THE ART OF WARAQAT[1]

During the 'Abbasid period

At a time when the art of printing was unknown, copying and writing by hand was very popular, and hence this art, known as warâqat, came into existence and flourished for a long time throughout the Islamic world.

Different interpretations have been given to the term warâqat. Generally, it was used for copying and stationery as defined by As-Sam'ânî.[2] But the French Orientalist De Slane has translated it as " Bookbinding " in the notice of the Spanish poet and man of letters Ash-Shantarini (d. 617 A.H.), inferred from his verses, given by Ibn Khallikan.[3] The learned Orientalist has also explained, in a footnote, the general meaning of the term to signify also the profession of a stationer and that of a copyist.

But[4] there is no justification for such inference, as in these verses the likening of a bookbinder to a tailor, who prepares dress for others and remains himself naked, does not apply to a bookbinder, but in this way the greatly fallen condition of this art is indicated.[5]

The term warâqat was also applied to bookselling, as suggested by Ibn Nadîm's use of *warraqin* for the booksellers of Baghdâd[6] as well as Ibn Jauzi and Khatîb's mention[7] of the *Suqu'l-warraqin* for the book-markets of Baghdâd.[8]

(1) Paper read at the Urdu Section of the Seventh Session of the Indian Oriental Conference, held at Baroda, on the 27th and 29th December 1933.

(2) *Ansab* fol. 579. London.

(3) Vol. I, p. 264.

(4) English translation of Ibn Khallikan, vol. III, pp. 59-61.

(5) Ibn Khaldûn (*Muqaddimah*, Bulâq ed. pp. 398-400), in his chapter on Warâqat. mentions bookbinding as included in this art, which in his time (8th century A. H.) had fallen into disrepute.

(6) *Fihrist*, p. 169, Cairo ed.

(7) *J.R.A.S.* (1912) p. 71, the Arabic text quoted from Al-Khatîb's History of Baghdâd, vol. 27 MS.

(8) *Manaqib Baghdad*, p. 26,

Thus it is evident that the term warâqat was applied to :

(1) Copying and transcription,
(2) Stationery,
(3) Bookselling.

Now I am going to show under each separate head, and by other details pertaining thereto, how far the Muslims had given an impulse to the art of warâqat absolutely for the cause of disseminating the arts and sciences among the people. The scope of my paper is confined to the Abbasid period as the Islamic rule for its culture and civilization covers a more extensive field.

The Art of Copying.

In the earlier centuries of Islam, this art was cultivated and developed to the highest pitch. The persons well-versed in this art were called " warrâqîn " or " nassâkhîn. "

Like the pre-Islamic poets, who had their own " rawi " or humanist, almost every learned man had his own *warraq* or amanuensis. Ibn Sa'd, author of a huge compendium on the Prophet's biography, was the scribe of Al-Wâqidi.[1] Ishâq b. Husain, the renowned Christian physician of Baghdad, had employed a scribe named Arzaq, in whose handwriting Ibn Abi Usaibî'a saw the Arabic translations of Galen's works signed by his master Husain.[2] Sandi b. 'Ali was the scribe of the celebrated musician of Baghdâd, Ishâq al-Mûsili.[3] Ahmed b. Akhi, a Shâfi'î man of letters was an employee of Ibn 'Abdus al-Jihshiyârî.[4] Ahmed b. Muhammad al-Qarashî worked as a copyist for Ibn Fatis of Damascus (d. 350).[5] Ibn Malsâqâ wrote for the eminent Jewish physician Ifraîm az-Zaffân—Ibn Abi Usaibî'a saw MSS. of his writing signed by his master.[6]

The art of copying being greatly profitable was acquired and adopted as a means of livelihood by many literary men of the day. Ibn Haitham, the great mathematician and optician of Egypt in the 4th century A.H., used to transcribe Arabic versions of Euclid and the Majesti

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(1) *Fihrist*, p. 145.
(2) *Tabaqatu'l-Atibba*. I. p. 188.
(3) *Fihrist*, p. 203.
(4) Yâqût, *Irshad*, I. p. 81.
(5) *Ibid*, II. p. 78.
(6) *T. Atibba*, II. p. 105.

