 74; al-‘Askarī, *Ma‘ānī*, II, 74; ar-Rāghib, I, 57; al-Māwardī, 21; al-Balawī, I, 78; an-Nuwayrī, VII, 13 f.; Āmulī, I, 11; Sirāj al-Ḥasanī, fol. 14a; Ṭāshkōprüzādeh, I, 70; Ḥājī Khalīfah III, 144.

24. The first philosopher¹ said: The calamus is one of the two tongues, even as it has been said: A small family is one of the two kinds of wealth.²

25. When someone said to Naṣr b. Sayyār:³ So-and-so does not write, he replied: This is a hidden, long, and debilitating disease.⁴

26. The vizier, Ibn az-Zayyāt⁵ said: The calamus introduces the daughters of the brains into the bridal chambers of the books.⁶

27. Ibn at-Tawʿam⁷ said: The written word can be read in any place and at any time, and it can be interpreted by any tongue. The spoken word, on the other hand, does not reach farther than the ears which hear it, and it is not equally clear for everybody.⁸ Without written documents there would be divergent reports about past generations, and information on (for?) future generations would be interrupted.⁹ The spoken word is for those who are present, but the written word is for those who are far away and those who will come and go after you. The usefulness of the calamus is more general, and the government offices need it more than the spoken word. It is only through written communications that a king who resides in the middle of his country knows about the welfare of the outlying districts, the safety of the frontier zones, and the stability of his realm. Without writing no administration could go on, and affairs could not be properly managed.

¹ *Al-ḥakīm al-awwal* may, of course, refer to Aristotle, but it is doubtful whether Aristotle is meant here.

² Cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Uyūn*, I, 47; aṣ-Ṣūli, 74; al-Balawī, I, 78. The first part of this saying is found in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, I, 71; *idem*, *Ḥayawān*, I, 22; *ʿIqd*, II, 153; aṣ-Ṣūli, 74; al-Bayhaqī, I, 6; at-Tanūkhī, fols. 44b-45b; al-Māwardī, 21; ath-Thaʿālibī, *Tamthīl*, 20, and *idem*, *Thimār*; Ibn ʿAbd-al-Barr, 38; al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, III, 126 (*Kitāb āfāt al-lisān*); al-Lakhmī, fol. 6a; an-Nuwayrī, VII, 20; Sirāj al-Ḥasanī, fol. 14a; as-Suyūṭī, *Iṭqān*, 869; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 75a. The second part is quoted, for instance, by al-Maydānī, II, 166 f.

³ I. e., al-Layth, governor of Khurāsān (d. 748).

⁴ Cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Uyūn*, I, 47; ath-Thaʿālibī, *Tamthīl*, 20; al-Balawī, I, 78. Cf. below saying no. 86.

⁵ Muḥammad b. ʿAbd-al-Malik (d. 847).

⁶ Cf. ar-Rāghib, I, 67, and al-Qalqashandī, II, 437. A similar metaphor, though with a different twist, appears in al-Ḥalabī, 82.

⁷ The identity of this person remains to be ascertained.

⁸ Cf. al-Balawī, I, 78. For the first part of this saying, cf. also al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, I, 71, and al-Bayhaqī, I, 6. Cf. also the anonymous *Risālah fī faḍl al-ʿilm*, addressed to Aḥmad b. Abī Duʿād (d. 854), in *Revue de l'Académie Arabe de Damas*, XIX (1944), 74.

⁹ If *ghābir* here means "past generations," and not "future generations," the second half of this sentence would be a repetition of the first. The context seems to favor the above translation. Cf. Pseudo-Jāḥiẓ, 59, and al-Ghazzālī, *Ḥikmah*, 31.

28. Ismā'īl b. Ṣabīḥ ath-Thaqafī¹ said: The brains of men are under the points of their pens.²

29. 'Alī b. 'Ubaydah³ said: The calamus is deaf, yet, it hears secrets. It is mute, yet, it expresses ideas clearly.⁴ It is more unable to say what it wants to say than Bāqil,⁵ yet, it is better able to express itself and is more eloquent than Saḥbān Wā'il.⁶ It interprets the thoughts of those who are present, and gives information about those who are far away.⁷

30. Aḥmad b. Yūsuf,⁸ secretary of al-Ma'mūn, said: Tears upon the cheeks of chaste young women are no more beautiful than tears of a calamus in a manuscript.⁹

31. Ja'far b. Yaḥyā¹⁰ said: Handwriting is the necklace of wisdom. It serves to sort the pearls of wisdom, to bring its dispersed pieces

¹ There seems to be no certainty as to whether the name of Ismā'īl's father was Ṣabīḥ, or Ṣubayḥ. Cf. also Björkman, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

² Cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Uyūn*, I, 47; *Iqd*, II, 156; aṣ-Ṣūli, 67; *Fibrīst*, 15; ath-Tha'ālibī, *Tamthīl*, 20; *idem*, *Ijāz*, 24, and *Khbāṣṣ*, 3; ar-Rāghib, I, 59; al-Maydānī, II, 166 f.; al-Balawī, I, 78; al-Lakhmī, fol. 9a; an-Nuwayrī, VII, 20; al-Qalqashandī, II, 436; Ikhtiyār-ad-dīn, 126 f.; as-Suyūṭī, *Muḥbir*, II, 179 f.; *Bustān*, fol. 40b. Cf. also the poem by 'Alī b. Muḥammad at-Tanūkhī (d. 953), in Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XIV, 174.

³ I.e., ar-Rayḥānī, who lived in the time of al-Ma'mūn.

⁴ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūli, 67. For the whole saying, cf. *Iqd*, II, 156.

⁵ Cf. al-Jāhīz, *Madḥ al-kutub*, 43; Ibn Qutaybah, *Ma'ārif*, 296; at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā'*, I, 61; Ibn Ḥibbān, 105; al-'Askarī, *Jamharah*, s.v., a'yā; ath-Tha'ālibī, *Thimār*, 99 f.; al-Maydānī, II, 146, quoted in Lane's dictionary, s. *rad.* 'y-y; Ibn Ḥamdūn, fol. 32a-33a (ch. 30); ash-Sharīshī, I, 253 f. and II, 50; al-Muṭarrizī, fol. 77b (16th *Maqāmab*), who quoted the collections of proverbs by Abū 'Ubayd b. Sallām and Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XVII, 148; *Lisān al-'Arab*, s. *rad.* b-q-l; as-Suyūṭī, *Muḥbir*, I, 242.

⁶ Saḥbān is frequently mentioned as the model of eloquence, cf., for instance, al-Jāhīz, *Madḥ al-kutub*, 43; Ibn Qutaybah, *Ma'ārif*, 297; al-'Askarī, *Jamharah*, 66; ath-Tha'ālibī, *Thimār*, 79; al-Maydānī, I, 450 and II, 794, cf. also III, fasc. 1, 43; *Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, VI, 65; ash-Sharīshī, *loc. cit.*; al-Muṭarrizī, fols. 37b-38a (5th *Maqāmab*); Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XVII, 148; *Lisān al-'Arab*, s. *rad.* s-b-b and b-q-l; an-Nuwayrī, II, 109; Ibn Nubāṭah, I, 148, where it is stated that Saḥbān Wā'il died in 674. Cf. also at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā'*, I, 100, 139, and the introduction to at-Tawḥīdī, *Muqābasāt*, 54.

In his *Nūnīyah* Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Bustī, a contemporary of at-Tawḥīdī, sings: Saḥbān without money is dumb like Bāqil, and a wealthy Bāqil is like Saḥbān.

⁷ It is unlikely that the text should be translated: "... interprets what is going on in its presence, and gives information about what is happening far away."

⁸ Died about 828-29, cf. *Ta'rīkh Dimashq*, II, 123.

⁹ Cf. *Iqd*, II, 156; aṣ-Ṣūli, 67; al-Lakhmī, fol. 9a; al-Qalqashandī, II, 436; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 70b.

¹⁰ I.e., al-Barmakī (d. 803).

into good order, ¹ to put its stray bits together, and to fix its setting (?).

32. An-Namarī said: The calami are the pack animals of the minds, ² the couriers of the natural faculties, and the *avant-garde* of the part of the body in which thought and feeling are situated.

33. Jabal b. Yazīd ³ said: The calamus is the tongue of the person of insight. It reveals to him secret rumors, ⁴ reassures him about the natural qualities which had been stirred up (?), ⁵ and tells him what happened while he was in the country (?).

34. ‘Abd-al-Ḥamid b. Yaḥyā, ⁶ secretary of Marwān, said: The calamus is a tree whose fruit is the spoken word. Reflection is an ocean whose pearl is wisdom. ⁷ Eloquence ⁸ is a watering place where the thirsty intellects are watered. Handwriting is a garden whose flowers are instructive remarks.

35. Ibn al-Muqaffa’ ⁹ said: The calamus is the courier of information who brings back the news and reveals hidden intelligence. ¹⁰ It sharpens the dull powers of reflection. The fruit of the vicissitudes and experiences of life ¹¹ is plucked from its scribbling (*mashq*). ¹²

36. Abū Dulaf al-‘Ijlī ¹³ said: The calamus is the goldsmith of speech. It liquefies and finds the content of the heart and fashions the ingots of the part of the body in which thought and feeling are situated. ¹⁴

¹ Cf. at-Ṭabarī, II, 843; al-Jahshiyārī, fol. 125b; al-‘Askarī, *Awā’il*, fol. 39a; *idem*, *Ma‘ānī*, II, 74; al-Māwardī, 20; al-Balawī, I, 78; ash-Sharishī, I, 95; an-Nuwayrī, VII, 14; Sirāj al-Ḥasanī, fol. 14a; Ṭashköprüzādeh, I, 70.

² Cf. *‘Iqd*, II, 156; *Fibrīst*, 15; al-Qalqashandī, II, 437; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 75b. Cf. also aṣ-Ṣūlī, 67 f.; Ṭashköprüzādeh, I, 71. Aṣ-Ṣūlī, 38, quoted this saying in the name of al-‘Attābī; ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Tamthīl*, Ms. Paris, fol. 58b; al-Lakhmī, fol. 9b.

³ Secretary of ‘Umārah b. Ḥamzah, who lived in the time of the Caliph al-Mahdī, cf. *Fibrīst*, 171 and 181; Ibn al-Mudabbir, 42.

⁴ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 66. A footnote in the edition of aṣ-Ṣūlī refers to al-Qalqashandī. Cf. also al-Lakhmī, fol. 6a, where we read *ad-damīr*, for *al-baṣīr*, and *al-asmā’*, for *al-asmā’*.

⁵ Or: “. . . which had become apparent (*istashāra*)” ??

⁶ The famous prototype of the *kuttāb* (d. 739-40) [rather, 750].

⁷ Cf. al-Jahshiyārī, fol. 41b; aṣ-Ṣūlī, 68; at-Tanūkhī, fol. 158b; ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Ijāz*, 29; *idem*, *Thimār*, 156; al-Muṭarrizī, fol. 150b (40th *Maqāmab*); Ibn Kathīr, X, 55; Ms. Spoer, p. 3. *Fibrīst*, 15, includes the following sentence.

⁸ Or: “A good style.”

⁹ The celebrated littérateur (d. 759).

¹⁰ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 67; ar-Rāghib, I, 68.

¹¹ Cf. at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā’*, I, 42: (*ad-dunyā*) *fī ‘ibarihā wa-ghiyarihā*.

¹² Cf. p. 29 n. 4.

¹³ I.e., al-Qāsim b. ‘Īsā (d. 839-40).

¹⁴ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 67; ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Tamthīl*, 20; Ms. Spoer, p. 3; Sirāj al-Ḥasanī, fol. 25a.

37. Hishām b. al-Ḥakam ¹ said: Handwriting is jewelry fashioned by the hand from the pure gold of the intellect. It also is brocade woven by the calamus with the thread of discernment.

38. The Greek philosopher said: The light of handwriting makes wisdom visible, ² and the skilful handling of the calamus shapes politics.

39. Thumāmah ³ said: Time does not desire to efface the imprints of the calamus. ⁴

40. Hishām b. ‘Abd-al-Malik ⁵ said: Handwriting is meek in its form, but its significance is great. ⁶ It is humble in its appearance, ⁷ but its influence is considerable.

41. The Ṣāḥib aṭ-Ṭāq ⁸ said: Many a handwriting which is inconspicuous to look at has demanded the full attention of speculative minds. ⁹

42. Hāshim b. Sālīm ¹⁰ said: Ink appears black to sight but white to insight. ¹¹

43. Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamir ¹² said: The heart is a mine, the intellect a precious mineral, the tongue a miner, the calamus a goldsmith, and the handwriting a finished piece of jewelry. ¹³

44. Sahl b. Hārūn ¹⁴ said: The calamus is the nose of the brain. When it bleeds, ¹⁵ it divulges the secrets of the brain, shows its ideas, and spreads the information the brain has. ¹⁶

¹ Died in the first quarter of the ninth century.

² Cf. al-Qalqashandī, II, 437.

³ The Mu‘tazilah leader (d. 828).

⁴ Cf. Ḥunayn, 152 f.; ‘*Iqd*, II, 156; ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Tamthīl*, Ms. Paris, fol. 58a; al-Qalqashandī, II, 437; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 75b; Ms. Spoer, p. 3.

⁵ The Umayyad caliph (d. 743).

⁶ Cf. Ḥunayn, 153; ‘*Iqd*, II, 156.

⁷ Or should one translate, in accordance with what seems to be the reading of the manuscript: “It is (like) a humble old man whose influence, however, is considerable” ?

⁸ The identity of this person remains to be ascertained.

⁹ Cf. ‘*Iqd*, II, 156.

¹⁰ The identity of this person remains to be ascertained. A certain Hishām b. Sālīm, of the clan Dhūr-Rummaḥ, who lived in the time of the grammarian and lexicographer, al-A‘rābī, is mentioned in at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā‘*, II, 104.

¹¹ Cf. al-Ḥuṣrī, II, 31; ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Tamthīl*, 20; *idem*, *Ījāz*, 29; Āmulī, I, 11; Ikhtiyār-ad-dīn, 127; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 77a.

¹² The Mu‘tazilah leader (d. 825).

¹³ Cf. al-‘Askarī, *Awā‘il*, fol. 39a; al-Balawī, I, 78; al-Lakhmī, fol. 10a.

¹⁴ Died in 830.

¹⁵ According to al-Baṭalyawsī, 87, *r-‘f* is used as a technical term denoting the dripping of ink from the calamus.

¹⁶ Cf. aṣ-Ṣulī, 67; al-Lakhmī, fol. 6a.

45. A Bedouin who looked at the handwriting of Aḥmad b. Abī Khālīd while he was writing said: The inkstand is a watering place, the calamus someone who goes down to it, and the manuscript the resting place where one goes after having been at the watering place.¹

46. Al-Ma'mūn said: Handwriting is the garden of knowledge, the wells (?) of understanding, the branch (?) of wisdom, and the brocade (?) of clear proof.²

47. Ibrāhīm b. Jabalah said: When the secretary, 'Abd-al-Ḥamīd passed by me and saw me write a bad hand, he asked: Do you want your handwriting to improve? I answered: Yes, and he said: Lengthen the *jilfab* of your calamus and cut its point all over again. I did so, and my handwriting improved.³

48. Ja'far b. Yaḥyā, looking at a beautiful handwriting, said: I never saw someone shed tears, and at the same time smile, more beautifully than the calamus.⁴

49. Al-Ma'mūn, looking at a beautifully written official document, said: How wonderful is the calamus! How it weaves the fine cloth of royal power,⁵ embroiders the ornamental borders of the garment of the ruling dynasty, and keeps up the standards of the caliphate.

50. When a secretary of 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ came to 'Umar, the latter asked him: Are you not Ibn al-Qayn from Mecca? When the secretary answered in the affirmative, 'Umar said to him: The calamus does not hesitate to show to whom it belongs.⁶

51. Ar-Rashīd who liked the handwriting of Ismā'īl b. Ṣabīḥ said to a Bedouin: Describe me Ismā'īl and his handwriting! The Bedouin replied: I never saw anything more agitated than his calamus, and more firm than his judgment. Whereupon ar-Rashīd exclaimed: Well spoken, O Bedouin, and ordered a sum of money to be given to him.⁷

¹ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 67, who quotes this saying on the authority of al-Jāḥiẓ.

² No uniform interpretation of all four metaphors suggests itself. Consequently, the above translation is highly uncertain. A remotely similar remark is in Yāqūt, *Irsḥād*, XVI, 98.

³ Cf. p. 26, n. 4.

⁴ Cf. ath-Tha'ālibī, *Tamthīl*, 20; *idem*, *Kbāṣṣ*, 3; *idem*, *Ijāz*, 24. For the used metaphor, cf. also *'Iqd*, II, 155; *Fihrist*, 15; al-Ḥalabī, 80; al-Qalqashandī, II, 437; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 70b.

⁵ Cf. al-Bayhaqī, I, 8; aṣ-Ṣūlī, 67; ath-Tha'ālibī, *Tamthīl*, 20; *idem*, *Ijāz*, 20; ar-Rāghib, I, 67; al-Qalqashandī, II, 437; as-Suyūṭī, *Muzḥbir*, II, 179 f.; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 71b.

⁶ I.e.: "I recognized you from your handwriting."

⁷ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 73; al-'Askarī, *Ma'ānī*, II, 77; ar-Rāghib, I, 60. Cf. also Ibn Qutaybah, *'Uyūn*, I, 47.

52. Al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā¹ said: A bad handwriting is one of the two kinds of stammering, even as it has been said: A good handwriting is one of the two kinds of eloquence.²

53. ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir,³ looking at the handwriting of a certain secretary, was not satisfied with it and said: Remove him from his government office job, for he is ill with regard to his handwriting, and there is no guarantee that he might not infect someone else.⁴

54. ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir made the following note to a badly written petition which Ma‘bad b. So-and-So (?) had handed him: We were willing to accept your excuse, but in view of your bad handwriting we changed our mind. If you had been truthful in stating your case, the movement of your hand would have aided you. Or do you not know that a beautiful handwriting speaks for the writer, makes his arguments convincing, and enables him to obtain what he wants.⁵

55. When two clerks asked Sahl b. Hārūn to decide whose handwriting was better, he said to one of them: Your handwriting is a filigree of pure gold, and to the other he said: Your handwriting is fine woven cloth. Through your mutual efforts you have reached the limit (of beauty in handwriting) and achieved the most perfect (handwriting possible).⁶

56. Euclid said: Handwriting is spiritual geometry which appears by means of a bodily instrument.⁷

57. Homer said: Handwriting is something which the intellect causes to appear in the calamus by means of the senses. The soul, when confronted with handwriting, loves in it the first element.⁸

¹ I.e., al-Barmakī (d. 808).

² Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 53; al-Lakhmī, fol. 16a; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 74a. The first half of this saying appears in *Fihrist*, 16, cf. al-Khafājī, *Ṭirāz*, 256; ar-Rāghib, I, 60. The second half is found in al-‘Askarī, *Ma‘ānī*, II, 86; al-Māwardī, 21; Sirāj al-Ḥasanī, fol. 14a. Cf. also above nos. 24 and 25.

³ Died in 844.

⁴ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 52 f. Cf. also below no. 94.

⁵ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 53; al-‘Askarī, *Ma‘ānī*, II, 86. The last sentence is also found in ‘*Iqd*, II, 156; Ms. Pocock 37, fol. 74a.

⁶ Cf. ‘*Iqd*, II, 156; al-‘Askarī, *Awā‘il*, fol. 39a; ar-Rāghib, I, 60; al-Lakhmī, fol. 9b. Cf. also at-Tawḥīdī, *Imtā‘*, I, 100. [The suggested correction of *takhbāyara* to *takhbāyarā* is superfluous].

⁷ Cf. p. 27. Cf., further, Ḥunayn, 153; aṣ-Ṣūlī, 41; *Fihrist*, 16; Abū Sulaymān, fol. 38b; ar-Rāghib, I, 57; ash-Shahrastānī, 357.

⁸ Cf. Ḥunayn, 147; ash-Shahrastānī, 301; al-Qalqashandī, II, 437.

58. Plato said: The calamus is the fetter of the intellect.¹ Handwriting is the deployment of the senses, and the desire of the soul is attained through it.

59. *Mwdwtys*² said: The calamus is the chief of wisdom.³ Handwriting is the master of the calamus. The idea is the rich gift of the intellect, and the good style is the ornament of the whole.⁴

60. Galen said: The calamus is the physician of handwriting.⁵ Handwriting prescribes the diet of the soul, and the idea is the source (?) of health (correctness).

61. Balinās⁶ said: The calamus is the most potent amulet, and handwriting is its result.⁷

62. Aristotle said: The calamus is the active cause, ink the elementary cause, handwriting the formal cause, and a good style the final cause.⁸

63. The Greek king said: The world depends on two things, one of which, in turn, depends upon the other. These two things are the sword and the calamus. And the sword depends on the calamus.⁹

64. Alexander said: Without the calamus a realm could not be properly administrated. Everything depends on the intellect and the tongue, because they decide everything and give information about everything, and the calamus shows you both intellect and tongue in (material) shapes and represents them to you in (material) forms.¹⁰

65. The astrologers were of the opinion that "the calamus" is

¹ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 45; *Fibrīst*, 15 f.; Abū Sulaymān, in the life of Plato; al-Mubashshir, fol. 55a; Ms. Pocock 37, fol 75a; al-‘Askarī, *Awā’il*, fol. 39a; ath-Tha‘alibi, *Tamthīl*, Ms. Paris, fol. 57b-58a; *Bustān*, fols. 41. Cf. F. Rosenthal, *On the Knowledge of Plato’s Philosophy in the Islamic World*, in *Islamic Culture*, XIV (1940), 408.

² Herodotus ?, Menodotus ?, or perhaps, *Mwrstys*, Mūristus. For the last mentioned personality, cf. Abū Sulaymān, fol. 43a, and, especially, H. G. Farmer, in *EI, Supplement*, 156-57, s.v. Mūristus.

³ Cf. al-‘Askarī, *Awā’il*, fol. 39b.

⁴ Or: "of the sentence" ?

⁵ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 67; al-Qalqashandī, II, 247. Cf. also Ḥunayn, 134; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah, I, 88; *Bustān*, fol. 41a.

⁶ For Apollonius of Tyana in Arabic tradition, cf. P. Kraus, *Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān*, (Cairo 1942, *Mém. de l’Inst. d’Égypte*, 45, Vol. 2).

⁷ Cf. Ḥunayn, 151; ar-Rāghib, I, 57; al-Qalqashandī, II, 247; *Bustān*, fol. 41a.

⁸ Cf. Ḥunayn, 111; aṣ-Ṣūlī, 45; *Fibrīst*, 15; Abū Sulaymān, fol. 38b; al-Qalqashandī, II, 437; *Bustān*, fol. 41b.

⁹ Cf. Ḥunayn, 150 (Solon); aṣ-Ṣūlī, 45; al-Mubashshir, fol. 18b (Solon); al-Qalqashandī, II, 437; Tāshköprüzādeh, I, 71. Cf. also *‘Iqd*, II, 155; ash-Sharīshī, I, 98; Ms. Paris ar. 3953, fol. 11a (Solon); al-Lakhmī, fol. 9a; *Bustān*, fol. 41a.

¹⁰ Cf. Ḥunayn, 119; al-Mubashshir, fol. 92a; al-Qalqashandī, II, 437.

identical with “very useful,” according to the numerical value of the letters of these words. ¹

66. Yaḥyā b. Khālīd ² said: Handwriting is a form, its spirit clear evidence, its hand speed, its foot evenness, and its limb the knowledge of division. ³

67. A Bedouin who was asked to give his opinion about Ibrāhīm b. al-‘Abbās and his handwriting said: He pours out (?) disarranged pearls when he makes speeches, and he strings together those precious jewels when he writes manuscripts with his calamus. ⁴

68. Ibrāhīm b. al-‘Abbās said to a clerk in his presence: ⁵ Let your calamus be medium thick. Do not nib it at a knot, for this would make matters knotty. Do not write with a twisted calamus, or with one with an <un>even split. ⁶ If you cannot afford a Fārisī or Baḥrī ⁷ calamus and are obliged to use a Nabataean one, select those which tend to have a brown color. Make your knife sharper than a razor; do not cut anything with it but the calamus, and take very good care of it. Let your *miqaṭṭ* ⁸ be of the toughest wood available, so that the point may come out evenly. In cutting your calamus keep to the middle between obliqueness and evenness. When you write fine letters, hold your calamus even, so that the letters may come out well; ⁹ when you write large letters, hold it inclined toward the side.

