

ENGLISH SUMMARY

The *Codex Parisino-petropolitanus* is a fragmentary Qur'anic manuscript which was stored with other discarded old Qur'anic codices in the 'Amr mosque in Fustāt where it was discovered at the end of the 18th century (chapter 1). During Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt, the Arabist and printer Jean-Joseph Marcel (1776–1856) acquired a first lot of folios which he brought back to France. A few years later, another Frenchman, Jean-Louis Asselin de Cherville (1772–1822), a pupil of Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy, bought a few more folios while he was serving as vice-consul in Cairo. After his death, they were sold along with the rest of his collection of Arabic manuscripts to the Bibliothèque nationale (then: Bibliothèque royale). The Asselin de Cherville folios are now kept under the call-number Arabe 328 (here: P) with other parchment fragments of the same provenance. When Marcel's heiress tried to part with the collection of Qur'anic fragments he had brought from Egypt, she was contacted by the Russian government. So Marcel's parchment folios became part of the collection of the National Library of Russia in Saint-Petersburg (then: Public Imperial Library) in 1864. Those which were part of the Parisino-petropolitanus are found with other fragments in the folder Marcel 18 (here: M). In addition to these main portions, two folios also reached Europe and one is now in the Vatican Library (Vat. Ar. 1605/1, here: V), the other in London (David N. Khalili collection of Islamic art, KFQ 60, here: L).

In the 1983 catalogue of the Qur'anic manuscripts kept in the Bibliothèque nationale, the f. 1 to 56 of Arabe 328 were described as a different entity (Arabe 328 a) from f. 57 to 70 (which appears as Arabe 328 b) on the basis of the script and the orthography. Until recently, the nineteenth-century binding and the "protective" sheets of paper inserted between the folios actually prevented a thorough examination of the codicological features of Arabe 328. When it was restored, its structure could be examined under better conditions. On the other hand, Marcel 18 was kept as it was found and the disposition of the stitching holes in the back of the folios corresponding to Arabe 328 a (*i.e.* f. M 1 to 24) and b (*i.e.* f. M 45 and 46) could be

checked. These proved to be almost identical, suggesting that they were originally bound as a single volume.

The text available in the manuscript in its current state covers *surahs* 2: 275-3: 43 (f. P 1a-3b); 3: 84-5: 33 (f. P 4a-22b); 6: 20-10: 78 (f. P 23a-40b; f. M 1a-6b; f. P 41a-48b); 10: 102-11: 35, with a short lacuna between 11: 13 and 14 (f. V 1a-f. L 1b); 12: 84-15: 87 (f. P 49a-54b); 23: 15-28: 53 (f. M 7a-23b); 30: 58-31: 23 (f. M 24: 35: 13-41 (f. P 55); 38: 66-39: 55 (f. P 56); 41: 31-46: 6 (f. P 57a-64b); 56: 53-57: 26 (f. M 45a-46b); 60: 7-63: 9 (f. P 65a-66b); 65: 3-67: 26 (f. P 67a-68b); 69: 3-72: 2 (f. P 69a-70b). These sections cover roughly 45% of the Qur'anic text, which allows us to estimate that the codex Parisino-petropolitanus originally contained between 210 and 220 folios.

In their present condition, the folios are roughly 330 mm high and 248 wide. Since in many places the natural edges of the parchment as well as the chines, are visible in the margins, we can conclude that the hides were cut in the in quarto format and that the size of the folios are not far from their original dimensions. Two main portions of text survive with short lacunae: the first one from 2: 275 to 10: 78 and the second one 23: 15 to 31: 23. They allow us to reconstruct the quire structure of the codex one in which each quire was consistently composed of 8 folios, with the parchment arranged according to the so-called "Gregory rule", that is to say with flesh sides facing flesh sides and hair sides facing hair sides. Only a few exceptions to the prevailing structure can be found (one 7 folios quire, f. P 15 to 21: three bifolios are in the wrong position and break the normal sequence of the hair and flesh sides) [p. 24].

An analysis of the palaeography of the Parisino-petropolitanus shows that five copyists were involved in the transcription of the text. The main contributor is A who wrote f. P 1a to 9a, 10 b to 25 a, 26 b to 28 a, 30 b to 32 a, 34 b to 35 a, 38 b to 48 b, 49 a to 54 b, 55 a to 55 b and 56 a to 56 b; M 1 a to 24 b; V 1 and L 1 [p. 31-34 and pl. 1-2]. B is responsible for f. P 28b to 30a, 32b to 34a and 35b to 38a [p. 34-36 and pl. 3-4]. The contribution of C is concentrated at the end of the manuscript: f. P 57a to 70b and M 45a to 46b [p. 37-39 and pl. 5-6]. The work of the other two copyists is limited to an opening each: f. P 9b and 10a are by D [p. 39-41 and pl. 7-8] and f. P 25b and 26a are by E [p. 41-43 and pl. 9-10]. There are a few interesting characteristics of this combined calligraphy: in no case does the reader see two different hands when the manuscript is open.

