

THE ARABIST  
BUDAPEST STUDIES IN ARABIC 23

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# Essays In Honour of Alexander Fodor On His Sixtieth Birthday

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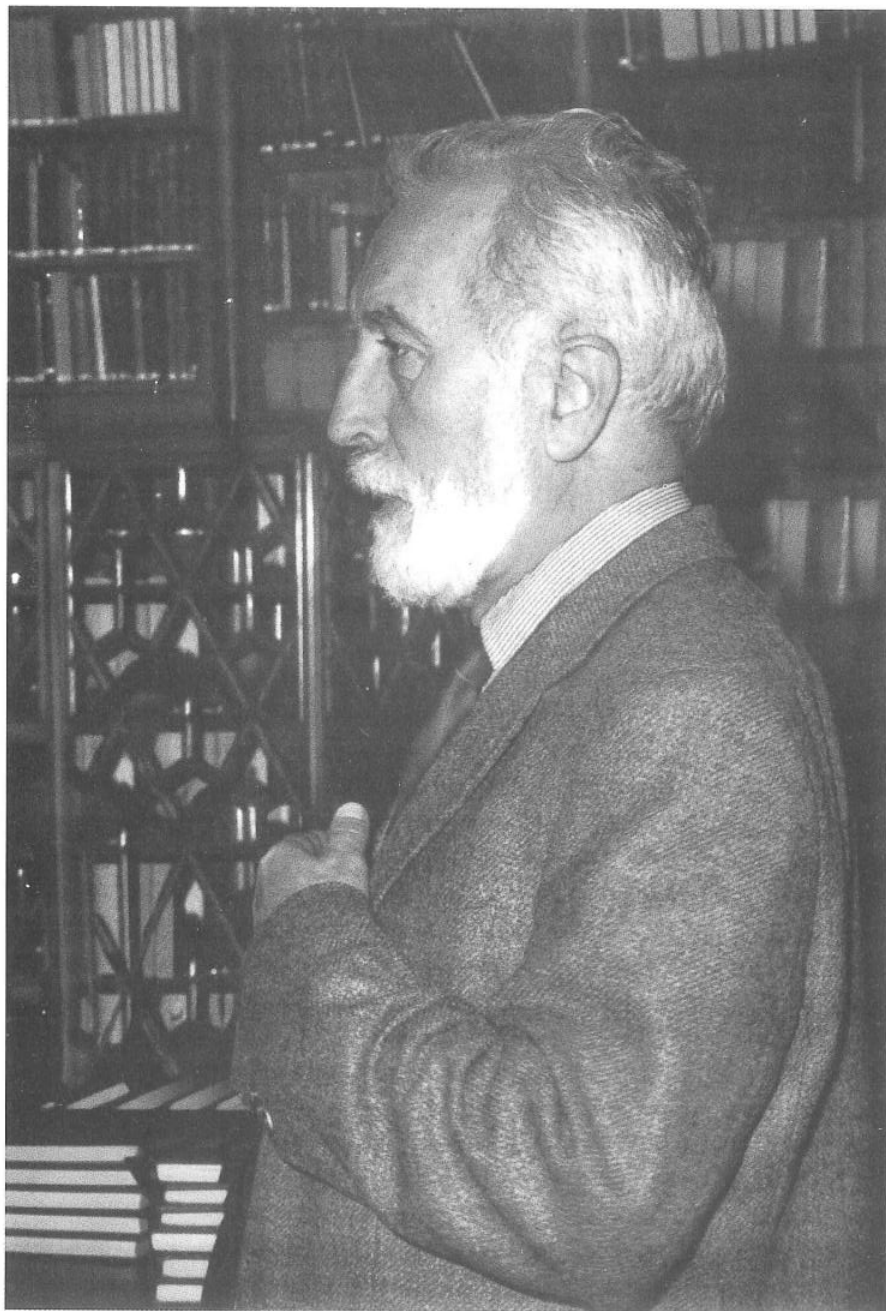
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**KÉSZÜLT**  
**AZ EÖTVÖS LORÁND TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM**  
**BÖLCSESZETTUDOMÁNYI KAR TÁMOGATÁSÁVAL**

*Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula sagas,  
Nocturnos lemures portentaque Thessala rides?  
Natales grate numeras?*

Horatii Epistularum liber secundus 2.208-210.





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## PREFACE

This volume is intended as a present for Professor Sándor [Alexander] Fodor\* on his 60th birthday, the 6th November 2001. Since a gift should always be nicely wrapped, this volume will be handed over to the person to be fêted during a one day colloquium organised on his birthday for the presentation of the papers of this volume.

Since possibilities of *The Arabist* offered only limited space for this *Festschrift*, contributions were sought only from Alexander's closest (Hungarian and foreign) friends and academic colleagues, and – what seemed very important for the editors – from the representatives of the youngest generation of Hungarian Arabists who, by their contributions, pay tribute to the person who initiated them into the mysteries of Arabic studies.

Being the member (now professor) of a small department means that Alexander has lectured throughout his career on nearly all the subjects of the curriculum, that is why no subject limitation was imposed upon the contributors. It is our hope that all the articles would be of interest to him, albeit his favourites will most certainly be those which are closer to his scholarly interest, *i.e.* those with a touch of magic. Owing to the diversity of topics that resulted from the lack of constraint, any thematic grouping of the articles seemed too artificial, so authors follow in alphabetical order.

The editors owe special thanks to Professor Károly Manherz, Dean of the Eötvös Loránd University, without whose support the volume would never have seen the light of day. We are indebted to István Ormos and Zoltán Szombathy who helped in many ways.

*The Editors*

\* A piece of information for the non-initiated: Sándor has always used the Latin (English, German, etc.) equivalent of his name, *i.e.* Alexander, when publishing in foreign languages.





## A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

It was nearly thirty years ago that I had the first chance to meet Sándor. At that time, in May, the Eötvös Loránd University organized a Conference to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the foundation of its Arabic Department. Sándor was waiting for me at Ferihegy airport. For me it was a major occasion to attend that Conference for several reasons. First of all, because that was my first visit to my own country after eighteen years of absence. During those years, living in exile since the Revolution of 1956, I was unable to get a permit and visa to return even for a short visit. That at that time I was able to come home was mainly due to the efforts of members of the Arabic Department, among them a major share by Sándor. He was then a young lecturer at the Department, whose head at that time was my own former teacher, Professor Czeglédy. However, we were supposed to meet a few years earlier, namely during the summer of 1968, when he received a grant to visit my own college, SOAS in London. The proposed visit, however, coincided with the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the unfortunate and tragic participation of Hungary in that event. One of the negative consequences of that invasion was that Sándor's grant and visa were withdrawn. So our meeting had to wait for another six years. Since our first meeting we became not only good friends, but colleagues working together on many projects.

Soon after I was appointed as Hungarian Ambassador to Kuwait, I was able to arrange an invitation for Sándor, by then Professor at the University of Budapest, to deliver a lecture on one of his favourite topics, namely on Talismans and magical bowls. It was at that time that he discovered that the Tareq Rajab Museum has a vast collection of such objects. These he is now preparing for publication. That this work is still not in print is not his fault. There is a simple reason for that: Whenever he returns to Kuwait he finds many new acquisitions, among them a few so rare and interesting objects that he simply cannot leave them out. However, that is a well-known problem to many of us working on different collections. One of our most recent joint projects is the Islamic Art exhibition which will take place in the Helikon Castle Museum in Keszthely, Hungary.

The Arabic Department of Eötvös Loránd University, (or our beloved ELTE), the Head of which is now Professor Fodor, boasts a long list of distinguished scholars as its former professors. Among them it is sufficient to mention Ignaz Goldziher, or Julius Germanus, who was much admired by scholars of the Arab world and who was one of the outstanding experts in modern Arabic literature, and Károly

Czeglédy, whose special field was the study of Arabic sources on the early history of the Hungarians. Thus, Professor Fodor is the successor of outstanding and well-respected scholars and I feel proud that I can work together with him and can call myself his friend.

Géza Fehérvári

Professor Emeritus in Islamic Art and Archæology  
at the University of London,  
formerly Curator of the Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait

\* \* \*

My first contact with Professor Fodor was at a lecture he was giving here in Kuwait a few years ago. The subject was "Magic and Magic Symbols". I made a comment at that lecture telling him that Islam is very much against magic and the practice of it. Then after the lecture I looked at our Museum's collections and to my amazement I found that we hold a sizeable number of manuscripts and objects made in different mediums that were used for magical, medicinal or purely *ṣūfī* applications. From that date Professor Fodor is still engaged in the research of this large collection, investigating its historical background and deciphering its many symbols. I have never met such a dedicated scholar and I am very proud to be associated with him. The work he is doing whether in Hungary, Kuwait or indeed in other Arab countries is of great importance and the service he is giving to Arab and Islamic studies is of great significance. Hungary should be proud to continue giving the world such dedicated scholars as Professor Sándor Fodor.

Tareq Sayid Rajab

Director of the Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait

## تحية

طلبت مني هيئة الاحتفال بالذكرى الستينية لصديقي شاندور الإدلاء بكلمة تحية وهي مهمة عسيرة لأنني أعرفه منذ ما يزيد على أربعة عقود من الزمن. وبدأت معاصرتي له في مرحلة الزمالة في مهمة العروبة ولغة الضاد. وخلال هذه المرحلة فقد كرس حياته لمصلحتها وبذل كل الجهود في خدمتها والتعريف بها. وكان لا يقل في توجيه أسئلته في معنى كلمة غامضة أو مستعصية وكان لا يتوقف عند تكرير سؤاله حتى يصل إلى القناعة التامة أو يصل إلى الحقيقة. وكان لا يقل في ذلك وهو يذكرني بأستاذي المرحوم لايوش فيكيتي (Prof. Lajos Fekete) عالم الوثائق التركية القديمة والذي كان يسأل خلال مدة طويلة نفس السؤال ولا يخجل من سؤال طلاب اللغة العربية. وتمر الشهور ويعود من جديد الطرس. لقد عرفت شاندور يجل ويحترم أساتذته مثل الأستاذ عبد الكريم جوليوس غرمانوس (Prof. Julius Germanus) والأستاذ كاروي تسيغلدي (Prof. K. Czeglédy) وغيرهما ممن أخذ عنهم العلم.

لقد رغبتني في أمور وأنا عربي منذ بداية معرفتنا وذلك عندما بدأ دراسته للتقاليد الشعبية وافترض أنني أعرف كل شيء عن علم الميثولوجيا وكان يسأل عن ظاهرة أو طقوس شعبية ومدى علاقتها بمصر القديمة. وكنت في الأحيان لا أستطيع الإجابة عن حقيقة ما يسأل. وقد وثق علاقته مع الأستاذ الدكتور لاسلو كاكوشي (Prof. László Kákosi) العالم المعروف والذي جعله يهتم بالتراث الشعبي الحديث للعرب. ولم تكن علاقته مع طلابه علاقة الأستاذ والطلاب بل افترض فيها الزمالة في بحثه عن المعرفة. وكان لا يتطلب من الطالب إلا ما يعرف وليس ما لا يعرف. ويحب من الطلاب السؤال ولا يتعالى في الإجابة. لقد جعلني أحاول معرفة أشياء كثيرة حتى أستطيع التمتع بالمجادلة معه فمثلا جعلني أهتم بالتتار وذلك عند دراسته لشواهد قبور أموات التتار وعلاقتها باللغة العربية ويحاول الربط بينها وبين طقوس الموتى عند العرب.

إن هذه المهمة هي صعبة لأنها عجالة في التعريف بجهوده العلمية التي لا يمكن حصرها. وجميع من يعرفه يعرف فيه الإنسان المخلص في خدمة قضية العروبة وتحدي أجيال متعددة من الدارسين للعربية. بل أنه حاول تعريف المجتمع المجري بالحضارة الإسلامية والتراث العربي.