(syntaxis) of Ptolemy, and sell them for a price which provided him with a living all the year round.[1]

Abu Sa'îd as-Seyrafi (d. 368), who was appointed a Qâdi in some suburbs of Baghdad, lived on this profession. Before attending to his duties, which he discharged honorarily, he used to copy 20 pages for which he received a remuneration of 10 dirhems (four rupees) daily.[2] A famous litterateur of Fez, Ahmad b. 'Abdu'llâh al-Hutai'ah depended on copying for his daily bread.[3] Al-Kirmâri (d. 329 A.H.), a grammarian and lexicographer, wrote for money.[4] Ibn Abkhar, the Qâdi of Alexandria (d. 568), used to copy books and was paid for it.[5]

Those who were unemployed and could not betake themselves to any career, sought their daily bread by adopting the profession of a copyist. There were many learned men who in the days of their adversity fell back upon this helpful profession. Yâqût has furnished us with the instance of a scholar Ahmad b. Sulaiman Al-Qati'i who, on account of adverse circumstances, was near starvation. His wife and children also shared the same fate with him. At last his wife cried out for the starvation of her young ones. She advised her husband to sell his books, but the true lover of books did not like to part with them. He at last succeeded in saving himself and his family by applying himself to the profession of copying books and selling them in the market.[6]

Another man, a learned traditionist, who was one of the teachers of At-Tirmizî and Nasaî, earned his living by copying books. Safadi gives a curious anecdote about him. Once he was reduced to chill penury and worked hard at his profession. One night while he was writing with a fast hand, suddenly he lost his eyesight through cataract. He was totally blind and could not see even the light of the lamp before him. On this sudden calamity he began to shed tears of remorse and in the same state he fell asleep. He dreamt and beheld the Prophet in a vision. The Prophet inquired the cause of his weeping.

(1) *Ibid*, p. 90.
(2) Yâqût, *Irshad*, III, pp. 84, 105.
(3) Ibn Khall, I, p. 54.
(4) Suyûti, *Bughya*, p. 47.
(5) *Ibid*, p. 297.
(6) Yâqût, I. pp. 38-39.

He complained of the loss of his eyesight and his deprivation from writing the Prophet's sayings. The Prophet then put his hand on his eyes and chanted something over them. When he awoke he found to his astonishment his eyesight restored. He sat again at his work and began copying.[1] Ar-Raffa as-Sirri (d. 360), the celebrated poet of Baghdâd, who wrote encomia on Saifu'd-Daulah and other princes of the Hamdânid dynasty, in his impecuniosity, used to compose his poems and sell them out in the market. But when he incurred many debts, he began to work as a copyist.[2] An eminent literary man and lexicographer, Abu Nasr Sulaimân b. Qatramish (d. 620), after his father's death squandered away money on gambling, and in utter destitution started on the career of a copyist.[3] In the 9th century A.H. to what extent the art of copying had fallen into decay can be gauged from the verses of As-Shantarini, referred to above, who tried hard to secure any humble situation but could not get one, and at last entered the service of the Governor of a province as a scribe. His services being dispensed with, he earned his living by copying MSS.[4]

In this connection it is noteworthy that there were persons among these copyists who wrote abundantly and with a fast hand which excites our wonderment. The Hanbalite traditionist and jurist, Ahmad b. 'Abdu'd-Dâ'im al-Maqdisî (d. 668) wrote so rapidly that he transcribed 9 kurrasa (36 pages) in his leisure hours. It is said of him that he copied the text of the well-known work on Jurisprudence, *Al-Quduri*, in one night, which may seem highly improbable. He was engaged in his profession for 50 years. During this period he copied two thousand volumes, to which he alludes in a poem quoted by As-Safadî.[5] He also copied twice the History of Damascus, which is a voluminous work.