The copyists do not maintain the same number of lines per page from one contribution to another one, nor from one hand to another one, although traces of ruling would suggest that there was advanced preparation for the work. Margins are almost non-existent in all contributions. The script is organised according to the rules of the *scriptio continua* adapted to the specific rules of the Arabic script: words are cut where permitted at the end of a line but never from one page to the next one.

The surahs are separated from each other by a blank line—with the exception of Surah 9. Verses are divided by marks which vary according to the copyists. The *basmala* is not written separately on the first line of the surah (except when it is the first line of the page itself in C contribution) and is marked as a verse by A.

The various hands are quite different from each other (see pl. 1–10). C and D are certainly professional copyists but E writes somewhat awkwardly. Their use of the diacritical dots is very rare: E does not dot any letter on his 2 pages and C does so only twice in 16 folios. The other copyists vary in their choice of the letters they mark, but they never indicate a *jīm* or a *qāf* [p. 44]. There is no sign for the short vowels or for the *tašdīd*, the *hamza* or the *sukūn*. The current condition of the Parisino-petropolitanus does not completely correspond to its state when completed. In many places, corrections were made to the text or to the verse ending marks. Some were the work of the copyists, but others were made over the course of time. This is notably the case for later verse counts with the old *abjad* system or with the surah headings which were added in red ink [p. 45–60 and pl. 11–12].

When comparing the *rasm* of the manuscript with the Cairo edition (barring all short vowels and orthoepic signs not found on the former), many words turn out to be written in a different way. If we admit that the text found in the Parisino-petropolitanus corresponds to the 'Uṭmānic edition, many of the discrepancies can be explained as orthographical variants. The Qur'ānic orthography (chapter 3) of the manuscript has been described as a *scriptio defectiva*. It can be examined first through five words which are frequently used in the text: the plural *āyāt*, *šay*, the plural *'ibād*, *'adāb* and the third persons of the verb *qāla* in the past tense. The solutions vary according to the copyists: as a rule, they tend to omit the *alif* for the /ā/ and write *qāla*: *qāf+lām*—that it to say like *qul*. The hand A writes *šay* شای (but *šay^{an}* شيا), *'adāb* عذب and frequently *'ibād* عبد. *Āyāt* is written

أيت, but a special orthography appears when it is introduced by the preposition *bi-*: the word has an additional denticle, like *بأيتنا*. C writes instead *šay* شى and *ʿadāb* عذاب. B and E hesitate between the two; as for D, his short contribution does not contain enough of these five words to reach a conclusion [p. 54–59].

A more detailed examination of the orthography focuses on the following points: the writing of /ā/ [p. 60–63]—eventually through a denticle which could be a *yā* [p. 63–64], of the *alif al-wiqāya* [p. 64–66] and of the *hamza* [p. 66–71]. It concludes with a study of various forms (*fāʿāl*, *fu lān*, *fāʿala* and *fiʿāl*) which appear to be subject to variation [p. 71–75]. A comparison with the Cairo edition shows that when the Parisino-petropolitanus was written many questions were still unanswered, notably that of the *hamza*. The differences among the copyists confirm, to some extent, the observations concerning the script. This examination also indicates that their relationship with the original they were transcribing was not one of a complete subservience. They were willing to improve the *rasm* they were copying.

The study of the orthography does not resolve all the cases of discrepancy between the Parisino-petropolitanus and the Cairo edition. This is notably true for the verse endings (chapter 4). The copyists did indicate these divisions with great care, but their marks have been erased in 11 cases (which are here taken as reflecting the position of the copyists). In other instances, the marks were added: some of these can be attributed to the copyists, but others are clearly by other hands. A comparison with the canonical endings (as established by A. Spitaler [p. 79–91]) underlines the fact that A has a distinctive position about the *basmala* which he considers as a verse. In seven cases, a canonical verse (4: 34 and 79; 5: 3; 9: 115; 10: 10; 14: 27 and 25: 4) is subdivided into two verses. On the other hand, 12 verse endings known by the various traditions are not to be found in the manuscript (2: 279; 3: 2 and 5; 4: 71; 6: 92; 9: 1; 13: 30; 23: 97 and 112; 26: 69; 56: 93 and 69: 38). The comparison with the canonical systems on the 93 places where they disagree shows that the Parisino-petropolitanus is usually—but not always—in agreement with Homs (75 instances). In descending order, the overlap frequencies are Mecca (67), Medina II (66), Damascus and Medina I (62), Bašra (61) and Kūfa (38) [p. 92–94]. In itself, the manuscript is a witness to an original tradition which did not survive otherwise.