عبد المنعم مختار

أستاذ متقاعد

قسم اللغة العربية

جامعة أوتفوش لوراند ببداست



## A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

Born on 6th November 1941 in Budapest, Alexander Fodor commenced his studies at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest (majoring in Arabic and studying History as his second subject) in September 1960. Since his graduation in June 1965, he has been working at the Department of Semitic Philology and Arabic Studies of the University. Having been advanced to the position of Reader in 1981, he was subsequently, during the course of the year 1984, appointed Head of the Department of Arabic, which position he has held ever since. He acquired a full professorship in 1996, and has held the post of Director of the Oriental Institute at the University since 1999. Having already served the Faculty of Arts thrice as Vice-Dean in charge of the international relations (between 1990 and 2000), then in 2000 the Faculty of Arts of the University proceeded to elect him to the post of Dean. He was vice-president of the Hungarian Society of Orientalists from 1988 to 1994, in addition to having been, since 1984, head of the Islamic Studies Section thereof. He is involved in popularizing scholarly achievements on Islam through the written and broadcast media on a regular basis.

After having spent a whole year in Egypt on a scholarship grant in 1966, he has repeatedly visited that country, where he was elected member of the *Mağma' al-Luġa al-'Arabiyya*. During the 1970's, he participated in two grand canoeing expeditions that took him along the Nile and the Tigris respectively, journeys during which he could gather a remarkable amount of useful scholarly observations on local folklore. Other Arabic countries in which he frequently conducted scholarly research include Morocco, Iraq, Syria and Tunisia. For several years he has been returning to Kuwait every autumn to lecture there and do a thorough investigation of the amulet collection of the Tareq Rajab Museum. He spent a lengthy period of research in 1994 at the London based Warburg Institute.

A regular participant of international conferences with his presentations, he has contributed since 1974 to almost all the congresses of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, in the committee of which he became a member in 1986. The first conference that he took part in organizing was the 14th Congress of the UEAI, held in Budapest in 1988 under his chairmanship. On this occasion he founded *The Arabist (Budapest Studies in Arabic)*, of which he is the series editor ever since. In 1993 and 1995, he organized conferences on popular beliefs in the religions of the Middle East and North Africa. He was vice-chairman of the 35th ICANAS and chairman of the Arabic Studies Section thereof in 1997, then chief organizer and

chairman of the 20th Congress of the UEAI in 2000, both of which took place in Budapest.

In the centre of his scholarly work lies the study of popular Islam, and, generally, popular religion in the Middle East, a focus of which he has analysed, in his numerous publications, various facets of a religio-historical, ethnological, linguistic, literary or historical relevance, with a special emphasis on Egypt and Mesopotamia. The subject of his dissertation, titled *Arabic Legends on the Pyramids* (in Hungarian), was, as the title shows, mediaeval Arabic accounts on the Pyramids, which earned him the degree of Candidate (PhD) at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1980. It is an uncommonly complex historical study of religion and culture, the gist of which is probably best summarized by its subtitle, "Syncretism in Islam". As the study demonstrates, syncretism as a religious phenomenon never ceased, even after the disappearance of pagan cults, to be an important element in the Middle Eastern cultural scene, receiving as it did its inspirations both from the civilizations of Antiquity and the new world-power that Islam came to be. A pivotal point in the dissertation is the impact upon Muslim thought of Hermetism.

His main scholarly endeavour in the field of studying popular religion has always been to demonstrate the identical features of Muslim, Christian and Jewish popular religions in the Middle East; to show the survival and continuity of ancient ideas and practices in the Islamic world; and to give an idea about the birth, growth and degeneration of amulets as far as the material, the craftsmanship and the complexity of the contents are concerned.

Alexander Fodor has not only come to be an expert of international reputation on Islamic talismans and amulets, and especially talismanic charts and amulet scrolls, but also the owner of one of the bulkiest collections of such material. When the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants held its 14th Congress in Budapest in 1988 on the central theme "Popular Culture in Islam", this occasion gave him the opportunity to organize an exhibition of a collection of amulets, magical books and manuscripts, fear cups, censers and rosaries which he had collected in the Middle East and North Africa during the previous two decades. Part of the material had already been exhibited in Milan in 1985 on the occasion of an international congress about the subject of "La Magia in Egitto ai Tempi dei Faraoni". His book under the title *Amulets from the Islamic World* presents best the collection.

*Tamás Iványi*

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## THE PROPHET NOAH IN ISLAMIC TRADITION

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1.1. The entire 71<sup>st</sup> sūra of the Qur'ān is dedicated to Noah. His prophetic mission had the purpose of warning his people of their imminent punishment: "We sent Noah to his people, saying, 'Warn thy people, ere there come on them a painful chastisement'" (Qur. 71:1). But despite the divine 'signs', his people obstinately refused to repent and continued to adore their deities Wadd, Suwā<sup>c</sup>, Yağūt, Ya<sup>c</sup>ūq, and Nasr (Qur. 71:23). Other verses of the Qur'ān mention Noah and his patience and faith<sup>1</sup>. Notwithstanding the allusive style which characterizes the narrative parts of the Qur'ān, the story of the Ark is given much development in the sūra of Hūd (Qur. 11:25-49). In this sūra, the punishments inflicted by God on Noah's people are described, as well as those on Abraham's and Moses' peoples, and on the 'Ād and the Tamūd. It was a clear warning for the heathen Mekkans who persisted in their harsh opposition to Prophet Muḥammad and to the Revelation<sup>2</sup>. The narration can be divided into six parts: I. Noah's invitation to his people to convert themselves, and their subsequent refusal (25-35); II. the construction of the Ark, and the boiling oven as the sign of the beginning of the Flood (36-40); III. the call to all believers and to each animal couple to embark onto the various floors of the Ark (40-41); IV. the drowning of Noah's unbelieving son (42-43, 45-46); V. the rescinding of the waters and the grounding of the Ark on Mount al-Ġūdī (44); VI. Noah's prayer for mercy and salvation (47-49).

1.2. The *ḥadīṭ* contains few references to Noah: he is the first Messenger (*rasūl*); he warns his people against the oncoming Dağğāl; the Prophet Muḥammad and his community will be witnesses on his behalf<sup>3</sup>. Noah's testament to his son Shem contains two orders – to profess the unity of God (*tawḥīd*) and to exalt His glory (*tasbīḥ*) – and two prohibitions – idolatry (*ṣīrk*) and presumption (*kibr*)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See Qur. 7:59-64; 10:71-73; 23: 23-30 (Noah is considered a madman, possessed by the *ḡinn*); 26:105-122 (he is threatened with stoning); 37:75-82 (he will be praised by all in perpetuity).

<sup>2</sup> Muḥammad's objective in mentioning the 'stories of the ancients' (*aqāṣīṣ al-mutaqaddimīn*) was to frighten his listeners with the threat of divine punishment. At the same time, God reminded Muḥammad of the 'stories of the prophets' (*qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*) in order to make him patiently tolerate the harassment of his enemies. See al-Qurṭubī, *Ġāmi'* VIII, 362; IX, 22.

<sup>3</sup> See al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* II, 452-453 nos. 3337-3340 [*Anbiyā'* 3]. Exegetes explain that Noah was the first messenger because the *risāla* revealed to Adam was only reserved to his sons (*Ṣaḥīḥ* II, 453 note 3).

<sup>4</sup> See Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* II, 226 no. 6580 [II, 169].

aṭ-Ṭabarī relates two traditions handed down respectively by ʿĀʾiṣā and by Ibn ʿAbbās, which succinctly tell the entire story of Noah. The prophet lived for 950 years, and never ceased to invite his people to embrace the true faith. He planted a tree, waited for it to grow, and then cut it to build the ship. Passers-by ridiculed him, “You are building a ship on dry ground, how will it float?” When he finished it, the oven boiled and the water poured out. A mother and child climbed up a mountain, ever higher and higher. Before being submerged, she held the child up to save it. “If God had shown pity on someone – said the Prophet Muḥammad – he would at least have shown it on the poor mother”<sup>5</sup>. Many details about the Ark and what happened aboard were known thanks to a miracle of Jesus. According to Ibn ʿAbbās, the Apostles asked ʿĪsā b. Maryam for an account of the Ark. Jesus brought them to a hill, he took a handful of earth, he touched it with his rod, and revived Kaʿb b. Ḥām b. Nūḥ (Noah’s grandchild), who described the Ark to them, its dimensions, its three floors, problems deriving from the proximity of the animals, the creation of the pig and the cat, and the sending of the raven and then the dove to bring proof of the Flood’s end. Then Jesus returned him to dust<sup>6</sup>.

1.3. The first exegesis does not seem to dedicate much space to the story of Noah. Muqātil (d. 767), for example, limits himself to explaining word for word the meaning of each Qurʾānic expression<sup>7</sup>. But already in the ninth and tenth centuries many details had enriched the legend, which by now has acquired a distinct place within the commentaries of the Qurʾān and in the works of historians such as Ibn Saʿd, al-Azraqī, Yaʿqūbī, ad-Dīnawarī, aṭ-Ṭabarī, al-Masʿūdī, al-Ḥamdānī. It finds a natural home in the Stories of the Prophets<sup>8</sup>, the most significant examples of which are the *Qisṣat al-anbiyāʾ* of al-Kisāʾī and aṭ-Ṭaʿlabī. The legend of Noah is part of the narrative group whose main characters are biblical patriarchs (*isrāʾīliyyāt*), and is mostly transmitted on the authority of Yemeni Jews converted to Islam such as Wahb b. Munabbih and Kaʿb al-Aḥbār<sup>9</sup>. Later authors particularly interested in ancient legends, like al-Qurtubī and as-Suyūṭī, historians like Sibṭ Ibn al-Ġawzī, or scholars with zoological interests like ad-Damīrī, quote and elaborate upon the details previously related by their predecessors. The different interpretations of certain terms (e.g. *tannūr*) or the discrepancies between versions (e.g. the inhabitants of the Ark’s floors)

<sup>5</sup> See aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmiʿ* XII, 35; *Taʾrīḥ* I, 180.

<sup>6</sup> See aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmiʿ* XII, 35-36; *Taʾrīḥ* I, 181.

<sup>7</sup> See Muqātil, *Tafsīr* II, 278-285.

<sup>8</sup> For Noah’s story, see al-Kisāʾī, *Qisṣat* I, 85-100; aṭ-Ṭaʿlabī, *Arāʾis* 54-61; aṭ-Ṭarafī, *Qisṣat* 59-71. For a general overview of the *Qisṣat al-anbiyāʾ* literature, see Tottoli 1999a.

<sup>9</sup> See Goldziher 1902, and the recent essays by McAuliffe (1998) and Tottoli (1999b), with further bibliographical references.

are conscientiously listed, often without any personal considerations. But certain episodes seem to be received with incredulity. For instance, why should Satan, made of fire or air, have feared the Flood so much that he took refuge in the Ark? – wondered ar-Rāzī<sup>10</sup>. In Islamic tradition the story of Noah takes the dimensions of an etiological tale, with the construction of the Ark, the first guard dog, the origin of certain animals, the dove's familiarity with mankind and the raven's fear of it, the use of *kuhl*, the prohibition of wine, the origin of human races, tribes, and peoples. (See section 2)

1.4. Muslim authors recognize numerous common traits with the biblical narration of the legend of Noah, often making reference to the Torah or to the affirmations of the People of the Book. This is clearly shown by the works of Ibn Qutayba and at-Ṭabarī. Similar information about the Ark, the Flood, or the rainbow which sealed God's reconciliation with mankind is also found<sup>11</sup>. Goldziher had already asserted that "les éléments agadiques et rabbiniques apparaissent avec beaucoup plus de fidélité que les éléments bibliques" (1902:63). Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews* represents the most extensive collection of haggadic legends, and the chapter dedicated to Noah makes numerous interesting parallels. Without diminishing the importance of comparative studies such as those of Grünbaum (1893), Sidersky (1933)<sup>12</sup> or of Speyer (1938), it can be said that the remarks of Heller nonetheless remain valid: "La légende biblique dans l'Islam a vécu sa propre vie, a suivi ses lois intrinsèques; elle est dominée par une tendance: elle tend à glorifier l'Islam, son fondateur historique, ses précurseurs légendaires comme Abraham, Hagar, Ismaël, à présenter les prophètes de l'antiquité comme préfigurant Mahomet, à sanctifier la Mecque, la Ka'ba et le puits de Zemzem" (1934b:17). In Islamic tradition it is not textual quotations<sup>13</sup>, but more-over the elaboration of myths and legends circulating in oral form in Arabia and more generally in the Near East since ancient times that have had prominence. Semitic, Hellenistic, Gnostic, Hermetic, and other elements figure alongside genuinely Arab themes and motifs. The tale of the Flood is of such universal diffusion that Utley studied more than 400 versions from different cultures and from various parts of the world<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> See ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* XVII, 236. Utley (1961) dedicated a specific essay to the Devil in Noah's Ark, which represents the narrative type Aarne-Thompson 825.