It is said of Yahyâ b. 'Adî, a philosopher at Baghdâd, that he was a prolific copyist. Once a friend expressed wonder at his writing so much, to which he replied: You may be astonished at my sitting for a long time and reading so many books, but you should be aware that I have

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(1) *Naktu'l-Umiyan*, p. 312.

(2) *Ansab*, fol. 255.

(3) Suyuti, *Bughya*, p. 46.

(4) Ibn Khall, I, p. 264.

(5) *Naktu'l-Umiyan*, p. 99 and *Fawatu'l-Wafayat*, I, p. 46.

written with my own hand two copies of Tabarî's commentary on the Qur'ân, a stupendous work of enormous size, and submitted them to the princes in the neighbourhood. And the works of the scholastic philosophers which I have copied are countless. By God, I can write more than 100 pages in a day and a night.[1]

Shâkir al-Kutbî informs us that a traditionist and poet of the 6th century, Ibn Ikhwatu'l-A'ttâr (d. 548), wrote a large number of books—difficult to enumerate. Ibn u'n Najirami saw a copy of *Al-Tanbih* by Abu Ishâq Shirâzi written by him, at the end of which he says that it was written in one day. He transcribed one thousand MSS.[2] Ibn al-Qûtî (d. 644), a historian and a philosopher, was a calligraphist and an expert copyist. He used to write 4 *kurrasa* (16 pages) daily, while lying on his back. He wrote a large work named *Majma'ul-Adab fi Mujma'il-Asma 'ala Mu'jami'l-Alqab*, comprising 50 volumes.[3]

As scribes were employed in almost all the private and public libraries, so this profession attracted a large number of persons. They were well remunerated. In the grand library of the Banu Ammâr at Tripoli, 180 scribes were employed for copying MSS., and of them 30 persons were constantly at work in the library.[4] There were several scribes in the library of the famous historian Abu'l-Fidâ, the ruler of Hamât in Syria. In the middle of the seventh century, there were numerous scribes in the library of Ibn al-Ghazzâl, the Wazîr. Once he wanted to get copied Ibn 'Asâkir's history of Damascus comprising 80 closely written MS. volumes; and that being a colossal work it was distributed to ten scribes, 8 volumes to each. They set to copying the work and were able to finish it in two years.[5] In the same way, scribes were employed in the libraries of Cairo.[6] and Shîrâz.[7] The same was the case in the library of the Caliph Al-'Azîz in Egypt[8] and in Spain in Al-Hakam's library.[9]

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(1) Qifti, *Tarikhu'l-Hukama*, p. 369, Lippert ed.
(2) Safadi, *Fawat*, I, p. 268.
(3) *Fawat*, I, p. 272.
(4) History of Ibn al-Furât, MS. fol. 36.
(5) *T. Atibba*, II, pp. 234-236.
(6) Maqrizî, *Khitat*, I, p. 458.
(7) Yâqût, *Irshad*, V, p. 447.
(8) Maqrizi, I, p. 409.
(9) Ibn Khaldûn, vol. IV, p. 146.

Ibn Khallikân, in his notice of Al-Farrâ the grammarian, describes the incident of getting his two works, Kitabu'l-Ma'âni and Kitabu'l-Hudûd, transcribed at the instance of Caliph al-Mâ'mûn, which gives us an idea of the great number of the scribes. When Al-Mâ'mûn, says the author, ordered Al-Farrâ to compose a book on the principles of Grammar he employed scribes and dictated to them for two years when the book was completed. Next time, when Al-Farrâ called the copyists to his presence to dictate to them his book on Rhetoric so large a number of scribes rushed to the spot as rendered their counting difficult. Only judges among them were counted, 80 in number.[1] The same author has stated in his notice of the Wazîr Ibn Killis that in his house sat different batches of scribes employed for particular branches. One batch copied the Qur'ân only, another transcribed books on Hadîth, jurisprudence, literature and medicine. A large number of them was simply retained for putting in diacritical points.[2]