Later hands modified the verse markers through erasures and additions. The latter case corresponds to the introduction of marks in places known as canonical verse ending. Then two anonymous interveners added signs aimed at providing the users with information about the number of the verses. The first one put red circles on top of the original verse markers for the tens and probably also added a red *alif* as an indicator of the fifth verse within each decade [p. 94]. The second one is responsible for the circles of dots surrounding a letter with numerical value (*abjad*). Where his contribution reaches the end of a surah, we can compare his position with the canonical systems. It appears that on 31 cases, he agrees mostly (but not for the same surahs) with Homs, Mecca and Medina I and II (18 instances), then with Baṣra (17), Damascus (14) and Kūfa (9) [p. 94–96]. The system used by the second intervener is therefore distinct from the canonical tradition. It is also different from the original verse endings since he sometimes agrees with them, sometimes not [p. 96–101].

Variants of the *rasm* are also found on the Parisino-petropolitanus. If we look for the variants known to the tradition, the manuscript follows the Syrian reading of Ibn ‘Āmir [p. 102–105]. But there are also points in the text which correspond neither to the Cairo edition, nor to the other canonical readings. Most have been erased and corrected by later hands. Some are purely copyist’s mistakes which can be easily identified as such [p. 105–106]. Other instances may be considered variants that were current at the time the manuscript was transcribed; many are typologically close to variants known through the canonical tradition [p. 106–108].

The codex Parisino-petropolitanus should be understood as a part of the early written transmission of the Qur’ān (chapter 5). The scripts of the five copyists are a nice example of the situation prevailing before ‘Abd al-Malik’s chancery reform: the *ḥijāzī* style is representative of a period when writing was not yet subjected to norms and control [p. 109–117]. A few manuscripts and fragments exhibit the same palaeographical features and help us in understanding the codicological characteristics of the period [p. 119–125]. They all belong to the vertical codex tradition and are written on parchment. With the exception of a group of smaller copies, they are in quarto Qur’āns in one volume, with almost no margin. This is clearly not the result of a desire to spare parchment since the script is generally

of large size. On the page, the script is organised in long lines, according to the rules of the *scriptio continua*, with the words divided at the end of the line and the same space between the words as between the isolated letters within a word. The number of lines to the page varies in the different manuscripts, but the average value is 25; this is true for the larger copies, but also for the smaller ones. The ends of the verses are consistently indicated, mainly by clusters of dots [p. 125–127]. The copies resulting from the collaboration of two or more copyists, with hands easily recognisable, are another common feature of the period: in this respect, the Parisino-petropolitanus is by no means exceptional and should be seen as representative of the period—even if no Qurʾānic manuscript written by so many copyists has been found to date [p. 127–130]. The orthography of the other early Qurʾāns with their *scriptio defectiva* coincides with that of the manuscript and predates that found on Umayyad copies [p. 130–135].

In the Qurʾāns of this period, the verse endings are consistently indicated by the copyists with marks involving a measure of control. Due to the fragmentary state of the documentation, a comprehensive overview of the situation remains out of reach. We can nevertheless detect peculiarities (sometimes in agreement with the Parisino-petropolitanus) which do not correspond with the canonical tradition [p. 136–137]. The case of the seven verses which are divided into two parts in the manuscript is particularly interesting: the “supplementary” endings in 4: 79, 9: 115, 14: 27 and 25: 4 do not rhyme with those of the rest of the passage. In addition, six of the verses comprised between the “supplementary” ending and the canonical one (the same as above and 4: 34 and 10: 10) are very short, do rhyme with the surrounding verses and are often general in their content. They may reveal the trace of the editing process that was made necessary by the inclusion of new verses into the surahs in course of constitution. The markers were meant to disappear but for some reason the copyists forgot to eliminate them. The verse ending in 5: 3 may also be related to this work on the text; it actually involves what some sources consider to be the last verse revealed [p. 138–143]. Conversely, it is more difficult to explain why some verses are not indicated in the manuscript.