<sup>11</sup> Gn 6:15; 7:12; 9:13. Islamic legend spares us the image of the Lord who "smells the pleasant fragrance" that rises from the holocaust of animals sacrificed at Noah's altar in thanks to God after having saved them from the Flood (Gn 8:20-21).

<sup>12</sup> But see the remarks of Heller 1934b:8 ff.

<sup>13</sup> A clear example of this is Ibn al-Ġawzī's 'quotation' from Genesis about the story of Noah, on the authority of Ka'b al-Aḥbār (cf. Sibṭ Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Mir'āt* I, 239).

<sup>14</sup> See Utley 1960 and 1961; cf. Schwarzbaum 1982:158.

2.1 *Noah's name and appearance.* He was the son of Lamak (Lamk, Lāmak) b. Mat-tūšalah b. Aḥnūh (Enoch/Idrīs) and Qaynūš bint Rākīl. His name was ʿAbdalḡaffār, Yaškūr, Šākīr or Sakan<sup>15</sup>. According to as-Suddī, he was called Nūḥ because he saw a dog with four eyes and found it disgusting. The dog asked him, "Is it my image (*naqš*) that you find imperfect or its Creator (*naqqāš*)?" Each time Noah thought of this he moaned (*yanūḥ*) and wept for his sin of pride. For this reason he was called Nūḥ<sup>16</sup>. He had a narrow face and a long head, big eyes, strong arms, thin forearms, slender legs, weighty thighs, a large belly button, a flowing beard, and he was of high stature. He was also a man of intelligence and knowledge, a good orator with a pleasant voice. Physically he resembled Adam<sup>17</sup>. Noah was a shepherd of his people's flocks; others say he was a carpenter.

2.2 *His mission.* When he reached the age of 480, the angel Gabriel informed him of the prophetic mission (*risāla*) given to him by God (Qur. 11:25 ff.). For 120 years he spoke the word of the Lord among his people. Gabriel dressed him like the fighters of the Faith (*muḡāhidūn*), wearing the turban of victory and the sword of steadfastness to fight against idolatry and depravation. He had to battle against the tyrant Darmašīl<sup>18</sup>, who had introduced the cult of 1700 idols, in addition to the five adored by the people of Idrīs mentioned in the Qurʾān, for whom he had built marble temples. Priests were in their service, lighting fires and bowing down in worship; people played and danced beside these idols, drinking wine and committing adultery<sup>19</sup>. During the reign of his successor, Tūbīn, people wanted to stone Noah, but a flock of birds miraculously protected him<sup>20</sup>. Noah's dwelling was in ʿAyn Warda, Syria, or in the place of the mosque of Kūfa<sup>21</sup>.

2.3 *The Ark.* According to the different versions, the Ark either took two, four, or even forty years to build, and its construction was carried out in the plane of Damascus with wood from Mount Lebanon<sup>22</sup>. Teak was used, sawed with carpentry tools found in Adam's coffin<sup>23</sup>. Noah cut 124,000 boards, each one bearing the name

<sup>15</sup> See at-Taʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis* 54; al-Kisāʾī, *Qīṣaṣ* I, 85-86; as-Samarqandī, *Baḥr* II, 150.

<sup>16</sup> See Ibn Iyās *Badāʾir* 65. On the meaning of the name Nūḥ for Jews and Muslims, see Goldziher 1870 and Ginzberg 1968: V, 6.

<sup>17</sup> See Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif* 21; al-Kisāʾī, *Qīṣaṣ* I, 86.

<sup>18</sup> at-Ṭabarī relates that Noah's people obeyed King Bēwarāsb, who was the first to divulge the views of the Sabaeans (*Taʾrīḥ* I, 179).

<sup>19</sup> See al-Kisāʾī, *Qīṣaṣ* I, 86-87; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾir* 65.

<sup>20</sup> See Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾir* 66.

<sup>21</sup> See Muqātil, *Tafsīr* II, 282; al-Kisāʾī, *Qīṣaṣ* I, 93.

<sup>22</sup> Others say Mount Nawḍ (Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* I, 41) or al-Ḥīra (Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾir* 68).

<sup>23</sup> See al-Kisāʾī, *Qīṣaṣ* I, 92.

of a prophet. Four were nonetheless missing to complete the Ark that the giant ʿUḡ then carried from the Valley of the Nile<sup>24</sup>. God made a spring of bitumen (*qār*) that Noah spread on the walls of the Ark to make it resistant to water<sup>25</sup>. To defend the Ark from those who wanted to burn it at night, Noah put out a dog to take guard<sup>26</sup>. Noah did not know what form to give the ship so the Lord revealed to him to make it with a bow "like the breast (*ḡu'ḡu'*) of a bird". Exegetes ended up describing its body as a mixture of various parts of different birds (peacock, dove, cockerel, falcon, eagle) – a ship even with wings<sup>27</sup>. Opinions vary as to its dimensions: from 80 cubits long, 50 wide, 30 high, according to the People of the Torah, to more bigger figures such as 1200, 600, and 300 cubits<sup>28</sup>. A pearl from Paradise lit its interior<sup>29</sup>. There were three floors: one for wild and domesticated animals, one for men and women, and one for birds<sup>30</sup>. al-Kisā'ī maintains that there were seven doors<sup>31</sup>.

2.4 *The inhabitants of the Ark*. Before the Flood, God made women sterile for forty years. Abū Ḡaʿfar al-Bāqir tells that, in the time of Noah, women menstruated once a year, but God, in order to limit their lust, gave them a monthly cycle<sup>32</sup>. Only Noah, his sons and the few believers who embraced his appeal embarked on the Ark. There were eighty people<sup>33</sup>. The sign of the Flood's beginning was the

<sup>24</sup> See ad-Diyārbakrī, *Ta'riḥ* I, 69.

<sup>25</sup> See as-Suyūṭī, *Durr* III, 593.

<sup>26</sup> See ad-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt* II, 390; cf. Basset 1926:24.

<sup>27</sup> See al-Kisā'ī, *Qīṣaṣ* I, 92; al-Qurṭubī, *Ġāmi'* IX, 31; as-Suyūṭī, *Durr* III, 593.

<sup>28</sup> According to Ham's son, revived by Jesus, the Ark was 1200 cubits long and 600 wide.

<sup>29</sup> Others say there were two pearls, one which took the place of the sun, and the other of the moon (as-Suyūṭī, *Durr* III, 598; al-Maḡlisī, *Bihār* XI, 333).

<sup>30</sup> See al-Qurṭubī, *Ġāmi'* IX, 32. In other versions the first floor was occupied by wild beasts, the second by domesticated animals, the third by men and women; or, respectively, by animals, food and drink, and men. Noah took up the small ant to his floor, for fear that other animals would crush it (as-Suyūṭī, *Durr* III, 593). al-Hamdānī speaks of three 'houses' (*abyāt*), instead of three floors (*tabaqāt*) (al-*Ikhlīl* I, 58-59). ar-Rāzī is not surprised by the difference between these traditions, given that "it is information that does not necessitate a precise knowledge" (*Mafātīḥ* XVII, 232).

<sup>31</sup> According to al-Kisā'ī (*Qīṣaṣ* I, 94), Noah let men, the intact body of Adam and his rod through the first door; women and the body of Eve through the second; wild and domesticated animals through the third; birds and insects through the fourth; ferocious predators through the fifth; snakes and scorpions through the sixth; and elephants and lions through the seventh. Noah stood at the bow.

<sup>32</sup> See al-Maḡlisī, *Bihār* XI, 326.

<sup>33</sup> Exegetes disagree as to the number of the Ark's inhabitants: seven people (Noah, his three sons and their wives); eight people (with Noah's wife in addition); seventy-eight people (including the seventy believers); eighty people (among whom a Ḡurhum). The different versions are quoted by at-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ* I, 187-188, and ad-Diyārbakrī, *Ta'riḥ* I, 70. According to Ibn Qutayba, Noah, his three sons and their wives, and forty men and forty women *min al-muslimīn* were aboard (*Māʾārif* 23).



pouring out of boiling water from an oven. It was the same oven, made in stone, in which Eve cooked bread. Exegetes do not agree on the location and meaning of *tannūr*<sup>34</sup>. To avoid any intercourse, Noah divided men from women touching the first with his right hand and the second with his left<sup>35</sup>. The coffin with Adam's body was placed in the middle to separate the two sexes. According to some sources, Ham contravened the order and as punishment his semen was altered by God causing his sons to be born black<sup>36</sup>. The giant ʿŪḡ was saved "as attested by the People of the Book", at-Ṭabarī prudently remarks<sup>37</sup>. The son of Noah who did not want to embark on the Ark and perished with the others in the water (Qur. 11:42-43) would have been Kanʿān/Yām<sup>38</sup>. Some Muslim authors have questioned themselves as to the reason why animals and even innocent children were victims of the Flood. The only answer was that "their time had come"<sup>39</sup>.

2.5. *The animals*<sup>40</sup>. In the Ark, the fact that animals had to live together caused some problems. How were the lion and the cow to be reconciled? The Lord pacified all the animals and sent down a fever to weaken the lion<sup>41</sup>. The first animal to enter was the small ant (*ḍarra*), and the last was the donkey. But even Satan succeeded in entering, by holding onto the donkey's tail<sup>42</sup>. Noah only accepted the snake and the scorpion after obtaining the promise from them that they would not hurt the other

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<sup>34</sup> as-Suyūṭī summarizes the different opinions (*Durr* III, 595-596): the *tannūr* was the oven of stone which first belonged to Eve; it means the surface of the earth; the high ground; the coming of dawn. The spring of ʿAyn al-Wardā, India, the mosque of Kūfa, Jerusalem, Mecca and Madina are mentioned among the various locations of the *tannūr*. ar-Rāzī favours the literal interpretation of 'oven', the site where the water first gushed out (*Mafātīḥ* XVII, 234).

<sup>35</sup> See al-Baḡawī, *Maʿālim* III, 232.

<sup>36</sup> See at-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīḥ* I, 188; ad-Diyārbakrī, *Taʾrīḥ* I, 70.

<sup>37</sup> See at-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmiʿ* XII, 37. On this giant, see Pauliny 1973.

<sup>38</sup> ar-Rāzī maintains that Noah's community was composed of believers destined for Paradise, unbelievers destined for Hell, and hypocrites, like this particular son of Noah, whose last judgement was concealed (*mahfiʿ*) (*Mafātīḥ* XVIII, 6). But even a prophet can have an unbelieving son, observed some exegetes (al-Ḥāzin, *Lubāb* III, 235). On the drowned son of Noah, see Newby 1986:19-24.

<sup>39</sup> See at-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmiʿ* XII, 49; al-Muṭahhar points out that "God took the souls of the animals and of the children before they drowned" (*Badʿ* III, 17).