¹ Cf. *Fihrist*, 15; ar-Rāghib, I, 67. The *Fihrist* states on the authority of al-Kindī that *al-qalam* as well as *naffā‘* has the numerical value of 201.

² I.e., al-Barmakī (d. 805).

³ Cf. al-Bayhaqī, I, 8; aṣ-Ṣūlī, 41; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XX, 7.

“Division” could refer to the proper distribution of the words at the ends of the lines, rather than to word division. The word *faṣl* may also refer to paragraphs, cf. al-Baṭalyawsī, 68. Cf. also below no. 69.

⁴ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 89, where this saying is quoted as a verse by the poet Abū sh-Shibl al-Burjūmī.

⁵ I.e.: “Working in his office,” or “writing at his dictation.”

⁶ Cf. ar-Rāghib, I, 68. With the inclusion of the following sentence the preceding part of this saying is also mentioned by aṣ-Ṣūlī, 54; al-Qalqashandī, II, 440.

⁷ From the provinces of Fārs and, presumably, al-Baḥrayn, which, however, is known to have the *nishab* al-Baḥrānī. These are the low countries along the shore of the Persian Gulf. Nabataean, on the other hand, refers to inland Babylonia. Ibn al-Mudabbir, 23 f., expresses himself in favor of the Baḥrī as against the Fārisī calamus. Cf. also al-Lakhmī, fol. 9b.

⁸ A little piece of a hard material upon which the calamus is placed for cutting the point. For the above passage, cf. al-‘Almawī, 133.

⁹ As a technical term in calligraphy, *isbbā‘* is mentioned by Āmulī, I, 12; Sirāj al-Ḥasanī, fol. 163a; and Ḥājji Khalīfah, III, 156. According to the definition given by Āmulī the term refers to producing an even proportion of thinness and thickness of the parts of the individual letters. There appears to exist some uncertainty with regard to the correct form of the term. The lithograph edition

The best handwriting is that which is clearest, and the best way of reading aloud is that which is clearest.¹

69. Al-Ḥasan b. Waḥb² used to say: A penman needs a number of qualifications. He must be able to cut the calamus according to the best method; to lengthen its *jilfab*; to nib its point obliquely; to be careful and slow in grasping³ it with the fingertips; to let the ink flow sufficiently to make the letters come out well; to be careful not to make blots; to omit the vowel signs in the case of a mistake, and the diacritical points in the case of a misspelt word; to make the writing⁴ even; to know how correctly to divide and break.⁵

70. The secretary, Saʿīd b. Ḥumayd⁶ said: These are some of the things a penman must know. He must hold the calamus at that part of it at which it is most suitable to hold it and which is as distant from the ink as possible. He must give the calamus a lot of the land of writing paper.⁷ He must not write with the defective side of the edge of the calamus. He must apply to it⁸ the fairest standards and use the best measurements⁹ for its form, so that nobody might feel any desire for an inferior (handwriting?) and so that no aspiration for a superior one might enter one's mind. He must distribute it evenly on the line, and he must execute it so as to be in keeping with the vowel signs (?) he is going to apply. He¹⁰ must connect one letter with the other according to the rules which he has previously laid down with regard to the narrowness and width of the letters. He must

of ʿĀmulī and four of the manuscripts of the work in Oxford and Paris have *ishāgb*; three leave the matter open by adding a diacritical point only to the *b*, and only one (Ms. or. Bodl. Elliott 274, fol. 9b-10a) has *ishbāc*. The other two authors have *ishbāc*.

¹ For the last sentence of this saying, cf. above no. 22, and ʿIqd, II, 156; ath-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 48; Ikhtiyār-ad-dīn, 127.

² A secretary of al-Wāthiq, and brother of the vizier, Sulaymān (ninth century).

³ Lit., "upon mounting. . . ." Cf. Ibn Qutaybah, ʿUjūn, 48 (a verse by Abū Tammām); as-Sarī ar-Raffāʿ, 170; ath-Thaʿālibī, *Tatimmah*, I, 12 and II, 84; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XVII, 200.

⁴ *Rasm*. Is the symmetrical distribution of the text on the page meant, as in no. 12?

⁵ Cf. no. 66. Cf. ʿIqd, II, 156; ash-Sharīshī, I, 96; an-Nuwayrī, VII, 20.

⁶ Cf. *Fihrist*, 179.

⁷ *Qirṭās* may refer to papyrus. If the above translation is correct, the author might have intended to say that a penman should have an ample supply of paper on hand. Or does he mean that the proper space on the surface of the page should be allotted to the writing (cf. n. 4)?

⁸ The pronoun appears to refer to handwriting, and not to the calamus.

⁹ In aṣ-Ṣūlī, 148 f., *maqādīr* seems to refer to the size of the writing (or the paper).

¹⁰ The remainder of this saying is in aṣ-Ṣūlī, 54.

not break up a word and write one of its letters on another line. He must arrange the beginnings and ends of the writing of his manuscript symmetrically. He must not embellish it improperly, but he must not deny it that (embellishment) to which it is entitled. Otherwise its elegance will be left behind, and its symmetry will be destroyed.

71. Salm al-Ḥarrānī¹ said: Perfume your literary notebooks with black ink.²

72. Al-‘Attābī³ watched a bookdealer who was engaged in copying. Since he did not like his handwriting, he said to him: Cover up your ugly handwriting with black ink,⁴ for much deformity (?) deserves much blackness.

73. Al-Ma’mūn said: The stars of wise sayings (shine) in the darkness of ink.⁵

74. Al-Manṣūr said: These wise sayings might be lost. Therefore, appoint the books their guardians, and the (vowel) signs (?)⁶ their shepherds.

75. Ibn at-Taw’am said: If you provide the words which contain the identical consonant skeleton⁷ with vowel signs, they⁸ cannot avoid being correct.

76. ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir wrote the following note on the back of a memorandum which someone had handed him: Very beautifully written indeed, except that the writer used too many diacritical points.⁹

77. Ibn Thawābah¹⁰ said: The use of diacritical points prevents misunderstandings.¹¹

¹ Chief of al-Ma’mūn’s *Bayt al-Ḥikmah*.

² Cf. *Iqd*, II, 157; ar-Rāghib, I, 69; ash-Sharīshī, I, 96; al-Lakhmī, fol. 15b.

³ Abū ‘Amr Kulthūm b. ‘Amr (d. 823-24). Al-‘Attābī’s description of the calamus is reproduced by al-Ḥuṣrī, II, 236.

⁴ Cf. ar-Rāghib, I, 69.

⁵ Cf. Ikhtiyār-ad-dīn, 127.

⁶ *Leg.*: “The calami.” Cf. al-Māwardī, 19; 33 (Cairo, 1315).

⁷ For this meaning of *qarā’in*, cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, II, 339.

⁸ *Leg.*: “You . . . ?”

⁹ Cf. *Iqd*, II, 157; ar-Rāghib, I, 61; an-Nuwayrī, VII, 13; Ṭāshkōprüzādeh, I, 51; Ḥājji Khalifah, III, 155.

Too meticulous an application of diacritical points is considered an affront to the reader, since it implies that he is unable to understand a text without the help of those points. For *sbūnīz*: *nuqaṭ*, cf. Ibn al-Mudabbir, 25; *Iqd*, II, 147; al-Lakhmī, fol. 19a; and the footnote to an-Nuwayrī, VII, 13.

¹⁰ Probably the best known member of the family, Abū l-‘Abbās Aḥmad, cf. p. 31, n. 2.

¹¹ Cf. ath-Tha‘alibī, *Kbāṣṣ*, 52; *idem*, *Tamthīl*, Ms. Paris, fol. 59a; al-Māwardī, 22; ar-Rāghib, I, 60; an-Nuwayrī, VII, 13; al-‘Almawī, 135.

The Arabic play on words relieves the saying of its trivial character.

78. According to what his son ʿĪsā told us, the vizier, ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā¹ said: Writing provided with diacritical points is like artistically designed cloth.²

79. ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir made the following note to a memorandum handed him by someone who had used too much sand on it: If he had enclosed enough soap for us to clean our clothes from the sand in his memorandum, we would have complied with his request.³

80. Abū Ayyūb al-Mūriyānī⁴ said: Embellish unvocalized⁵ knowledge with vowel signs, and thus fortify it against the doubts of misreading.⁶

81. Ibrāhīm b. al-ʿAbbās said: The calamus does the speaking for a silent person and brings information from him who is speechless. It interprets the ideas of the hearts and tells about hidden thoughts. It provides the opportunity for discussing things in spite of local distances and the resulting difficulty of getting together. Information written down with the calamus will not be interrupted, and the imprints of the calamus will not be effaced. The calamus speaks and is silent. It stays in one place and travels. It is present and absent. It is far away and near at hand. If it is set in motion, it goes forth, and if it is called, it comes. It keeps secrets concealed, and it can be trusted not to cause any harm.

82. The vizier, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd-al-Malik said: A manuscript that is provided with diacritical points is Arabic; one that is not, is Nabataean.

83. Saʿīd b. Ḥumayd said: He who follows a path without signposts goes astray, and he who reads a handwriting without diacritical points slips.

84. ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd said: Barren soil is something desolate. A flower garden, on the other hand, is something pretty, and when it is in bloom, its beauty is perfect. Thus a handwriting without dots and diacritical points is like barren soil. On the other hand, a handwriting

¹ ʿAlī died in 946, and his son in 1001.

² Cf. ath-Thaʿālibī, *Tamthīl*, Ms. Paris, fol. 59a; al-Māwardī, 22.

³ Cf. ar-Rāghib, I, 61.

The sentimental lover of the eighteenth century also complained about the use of sand as a blotter, but for a different reason: “Um eins bitte ich Sie: keinen Sand mehr auf die Zettelchen, die Sie mir schreiben. Heute führte ich es schnell nach der Lippe, und die Zähne knisterten mir.” Goethe, *Werther* (Buch I, 26. Julius).

⁴ The vizier, who died in 770-71.

⁵ Or: “Without diacritical points . . .” ?

⁶ Cf. an-Nuwayrī, VII, 13.

that is provided with dots and diacritical points is like a garden in bloom.¹

85. Ibn Thawābah said: Vowel signs have the same significance for a manuscript which white spots on the feet have for horses.²

86. Sahl b. Hārūn said: A bad handwriting is a long and debilitating disease for an educated person,³ and an improper manner of expressing himself is a black mark for a man of thought and feeling.

87. Al-Ḥasan b. Wahb, looking at the handwriting of a certain penman, said: This is the resort of enamored eyes, and the fruit garden of joyful speech.⁴

88. ‘Ubaydallāh b. Abī Rāfi‘⁵ said: When I was writing for ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—God, He is exalted, honor him—, he said to me: O ‘Ubaydallāh, use cotton⁶ for your inkstand, lengthen the edge of your calamus, leave intervals between your lines, keep your letters close together,⁷ and preserve the equilibrium.

89. Abū Sulaym (?)⁸ said: I used to prepare copies of the Qur’ān. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—God show favor unto him—passed by me and said: Make your calamus thick. I broke a piece off and, then, went on writing. He said: Good so! Illuminate it even as God illuminated it.⁹

¹ A saying attributed to Euclid, in Ḥunayn, 153, contains a different comparison of handwriting with a garden in bloom.

² According to the lexicographers there is a difference of opinion as to whether *shikāl* add to, or detract from, the beauty of horses, cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Adab al-kātib*, 145. Cf. also ad-Damīri, I, 268, *s.v. khayl*.

³ Cf. ‘*Iqd*, II, 156; aṣ-Ṣūlī, 52; *Fihrist*, 16; ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Tamthīl*, 20; *idem*, *Kbāṣṣ*, 54; al-Māwardī, 21; as-Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, II, 179 f. Cf. also above no. 25.

⁴ Cf. ar-Rāghib, I, 60; al-Lakhmī, fol. 16a.

⁵ ‘Ubaydallāh is one of the secretaries of ‘Alī. His name is frequently given as ‘Abdallāh, cf. Björkman, *op. cit.* (p. 23, n. 1), 57, but Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabdhīb*, VII, 11, has ‘Ubaydallāh. Cf. also Ibn Qutaybah, *Ma‘ārif*, 71 f.

⁶ Other objects, too, are used for stirring up the ink, cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 99, and Ibn Durustawayh, 94.

⁷ Cf. al-Jahshiyārī, fol. 10b; ar-Rāghib, I, 61; ash-Sharīshī, I, 95; al-‘Āmilī, *Mikhlāb*, 5. For the meaning of the two preceding clauses, cf. also al-Jahshiyārī, fol. 75a; aṣ-Ṣūlī, 60 and 72; al-Baṭalyawsī, 94. For the last three clauses of the saying, cf. Āmulī, I, 11.

⁸ *Leg. Ḥukaymah*, with the parallel passages (n. 9) which attribute this saying to Abū Ḥukaymah al-‘Abdī?

⁹ In the context the suffix would seem to refer to the calamus, which is mentioned in the Qur’ān. However, according to the parallel passages (Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣābiḥ*, 130 f., and as-Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 868), the suffix refers to copies of the Qur’ān. As-Suyūṭī indicates that his sources were Abū ‘Ubayd b. Sallām, *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*, and al-Bayhaqī, *Al-Jāmi‘ al-muṣannaf fī shu‘ab al-īmān*. Both works are unavailable to me. Cf. also al-Lakhmī, fol. 9b.

90. Ibn Sīrīn¹ said: He did not like the Qurʾān to be written in *mashq*,² because this entails coarseness and clumsiness.³

91. ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb—God show favor unto him—misread a passage in a document written by a secretary of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, and he wrote to him: I am sending you a whip. He, however, said: No, the whip might (rather) be used on you, for he had written Allāh in a mutilated manner (?). (So he wrote back: I [you?] am [are?]) the writer who deserves the heaviest whipping.⁴

92. Ibrāhīm (. . .)ī said: Whoever is gifted with intelligence in his soul, with eloquence in his tongue, with handwriting in his hand, with graciousness in his bearing, and with elegance in his character is provided with an orderly array of all good qualities and with a great profusion of all virtues. The only obligation that remains for him is to give thanks, and how could he do that sufficiently!

93. ʿUbaydallāh b. al-Ḥasan al-ʿAnbarī⁵ said: I never read a manuscript written in a good style without my heart being satiated (?) with joy, and I never saw a beautiful handwriting without my eye being filled with pleasure.

94. Al-Mutawakkil, looking at the handwriting of Aḥmad b. al-Khaṣīb⁶ and finding it ugly, said: How great is the power of God to do what He pleases! This man combines all kinds of shameful qualities under his skin: Natural depravity, inability to express himself, unorthodoxy, bad manners, a homely face, and an ugly handwriting. Whoever keeps company with him is, I think, in a bad spot, and exposed to contagion.⁷

95. I saw the geometer, Abū l-Wafāʾ⁸ say to Ibn Saʿdān:⁹ By God, O vizier, your handwriting is the limit of beauty, and your style

¹ Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 728).

² Cf. *ʿIqd*, II, 156. For *mashq*, cf. p. 29, n. 4.

³ Cf. Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣābiḥ*, 134, and as-Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 869. The parallel passages show that “he” refers to Ibn Sīrīn. Our text may be slightly in disorder.

⁴ Reference to a simpler form of this story is made by aṣ-Ṣūlī, 129. The above translation is doubtful.

In Arabic literature wide currency is given to a story in which al-Ashʿarī is blamed by ʿUmar for employing a Christian secretary. That story obviously is a later expression of Muslim opposition to the employment of Christians in secretarial positions. There is no connection between that story and our saying.

⁵ The politically prominent caḍī, who died in 785.

⁶ The vizier of al-Mustaʿīn.

⁷ Cf. no. 53.

⁸ Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Būzajānī (d. 997 or 998). At-Tawḥīdī composed the *Imiāʿ* for him.

⁹ Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad b. Saʿdān (d. 985). Upon his suggestion at-Tawḥīdī wrote the *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣadāqah*.

could not be more perfect. Why, then, do you enlist the help of Abū Ishāq aṣ-Ṣābi' for your correspondence with Ibn 'Abbād?¹ Ibn Sa'dān replied: Ibn . . . ² hunts very eagerly after mistakes and enjoys very much to discover a faux pas. I would not like him to shoot me and not merely wound me superficially but actually kill me while he is a spectator. I would rather not use my own handwriting and speech and thus save my intellect and honor than suffer at being needled by him ³ and being kicked in his presence and absence. It is healthier for me to have someone else take my place and myself to vanish like a mirage and to be left alone than . . . to stay insulted and frightened.

The Sheikh Abū Ḥayyān says: Here ends the treatise devoted to the detailed description of handwriting and calamus. If we would say more, it would be dull and boring. I hope that the jealous concern which this treatise has for your approval will strengthen my claim to your consideration and esteem. Farewell!

Postscript: The preceding article was published in *Ars Islamica*, XIII-XIV (1948), 1-30. The Arabic text has not been reprinted here. It was incorporated (with about six brief homoioteleuton omissions) by Ibrāhīm al-Kaylānī in his edition of *Thalāth rasā'il li-Abī Ḥayyān at-Tawḥīdī*, 27-48 (Damascus 1951). The English text has been reproduced unchanged and uncorrected, except for the system of transliteration and citation which has been changed to conform with the rest of this book. Some of the editions and manuscripts used here for reference are different from those used in the other articles. It has seemed proper not to tamper with that.

In the years that have gone by, much work has been done on at-Tawḥīdī, and many of his works have been published and re-published. Also, new texts on calligraphy and related subjects have become known. A brief anonymous *Risālah fī l-kitābah al-mansūbah* has been ascribed to at-Tawḥīdī—very tentatively, to be sure—by Kh. Maḥmūd 'Asākir, in *Revue de l'Institut des Manuscrits Arabes*, I (1955), 121-27. The old treatise on government secretaries by 'Abdallāh al-Baghdādī, mentioned above, p. 23, n. 1, has been published by D. Sourdel, in *Bulletin d'Études Orientales de l'Institut Français de Damas*, XIV (1952-54), 115-53. It contains a good deal of information on the technical details of the treatment of pens, etc. On the work of Ibn Bādīs, also mentioned above, cf. M. Levey, *Mediaeval Arabic Bookmaking and its Relation to Early Chemistry and Pharmacology* (Philadelphia 1962, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, LII, 4). Works on higher education contain clusters of sayings identical with, or similar to, those of at-Tawḥīdī. For instance, as-Sam'ānī, *Adab al-implā'*, contains, *inter alia*, the sayings nos. 1, 24, 63, 71, and 89 of the Tawḥīdī

¹ The famous Ṣāhib, Abū l-Qāsim Ismā'il b. 'Abbād (d. 995).

² *Hw'd* may be corrected to 'Abbād. Or may we assume that Hawwād "very much of a Jew," was a mocking imitation of the name 'Abbād "very much of a pious person" ?

³ The author probably thought of the sting of the scorpion.

treatise on pp. 166, 159, 160, 149, and 167. Much relevant material is also contained in Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, *Tanbīh*, 92-110. See further A. Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie*, I (Vienna 1967), and the following publications of rather late texts on calligraphy: ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān b. Yūsuf b. aṣ-Ṣā’igh (d. 845/1441), *Tuḥfat ulī al-albāb fī ṣinā‘at al-khaṭṭ wa-l-kitāb*, ed. Hilāl Nāji (Tunis 1967); Muḥammad b. Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭībī (wrote in 908/1502-3), *Jāmi‘ mahāsīn kitābat al-kuttāb*, ed. Ṣ. al-Munajjid (Beirut 1962); and Murtaḍā az-Zabidī (d. 1205/1791), *Ḥikmat al-isbrāq ilā kuttāb al-āṣāq*, ed. ‘Abd-as-Salām Hārūn, *Nawādir al-makbtūtāt*, V, 50-98 (Cairo 1373/1954).

In connection with some of my publications, I have over the years followed the custom of making notes whenever I came across relevant material in my readings. I have only rarely taken notes pertinent to the Tawḥīdī treatise. Some of the sayings are very common and re-occur in numerous places. The more technical sayings are rarely if ever duplicated in other works.

I wish to mention here the following additional items, without implying that they are of particular importance or in any way needed:

No. 11, p. 30, n. 7: (Abū Bakr) az-Zuhayrī occurs also in at-Tawḥīdī, *Ṣadāqah*, ed. I. al-Kaylānī, 62 f., 190, 230 (Damascus 1964).

No. 11, p. 31, n. 2: Abū Ishāq b. Thawābah, listed by Ibn al-Athīr as having died in 349/960-61 and as the predecessor of Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl aṣ-Ṣābi’ as secretary and chief of the *Diwān ar-Rasā’il*, might have been a member of the family. Still other Ibn Thawābahs are mentioned, but they are likely to be unrelated to this family. Cf., for instance, the maternal grandfather of the author of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Thawābah, who is mentioned in *Aghānī*, XIII, 34, and elsewhere.

No. 12, p. 31, n. 7: Mentioned also in at-Tawḥīdī, *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn*, 383.

No. 15, p. 33, n. 1: On the hexagonal shape of the honey cells, cf. also, for instance, al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’*, IV, 274.

No. 20, p. 34, n. 6: Cf. also as-Sahmī, *Ta’riḫ Jurjān*, 397.

No. 21, p. 34, n. 7: Cf. also Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ, *Muqaddimah*, 172, ch. 25.

No. 27, p. 35, n. 7: For Ibn at-Taw’am, cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhālā’*, according to the Index, p. 337, of C. Pellat’s translation.

No. 29, p. 36, nn. 5 and 6: Al-Bayhaqī, 3, might have been cited.

No. 49, p. 39: “Keeps up the standards” should probably be corrected to “sets up the ornamental stripes,” which fits better into the context. For *a’lām* in this sense, cf. below, pp. 70 f.

No. 50, p. 39: Members of an Ibn al-Qayn family are mentioned among the Anṣār in Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 294 f. This may be the family meant here, although my earlier hesitation is understandable.

No. 60, p. 41: “Source of health” should more likely be “health itself.”

No. 66, p. 42, n. 3: Instead of *faṣl*, al-Kaylānī’s text shows *waṣl*, if it is not a misprint.

No. 70, p. 44: *Hilyah*, in the last sentence, which has been translated “elegance,” is more likely “form”: “its form is altered.”

No. 78, p. 45: “Artistically designed” should more precisely be: “provided with ornamental stripes.”

For the concluding sentence of the treatise, al-Kaylānī is probably right in suggesting the reading: “I hope that you will lend it of your approval what will strengthen. . . .”

III

SIGNIFICANT USES OF ARABIC WRITING*

On the fifteenth day of October of the year 1351, the well-known Shāfi'ite jurist and author, Taqī-ad-dīn as-Subkī, released a legal opinion in reply to the following question addressed to him:

What is your opinion concerning a man's placing his foot upon a carpet into which there are woven some letters of the alphabet arranged in meaningful words such as "blessing," "bliss," "enduring strength"? Is it permissible for a man to step on the portions of the carpet where these words are found? ¹

In his reply, as-Subkī is inclined to consider it forbidden for a man to step on such a carpet, although he says he is unable to offer sufficiently strong proof for his opinion. Decisive proof would be necessary because an express prohibition by the Lawgiver, or reasoning based on sound analogy, is required in order to declare something forbidden. He has no doubt, however, that he is dealing with something that is to be classified as disapproved. There are people who do consider it forbidden on the strength of the argument that every letter of the alphabet is indicative of one of God's most beautiful names. However, this argument is not specific enough. Then, there are those speculations of "the science of letters," attributing magical and physical properties to individual letters. Some of those speculations are clearly sinful and classified as disapproved; others he has found through his own experience to be untrue.

Since these arguments cannot be used to decide the question, as-Subkī bases his opinion on an argument which runs somewhat as follows. The Qur'ān refers to God repeatedly as the "Creator of everything." The letters of the alphabet are to be included in the

* The following pages contain a 20 minute lecture presented at the meeting of the American Oriental Society in Ann Arbor in April 1959, during a symposium on the uses of writing. Except, of course, for the footnotes (and the fact that during delivery of the lecture some passages were shortened or omitted by me in order to stay within the allotted time limit), the text of the lecture is printed here much as it was delivered. It is hoped that it will be judged for what it is—a brief and, of necessity, incomplete outline of a very large subject, a lecture meant to be heard and not to be read.

