

A Brief History Of Philology In Egypt: A Literary Study

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to provide a brief overview of the history of philology and writing activities in Egypt, Egypt's position in the development of scholarship, as well as the claim that the first philological activities were undertaken by Islamic scholars. Egypt was chosen due to its significant role in the field of philology, especially during the 3rd century BC when the Greek civilization was present in Alexandria. This research is a qualitative research employing the method of literature review. Literature review involves the analytical examination of a collection of written sources, such as books, journals, and articles, relevant to the research topic. This research reveals that Egypt is a pioneer in the field of manuscript studies in the Middle East. To this day, Egypt continues to play a central role, as evidenced by the return of the headquarters of the Arab Manuscripts Institute to Cairo in 1991 and to the present day. The claims of several Arab researchers that Arab-Islamic scholars were the first to establish the foundations of philological theory hold strong rationale, considering that the theory and methods of *tahqiq* had already been developed thoroughly by hadith experts long before the literary revitalization projects in the West.

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk memberikan gambaran singkat tentang sejarah filologi dan aktifitas tulisan di Mesir, posisi Mesir dalam perkembangan keilmuan, juga tentang klaim bahwa yang melakukan kegiatan filologis pertama kali adalah para sarjana Islam. Mesir dipilih karena memainkan peranan penting dalam bidang filologi terutama pada abad ke-3 SM saat bangsa Yunani berada di Alexandria. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif yang menggunakan metode studi literatur. Studi literatur adalah proses analisis terhadap kumpulan sumber tertulis seperti buku, jurnal, artikel yang relevan dengan topik penelitian. Literatur yang dimaksud dalam penelitian ini adalah literatur yang ditulis oleh sarjana Arab. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Mesir merupakan pelopor dalam dunia pernaknahan di Timur Tengah. Hingga saat ini, Mesir masih memainkan peran sentral, hal ini bisa dilihat dari kembalinya kantor pusat Institut Manuskrip Arab ke Cairo pada tahun 1991 hingga saat ini. Klaim beberapa peneliti Arab bahwa sarjana Arab-Islam yang pertama kali meletakkan fondasi teori filologi memiliki alasan yang kuat mengingat teori dan metode *tahqiq* sudah dibentuk secara matang oleh para pakar hadis jauh sebelum proyek revitalisasi kesusastraan di Barat.



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INTRODUCTION

Egypt or the Arab Republic of Egypt is one of the countries that is reckoned with in the advancement of knowledge, particularly in Islamic

sciences. Up to the present time, Egypt still holds a wealth of Islamic treasures, both classical and modern, readily available in libraries.

As commonly known, Egypt has had an advanced civilization for centuries before the Common Era. Remnants of the ancient Egyptian civilization, such as the Giza pyramids, the Abu Simbel temple, and the Sphinx, still stand majestically. Artifacts from the ancient Egyptian royal dynasties are also meticulously preserved in various accessible museums.

Egypt becomes significant as a research subject due to being one of the oldest cultures that has been acquainted with writing. Additionally, as per Al-Hajiri (1977: 29), Egypt is a pioneer among Middle Eastern (Arab) countries in the realm of philology in the modern era. This is evident from the attention and philological activities carried out by Egyptian researchers, which have preceded those of researchers from other Arab nations.

In this paper, the author will endeavor to provide a brief description of the history and development of philology in the Middle East in general, and in Egypt specifically, from the perspective of Muslim philologists as reflected in their works.

METHODS

This article is a literature review that serves as a summary of previous references. The research was conducted through the following stages: 1) formulating the research problem; 2) data collection; 3) data selection; 4) data analysis; 5) data presentation; and 6) drawing conclusions.

The references utilized in this research are confined to books authored by Arab scholars. These books were selected based on their relevance to the research topic. The data acquired was subsequently

subjected to analysis using a descriptive analysis model. The method of descriptive analysis involves presenting facts that are then supplemented with analysis. The descriptive analysis model not only delineates but also provides commentary and explanations.

According to Sugiyono (2013: 245), qualitative data analysis is inductive in nature, meaning it involves an analysis based on collected data, which is then developed into hypotheses. Based on the hypotheses formulated from the data, further data is sought repeatedly, allowing for the conclusion of whether the hypotheses are accepted or rejected based on the accumulated data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Speaking about philology in Egypt cannot be detached from the history of philology in Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia. The unity of language, culture, and religion has also influenced the emergence and development of philology in Arab nations. Although situated on the African continent, Egypt's geographical proximity to the Arabian Peninsula played a significant role in its contribution to the development of knowledge.

