

but transcribed under his superintendence, and in part, and perhaps entirely, revised by him. This copy wants a portion from the commencement of the first main division of the lexicon; i. e., of باب الهمزة: it also wants some other, smaller, portions. I shall have to say more respecting it in the next paragraph.—5. A portion in the handwriting of the author, in my possession; from the commencement of باب الهمزة to the words لغة في رثى البيت, in article رثا: supplying more than the main portion that is wanting in the copy of Moḥammad Bey. It is of a small quarto-size, and ends in the middle of a page.—6. A copy in the library of the late Ibráheem Páshá, transcribed from that of Moḥammad Bey, and said to be incorrectly written.—7. A large folio-volume, in my possession, before mentioned, consisting of nearly the whole of the first tenth portion; evidently transcribed from the copy of Moḥammad Bey, for it wants what is deficient in باب الهمزة in the latter copy.

The copy transcribed for me, which is in twenty-four thick quarto-volumes, is partly from the portion, in the handwriting of the author, in the great mosque El-Azhar; but mainly from the copy of Moḥammad Bey; what is wanting in this last, in باب الهمزة, being copied from the MS. No. 5 in the foregoing list; and very nearly the whole of the other (smaller) portions that are wanting therein being supplied from the principal source, namely, the Lisán el-'Arab. It is therefore far superior to the other known copies, in respect of completeness, except the first and third of the copies mentioned in the next preceding paragraph if these exist and be still entire. But it will not always serve as a perfect test of the correctness of my own lexicon, although it has been carefully collated with its originals, as I made use of the copy of Moḥammad Bey as long as I remained in Egypt, and have used the Lisán el-'Arab and other lexicons for the supplying of syllabical signs &c. wanting in that copy and in my own. In my copy, diacritical points have often been omitted when not thought by the transcriber to be absolutely necessary; as is the case in almost all copies of lexicons: also syllabical signs that are in the originals are not unfrequently omitted: and my copy is more irregular than its originals in the manner of writing the letter hemzeh. The copy of Moḥammad Bey will probably, in a few years, be in many places illegible; for the ink with which it is written is of a corrosive nature, and has already, in those parts, eaten through the paper, though hitherto not to such an extent as to present any difficulty to the reader: or rather I should say that such was the case just before my own copy was made; for while I was translating from portions of it already transcribed for me, small pieces often dropped out from its leaves, in spite of my utmost care. I believe that if I had not undertaken the composition of the present work, the means of composing such a work would not much longer have existed. For not only was the sole copy of the Táj el-'Aroos that was nearly complete, and that was worthy of reliance, of those known to exist, rapidly decaying; but many of the most precious of the manuscripts from which it was compiled have been mutilated; many are scattered, no one knows whither; and several, of which no other copies are known to be in existence, and for which one would have to search from city to city, exploring the libraries of mosques, are said to have perished. The transcription of my own copy, and its collation, extended over a period of more than thirteen years. It might have been accomplished in much less time, had less care been bestowed upon it: but for several years I could find no competent and willing transcriber except the sheykh Ibráheem Ed-Dasookee, who was unable to devote the whole of his time to this object. Upon him the task of transcription mainly devolved; and the collation was performed wholly by him in conjunction with myself or with another sheykh.

As soon as a few pages of my copy of the Táj el-'Aroos had been transcribed, I commenced the work of translation and composition from its originals. I did not hesitate to write my lexicon in English rather than in Latin, because the latter language is not sufficiently perspicuous nor sufficiently copious. For several years I continued to collect all that I required for a lexicon as complete as it was possible for me to make it. But I then considered that about one third of what I had compiled consisted of the explanations of words rarely occurring; many of them, words that no one student was likely ever to meet with; and not a few, such as are termed مفاريد or أفراد or آحاد (before explained, in page xi. of this preface); these last being words known only as having been *spoken*, each by a single Arab, or as only once occurring in any *writing*. I considered also that the undertaking which I had thus long been prosecuting was one which would require many more years for its completion; and that it was incumbent on me to take into account the uncertain duration of my appointed term