¹ *Fatāwī*, II, 563-565.

expression "everything." They are sections of the sound complexes that are accidents of the bodies created by the Lord; thus, they are created together with them in the second or third place. Everything created by God has its specific purpose. This purpose must be taken into consideration by man whenever he uses something. It is inherent in the thing by virtue of the act of creation, or it is fixed by the religious law. Any improper use of something is permissible only if sanctioned by the Lawgiver. The Prophetic traditions include the story of the cow that spoke up and protested against being used for riding purposes. Anyone who argues that a cow can be used for riding must bring special proof for his contention, or he may use the argument that riding on them was one of the secondary purposes for which cows were created, even if their primary and obvious purpose, which is always stressed, is that they be used for plowing. Hence, the letters—and here we can observe the almost universal failure of mediaeval scholars to make a clear-cut distinction between sound and letter—were created in order to produce, by means of their proper arrangement, the word of God and Muḥammad and of the other prophets and the angels as well as other necessary, desirable, or permissible utterances. There can be no doubt as to the correctness of the assumption that the fact that the letters are used for the production of something necessary or desirable makes it obligatory upon human beings to honor and reverence them. In the opinion of lawyers, a piece of paper containing the name of God cannot be used for writing on it secular stories or the like.¹ In this case, of course, the situation is clear since the name of God is involved. But what if it is a case of ordinary letters that could be used for producing any word in the world? In this case, it is still possible to make a case for a similar prohibition, since it is not necessary to prove the complete identity of two cases but merely to prove the fact that they share certain legal characteristics (*causa legis*).

An objection may be raised, his argument continues, to the effect that the same letters that are used to indicate good and holy words may be used to indicate evil words and words of unbelief. While this is true, it must be stated that the letters were created for the former purpose. Like anything else, they may be employed by human beings to serve either their proper purpose or a contrary purpose.

¹ Some examples of the reverence shown by pious men for pieces of paper that may contain the name of God, in H. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, 295, 270 (Leiden 1955).

In the latter case, however, we are dealing with an unjust and improper action which as such is to be classified as forbidden. In this sense, some scholars have gone so far as to wash each time before touching a piece of paper. Paper can be used for writing down either good words or evil words. However, the true purpose for which it was created and for which it must be revered is for writing on it the Qur'ān, the Prophetic traditions, and all other useful kinds of knowledge. Were a man to step upon a piece of paper upon which nothing had as yet been written, intentionally and in full knowledge of the fact that all paper must be revered, his action could be classified as a forbidden one. The same applies to the letters of the alphabet. Those who know the purpose for which the letters were created are not permitted to step on them. This admits making an exception for persons ignorant of the purpose of writing, in conformity with the widely accepted legal view that only knowledge of the fact that an action is forbidden makes its commission a crime.

Therefore, as-Subkī concludes, only those who are aware of the facts concerning the true purpose of writing as stated here commit a crime when they step on such letters as are found on the carpet. However, though it may not always be a crime, it could in any case be considered as forbidden, and the person ignorant of the situation should be taught to know better.

This summary of as-Subkī's legal opinion may serve, I believe, as a competent guide through the vast field of writing in Islam. The practical uses of the Arabic script have never been subject to any limitation. Arabic writing was used to perpetuate the word of God and all conceivable forms of literary and scientific endeavor, from the loftiest thought down to the strictly utilitarian notations of the merchant and the idle scribbles of vulgar hands on the walls of houses and rooms. It proved no less able than other types of writing to denote a great variety of languages and to furnish transliteration signs sufficient for the occasional fixation in writing of foreign sounds. Against the full weight of a powerful literary tradition, it has also been able, when called upon, to express widely divergent forms of Arabic speech, with as much or as little success as similar efforts undertaken, for instance, within the English system of writing. What, we may ask, is peculiar to, or remarkable in, the use of writing in Islam?

One aspect, in particular, is suggested and strongly emphasized by as-Subkī's reflections. That is, the sacred character of writing in Islam. At the same time, as-Subkī makes it clear—and he is certainly right in making this distinction—that the sacredness of writing should be considered as something different from the magical power that was widely believed to be possessed by writing. It is true that both sacredness and magical power were early and inseparable properties of writing. It is also true that letter magic was widely practiced throughout Muslim history and the theory of specific properties inherent in the letters was accepted as a possibly valid explanation of the mysteries of nature even by some of the best minds produced by Muslim civilization. However, the sacredness of writing in Islam was something more historically effective and more basically and profoundly Islamic. It had its origin in the importance that the Qur'ān attributed to the possession of written books by a religious community, and it was intimately connected with the early Islamic discussion of the meaning of the concept "word of God" as it affected the recitation and written reproduction of the Qur'ān. From the very beginning all this revolved, specifically, around the *Arabic* language and *Arabic* writing and made both integral components of the Muslim religion, a role which naturally assumed ever larger proportions when Muslim civilization came to favor more and more its religious aspects and institutions. Arabic writing, even more so than the language, became a sacred symbol of Islam.

The reason why writing outdistanced language as a religious symbol is easily explained from historical circumstances. In the first powerful burst of energy, the Arab Muslims succeeded in displacing the languages of quite a few territories and eventually supplanting them with their own. This was an astonishing feat, considering the comparatively small number of speakers of Arabic and the fact that they were originally no bearers of a higher civilization. The main resistance to Arabic, in fact, came from long-established administrative institutions closely connected with the civilizations of the subject peoples, and it took about half a century to overcome that resistance. Soon, time, space, and numbers did their job of weakening the original impetus so that it was no longer possible to influence additional masses of speakers of foreign tongues in ever more remote territories and to require of them the tremendous sacrifice of giving up their own languages. On the other hand, the sacrifice of changing scripts was much more easily accomplished. It has been alleged that

the Arabic script is not particularly suited to express the sounds of the languages that came to adopt it. However, at the time the change to Arabic writing was made, the native scripts were often greatly inferior to Arabic in most technical aspects. The switch to Arabic writing meant a break with the past, of course, but it did not entail any great practical loss and actually made literacy easier.

In Muslim civilization, writing thus became a sacred religious symbol of the first order. In consequence, the various religious groups other than Muslim which lived within the boundaries of Islam adhered zealously to their particular scripts while willingly changing languages. There is no real evidence from the pre-Islamic Orient to indicate the prevalence of writing over language as a religious symbol, even though sacredness attached to writing from the earliest times, and religious groups naturally tended to develop their own type of writing to be used for their original languages. In Islam, sacredness became a characteristic element in writing. Its presence and effect were not only felt but also discussed and analyzed. To this day, radical reforms of writing are widely felt to constitute a break with a tradition that possesses the aura of religious sanctity.¹

The feelings aroused by religious awe are not basically different from the emotions stimulated by man's artistic instincts. As-Subki's legal opinion centers around the fact that writing was used in Islam as a form of artistic expression. The extraordinary interest in calligraphy we encounter in Muslim civilization is indeed as well known as it is remarkable. Writing was widely used as a decorative element in architecture and in connection with small objects including carpets, textiles, and a wide range of different utensils. The calligraphic execution of manuscripts and documents was a highly esteemed form of art. Numerous varieties of the Arabic script were created, among them some using leaf and flower motifs for embellishment, and again others of a zoomorphical character, using letters in the form of animals, mainly birds. A rather extensive literature on calligraphy was produced, of which a large part has been preserved.

This literature makes no effort to gloss over the fact that its primary purpose was practical. Books on writing were meant to serve utilitar-

¹ A bitter denunciation of those who wish to replace Persian with Roman characters for the writing of Urdu from a Pakistani newspaper (*al-Islam*, Vol. 6, No. 5 [Karachi, March 1, 1959]), is a timely illustration and corroboration of the above statement.

ian ends. They were published in order to help government officials whose main equipment was a thorough command of the written word, and they prepared those officials for success in an often highly lucrative profession. Therefore, this literature stresses the full range of technical know-how required by an accomplished penman, to the virtual exclusion of anything else. It also displays an understandable tendency to link up calligraphy with intellectual pursuits rather than aesthetic and artistic-emotional notions. However, there can be no doubt whatever that calligraphy also served to satisfy the artistic needs of human nature in Islam. One of the writers on calligraphy, Ibn Durustawayh (d. 958), said that in addition to the technical and utilitarian aspects to which he restricted his book, there also existed, as another important but different aspect, ornamental writing on paper and stone (*taswīr, naqsh*).¹

Overwhelming evidence for the emotional-artistic element in Muslim calligraphy is furnished by its very character. The infinite pains that were taken in order to develop new and more beautiful forms of writing point in the same direction. Then there are occasional remarks that express aesthetic appreciation of writing in deeply felt emotional terms.² We find comparisons of writing with objects of recognized beauty and emotional appeal, such as jewelry, flowers, gardens, and textiles. The sphere of more intimate emotions is touched when a beautiful handwriting is described as giving joy to the heart and pleasure to the eye,³ or when the sense of smell, so highly refined in the East, is invoked and ink is compared to perfume,⁴ and a poet could say that

Saffron is the perfume of maidens,
And ink is the perfume of men.⁵

Here we also have an example of the significant connection of calligraphy with erotic emotions which had become firmly established at the very latest in early 'Abbāsīd times. "Tears upon the cheeks of

¹ Cf. Ibn Durustawayh, 2nd ed., 6 (Beirut 1927).

² Since the sources contain little on aesthetic appreciation, the secondary literature also has little on it. An exception we may mention here is *A Survey of Persian Art*, edited by A. U. Pope. The second volume of the *Survey* deals with calligraphy. It would seem wrong, though, to claim every expression of admiration for particular specimens of handwriting as indicative of an appreciation of handwriting as a form of art in the sense we have in mind.

³ Cf. at-Tawhīdī's short treatise on calligraphy, published in *Ars Islamica*, XIII-XIV (1948), 19, no. 93 (above, p. 47)

⁴ Al-Tawhīdī, *op. cit.*, 17, no. 71 (above, p. 44).

⁵ Al-Māwardī, 37 (Cairo 1315).

chaste young women are no more beautiful than tears of the pen in a manuscript," was a saying attributed to a secretary of the caliph, al-Ma'mūn.¹ Especially in love poetry, the comparison of bodily features with letters of the alphabet became a standard ingredient of the poetic imagery. The beloved's hair curling about the temples was compared to a *qāf* at each end of a line,² or to the graceful curvature of the tail of the letter *rā'*.³ Or it might suggest to the poet the shape of the letter *nūn*, and a mole on the cheek of the beloved would then naturally be compared to the dot on top of the *nūn*.⁴ The budding moustache might be likened to half of the letter *ṣād* as penned by a skilled writer.⁵ All such beauty attested to the majesty of the divine scribe.⁶

Even love union could be symbolized by the shape of a letter, in this case the ligature of the letters *lām* and *alif*, written, as they are, closely entwined:

I saw you in my dream embracing me
Like as the *lām* of the scribe embraces the *alif*.

This verse was often quoted, and the simile underwent numerous variations at the hands of successive poets.⁷ The same letters *lām*-

¹ At-Tawhīdī, *op. cit.*, 12, no. 30 (above, p. 36).

² Ibn Abī 'Awn, *Tasbbihāt*, 250. Comparisons making use of individual letters (in contrast to general comparisons with writing [below, p. 58, n. 1]), are said to appear first in the poetry of Dhū r-Rummah. Cf. C. Brockelmann, *GAL, Supplement*, I, 87 f.

³ Ibn Abī 'Awn, *Tasbbihāt*, p. 251.

⁴ Ibn Abī 'Awn, *Tasbbihāt*, 251, and aṣ-Ṣūlī, 60.

⁵ Ibn Abī 'Awn, *Tasbbihāt*, 253. A number of examples were collected by aṣ-Ṣafādī, *Ghayth* I, 77 f. Occasionally, the idea was carried a bit too far; cf., for instance, al-Ḥalabī, 80.

⁶ Al-'Imād al-Iṣfahānī, *Kharīdat al-qaṣr* (Syrian poets), 189 (Damascus 1375/1955), where *jalla l-kātib*, "majestic is the scribe," evidently refers to God.

⁷ References to the original verse were collected by 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Maymanī and H. Ritter in their respective editions of al-Bakrī, *Simt*, I, 578, and 'Abd-al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Asrār al-balāghab*, 185, trans., 221 f.

The name of the author of the verse is variously given: (1) Bakr b. an-Naṭṭah, according to aṣ-Ṣūlī, 62; *Aghānī*, XVII, 155. (2) Bakr b. Khārijah, according to al-'Askarī, *Ma'ānī*, I, 243; al-Bakrī, *Simt*, I, 578; ash-Sharīshī, II, 114 (31st *maqāmab*) (= Cairo 1306, II, 98 f.). (3) Abū Bakr al-Muwaswas, according to 'Iqd, III, 227 (= Cairo 1305, III, 248). (4) Anonymous, according to al-Qālī, *Amālī*, I, 226 (= Cairo 1373, I, 223); al-Jurjānī, *Wasāṭab*, 184 (not seen, quoted from 'Abd-al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Asrār al-balāghab*, trans., 221 f.); 'Abd-al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *loc. cit.*

The metaphor of *lām-alif* indicating close embrace (*'ānaqa*, *i'tanaqa*, also *'aṭafa*, *talāqā*) is used mainly in connection with love union, but also for close friendship and, once (Ibn al-Jawzi), for greedily hugging the material goods of

alif, read as a word, mean “no,” and thus we find a poet complaining about his sad fate as a rejected lover:

The *lām*-shaped cheek and the *alif*-like straight figure of the beloved
Make definite reply to the question of the lover: *lām-alif* no! ¹

Fortunately, it was not always an unhappy message that the alphabetomorphic features of the beloved conveyed to the persistent lover:

The *nūn* of the eyebrow and the ‘*ayn* of the eyelids,
Together with the *mīm* of the mouth, give the answer:
na‘am yes! ²

All these and similar comparisons, which are extremely frequent in Arabic poetry, seem tiresome and contrived to us because we do not attach any emotional significance to the shape of letters. Conversely, their popularity in Islam is a strong confirmation of the hold exercised by calligraphy over Muslim emotions.

How did writing happen to occupy this particular place in Muslim civilization? It is hardly a satisfactory answer to say that since all forms of pictorial representation were greatly curbed in Islam, art took refuge in calligraphy. ³ There must have been something to

this world: Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, in Ibn Abī ‘Awn, *Tashbībāt*, 367; Abū l-Muṭā‘ Dhū l-Qarnayn, in ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Yatīmah*, I, 64, and Ibn Khallikān, III, 33; al-Hasan b. ‘Alī b. Abī Jarādah, in Yāqūt, *Irsbād*, XVI, 15, in the life of the historian Ibn al-‘Adīm; ‘Umārah al-Yamanī, 59; al-Qaysarānī, in *Kharīdat al-qaṣr* (Syrian poets), 137, and al-Khafājī, 101; Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh b. al-Farrā’, cf. A. R. Nykl, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry*, 258 (Baltimore 1946), and *idem*, *Selections from Hispano-Arabic Poetry*, 172 (Beirut 1949); Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mudhish*, 555; Abū Ja‘far al-Ilbīrī al-Baṣīr, in al-Maqqarī, *Analectes*, I, 931.

In a prose context the metaphor of *lām-alif* is used to illustrate extraordinary promptness in fulfilling one’s promises; cf. *Ta’rīkh Baghdād*, XII, 479. As the title of a book, we find it in an early work on love, ad-Daylamī’s ‘*Aṭf al-alif al-ma’lūf ‘alā l-lām al-ma’ṭūf*’; cf. *GAL*, *Supplement*, I, 359, and R. Walzer, in *JRAS*, 1939, 407 ff. I had no opportunity to check grammatical monographs on *alif-lām*.

The locks of the beloved are compared to *lām* and *alif* by Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, 462. Cf. also Dik-al-jinn, in al-‘Askarī, *Ma‘ānī*, I, 247.

Walking unsteadily is compared to writing *lām-alif* on the road in verses ascribed to the Umayyad poet Abū n-Najm al-‘Ijlī (*GAL*, *Supplement*, I, 90); cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, 61 f.; ar-Rāghib, I, 61; al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab*, I, 100; cf. F. Krenkow in *A Volume of Oriental Studies presented to E. G. Browne*, 264 (Cambridge 1922). *Lām-alif* here is said not to refer to the ligature, but to the two individual letters.

A Persian verse warns against disorderly companions, “for *alif* becomes crooked through consorting with *lām*”; cf. H. Relandus, *Enchiridion studiosi*, 249 (Utrecht 1709).

¹ Al-Qayrātī (d. 1379), *Dīwān*. Cf. also Ibn Juzayy, in al-Maqqarī, *Aḏḥār ar-riyād*, III, 198.

² ‘Imād-ad-dīn ad-Dunaysirī, as quoted by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah, II, 271.

³ C. Huart, *Les Calligraphes et les miniaturistes de l’Orient musulman*, 2 (Paris 1908).

suggest that writing was a suitable outlet for artistic creativity; thus, we are back where we started. It also would not do, in my opinion, to derive Muslim calligraphy from the wonderment and admiration with which little-educated pre-Islamic Arabs considered the mystery of writing.¹ The truth is that Arabic writing originally showed extremely little promise of developing into a form of art.

Nabataean writing, the predecessor of Arabic writing, even in the period when the Nabataean state was flourishing and prosperous, could hardly be called beautiful. Admittedly, judgments of this sort are wide open to subjective criticism, and there may be some who would see a certain subtle elegance and beauty in the elongated shapes of Nabataean letters. However, in its transition to Arabic writing, Nabataean lost all the elegance and artistic refinement it may have possessed. The earliest Arabic documents of writing exhibit, to say the least, a most ungainly type of script.² As a matter of fact, the history of the Semitic alphabetic writing gives little evidence of artistic tendencies. As a utilitarian and economic product, the Semitic alphabet shunned luxury features and was much less of a natural starting point for artistic development than, for instance, Egyptian or Chinese writing.

In Semitic epigraphy, Palmyrenian in its later stages shows a tendency toward developing artistic forms, possibly under the influence of Greek epigraphic refinement. South Arabia was closer in time and culture to the beginnings and later history of Muslim civilization. Epigraphic monuments in the South Arabian alphabet show the highest development of a true feeling for form and symmetry, coupled with graceful simplicity, ever achieved in connection with a Semitic language, including, I believe, later Arabic writing.

As far as writing on soft material is concerned, we have at our disposal comparatively few documents from the pre-Islamic period on which to base our judgment. Many outstanding specimens of unusual calligraphic skill may have been lost. We have, for instance, the Aramaic documents from the Achaemenid period, the rich finds from the Dead Sea, or the old Syriac manuscripts, to mention the most promising material for comparison. They all reveal a certain

¹ Cf., for instance, I. Goldziher, *Mubammedanische Studien*, I, 110 f., 174, II, 7 f. (Halle 1889-90).

² Cf. the discussion between A. Jeffery and N. Abbott in *The Moslem World*, XXX (1940), 191 ff., and *Ars Islamica*, VIII (1941), 65 ff. It is the extremely rapid development of Arabic calligraphy which obscures the fact of the original ungainliness of the writing.

neatness and loving care in their execution, but whatever true artistic-emotional elements they may contain—and, in my opinion, they contain hardly any—would seem to be unintentional. The Arabs' cultural heritage did not make calligraphy the natural choice for artistic expression among Muslims.

Whether or not outside models influenced the rapid rise of Muslim calligraphy is an open question. Non-Semitic influences are, of course, not excluded. But Greek writing in Syria, as it must have appeared to the Muslims, was presumably not very impressive. The famous Manichaean predilection for fine books may have influenced Muslim calligraphy somewhere along the line but hardly at its early beginnings. On the other hand, in the environment of Semitic speech, South Arabian epigraphy could easily have served as a major source of inspiration, but the fact that the Muslims knew and admired South Arabian writing is the only, and insufficient, evidence we have.

The most likely starting point for the phenomenal development of calligraphy in Islam would again seem to be the sacred character of writing. It not only demanded the careful and exact execution of religious documents, but also led Muslims to see in writing an outlet for religious emotions and to discover in it the beauty of the divine and of the divine creation. From this starting point, writing could have gained easily its position as an artistic medium on every level of Muslim civilization. It maintained this position, favored by the increasing religious intensity of later Muslim history. It was stimulated, perhaps, by non-Arab artistic impulses unduly repressed by Islam; however, the rise of calligraphy was so early and rapid in Islam that the earliest generations of Muslims must have participated in it. This also makes it unlikely that the requirements of a powerful bureaucracy created Muslim calligraphy even if they greatly contributed to its development and growth. At any rate, the fusion of religion and art in Muslim calligraphy became a reality. To this day, the tablets with the names of the Prophet and the four caliphs high up in the interior of Aya Sofya will not fail to impress everyone who looks at them intently as religious emotion frozen by art and as being no less effective as a religious and artistic experience than Western religious painting was in a different if related medium.

A further noteworthy aspect of writing in Islam, which is also illustrated by as-Subki's *fatwā*, is the fact already alluded to that writing as such, and Arabic writing in particular, formed the subject of much theoretical discussion and analysis among all kinds of scholars

and writers. Like the other aspects of the use of writing in Islam mentioned here, this is not something peculiar to Islam. However, the practice of writing, even where it is extensive, must not necessarily be accompanied by elaborate speculations as to the meaning and purpose of writing, its peculiar characteristics, or its limitations. This we find in Muslim literature. Some of the points raised certainly deserve a few words in this context, as indicative of the role played by writing in Muslim civilization.

The limitation of the effectiveness of writing most commonly deplored by Muslim scholars was peculiar to the Arabic script. As al-Bīrūnī, writing around the middle of the eleventh century near the end of his long and fruitful life, phrased it:

Arabic writing has a great drawback. It contains letters identical in their forms. They are easily confused, and there results the need for diacritical marks to distinguish those letters from each other, as well as the need for ways and means to express the grammatical terminations at the ends of words. Where these marks are omitted, the meaning becomes obscured. In addition, it is a widespread custom among scribes to neglect the collation and checking of the correctness of the text of a manuscript. In view of this situation, it often makes no difference whether a book on a certain subject does exist or does not, and reading such a book makes nobody the wiser with respect to the subject matter it deals with.¹

This and similar complaints confirm the fact that Muslim civilization depended on writing for the preservation and augmentation of its intellectual heritage. This is a point that needs stressing inasmuch as the apparatus of Muslim scholarship gives the impression that the oral transmission of information was valued very highly. The religious sciences, in particular, emphasized the necessity of receiving information *viva voce* and considered the process of oral transmission an indispensable guarantee for the correctness of the information received. The question whether instruction by a teacher or self-instruction with the help of books made the better scholar was often discussed and usually decided in favor of the first alternative.² However, writing was always used, even in the disciplines that made a fetish of oral transmission and of astonishing—and no doubt

¹ M. Meyerhof, *Vorwort zur Drogenkunde des Bīrūnī*, in *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin*, II, 3 (1932), 14.

² Cf. the discussion between two physicians of the 11th century, published by J. Schacht and M. Meyerhof, *The Medico-Philosophical Controversy between Ibn Būṭlān of Baghdad and Ibn Ridwān of Cairo*, 83 ff. (Cairo 1957, *Publications of the Faculty of Arts of the Egyptian University* 13).

true—feats of memorizing. In fact, insistence upon the paraphernalia of oral transmission became for wide circles a mere pretense. Muslim scholarship always placed reliance upon the written word, and it was this very circumstance that made it great. It was recognized that there existed some technical limitations to writing which made it less accurate in certain respects than oral transmission, but these were outweighed by the durability and definiteness of written fixation. Muslim civilization was dominated by the written word as modern Western civilization was, and still is, by its printed counterpart.

One of the special features of writing which we find discussed in Muslim literature as being of practical importance is the individual character of a person's handwriting. The possibility of identifying individuals by their handwriting was of particular importance in legal matters. The question was raised whether a handwritten will that was not witnessed by other witnesses was valid. According to Ibn Ḥanbal, it was, provided the handwriting was known and could be identified as that of the testator. A later Ḥanbalite added the comment that definite identification of the handwriting was a reliable source of knowledge as to the intention of the testator:

Handwriting indicates the spoken word, and the spoken word indicates a person's will and intention. The most that could be said against assuming validity of a handwritten will is that similar handwritings may be confused with each other. This would fall into the same category as the possible confusion of figures and voices. God put something into the handwriting of each individual by which his particular handwriting can be distinguished from the handwriting of any other individual, in the same way in which the figures and voices of individuals can be distinguished. People do not have the slightest hesitation to testify that this is the handwriting of a particular individual. . . . There is much evidence, almost amounting to absolute certainty, in favor of the acceptability of the testimony of a blind person under suitable circumstances when he is able to identify the voice of someone involved. The possibility of the confusion of voices, if not greater than that of handwritings, is certainly not smaller. . . ¹

In this and other respects, handwriting came into its own as part of legal procedure, at least, according to the opinion of certain lawyers. Considering the importance of the legal sphere in Islam, this gave it added status. ²

Not only its individual character but also the innate meaning and

¹ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah (d. 1350), *at-Ṭuruq al-ḥukmīyah*, 206 f.