The history of the emergence of philology, known in Egypt and the Middle East as "tahqiq al-makhthuthath," when traced, actually takes us back to the early days of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him). As recorded by Ibn As-Shalah (d. 1245 CE), during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), there was a polemic among his companions due to his initial prohibition against writing down his sayings (hadith). However, according to Ibn As-Shalah (1998: 48), the writing of hadith eventually became inevitable in order to ensure the validity and accuracy of transmission.

On the other hand, Al-Baghdadi (2008: 101) actually narrates several hadiths that affirm that many companions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) wrote and even possessed collections of his hadiths. Among these companions are Abu Bakr, Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud, and Abdullah Ibn 'Amr.

After the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the process of recording hadith was continued by his companions and the generation that followed, known as the Tabi'in. According to Al-Baghdadi (2008: 126-142), the writing of hadith continued to be carried out by the first, second, third, and subsequent generations of Tabi'in. This process persisted continuously until the second century, when the principles of the science of hadith entered an era of consolidation (Diyab, 1993: 20). In the second and third centuries, influential figures who founded schools of jurisprudence emerged, such as Abu Hanifa, Malik Ibn Anas, Al-Layth Ibn Sa'd, Ash-Shafi'i, Al-Awza'i, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, and hadith experts like Az-Zuhri, Al-Bukhari, and Muslim. These significant figures also made substantial contributions to the advancement of the science of hadith.

The formal writing and collection of hadith were indeed officially mandated by Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz (d. 101 H) during his caliphate. However, this directive cannot be considered the starting point of hadith writing, as it was institutional in nature, while individual efforts towards the codification of hadith had already been underway prior to that.

The writing and transmission of hadith later laid the foundation for the theoretical and methodological structure of the discipline of philology (tahqiq al-makthuthath) among Islamic scholars. This is because the recording of hadith constitutes one of the valid methods of hadith transmission recognized by hadith

experts (Ibn As-Shalah, 1998: 183). Commenting on this matter, Abdul Tawwab (2002: 24) asserts that it must be acknowledged that the scholars of hadith were the first individuals to research, research, and establish principles for writing, copying, and validating texts through the documentation of hadith. Their remarkably high attention to the science and criticism of hadith, scrutinizing each narrator, accurately recording the names and epithets of narrators, distinguishing among similar names of narrators, and other such aspects, lay the robust foundation for the edifice of the tahqiq discipline in the future.

Traces of philological theories in the treasury of hadith studies can be traced back to the era of the Tabi'in (the generation that followed the companions of the Prophet). As narrated by Ibn As-Shalah, as quoted by Syakir (2007: 23), at one point, 'Urwa Ibn Az-Zubair (d. 94 H) asked his son, Hisyam, "Have you already written (hadith)?"

Hisyam responded, "Yes."

'Urwa asked again, "Have you compared your notes?"

"Not yet," answered Hisyam.

"Then that means you haven't actually written!" said 'Urwa.

Al-Shafi'i (d. 204 H) also once stated, "A person who writes but does not compare is like someone who enters a restroom (for relieving themselves) but does not cleanse."

Both of the aforementioned narratives, along with several other accounts, indicate that the comparative analysis process of muqābalaḥ between copied manuscripts and original texts, or among various manuscripts, was recognized early on during the time of the companions and the generation that followed them.

Abdul Tawwab (2002: 25-27) further adds that there are several works by Islamic scholars that have

demonstrated the maturity of the tahqiq method in the Islamic world. These works include:

1. The Distinguished Compiler Between the Narrator and the Reporter, a work by Al-Hasan Ibn Abdurrahman Ibn Khallad Ar-Ramahurmuzi (d. 360 H).

2. The Knowledge Directed towards Understanding the Principles of Narration and the Specification of Transmission, a work by Al-Qadhy 'Iyâdh Ibn Musa Al-Yahshubi (d. 544 H).

3. "*Ulûm Al-Hadîts*," authored by Ibn As-Shalâh (d. 616 AH).

