

Arabic manuscripts in the Maronite Library of Aleppo (Syria)

Francisco del Río Sánchez

تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَيْهِ مَوْلَانَا الْبَارِي الْعَلَامِ وَشَرَكْتُ عَنْدَ الْمَادِي الْإِمامِ
مِنَ الْعَبْدِ بَهَّا الَّذِينَ وَلَسَارُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَسَرَّ الْمُوَحَّدِينَ الْمُقْتَبِيِّ
الْخَاضِعِ وَالْخَنَّاجِ الْأَسْرَرِ لِلْحَدِ الْأَخْرَ الْأَصْغَرِ الرَّابِعِ إِلَى الْأَخْرَ
السَّادَةِ إِلَى النَّوْحِ الْأَصْفَيَا الْمُحِقَّيَّنَ الدُّعَاعَةِ الشَّيْوخِ



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PREFACE

كتاب المقدمة

The presence of Maronites at Aleppo probably dates back to the early Middle Ages, but we can not speak about a fully organized community in this city before the 16th century, when the difficulties suffered by the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon during the last years of the Mameluke Government due to the rising taxes and famines provoked a massive migration to the North of Syria. The Ottoman Census of 1537 proves that there were a great number of Christians at Aleppo: only in Ġdeydeh-Şaliba lived 161 families. In the first years of the 17th century, the Maronite Community (probably the poorest people of the City) had about 4000 members, and they were concentrated in the mentioned "New Quarter".¹ It was not until the year 1634 when the Maronites of Aleppo had a resident bishop in the city. The most characteristic feature of that preceding period was the strong antagonism between the Maronite clergy and the Western Missionaries: in fact, the Maronites did not accept that their church was used for the common Catholic worship.² The Missionaries welcomed the arrival of a Maronite prelate who could control those unruly priests. The existence of a Maronite Library is directly related to the inauguration of a *mutrāniyya* near the old church of Mār Iliyās in the quarter of Ġdeydeh.³ The oldest liturgical manuscripts conserved probably belonged to this initial deposit: all of them were copied in Mount Lebanon or on the Coast during the 15th and 16th Centuries. The funds of the Maronite Library increased thanks to new acquisitions, copies performed by local copyists and donations of community members; in fact, the numerous notes of *waqf* found in the pages of these books show names of many well-known personalities. With the passage of the centuries, the library became one of the most important private collections of manuscripts in Syria, with more than 1640 volumes.

The Maronite library is a typical ecclesiastical collection, similar in form and content to others conserved in the different Christian *tawā'if* of the city; in fact, about the 65% of the whole collection is related to the different ecclesiastical subjects and disciplines. It is

¹ Cf. Antoine Rabbath & Henri François Tournebize, *Documents Inédits pour servir à l'Histoire du Christianisme en Orient*, vol. II, Paris-Leipzig: A. Picard-Otto Harrassowitz, 1905-1910, 95-96 and 512-532; Mariam de Ghantuz, *I maroniti d'Aleppo nel xvii secolo attraverso i racconti dei missionari europei, dai documenti conservati nei archivi romani*, Patrimonio Culturale Arabo-Cristiano 2, Jaca Book: Milano 1996, 110.

² Ghantuz, *I maroniti d'Aleppo*, 51-53, 50-64, 110.

³ Abdallah Hadjar, *Historical Monuments of Aleppo*, Aleppo: Automobile & Touring Club of Syria 2006, 45-

noteworthy that most of the manuscripts are written in Arabic: only 134 copies are written in Syriac, less than 10% of the whole collection, and 250 copies are in Arabic *Karšūnī*. In fact, by the Ottoman period, the Maronites of Aleppo had completely abandoned Syriac in favour of Arabic as their vernacular, assimilating much of the Arabic culture as their own (this arabization would precede the “cultural Arabism” stimulated during 17th-19th centuries by Latin missionaries in the Uniate churches of Syria as a concession to local sentiments in order to make the spreading of the new dogma easier).⁴ The oldest copies date back to the 15th century, being the most recent ones to the 20th century. The most part of the books were written at Aleppo by local Maronite copyists; some of them came from Mount Lebanon, Egypt, the Euphrates and the Jazeera.