² For handwriting and the science of the principles of jurisprudence, cf., for instance, as-Sarakhsī, *Uṣūl*, I, 357-59.

purpose of writing gave it evidential character. According to the firmly held world view of philosophers and jurists, writing occupies the third place in the scheme of things. First, there are the ideas in the mind and the intellect. Then ideas become expressible through the spoken word. Finally, the spoken word gains permanence and ubiquity through writing. It could be argued that writing was the least original of the three stages, an image (*mithāl*) of an image of an image.¹ However, it was natural to assume that all of these stages were equally necessary for civilization. The last one, as the least natural one, was then the final achievement in terms of human cultural endeavor and deserved the highest praise.

Echoing a sentiment also often expressed in Muslim literature, Abraham Lincoln once had occasion to observe that the invention of writing was "great, very great in enabling us to converse with the dead, the absent, and the unborn, at all distances of time and space."² In Islam, this great invention reached the pinnacle of its effectiveness. In addition to its elementary uses, it was the greatly refined and indispensable tool of culture in all its aspects. It was the highly adaptable vehicle for the expression of artistic emotion. And it shared and represented the sacredness of the central fact of Muslim existence, the religion of Islam.

Postscript: This article was published in *Ars Orientalis*, IV (1961), 15-23. Again, the style of citation had to be changed here, in order to conform to that employed in the rest of this book.

If I had known about it, I would have referred to the article by A. Schimmel on *Schriftsymbolik im Islam* from the *Festschrift* for E. Kühnel, cf. R. Ettinghausen (ed.), *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst*, 244-54 (Berlin 1959). On the subject of human and divine writing, cf. al-Ghazzālī, *al-Ma'ārif al-'aqliyah*, 73 ff. (Damascus 1383/1963). The *lām-alif* symbolism deserves to be treated in much greater detail. Cf., for instance, Ibn 'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, I, 75 ff., 177 (Cairo 1329). Ad-Daylami's *'Aṭf al-alif* has found its editor in J. C. Vadet (Cairo 1962).

¹ Schacht-Meyerhof, *op. cit.*, 84.

² Quoted from a review by D. C. Mearns of *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. by R. P. Basler, in *New York Times Book Review*, February 8, 1953, p. 5.

IV

A NOTE ON THE MANDĪL

Scholarly literature has paid considerable attention to the piece of cloth of manifold uses called *mandīl* in Arabic (and, in Persian, unless its Arabic name is used, *dastār*).¹ Yet, the *mandīl*, a lowly object and one of the highest luxury as well as everything in between, is so frequent an appearance in literature, in documents, and in art that a new, albeit provisional, classification of our present knowledge concerning it may not be entirely without interest. Much more evidence than is presented in the following pages will show up in the course of further study,² and a good deal of what might have been discussed has been left aside.

1. THE FORM AND ORIGIN OF THE WORD

Mandīl (pl. *manādīl*) is ordinarily masculine in grammatical gender, but it is also treated as a feminine noun.³ The form *mindīl*, with an *i* vowel in the first syllable, is an obvious attempt to force the word into a type of noun formation considered to be genuine from the point of view of classical Arabic. The *a* vowel of the first syllable is firmly established, both by the etymology of the word and by subsequent loans from Arabic, as the one normally in use. This does not preclude that purists in fact did employ the form *mindīl*. The derivation of *mandīl* from Latin *mantēle*, *mantēl(i)um*, through the obligatory

¹ Cf., in particular, Dozy, *Vét.* and *Supplément*; Serjeant; Grohmann; and Steiger-Keller. The article by Steiger and Keller was brought to my attention, after the completion of my study on the *mandīl*, by Professor G. Levi Della Vida when I last saw him during a visit to Rome in August, 1966. Steiger and Keller not only trace the development of Latin *mantēlum* and its Arabic form in the European languages but also present a very well-informed discussion of the Arabic material. Professor R. Ettinghausen has been kind enough to contribute the illustrations on pls. 11-13, 15, and 18.

² This refers not only to the eagerly expected material promised by S. D. Goitein (cf. *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, IV [1961], 175), but also to the wealth of references that should appear in the entry *mandīl* of the *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache*, once it reaches this point, and to the great increase in our knowledge which would result from a systematic sifting of the pictorial evidence.

³ Cf. below, p. 83, n. 2. For the verb *mandala*, *tamandala*, cf. below, pp. 84 and 97.

Greek intermediary, is self-evident. It is not quite clear whether early European lexicographers such as Raphelengius and Golius recognized this relationship when they gave pride of place to the translation "mantile"; possibly, they would have said so if they had considered it likely.¹ For the great philologists of the nineteenth century such as T. Nöldeke or S. Fraenkel, the matter admitted of no doubt.² For the replacement of the voiceless dental of the Latin word by the voiced *d* we find in Arabic, some ambiguous evidence has always existed. The situation has been clarified by the occurrence of *mandēlēn apo Skinepōēōs hen* "one *mandēlē* from S." in a Greek papyrus from Egypt dating from the year 481 A.D.³ Syriac also contributes an important link. A work by John of Ephesus written in 567 A.D. contains a passage mentioning cloth for garments (*talb šātā*), carpets (*prāsē*), and *mandīlē*, all of which were embroidered with the names of their donor and her husband.⁴ The pre-Islamic date of this passage is hardly subject to doubt. However, the other occurrences of the word in Syriac literature,⁵ as far as could be ascertained, all date from a much later, Islamic period. They might very well have been loans from Arabic, and in fact, they most likely are. As an Arabic loan-word, we must also consider the famous Byzantine term *mandylion* used for the picture(s) of the face of Christ produced "not by human hands" on a piece of cloth and venerated as a holy relic. The Arabic derivation of the term is made inescapable by its form and its late attestation,

¹ Cf. F. Raphelengius, *Lexicon Arabicum*, 429 (Leiden 1613), and J. Golius, *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum*, col. 2340 (Leiden 1653). Raphelengius' quotation from "Gloss." does not refer to the *Glossarium Latino-Arabicum* (also used by him), which lists *mandīl* merely as the equivalent of "mappe," cf. the edition by C. F. Seybold, in *Semitistische Studien*, XV-XVII (Berlin 1900), 306, but to Pedro Alcalá's entry under "sudario" (see below, p. 78). The *Vocabulista in Arabico* (ed. G. Schiaparelli, 197, 469 [Florence 1871]) just has "mapa." A diminutive formation seems attested so far only in Pedro Alcalá's glossary, 306, under "manteles pequeños": *munāidal*, *munaydalīt*, or *monaydal*, *monaydalīt* (342b, lines 6 and 9). (For Latin *mappa* having many of the meanings of *mandil*, cf. *PWRE*, s.v.).

² Cf. S. Fraenkel, *Die aramäischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen*, 61, 83 f., 139 (Leiden 1886). If the reference to Freytag by Fraenkel, 84, and Steiger-Keller, 116, n. 1, is to Freytag's *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum*, the same would apply what has just been stated with reference to Golius and Raphelengius.

³ First published by H. B. Dewing, in *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, LIII (1922), 113 f. For a detailed survey of the material, cf. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, VIII, I, col. 332 (Leipzig 1936). For a discussion of *nt > nd* in late Greek and in Semitic loan words, cf. Steiger-Keller, 122 ff.

⁴ Cf. Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*, II, 269.

⁵ As listed in *Thesaurus Syriacus*, col. 2170, and C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 2nd ed., 395a (Halle 1928).

as well as by the fact that it could hardly have been derived from Syriac as the holy relic was ordinarily not so designated in Syriac.¹

It has long been assumed that the Latin term, with the preservation of the original voiceless dental, had also entered the Near Eastern environment through Jewish usage and that it was attested in the Jerusalemian Talmud in the spelling *mm̄ṭwlyn*. However, the existence of the word has now been recognized as highly doubtful. It presumably owes its origin to a scribal error.² It may be added here that in some Aramaic dialects, certain usages later attested for Arabic *mandīl* go with another word of Latin-Greek origin, *soudarion*, *sūḏārā*.³

The date of the first occurrence of *mandīl* in Arabic is hard to determine. The word is used in the *ḥadīth* literature,⁴ but there the possibility of a term's anachronistic use is always present; in this particular case, this possibility is strengthened by the existence of corresponding versions employing different terms. In one tradition, which may have existed in only one version, the Prophet is said to have decried a valuable garment given to him by remarking that "the *mandīls* of Sa'd b. Mu'adh in Paradise were better," and again we are told among the traditions judged authentic that the Prophet used to lick his fingers clean after eating and then wipe them with a *mandīl*.⁵ Regardless of the reliability of the available evidence, Muḥammad and his Meccan and Medinese contemporaries might very well have known what a *mandīl* was, even if the word retained

¹ Cf. E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, 176, n. 1 (Leipzig 1899, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, N.F. 3). Characteristically, when speaking of the original painting, Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286) calls it *dappā* "tablet" or *ṣalmā* "picture," but in connection with the historical transfer of the Edessene relic into Christian hands under the caliph al-Muttaqī, he calls it *mandīlā*, cf. his *Chronicon*, 47, 113, 179 f., trans. 48, 105, 162 f. The earlier Michael Syrus (d. 1199), *Chronique*, III, 123, IV, 554, also mentions *mandīlā* only in connection with the Muslim-Christian encounter. Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī (early eleventh century), in his Arabic history, 98, 263 f., speaks of *iqūnat al-mandīl* in the same context, while in his discussion of the letter of Abgar, no reference is made to the painting. In his Arabic chronicle, 67, Bar Hebraeus, quoting the Abgar story, combines it with what he had said on the later occasion in his Syriac work. All this, I feel, confirms the impression that the use of *mandīlā* in Syriac with reference to the holy *mandylion* results from Arabic influence.

² Cf. E. S. Rosenthal, in *Leshonenu*, XXIX (5725), 172, n. 27. For the supposed passage, cf. Levy, III, 154a.

³ Cf. Levy, III, 487a; *Thesaurus Syriacus*, col. 2545; F. Schulthess, *Lexicon Syropalaestinum*, 133 (Berlin 1903).

⁴ See below, p. 83.

⁵ Cf. *Concordance*, I, 378a, and, in particular, the entry *mandīl*, VI, 390b52-391a19. The former tradition is quoted by Freytag and Steiger-Keller from Ibn Durayd, *Isḥīqāq*, 223. For the latter tradition, cf. Kindermann, 99 ff.

for them a foreign ring. In fact, a contemporary poet, 'Abdah b. at-Ṭabīb, is credited with a verse in which he describes horses

Whose manes are *mandīls* for our hands (to wipe on).

The manes were so used in the poet's imagination because the horsemen were in such a hurry after a quick meal that they had no time to wipe their hands in the ordinary manner.¹ There is no good reason for doubting the genuineness of the attribution of the verse or of the poem in which it occurs. 'Abdah's long poem as a whole is fraught with references to luxury objects known to the high civilizations of his time. *Mandīls* most probably belonged in this category for him and for his audience. Together with fine specimens of *mandīls*, the word to designate them might, of course, have entered Arabia long before the time of the Prophet.

2. THE MEANING OF THE WORD

Arabic lexicographers, as we would expect, did not recognize *mandīl* as a foreign word. They tried to derive it from a root *n-d-l*. While this is wrong, the definition given by them, "whatever is used for wiping" (*alladhī yutamassah bih*, or the like),² applies very well to at least the basic usage of the object. "Wiping" is also the meaning of the root of another word, *mashūsb*, which the native lexicographers consider a synonym of *mandīl*.³ The definition cited disregards such other common uses as for carrying or covering things. But it is true that the basic function of a *mandīl* is for it to be worn detached

¹ The entire poem is quoted in *Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, I, 285, trans., II, 96. For the verse, cf. also *Aghānī*, XVIII, 164, l. 7, and al-ʿAskarī, *Taṣḥīf*, 234. A verse by Imru'ul-Qays, *Dīwān*, 234, also quoted in the commentary on 'Abdah's poem in the *Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, refers to the same conceit. Imru'ul-Qays is more explicit and uses the verb *m-sh-sh* "to wipe," omitting any mention of the word *mandīl*. This does not necessarily mean that the word might not have been known to the sixth-century poet.

An old verse is possibly the one recited by Tha'lab for its peculiar linguistic usages: "Like *mandīls* with which drinkers are provided" (*mithla l-manādīli tu'āṭā l-ashrubā*), cf. *Lisān al-ʿArab*, I, 470, and XIX, 300 f.

Steiger-Keller, 126 f., refer to another verse mentioning the *mandīl*, by the poet ar-Rā'ī (collected fragments, 136). The verse appears to date from the caliphate of 'Abd-al-Malik, thus around the year 700. It implies that the people disliked by the poet shift their allegiance as frequently as a *mandīl* may be used by many persons in turn for wiping their hands.

Ad-Dārimī, fol. 131a, discusses the use of *mandīls* for wiping the fingers after eating, but the word *mandīl* appears only in the chapter-heading and not in the actual statement attributed to the Prophet.

² Cf. *Lisān al-ʿArab*, XIV, 177, *s. rad. n-d-l*.

³ Cf. *Lisān al-ʿArab*, VIII, 238 f., *s. rad. m-sh-sh*.

from the body. Whenever it serves functions whereby it becomes attached to the body, as was often the case, this must be considered as secondary. Arabic *mandīl* designates a piece of cloth, probably always cut in a rectangular shape, of small to medium size, usually carried detached from the body, of a great variety of materials, colors, and prices. It forms part of the complete outfit of a properly appareled individual,¹ but most probably only of people who were at least moderately well-to-do.

For purposes of translation, only the context can decide in a given case which English word would serve as the most appropriate rendering. Needless to say, the context often fails to provide us with the necessary information. It is rather noteworthy that within the rich vocabulary of the Arabic language, the one word *mandīl*, by itself or (rarely) modified by a depending genitive, is ordinarily employed for such a large variety of meanings. Among modern European languages, in comparison, German, with its ease in the formation of noun composites, possesses a fairly exact counterpart of *mandīl* in *Tuch*. In composition with other nouns, *Tuch* covers almost the entire range of meanings of *mandīl*. The Romance languages, lacking this facility, have to use by and large different words in each case. English, as is only natural, seems to stand somewhere in between these two extremes.

3. MATERIAL, COLOR AND ORNAMENTATION, SIZE, PLACES OF MANUFACTURE, AND PRICE

a. *Mandīls* may be described as being of various kinds. Whether such a description refers to the material or, more likely, to the size, is not clear from the context.² Obviously, almost any textile material could be cut into pieces of cloth and then be called *mandīl*. *Mandīls* are frequently qualified by the adjective *dabīqī*.³ This highly valued

¹ Cf. the Šāhib Ibn ‘Abbād, in ath-Tha‘alibī, *Yatīmah*, III, 34, cited by R. Levy, in *JRAS* 1935, 327 f.; ash-Sharishī, I, 94 (Cairo 1306). See also below, p. 91 n. 1.

² Cf. ar-Rashīd, *Dbakhbā‘ir*, 215. “Small *mandīls*” are mentioned among valuable gifts as the item apparently possessing the least value, cf. al-Khālidiyān, *Tuḥaf*, 147. The story goes back to al-Jahshiyārī. In the version to be found in Ibn at-Ṭīqtaqā’s *Fakhrī*, cited by the editor of the *Tuḥaf*, “small” is replaced by “fine” (*latīf*).

³ Cf., for instance, aṣ-Šābi‘, *Rusūm*, 68 (below, p. 81, n. 4); Yāqūt, *Irshād*, I, 126 (= ed. Margoliouth, I, 44) (below, p. 88, n. 7). Cf. Grohmann (also in *Der Islam*, XXXIV [1959], 208), who gives further references to the tenth-century authors aṣ-Šūlī and al-Washshā‘. In general, cf. G. Wiet, in *EI*, 2nd ed., s.v. Dabīk, and Monneret de Villard, *Tessuti*, 200 f. and *passim*.

and often mentioned material probably did not represent, for the writers who used the word, anything very different from what in connection with *mandīls* is called elsewhere *dībāj* "brocade."¹ *Mandīls* were made of silk (*ḥarīr*),² and if, as is the case at times, they were described as being made of *khaḥḥ*, the same material was certainly meant.³ Ideally, *mandīls* used as towels should be "softer than *qaḥḥ*-silk and nicer than *khaḥḥ*-silk."⁴ *Mandīls* of "splendid cloth"⁵ and, if this is the correct translation, "with a velvety surface"⁶ were presumably also of the silken type. *Mandīls* were also made of cotton⁷ and of wool.⁸ The *manādīl al-khaysh*, for which Ṭabaristān was famous, were apparently made of linen.⁹ It appears to be not entirely clear what material was meant in connection with *mandīls* with a "short pile,"¹⁰ but the ideal towel certainly was intended to be "fluffy" (*ja'd al-khaml*).¹¹ For massages, "coarse" (*khashin*) or "medium coarse" (*mutawassiḥ al-khushūnah*) *mandīls* were needed.¹² The *mashūsh* was defined as a "coarse" *mandīl*.¹³

Understandably very rare were *mandīls* made of "the down of phoenix feathers" that were incombustible.¹⁴ Incombustible "grease

¹ Cf. ar-Rashīd, *Dhakhbā'ir*, 75, 104. The corresponding Persian term is *zarbaft*, cf. Firdawsī, V, 572 f. (35, verse 250), and VI, 298 f. (41, verse 1659). I owe my knowledge of these and all the other passages from the *Shāhnāmah* to Wolff's *Glossar*, s.v. *dastār*.

² Cf., for instance, the much cited passage from Ibn Abī Ṭayy in al-Maqrīzī, I, 410 f. To my knowledge, it still awaits adequate study.

Firdawsī, V, 570 f., 610 f. (35, verses 250, 740), and VII, 362 f. (44, verse 88), uses *ḥarīr* and *chīnī*. The towels "woven of silk and *qaḥḥ*" (*Arabian Nights*, IV, 255, trans., V, 636) were apparently meant to be of silk, *qaḥḥ* here also meaning silk (or some other textile?).

³ Cf. above, p. 67, n. 1.

⁴ Cf. al-Azdī, 42.

⁵ The expression used, "of the most gorgeous cloth" (*min fākhīr ath-thiyāb*), is, however, entirely non-committal. Cf. Serjeant, in *Ars Islamica*, XIII-XIV, 110, from al-Maqrīzī, I, 409.

⁶ Cf. Serjeant, in *Ars Islamica*, X, 82, citing al-Muqaddasī, 443, where these *mandīls* are said to be very different from the *mandīls* of Shaṭā, as well as al-Azdī, 42. The word *mukbmal*, from *khaml*, is used, referring to the pile (but cf. below, p. 73, n. 1).

⁷ Cf. Serjeant, in *Ars Islamica*, XI-XII, 102, referring to Ibn Ḥawqal, II, 272 (=381, l. 19), trans., II, 371.

⁸ Cf. Dozy, *Supplément*, referring to Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, II, 354, trans., II, 468.

⁹ Cf. ath-Tha'ālībī, *Laṭā'if*, 186, trans. Bosworth, 130.

¹⁰ Cf. Serjeant, in *Ars Islamica*, IX, 63, referring to al-Jawāliqī, 68. The same information is repeated in *Lisān al-'Arab*, XII, 306 f., s.v. *durnūk*. Cf. below, p. 73, n. 1.

¹¹ Cf. al-Azdī, 42.

¹² Cf. below, p. 85.

¹³ Cf. above, p. 66, n. 3.

¹⁴ Cf. ar-Rashīd, *Dhakhbā'ir*, 259. "Phoenix" translates *samandal*.

mandīls” (*mandīl al-ghamar*) which could be cleaned by throwing them into the fire are mentioned as a Chinese specialty.¹ While *mandīls* were made of all kinds of material, for the littérateur as well as the popular storyteller their sheerness and lightness were the characteristics that provoked admiration and comment. Egyptian *mandīls* could be compared to the inner membrane (*ghirqi*) of eggs, so sheer was the material they were made of.² And the white *mandīl*, in the story of ‘Azīz and ‘Azīzah in the *Arabian Nights*, which was dropped by the enamored maiden from a window in order to arouse ‘Azīz’ attention seemed to the narrator’s fancy “softer than the zephyr and more pleasant to the eye than his cure is to a sick person.”³

b. *Mandīls* were usually plain white, and they are often described as such. Poetically, camphor is employed as a metaphor to describe the whiteness of *mandīls*. A narcissus is thus compared to “a goblet of gold in a *mandīl* of camphor.”⁴ In pictorial representation, they are white in the majority of instances (cf., for instance, pls. 6, 7, 10).⁵ *Mandīls* are also described as colored (*mulawwan*),⁶ or, in a more

¹ Cf. ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Thimār*, 432, and *Laṭā’if*, 221 f.; an-Nuwayrī, I, 366. According to Serjeant, in *Ars Islamica*, XV-XVI, 82, the most likely source for this bit of information would be al-Jāhiz. Cf. also E. H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, 199 f. (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1963). For the *mandīl al-ghamar*, see below, p. 78.

Az-Zuhrī, *Ja‘rāfiyah*, 74, 256, speaks of *mandīls* to be used for wiping the hands of kings after meals, made of the greenish-white fur of the *samandal*. They become dirtier when they are cleaned with soap. Fire cleans them and, in fact, makes them cleaner than they were before.

² Cf. *Aghānī*, XVIII, 164, in connection with ‘Abdah’s verse quoted above. The passage is referred to in the introduction of the edition of al-Azdi, XLI, but cf. also Mez, *Renaissance*, 432.

³ *Arabian Nights*, I, 568, trans., II, 27.

⁴ Cf. ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Yatīmah*, III, 281, quoting a poet from Ṭabaristān, Abū l-‘Alā’ as-Sarawī. Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Diwān*, III, 7, similarly used “silver” to describe a white *mandīl*, speaking of “a goblet covered with a *mandīl*, its head silver, and the body of gold.”

⁵ Practically all my references to pictorial representations are derived from the published literature. Naturally, it has been a disadvantage that most of the reproductions available were not in color. Descriptions of illustrations in the scholarly literature usually do not go into such minor details as *mandīls* or what may be considered to be *mandīls*. As a rule, there was no pressing need to mention this particular feature. However, even quite detailed descriptions tend to overlook it. The responsibility for dates and attributions rests with the authors of the publications consulted, some of which are rather dated.

⁶ Cf. ar-Rashīd, *Dhakkā’ir*, 232. *Mulawwan* material of six colors was made into a *mandīl* to be put over a man’s shoulders, cf. *Arabian Nights*, IV, 291, trans., V, 679 f.

poetic vein, as comparable to spring flowers with their great variety of different colors.¹ The *Arabian Nights* have occasion to mention a red *mandīl* as well as one of green silk.² A woolen *mandīl* used as a turban is described as black.³ There were also black handkerchiefs as shown by the figure of the Sultān holding one in a garden scene dating from around the year 1485.⁴ Miniatures from about the same period in a manuscript of Nizāmī's *Khamsab* depict *mandīls* tucked into belts as blue as well as white, and an illustration from the same work about half a century later shows a blue handkerchief held in the hand.⁵ The illustrations of Nizāmī's *Khamsab* in Ms. Ahmet III 3359 of the Topkapusaray feature many handkerchiefs, nearly all of them colored. They also include a banquet scene (fol. 26b) depicting a light blue handkerchief held in the hand in the prescribed fashion, a dark blue one with a gold border used for wiping the mouth, a purple one held in the drinker's hand, and dancing girls holding dark blue pieces of cloth.⁶ The multitude of small touches of different color provided a harmonious variety, just as the usual whiteness of handkerchiefs elsewhere served as an element of rest for the eye of the viewer.

Firdawsī speaks of "a *dastār* perfumed with musk and ambergris."⁷ Perfuming *mandīls* with musk (*mumassak*) was indeed not unheard of in 'Abbāsīd times.⁸ No doubt it was an enduring custom. Bath towels, we hear, could also be scented.⁹

The most common ornamentation is the decorative border embroidered close to each of the narrow ends of the oblong *mandīl* (or, perhaps, covering the entire edges there). This type of ornamentation

¹ *Aghānī*, XVIII, 164, considers this as a characteristic of Yemeni *mandīls*.