The art of calligraphy was a bye-product of the art of copying, which was carried to perfection. It produced artists like Ibn al-Bawwâb, Ibn Muqlah, Yâqut al-Musta'simî and a host of others. There were learned divines, men of letters and artists among them, like Ibn Jauzi, Al-Jauharî, the author of the Arabic dictionary *As-Sihah*, the celebrated musician 'Abd-al-Mu'min Isfahâni, etc. On account of their beautiful penmanship their works were appreciated and sold at fancy prices. The well-known calligraphist Yâqût al-Musta'simî (d. 618), who bore the title of "Abu'd-Durar" (father of pearls) on account of his beautiful writings, was a master-hand of great reputation. It is stated by Ibn Khallikân that his MSS. have spread throughout the whole Islamic world. He had a special attachment to Al-Jauharî's dictionary of which he prepared several editions and sold them at 100 dînârs (£ 50) each.[3] Al-Juwainî, known as "the pride of copyists" (*Fakhrul-Kuttab*), (d. 586), was a famous calligraphist of Baghdâd. His MSS. fetched handsome prices. According to Ibn Khallikân, he was an unequalled master of his time in Egypt.[4]

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(1) Ibn Khallikân, II, p. 228.
(2) Ibn Khallikân, II, p. 334.
(3) Ibn Khall, II, p. 207.
(4) *Ibid*, I, p. 144.

The writings of some of the calligraphists were so much appreciated and admired that, in spite of inaccuracies, their MSS. were greatly valued; of such was Ibn al-Qassâr of Baghdad (d. 576).[1]

The charges for copying depended on a beautiful hand and its accuracy and varied according to the quality of work, As-Seyrafî charging 1 dirhem (6d.) per folio (2 pages).[2] The Nestorian physician Bukhtishû' received one thousand dînârs (£500) for 200 folios (400 pages). When Al-Farrâ called the copyists for dictating his *Kitabu'l-Ma'ani*, they demanded 1 dirhem for 5 folios, but when he insisted on a lower rate, consented to write 10 pages for 1 dirhem.[3] This goes to prove that in the 3rd century 1 dirhem for 5 pages was taken to be excessive at Baghdad. Sometimes accurate and finely written MSS. were sold at high prices. The MSS. of Ibn Khurzad of Egypt, and a copy of the Dîwân of the Arabic poet Jarîr, written by himself, fetched 10 dînârs[4] (£5). The writings of Amîr al-Musabbihi (d. 395), being much appreciated, were remunerated at one pound for 50 folios.[5]

Stationery

Although stationery is also included in *waraqat*, we possess no information regarding it in the Arabic historical works. Of course we can gather certain details about the art of paper-making, but here we are not concerned with that. Paper was sold, as in our times, at the booksellers' shops. According to As-Sam'âni[6] a stationer was called *kaghadi*, and still the same term is used for a stationer in Gujarât and Kathiawar. We have no information about the different prices charged for different kinds of paper at that time. But it can easily be understood that, on account of the flourishing condition of the paper industry and the large consumption of paper, numerous shops for paper-selling must have been established, especially when we know that paper was manufactured in Islamic countries and paper-mills were erected in almost all the chief towns of the Muslim Empire. The art of manufacturing paper from rags was invented

(1) Ibn Khallikan, I, p. 344.
(2) Yâqût, *Irshad*, III, p. 84.
(3) Ibn Khall. II, p. 228.
(4) Ibn Khall. II, p. 228.
(5) *Ibid* I, p. 516
(6) *Ansab*, fol. 472.

during the 'Abbâsid period.[1] Some scholars think the word *kaghid* to be of Chinese origin, and it was Chinese prisoners of war, brought to Samarqand after the battle of Atlakh near Talas, who first introduced, in 134 A.H. (751 A.D.), the industry of paper-making from linen, flax or hemp or rags after the method of the Chinese.[2]

At the end of the 3rd century, the only paper-mill was established in Trans-Oxiana,[3] and afterwards there flourished paper-mills at Damascus,[4] at Tripoli (Syria) and in Palestine.[5] Notwithstanding this, Samarqand was the only centre of paper-manufacture to which people used to send for paper for their libraries. The well-known prose-writer and epistolographer Al-Khwârazmî jestingly excuses a friend for not writing on the ground that he lives a long distance from Samarqand and so finds paper too dear.[6] This shows how dear paper was at places far from the centre where paper was manufactured. Ibnu'n-Nadîm has given the names of different kinds of paper then in vogue.[7]

Bookbinding.