The collection of manuscripts is located in the new Maronite *muṭrāniyya* of Aleppo, in the Christian neighbourhood of Azizieh (Faris Khouri Street). All the manuscripts, stored in metal cabinets, are located in a separate locked room, and each copy is conveniently kept in a custom-made cardboard box. The volumes have an identifying number (both on the book's spine and on their individual keeping box); it should be noted that it is a modern numbering which does not always coincide with the information found in works prior to the second half of the 20th century. The current arrangement of the copies is based on different criteria (genres, dates of the manuscripts, origins, donors, etc.) and therefore, the final result is far from being coherent.⁵

The contents of the Maronite library of Aleppo were known by the Western researchers, but they had not been properly catalogued. The work carried out by local scholars give a general picture of the collection or they focus on specific aspects of the copies: in fact, there is only a handwritten inventory of the manuscripts, performed by Ġubaylī and currently preserved in the *muṭrāniyya* in which 1536 copies are listed (see below). This work seeks to remedy this lack, and it is the last one in a series of three inventories published in the context of the MANALEP project: the first one, published in 2008, presented the

⁴ Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World, the Roots of sectarianism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001, 43 and 112.

⁵ Francisco del Río & Manuel Forcano, “Algunos manuscritos arameo-siríacos y árabes hallados en la biblioteca maronita de Alepo (Siria)”, *Aula Orientalis* 21 (2003), 5-18. This would be the general structure of the collection according to Anṭūn Ġubaylī's broad (and frequently inaccurate) description: 1-52, الكتاب المقدس 301-307, 450-457, 760، عبادة العذراء والقديسين; 288-300، رهبانيات 308-310، رياضات; 301-307، 450-457، 760؛ 308-466، لغة وأدب عربي; 458-465، تاريخ كنسي; 311-331، 784-786؛ 335-449، 845، 857، 858، 863، 871؛ 310، الحياة الروحية؛ 528-544، 740، 741، 765، 1392؛ 526، 550، 551، 855، 861، 864، 865، 867، 870، 905، 1116-1118، 1121، 1132؛ قاموس 545-549، 552؛ طفسيات 553-560؛ الشريعة والقضاء، 561-571، 746، 911، 1281، 1289؛ 572-735، 744، 745، 747-758، 762، 763، 766-777، 922-1049؛ متنقرقات، 790-795، 801، 810، 811، 818، 833-835؛ أخويات، 1050-1046. Anṭūn Ġubaylī، فهرس المخطوطات المارونية، Aleppo (handwritten), 1977, 1.

description of the Syriac manuscripts of the library while the second book, published in 2011, did the same with the copies in Arabic *Karšūnī*.⁶ In the same manner, this publication presents the Arabic manuscripts conserved in the Maronite library of Aleppo, organized according to the numbering that can today be found in the collection. Following the model established in those two previous publications, I have included a brief and precise information about each copy, including the title or titles, name of author and copyist, place and date of the copy and all the formal features which can allow a better identification of the manuscripts. It must also be noted that I have preserved the original spelling of the Arabic text as it appears in the titles, *incipit*, etc., to illustrate the prevailing conventions common to that period, the influences of spoken Arabic and the copyist's mistakes and corrections. I have used the Central European system of transcription to represent the Arabic, and eventually, the Syriac consonantism, avoiding digraphs (' b t t ḡ h h d d r z s š š ḍ ṭ z z ḡ f q k l m n h w y à). In this book, the *estrangelō* alphabet is used to reproduce texts written in Syriac, while *serṭō* is for the Arabic *Karšūnī*, regardless the original calligraphy that appears in the manuscript. Needless to say, the mistakes of the final product are entirely my own.