4. "*Tazkirah As-Sâmi' wa Al-Mutakallim fî Adab Al-'Âlim wa Al-Muta'allim*," written by Badruddin Ibn Jama'ah (d. 733 AH).

5. "*Ad-Durr An-Nadhîdh fî Adab Al-Mufîd wa Al-Mustafîd*," composed by Badruddin Al-Ghazzy (d. 983 AH).

6. "*Al-Mu'îd fî Adab Al-Mufîd wa Al-Mustafîd*," crafted by Abdul Basith Ibn Musa Al-'Almawy (d. 981 AH).

According to Diyaab (1993: 22), the process of compiling the Quran during the caliphate of Uthman Ibn Affan can be referred to as the first tahqiq process within the Islamic scholarly tradition. Thus, the manuscript of the holy Quran – the physical codex made from paper – stands as the outcome of the first philological endeavor that has reached humanity in this era, having been meticulously codified and duly validated.

On the other hand, the movement of codification, writing, and tahqiq (textual analysis) of Arabic literary works that began to gain momentum in the late 1st century of the Hijri era, as stated by Diyaab, could be regarded as the inception of the philological movement aimed at preserving and safeguarding Arabic literary works since the era of Jahiliyah (pre-Islamic period). However, the oldest manuscript in the field of adab

(Arabic literature) that has been discovered, according to Awad's research (1982: 77), was actually recorded in the year 249 AH (863 AD). This manuscript is titled "Adâb Al-Falâsifah" authored by Hunain Ibn Ishaq.

With the advent of Islam in Egypt in the year 20 AH/641 AD (Abdul Hadi, 1999: 37) through the expansion led by Amru Ibn Al-'Ash, the companions and their successors (tabi'in) also took up residence in Egypt. A new phase of scholarly movement in Egypt commenced with the introduction of Islamic sciences.

The internal division within the Islamic community that began with the passing of Uthman Ibn Affan had detrimental consequences for the transmission of hadiths. The schism was exploited by hardcore fanatical elements within each faction to fabricate and disseminate false hadiths that supported their group or undermined their opponents. This phenomenon of false hadiths, inevitably, eventually spread to regions under Islamic caliphate, including Egypt.

Nevertheless, the author has not encountered any remnants in the form of manuscripts that could provide evidence of tahqiq activities before the second century of the Hijri era. The activities of writing, copying, and collecting manuscripts that the author has discovered were carried out in the year 199 AH by Asy-Syafi'i and his disciples. As is known, Asy-Syafi'i entered Egypt in the year 199 AH, where he subsequently settled and passed away. Asy-Syafi'i's engagement with local thoughts of that time resulted in several works. His disciple, Ar-Rabi' Ibn Sulaiman, took the initiative to gather and rewrite several of Asy-Syafi'i's works into a foundational book, later known as "Al-Umm." In composing this book, Ar-Rabi' honestly delineated which portions he directly heard from Asy-

Syafi'i, which sections were written by Asy-Syafi'i himself, and which parts were omitted by Ar-Rabi' (Asy-Syafi'i: 9-10). This indicates that the method of transmitting the knowledge of hadith was eventually adopted by Islamic scholars to transmit the works of other scholars in different disciplines of knowledge. Two other books written by Asy-Syafi'i in Egypt are "Ikhtilâf Al-Hadîts" and "Ar-Risâlah." "Ar-Risalah" itself was recorded by Ar-Rabi', while Asy-Syafi'i dictated every word of it.

The initial proponents of philological theory and methodology

As widely recognized, the theory and practice of philology in Egypt were undertaken by the Greek community in Alexandria during the 3rd century BC. Nevertheless, based on the development of hadith theory and studies, Islamic scholars assert that Muslims were the pioneers in establishing well-founded philological theories and methods, long before the West.

This assertion is unequivocally articulated by Syakir (2007: 15), Abdut Tawwab (2002: 14), and Diyab (1993: 14). According to Abdut Tawwab, the progression of Islamic civilization ahead of the West in formulating the principles of tahqîq is substantiated, among other factors, by the validation project of the compilation of the authentic hadith collection, Sahîh Al-Bukhârî, carried out by Al-Yûnini (d. 701 AH). Al-Yûnini is regarded as having successfully curated the manuscripts of Sahih Al-Bukhârî, meticulously scrutinizing the transmission pathways of the book, enabling its enduring accessibility. Thus, in accordance with Abdut Tawwab's theory, it can be asserted that Islamic scholars had already established philological principles in the field of hadith two centuries prior to Western scholars. However, when

referring to the first book of the science of hadith, "Al-Muhaddith Al-Fâshil" by Al-'Amlawi (died 360 AH/970 AD), the Muslim community had already surpassed the West by approximately five centuries. The book "Al-Muhaddith Al-Fâshil" has clearly explained the theory of writing, copying, punctuation, the use of the critical apparatus, arrangement of chapters, the procedure for correcting errors, and so forth.