It will not be out of place here to speak briefly of the art of bookbinding. How refined was the taste of Muslims in regard to this art, can be imagined from the precious leather-bound books referred to in Arabic chronicles.[8] Ibnu'n-Nadîm tells us that originally the bindings were very crude. Books were bound in leather, dressed in lime, which, by reason of the defective process, remained much too stiff and hard. At a later date, in Kûfa, a more effective way of dressing leather was invented. This was done by means of dates, with the result that the leather became softer and limper. Later on, the art was much developed and much progress was made in ornamentation and illumination of leather-bound books. A European scholar, Sarre, has furnished a monograph on Islamic bookbinding which contains 36 coloured illustrations of Arabic and Persian bindings. These pictures look like the real thing and, taking them to be real, one touches

(1) *Fihrist* p. 32.
(2) *Encyclopedia of Islam* II, p. 626.
(3) Istakhrî p. 288.
(4) Maqdisî, p. 180.
(5) Nâsir Khusru, *Safar-Namah* p. 11. Bombay ed.
(6) Al-Khwârazmî, *Resail* p. 25.
(7) Arib, *As-Silah*, p. 90, Leiden.
(8) *Fihrist*, p. 14.

them with his fingers. All the illustrations have been taken from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin.

Art of Painting in gold and Illustrating.

Along with the arts of calligraphy and bookbinding, the art of painting in books also came into vogue. Gilding with gold and silver and binding of artistic designs was carried to perfection by the Muslim artists. There were some scholars who were expert in this art, like Abu 'Ubaidah, known as Tarsûni (d. 730), who, according to Siyûtî, was an expert bookbinder and painter in gold.[1] As-Sam'âni saw a MS. of the Qur'ân written by Abu Usâma, the ruler of the Syrian fortress Shaizar (5th century), in letters of gold on the Syrian mica, the like of which, he says, no human eye has ever seen.[2] Ibnu'n-Nadîm has given the names of some persons who were expert in gilding MSS. of the Qur'ân.[3]

As the portrayal of living beings was held to be forbidden in Islam, at first the labours of the Muslim artists were solely confined to painting flowery designs and lifeless things, but in course of time living beings were also painted. Yâqût makes mention of a MS. of Bal'ami's *Sowaru'l-aqalim*, containing pictures, which he presented to Az-Zâhir, the son of Salâhu'd-dîn and ruler of Hamâh.[4] Even at the present day, we find hundreds of illustrated MSS. in the libraries of Europe and the Near East.[5]

Book-trade.

Owing to the love of the Muslims for reading books, and their increasing popularity, the book-trade received a great impetus. Book-shops were established in every Muslim land. The manufacture of paper was a chief factor in the development of the book-trade. In the 3rd century A.H., there were 300 book-shops at Baghdâd.[6] Maqrizî writes of a book-market in his own time.[7] Al-Khatîb of Baghdâd, in the middle of the 4th century,

(1) *Bughya*, p. 51.
(2) *Ansab*, fol. 346 and Yaqut II, p. 190.
(3) *Fihrist*, p. 14.
(4) Yâqût, *Irshad.*
(5) For an account of such illustrated books see the *Discourses of the Arabian Academy, Damascus* vol. I, p. 185.
(6) *Ya'qubi*, cf. Von Kremer.
(7) Maqrizî, III, p. 165.

refers to the book-market of Baghdâd which was in a flourishing condition, all the shops being full of books.[1] These were in small shops in close proximity to each other and generally in the vicinity of a mosque. Books exposed for sale on trestles had a label on the back to facilitate the search for them.