In the descriptive list of manuscripts I have included a reference to the lost copies as listed in the Inventory of Ġubaylī, reflecting the status of the collection before the horrific events of these last six years. It should be noted that some copies may have been lost or destroyed during this time, despite the meticulous care of the owners and responsibles of the collection; furthermore, some new manuscripts belonging to the new church of Mār Iliyās (located in Farḥāt's Square, just at the line of fire) were transferred to the *muṭrāniyya* shortly before the start of the war. To help identify the listed copies I have used the works of Georges Graf and Carl Brockelmann. To provide a comprehensive picture of the collection I have listed also the copies in Syriac and Arabic *Karšūnī*, using the aforementioned two inventories of manuscripts as a reference. These are the bibliographic abbreviations used in this work:

<i>Fihris</i>	Anṭūn Ġubayli. فهرس المخطوطات للكنيسة المارونية. (Aleppo, handwritten, 1977).
GAL	Carl Brockelmann. <i>Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur</i> . 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill 1943-1949). <i>Supplementband (S I, II, III)</i> . (Leiden: Brill, 1937-1942).
GCAL	Georg Graf. <i>Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur</i> . Studi e Testi, vols. 118, 133, 146, 147, 172 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944-1953).
MKM	Francisco del Río Sánchez. <i>Manuscrits en Arabe Karchouni conservés dans la Bibliothèque des Maronites d'Alep, Syrie</i> . (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011).

⁶ *Syriac and Arabic MSS. conserved in the Maronite Library and in the Salem Foundation of Aleppo (Syria): Catalogue and Study*. Spanish Ministries of Economy and competitiveness (FFI 2011-25460/FILO), Sciences and Innovation (FFI 2008-04317/FILO and Education and Sciences (HUM 2005-0554/FILO), respectively.

- MSM Francisco del Río Sánchez. *Manuscrits syriaques conservés dans la Bibliothèque des Maronites d'Alep, Syrie*. (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008).

I indeed owe a great deal of thanks to many people who have either directly helped to bring this research to completion, or who have indirectly helped through their support and encouragement. Special thanks are due to Mgr. Youssef Anis Abi-Aad, former Archevêque of Aleppo, who allowed me to have access in the Library, offering me all the facilities to work there. I am deeply grateful to my dear friends Mgr. Youssef Tobji, Archevêque of the Maronites in Aleppo, and his brother Elias for their generosity, their constant help and especially for their friendship that resists borders and wars, and to all persons who worked in the *mutrāniyya* during my time there. Since the beginning of the battle for Aleppo, not a single day has gone by without remembering them. I want to acknowledge all the scholars who helped me: my deepest gratitude to Gregorio del Olmo Lete, Mahmud al-Haritani, Ramón Magdalena, Yom Tov Assis, Reuven Amitay and Meir Bar-Asher. Also my especial gratitude for my colleagues Margarita Castells and Manuel Forcano, who also spent time in Aleppo swimming among manuscripts. And thanks to Claire James, who read and corrected the draft in its final stage. Finally, my infinite gratitude to my family: Alejandra, who not only helped me during my work in Syria, but she also has sacrificed a great deal for me to finish this project. And my children, Juan and Cecilia, who never stop bringing me back to a fantastic reality, far from the paths that lead to my beloved and beautiful city of Aleppo.

I

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF MANUSCRIPTS

لائحة وصفية للمخطوطات

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF MANUSCRIPTS

1

First volume of the Old Testament translated to Arabic by Sergius Risi (Sarkīs ar-Ruzzī, see fol. 3a). 1) Fols. 2b-4a: 2) Fol. 4a: 3) اسفار العهد القديم (Fol. 4b: فاتحة الكتاب). 4) اسفار العهد الجديد (Fols. 5b-38b: 5) سفر تكوين الخلايق يقال بالعبراني براشيت (Fols. 39a-66b: 6) سفر العدد ويقال له بالعبراني (Fols. 67a-84b: 7) سفر الاخبار ويقال بالعبراني وسفرة (Fols. 85a-112b: 8) سفر يشوع بن يعقوب (Fols. 113a-137b: 9) سفر تثنية الاشتراك ويقال له بالعبراني الله هاديريم (Fols. 138a-154b: 10) سفر راعوت (Fols. 155a-172b: 11) سفر القضاة وبالعبراني شفطيم (Fols. 173a-175b: 12) الموابيه (Fols. 176a-200a: 13) سفر صموئيل الاول وهو اول اسفار الملوك (Fols. 200b-219b: 14) سفر صموئيل الثاني وهو ثاني الملوك. The volume was copied by the deacon Iliyās b. Mīhā'īl ibn Qara'ālī in 1706 (fol. 219b). It was acquired by the *muṭrān* Ġabrā'īl Hawšab who donated it to the church of Mār Iliyās in 1734 (see notes of *waqf* on fols. 2a and 219b). GCAL I, 96; III, 337.