Diyab (1993: 14) adds that Western scholars themselves began to delve into the field of philology in the 15th century when the revival of Greek and classical Latin literature was taking place.

Egyptian Philology in the Modern Era

According to Abdut Tawwab (2002: 59), the term "tahqîq" was first mentioned in Egyptian publications in the year 1914. At that time, one of Egypt's first philologists, Ahmad Zaki Pasha, published two books by Ibn Al-Kalby, namely "Ansâb Al-Khail" and "Al-Ashnâm." After thoroughly researching these two books, he validated and concretized them, and then had them published through Dar Al-Kutub press in Cairo.

Both Abdut Tawwab and Diyab, equally affirm that Zaki Pasha was greatly influenced by orientalists. This is not surprising, as Zaki Pasha indeed had extensive interaction with orientalists.

At the age of 25, by the Egyptian government at that time, Zaki Pasha was sent to represent Egypt at the international orientalists conference in London in 1892. Zaki Pasha's departure can be considered as the beginning of the interaction between the world of Egyptian philology and the Western philology. Naturally, his presence in London was not in vain. Zaki Pasha utilized this opportunity to visit various manuscript centers there and engage

in direct dialogues with Western philologists.

Despite learning extensively from orientalists, it turns out that Zaki Pasha had a strong sense of nationalism. Upon returning from the conference in London, his attitude and passion for the treasury of Arab knowledge and literature became even more fervent. In 1910, he submitted a proposal for the project "Ihyaâ` Al-`Adab Al-`Arabiyyah" (Revitalization of Arabic Literature) to the Egyptian government. The government responded positively, both approving the proposal and appointing him as the responsible individual for the project.

Zaki Pasha was also the first Arab to utilize technology in manuscript research. When he traveled to London, he brought with him ten books containing the edited versions of ten Arabic literary manuscripts that he had personally worked on (Diyab, 1993: 97 – 98). The manuscripts that he had edited were taken to London in the form of photographs (microfilm).

During the Orientalism conference in Athens in 1919, Zaki Pasya raised a significant issue in the field of philology. He addressed the matter of integrity (*amanah*) in citing the works of predecessors, questioning whether publishers were allowed to alter, omit, or amend their writings, or if the original manuscripts had to be published as they were. The members of the conference eventually decided that manuscripts intended for editing and publication should be presented exactly as they were.

The role of orientalists resurfaced when Bergstrasser, an orientalist from Germany, published the book "Ushûl Naqd An-Nushûsh wa Nasyr Al-Kutub." The book initially consisted of a series of public lectures he delivered to graduate students in the Arabic Language department at the Faculty of Literature, Cairo University, in the year 1931. Those lectures were

later compiled by his student, Dr. Muhammad Hamdi Al-Bakri, and reissued in the year 1969. When it was written in 1931, this book was the first book in the field of philology to be written in the Arabic language.

Furthermore, Abdussalam Harun, an early-generation Egyptian philologist, also published the book "Tahqîq An-Nushûsh wa Nasyruha" in the year 1954. This book is the first philology book by an Arab individual to be printed and widely published (Abdut Tawwab, 2002: 59). Meanwhile, according to Al-`Athiyyah (2014: 103), earlier, precisely in 1944, Muhammad Mandur had also written and published two short articles about the principles of philological work on manuscripts in the magazine "Ats-Tsaqafah." These two articles were his critiques of the book "Qawanin Ad-Dawawin" by Ibn Hammaty Al-Qibthy. He later republished those two articles in the same year. Thus, according to Abdut Tawwab, the first person to publish a work on Arabic philology was Abdussalam Harun, while according to Al-`Athiyyah, the first person to write a scholarly work on the theory and methods of tahqîq was Muhammad Mandur.