<sup>40</sup> ad-Damīrī's *Ḥayāt* amply describes the story of the Flood and traditions related to the various animals (s.vv. *asad*, *ḥayya*, *ḥanzīr*, *sinnūr*, *ʿaqrab*, *faʿr*, *fīl*, *kalb*, *hīrr*).

<sup>41</sup> See Ibn al-Aṭīr, *Kāmil* I, 71.

<sup>42</sup> See at-Ṭaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis* 57.



animals<sup>43</sup>. In the version related by al-Kisā'ī (*Qisāṣ* I, 94), the angel Gabriel broke the venomous tooth of the snake and the scorpion's sting before they entered the Ark. Only animals of birth and animals hatched from eggs were allowed to enter, not creatures originating from mud<sup>44</sup>. Aboard, the dog broke the rule banning intercourse and was cursed by Noah. As we will see further on, the elephant, the pig, the mouse, and the cat were all involved in solving various "logistical" problems in the Ark<sup>45</sup>, whereas the task of bringing proof of the Flood's end was given to the raven and then to the dove<sup>46</sup>. Noah also took plants into the Ark. According to some versions, the first to be planted after the Flood was the palm or the myrtle<sup>47</sup>. When he wanted to plant the vine he could not find it. The angel Gabriel informed him that Satan had stolen it. Noah had to bargain with him promising him two thirds of the grapes. Beside the plant, Satan sacrificed some animals<sup>48</sup>. The drink obtained from the grapes affected Noah, making him drunk<sup>49</sup>.

2.6. *The end of the Flood and Noah's death.* The Flood lasted forty days and forty nights. After travelling the world for six months, the Ark circumnavigated the Sacred Territory of Mecca, without entering. God had lifted up the Inhabited House which he had sent down in the time of Adam. Angel Gabriel had carried the Black Stone up to Mount Abū Qubays<sup>50</sup>. The Ark continued towards the Yemen, then it returned and ended its journey on Mount al-Ġūdī - in al-Ġazīra, near Mosul - on the

<sup>43</sup> Whosoever mentions this pact pronouncing the Qur'ānic verses "Peace be upon Noah among all beings! Even so We recompense the good-doers; he was among Our believing servants" (Qur. 37:79-81) will be protected from the venom. See ad-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt* II, 57-58. A spell of the Prophet Muḥammad says that "If a snake comes into the house tell it 'I ask you [to respect] the pact with Noah and with Solomon son of David not to hurt us! If it returns, kill it'. On these traditions, see Canova 1991:205.

<sup>44</sup> "like chinchies, mosquitoes, and flies", see al-Baġawī, *Ma'ālim* III, 233.

<sup>45</sup> See Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 70; cf. Basset 1926: I, 26-28.

<sup>46</sup> According to as-Suyūṭī, the dove went to the Land of Sheba and then to Mecca (*Durr* III, 598). as-Samarqandī also includes the kite in the story (*Baḥr* II, 157).

<sup>47</sup> See al-Maġlisī, *Biḥār* XI, 293; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 78. According to as-Suyūṭī, the first tree ever to be planted was the teak, in order to build the Ark (*Durr* III, 594).

<sup>48</sup> Satan slaughtered the peacock on its roots, such that they would absorb the blood; when the vine sprouted its leaves, he slaughtered a monkey; when it bore fruit, a lion; and when the grapes were mature, a pig. People who get drunk behave like these animals: they strut like peacocks, dance like monkeys, quarrel like lions, and doze off like pigs. See Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 78. According to ad-Damīrī (*Ḥayāt* I, 12) there are seven slaughtered animals: the lion, the bear, the panther, the jackal, the dog, the wolf, the cockerel; cf. I, 651, where the story refers to Adam (the same in Ibṣīhī, *Mustatraf* II, 252-253).

<sup>49</sup> al-Kisā'ī comments about this that "Iblīs was the first to press grapes, and to build drums, oboes and musical instruments (*ālāt at-tarab*)" (see Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 78).

<sup>50</sup> See al-Azraqī, *Aḥbār* I, 50-51; aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ* I, 185; ad-Diyārbakrī, *Ta'riḥ* I, 72.

tenth of Muḥarram (‘*āšūrā*’)<sup>51</sup>. Noah fasted as a sign of thanks to God and ordered men and animals to do likewise. On leaving the Ark, Noah founded the first village, which was called *Tamānīn* (‘Eighty’) based on the number of the Ark’s inhabitants<sup>52</sup>. Then he fasted for the whole month of Ramaḍān<sup>53</sup>. He buried the body of Adam in Jerusalem<sup>54</sup>. The last part of his existence was spent living as a hermit in a tent, neglecting his person and only wearing animal hides<sup>55</sup>. The Angel of Death presented Noah with a cup of nectar from Paradise. He found him beneath the burning sun and informed him that he had arrived to take his soul. Noah asked to move to the shade, given that passing to the after-life was like passing from the sun to the cool shade<sup>56</sup>. Noah saw life as “a house with two doors, one to enter, and one to go out”<sup>57</sup>. Gabriel invited him to transmit the Supreme Name of God, science and prophecies to Shem, in order to save them before the coming of a new prophet<sup>58</sup>. Noah died aged 950 and was buried near Karak<sup>59</sup>. Others say at the age of 1,450<sup>60</sup>. He is called *abū bašār* (the father of humanity) and *Ādam al-ašgar* (Adam the younger)<sup>61</sup>. According to some Muslim authors, his language was Syriac<sup>62</sup>. He was the

<sup>51</sup> See al-Bakrī, *Muḡam* I, 403; Yāqūt, *Muḡam* II, 179-180. Some say that al-Ġūdī is one of the mountains in Paradise (as-Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 598). God ennobled three mountains for three people: Mount al-Ġūdī for Noah; Mount Sinai for Moses; and Mount Ḥirā’ for Muḥammad (al-Qurṭubī, *Ġāmī* IX, 42). Stones from Mount al-Ġūdī (and from Mount Lubnān, Ṭūr Zītā, Ṭūr Sīnā, and Ḥirā’) have been used to build the Ka’ba (al-Azraqī, *Aḥbār* I, 37).

<sup>52</sup> See al-Bakrī, *Muḡam* I, 344-345; Yāqūt, *Muḡam* II, 84.

<sup>53</sup> See Ibn Qutayba, *Ma’ārif* 24.

<sup>54</sup> See Ibn Sa’d, *Ṭabaqāt* I, 42.

<sup>55</sup> According to al-Maḡlisī, however, he was the first to wear woollen clothes, possibly considering him as the first Ṣūfī (*Bihār* XI, 341).

<sup>56</sup> See al-Kāšānī, *Tafsīr* II, 454; al-Maḡlisī, *Bihār* XI, 286.

<sup>57</sup> See al-Ṭa’labī, *Arā’is* 60.

<sup>58</sup> See al-Maḡlisī, *Bihār* XI, 288-289.

<sup>59</sup> According to other versions, he is buried at Sūq al-*Tamānīn*, on Mount Būd in India, at Mecca beside the prophets Hūd, Šālīḥ and Šu’ayb, or at Babel (Sibt Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Mir’āt* I, 244). Even today Noah’s *mawlid* is celebrated at Karak, near his mausoleum, on the sixth day of Rabī’ I (see Kriss and Kriss-Heinrich, 1960: I, 239 and Abb. 127, with a picture of his huge grave).

<sup>60</sup> See al-Ibšīhī, *Mustatraf* II, 75. al-Ṭabarī maintains that all these calculations are more the work of Jews, rather than Muslims, who only calculate time from the *hiġra* onwards – except for the Year of the Elephant or the *ayyām al-‘arab* (*Ta’rīḥ* I, 193).

<sup>61</sup> See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* XVIII, 7-8.

<sup>62</sup> *surṣānī*. See Hūd, *Tafsīr* II, 225; ad-Dīnawarī, *Aḥbār* 2; ad-Diyārbakrī, *Ta’rīḥ* I, 73. About the multiplicity of languages after the Flood, see Goldziher 1994:44-46.

first of the *mu'ammārūn*<sup>63</sup>, more long-lived than Mattušalah (Methusalem). The various peoples found their origin in the dispersion of Noah's three sons on the earth. Ibn Sa'd explains the differences between the various races by the colour of their skin: Shem was reddish-white, Ham black with a bit of white, and Japheth reddish-brown (*Tabaqāt* I, 41).

3.1. Indians and Magians maintain that their territory was not subject to the Flood, which they limit to the land of Babel<sup>64</sup>. Egypt, however, was not only submerged – it regarded the Flood, as predicted by astrologers, as the very reason for the construction of the Pyramids and their temples. The story of Noah was incorporated into the medieval Arab literature of *Mirabilia* (*ʿağāʾib*). The version that follows is taken from a work of this kind, *Badāʾiʿ az-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ ad-duhūr*, a cosmology attributed either to Ibn Iyās (author of the homonymous history of Mamlūk Egypt, d. c. 1528) or to as-Suyūṭī (d. 1505)<sup>65</sup>. It also displays many similarities with *Aḥbār az-zamān* attributed to al-Masʿūdī and Ibn Waṣīf Šāh<sup>66</sup>. The main difference of these works in respect to the Stories of the Prophets is that Egypt takes a primary role: in the specific case of the story of Noah, the Pyramids and the temples of Upper Egypt, built by Hermes (identified with Enoch/Idrīs)<sup>67</sup>, are saved from the Flood.

3.2. According to an Egyptian tradition, Farʿān wrote to Darmašīl, king of Babel, asking him to get rid of Noah who was threatening the cult of the idols. The head of his priests, Iflīmūn (Philemon, Polemon), carried the letter. He had had a vision in which the city of Amsūs was destroyed and the idols toppled. In a second vision a white bird had invited him to join the believers. Iflīmūn left with his family, but did not carry out his mission to Darmašīl: instead, he remained with Noah until the Flood arrived, and embarked on the Ark thus saving himself<sup>68</sup>. He handed down the knowledge contained in the sacred Egyptian books. The first post-diluvian town in Egypt was called *Talāt* īn (as opposed to *Tamānīn* in the east). But how was the

<sup>63</sup> See as-Siğistānī, *Muʿammārīn* 2 and LXXXIX.

<sup>64</sup> See Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil* I, 73. al-Muṭahhar objects to all those who place doubts on the reality of the Flood, that it is stated by the word of God. Aristotle and Plato maintain that several floods of one or two days occurred, but certain philosophers do not recognize its universality (*Badʾ* III, 18-19).

<sup>65</sup> *GAL* II, 202<sup>288</sup>, 380<sup>2</sup>; *GAL* SI, 616<sup>13</sup> (al-Bakrī), II, 196-197<sup>288</sup>. The book is also known as *Marğ az-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ ad-duhūr* (*GAL* II, 380<sup>1</sup>; *SI* 405<sup>1</sup>).

<sup>66</sup> Or as-Suyūṭī. Cf. *GAL* I, 145; *GAL* SI, 22; Carra de Vaux 1898: Introduction 31-33.

<sup>67</sup> al-Masʿūdī relates that, according to the Sabeans, "Aḥnūh – the prophet Idrīs – is no other than Hermes" (*Murūğ* I, 50).

Hermes" (*Murūğ* I, 50).

disapproval expressed in the Qur'ān for the Pharaoh<sup>69</sup>, or Noah's curse on his son Ham, the forefather of the people of the Nile, to be overcome? Ibn Iyās presents the Egyptian version of the facts. Having grown old, Noah climbed up a mountain and called his sons. Shem came and was blessed. Ham did not respond to the call and his offspring was condemned to serve Shem. Nonetheless, Ham's son, Miṣrāym, heard Noah and went to him. Noah placed his hands on Miṣrāym and said, "Oh God, he has responded to my call. Bless him and his offspring, and give him a home in the blessed land, mother of all countries and haven of men, whose Nile is the greatest of all rivers". Thus, Miṣrāym set up home in the land that took his name (Miṣr, Egypt)<sup>70</sup>.