Incipit fols. 2b-3a (*sic*):

ذلك الكلام الذي انزله الله سبحانه ونكتبته او لا الانبياء والرسل بلغاتهم كل واحد بلغة بلدته او قومه . ثم من بعدهم نقل الى السنة مختلفه ليعرف جميع الامم ما اوحى به الله لخلاصهم اجمعين . وان كان في نسخة المقبوله اختلاف الكلمات كاختلاف اللغات ولكثره المعاني التي لكل وحدة من الكلمات في اصلها .

—420 x 284 mm. —Well preserved. —Binding: black embossed leather on cardboard. —221 unnumbered paper fols. Blank pages, fols. 1, 5a, 220 and 221. —Pages with 1 column and 27 lines. The space for the text is delimited by a double red line or a triple line (black and gold), see fols. 2b-137b. —*Nashū*. —Black and red inks (punctuation dots). The titles are written in violet ink. —Polychrome designs of plant shapes on fols. 2b, 39a, 67a, 85a, 113a, 138a, 155a, 173a, 176a and 200b.

2

Second volume of the Old Testament translated to Arabic by Sarkīs ar-Ruzzī. 1) Fols. 3a-25a: 2) سفر الملوك الرابع وللعبرانيين ثاني الملوك (Fols. 25b-46a: 3) سفر الملوك ولل عبرانيين اول الملوك سفر اخبار الايام الثاني وبالعبراني ديري (Fols. 67a-90b: 4) سفر اخبار الايام الاول وبالعبراني ديري هيميم (Fols. 66b: 5) هيميم (Fols. 91a-98a: 6) السفر الاول لعزز الكاهن (sic) (Fols. 98b-108b: 7) سفر نحريا وهو ثاني عزرا (Fols. 99a-108a: 8) سفر طوبيا (Fols. 109a-116a: 9) سفر يهوديت الاسرائيليه (Fols. 116b-125b: 10) سفر استير (Fols. 126a-135a: 11) سفر ايوب الصديق (Fols. 135b-154a: 12) سفر المزامير (Fols. 154b-199a: 13) سفر ايوب الصديق (Fols. 199b-214b: 14) سفر المزامير

سفر الجامعه ويقال بالعبرانيه قهلت (13) الامثال وبالعبرانيه موشلي Fols. 215a-221a; سفر الحكمه نشيد الانشد لسليمان ويقال بالعبرانيه شير هشيريم (15) Fols. 224b-236a; It was copied by the deacon Iliyās b. Mīhā'il ibn Qara'ālī in 1706 (f. 236a). The volume was acquired by the *muṭrān* Ġabrā'il Hawšab. It was donated to the church of Mār Iliyās in 1734 (notes of *waqf* on fols. 3a and 235b). GCAL I, 96; III, 337.

—415 x 282 mm. —Well preserved. —Binding: black embossed leather on cardboard. —238 unnumbered paper fols. Blank pages, fols. 1-2, 236b, 237-238. —Pages with 1 column and 27 lines. The space for the text is delimited by a double red line. —*Nashīl*. —Black and red inks (punctuation dots). The titles are written in violet ink. —Polychrome designs of plant shapes on titles.

3

Third volume of the Old Testament translated to Arabic by Sarkīs ar-Ruzzī. 1) Fols. 3a-31b: (4) نبوا ارميا: (3) نبوا اشعيا النبي: (2) حكمة يشوع بن شيراح Fols. 32a-66a; (5) مراشي ارميا: (6) صلاة ارميا النبي: (7) نبوا باروخ: (8) حزقيال Fols. 112b; (9) نبوا دنيال: (10) نبوا هوشع: (11) نبوا يوحا: (12) نبوا عوبديا: (13) نبوا يونان: (14) نبوا يعقوب: (15) نبوا ناحوم: (16) نبوا ميخا: (17) نبوا صحفيا: (18) نبوا زخريا: (19) نبوا حجي: (20) نبوا صفنيا: Fols. 192a-193a; Fols. 191a-191b; Fols. 187a-190b; Fols. 197a-198a; Fols. 198b-200a; Fols. 193b-196b; Fols. 200b-202a; Fols. 202b-204a; Fols. 204b-209b; Fols. 210a-232b; Fols. 233a-250b; Fols. 251-252. —It was copied by the deacon Iliyās b. Mīhā'il ibn Qara'ālī in 1706 (f. 250a). The volume was acquired by the *muṭrān* Ġabrā'il Hawšab. It was donated to the church of Mār Iliyās in 1734 (notes of *waqf* on fols. 3a and 250a). GCAL I, 96; III, 337.