After these two figures, several other important figures emerged successively. Like a continuous chain, these researchers continued to contribute to the theory and methods of philology in Egypt. Among these figures are (Abdut Tawwab, 2002: 59 and Al-`Athiyyah, 2014: 104 – 105):

1. Dr. Shalahuddin Al-Munajjid, with his article titled "Qawa'id Tahqîq An-Nushûsh," was published in the journal of the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts in the year 1955.
2. Dr. Aisyah Abdurrahman, with her book "Muqaddimah fî Al-Manhaj," was published in Cairo in the year 1971. Previously, in the year 1950, the results of her research and textual edition of the manuscript "Risâlat Al-

Gufrân" by Al-Ma'arri earned her recognition as the best work in the field of philology from the Academy of the Arabic Language in Egypt.

3. Dr. Ramadhan Abdu Tawwab, with his book "Fî Ushûli Al-Bahts Al-'Ilmi wa Tahqîq An-Nushûsh," was published in the year 1972, and his article "Tahqîq At-Turats: Asâlibuhu wa Ahdâfuhu" was published in the year 1976.

4. Dr. Syauqi Dhaif, with his book "Al-Bahts Al-Adabi," which was published in the year 1972.

5. Dr. Nuri Hamudi Al-Qaisi and Dr. Sami Makki Al-'Ani, with their book "Manhaj Tahqîq An-Nushûsh wa Nasyriha," published in the year 1975.

6. Dr. Abdul Majid Diyab, with his book "Tahqîq At-Turâts Al-'Arabi: Manhajuhu wa Tathawwuruhu," published in Cairo in the year 1983.

7. Dr. Mahmud Muhammad At-Thanahi, with his book "Madkhal Ilâ Târîkh Nasyri At-Turâts Al-'Arabi," was published in Cairo in the year 1984.

8. Ahmad Syakir, with his book "Tashîh Al-Kutub wa Shun'u Al-Fahâris Al-Mu'jamah," was first published in the year 1993.

9. Isham Muhammad Asy-Syanthy, with his book "Adawât Tahqîq An-Nushûsh: Al-Mashâdir Al-Âmmah," which was published in the year 2007.

10. Dr. Marwan Al-'Athiyyah, with his book "Dalîl Al-Muhaqqiqîn wal Bâhitsîn fî Tahqîqâtihim wa Abhâtsihim," was published in Cairo in the year 2014.

Some of the names in the aforementioned list are also pioneering figures in the field of Arabic philology. Al-'Athiyyah (2014: 115) mentions that prominent Arab philologists include Ahmad Syakir, Mahmud Muhammad Syakir, Abdussalam Harun, Ahmad Amin, Syauqi Dhaif, Aisyah Abdur Rahman (Bintu Asy-Syâthi'), Ahmad Saqr, Badawi Thabanah, Ahmad Al-Haufi, Muhammad Abu Al-Fahdl Ibrahim,

Hali Ahmad Al-Bijawi, and Thahir At-Thanahi.

Printing in Egypt

The first printing press established in Egypt was owned by the French colonizers, brought by Napoleon to Egypt during the period 1801-1898. This printing press was utilized by Napoleon to disseminate his political propaganda in Egypt (Diyab, 1993: 107). The second printing press, named Al-Mathba'ah Al-Ahliyyah, was owned by native Egyptians and had been in existence since 1801. Following the departure of the French from the land of Egypt, this printing press settled in Cairo and produced books in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian languages.

In the year 1821, the printing press was relocated to the Bulaq region. Due to its location in Bulaq, the Al-Ahliyyah printing press eventually underwent a name change to become the Bulaq Printing Press (Mathba'ah Bûlâq). The workers and editors at the Bulaq Printing Press at that time were students of Al-Azhar who had undergone six years of training in publishing and printing. The Bulaq printing press is one of the most significant printing establishments in the history of Egypt, and indeed, in the history of the Middle East at large.