3.3 As Haarmann writes, "All efforts on the part of Egyptian writers to balance this bleak image of Egypt's pagan past within the *Heilsgeschichte* of Islam were bound to have only limited effects" (1979:56). On the basis of research by A. Fodor, it would seem that the particular development in Egypt of stories like those of Noah and of Hermes was not owed so much to an Egyptian *šū'ūbiyya*, aimed at reaffirming the country's role in the history of civilization, as to an attachment, in the land of the Nile, to Hermetic ideas of Mesopotamian origin<sup>71</sup>. To these are to be added local traditions of Coptic origin. Thus, the Pyramids would have been built not only for the eternal glory of the Pharaoh, but to preserve, together with the temples, the heritage of ancient sciences and techniques contained in the papyri and pictured on walls and columns<sup>72</sup>.

#### THE STORY OF NOAH, PEACE BE UPON HIM<sup>73</sup>

Then God revealed to him, "Make thou the Ark" (Qur. 11:37). Noah asked, "Oh Lord, what is the Ark?" He replied, "It is a wooden house that flows on the surface of the water". God ordered him to plant a sapling of teak – some say of ebony – in the land of Kūfa. He planted it and he remained there for forty years until the tree was mature. God ordered the sky not to let rain fall and the earth not to let plants sprout. For the whole period not a

<sup>69</sup> E.g. Qur. 3:10-11, "...those – they shall be fuel for the Fire like Pharaoh's folk, and the people before them, who cried lies to Our signs; God seized them because of their sins; God is terrible in retribution".

<sup>70</sup> See Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 79.

<sup>71</sup> Fodor 1970. Also see Cook 1959, Haarmann 1979 and his edition of Idrīsī's *Anwār*.

<sup>72</sup> A. Fodor writes, "The basis for the Arabic pyramid legend thus was supplied by the combination of two motifs: that of the hiding of knowledge with the Jewish Flood-story. This resulted in a new Flood-story in which the part of the Biblical Ark was played by the ancient Egyptian monuments, especially by the pyramids, and the place of Noah, the Ark-builder, was taken by Hermes, the builder of the pyramids" (1970:342).

<sup>73</sup> Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī* 67-78.

drop of rain did fall, and neither did a blade of grass grow, neither did women or any female animals domesticated or wild give birth, and neither did birds have offspring. It was a sign for the people of the punishment that was about to be inflicted upon them. God ordered Noah to go to Kūfa carrying the teak. Noah was confused as to how to transport it. God let it be known that it would be ʿŪḡ b. ʿAnaq who would carry the wood.

al-Kisāʾī tells that ʿŪḡ's mother ʿAnaq was one of Adam's daughters, and had repugnant looks and an ungraciating figure. She was a skilled sorceress; she died a hundred years after the birth of ʿŪḡ. He grew to enormous proportions: he was 600 old cubits high – one and a half times the current cubit – and equally wide. When the floods came, the water went no higher than his neck. When he was sitting on the top of a mountain, he could reach out his hand to the sea and catch fish, which he roasted against the heat of the sun. If he was angry with the inhabitants of a village, he urinated on them until they drowned. (...) It is said that he lived for 4,500 years, until the time of Moses<sup>74</sup>.

According to al-Kisāʾī, God revealed to Noah that ʿŪḡ would carry the wood from Kūfa to Ḥīra, a village near Baghdad. Noah went to ʿŪḡ and asked it of him. ʿŪḡ told him he would only be prepared to do it if he satiated his hunger with bread. Noah had three loaves of barley bread and gave him one of them. ʿŪḡ laughed, "Not even a mountain of this bread would contain my hunger! How could you think that one loaf would be enough?" Noah broke it in half and said, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Eat!" He ate the bread. Noah offered a second loaf, but only a half was needed, such that he could eat no more. In one go ʿŪḡ carried all the wood from Kūfa to Ḥīra.

When the wood was with Noah, he said, "Oh Lord, how can I build this ship?" God the Highest sent Gabriel to teach him how to do it. Noah cut up some planks, he put them together each with the other and he nailed them with iron nails. He made the head (*raʾs*) of the Ark like the head of a peacock, the tail (*ḍanb*) like the tail of a cockerel, the beak (*minqār*) like the beak of a falcon, the wings (*aḡniḥa*) like the wings of an eagle, and the face (*waḡh*) like the face of a dove. He made three floors – some say seven.

Ibn ʿAbbās says that the length of the Ark was 1,000 cubits, the width 600 and the height 300. It is told that Noah took forty years to build it. People derided him: "Oh Noah, you have left your mission as a prophet to be a carpenter?" al-Kisāʾī tells that fire was applied to the wood of the ship, but it had no effect. This was said to be fruit of Noah's magic. When the ship was by now almost complete, Noah spread pitch and bitumen on it. Then God had him put four nails into its sides, upon which he had engraved an eye<sup>75</sup>. Noah said, "Oh Lord, what is the purpose of this?" God revealed to him that these were the names of Muḥammad's companions: Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUtmān, and ʿAlī – God be satisfied with them<sup>76</sup>. The ship was not complete without them. Noah carried out what had been ordered and finished the ship. God the Highest gave it voice and the Ark spoke clear-

<sup>74</sup> When Moses entered the desert with the Banū Isrāʾīl, ʿŪḡ lifted up a mountain, wanting to throw it against them. But God sent a hoopoe with an iron beak which pecked at the rock until it opened a crack. The rock fell on top of ʿŪḡ paralyzing him. So Moses hit him with his rod and killed him. In the land of the Tartars there is a bridge that is said to be one of his ribs (Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* 67).

<sup>75</sup> An eye for the ship 'to see' where it was navigating, or for protecting it from misfortune and shipwreck (a common tradition in Egypt); another possible interpretation is as a letter ʿayn.

<sup>76</sup> The 'rightly guided' caliphs. Also see ad-Diyābakrī, *Taʾrīḥ* I, 69.

ly as the people listened: "There is no god but God, God of the first and the last. I am the Ark which will bring to safety all who board me, while those who stay away will perish!" "Now do you believe it?" asked Noah. But they replied that it was an act of his magic. God's anger grew against those who disobeyed Him; He ordered Noah to carry food for six months into the Ark and to build a tank of drinking water. Then He made a pearl come down from Paradise, whose light was like that of the sun. Thus Noah could recognize the times [of prayer] of both day and night and the passing of the hours. He asked his Lord permission to carry out the pilgrimage and God conceded it to him. When he reached Mecca, its inhabitants wanted to burn the Ark. God ordered his angels to lift it up between the sky and the ground. This they did as the people were watching. Noah made seven ritual circumambulations around the Ka'ba, then he prayed for his people and God received his prayer. When he returned from Mecca, He made the Ark descend to the ground. Then God the Highest ordered him to climb up the mountain and to call out with all his voice, "Oh beasts, birds, reptiles and everything that has the breath of life! Make hast towards the entrance of the Ark, for the punishment is close!" The call reached the East and the West and beasts, birds, domesticated animals and reptiles came in groups. Noah said, "I have been ordered to take a couple [from every species of animal] with me." Then God commanded him to carry all plants and the bodies of Adam and Eve. He placed them in a coffin (*tābūt*). Furthermore He ordered him to carry the Black Stone and Adam's rod descended from Paradise, together with the coffin, the leaves (*ṣubḥuf*)<sup>77</sup> and the food. The total number of people who entered with him into the Ark was forty men and forty women. They were housed on the first floor. On the second floor Noah placed the wild and domesticated animals and the livestock [and on the third the birds]. It is told that the last of the animals to enter was the donkey. Iblīs 'the cursed' held on to the tail and stopped it from proceeding. Noah thought that the donkey had stopped out of stubbornness, and told it, "Come in you cursed thing!" In this way the donkey entered together with Satan. When Noah saw him, he asked him who had allowed him to enter. He replied, "You did it, didn't you say 'come in you cursed thing'? There is no cursed creature if not me!" It is told that Noah, when he boarded the Ark, prohibited men and animals to have intercourse for fear of them multiplying, spbeing limited. They all obeyed, apart from the dog, who copulated with his bitch. The cat informed Noah of what the dog had done, but the latter denied it repeatedly. Noah cursed them all for the reproachable act. From that day hostility was born between dogs and cats, just like their shameful behaviour during copulation. The following verse has been said of them: "The cat said words of great meaning, / 'I neither want to see the dog nor him to see me'". When the animals' excrement in the Ark became unbearable, they would complain to Noah. God inspired him to squash the elephant's tail. Noah did this and a couple of pigs appeared, which started to eat the excrement. From the sneeze of the pig God created a couple of mice, which multiplied and started to chew at the walls of the Ark. The inhabitants of the Ark complained about this and God instigated the cats against the mice. These started to eat them devouring them from first to last. From that day was born the hostility between cats and mice.

<sup>77</sup> Adam received twenty-one leaves, Seth twenty-nine, and Idrīs thirty (see al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūğ* I, 50).



Ibn Waṣīf Ṣāh said that amongst the kings of Egypt there was no reacher than King Sūrīd<sup>78</sup>. He had a vision, 300 years before the Flood. The sky had turned upside down towards the earth, as if to open a large pit. The stars seemed to fall, the sun and the moon seemed to approach the world. He saw white birds kidnap people and throw them between two mountains. He saw the earth become obscured by the darkness, and his people gathered together, asking him for help. The king awoke from his sleep full of terror. When morning came he called all his priests; there were a hundred of them and they gave no judgements without consulting the stars and their ascendants. He withdrew with the priests and recounted all that he had seen. They said that his vision had descended from the sky and that the whole world and all that was to be found upon the face of the earth would perish. The king asked them to calculate the position of the stars. When they had been observed, they said, "We have discovered the moon within the constellation of Cancer, near to Pisces. The cataclysm will come due to a flood, a mass of water from the sky". The king asked them, "Observe if the calamity is to afflict our land". They said yes, the land [of Egypt] would be in ruins for many years. The king then asked, "Observe if it will return as prosperous as before". They replied that it would return even better. So King Sūrīd ordered the construction of the Pyramids. Their foundations and heights were of equal dimensions. The king said, "We will make them as coffins and tombs for our bodies". Many riches were carried there, together with precious stones, arms, marvellous statues and extraordinary vases of every metal. Talismans were written upon them, as well as the knowledge of the stars which described all that would be until the end of time, including those who would reign over the land, both believers (*muslimūn*) and heathens. The priests announced that the Flood would not last for long on the earth, for forty days. The king built the Pyramids imprisoning the air according to wise dispositions, and amassing the mentioned riches. He said, "If we are saved from the Flood we will return to our reign finding all our riches; if we perish, these Pyramids will be tombs for our bodies, refuges that will preserve them from decay". Each of his ministers, sages, and dignitaries built a pyramid for himself to preserve his body from the Flood (...)<sup>79</sup>.

God revealed to Noah: "Oh Noah, when the oven boils in the house of your son Shem, board the Ark!" Shem was his eldest son and was then 300 years old. He was married to a woman called Raḥma. Noah went to his son's house and said, "Oh Raḥma, the beginning of the Flood will take place in this oven in which you make your bread. When you see the oven boil, immediately come to me and tell me!" The oven was of black stone. On Friday the tenth of Raḡab, Raḥma was cooking at the oven; when she came to the last loaf, then did the water boil, as the verse says, "Until, when Our command came, and the Oven boiled" (Qur. 11:39). As soon as Raḥma realized, she shouted, "God is the greatest! The punishment promised by the Lord has arrived! Noah, the prophet of God, said the truth." She ran to Noah and informed him that the oven was boiling. He exclaimed, "There is no power and no strength save in God the Highest and the Omnipotent!"<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> For Sūrīd's legend, see al-Maṣūḍī, *Aḥbār* 134 ff.; Carra de Vaux 1898:179 ff.; Fodor 1970:347-349.

<sup>79</sup> Extensive quotations follow from al-Maṣūḍī, Ṣihāb al-Ḥiğāzī and Abū r-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī on Egypt and the Pyramids (*Badā'ī* 71-74).