—422 x 290 mm. —Well preserved. —Binding: black embossed leather on cardboard. —252 unnumbered paper fols. Blank pages, fols. 1-2, 250b, 251-252. —Pages with 1 column and 27 lines. The space for the text is delimited by a double red line. —*Nashīl*. —Black and red inks (punctuation dots). The titles are written in violet ink. —Polychrome designs of plants on titles.

4

كتاب الإنجيل الشرييف الطاهر والمصباح المنير الظاهر Ya^cqūb ad-Dibṣī's Arabic version of the Gospels, dated 1691 (fol. 2a). 1) Fols. 2b-4a: introduction. 2) Fols. 4a-5a (*sic*): 3) Fols. 5b-43b (*sic*): 4) بشاره القديس متى الإنجيلي التلميذ الطاهر: 5) Fols.

44b-65b: Gospel of Mark (untitled). 6) Fol. 66a: مقدمة لوقا (7). Fols. 66b-103b: Gospel of Luke (untitled). 8) Fol. 104a: مقدمة ليوحنا البشير (9). Fols. 104b-131a: Gospel of John (untitled). 10) Fols. 131b-170a: بيان ما انطوى عليه هذا الكتاب الشريف من الألفاظ اللغوية. The volume was copied in Aleppo by Zahāriyā ibn Marquş in 1694 (fol. 170b). It was purchased by the *muṭrān* Ġabrā'il Hawšab, and was donated to the church of Mār Iliyās in 1734 (notes of *waqf*, fols. 3a and 170b). GCAL I, 166. See picture (fol. 4a).

Incipit f. 3a:

أما بعد قال الشيخ الإمام العالم العامل لأجل الفاضل. فريد عصر. ونتيجة دهره قدوة المحقم. وفحز أمة المقدسين. أبو الم يعقوب بن نعمة بن بطرس نن أبي لغوث الدَّبَسيِّ التَّحْوِيِّ اللَّغُوِيِّ المارونيِّ مذهبًا. الـ طرابلسيِّ أصلًا. وجرومته الحلبيِّ مولداً وموطناً.

