
BOOK REVIEWS

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UNESCO CD OF ŞAN'Ā' MSS. PART 3: QUR'ĀN PALIMPSESTS, AND UNIQUE QUR'ĀN ILLUSTRATIONS

Introduction

This third index is intended to complete a detailed reference index to the UNESCO CD-ROM of the important Qur'ān manuscripts found in Şan'ā' in the mid-1970s. For this third part, I have had the invaluable assistance of Dr. Elisabeth Puin, who has done painstaking work examining and cataloguing more features of the CD, has co-authored the text of this article, and who, with her husband Dr. Gerd-R. Puin, has provided first-hand insight into these fascinating and priceless manuscripts. I would like to offer them my heartfelt thanks for making this index a much more valuable research tool.

With this last instalment two more offerings of the treasures on this CD are described: pictures of rare Qur'ānic palimpsest manuscripts, and descriptions of two unique illustrations from 1st century AH Qur'āns. These will be discussed further in the article.

First, here is how the complete index is organized:

Part 1 of this index (published in the March 2006 issue of *Manuscripta Orientalia*) listed the Qur'ān manuscripts on this CD as they are found on the CD. It used the manuscript designations found on the CD and listed the manuscripts and their contents in the order one would find them in normal use of the CD.

Part 2 (published in the June 2006 issue of *Manuscripta Orientalia*) listed the manuscripts in the order of the passages of the Qur'ān that they contain. This index listed them in *sūra* and *āya* order, so that researchers can quickly look up a particular passage they are interested in studying. Again, the manuscript numbers found on the CD were used for this index [1].

Part 3 builds on these two prior indices and adds a number of important additional features:

First, it provides the manuscript catalogue numbers as they are found in Şan'ā' according to the system devised by Dr. Gerd R. Puin and improved by

Dr. Hans-Caspar Graf von Bothmer. There is a slight difference in how the manuscripts are listed on the CD compared to how they are actually catalogued in the Şan'ā' collection. Also, the manuscripts listed on the CD with the "showcase" designation have been given their actual manuscript number in as many cases as possible without visiting the collection. The showcases in view here were the actual showcases of the exhibition of manuscripts in Şan'ā'. These have since been dismantled and the manuscripts that they contained must be accessed according to their original manuscript designation.

Second, this index provides a number of corrections to the information contained on the CD. In a project of the scope of this invaluable CD small mistakes are bound to be made, and corrections are here humbly offered to enable the CD to be used with greater precision. These corrections involve mainly a few citation errors and some typographical errors.

Third, this index provides additional information to the other two. There are new columns giving information concerning the format of the manuscript pages, whether they are of a vertical format or a horizontal one, and also the sizes of the manuscript pages. Also, the individual picture file reference numbers to each manuscript are provided, as they are found in the database of images at the heart of this CD. They can be accessed by looking at the contents of the CD and clicking on the images folder. This will facilitate study by allowing the researcher to go directly to the best image for studying a specific manuscript. Also, this last instalment provides detailed explanatory notes concerning each of the categories used in the index and an explanation of the manuscript signature system for the Şan'ā' manuscripts devised by Dr. Gerd R. Puin and Dr. Graf von Bothmer.