<sup>80</sup> An expression frequently uttered by Muslims, following the example of the Prophet Muḥammad (al-Buḥārī, *Sunan* II, 208 no. 613 [*Adān* 7]) and before him that of Adam (al-Azraqī, *Aḥbār* 35).

Noah had already prepared as much food as was necessary in the Ark to feed the animals. When Raḥma told him, he went to Shem's house and watched the water boil from the oven, such that it covered the floor of the house and left by the door like an impetuous river. Then Noah ran towards the Ark shouting, "Oh people, let us save ourselves!" Forty men and forty women reached the Ark. Then Noah said to his son Kan'ān: "Embark with us, my son, and be thou not with the unbelievers! He said, 'I will take refuge in a mountain, that shall defend me from the water'. Said he, 'Today there is no defender from God's command but for him on whom He has mercy'. And the waves came between them, and he was among the drowned" (Qur. 11:43-43). God informed him that his son was not a believer. Wahb b. Munabbih tells that Kan'ān drowned before reaching the mountain. According to Ibn 'Abbās, when the oven boiled the doors of the sky opened with rain without there being clouds, and darkness fell upon the earth. The angels of fury beat the face of the sun with their wings, whilst the skies said, "If it were not for the limit placed by God the Highest, water would penetrate down to the seventh earth". Men were walking along the roads as water gushed from under their feet; women at home saw water gushing underneath them and boiling as if from pans. The same took place in every region of the earth. When the water boiled in the city of Amsūs, King Sūmrīd was on his throne and heard his people shouting. He went by horse with his dignitaries up to a high mountain to see the conditions of his subjects, concerned about all the water. Without realizing, the water began to boil under his horse's hooves. Then he returned to his palace and found nothing but water, a great wave like a mountain, and no more could be seen on the earth. Wahb b. Munabbih tells that the beginning of the Flood took place in Kūfa, where the oven boiled over. When 'Uḡ b. 'Anaq saw these fearful things he went to the Ark and placed his hand upon it. Noah asked him, "What do you want oh enemy of God?" Whereupon he replied, "Do not be afraid oh prophet of God! Allow me to come with the Ark, grasping hold in friendship, so that I can hear the angels' hymns of praise to God". The Lord said to Noah, "Have no fear of 'Uḡ and allow him to proceed with the Ark wherever it goes". Then Noah closed the doors of the Ark, "and He said 'Embark in it! In God's name shall be its course and its berthing'" (Qur. 11:41). The Ark moved on with its passengers between waves as high as mountains. God the Highest said, "Lo, when the waters rose, We bore you in the running ship" (Qur. 69:11).

It is told that God the Highest, when he sent the Flood, lifted up the Inhabited House which he had sent down in the time of Adam. It was of red ruby. When the waters rose God made it ascend into the sky and it was called the Inhabited House 'made free' (*al-bayt al-ma'mūr al-atiq*)<sup>81</sup>, given that it had been saved from the Flood. When the Ark reached the site of the Ka'ba, it circumnavigated (*tāfat*) around it seven times; then it went to the site of Jerusalem and paid 'the visit' (*fa-zārathu*). No place was passed by the Ark without saying, "Oh Noah, this is such and such a place". It toured around, easterly to westerly. There were ninety thousand angels around the ship who protected it from the punishment sent down by God. It flowed through the water like the moon in the firmament. Hardly a brief moment of time had passed before the water had covered the mountains, extending forty cubits higher than their peaks, and it spread across every land and high ground. No living creature remained upon the surface of the earth that had not perished, except those

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<sup>81</sup> *'atiq* is traditionally translated as 'ancient'.



in the ship together with ʿUḡ b. ʿAnaq. No city or village remained that had not been destroyed, no ruins remained except the Pyramids and the [Egyptian] temples (*al-barābi*)<sup>82</sup>, that were of sound construction (...)<sup>83</sup>. There is no agreement on the duration of the water's permanence on the earth, whether six months or 150 days.

God ordered to the earth, "Earth, swallow thy waters; and heaven, abate! And the waters subsided, the affair was accomplished, and the Ark settled on al-Ġūdī" (Qur. 11:44). It was related that al-Ġūdī was a mountain near Mosul and the ship grounded there. According to al-Taʿlabī this took place the day of the ʿāšūrā, the tenth of Muḥarram. Noah fasted in thanks to God the Highest, and ordered that all those with him do the same for the grace received. It is told that even the angels, beasts and domesticated animals fasted on that same day. Then Noah took out the food that was left and put together seven types: onion, lentils, broad beans (*ḡul*), chick-peas, wheat, barley, and rice. He mixed them together and cooked them and from that day they have become "Noah's *sunna* (tradition)", a much-loved dish.

Then Noah opened the doors of the ship, saw that the sun and the clouds were apart and that a rainbow (*qaws quzah*) had appeared on the Earth. It is said that before then it had never appeared, and it was a sign of the rescinding waters. But it was in pain that Noah saw all of this, as it was for all his companions, because his eyes could not confront the light of the sun. They complained to Noah, who ordered them to apply antimony to the edges of their eyelids, used from that day on to strengthen the eyes. It is told the God's Messenger said, "Whosoever applies the *kuhl* on the day of ʿāšūrā will not suffer from disease of the eyes for the whole year".

Noah opened all the doors of the ship: the sun entered, the birds flapped their wings, the animals began to move, and the plants bowed [towards the sun]. When ʿUḡ saw that the ship had grounded he left it and went off where his desire took him immersed in the water. al-Kisāʾī tells that the first mountain to appear was Abū Qubays, at Mecca; the site of the Kaʿba also came to light, having turned into a hill of red earth. No village was saved except for Nahāwand<sup>84</sup>, which was found intact under the water. The Pyramids were also saved as well as the temples of the Saʿīd (Upper Egypt), which were built by Hermes the first. He had deposited the secrets of astrology and astronomy inside. They were found in their original condition.

Noah wanted to know if the water had liberated the earth or not. He sent the raven to uncover its state, but when the bird saw a corpse it stopped to devour it and was seven

<sup>82</sup> See Yāqūt, *Muḡam* I, 362. Hermes the first "was afraid that science would perish in the Flood and so he built temples, that is, the mountain which is known as al-Birbā, the temple of Akhmīm. In them he engraved all the crafts and craftsmen. He drew all the tools of the craftsmen and showed in the drawings the characteristics of the sciences to those who would come after him and feared that their traces might vanish from the world." (Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa *K. ʿuyn al-anbāʾ*, Cairo 1882: I, 16, quoted in Fodor 1970:336. For the three Hermes, see Plessner 1959.

<sup>83</sup> Ibn Iyās tells the story of the mother who tries to save her little boy – the last child still alive. However, he inserts a terrifying element – when she was submerged by the water she placed it under her feet to resist a little longer until both perished. It became a proverbial fact, indeed, one says "if the flood comes, a man will even put his son under his feet" (*Badāʾiʿ* 75).

<sup>84</sup> See Yāqūt, *Muḡam* V, 313-314.

days late in returning to inform Noah. He invoked God against the raven, which from then on moved carelessly without staying still in any single place. Then Noah asked the other birds, "Who will bring me news of the water without behaving like the raven?". The dove replied, "I will do it oh prophet of God!" It flew off and was absent for an hour. Then it returned with a green leaf in its beak. When Noah saw this leaf he said, "It is an olive leaf!", and realized that the water had not yet uncovered the earth. After a short while he sent the dove once more. An hour afterwards it returned with its feet painted red. The reason for this was that the first thing to emerge from the water had been the site of the Ka'ba, turned into a hill; the dove had landed on top and had stained its feet in the red mud, and it found itself with a collar. Noah invoked God in its favour, "Oh God, make the dove the most blessed of all birds, with numerous offspring, beloved by all people". The ship remained for forty days on the mountain until the earth dried and every species of grass began to grow. God revealed to Noah, "Get thee down in peace from Us, and blessing upon thee and on the nations of those with thee" (Qur. 11:48). Then God ordered him to release the birds and all the other animals. The birds flew off into different directions as they had once been. God the Highest made both night and day appear, as well as the sun, the moon, and the stars as they were before. Afterwards, He sent down the 'rain of mercy' and made the floodwater pour from the earth as saltwater. Noah took heart from this and was happy for the favour shown by God the Highest.

It is told that Noah, when he stepped down from the Ark, saw the earth all white and marvelled to himself. The angel Gabriel went to him and asked, "Do you know oh Noah what this whiteness is that you see?" "What is it?" "These are the bones of your people". Then Noah heard a great noise. Gabriel informed him that it was the sound of the chains with which people were kept in Hell, "And because of their transgressions they were drowned, and admitted into a Fire" (Qur. 71:25). When Noah left the ship with the eighty people who were with him, he founded a village for them and called it Qaryat at-Tamānīn. It was the first village to be built on the earth after the Flood. When they set up in the village God brought death upon them and they perished. None of them survived except for Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, Japheth and their wives. They were seven in all. "And We made his seed the survivors" (Qur. 37:77). All people descend from Noah, peace be upon him; he is the second father of humanity. Wahb b. Munabbih says that the beginning of the Flood took place in the month of Raġab and its conclusion in the last days of Dū l-ḥiġġa. According to Abū Ma'shar, there is a space of 1240 years between Adam's repentance and Noah's Flood, and 3744 years between the Flood and the Prophet Muḥammad's *hiġra*.

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# LE SALAUD MALHEUREUX RIRE ET DÉRISION DANS UN TEXTE ORIENTAL DU MOYEN ÂGE

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Ibn Dāniyāl<sup>1</sup>, poète de Mosul, émigré au Caire après la conquête des Mongols, exerçait sa profession d'oculiste au marché de la ville, mais sa fortune commença à tourner lorsque ses vers conquièrent la sympathie de certains princes mamelouks qui surent apprécier, et tolérer, son esprit satyrique acéré. Le texte qui le rendit célèbre est une oeuvre pour le théâtre des ombres, dont l'on présente ici le protagoniste de la première *bāba*<sup>2</sup>, le prince de l'union (Amīr Wiṣāl), parodie probable d'un émir ami de l'auteur. Le héros, un soldat mamelouk, se vante dès le début d'être un fanfaron que poursuivent à la fois les événements de son époque et la malchance: contraint de quitter les collines de sa ville de Mosul (à cause de l'arrivée des Mongols), il retourne dans la terre bien-aimée d'Égypte, patrie de la débauche, au moment où Baybars impose au pays une vague moralisatrice. Aux termes d'un édit, des rentes lui sont assignées, or elles n'ont pas la moindre valeur; on lui donne un cheval, mais c'est une mauvaise rosse; et lorsqu'il se décide enfin à prendre femme pour enfanter une descendance légitime, dans le respect de la Loi coranique, une entremetteuse réussit à le berner en lui refilant une horrible vieille. Sur un ton plutôt affable, il se présente ainsi (le mètre de ces vers est *ḥafīf*) (Ibn Dāniyāl, *Plays* 7, Khawam 1997:32, Corrao 1990:21):

*"Avant de faire repentance,  
je possédais une fortune.  
Ce n'étaient pas de grands biens,  
mais un paradis où je m'ébattais.  
Non, pas de palais,  
mais de belles pupilles,  
avec beaucoup de coupes  
remplies à ras bord de boisson."*

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Dāniyāl, *Plays*. Pour la traduction, voir Corrao 1990; lorsqu'il ne s'éloigne pas trop du texte, je préfère à ma version la belle traduction française de Khawam 1997.

<sup>2</sup> L'oeuvre est divisée en trois actes, *bāba*, autonomes, que j'ai intégralement traduits dans Corrao 1990.