Books were sold either privately or by auction. The auctioneer was called Munâdi (crier)[2]. Most of the book-sellers were men of learning and scholars like Abu Hâtim Sahl b. Muhammad As-Sijistânî, the lexicographer, Yâqût (d. 620) the geographer and others. The booksellers had their agents called *dallalu'l-kutub*[3] who used to supply them with books ; as, for instance, the poet Haziri, who owing to his profession was named Dallal-ul-Kutub.[4] Another dallâl or agent was Al-Wajih b. Surah in Egypt, who sat at the door of his house with books, and learned scholars used to come to him on Monday and Tuesday to purchase books from him.[5]

In this connection, it may be interesting to note that a blind scholar Zeynu'd-dîn al-'Amidi of the 8th century, was a book-dealer and knew the price of each book in his house. Whenever he bought any book, he made a coil of a paper, made figures according to the Abjad method, pasted it inside the book and putting a scrap of paper on it, he embossed it, so that the letters could be easily felt by hand. When he wanted to ascertain the price, he used to lay his hand on the embossed letters.[6]

Although, owing to the extensive use of paper and a flourishing book-trade, the prices of books had comparatively gone down, yet these do not appear to have been very cheap. In the 5th century a copy of Ibn Duraid's *Jumhara* was sold at 60 dînârs[7] (£30 or Rs. 425). The voluminous chronicles of At-Tabarî were bought for one hundred dînârs[8] (£50 or Rs. 700). The Omayyad Jarîr's diwan was purchased for 200 dînârs[9] (£100 or Rs. 1,400). *Kitabu'l-'Ain* of Khalîl b. Ahmad, which a bookseller

(1) *J.R.A.S.* (1912) p. 71.
(2) *Bughya*, p. 97.
(3) Ibn Khall, I, p. 63.
(4) *Ibid* i., p. 286.
(5) *Ibid* i., p. 63.
(6) Safadi, *Nakt*. pp. 207-208.
(7) Ibn Khall. I, p. 479.
(8) Maqrizî, I, p. 408.
(9) Ibn Khall, II, p. 522..

brought from Khorâsân to the market of Basra, was sold at 50 dînârs[1] (£25 or Rs. 350). An Arabic translation of the commentary of *Acroasis* of Alexander Aphrodosias was bought for 100 dinars[2] (£50 or Rs. 700). But, as the number of books and the scribes went on increasing, the price of books fell gradually. Syed Amir Ali,[3] Miss Olga Pinto,[4] an Italian lady orientalist, and Dr. F. Krenkow, the learned Arabist, have deduced from Yâqût's statements regarding the Ad-Damirîyah Library of Marv, whence he used to borrow books, that the average price of a book in the 'Abbâsid period was one dînâr. "My residence" says Yâqût "was never without 200 books, among them were books worth 200 dinars lent to me without any deposit."[5]

From this it is clear that Yâqût used to retain books, many of them worth 200 dînârs, not that the average price per book was one dînâr.

Sometimes, precious books were sold at low price, owing to the pecuniary circumstances of the seller. It is said of Avicenna that he had read Aristotle's work on metaphysics forty times and had learnt it by heart, and yet he was unable to comprehend it thoroughly. One evening he went to the book-seller's market, when a book-agent was putting a book up to auction. He requested Avicenna to buy it but he refused, thinking it a worthless book. 'It is dirt cheap', insisted the auctioneer 'and going to be sold at 3 dirhems (Re. 1-2-0) only, its owner being in urgent need of money.' At last the book was purchased and the buyer, to his utmost joy, found it to be the commentary of Al-Fârâbi on the metaphysics of Aristotle, which solved his difficulties. For possessing such a useful book, he gave alms to the poor in gratitude to God.[6]

Book-selling being a profitable business and books being sold at high prices, clever book-sellers would demand a high price for the works of a well-known author, sometimes even charging an exorbitant price for an ordinary book by selling it under the name of some renowned

