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El-Kor'Ân, or the Koran: Translated from the Arabic, the Suras Arranged in Chronological Order, With Notes and Index (Classic Reprint)

J. M. Rodwell

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One important point in which this Transhtion of the Koran tliifers from its predecessors is the arrangement of the Suras, of which it is therefore necessary that a brief explanation sliould be gien. The order of the Suras, as it stands in all A rabic mannscrijits, and in all hitherto printed editions whether A rabic or European, is not chronological, neither is there any authentic tradition to show that it rests upon the authority of Muhammad himself. The scattered fragments of the Koran were in the first instance collected by A bu Bekr, about a jear after the Proj)het sdeath, at the suggestion of Omar, who foresaw that as the Muslim warriors, whose memories were the sole dei)O sitaries of large portions of the revelations, died off or were slain, as had been the case with many in the battle of Yera una, A. H. 12, the loss of the greater part, or even of the whole, was imminent. Zaid I bn Thabit, a native of Medina, and one of the A nsars, or helpers, who had been Muhammad samanuensis, was the person fixed upon to carry out the task, and we are told that he gathered together the fragments of the Koran from every quarter, from date-leaves and tablets of white stone, and from the breasts of men. i The copy thus formed by Zaid proba Vjly remained in the possession of A bu Bekr duiing the remainder of his brief caliphate, who committed it to the custody of Hafsa, one of Muhammad swidows, and this text continued during the ten years of Omars caliphate to be the standard. In the copies made from it, various readings naturally and necessarily sprung up; and these, under the caliphate of Othman, led to such serious disputes between the faithful, that it became necessary to interpose, and in accordance wuth the warning of Hodzeifa, to stop the people, before they should differ regarding their scriptures as did the Jews and Christians. Tn accordance with this advice,
(Typographical errors above are due to OCR software and don't occur in the book.)

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