Toutefois, quand on lui demande de bourse délier pour fêter son contrat de mariage, c'est avec davantage de réalisme qu'il déclare sa condition misérable<sup>3</sup>:

*"Prenant mon courage à deux mains, j'ai signé ce contrat en invoquant la générosité de mes compagnons/*

*je m'en remets à Dieu, en lui demandant le nécessaire pour vivre et en le priant de me rémunérer avec abondance,/*

*je haïssais ma couche solitaire, et la façon dont la truffe des chiens reniflait mon postérieur./*

*Lorsque je demeure seul, je ne vois auprès de moi aucun ami avec qui manger et boire./*

*Si je m'étouffais chez moi, je mourrais patiemment sans que les gens ne sachent ce qui m'arrive"/*

Il est certain qu'à cette époque historique de crise et de déchéance du khalifat, la peur de vivre un présent affecté par des calamités en tous genres marque tout le monde sans distinction, où oppresseurs et opprimés se côtoient parfois sous le joug d'un sort identique. Ibn Dāniyāl rejoint dans une sorte de destin commun les nouveaux seigneurs, qui passent leur vie entre les faits d'armes et les humbles de tout temps, à savoir les gens ordinaires. Cet homme bouleversé par la rapidité du changement de régime inauguré par Baybars est obligé de s'adapter, et d'exécuter les ordres à la lettre; en effet, il débute en affirmant (métrique *ṭawīl*) (Ibn Dāniyāl, *Plays* 5, Corrao 1990:12):

*"Avant (que l'hôte) n'impose sa crucifixion, la loi se montrait indulgente et la peine légère pour délit d'ivresse./*

*Mais, lorsque le crucifix est apparu, j'ai dit à mon ami: la punition a dépassé les bornes, je t'exhorte au repentir"*

Le vaurien qui a traversé son existence en passant d'une transgression à l'autre et en se vantant de sa perversion, décide de se racheter confronté à la peur de la mort. Or sa décision de se soumettre aux contraintes de la loi nous le dévoile inadéquat, sot et poursuivi par le mauvais sort. Cependant, dans son désir de s'adapter aux choses à la lettre, l'émir devient un vengeur qui s'ignore: avec ses vers chargés de réalisme cru, il venge les fictions aussi idylliques qu'abstraites de la poésie officielle; il venge

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<sup>3</sup> Ibn Dāniyāl, *Plays* 37, Corrao 1990:79-80. Dans les vers suivants, la brillante traduction de Khawam (1997:92) s'écarte légèrement des manuscrits édités par Kahle. A propos de la culture du jeu de hasard, voir Rosenthal 1975:41, 44-45, 52-55.



toutes les interprétations et les nuances auxquelles la parole doit s'adapter pour dissimuler la réalité et la pensée, mais surtout pour violer le nouvel état de droit.

De même que dans la littérature comique, le poète force les traits du sot, de l'ivrogne ou du malchanceux, dans son obsession angoissée de montrer combien il est martelé par sa propre déveine. Cette crapule issue de la race des dominateurs, à qui la poisse colle à la peau, n'inspire plus aucune crainte dans son nouveau rôle et prête même à rire, puisque la tendresse qui se dégage de ce traîne-misère mitige sa dureté d'autrefois, en réduisant les distances entre l'opprimeur et l'opprimé et en recomposant ainsi les lacérations de la vie. Le tout-puissant n'est pas invincible comme il le déclarait en se présentant; en réalité, il est aussi minable que son présentateur, *Tayf al-hayāl*, fréquentateur assidu des bouges, compagnon de débauches et de beuveries. La dérision du puissant ainsi associé au pauvre est donc la seule relation possible qui permet de mettre en communication deux classes sociales si éloignées. Ce qui est appréhendé au mètre de la quotidienneté comme divers, distant et incompréhensible, devient tout proche vu dans le kaléidoscope lumineux du rire, qui aide à dépasser les limites du préjudice et de la peur.

Ce qui fait peur est maintenant vu comme en position de force à travers le prisme du rire, ce qui permet de conjurer, tout au moins provisoirement, les préoccupations. A des siècles de distance, le langage et les signes du théâtre des ombres peuvent être comparés à ceux que Charlie Chaplin utilise dans *Les Temps Modernes* (1936), où le héros semble emporté par un nouveau système de production. Son inadéquation au changement est soulignée par la misère et la malchance qui s'acharnent sur lui dans les événements de son existence. Les postures maladroites et drôles du comique moderne rappellent les gestes mécaniques de la marionnette des ombres, et les mouvements rigides et gauches suscitent la tendresse. Le prince de l'union vivait dans une habitation dépouillée à l'extrême; de façon analogue, dans le film à peine mentionné, Chaplin se mouvait péniblement dans une maison délabrée, symbole manifeste de la précarité du personnage. Voilà la description que fait Ibn Dāniyāl (*Plays* 27-28, Corrao 1990:63, Khawam 1997:72-73) de la maison du prince:

*"Je suis devenu plus pauvre qu'une âme errante,  
et ma main ne contient plus que mon éternelle pauvreté/  
je suis la seule chose qui tienne encore debout dans ma maison,  
je gis sur ma couche sans réussir à me détendre/  
et ne restent plus que les traces de la natte et du coussin  
qui appartenait à Umm Muhtadī,  
renversé sur un matelas, avec  
tant de poux qu'on me dirait saupoudré de sésame./  
Des punaises grandes comme des cafards puants  
habitent le matelas et son rembourrage,  
et boursofflent mon corps, ma peau*

*est liquéfiée par les morsures;/*  
*jour et nuit on aperçoit les puces qui*  
*s'accrochent à mon corps comme des sangsues./*  
*Les moustiques voltigent comme des plumes*  
*et dès qu'elles le peuvent sucent une veine;/*  
*le rat galope comme un cheval de course,*  
*sur chaque espace ouvert de la superficie,/*  
*en mangeant le bois du plafond comme un rabot*  
*au fil aiguisé par la lime/".*

Le personnage d'Ibn Dāniyāl nous fait rire parce qu'il doit se mesurer aux mutations rapide du temps et qu'il s'avère inadapté. C'est le même poète qui ne vit plus à la cour des grands mais affûte son ironie pour décrire la réalité où il baigne, à savoir le marché. Pour rester fidèle au climat et à la culture du marché, il est obligé de transgresser dans la forme et le fond les règles de la poétique classique. Et son public s'amuse de cette transgression, qui souligne l'extranéité qui existait de facto entre le langage et les problèmes de ses spectateurs - les mamelouks et le commun des mortels - et les thèmes repris par les poésies classiques. La crise des valeurs qui a succédé à la chute de l'Empire du Khalifat Islamique suscitait la crainte; les règles des nouveaux seigneurs faisaient peur, préoccupations auxquelles venaient s'ajouter les guerres et les catastrophes naturelles, telles que les épidémies de peste. Un tel contexte renforce la nécessité du rire, car, en riant, il est possible de prendre de la hauteur et de voir les choses en position de force pour écarter, tout au moins un instant, les soucis de la vie.

Le Coran associe le rire à la vie, par opposition aux larmes, identifiées au trépas, puisque le rire est la seule chose restant au pauvre malheureux pour soulager son âme effrayée face à la mort qui l'entoure de toute part. Le symptôme concret de la peur d'affronter la vie est la faim, un vide qui vous consume l'existence, une faim pantagruélique qui dévore également les animaux, et l'homme - nous dit Ibn Dāniyāl - en est réduit à un état de prostration tel qu'il devient encore plus faible qu'un animal, tant il est vrai que c'est la présence des animaux qui domine dans la scène à peine décrite. Le héros n'est plus qu'un crève-la-faim, et même son héroïsme devient grotesque (Bachtin 1979, Corrao 2001 et 1991:81-86), ridicule; dans l'oeuvre pour le théâtre des ombres, le mamelouk ne fait plus peur à personne, la misère l'a abaissé jusqu'à le réduire au même niveau que ceux qu'il brimait auparavant. Nul n'est épargné par la faim ou la peur de la mort, des armées entières sont réduites à néant par la famine (Ibn Dāniyāl *Plays* 17, Khawam 1997:52, Corrao 1990:36):

*"Des troupes entières assoiffées*  
*se résignaient à boire leur urine.*

*Affamées par toi, elles étaient réduites  
à manger leurs excréments”.*

Tout concourt à définir la malchance du personnage principal, jusqu'à son cheval qui est en réalité une rosse. Certains contemporains d'Ibn Dāniyāl confirment d'ailleurs ce qu'il déclarait, à savoir que la composition des vers sur le cheval coïnciderait réellement à un don misérable qu'il aurait reçu d'un émir en échange d'une poésie. D'ailleurs, après s'être livré à une invective mordante, il paraîtrait que le pitoyable cadeau ait été remplacé par un cheval un peu plus digne<sup>4</sup>:

*“J’ai une bête de somme funeste  
que les gens connaissent,  
claudicante et, en plus,  
sourde et muette.*

*(...) Le maréchal-ferrant a refusé  
de la traiter, la voyant trop faible,  
semblable à une fourmi qui marche,  
les palettes souffrant de panaris.*

*(...) Ou bien la vieille l’a transformée  
en un corps sans vie, récalcitrant,  
ou en ancien combattant,  
semblable à une écriture effacée.*

*(...) On m’a dit: “Donne du repos  
à cette monture. Courir est funeste  
pour elle.” J’ai répondu: “Inutile.  
Elle représente le comble de la malchance.”*

La réalité tragique s'oppose admirablement à la fiction poétique, et, quelques vers plus loin, en réclamant un cheval qui soit plus digne de lui, le prince récite des vers qui exaltent le cheval idéal, de souche noble, semblable aux pur-sang que montaient les premiers héros islamiques. La comparaison entre la réalité et cette image stylisée déchaîne les rires du public. Le fait de rapprocher deux poésies à la teneur si différente entend souligner l'impossibilité d'une confrontation entre la réalité trop pénible du présent et celle d'un monde idéal disparu à jamais. D'un sourire, l'auteur

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<sup>4</sup> Corrao 1996:51-52; Ibn Dāniyāl, *Plays* 30; ici, la traduction est de Khawam 1997:77-78; Corrao 1990: 67-68.

souhaite atténuer ce qui est irrémédiablement perdu pour rendre la vie plus fluide et plus légère. Le pauvre prince mamelouk est aux héros arabes de naguère ce que sa vieille carne est au pur-sang, mais voilà apparaître le cheval de ses rêves<sup>5</sup>:

*"Ô te voici beau cheval bai, le front taché de blanc, tu surgis comme un vin nouveau aux bulles pétillantes/*

*(...ô) cheval pie à la vue plus agréable à l'oeil que celle de l'éclair lacérant les nuages<sup>6</sup>/*

*tes quatre (jambes) sont comme des lances soutenant une tour, solides, qui portent une croupe chargée de trophées./*

*ta crinière est comme une grappe de tamarix sous la colombe qui roucoule, tes flancs comme les dunes d'un mirage/*

*ton oreille tendue comme une sentinelle aux aguets, qui semble écouter un discours/*

*tu avances d'un pas majestueux, précédant ton ombre de tes reins orgueilleux qui forcent l'admiration" (...)*

Pour Ibn Dāniyāl, il est évident que tout ceci évoque un rêve fort distant de la dure réalité; toutefois, même au coeur de la calamité, le soldat généreux pourra se montrer sage, pour peu qu'il ne baisse pas les bras et qu'il sache porter sur le monde un regard d'espérance; en effet, voilà ce que nous suggère le poète (Khawam 1997:53; Ibn Dāniyāl, *Plays* 17; Corrao 1990:37):

*"La malchance, tu ne lui porteras  
aucune attention, si ce n'est  
pour la transformer  
en une source d'inspiration."*

Ibn Dāniyāl nous rappelle que, s'il sait rire de lui-même et regarder droit devant lui sans pleurer sur le temps qui passe, alors sa vie pourra continuer, en route vers le renouveau, prête à tracer un chemin neuf pour l'humanité. Là où, dans les films

<sup>5</sup> Les Mamelouks étaient cependant passionnés d'art d'équestre, et, durant leur règne, ce sport connut son heure de gloire, Corrao 1996:82. Ibn Dāniyāl, *Plays* 33; Corrao 1990:70. Vers que Khawam (1997:82) traduit ainsi: "Donne-moi, ô Vizir un cheval brun avec une tache blanche au front, qui marche avec grâce, tel un jeune homme séduisant ses amants".