² Cf. *Arabian Nights*, I, 572, II, 255, trans., II, 32, III, 264, mentioned in Dozy, *Vét.* Cf. below, p. 86, n. 5.

³ Cf. above, p. 68 n. 8.

⁴ Cf. Binyon-Wilkinson-Gray, pl. LXVII. V. Klein and P. Ackerman, in Pope, *Survey*, III, 2166, refer to a French inventory of the year 1564 which mentions "a petticoat of black mandil." I did not follow up this reference. It may reflect Spanish usage.

⁵ Cf. Pope, *Survey*, V, pls. 882 and 896. From the same time we hear about a drug addict who carried a blue *mandīl*, and when he purchased chestnuts (*qasṭal*) to carry home in it, the merchant put camel dung in it instead of the chestnuts, cf. al-Badrī, *Rābat al-arwāḥ*, fol. 16a.

⁶ Mrs. P. Soucek called my attention to this manuscript during my stay in Turkey in the spring of 1967. For the dancing girls, cf. below, p. 98.

⁷ Cf. Firdawsī, V, 570 f. (35, verse 220).

⁸ Cf. al-Washshā', 175.

⁹ Cf. below, p. 84.

was also known in Classical Antiquity, ¹ as it still is today. It was called 'alam (pl. *a'lām*) or *ṭarṣ*. *Mandīls* so decorated are described as *mu'lam* or *mutarraṣ*. It seems that the two terms were used almost interchangeably. However, 'alam was more particularly used to describe part of the entire composition. Thus, according to a tenth-century author, the ideal after-dinner towel had two 'alam, two *ḥunnār*, and two *ṣīrah*. ² It seems reasonably safe to assume that these were technical terms for the various components of the ornamental border, as we see them rather clearly distinguishable in pictures of *mandīls* (cf. pls. 2, 4). Presumably, this kind of decoration was used principally for napkins and towels. Three golden stripes are the simple if costly decoration of the *mandīl* held in the king's hand in a miniature of the Demotte *Shāhnāmeḥ* (pl. 1). ³ The embroidery may be in red and gold, as in the mechanical wine dispenser (pl. 2, and below, p. 82, n. 3), or in the handkerchief held in the hand of Sulaymān the Magnificent where golden stripes alternate with red ones, the innermost stripe being golden and the one at the outer edge, red (pl. 21). ⁴ The frontispiece of the Vienna Galen manuscript shows a napkin with a red edge ("ein weisses, rotgesäumtes Tuch," cf. below, p. 82, n. 2, and pl. 3). Blue dots constitute the border of a *mandīl* shown in the picture of a wedding from a manuscript written in 1396. ⁵ The frontispiece of the celebrated Vienna manuscript of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī dating from 734/1334 shows the border of the *mandīl*

¹ Cf. *PWRE*, s.v. Cheiromaktron. However, the *mandīls* with ornamental borders, which were included among gifts from Byzantium to the caliph ar-Rāḍī in 326/937-38 (ar-Rashīd, *Dhakhbā'ir*, 65), were presumably of Oriental manufacture, notwithstanding the repeated references to *rūmī mandīls* in the trousseaus of Jewish brides in the Geniza documents (Goitein, 46). *Rūmī* may be Byzantine, as suggested by S. Assaf, in *Tarbiḥ*, IX (1938), 27, but according to Goitein, it can also be, in general, European.

Marqūm in connection with *mandīls* probably refers to the striped border, in preference to any other kind of ornamentation. For an Egyptian *mandīl marqūm*, cf. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, IV, 403, cited by Dozy, *Supplément*, I, 741a.

² Cf. al-Azdī, 42.

³ Now in the Freer Gallery in Washington, D.C. Cf. the color reproduction in Pope, *Survey*, V, pl. 837, and de Jerphanion, *Miniatures*, 53, fig. 18. Note also the numerous purses (*badrah*) of money received by Buzurjmihr as a reward from Khusraw Anūsharwān (Firdawsī, VI, 292 f. [42, verses 1602-5]).

⁴ E. Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights*, I, 607 (London 1839), speaks of an "embroidered border of colored silk and gold." Cf. Dozy, *Vêt.* The *mandīls* striped with stripes in the color of the beloved's eyes (below, p. 95) are probably intended not as made entirely of striped material but as having a colored border (of blue, or black, or, most likely, gold?).

⁵ Cf. Gray, pl. 4.

pictured there as purple-colored with a golden outer edge (pl. 4, and below, p. 82, n. 2); the turban wound around the skull cap of the enthroned prince appears to be decorated with a quite similar design. The amount of gold used for *mandīls*, apparently in the form of gold thread for the *ṭirāẓ*, could be quite considerable.¹

If a person possessed the suitable material, he could go to an embroiderer and have his *mandīls* embroidered.² An anecdote about the ninth-century Ṣūfī and silk weaver, Khayr an-Nassāj, mentions a woman who came to him and said, "Give me the *mandīl* which I left with you" (*a'ṭinī l-mandīla lladhī dafa'tubū ilayka*), and when she did not have the two dirhams that she owed him for his work, he asked her to come back another time and, if he was not at home, to throw the two dirhams into the Tigris. The woman came back the next day with the two dirhams, wrapped in a rag (*kbiṛqah*) so as to be prepared, it seems, for throwing them into the river, and since the Ṣūfī was not home, she did so. A crayfish picked up the rag and later delivered it to Khayr an-Nassāj. Although we are not told so expressly, it would seem most likely that the woman had brought the *mandīl* to him for embroidering or for adding fringes or an ornamental border to it.³

The embroidering of *mandīls* was a process which required toil and skill but added greatly to the value of the finished product. Poetically, the process of embroidering could therefore be described as painful, yet ultimately highly rewarding to the *mandīl* that was so decorated and called *ṭirāẓī*, and be compared in this respect to the process of education toward virtue and excellence and the resulting emergence of an outstanding human being.⁴

The use of fringes seems to be indicated in Abū l-Qāsim's description of the ideal towel used for drying one's hands after having washed them after dinner, as "provided with a split edge" (*maḥshī*

¹ Cf. al-Maqrīzī, I, 471, l. 10, where, however, the *mandīl* is lumped together with other garments (*ṭhawb*) and bridles (*ḥunuk*) for the remark on the value of the gold in them. For a *mandīl* embroidered with "red gold," cf. *Arabian Nights* (above, p. 68 n. 2). The adjective *mudhabhab* used in connection with *mandīls* in al-Maqrīzī, I, 410, l. 18, may refer to the use of gold thread.

² This was the situation described by Badi'-az-zamān al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt*, 137 f., trans., 95, in his *maqāmāt al-maḍrīyah*. The passage has been discussed by Serjeant, in *Ars Islamica*, XII, 105 f. Cf. also above, p. 64.

³ Cf. Ibn Jamā'ah, *Uns*, fol. 3a. For Khayr, cf. as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 322-25.

⁴ Cf. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, IV, I, 382. The poet, 'Izz-ad-dīn Yaḥyā b. 'Alī aṭ-Ṭībī, was born in 578/1182-83. See below, p. 95.

bi-hāshbiyah mashqūqah).¹ Fringes are a conspicuous feature of *mandylion* icons (pl. 5).² Designs on the cloth of *mandīls* do not seem to be mentioned in literature. They no doubt existed, even if the more ornamentally decorated textiles which are mentioned in literary works and preserved in a considerable number of specimens would not fall into the category of *mandīls*. The *mandylion* icons show ornamental designs, and so does, for instance, a piece of cloth we find represented in a Syriac manuscript executed in the year 1219/20.³

The *Arabian Nights* speak of a *mandīl* which served as a kind of cloth to be placed upon a donkey's back for a slave girl to sit on while riding the donkey, as ornamented with precious gems (*mukallal bi-l-jawābir*).⁴ It seems a bit unlikely that something of the sort should have existed in reality, at least as far as *mandīls* are concerned. As often elsewhere, the word *mandīl* may have been used here rather loosely, the narrator being unsure of a more appropriate term by which to designate such a piece of cloth.

For *mandīls* allegedly decorated with inscriptions that were either embroidered or written upon them, cf. below, pp. 83 f., 93-95.

c. The ideal size for a *mandīl* was to have just the right length and width for the purpose it was to serve.⁵ *Mandīls* are described at times as "small"⁶ or as "long."⁷ The fireproof *mandīls* made of the down of phoenix feathers are said to have been nine spans long, that is, something over two yards, not at all an impossible size.⁸ Material

¹ Cf. al-Azdī, 42. *Muḥashshā* is the form used by al-Muqaddasī, 367, apparently in contrast with *sādbij* "simple." When ar-Rashīd, *Dhakhā'ir*, speaks of sheets (*luḥuf*) as *mukhmalah* and as "without *khaml*," this may refer to fringes, as "pile" seems to make little sense in that particular context.

² Cf. Grabar, *Sainte Face*, 16, and K. Weitzmann, *The Mandylion and Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, in *Cahiers Archéol.*, XI (1960), 163-84. The detail of Abgar holding the *mandylion* shown in pl. 5 is taken from Weitzmann's publication of the icon from the Sinai Monastery. Professor Weitzmann kindly provided me with the photograph reproduced here.

³ Cf. de Jerphanion, *Miniatures*, 82 and pls. A and IX. Cf. also Rice, *Baptistère*, 17, pl. XI, where the amir shown "has a bundle over his shoulder and carries a length of cloth decorated with lotus flowers" (I owe this reference to R. Ettinghausen).

⁴ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, II, 345, trans., III, 551. See Dozy, *Supplément*.

⁵ Cf. al-Azdī, 42.

⁶ Cf. ar-Rashīd, *Dhakhā'ir*, 229; al-Khālidīyān, *Tuḥaf*, 147 (above, p. 67, n. 2). "Small" and "large" *mandīls* were produced in Qūmis, according to al-Muqaddasī, 367.

⁷ Cf. Grohmann.

⁸ Cf. above, p. 68, n. 4. Old Turkish towels were four to six feet long, cf. B. Y. Berry, in *The Art Bulletin*, XX (1939), 253. The interesting data on old Turkish

could be bought and then cut into *mandīls*, for we are told that some fine material was made into trousers (*sarāwīl*) and into a *mandīl* (napkin or after-dinner towel).¹ A *mandīl* used for drying tears is depicted as being of a size amply sufficient to cover the face (pl. 6), and it probably was square-shaped as are our handkerchiefs. The napkin held in the hand of the drinking prince in the manuscript of the *Maqāmāt* is about the length of his arm to his fingertips, thus, perhaps, roughly one yard long (pl. 4). In the mechanical wine server, the *mandīl* appears to be longer than the human figure, but the latter may not have been intended to be life-size (pl. 2). The *mandylion* icons suggest a length about three or four times the width of the face of Christ.

d. *Mandīls* were produced in numerous places. As a matter of fact, they were no doubt produced in every town of any size, and they were possibly also produced in private homes. However, they were often qualified by the name of the place where they were made, as had already been the case with the *mandēlē* mentioned in the fifth-century papyrus.² Many regions in the Muslim world are expressly mentioned as producers of *mandīls*. In general, Egyptian *mandīls* enjoyed a great reputation in the ‘Abbāsīd ‘Irāq.³ Yemeni textiles were well-known, but the reference singling out Yemeni *mandīls* next to Egyptian *mandīls* fits probably better into the eighth-century context in which it appears, than it would into a later period.⁴ Places mentioned as producers of *mandīls* are in (1) Egypt: Qahqāwh, Shaṭā, Tinnīs, Bahnasā,⁵ Būsh, and Assuan⁶; (2) the ‘Irāq: al-Qaṣr and al-Buwayb⁷; and (3) Khūzistān and points east: ‘Askar Mukram, Fasā, Nisābūr (whose *mandīls* were qualified as *al-aṣīrīyah*, of uncertain meaning), Kāzarūn, Jurjān, Arrajān, Qūmis, Dāmghān (cf. below, p. 82), Ṭabaristān, Bamm, and Karminīyah,⁸ also Simnān (in the towels produced by Berry in this and related articles may not be applicable to the earlier period under consideration here.

¹ Cf. above, p. 72, n. 2.

² Cf. above, p. 64.

³ Cf. al-Azdi, 42; al-Qushayrī (below, p. 90, n. 9). On “Miṣr” as the point of origin for textiles, cf. M. A. Marzouk, in the Kühnel *Festschrift*, ed. R. Ettinghausen, *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst*, 283 ff. (Berlin 1959).

⁴ Cf. the *Aghānī* passage cited above, p. 69, n. 2.

⁵ The preceding four localities are mentioned by Grohmann. For shaṭawī *mandīls*, cf. also Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam*, III, 288, and de Goeje’s glossary of the *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, IV, 274 (above, p. 68, n. 6).

⁶ Cf. Serjeant, in *Ars Islamica*, XIII-XIV, 108 f.

⁷ Cf. Serjeant, in *Ars Islamica*, IX, 86.

⁸ Cf. Serjeant, in *Ars Islamica*, IX, 63, X, 77, 82, 86, 90 f., XI-XII, 102, 104 f., 125, 131, XV-XVI, 77.

region of Dāmghān) and Qazwīn, as well as Jannābah and Sīnīz in Fārs. ¹ It is hard to believe that all these localities and regions should have produced *mandīls* of some particular type or distinction, more so than any number of other places which might have been cited for the *mandīls* presumably produced there. Only in some cases would the *mandīls* seem to have been truly local specialties, as perhaps in the case of the *mandīls* of Ṭabaristān which were held in high esteem in early ‘Abbāsīd times, so much so that the number of Ṭabaristān *mandīls* was singled out for mention in the famous list of taxes received in the central treasury about the year 785/86. ²

Not only the production but also the selling of *mandīls* was a special occupation which gave rise to the *nisbah* al-Manādīlī. ³

e. *Mandīls* were valued as treasures if they were made of a particularly precious material or distinguished by unusually costly and beautiful embroidery. Like anything made of cloth, they were quite generally objects of a certain value and desirable possessions. ⁴ They were presumably beyond the means of the poor, who certainly had no napkins or handkerchiefs for everyday use and who may often have done without proper towels. The prices for *mandīls* varied greatly, depending on their quality and workmanship and the size and use for which they were destined. A papyrus from the ninth century indicates the very high price of two dīnār and one qīrāt (= 1/24 of a dīnār) for a *mandīl* manufactured in Tinnīs, if, indeed, only one single *mandīl* is meant. ⁵ This seems to have been as high as the price for a complete garment or, perhaps, as high as half the price for a complete

¹ Cf. Steiger-Keller, 129, who refer to al-Mas‘ūdī, Ibn Ḥawqal, Ibn al-Faqīh, and Yāqūt.

² Cf. al-Jahshiyārī, 284 (Cairo 1357/1938); Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, trans., I, 363. For non-Muslim *mandīls*, cf. above, p. 71, n. 1.

³ Cf. as-Sam‘ānī, *Ansāb*, fol. 542b. The proper name Mandīl (vocalization?), attested in the West, may or may not have anything to do with our object, cf. Bābā at-Tunbuktī, 347; Ibn al-Aḥmar, 40.

⁴ Cf. al-Azdī, 128, where *mandīls* and perfume are pointed out as potentially desirable possessions. Oriental handkerchiefs were still appreciated by Europeans in much later times, cf., for instance, “two gold-embroidered handkerchiefs” and “three towels” presented to Queen Elizabeth I (S. A. Skilliter, in S. M. Stern [ed.], *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, 135, 139, 141, 143 [Oxford 1965], where, however, the word used is not *mandīl*). Gaspar Correa, *Lendas da Índia*, II, 432 (Lisbon 1858-64), took the gold-embroidered handkerchief (“lenço”), which the dead Hormuzan was clutching in his hand, and sold it for the considerable sum of twenty xarafim. Correa adds the Persian word for the object, *rūmāl* (lit., “face wiper”).

⁵ Cf. Grohmann, 111.

garment of a better quality. A single *mandīl* from Qūmis is said to have brought at times as much as 2,000 dirhams, apparently, during the second half of the tenth century.¹ But there are also references to *mandīls* that sold for one dirham, and to others that sold for twenty dirhams.² The great differences in price do not seem to be conditioned primarily by monetary fluctuations or special economic conditions but mainly by the particular kind of *mandīl* that was under consideration in each case. Prices indicated by the much later Maqrīzī in the fifteenth century, which reflect the situation of an earlier period, vary from (commonly) five to seventy dīnārs.³ What this meant in terms of purchasing power may be very hard to determine, if it can be determined at all. This applies also to the statement in the *Arabian Nights* that the beautiful *mandīl* of Nūr-ad-dīn was worth at most one hundred dīnārs, which at all events was considered a very large sum.⁴

4. ATTESTED USES OF MANDĪLS

a. For the hand: The *mandīl* was very commonly carried in the hand, as is only natural. It also came to be carried tucked into the belt.⁵ Both these ways of carrying *mandīls* are amply represented in art. Obviously, neither reveals very much about the use to which a *mandīl* so carried was to be put. The *mandīl* held in a drinker's hand, for instance, served for wiping the mouth. In characteristic fashion—folded double and with the hand closer to the loop thus formed than to the ends of the *mandīl*—, we can see it carried in the hand of a woman in the fourteenth-century manuscript of al-Jāhīz' *Ḥayawān*. It almost looks as if the woman were pouring something from the *mandīl* into the flask right underneath it, but this effect was apparently not intended (pl. 7).⁶ A rather similar representation of a *mandīl* held near a flask can be seen in a detail from the story of Rustam and Isfandiyār, dating from 1430 (pl. 8).⁷ A sitting figure from later in the fifteenth century is shown with a *mandīl* in the right hand.⁸ In these times, and in the Eastern regions of the Muslim world at

¹ Cf. al-Muqaddasī, 367, as quoted by Steiger-Keller, 129.

² Cf. Grohmann.

³ Cf. al-Maqrīzī, I, 410 f., cited by Grohmann.

⁴ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, IV, 294, trans., V, 683. Cf. above p. 69, n. 6, and below, p. 92, n. 7.

⁵ It was also carried in the wide sleeve, cf. below, pp. 88 and 98 f.

⁶ Cf. Löfgren-Lamm, 26 and pl. II.

⁷ Cf. Binyon-Wilkinson-Gray, pl. L.

⁸ Cf. Martin, I, 34, fig. 22. Cf. also the ladies in the garden, from about the second quarter of the fifteenth century, in Binyon-Wilkinson-Gray, pl. LIX.

least, a person of rank and fashion would be seen in public always with a handkerchief in his hand.¹ The custom continued, as is shown, for instance, by a miniature from India dating from ca. 1600, in which the distinguished visitor of a hermit carries a handkerchief in the approved manner in his left hand.² Often, it is not quite clear how the piece of cloth shown in a figure's hand ought to be interpreted, for instance, when an attendant in the scene of the king and the drunken judge³ or in the scene depicting a physician with a sick ruler⁴ is shown with what seems to be a piece of cloth in his hand. Somewhat puzzling is also the apparent piece of cloth held in the right hand of the figure of Auriga. In the left, he holds a whip, and, perhaps, the other hand should have held the reins, but what we see appears to be a *mandīl* (pl. 9).⁵

The *mandīl* tucked into the belt is at times not quite easy to distinguish from the knotted ends of the cloth belt itself. It is quite commonly seen in miniatures. Apparently, it does not show up before the fifteenth century. Thereafter, it is omnipresent (pls. 10-13).⁶

¹ Cf. further, for instance, Martin, I, 44, fig. 26, II, pls. 97-99, 151; Schulz, pl. 155; Binyon-Wilkinson-Gray, pl. XLIX left; Holter, pl. XVIII. Cf. also above, p. 70. We also find it said in the Muslim West that a very young prince was "gracefully holding *mandīl* and dagger," cf. Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Nuṣūdat al-jirāb*, 219.

² Cf. Kühnel, *Miniaturmalerei*, pl. 103. For another version of the same scene, by 'Alī Rizā-yi 'Abbāsī, cf. I. Hubbard, in *Ars Islamica*, IV (1937), 288, fig. 9. In Pope, *Survey*, VI, pl. 1021, the object in the hand of the kneeling figure seems intended to be a piece of cloth (sixteenth century).

³ Cf. R. H. Pinder-Wilson, *Three Illustrated Manuscripts of the Mughal Period*, in *Ars Orientalis*, II (1957), pl. VI, fig. 13 (between pp. 424 and 425).

⁴ Cf. G. D. Guest and R. Ettinghausen, in *Ars Orientalis*, IV (1961), 38, fig. 37, pl. X. For representations of bandages and towels in illuminated Western medical manuscripts, cf. MacKinney, pls. 27, 32, 63, 81A, B, 90 (pp. 38, 40, 66, 78 f., 87 f., 197, 205, 208 f., 222, 243).

⁵ Cf. E. Wellesz, *An Early al-Šūfī Manuscript*, in *Ars Orientalis*, III (1959), pls. IV, XIX, XXI, figs. 8, 48, 54. In one instance, the whip is held in the right hand, and the "*mandīl*" in the left. A prince on horseback can be seen having a piece of cloth tucked into his belt in a miniature dating from about the end of the fifteenth century, cf. Binyon-Wilkinson-Gray, pl. LXXII.

⁶ Color plate in Arnold, *Bihzād*, pl. I. It shows several figures participating in an audience given by Timur who wear pieces of cloth in their belts as well as in their hands. It dates from 1467. Also in Kühnel, pl. 48. Cf. Schulz, pl. 161; Pope, *Survey*, V, pl. 867.

Pl. 11 illustrates both ways of carrying *mandīls*. Pl. 13 shows that even angels cannot do without one. Paintings of Mehmet the Conqueror and Sulaymān the Magnificent represent them with *mandīls* in their hands, while a man (often described as a painter at work) wears his *mandīl* in the belt (pls. 19-21). The European influence which is noticeable in these works hardly extends to the *mandīls*.

For a *dastār* carried inside a *mūzeh*, apparently a boot, cf. Firdawsī, V, 570 f. (35, verse 220). This reference is unique, as far as I can see.

The ideal *mandīl* for wiping and drying hands after meals—in this case, an object we would call “towel” rather than “napkin”—was circumstantially described by Abū l-Qāsim in a passage already often cited here.¹ A *mandīl aṭ-ṭa‘ām* (“for food”), which is referred to in a verse quoted below (p. 97), may be a napkin in common use, unless it was meant to be a table-cloth. Like “the *mandīl* for the hand,” the expression was used as a simile for something accessible to and used by everybody.² The expression *mandīl al-ghamar* (“for grease,” that is, for greasy fingers) also refers to a napkin for wiping one’s hands clean after eating. The term was listed already in Golius, but not very many instances of its use in literature can be given.³

The *mandīl* which was dropped from a window in order to start a liaison, as described in the *Arabian Nights*,⁴ was certainly a handkerchief such as the ladies in the miniatures mentioned were used to carry.

b. For the face: A *mandīl* may be described as being intended for the face, without any clear indication of the particular function it might have been meant for, although it may be supposed at times that the *mandīl al-wajh* was the one used for wiping the mouth after drinking.⁵ The Prophet is said to have had a *mandīl* with which he wiped his face.⁶ Particular functions that can be discerned in literary references and artistic representations are these:

1. For wiping the face and drying perspiration: The Arabic equivalent indicated in Pedro Alcalà’s glossary for “sudario de lienço” is *mandīl al-a‘rāq*, to be connected, it seems, with Arabic ‘*araq* “sweat” (?).⁷ The action of wiping off perspiration is obviously not one whose description would enjoy great favor with writers. However, again we can rely on the *Arabian Nights* for a rather explicit description. ‘Azīz, the rich merchant’s son, in the story dealing with him and his cousin ‘Azīzah, was perspiring heavily when he came

¹ See above, p. 68, nn. 4, 6, and 11, p. 71, n. 2, and p. 73, nn. 1 and 5. For the use of *mandīls* for drying the hands after meals, after having washed them with soap and water, cf. *Arabian Nights*, IV, 255, trans., V, 636.

² Cf. below, p. 96.

³ Cf. above, p. 69, n. 1, and below, p. 79, n. 3, p. 92, n. 9, and p. 96, n. 1; Lane, *s. rad. gh-m-r*; Kindermann, 113.

⁴ See above, p. 69.

⁵ Cf. Grohmann, and below, p. 92.