(1) *Fihrist*, p. 42.
(2) I, pp. 69-70.
(3) *History of the Saracens*, p. 460 new ed.
(4) *Islamic Libraries*, translated by F. Krenkow, *Islamic Culture* vol. 3. No., 2. p. 215.
(5) *Mu'jamu'l-Buldan*-IV. pp. 509-510.
(6) *T. Atibba*, II, pp. 3-4.

author. Thus a book-seller once compiled a book of songs in the name of the celebrated musician Ishâq al-Mûsili, and sold it for a considerable sum.[1] Such tricks were often played in the book-markets. Counterfeit coins and forged documents were brought for sale in the market. Such frauds were not only common with the book-dealers; the customers also were not backward in such tricks. It is related of a grammarian 'Abdullâh b. Ahmad Al-Khashshâb, that, when selecting books from a lot on sale, he was accustomed to take advantage of the book-seller's inattention to tear the book, and then, alleging it to be incomplete, to purchase the incomplete portions at a nominal price.[2] The book-sellers of Baghdad Ibnu'l-Khazzâr, Abu Bakr al-Qantarî and Abu Huseyn al-Khurâsânî relate of As-Seyrafi, the Judge at Baghdâd, that, on account of his poverty, whenever he wanted to sell any book, he used to get it copied by his pupils and wrote at the end of each MS. that he has collated it with the text and made corrections therein, his object being to draw more money for a correct text.[3]

Book-shops as Literary Clubs.

On account of the special importance attached to the book-sellers' shops during that literary age, book-stalls were generally used as literary clubs, where scholars and savants used to assemble, and lively discussions were held on literary topics. The book-sellers were not only ordinary publishers. but men of talents and ability and most of them were famous authors. Book-shops were so much held in esteem that Al-Muhallibî, the Wazîr, advised his son not to sit in any bazar except a book-market.[4] Maqrizî has given verses of some poet who has expressed the same idea.[5]

The book-shops had become a rendezvous and place of recreation for the scholars. Yâqût informs us about the shop of a certain book-seller, Sa'd, a litterateur, poet and prose-writer.[6] It was the resort of scholars and men of letters. Yâqût has also told us of a blind grammarian Abu'l-Ghanîm Habashî b. Muhammad (d. 568), who,

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(1) *Fihrist*, p. 141.
(2) *Bughya*, p. 278.
(3) Yâqût, *Irshad*, II, p. 190.
(4) *Al-Fakhri*, p. 3, Cairo Ed.
(5) Maqrizî, III, pp. 125-126.
(6) Yâqût II, p. 23.

in spite of his blindness, constantly used to go at night into the book-market of Baghdâd and continued to do so for twenty years.[1] In the seventh century, a scholar Ibn al-Qune was accustomed to sit in the book-market of Damascus.[2] Ibn Jauzî (d. 597), writing about the book-market of Baghdad, remarks that it is a resort of savants, scholars and poets.[3] Writing about the book-market of Old Cairo, the vestiges of which were seen till 780 A.H. in his own time, and which was afterwards transferred to Cairo, Maqrizî says that it was a centre where learned men used to meet.[4]

To judge of the cultivation and development of the art of warâqat, one has only to imagine those public, private and royal libraries and the immense number of books scattered in mosques, madrasahs, khanqahs, serais, hospitals and royal palaces, throughout the length and breadth of the Islamic Empire. I think no people have ever written, copied and collected so many books as the Muslims did during their halcyon days. Alas, that precious treasure of Arabic learning has largely disappeared. It was partly destroyed in the devastating invasion of the Tartars. Some of it was sunk by them in the waters of the Tigris ; some was committed to the flames by the brutal ignorance of the Crusaders, and some was destroyed or lost in the internecine wars of the Muslim princes. Notwithstanding this, splendid proofs of the literary labours of the sons of Islam are to be found in the libraries of the East and the West.

(1) Yâqût III, p. 3, Safadi, *Nakt*, p. 134.
(2) *Bughyah*, p. 97.
(3) *Manaqib Baghdad*, p. 26.
(4) Maqrizî, III, p. 125.

QAZI AHMADMIAN AKHTAR.