The Bulaq printing press is still considered to be the most instrumental in reviving the manuscripts of Islamic knowledge heritage to this day. This printing press was the first to dare to publish encyclopedias of Islamic sciences, such as the dictionary "Lisân Al-'Arab" by Ibn Manzhur, "Al-Umm" by Asy-Syafi'i, "Tafsir At-Thabary," "Fathul Bârî" by Ibn Hajar Al-'Asqalany, "Al-Aghâny" by Al-Asfahany, "Al-Kitâb" by Sibawaih, "Minhâj As-Sunnah" by Ibn Taymiyyah, "Ash-Shihah" dictionary by Al-Jauhari, "Al-Qâmûs Al-Muhîth" by Al-

Fairuzabadi, "Wafayât Al-`A'yân" by Ibn Khallikan, and so on.

The publication of these books represents a crucial step in the development of Arabic philology. This is because the project can be considered a large-scale edition initiative aimed at the treasure trove of Arabic literary works. Up to the present time, several books published by Bulaq are still regarded for their accuracy. It cannot be denied that this movement provides a strong stimulus for the revitalization of classical Arabic scholarly heritage in the subsequent periods.

The Establishment of the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts

The pinnacle of Arab nations' attention, in general, and Egypt's in particular, was evident in 1946 when the Arab League decided to establish the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts (IMA) in Cairo. This institute is one of the most significant and oldest manuscript centers in both the Middle East region and the world.

In 1945, this institution was still under the Arab League's Department of Culture. Then, in 1946, its name was officially changed to Ma'had Al-Makhthûthât Al-'Arabiyyah 'Institute of Arab Manuscripts' (IAM), and in 1955, the institution was formally recognized as an autonomous body.

IAM relocated to Tunisia from 1979 to 1981, then moved to Kuwait until 1990, and returned to Cairo from 1991 until the present. This institution is responsible for collecting, preserving, supporting research, and publishing manuscripts (<http://www.manuscriptsinstitute.org>).

The establishment of IAM represents a significant step in the Arab narrative world, both in the Middle East and specifically in Egypt.

The Role of Universities in the Field of Narrative Sciences

As academic hubs, universities undoubtedly play a significant role in the advancement of narrative sciences. In 1928, Cairo University initiated its contribution by publishing the manuscript "Az-Zakhîrah fi Ath-Thibb," which was edited by George Shubhi, a researcher from the same campus (Diyab, 1993: 111).

A few years later, on September 29, 1952, the Arab League established the Institute for Arab Research and Studies (IRSA). One of the departments within IRSA at present is the Department of Manuscript Research and Studies for the master's and doctoral levels. This department is the first of its kind to focus on philological studies and officially confer master's and doctoral degrees in the field of philology.

Other campuses, such as Al-Azhar University and Cairo University, indeed do not have dedicated philology departments. However, these campuses still play a role in manuscript revitalization by incorporating manuscript research projects as materials for their students' theses and dissertations.

The difference lies in larger campuses such as Cairo and Al-Azhar, where students are only allowed to research manuscripts within the discipline they are pursuing. Meanwhile, at IARS, students are free to choose manuscripts from any field to be used as materials for their theses and dissertations. Moreover, IARS does indeed formally teach the principles and methods of philology through lectures, while other campuses allow their students to learn through self-guided research under the guidance of mentors.

With the entry of universities into the realm of philology, the terms "tahqîq 'ilmi" and "tahqîq ghair 'ilmi" or commercial verification became

recognized. "Tahqîq 'ilmi" refers to the outcomes of philological endeavors carried out within universities, conducted by master's and doctoral students under the supervision of advisors. This term also applies to the works of renowned philologists who are well-known for their expertise in the field. Meanwhile, "tahqîq ghair 'ilmi" or commercial verification is a term used for books or manuscripts that are published haphazardly, without undergoing philological validation. Such books are typically circulated by unscrupulous publishers who are solely interested in financial gain without adhering to scholarly integrity.

CONCLUSION

From the above exposition, it can be concluded that Egypt has been a pioneer in the field of storytelling in the Middle East. Up to the present time, Egypt continues to play a central role, as evidenced by the relocation of the central office of the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts back to Cairo in 1991 and up to the present day.

Despite being pioneers, it is somewhat challenging to trace the philological output in Egypt from the 3rd century AH to the 12th century AH. Literary works are indeed easily found, but the project of revitalizing that literary heritage was actually preceded by Orientalist scholars.

Several researchers argue that it is justifiable to claim that the first Arab-Islamic scholars who laid the foundation of philology theory can be justified, considering that the theory and method of tahqîq had already been well-established by hadith experts

long before the West initiated its literary revitalization project.

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