⁶ Cf. Dozy, *Vêt.*, citing the ‘*Uyūn al-athar* (by Ibn Sayyid-an-nās), without reporting the precise situation.

⁷ Cf. Pedro Alcalà, 401a. For further references to *mandīl*, *manīdīl* from Pedro Alcalà, cf. Steiger-Keller, 132.

out of the bath house and was walking along the street, somewhat apprehensive, it seems, of his impending marriage. Thus, he spread out his *mandīl* to sit on it and rest for a while. When the heat of the day grew oppressive and sweat was running down his face, he was not able to use his *mandīl* for wiping his face because he was sitting on it.¹ Possibly, the piece of cloth held by auriga, if it was a *mandīl*, was primarily meant for wiping the sweat off his face and his hands.

2. For blowing the nose: Again, this is a common usage of *mandīls* which writers cannot be expected to mention often. However, it is unambiguously referred to in the case of the fastidious wazīr, Ibn al-Furāt (d. 312/924), who used precious *mandīls* only once for this purpose, for which the Arabic term used is *istanthara* (technically, cleaning the nose [with water], elsewhere also *istanshaqa*).² The fastidiousness of the higher classes made bad manners in this respect almost unbearable. When an accomplished littérateur named Abū Riyāsh was invited for dinner by the wazīr al-Muhallabī (d. 352/963), he used his "grease napkin" to blow his nose (*imtakhaṭa*) and expectorated into it during the meal, a truly atrocious performance.³

However, it was not only the higher classes which expected good manners. College students were advised in the early fourteenth century, as no doubt they were before and after this time, not to spit in the presence of their professor but "to remove the mucus from the mouth with a *mandīl* or a rag (*kbirqah*) or a corner of the garment." And when they had to sneeze, they were to cover their faces with a *mandīl* or the like.⁴

3. For drying tears: For a person listening to a preacher and dutifully moved by him, the proper reaction was to cry under the stress of emotion. In the *Kitāb al-Ḥaydab*, which pretends to be from the time of al-Ma'mūn but probably dates from the fourth/tenth century, the caliph was once moved to cry bitterly during the discussion. The narrator continued to talk, until "he saw him having wiped his face with a *mandīl*," whereupon he finally made a pause, but not for long.⁵ How the audience of a preacher could dry their tears daintily is shown in one of the illustrations of al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqā-*

¹ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, I, 568, trans., II, 27. Cf. Dozy, *Vêt.*

² Cf. ar-Rashid, *Dhakhbā'ir*, 230.

³ Cf. ath-Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmah*, II, 120; Mez, *Renaissance*, 375.

⁴ Cf. Ibn Jamā'ah, *Tadbkirah*, 99; al-'Almawī, 68. Al-'Almawī says in both cases, "a *mandīl* or the like."

⁵ Cf. 'Abd-al-'Azīz al-Kinānī, *Ḥaydab*, 164.

māt.¹ Another author of *Maqāmāt*, Badi‘-az-zamān al-Hamadhānī, also mentions the feminine use of *mandīls* for the inner corner of the eyes, apparently for drying real or pretended tears.² The recitation of poetry was likewise an occasion for letting one’s emotions run high. The listeners, being honestly moved or assuming a customary behavior pattern, would weep freely. On such an occasion, as reported in the *Rūznāmajah* of the Ṣāhib Ibn ‘Abbād (d. 385/995), a person might call for a *mandīl* to dry his tears, a *mandīl ‘abarātihī* “for his tears,” as it was called on this occasion.³

There were many other occasions for crying. There is the lonely and dejected lover who hides his tears and his face from the cold world behind his handkerchief.⁴ The same *mandīl* which the lonely lover used for drying his tears could be used, after his girl had accepted him, as a napkin to wipe the mouth when the two were carousing together.⁵ A person who hears a sad, shocking story would put his *mandīl* in front of his face and cry into it.⁶ Two figures, in a scene depicting the mourning for Faridūn from the Demotte *Shāhnāmeb*, are holding *mandīls* to their faces.⁷ A mourner at the bier of Chingiz Khān can be seen wiping away his tears with a piece of cloth in an illuminated manuscript of Rashīd-ad-dīn’s *Jāmi‘ at-tawārīkh* (pl. 6).⁸ At the sight of Gulrū, Farrūkh-rūz breaks into tears, and the handkerchief he holds comes in handy.⁹ However, handkerchiefs for such purposes were not always in a person’s possession. Remorseful St. Peter wipes his eyes with the sleeve of his garment, as shown in Vat. Syr. 559, fol. 135a (pl. 14).¹⁰ The artist no doubt

¹ Cf. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, 146, from a manuscript probably of Syrian origin written around 1300.

² Cf. above, p. 72, n. 2.

³ Cf. ath-Tha‘alibī, *Yatīmah*, II, 284; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XV, 113 (= ed. Margoliouth, V, 441); and the collection of the preserved fragments of Ibn ‘Abbād’s *Rūznāmajah*, 92.

⁴ See below, p. 94.

⁵ See below, p. 93.

⁶ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, I, 234, trans., I, 341. Cf. also Dozy, *Vêt.*, citing Ibn Baṭṭūṭah (II, 394, trans., II, 488) and Ibn Iyās.

⁷ Cf. Stchoukine, pl. I.

⁸ Cf. B. Gray, in *Ars Orientalis*, I (1954), pl. VI, fig. 12 (between pp. 74 and 75). The crying onlooker in the scene of Alexander comforting the dying Darius uses a red handkerchief in the Ms. Topkapusaray, Ahmet III 3359, fol. 327b, of Nizāmī’s *Khamsab* (cf. above, p. 70, n. 6).

⁹ Cf. Binyon-Wilkinson-Gray, pl. XII.

¹⁰ Cf. de Jerphanion, *Miniatures*, pl. XVIII, no. 37; Leroy, 293, pl. LXXIV, 4. Similarly, women in the West would be depicted as using their kerchiefs for drying tears while mourning Christ, cf. the painting in the Züricher Landes-

was right in not providing Peter with a luxury article such as a *mandīl*. Ordinary people had to dry their tears as a rule in the manner shown here for the apostle. Considering the vast amount of weeping done in the *Arabian Nights* and in Arabic belles-lettres in general and the failure to mention *mandīls* more frequently in these situations, it must be admitted that the drying of tears with them did, perhaps, not greatly interest poets and storytellers, or it was indeed not a common custom.

4. For the mouth, that is, for wiping the mouth after eating and, especially, after drinking: While *mandīls* for eaters probably had the cleaning of hands as their main function as mentioned before, those described as being used in connection with drinking primarily served for wiping the mouth. This presumably was the intended use of the rare *mandīls* of the down of phoenix feathers, described as being "for the mouth."¹ The *mandīl* employed by the drinker was at times called *mandīl ash-sharāb* ("for wine"). The *sāqī* carried one, as in the verse by Ibn al-Mu'tazz:

And a cupbearer putting his *mandīl*
In the place of the belt of the long sword.²

In another verse of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, it is not quite clear whether the *mandīl* was used as an apron or, more likely perhaps, as a napkin tucked into the belt:

There went with a strainer to tap the barrel a cupbearer
Who had girded himself with a *mandīl* when he jumped up.³

The waiter who served the wazīr al-Muhallabī carried in one hand a plate with a crystal pitcher covered with a *mandīl* made of *dabīqī* material, while holding in the other hand a *mandīl sharāb*.⁴ Such *mandīls* (in Persian, *dastārḥā-yi sharāb*), provided with well executed

museum (LM 4714), ca. 1500. The wide sleeve (*kumm*) of garments could also take over other functions of the *mandīl*. Thus we hear, for instance, that a *mandīl*, a napkin, was used for taking hot chickens from the spit on which they were broiled, and if someone was greedy as the caliph Sulaymān b. 'Abd-al-Malik is said to have been, he would not wait for the *mandīl* to be brought but use the sleeve for this purpose, cf. al-Ibshihī, I, 214.

¹ See above, p. 68. Strangely enough, in the Prophetic tradition about wiping one's hands after meals (above, p. 65), the commentator on al-Ghazzālī's *Iḥyā'*, II, 5, speaks of "a *mandīl* for the mouth," cf. Kindermann, 100.

² Cf. Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Dīwān*, III, 96, in the chapter on wine.

³ Cf. Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Dīwān*, III, 7. But cf. also below, p. 91, for using *mandīls* as belts?

⁴ Cf. aṣ-Ṣābi', *Rusūm*, 68 (above, p. 67, n. 3). *Mandīl sharāb* seems to have nothing to do with *sharābīyāt* (below, p. 91, n. 3).

borders, are mentioned as a specialty of Dāmghān.¹ They are exceptionally well known from artistic representations. The drinker himself is shown carrying a cup in one hand, and a *mandīl* in the other (pl. 4).² The servant carrying the cup and holding the *mandīl* ready for the drinker to use appears in pictures of an automaton in the famous work on the subject of automata by al-Jazarī written in 602/1205. This automaton was the prototype of the modern mechanical towel dispenser and the soft-drink machine, but let it be said that the Muslim machine was not meant to dispense *soft* drinks. The female figure forming part of the machine holds in her right hand a cup that is automatically filled with wine from above. In her left hand, there is "a *mandīl* which the king can use to wipe his mouth after drinking. . . . The empty cup and the *mandīl* are eventually replaced by the king into the hands of the machine."³ The *mandīl* is held in the prescribed manner, as described before,⁴ which was also the way in which the Achaemenid "towel-bearer" carried his towel⁵ and which

¹ Cf. *Hudūd al-'ālam*, trans., 135.

² Cf., for instance, Holter, pl. XVII, and *idem*, *Galen-Handschrift*, pls. I, III; Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, 148. For another illustration from the Demotte *Shāhnāmah*, cf. Schulz, p. 24 and pl. 66 ("Das Mundtuch in den Händen gehört neben dem Becher zu den beliebtesten Requisiten des Bagdad-Stiles"). While the king there is holding his *mandīl* in the usual manner, the *mandīl* of the other figure is not folded double and held in about the middle. The *mandīl* could be held in the right hand, and the cup in the left, or vice versa, cf. Ms. Paris ar. 5847, fol. 33, of the *Maqāmāt*, as reproduced by O. Grabar, in *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, XI (1968), 189, fig. 16.

³ Cf. Wiedemann-Hauser, 91 ff. and fig. 24; Schroeder, *Persian Miniatures*, pl. I, reproduced here as pl. 2. Cf., further, Martin, pl. III, and J. Needham and Wang Ling, *Science and Civilization in China*, IV, II, 156, 160, and pl. CLXVII (Cambridge 1965). Needham and Ling discuss Chinese antecedents and reproduce another illustration from a manuscript of al-Jazarī in Washington which shows the drinker holding cup and *mandīl* in his hand. Cf. also pl. 15 (below, p. 87), from the same manuscript.

⁴ See above, p. 76.

⁵ In the Achaemenid monuments, to which R. Ettinghausen has called my attention, this method of carrying the napkin is depicted as well as another one in which it is laid out in the middle upon the towel-bearer's palm. The latter appears to have been the proper way of presenting the napkin to the king for use. Cf. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, I, 195, pls. 105, 121, for the one mode of carrying, and pls. 148 f., 193 f., for the other.

The custom goes back much farther in time. As W. K. Simpson informs me, a piece of cloth is depicted in Egyptian painting and sculpture on numerous occasions, and it is often shown carried in the same manner. It can also be observed in banquet scenes on cylinder seals dating as far back as the fifteenth to thirteenth centuries B.C. (and down to Neo-Assyrian times). Towels carried over the shoulder are also shown on cylinder seals. I am grateful for this information to E. Porada, who also provided me with the picture of a thirteenth-century

appears again in the illustrations of a Western medical manuscript dating from ca. 1300.¹ In the case of our automaton, in contradistinction to all the other illustrations referred to here, there is an accompanying text which expressly uses the word *mandīl* to denote the object pictured.

c. For drying after washing, etc.: According to a precedent set by the Prophet, it is not desirable to use a towel for drying after the ritual *ghuṣl*. The Prophet's wife, Maymūnah, brought him a towel after he had finished with his ablutions, but he indicated that he did not wish to use it. The tradition occurs in several versions. Already the text of one of the versions in al-Bukhārī contains the word *mandīl*. Two other versions, however, use *kbirqab* "rag, piece of cloth" instead of *mandīl*, while a third version has *thawb* "cloth."² The necessary conclusion would seem to be that the term used in whatever might have been the oldest recension of the tradition can no longer be ascertained. *Mandīl* has the slimmest chance of having been it. At any rate, it is clear that *mandīls* were, in fact, used for drying after ritual ablutions.³ The early *Muṣannaḥ* of Ibn Abī Shaybah (159-235/775-849) has a number of traditions on the early Islamic attitude toward using or not using a towel for drying after the ritual ablution. Here *mandīl* again alternates with *kbirqab* and *thawb*.⁴

Through some supernatural agency Abū Bakr was presented with a cup containing water whiter than snow and sweeter than honey. It was covered with a *mandīl* inscribed with his name and with the

Elamite seal reproduced here as pl. 22. It is to be published in her volume in the *Mémoires de la Délégation en Iran*, entitled *La Glyptique de Teboga Zanbil*. From the references given me by Professor Porada, I may further mention A. Moortgat, *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel*, no. 527 (Berlin 1940), and E. Porada and B. Buchanan, *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals*, I, nos. 673 and 676 (New York 1948). There, we also find representations of tablecloths. It would seem an interesting task, which is beyond my competence, to follow the history of this artistic tradition in Egypt and Western Asia from the earliest times down into the mediaeval Islamic period. Another point of comparison is the *mappa* of the Roman consul, cf. R. Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen*, 62 f. and plates (Berlin and Leipzig 1929).

¹ Cf. MacKinney, pls. 63 and 81 B (pp. 66, 79, 205, 208).

² Cf. al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 40 ff., in the *Kitāb al-ghuṣl*. The feminine gender of *mandīl* in the *ḥadīth* is explained by Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath*, I, 387, as due to assimilation to the feminine noun *kbirqab*, the *mandīl* being a special kind of *kbirqab*. Cf. also Abū 'Awānah, I, 245, 299 f. For references to other collections of *ḥadīth*, cf. *Concordance*, IV, 504a28, 513a24.

³ Cf. *Lisān al-'Arab*, XIV, 177, l. 6, s. *rad. n-d-l*, and XI, 243, ll. 13 f., s. *rad. n-sh-f*.

⁴ Ms. Nuru Osmaniye 1221, fols. 54a-55a; Ms. Murat Molla 594, fols. 99b-100b. Cf. also an-Nawawī, *Majmū'*, I, 495 f., and Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath*, I, 377.

confession of faith. Abū Bakr put the *mandīl* upon his shoulders, performed the ritual ablutions, and replaced it upon the cup. From the continuation of the story it becomes clear that he used the *mandīl* for drying himself, for the Prophet told him that it was Gabriel who had washed him, and Michael who had dried him (*mandalaka*).¹

The use of *mandīls* for wiping the body after sexual intercourse is attested from a much later period in a bizarre account of murder by using a poisoned *mandīl* for this purpose.² This sounds like the application to an actual happening of an ancient motif of folklore and literature. Indeed, we find a long saying in al-Mubashshir which is ascribed to Pythagoras and purports to define the proper behavior of rulers. It concludes with the admonition that at the time of sexual intercourse with his women, a ruler should wipe himself with a *mandīl* only after having made sure of it(s) harmlessness.³ Apparently, since towels were at times perfumed, it was believed that they could also be impregnated with a poisonous substance.

According to the ninth-century *Futūḥ Miṣr* by Ibn ‘Abd-al-Ḥakam, the caliph ‘Umar, at al-Jār on the shore of the sea, called for *mandīls* and then told the people to wash themselves with sea water. The *mandīls* were hardly meant to be bathing trunks, for which the later term was *tubbān*. It would seem that they were to serve for drying.⁴ In public baths, towels were naturally available for this purpose. In this connection, scented *mandīls* are mentioned in the *Secretum Secretorum*.⁵ A *mandīl* could, of course, also be used for drying a man’s feet after washing them.⁶ Speakers of Arabic would no doubt have dubbed “*mandīl*” the objects made of cloth (garments [loincloths] rather than towels) which are held by two angels in the baptism scene in Vat. Syr. 559, fol. 26a (pl. 16).⁷ For the ideal towel

¹ Cf. az-Zamakhsharī, *Khaṣā’is*, 38.

² Cf. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, II, 123, trans., II, 340. See Dozy, *Vêt.*

³ Cf. al-Mubashshir, 71.

⁴ Ibn ‘Abd-al-Ḥakam, 166. Cf., however, below, pp. 90 f. For an early Spanish occurrence of *mandīles* meaning “Badewäsche,” cf. Steiger-Keller, 134.

⁵ Cf. *Sirr al-asrār*, 106.

⁶ As indicated, it seems, in a story to be found in Ibn al-Jawzī, *Dhamm al-hawā*, 545. The passage is referred to by Badrī M. Fahd, *al-‘Ammah bi-Baghdād fī l-qarn al-khāmis*, 174 (Baghdād 1387/1967).

⁷ Cf. de Jerphanion, pl. VII, no. 13; Leroy, 285 and pl. LXXIX, 1. The corresponding scene from a North Italian miniature dating from the second half of the fifteenth century in the Morgan Library in New York (M 558 B) (pl. 17) shows one angel holding a blue cloth, and the other a purple cloth. The pieces of cloth appear to be rather large and have been correctly identified as garments by M. Harrsen and G. K. Boyce, *Italian Manuscripts in the Pierpont Morgan Library*,

used for wiping and drying the hands after meals, cf. above, p. 78. The *mandīl* proffered by an attendant to someone who has just used water from a machine to wash his hands (pl. 15) apparently was meant to be used as a towel.

d. For massage: This usage is attested in medical works. In his encyclopaedic *Ḥāwī*, ar-Rāzī (d. 313/925) recommends a (dry) massage with (medium coarse) *mandīls*.¹ Most of the contents of the *Ḥāwī* consists of systematically arranged excerpts from the older medical literature among which the works of Galen take precedence. This particular passage is derived from Galen's *Methodus Medendi*, XIII, 3 (= Vol. X, 821-23 Kühn). "With medium coarse *mandīls*" of the Arabic corresponds to Greek *dia sindonōn mē pany malakōn alla ti metrion echousōn trachy*. However, the fact that we are dealing here with a translation does not mean that the passage cannot be taken to indicate a custom that was also practiced in the time of ar-Rāzī. Galen's advice was certainly followed, and *mandīls* were used for massages in Muslim times. In a much later medical handbook, we again find a reference to *mandīls* used for massages.² No doubt, a careful perusal of the medical literature will not fail to furnish further examples.

A kind of massage with linen *mandīls* in public baths is also indicated in the *Secretum secretorum*. Such *mandīls* are recommended there for "wiping the body time after time" after it has been made to perspire.³

e. For covering things: As shown in a verse quoted below, p. 96, *mandīls* were presumably often used for covering the serving table (*khuwān*), that is, as tablecloths. The first course of Ibn Buṭlān's *Physicians' Banquet* was brought in by a servant on "a tray covered with a *mandīl* upon which there were bread, vinegar, and vegetables." Reproductions from a thirteenth-century illuminated manuscript of the work do not show with sufficient clarity whether or not similar trays served for other courses of the meal were pictured covered with *mandīls*.⁴

28, no. 52 (New York 1953). Earlier representations such as the ivory plaque of ca. 1000 in the Landesmuseum in Zürich (AG 1313) show clearly that a garment is intended.

¹ Cf. ar-Rāzī, *Ḥāwī*, XIV, 3. Cf. also VII, 189.

² Cf. Ibn Hubal, III, 378, 382.

³ Cf. *Sirr al-asrār*, 105.

⁴ Cf. J. Muhriz, in *Revue de l'Institut des Manuscrits Arabes*, VII, 2 (1961), 75 ff. In Christian miniatures such as those of the Syriac manuscript in the Vatican

Mandils were also used to cover the food on the serving table and to keep it clean and, on occasion, warm. *Mandils* of *dibāj* covered the food carried on plates to al-Ma'mūn.¹ Ibn Baṭṭūṭah likewise used silk *mandils* to cover the plates of sweetmeats he presented to the Indian ruler.² A tray bearing gifts covered with a *mandil*, as if they were food, when carried into the house of an influential man, finds it easier to gain admittance than the giver in person, as stated in some snatches of poetry cited by Ḍiyā'-ad-dīn Ibn al-Athīr (d. 637/1239) at the head of a letter accompanying his gifts:

No friend, even if his friendship is true friendship,
Is on occasion as helpful, with respect to things one wants,
as a tray (*ṭabaq*).

When covered with a *mandil* on leaving,
It need not fear the harshness of doorman or lock.³

Mandils served to cover the pitcher that contained the drink to be poured and served.⁴ In the *Arabian Nights*, Budūr orders the slave girl to bring for 'Alī b. Maṣṣūr "a pitcher of red gold encrusted with pearls and jewels, full of water mixed with the sweetest smelling musk and covered with a *mandil* of green silk."⁵ In Maronite religious usage, *mandil* designates the veil covering chalice and paten; elsewhere, other terms such as *ḵbirqab* or *lifāfab* are used to express this meaning.⁶

The *mandil*, probably a handkerchief, came in handy for covering something which an unexpected visitor was not supposed to see. When the caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd was playing chess with 'Abdallāh b. Mu'āwiyah on the way to Mecca for the pilgrimage and an Arab asked for permission to enter, the caliph covered the chess board

Library, the tablecloth is well represented. However, the sixteenth-century Ghazzī consistently uses *mi'zar* for tablecloth, which is also used for wiping one hands.

¹ Cf. ar-Rashīd, *Dhakhā'ir*, 104. Cf. also Firdawsī, VI, 298 f. (41, verse 1659). For the *dastār-i-ḵhwān*, cf. Firdawsī, IV, 590 f. (15, verse 2753).

² Cf. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, III, 423.

³ Cf. Ḍiyā'-ad-dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *Rasā'il*, 225; Ibn 'Abd-al-Barr, I, 282 (Cairo, n.y. [1967?]). A tray "covered with a tied *mandil*" (*maṣḥūd bi-mandil*) is mentioned in Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyah*, IX, 387. It was assumed that a tray bearing gifts would be covered with a *mandil*, cf. Ibn al-Fuwatī, IV, 4, 653. There even was a special word, *qinā'*, to designate a tray but only when it was covered with a *mandil*, cf. al-'Askarī, *Talkhīṣ*, I, 219, 313.

⁴ See above, p. 81.

⁵ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, II, 255, trans., III, 264. See Dozy, *Vét.*

⁶ Cf. Graf, *Verzeichniss*, 108, 42, 102.

with a *mandīl*, until he made sure that the visitor was an uneducated and ignorant man.¹

f. For wrapping and carrying objects: Cheap wrapping materials for casual use were unknown in the Middle Ages. It is thus not surprising to hear of pieces of cloth used, in particular, to wrap and transport objects, usually things of some value such as other textiles or money.² Perfume and garments were carried in *mandīls*.³ "The corner of a *mandīl*" was a convenient place for carrying hashish.⁴ The apparently quite common habit of wrapping money in *mandīls* is mentioned, for instance, in the *Nūr al-Qabas*, a work going back to the tenth-century Marzubānī.⁵ The *Arabian Nights* mention a *mandīl* containing fifty dinārs.⁶ Coins and textiles are described at times as being wrapped together in a *mandīl*, which in these cases must have been of rather stout material and large dimensions, unless the word is meant to indicate more than one *mandīl*. A Spanish author of the tenth century, Ibn Juljul, thus reports that a powerful judge of the time sent to the physician Ibn al-Jazzār a *mandīl* containing a garment and 300 mithqāls as a reward for the successful treatment of his son. Ibn al-Jazzār, however, did not accept the gift.⁷ A *mandīl* containing pieces of fine cloth and 5,000 dirhams is mentioned by Yāqūt.⁸ This is obviously impossible, if only a single *mandīl* is involved. Firdawsī speaks of "30,000 dinārs upon three *dastārs*,"⁹ possibly meaning carried upon them, but in any case, they must have been made of strong material. Even a number of books could be transported in a *mandīl* of *dabīqī* material.¹⁰ A *mandīl* was the proper

¹ Cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Uyūn*, II, 120 f.; al-‘Askarī, *Ḥathth*, fol. 42b; ar-Rāghib I, 17.

