CHAPTER 6

A Comparison of P.Utah.Ar. inv. 205 to the Canonical Hadith Collections: The Written Raw Material of Early Hadith Study

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P.Utah.Ar. inv. 205 is a set of instructions for a two- rakʿa prayer with the tashahhud according to Ibn Masʿūd. Analysis of the script indicates a second/eighth-century date of composition. I have treated the paleographic features of the text elsewhere, so this article focuses on the relation of the papyrus text to the canonical hadith collections.1 This article argues neither for nor against the notion that the canonical hadith collections accurately record the precise words that the Prophet Muhammad uttered. It does, however, try to offer a glimpse of what sunna looked like before the full maturation of ʿulūm al-ḥadīth.

P. Utah.Ar. inv. 205 second/eighth century
Provenance unknown
12 × 26 cm
(Figs. 6.1a and 6.1b)

Text

Recto

1 بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

2 من الصلاة حسن الوضوء هو منها فتحها يحلها التسليم و يحرمها التكبر

3 على كل مسلم إذا قام إلى الصلاة ان يقوم لله قاتنا و الفقنتو

4 الركوع والركوع والخضوع والخضوع من رابة الله ثم يكون أول

5 ما يقول حين يقوم وهو رافع يديه [ح]ذا من كتبه من غير تجاوزان اذنيه فيقول

6 الله هو أكبر سبحان الله وتبعك اسمك و تعالى جدك ولا اله غيرك وجهت وجهي للذي

7 فطر السموم والأرض حنيفا مسلما وما انا من المشركين ان صلواتي و نسكي

8 ممالي لله رب العالمين لا شريك له بذلك امرت وان اكون من المسلمين ثم يفتح

1 The translation below incorporates the suggestions of Prof. Khaled Younes.
In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

The good ablution is part of the prayer. It forms its opening, the salutation of peace makes it licit, and the exclamation of God's greatness makes it sacred.

It is incumbent on every Muslim when he comes to prayer that he come before God standing reverently. And the qunūt is the repetitious bowing and prostrating in awe of God. Then there is the first of what one says while standing and raising his hands up to his shoulders without passing his ears: “God is the Greatest!

Praise be to You, God, and blessed be Your names! Exalted is Your sovereignty! There is no god but You! I have turned my face, being a ḥanif and a Muslim, to Him who cleft