As for the non-canonical variants, their presence in the Parisino-petropolitanus resembles that observed in contemporary fragments or manuscripts. In all of them, the text is basically that known as the

Uṭmānic edition, with canonical variants as well as others which correspond to the same typology as those found in the Parisino-petropolitanus. An analysis of the situation of the variants during the 2nd/8th and early 3rd/9th centuries shows that the compilation and canonisation of their lists is comparatively late and probably based on later copies. The text found in the early copies may therefore reflect a state of the Qurʾān's transmission predating the work of the scholars of the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries and still somewhat fluid [p. 143–150]. The same holds for the division into verses, which had not yet undergone the systematization corresponding to the *kutub al-ʿadad*, the earliest of which are dated to the end of the 2nd/8th century, or that of the *basmala* considered a verse by some of the copyists—such as A [p. 150–151].

The various clues (mistakes or orthographic differences) found in the Parisino-petropolitanus suggest that it was transcribed from another copy in a more defective version of the *scriptio defectiva*. The discrepancies among the copyists lead to the conclusion that they were not working in the context of some official structure, even if the cost of the manuscript itself would suggest that a wealthy patron paid for the production of a copy meant for public use. The reason of the collaboration of the five copyists remains obscure: the most plausible hypothesis is the need for quick production of this Qurʾān [p. 152–155].

Its place of production cannot be established. The fact that the manuscript was kept in Fuṣṭāṭ does not mean that it was produced there and the diffusion of the Syrian readings within the Near East cannot provide any clue in this respect as it is only known for later times. The Parisino-petropolitanus could be dated to the third quarter of the 1st/7th century and it is clearly a copy of an older manuscript. It predates Umayyad copies with a more developed orthographical variety, but the script of D exhibits features which can be related to them [p. 156–158]. An interesting feature of this manuscript is its prolonged use well into the 3rd/9th century: some of the corrections and the *abjad* decades can be dated to this period [p. 158–159].

The Parisino-petropolitanus is a copy meant for public use and representative of a group of Qurʾānic codices endowed with a specific visual identity, which suggests that they were inspired by an authoritative *exemplar*, whether a *muṣṣḥaf* of Uṭmān or some earlier Medinan codex. Although the text as a whole corresponds to the Uṭmānic

vulgate (assuming diacritical marks and short vowels that are also similar to the canonical tradition), it is the result of a transcription involving an enhancement of the *rasm* which eliminated the ambiguity between *kāna* and *kun* (written originally كُن), but not between *qāla* and *qul* (both usually written قُل). With respect to script, orthography and the *basma*, the copyists' relative freedom is obvious, even if they kept to a certain style of presentation. The text itself reflects an archaic state that still includes traces of the history of the revelations. When compared with the other witnesses of this period, it suggests that the corpus was not completely closed and that the "ʿUṣmānic" transmission was still running along parallel tracks.

This situation, but also the technical possibilities of the Arabic script towards the middle of the 1st/7th century, call for a reconsideration of the ʿUṣmānic "edition": the manuscripts of that period, with very few diacritics, no short vowels or orthoepic marks, simply could not have provided the solution which the caliph is said to have been seeking according to the classical account of this event. The additional variants found in the manuscripts and a review of the canonical lists suggest that the *rasm* itself did not reach the shape we know until a later date. On the other hand, most of the ʿUṣmānic *rasm* is there. The caliph's role may have been less ambitious but nevertheless important since he may have been involved in the diffusion of a visual identity for the text he supported, eventually paying for the production and diffusion of copies—a move that was essential to safeguard the vulgate. His work was completed in Umayyad times: the orthographic reform was then fulfilled and the text controlled. The physical characteristics of the Parisino-petropolitanus would better fit with what is said about Abū Bakr's recension of the Qurʾān.

Like other manuscripts of this group, the Parisino-petropolitanus has been subjected to emendations and corrections over a comparatively long time span, so that most of the discrepancies with the ʿUṣmānic *rasm* and the canonical variants (including the verse endings) have been eliminated. The history of the vulgate has to be re-examined over a longer period than commonly charted. Whereas we understand the evolution of the written text, we do not have a clear appreciation of how orality operated in this process and thus we cannot as yet define the relationship between the written and the actually recited text. Scholars in the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries

established specialized fields of science dealing with the various aspects of the text and transferred the debate from the Qur'anic codices to treatises devoted to well defined problems. The Qur'anic codex of the 1st/7th century, the only book of the young Muslim communities, was at that moment a major stake both internally and vis-à-vis the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire. It later lost some of its importance as a means of textual transmission although its symbolic uses developed considerably.

La transmission écrite
du Coran
dans les débuts de l'islam

Le codex Parisino-petropolitanus

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