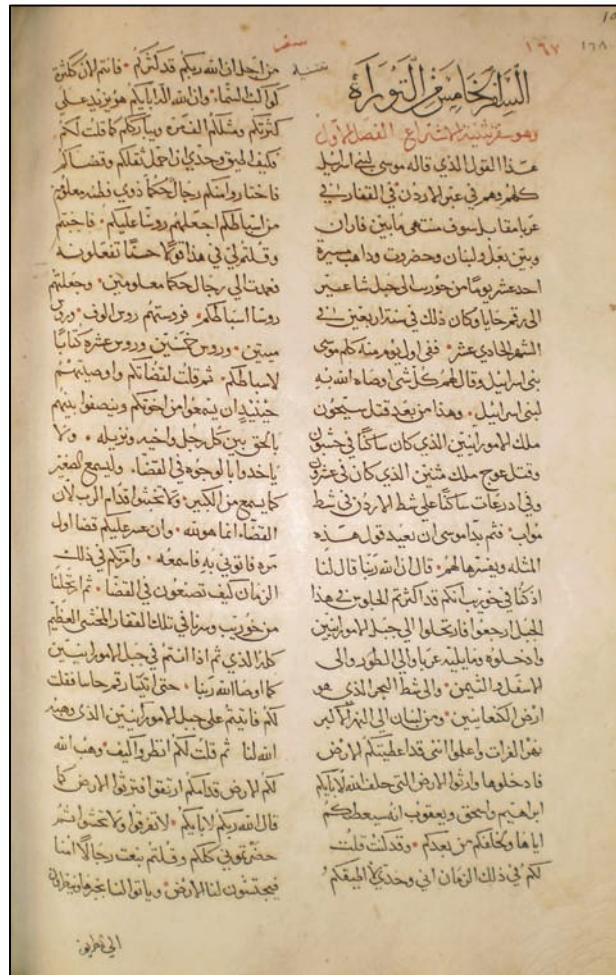


—415 x 282 mm. —Well preserved. —Binding: black embossed leather on cardboard. —172 unnumbered paper fols. Blank pages, fols. 1-2, 250b, 251-252. —Pages with 1 column and 27 lines. The space for the text is delimited by a triple line (in black, red and gold inks). —*Nashī*. —Black, red and golden inks (punctuation dots). —Polychrome designs of plant figures on titles.

Untitled. New Testament in Arabic. 1) Fols. 2b-32a: Untitled. Acts of the Apostles. 2) Fols. 35b-79a: Untitled. Introduction to St. Paul's Epistles. 3) Fols. 80b-88b (*sic*): 4. إلى أهل روميه. 5). Fols. 89a-98a (*sic*): 6. الرسالة الثانية إلى أهل قورنثية. 7). Fols. 98b-104a: الرسالة الأولى إلى أهل قرنثية.

Fols. 104b-106b: (7) الى اهل افسس Fols. 107a-109b: (8) الى اهل غلاطيا. Fols. 110a-112a: (9) الى اهل فلاماسيس 10) الى اهل تيسالونيقي 11) الرسالة الاولى الى اهل تيسالونيقي 12) الرسالة الثانية الى طيماثاوس 13) الرسالة الاولى الى طيماثاوس 14) الرسالة الثانية الى طيماثاوس 15) الى طيطس Fols. 121b-122a: Untitled. Epistle of St. James. 16) Fols. 123b-128b: Untitled. I Peter. 17) Fols. 129a-138b: Untitled. II Peter. 18) Fols. 139a-142a: Untitled. I John. 19) Fols. 142b-144b: Untitled. II John. 20) Fol. 145ab: Untitled. III John. 21) Fols. 146a-147a: Untitled. Jude. 22) Fols. 148a-160b: Untitled. The volume was copied by Iliyās b. Mīhā'il in 1706 (fol. 160b), and it was purchased by the *mutrān* Ġabrā'il Hawšab. The book was donated to the church of Mār Iliyās in 1734 (notes of *waqf*, fols. 2b and 160b).

—412 x 281 mm. —Well preserved. —Binding: red embossed leather on cardboard. —163 unnumbered paper fols. Blank pages, fols. 1-2a, 32b, 33-35a, 79b, 80a, 129b, 130-131a, 147b and 161-163. —Pages with 1 column and 27 lines. The space for the text is delimited by a double red line. —*Nashī*. —Black and red inks (titles and punctuation dots). —Without decorations.



6

- First volume of the Old Testament in Arabic. 1) Fol. 1a: index. 2) Fols. 1b-26a: السفر الثاني (2) Fols. 26a-46a: 3. كتاب التكوان (3) Fols. 47a-63a: 4 من التوراة وهو سفر الخروج (4) السفر الثالث من التوراة وهو سفر اللاويين: Fols. 63b-84a: السفر الرابع من التوراة وهو (5) السفر السادس من التوراة وهو سفر العدد (6) Fols. 84b-103b: 7. الخامس من التوراة وهو سفر تثنية الاشتراك (7) Fols. 104a-117b: 8. كتاب يشوع بن نون (8) Fols. 118a-133a: 9. بالعبرانية سفطيم (9) Fols. 133a-135a: 10. راعوت الموايه (10) Fols. 135a-165a: 11. كتاب الاول من الملوك (11) Fols. 165b-199a: 12. كتاب الثاني من الملوك (12) Fols. 199b-218b: 13. الثالث من كتاب اسفار الملوك (13) Fols. 218b-233a: 14. وهو الجزء الرابع من كتاب اسفار الملوك (14) Fols. 233b-234a: كتاب سليمان بن داود

II

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- Ibn al-Ḥaṭīb, abū l-Qāsim ʻAbd ar-Rahmān: 1366.
- Ibn Ḥātim, Mīḥā’il: 1447.
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