² Occasionally, paper was used for wrapping money (Yāqūt, *Irshād*, I, 116 = ed. Margoliouth, I, 39), and so were belts made of silk (*Arabian Nights*, IV, 291, trans., V, 678). Cf. also Goitein, 334. An example for the heavy wrapping of merchandise is given in S. Y. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter*, 217 f. (Wiesbaden 1965, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, XLVI).

³ Cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 412.

⁴ Cf. the poem by al-Is‘irdī, in al-Kutubī, II, 332.

⁵ Cf. al-Marzubānī, *Nūr*, 45.

⁶ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, I, 210, 216, trans., I, 308, 316; Dozy, *Vêt.*, who refers to *Arabian Nights*, I, 212 (not 112), trans. I, 310. Cf. also ar-Rāghib, I, 29, l. 17.

⁷ Cf. Ibn Juljul, 89, quoted by Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah, II, 38, l. 18.

⁸ Cf. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, IX, 131 (= ed. Margoliouth, III, 185).

⁹ Cf. Firdawsī, VI, 336 f. (41, verse 2128).

¹⁰ Cf. aṣ-Ṣūlī, *Akhhār ar-Rādī*, 6, trans., 55.

wrapping material for a book which a dandy sent to his beloved.¹ A number of petitions wrapped in a *mandīl* was easily carried in the garment's wide sleeve.² For the storyteller's imagination, it constituted no difficulty to have a garment and a crown made of gold carried in a silk *mandīl*.³

"The things in my *mandīl*" are casually referred to in an early tenth-century papyrus from Egypt.⁴ *Mandīls* of brocade for wrapping precious clothes were apparently not uncommon.⁵ An embroidered piece of cloth (*kbirqah*) would be wrapped in a *mandīl*, which, it seems, was then tied in a knot, since the verb *ḥalla* "to loose" is used for opening it.⁶ Only exceptionally do we hear about shoes being wrapped in a *mandīl*, and a good one at that, made of *dabiqī* material. This was done with the shoes of Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī (d. 285/898-99) when he visited the house of a judge. Al-Ḥarbī rightly considered this gesture as a sign of great respect for learning and for scholars.⁷ It was natural for an alleged shoe of the Prophet to be carried in a *mandīl* as a holy relic.⁸ The *Arabian Nights* speak of large numbers of seal rings kept in a *mandīl*.⁹

The *mandīl* was also quite commonly used to transport food. This was done clandestinely in order to smuggle food to the imprisoned Khālid al-Qasrī, according to a story reported by an Egyptian author of the ninth/tenth century, Ibn ad-Dāyah.¹⁰ "A valuable *mandīl* containing various kinds of food" was carried to the house of the afore-mentioned Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī, just when he needed it most.¹¹ Bread wrapped in a *mandīl* could be carried in the sleeve (*kumm*) of the civilian official's dress.¹² A gift of almonds and sugar was sent by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal wrapped in a *mandīl*.¹³ A knotted *mandīl* might

¹ Cf. al-Washshā', 174. *Kitāb* may, however, mean "letter," rather than book.

² Cf. Ibn aṭ-Ṭiqṭaqā, 451.

³ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, III, 150, trans., IV, 308.

⁴ Cf. A. Dietrich, *Arabische Briefe aus der Papyrussammlung der Hamburger Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek*, 136, no. 31, l. 13 (Hamburg 1955).

⁵ Cf. ar-Rashīd, *Dhakhbā'ir*, 75. The *mandīls* in question were gifts from Byzantium to the Fāṭimid al-Mustansīr. Cf. also Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, II, 195, trans., II, 381.

⁶ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, I, 587, trans., II, 51.

⁷ Cf. *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, III, 404; Yāqūt, *Irsḥād*, I, 126 (= ed. Margoliouth, I, 44).

⁸ Cf. aṣ-Ṣafādī, *Wāfī*, III, 302.

⁹ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, III, 184, trans., IV, 354.

¹⁰ Cf. Ibn ad-Dāyah, *Mukāfa'ah*, 5 (= 7, Cairo 1941). Cf. Firdawsī, III, 382 f. (13c, verses 1060, 1068).

¹¹ Cf. Yāqūt, *Irsḥād*, I, 116 (= ed. Margoliouth, I, 39).

¹² Cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, XI, 139, anno 559.

¹³ Cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 217.

serve to carry home small purchases, for instance, of rice. ¹ Sweets and bread could be sent to a person in a "sealed" *mandīl*, evidently one that was tied and with a seal impression affixed to the knot. ² The expression "sealed *mandīl*" also occurs elsewhere. ³

This usage of carrying things in or on *mandīls* is well represented in art. A floor fresco from Qaṣr al-Khayr al-Gharbī dating from about 730 A.D. shows Gaia carrying fruit on a piece of cloth. In each hand, Gaia holds one end of her "*mandīl*." The fruit carried is visualized as placed into the hollow formed by holding the piece of cloth loosely. ⁴ In the Christian tradition, this mode of carrying or offering objects appears in the Vat. Syr. 559, fol. 48b, in the scene in which Joseph carries two pigeons. In particular, there is the scene at Emmaus in which two of the disciples receive bread placed upon white pieces of cloth held in their hands. ⁵ A figure in a miniature representing Bahrām on his throne, dating from around 1340 A.D., seems to be carrying something wrapped in a piece of cloth, ⁶ and an attendant in a garden scene by Bihzād from about 1480 may be carrying food in the piece of cloth he is holding. ⁷

g. Among the casual uses of the portable *mandīl*, there is the one for flirtation (above, p. 69), its use for sitting on (above, pp. 73 and 79), and the macabre use for poisoning (above, p. 84). "*Mandīl*" also seemed a suitable term for a cloth used as proof of a newly wed girl's virginity. This is implied by Sa'adyāh's use of the word in Deuteronomy 22:17 to translate *šimlāh* in the Hebrew text, which elsewhere in his translation of the Pentateuch is consistently rendered *thawb*, *thiyāb*. ⁸

¹ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, III, 129, trans., IV, 279. It is not clear to me whether the same purpose was to be served by the *dastār* under a pail, mentioned in connection with the purchase of food in the market in Firdawsī, V, 564 f. (35, verse 148).

² Cf. Dozy, *Vét.* Cf. Steiger-Keller, 130 f., for two more references, one from Dozy, *Supplément*, I, 144a, and the other from the *Arabian Nights*, I, 204, trans., I, 300 (= ed. Habicht, II, 138).

³ Cf. al-Khālidiyān, *Tubaf*, 175.

⁴ Cf. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, 35.

⁵ Cf. above, p. 73, n. 3, and de Jerphanion, *Miniatures*, pl. XXI, no. 43 (fol. 150b of the manuscript); Leroy, pl. XCIV, 1 and 2, where the same scene is shown also as it appears in the Ms. add. 7170 of the British Museum, dating from about 1220 A. D.

⁶ Cf. Martin, pl. XXVII.

⁷ Cf. Binyon-Wilkinson-Gray, pl. LXVIII left.

⁸ Cf. Sa'adyāh, *Oeuvres complètes*, I, 286. Raphelengius stated already that *mandīl* also served to translate Hebrew *šimlāh*. Cf. *Arabian Nights*, I, 395, trans., I, 557.

For an improvised haircut of the overlong hair of the future caliph, al-Mutawakkil, someone present attempted to protect his dress from the shorn locks with a *mandīl*.¹

A bashful girl might cover her eyes with her hands and a *dastār*. The proper behavior in the presence of Iranian royalty required covering the face (*rūy*) with a *dastār* as a sign of respect. A worried sleeper might bury his face in a silk *dastār*, and a shirt and a *dastār* (here, possibly, a turban) could serve as a shroud.² A *mandīl*, a turban, was also by itself ample enough to serve this purpose.³ But a man might also hold his *mandīl* over his face in order to conceal his identity.⁴

The famous mystic, ash-Shibli, wanted to have a dead dog buried in a fine (*hasan*) *mandīl* in order to atone for having at first been repelled by the sight of it and only then having realized that it, too, was God's creature. However, the person whom he charged with the task and who did not know ash-Shibli's motive could not bring himself to waste the fine *mandīl*. So he washed it and returned it to ash-Shibli.⁵

Finally, a *mandīl* or the like might be used in school for wiping the slate clean, as stated in a ninth-century treatise on education.⁶

h. Uses for which the *mandīl* becomes attached to the body:

1. As a loincloth and an apron: "Loincloth" is listed as one of the meanings of Syriac *sūdārā*.⁷ In the bath, the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* tells us, a white *mandīl* was employed as an *iḡār*, the loincloth required by modesty to be worn in public to avoid exposure.⁸ The famous *Risālah* of al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) reports a description, supposedly by the great ninth-century Egyptian mystic Dhū n-Nūn, of the typical water-boy of Baghdād: "He wears a turban (*imāmab*), is wrapped (*mutaraddin*, lit., "wearing a *ridā*," usually translated "cloak") in an Egyptian *mandīl*, and fine clay pitchers are in his hand."⁹ The garment

¹ Cf. Ghars-an-ni'mah aṣ-Ṣābi', *Hafawāt*, 252.

² All four passages are to be found in Firdawsī, VI, 344 f., VII, 362 f., V, 610 f., and IV, 472 f. (41, verse 2228, 44, verse 88, 35, verse 704, and 15, verse 1345). Cf. also below, p. 92, n. 7.

³ Cf. ath-Tha'ālibī, *Laṭā'if*, 146, trans. Bosworth, 192.

⁴ Cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 148.

⁵ Cf. al-Qushayrī, *Tabbīr*, 34 f.

⁶ Cf. Ibn Saḥnūn, 354, trans., 86.

⁷ See above, p. 65.

⁸ Cf. *Aghānī*, IV, 171 (= 3rd ed., V, 107). Cf. also above, p. 84.

⁹ Cf. al-Qushayrī, 104, l. 21, in the chapter on *futūwah*.

could hardly have been a loincloth, nor is it likely to have been a full garment, unless “Egyptian *mandīl*” is intended here to indicate merely the material, which is somewhat unlikely.¹ It may have been an apron. In this case, this would be the earliest attestation of the meaning “apron,” which is one of the meanings of Spanish *mandil*, signifying a long apron attached to the neck, of either leather or cloth.²

2. As a belt: From fourteenth-century sources, Dozy, *Vét.*, adduces passages in which people are described as girding their midriffs with *mandīls*. This is another popular extension of the word.

3. As a kerchief (turban) and neckerchief: Any good-sized *mandīl* could easily be wound around the head as a head covering, or rather, around the skull cap as an additional head covering (pl. 4), and the long piece of cloth that constituted the turban could on occasion as easily be called *mandīl*. The adjective *mu‘ammamah* found in connection with *mandīls* means “made for turbans” or “wound as a turban (around skull caps, *shāshīyah*).”³ Lexicographical glosses in Arabic to Syriac *sūdārā* describe the turban (*‘imāmah*) as a *mandīl* placed over the head for protection like a hair net, or they simply equate the two words. Jewish *sūdārā* may also mean a covering for the head.⁴ The white covering of the head worn by Nestorian bishops during mass was called *mandīl*.⁵ While *mandīl* could thus be understood as a synonym of *‘imāmah*, it was not, apparently, understood in this manner in a passage in which woolen black *mandīls* are described as wound around the head “instead of *‘imāmabs*.”⁶ The folded (*mashdūd*?) gold-embroidered *mandīls* of different colors hanging on one hundred

¹ However, a papyrus published by Grohmann mentions a *mandīl* for a dress (*li-l-badlab*). J. Karabacek, *Führer durch die Ausstellung Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer*, 114, no. 574 (Vienna 1894), possibly correctly took this to mean a *mandīl* that went with a complete outfit.

² For the possibility of *mandīl* meaning “apron” in verses by Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, see above, p. 81.

³ Cf. ar-Rashīd, *Dhakhbā‘ir*, 232. In *Dhakhbā‘ir*, 46, the noun *mu‘ammamah* “turban” occurs. The papyrus passages cited by Grohmann (with reference to Karabacek) as likely to mean “Kopftuch” rely upon the interpretation of the word *sharābī*, *sharābīyāt* as meaning some kind of headdress. This interpretation is based upon a comparison with old Portuguese *enxavaria*, cf. the glossary of the *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*, IV, 272. However, the meaning of the Arabic word can by no means be considered as established. It may refer, for instance, to material or workmanship.

⁴ Cf. above, p. 65, n. 3. Goitein, 46, considers the *mandīls* mentioned in Geniza sources to be “kerchiefs.”

⁵ Cf. Graf, *Verzeichnis*, 108.

⁶ Cf. Dozy, *Vét.*, and above, p. 65, n. 8; Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, IV, 116. Cf. also Ibn Bassām, 82.

pegs of gold in ten rooms in the palace of the Fāṭimid wazīr, al-Afḍal b. Badr al-Jamālī, are thought to have been turbans.¹ A *mandīl* for a turban (*‘iṣābah*) is mentioned in the *Arabian Nights*.² *Destār* in Turkish, from the Persian, means “turban.”³

When a *mandīl* is described as worn on the neck, it may have been a head covering whose ends fell down over the neck.⁴ Possibly, however, the use of *mandīls* as neckerchiefs may have been intended in these cases, as L. A. Mayer has suggested for the *mandīl al-amān*.⁵ That a veil covering the face could also loosely be called *mandīl* needs no comment.⁶ A *mandīl* placed over a person’s shoulders could be used to cover his face while he was taking a nap.⁷

5. THE HANDLING AND STORING OF MANDĪLS

Mandīls were supposed to be kept clean. That this was not always the case is clearly indicated by the figurative usage to be discussed later on. We also hear of a *mandīl* expressly qualified as “clean,”⁸ another indication that they not always were. When the description of the mechanical napkin dispenser says that the napkin is to be replaced into the automaton’s hand after use, it may be assumed that what was meant was that the *mandīl* was to be put back after having been washed, or that another, clean *mandīl* was to be put into the machine. Indeed, a ninth-century *fürstenspiegel* states that a ruler’s “grease *mandīl*” as well as his “face *mandīl*” (meaning, apparently, the napkin for wiping the mouth after drinking) must be clean and white. They must be either washed before they are returned to him, or new ones must be given to him.⁹ An individual with fastidious tastes, if he could afford such a luxury, used a *mandīl* only once for blowing his nose (above, p. 79). Washing *mandīls* was an ordinary

¹ Cf. Ibn Khallikān, trans. de Slane, I, 614, quoted by Ibn Kathīr, XII, 189, also as-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl*, 154. The *mandīl laṭīf*, mentioned by Ghars-an-ni‘mah aṣ-Ṣābi, *Hafawāt*, 294, appears to have been some kind of skimpy head covering.

² Cf. *Arabian Nights*, III, 501, trans., V, 36. For *mandīl* among words for “turban,” see also U. Haarmann, *Quellenstudien zur frühen Mamlukenzeit*, 169, n. 4 (Freiburg 1969), referring to the *History* of al-Jazarī.

³ For its present-day use, cf. H. Ritter, *Die Mevlānafeier in Konya*, in *Oriens*, XV (1962), 250, 252, 256.

⁴ Cf. Dozy, *Vêt.*

⁵ Cf. L. A. Mayer, *Mamluk Costume*, 63, n. 4 (Geneva 1952). See below, p. 97.

⁶ Cf. Dozy, *Vêt.*; also Levy, above, p. 65, n. 3.

⁷ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, IV, 293, trans., V, 681. See above, p. 90.

⁸ Cf. Ibn ad-Dāyah (above, p. 88, n. 10).

⁹ Cf. al-Jāhiz, *Tāj*, 17, trans., 46 (where the *mandīl* for the face is understood to be a handkerchief).

household chore. It is mentioned as such in a poem by an eighth-century poet, Sulaymān, a brother of the more famous poet known as Ṣarīʿ-al-ghawānī. Sulaymān ridicules some people's lack of hospitality as shown by the fact that little work is done in their kitchens:

They have white kitchen utensils. Their maids do not complain
About having to wash pots or *mandīls*.¹

In the houses of the powerful and the rich, *mandīls* formed part of their wealth and were stored in their treasuries. No doubt, the same was the case, on a more modest scale, in the houses of the less affluent part of the population who could still afford to have a supply of *mandīls* for various uses. A particularly fine napkin might be put into a box (*ṣundūq*) and be taken out only for special guests.²

6. LITERARY AND FIGURATIVE USES

We are told that lovers wrote each other messages on *mandīls*. Al-Washshā' (d. 325/936) quotes ten specimens of quatrains written, sometimes in letters of gold, on *mandīls*. Most of their authors are described as artistically trained slave girls, or as dandies and aesthetes (*ḡurrāf*, *ḡurafā'*).³ As a rule the verses contain the usual expressions of amorous sentiments. Some, however, let the *mandīl* speak up for itself. For instance:

I am sent to you,
My Lady Uns, (to be) with you.
She had made me with her hands.
Thus, wipe with me your lips!

Or:

I am the *mandīl* of a lover who never stopped
Drying with me his eyes of their tears.
Then he gave me as a present to a girl he loves
Who wipes with me the wine from his lips.⁴

¹ Cf. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, XI, 256 (= ed. Margoliouth, IV, 225). For the poet brothers, cf. C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur, Supplement*, I, 118. For the supposed method of cleaning asbestos *mandīls*, see above, p. 69.

² Cf. Badīʿ-az-zamān al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt* (above, p. 72, n. 2).

³ Cf. al-Washshā', 174-76. On al-Washshā' and the *ḡurrāf*, *ḡurafā'*, see M. F. Ghazi, *Un groupe social: "Les Raffinés"*, in *Studia Islamica*, XI (1959), 39-71.

⁴ Cf. the verses of Ibn ʿArabī (?), cited by al-Badrī, *Rāḥat al-arwāḥ*, fol. 72b: Many a handkerchief (*mandīl kumm*) have I carefully guarded
For two things, neither of which I can stand:
For wiping the tears of lovers when they are flowing,
And for wiping the mouth of the beloved when he is drinking wine.
Cf. also above, p. 80.

The librarian and historian, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (642-723/1244-1323), tells us that in the year 663/1264-65, he came across a collection of treatises in the Observatory Library in Marāghah. That collection was used by him in the composition of a work of his now lost, entitled *Durar al-aṣḍāf fī ghurar al-awṣāf*. It contained a chapter on “things written on *mandīls*” which Ibn al-Fuwaṭī apparently took over into his own work. Verses written on *mandīls* as quoted by Ibn al-Fuwaṭī included these specimens:

I am envied for
Great worth and nobility
In the hands of a lady bountiful
Conspicuous for jewelry. ¹

Or:

I am the *mandīl* of a lover
Deeply, passionately in love.
I have been fashioned by a tender palm
Of someone skilled in the crafts.
If his tears run because of the
Separation from a far-away lover,
I guard him from slanderous accusations
And the eyes of humanity. ²

Another collection of *mandīl* inscriptions is to be found in the *adab* work of the historian al-‘Aynī (762-855/1361-1451):

- (1) I am the *mandīl* of a pretty one
For the world’s greatest dandy (*ẓarīf*).
I am good only
For the tears of lovers.
- (2) I am the *mandīl* of a pretty one,
Beautiful of face, tender, ³
Who vies in elegance with a lad,
Beautiful of face, a dandy.
- (3) I am the *mandīl* of a lover pining,
Consumed by desire, a prisoner of separation.
I was the best of *mandīls*, but
The tears of the lovers have changed me.

¹ This appears to be the intended meaning, but the translation is not entirely certain.

² Cf. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, IV, 1, 280.

³ The last word (*jaṭīf*) is commonly used to designate the sheerness of the material employed in the manufacture of the best *mandīls*. However, it is not possible here to have it refer to the *mandīl*. Nor can the adjective “pretty” of (1) and (2) refer to it.

- (4) I am the *mandīl* of the one who keeps agreements.
I am the *mandīl* of (maidens) with pure cheeks.
She embroidered me with her hand. Then she said:
“May God curse those (maidens) who break agreements!”
- (5) I am the *mandīl* of . . .
. . . for (maidens) wasted by disease (?)¹
I am good only
In the hands of coquettish (maidens).
- (6) I am the *mandīl* of a beloved
Who is surrounded by a thousand watchers.
I wipe off the tears grieving
And weeping and lamenting.
- (7) I am in the palm of a chaste (woman), because I
Am striped with the color of her languid eyes.
My sheerness has turned me into a zephyr,
And I pass by meadows constituted by faces.²

The *Arabian Nights*, again in the story of ‘Aziz and ‘Azizah, speak of verses written (*musatṭar*) along the edges of a *mandīl* intended to convey a message of love.³ While we know that long inscriptions were, in fact, woven into textiles or inscribed on metal objects, the specimens collected in literary works must be considered as largely, if not altogether, fictitious.

The verses referred to above (p. 72) about human virtue and a *mandīl*’s beauty being achieved only through much effort and pain are quite beautiful:

A *mandīl* is not good until it is provided with a striped border (*turqam*)
And the iron (needle) hits it, and it is wounded.
Thus, seek the virtues and endure harm for their sake,
If you wish to be called “an embroidered *ṭirāz*.”

A littérateur named al-Badī‘ ad-Dimashqī (d. 524/1130) accepted with equanimity a seat in the back and dubbed it a seat of honor, since, he said, the decorative border of the *mandīl* is placed at its ends:

I was asked, Why are you sitting at the end of
People, being the Badī‘, the master of rhyme?
I replied: I have preferred it, because the embroidery (*tarz*)
Of *mandīls* appears at the edges.⁴

¹ One word is illegible. The legible portion reads: *Anā mandīlu maṣūnin — . . . li-ḍ-ḍanayāti*.

² Cf. al-‘Aynī, fol. 202a-b. The poet of (7) is stated to be Ibn Qurnāṣ. One of several men of this name, all living in the thirteenth century, may be meant, most probably, ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abd-ar-Raḥmān (588-654/1192-1256).

³ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, I, 569, trans., II, 28 f.

⁴ Cf. Yāqūt, *Irsḥād*, XII, 20 (= ed. Margoliouth, IV, 275).

Of a parasite it might be said contemptuously that he possessed the characteristic of “sticking more closely to the table than a grease *mandīl* (*mandīl al-ghamar*).”¹ However, the most interesting and most frequently used simile for which the *mandīl* had to sacrifice its good name was that of the soiled napkin or tablecloth used by everybody, which was accessible to everyone and therefore could fittingly be employed to indicate low status and dishonor. Al-Kindī uses the simile for commonness in his treatise on the avoidance of grief, a work of strongly Hellenistic inspiration. He states that sensual (material) possessions and sensations are, among other things, “a *mandīl* for every hand,” that is, accessible to every human being.² The connotation of contempt is apparent in the indignant question put by at-Tawḥīdī into the mouth of the Ṣāḥib Ibn ‘Abbād who accused a certain judge of having neglected him: “When have I ever been a *mandīl* for a hand?!”³ Ath-Tha‘ālibī (d. 429/1038) seems to have been particularly fond of the metaphor, because he refers to it in a number of his works. He explains that “someone is a *mandīl* for every hand, if he is exposed to (wagging) tongues (*urḍah li-l-alsinab*).”⁴ In another place, he refers to “*mandīl* of the hands” among the metaphors used for lowly, insignificant persons.⁵ It is possibly the tablecloth that is used in the same sense in a verse which runs:

A table for food (*khuwān*) which is not attended by guests,
And an honor like the *mandīl* of such a table.

On one occasion, ath-Tha‘ālibī ascribes this verse to the famous littérateur and humorist Abū l-‘Anbas aṣ-Ṣaymarī (213-275/828-888), and on another, to a certain Abū l-Ghanā‘im b. Abī l-Makārim ar-Ramlī.⁶ Ath-Tha‘ālibī’s Northwest African contemporary, al-Ḥuṣrī, merely remarked that it was by a contemporary.⁷ A verse intended to vilify the tribe of the Bahīlah, in a collection of similar verses directed against many other important Bedouin tribes which

¹ Cf. ar-Rāghib, I, 394.

² Cf. al-Kindī, *Daf‘ al-abḥzān*, 32, l. 13; F. Rosenthal, in *Orientalia*, N.S. IX (1940), 190; G. Levi Della Vida, “Il conforto delle tristezze” di Elia al-Ḡawbarī, in *Mélanges E. Tisserant*, II, 357, 379 (Città del Vaticano 1964, *Studi e Testi* 232). The same idea is already found expressed in the verse of ar-Rā‘ī, see above, p. 66, n. 1.

³ Cf. at-Tawḥīdī, *Akblāq al-waḥīrayn*, 100, l. 3 (= ed. Kaylānī, 70, l. 5 [Damascus 1961]), quoted by Yāqūt, *Irsbād*, VI, 193 (= ed. Margoliouth, II, 285).

⁴ Cf. ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Tamthīl*, fol. 106a.

⁵ Cf. ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Khāṣṣ*, 25 (= ed. Beirut 1966, 33).

⁶ Cf. ath-Tha‘ālibī, *Muntabāḥ*, 140, and *Tatimmat*, I, 66.

⁷ Cf. al-Ḥuṣrī, I, 268 (Cairo 1305, in the margin of ‘*Iqd*).

can be assumed to go back to some littérateur of the ninth century if not already the eighth century, reads as follows:

And the honor of the Bāhili, even if he takes care,
Sits upon him like a *mandīl* for food (*mandīl at-ṭa'ām*),

obviously, because the napkin or after-dinner towel used by everybody is something badly soiled,¹ even without the help of those ill-mannered individuals, supposedly nicknamed *dallākūn*, who did not wash their hands with soap before wiping them on the *mandīl*.² "To wipe one's hands on" (*tamandala bi-*) in the sense of "treating with contempt" appears in a statement attributed to Dhū n-Nūn al-Miṣrī. Asked why he held on to money, he replied: "But for these *dīnārs* those kings would wipe their hands on us."³

However, there also exists an alleged Arab saying which gives a positive connotation to the *mandīl*, namely, "They are people who have made their money *mandīls* for their honor . . ." This is explained to mean that "they protect their honor with their money."⁴ Thus, money is said to serve as a sort of protective covering for something valuable and frail, as *mandīls* often do. And then there is the use of the *mandīl* as a sign of recognition⁵ and, in a manner of speaking, as a part of one's own body, the possession of which assures the recipient of exemption from punishment by the giver. This is called *mandīl al-amān* in the *Arabian Nights* and known very well from Mamlūk times.⁶ Waving the *mandīl* was a commander's sign for dismissing his troops.⁷

Some descriptions of the *mandīl* have not been mentioned here because they are not quite clear to me, such as the adjectives *muta-*

¹ Cf. as-Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, fol. 12a (= ed. Hyderabad 1382/1962, I, 56); as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 143. The indicated chain of transmitters leads back to Aḥmad b. 'Ubayd, i.e., Abū 'Aṣīdah an-Naḥwī, who died around 273/886-87 (cf. *Ta'rīkh Baghdād*, IV, 258-60; Yāqūt, *Irsḥād*, III, 228-32). As his authorities for the information, the well-known historians of the second half of the eighth century, az-Ziyādī and al-Haytham b. 'Adī, are claimed by Abū 'Aṣīdah.

² Cf. al-Jāhīz, *Bukḥalā'*, 109; Kindermann, 120 f.

³ Cf. Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyab*, VI, 381.

⁴ Cf. al-'Askarī, *Ṣimā'atayn*, 134.

⁵ Cf. Dozy, *Vét.*, and add: *Arabian Nights*, IV, 261, trans., V, 643.

⁶ Cf. Dozy, *Vét.*; an-Nasawī, 133, trans., 222 (see B. Lewis, *The Assassins*, 85 [New York 1968]); D. Ayalon, in *EI*, 2nd ed., III, 188, s.v. ḥarb. The passages from the *Arabian Nights* are I, 271, II, 175, III, 441 f., 529, trans., I, 395, III, 153, IV, 721, V, 73.

⁷ Cf. *Arabian Nights*, IV, 273, trans., VI, 635.

wakkilī and *sh-r-w-b*¹ or the qualification of *mandīl* by *kumm* "wide sleeve" used constantly in the Maqrīzī references to Fāṭimid material, which probably means nothing more than "handkerchiefs (carried in the sleeve)." ² This is not to say that everything else here has been interpreted correctly. There are quite a few uncertainties. The use of the *mandīl* is by nature something rather elusive. While it may be described as being used for one purpose, the same *mandīl* might have been put to many other uses. Some of the uses to which *mandīls* were no doubt put, such as stilling the flow of blood from minor wounds, do not seem to be mentioned. Employed exactly, *mandīl* signified handkerchief, napkin, and towel. However, its extended applications were inherent and certainly quite early. The ordinary man's limited knowledge of words helped to extend its meanings and uses. A greater variety of them seem to crop up in later periods. In this respect, our information may be somewhat misleading. We have fewer texts from the earlier periods of Muslim literature, and what we have goes back mainly to authors who were proud of their large and precise command of words and rarely admitted uneducated usages.

Many of the objects we can see in pictorial representation might have been called *mandīl* in popular usage. For instance, the long scarfs forming part of the apparel of performing female dancers, as in a well-known wall painting of Samarra and other artistic representations, ³ might well have been described by many as *mandīls* for loss of a better word, which would probably have been *wishāb*. On the other hand, some of the objects classified here as *mandīls*, although I have exercised considerable restraint, might never have been considered as such (this, of course, apart from the fact that the majority of illustrations comes from very late periods and from areas where no Arabic was spoken).

The depiction of *mandīls* in art was basically a realistic trait, corresponding, for example, to the situation prevailing in the *Arabian Nights* where every mention of the *mandīl*—and they are very numerous—neatly corresponds to its actual use in urban society, even if there is some embellishment. Sorcerers and demons, travelers and

¹ Cf. al-Azdi, 42, and ar-Rashīd, *Dhakhā'ir*, 232.

² Cf. above, p. 68, n. 2, and p. 93, n. 4.

³ Reconstruction by E. Herzfeld, *Die Malereien von Samarra* (Berlin 1927). Cf., especially, R. Ettinghausen, *Early Realism in Islamic Art*, in *Studi Orientalistici in onore di G. Levi Della Vida*, I, 253 (Rome 1956). For a *mandīl* held by a female dancer on a piece of Fāṭimid pottery, to which R. Ettinghausen has called my attention, see pl. 18. Cf. also above, p. 70.

laboring men are not depicted as wearers of *mandīls*. However, the showing of *mandīls* in pictures also involved an element of symbolism. The drinker needed the *mandīl* as well as the cup in order to underline the refined character of his activity, which under other circumstances could be something very lowly and, in Islam at least, objectionable. The highly placed Sassanian drinker held in one hand a cup, and in the other, a flower.¹ In the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, the painting of the Christian ruler drinking shows him holding not a *mandīl* but another object, apparently a highly stylized representation of a flower.² The *mandīl* in Muslim paintings appears to be a realistic replacement of the flower of an older tradition which was no longer able to convey the symbolic value of drinking as a highly refined, valid, socially acceptable activity.

Members of the learned classes never seem to carry *mandīls* in pictures. The wealthier among them no doubt had them but might have carried them concealed in their wide sleeves, so that they were in fact not visible to the artist and his audience.³ The *mandīl* became an indispensable mark of the well-dressed person of rank and substance. He is often shown with it, at least from the fifteenth century on. The servant class, and in particular servants who waited on diners and drinkers, employed *mandīls* as tools of their profession, but we do not always find them represented with *mandīls* where we would expect that. Perhaps, *mandīls* characterized a lower class of servants than would appear in the company of princes who are most often shown in banquet scenes. Or perhaps, their representation would have made the scene too realistic and vulgar.

Unfortunately, we lack almost all clearly identifiable artistic documentation from before the thirteenth century for illustrating the earlier artists' concept of the *mandīl*, if, indeed, they were ready to pay attention to a detail of this kind. It would not be safe to project later attitudes back into earlier periods. However, the *mandīl* as such did not change materially over the entire long period considered here.

¹ Cf. R. Ghirshman, *Notes Iraniennes V: Scènes de banquet sur l'argenterie sassanide*, in *Artibus Asiae*, XVI (1953), 51-76, in particular, 61, fig. 12.

² Cf. Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, 45; Monneret de Villard, *Pittura*, 37 f., figs. 5 ff., 50 ff., 187 ff.

³ Students certainly were not expected to have *mandīls*. In their absence, as Ibn Jamā'ah states (above, p. 79, n. 4), something else could be used.

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Additions: There is no end to finding instructive references to the various uses of the *mandīl*. The empty space on this page invites mention of a very few.

Pp. 68 f.: On the asbestos *mandīls* woven from *samandal* fur or, in the land of the Turks, from the fur of large rats (*jirdhān*), cf. also al-Ghuzūlī, *Maṭāli‘ al-budūr*, II, 249 (Cairo 1299-1300). See further Ibn Khallikān, trans., IV, 375 f.

P. 75: For Genizah data, cf. E. Ashtor, *Histoire des prix* (Paris 1969).

P. 79: On blowing one’s nose in a *mandīl ash-sbarāb*, cf. al-Ghuzūlī, I, 146.

P. 84: The obnoxious *aṣḥāb al-manādīl* in the public bath, mentioned by Abū Nuwās, *Diwān*, 511 (Beirut 1382/1962), may have been the attendants whose duty it was to bring in towels when the bathers’ time was up and who thereby disturbed them.

P. 89: The napkin in the cupbearer’s hand is compared to a “virginity cloth” (*mandīl al-‘udhrab*) for the “virgin wine” just mixed with water, in a verse by Kamāl-ad-dīn Ibn an-Nabih (d. 619/1222), who is not likely to have invented this simile:

A virgin deflowered by mixing — don’t you see
The *mandīl* of its virginity in the hand of the cupbearers.

The verse is quoted by al-Ghuzūlī, I, 168.

P. 94: Another *mandīl* inscription in al-Kutubī, II, 352.

INDEXES

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LIST OF PLATES

1. "Anūsharwān rewarding Buzurjmīhr." From the fragmentary "Demotte *Shāhnāmah*," ca. 1330-1340.

Freer Gallery of Art, No. 42.2. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

2. "A mechanical wine dispenser." From al-Jazari, *Ḥiyāl*. On the left, a folio in the Fogg Museum, detached from a Ms. dated 1354, now in the Topkapusaray, Istanbul, Ahmet III 3606, and in various museums; on the right, fol. 224 of Ms. Topkapusaray, Ahmet III 3472 (= Catalogue Karatay, 7144), dated 1205-6 (the year of the composition of the work).

Fogg Museum of Art, No. 1919.138, and Ms. Topkapusaray, Ahmet III 3472, fol. 224. Courtesy of the Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

3. "Frontispiece of the *Book of the Theriac* ascribed to Galen." About the middle of the thirteenth century.

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Cod. A. F. 10, fol. 1a. Courtesy of the Austrian National Library, Vienna, Austria.

4. "Frontispiece of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī (detail)." Ms. dated 1334.

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien, Cod. A. F. 9, fol. 1a. Courtesy of the Austrian National Library, Vienna, Austria.

5. "Abgar holding the Mandylion (detail)." Icon, apparently Constantinople, not earlier than the middle of the tenth century.

Monastery of St. Catherine, Sinai Peninsula. Courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mt. Sinai and Professor Kurt Weitzmann, Institute of Advanced Study and Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.

6. "Mourning Chingiz Khan (detail)." From Rashīd-ad-dīn, *Jāmi' at-tawārīkh*. Beginning of fourteenth century.

Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, India, No. D. 31. From B. Gray, in *Ars Orientalis*, I (1954), pl. VI, fig. 12.

7. "Harem scene." From al-Jāhīz, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*. Second quarter of fourteenth century.

Ambrosiana, Milan, Italy, Ar. A. F. D 140, fol. 40b. From Löfgren-Lamm, pl. II.

8. "Attendants of Rustam and Isfandiyār (detail)." From Firdawsī, *Shāhnāmah*. Ms. dated 1430.

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9. "Auriga." From aṣ-Ṣūfī, *Ṣuwar al-kawākib atb-thābitab*. Ms. dated 1249-50.

Aya Sofya 2595, Istanbul, Turkey. From E. Wellesz, in *Ars Orientalis*, III (1959), 21 and fig. 48.

10. "Garden scene." From Sharaf-ad-din 'Alī Yazdī, *Zafarnāmah*. Ca. 1480. Ascribed to Bihzād.

The John Work Garrett Library of the Johns Hopkins University, No. T. L. 6.1950, fol. 87b. Courtesy of Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland.

11. "A Banquet." Early sixteenth century.

Freer Gallery of Art, No. 32.7. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

12. "Young man holding cup, with a flask in front of him." Sixteenth century. Artist: Muḥammad Harawī.

Freer Gallery of Art, No. 37.8. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

13. "Winged angel holding cup and flask." Turkey, second half of sixteenth century.

Freer Gallery of Art, No. 33.6. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

14. "St. Peter drying his tears (detail)." From a Syriac lectionary of the Gospels, dated 1219/20.

Ms. Vatican siriaco 559, fol. 135a. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Vaticana, Città del Vaticano.

15. "An attendant offering a *mandil*." From al-Jazari, *Ḥiyal*. Ms. dated 1315.

Freer Gallery of Art, No. 30.75. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

16. "Baptism of Christ." From a Syriac lectionary of the Gospels, dated 1229/30.

Ms. Vatican siriaco 559, fol. 26a. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Vaticana, Città del Vaticano.

17. "Baptism of Christ." Northern Italy, second half of the fifteenth century.

Morgan Library, No. M 558B. Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, N.Y.

18. "Dancing girl." Pottery, Fāṭimid period, eleventh to twelfth century.

Freer Gallery of Art, No. 46.30. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

19. "Study of a seated figure." Turkey, late fifteenth century.

Freer Gallery of Art, No. 32.28. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

20. "Mehmet the Conqueror." Late fifteenth century. Artist: Sinān Bey.

Topkapusaray Museum, Istanbul. 2153. Cf. *Art Treasures of Turkey*, no. 173 (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1966).

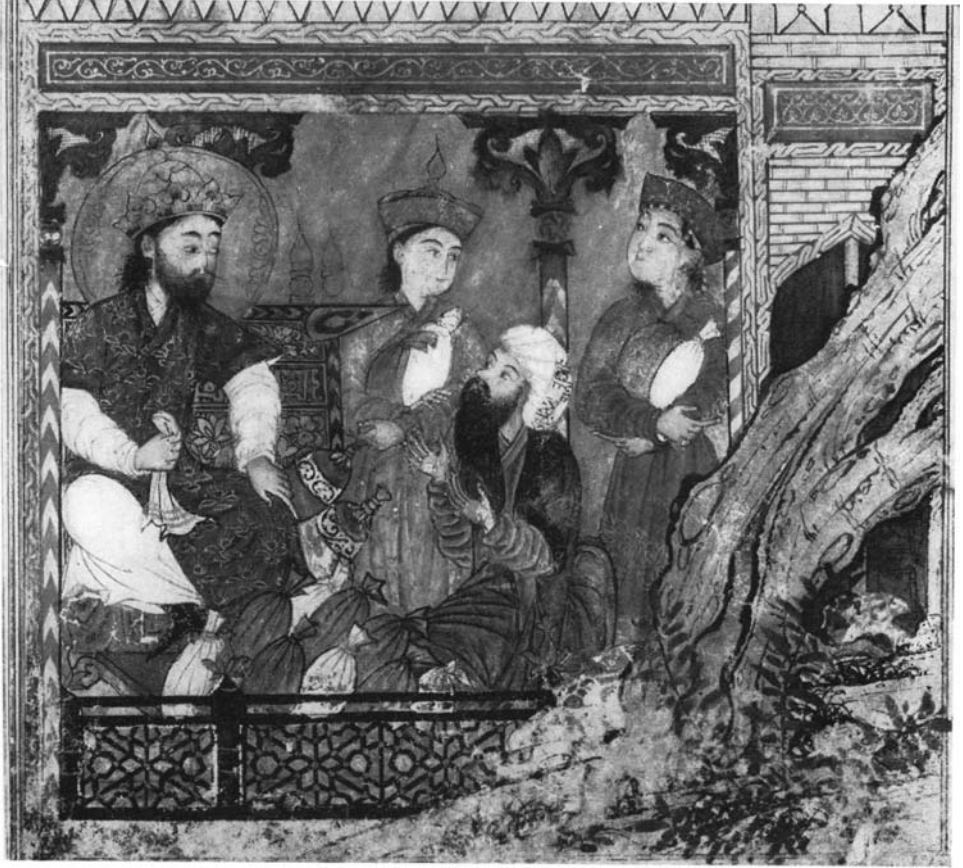
21. "Sulaymān the Magnificent (detail)." Second quarter of sixteenth century. Artist: Nigārī.

Topkapusaray Museum, Istanbul. 17/180. Cf. *Art Treasures of Turkey*, no. 191.

22. "Banquet scene." Elamite cylinder seal from Tschoga Zanbil, Iran. Thirteenth century B.C.

Courtesy of Professor Edith Porada, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.

PLATES I-22



Anūsharwān rewarding Buzurjmihr



Frontispiece of the *Book of the Theriac* ascribed to Galen



Frontispiece of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī (detail)



Abgar holding the Mandylion (detail)



Mourning Chingiz Khan (detail)



Harem scene



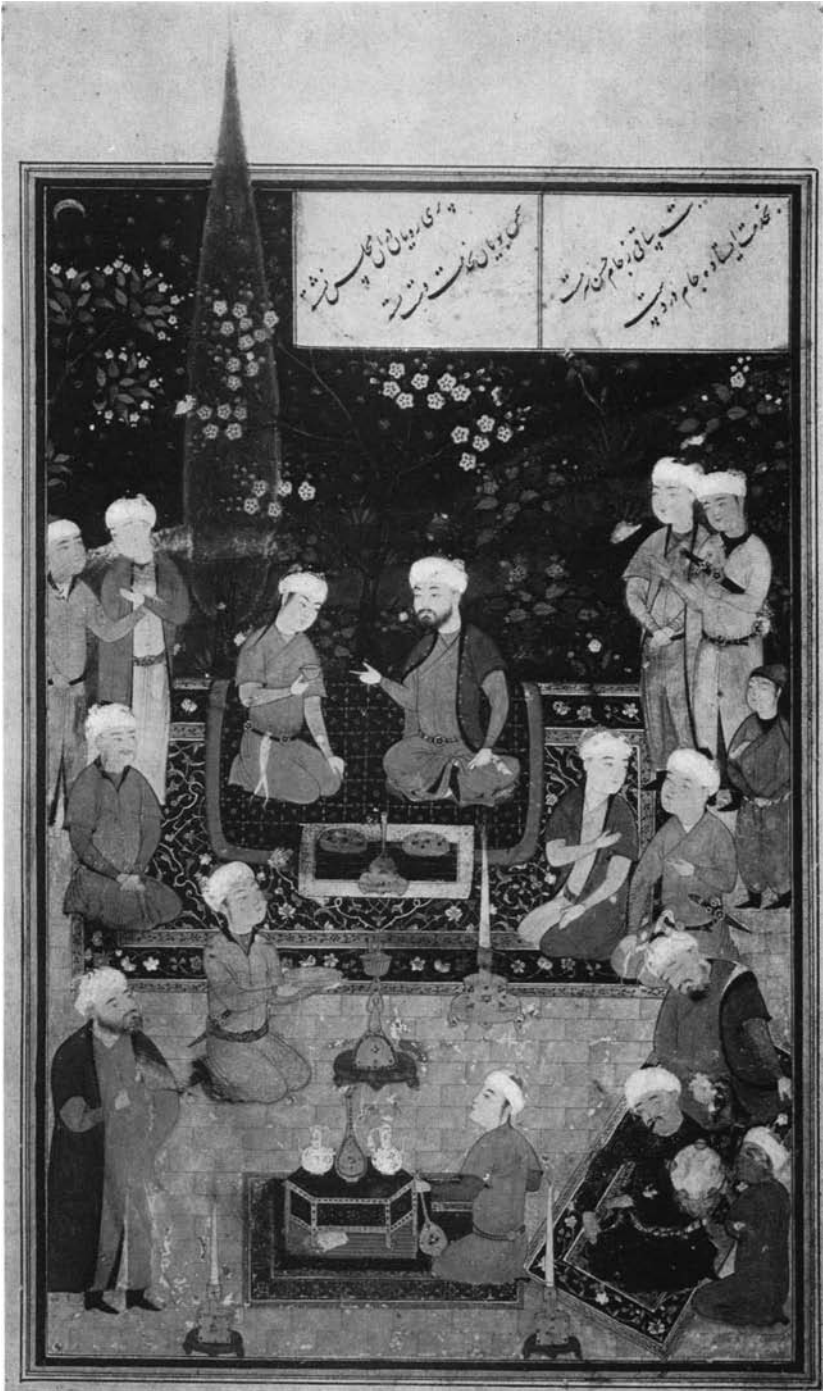
Attendants of Rustam and Isfandiyar (detail)



Auriga



Garden scene



A Banquet



Young man holding cup, with a flask in front of him



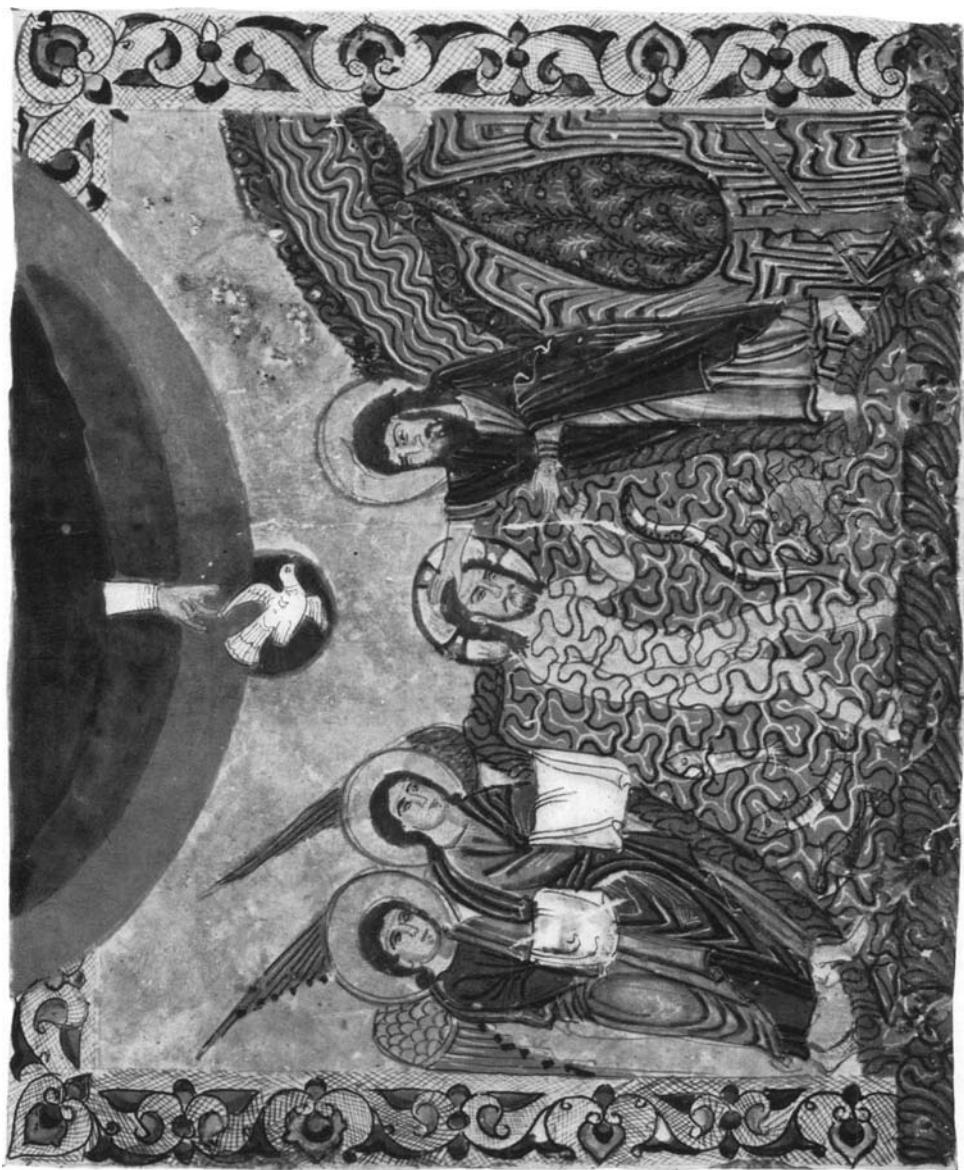
Winged angel holding cup and flask



St. Peter drying his tears (detail)



An attendant offering a *mandil*



Baptism of Christ



Baptism of Christ



Dancing girl



Study of a seated figure



Mehmet the Conqueror



Sulaymān the Magnificent (detail)



Banquet scene