<sup>6</sup> Ce vers manque dans Khawam, tandis que le suivant est ainsi rendu: "Ses quatre jambes fines supportant une forteresse d'où jaillit de toutes parts une mort certaine"; le vers après est absent, et le successif est rendu de la manière suivante: "Il dresse les oreilles comme s'il aimait entendre les discours suscités par son ardeur combative", le dernier récitant: "Le soleil derrière lui projette son ombre en avant. Il essaie de la devancer et sa force provoque l'admiration". (Khawam 1997:82)

de Chaplin, le protagoniste s'avance vers un nouvel horizon, dans le spectacle d'Ibn Dāniyāl, le héros part confiant en pèlerinage pour aller purifier son âme à la source: les lieux saints de La Mecque.

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# OMANI PROVERBS: DATE PALMS AND DATES

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النخلة عطيما ... تعطيك

(Omani proverb)

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Date palms and their fruit have from ancient times occupied a central part in Arab culture. The date palm is mentioned several times in the Qur'ān and the value of dates is also given emphasis by a *ḥadīth*<sup>1</sup>.

Within Arabia, Oman had for a long time been established as a major area of palm date cultivation. Pliny – who not only landed on the coasts of Oman but also ventured somewhat into the country – claimed that he could list forty-nine different varieties of the date palm if only he could remember their outlandish names (Pliny, *Natural History*, VI, 28). The importance of this plant for the inhabitants of this territory is well illustrated by a story of the Baṣran philologist Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā' (d. 154/770). According to which he met one day a Bedouin in Mekka who turned out to be from Oman. When Abū 'Amr asked him about the source of their wealth (*māl*), he answered that it comes from the date palms and added that the fruit of the date palm can be eaten, its boughs [when lit] shed light, its stump is used in building, the bases of its branches give warmth when burnt, its fibres are good ropes, its leaves drinking cups, and the bowl made from its stump is a vessel (for making date wine)<sup>2</sup>.

Date palms are in themselves of lasting economic value, and as such, they have been termed *māl*<sup>3</sup> ever since in Oman. This is, however, not the only appellation

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<sup>1</sup> *Man taṣabbaha keulla yawmin sab'a tamarātin 'aḡwatan lam yaḍurrahu fi dālīka l-yawmi summun wa-lā siḥrun* (al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ: al-Aḥima*, Nr. 5025).

<sup>2</sup> For the whole anecdote, in which the *faṣāḥa* of the Omani bedouin is also given great emphasis, see al-Qālī, *Dāyl* 19. In Oman, apart from traditionally providing a major foodstuff, the date palm was until recently used to make all kinds of useful items. Its trunk was used to make columns and ceilings for houses while its fronds were used to make roofs and walls. The palm frond was, and still is, used to make bags, mats, boats, shelters, brooms and fans. Livestock were fed with its seeds and it was burned as fuel.

<sup>3</sup> That by *māl* date palms are often to be understood outside Oman as well, is stated explicitly by a proverb in the collection of Al Sudaīs (1993:146, No. 993) 'المغنيات الخيل والمال النخل' 'Horses bring wealth, but date palms constitute true property'. Before the discovery of oil in the 1960s and the subsequent change in the economy, property in Oman had also been composed principally of date palms, and *māl* was usually employed in this sense. In the 19th century dates were Oman's biggest export. By the early 1970s the situation has changed dramatically. As a result of rapid inflation, labor shortage and

of date palms in Oman. On the contrary, date cultivation – together with a relative linguistic isolation – has led to a variegated vocabulary which is apparent already in Ibn Sīda's (d. 458/1066) *Muḥaṣṣaṣ*, where in every chapter of the *Kitāb an-Nahl* – on the basis of his sources – he calls our attention to the special terminology used in Oman (as, for example, *ʿawāna* (*ʿawān*) 'a tall palm' /III, 215.12/), also mentioning some species of date palms cultivated in Oman (like the Farḍ-palm and its date of the same name, in connection with which even a line of poetry is cited /III, 228.16-17/).

1.2 The principal aim of this article is to present the knowledge about date palms and dates as presented by Omani proverbs<sup>4</sup>. Their major source is al-Ḥumaydī's collection where 2749 proverbs are to be found (al-Ḥumaydī 1986-94). This comprehensive collection has been supplemented with proverbs from three other, much smaller, sources (Reinhardt 1894, Jayakar 1904, and Brockett 1985) where a total of 546 (200, 320, and 26) proverbs are to be found.

The exceptional standing of the date palm and its fruit among Omani people is well reflected by the high frequency of proverbs containing references to them, to artifacts woven from palm leaves, or to different tools used in connection with dates or date palms. Though the date palm is well represented in the classical and colloquial proverb collections alike, it is far less frequent in any of those than among the Omani proverbs. From among the 2749 Omani proverbs<sup>5</sup> that form the basis of the present investigation 78 can, in some way or another, be connected to the date palm or its fruit. This amounts to c. 2.84% of the proverbs, which is quite impressive if compared to the occurrence of similar material in other proverb collections<sup>6</sup>. The

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the costs of such labor, the costs of local agricultural products have risen sharply. At that time "a foreign expert adviser on date cultivation abandoned his mission when he discovered that American-grown dates could be supplied to Sohar at competitive prices with those required to pay for the production from the date groves adjoining the marketplace" (Barth 1983:154). Since that time the situation has changed again, and today agriculture is the second largest sector of Omani economy. The potential lying in date production is being reconsidered as part of ongoing efforts to wean the country away from oil. There are some 10 million date palms, occupying around 60% of cultivable land, and annual production is estimated at 150,000-175,000 tons. Of the several date processing factories, that of Rustāq, for example, processes 800 tonnes of dates a year.

<sup>4</sup> In this respect it is also a continuation of our previous article (Dévényi 1996) where the animal world of Omani proverbs has been dealt with.

<sup>5</sup> These were collected from a great variety of informants who represent all the tribes and regions of Oman. The collector of the proverbs, Ḥalifa al-Ḥumaydī, used written sources as well. For the list of informants and other sources, see al-Ḥumaydī 1986-94: IV, 216-221. In the statistical survey only this collection was taken into account. Since the collector does not mention the exact provenance of the proverbs, it would be misleading to present them in the present article in transliteration considering the great differences in pronunciation from one Omani region to another.

<sup>6</sup> According to the data given by Al Sudaīs (1993:259) it occurs in 10 out of the 1200 Najdi proverbs of his collection (c. 0.8%), whereas it occurs only in about 0.2% of Taymūr's collection of Egyptian proverbs, and in about 0.15% of Tikrītī's collection of proverbs current in Baghdad. In the case of Iraqi



percentage remains significant even if only direct references to the date palm or its parts are counted. There are altogether 38 such instances, which is c. 1.38% of the proverbs; while the percentage of proverbs about dates is more than 0.7%; and to these occurrences can be added those proverbs where artifacts woven from date palm leaves or utensils used in connection with the date are mentioned.

The majority of these proverbs stand alone, *i.e.* they rarely have a correlative either among classical or other colloquial proverbs. A reason for this might be what has been observed by Al Sudaïs (1993:182) in connection with Najd and Oman, namely that contact between these territories has been virtually non-existent for the greater part of the last three centuries. Another reason may be in close connection with the prominent position of the date palms and dates in Omani society, since they are observed in minute detail, and this observation, as will be seen later, finds its way into the proverbs.

1.3 In the following presentation, the proverbs have been grouped according to their lexical contents and concrete meanings<sup>7</sup>. Since, in order to orient the reader as far as possible, several subdivisions were made according to the above principles, it seems unnecessary to present them here in detail. In summary, it should, however, be noted that these 84 proverbs do not speak about the date palm or the date in general, but differentiate their types, the cycles of the palm, the steps of cultivation, the tools used in connection with the date and the date palm, and those which are woven from palm leaf, they even distinguish between the regions of Oman from the aspect of the date and the date palm, all in all they almost provide sufficient information for a handbook on this topic.

It was not our aim to analyse the proverbs according to what they are used for, these applications, however, are mentioned at the individual proverbs. One thing is apparent, *i.e.* that contrary to animals to which, as rational beings, humans are often likened<sup>8</sup>, the proverbs containing references to date (palms) refer – through observation<sup>9</sup> in the majority of the proverbs – to correct and incorrect behaviour and to the norms to be followed in everyday life.

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proverbs, the frequency of such proverbs would certainly be much higher had the proverbs been collected from rural areas.

<sup>7</sup> The 'Nos.' followed by volume and page numbers refer to al-Humaydi 1986-94. If a proverb can be found in any of the other three sources, it is always mentioned. The following abbreviations are used: B = Brockett 1985; J = Jayakar 1904; and R = Reinhardt 1894. Numbers after these three letters always refer to the number of the proverb in the given collection.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dévényi 1996 and Fahd 1971-78.

<sup>9</sup> Altogether 48 proverbs contain observation as opposed to 36 featuring some kind of activity. The proportion of observation is even greater in the case of the date palm and its parts (29 observational *vs.* 12 activity proverbs).

At the end of the article, a vocabulary of date palm related terminology collected from the proverbs supplies the readers with additional information.

## 2. The Proverbs

### 2.1 Observation of the date palm

#### 2.1.1 Cycles:

No. 38 (I, 63); J 5

(١) إِذَا سَاحَ النَّبَاتُ حَيْثُ يَدَّيْكَ اللَّيْلُ بَاتَ

"When the pollen is all gone [i.e. when the male date palm fertilised the females], sleep wherever the night overtakes you". According to local observation it signals the beginning of warmer weather when people can sleep under the open sky.

No. 2735 (IV, 210)

(٢) يَوْمَ النَّمِيتِينَ وَالسَّتِينَ الرَّطْبُ فَيْدُ كُلِّ مُسْكِينٍ

"On the 260th day [of the year]<sup>10</sup> fully ripe dates are in the hands of the poor".

#### 2.1.2 The needs of the date palm:

##### 2.1.2.1 Male flower:

B 11

(٣) كُلِّ نَخْلَةٍ بِنَبَاتِهَا

"Every female date palm needs its own [particular quantity] of male flower". Things are not stereotyped.

##### 2.1.2.2 Proper soil and climate:

No. 1749 (III, 182)<sup>11</sup>

(٤) مَا فَاسَلْنَاهَا فَسَبْخَةٌ

"We have not planted it [the date palm] in a salt marsh". Pride in one's aptitude; self-reliance.

No. 1779 (III, 193); J 260

(٥) مَالُ الْفَرَّاحِ مِنْ طَاحِ رَاحٍ

"Date palms planted in sand, when they fall down, are lost". A weak foundation destroys the superstructure.

No. 1252 (III, 23)

(٦) لَا تَزْرَعْ النَّارَجِيلَ فِي صَحَارٍ وَلَا الْفَرْضَ فِي ظَفَارٍ

"Do not plant coconut palms in Şohâr nor Farḍ-date palms in Zofâr". Do not waste your time and effort.

##### 2.1.2.3 To be propped up:

No. 543 (II, 20); J 130

(٧) سَجِّلْهَا وَلَا تَفْسِلْهَا

"Prop it up [a female date palm] and do not plant a new one [in its place]". One should be patient and try to solve problems. Used mainly in reference to somebody who is impatient with his wife.

##### 2.1.2.4 Water:

J 259

(٨) مَالُ الْجَبَلِ حَالُ الْجَمَلِ وَمَالُ الْيَحَابِ مَوَاةُ ذِهَابٍ

"The date palms of a mountainous country belong to the camel<sup>12</sup>, and the date palms watered with a leathern bucket are in danger of perishing". Applied to labour without profits, and also to a person between two misfortunes.

<sup>10</sup> This day – which is called *qayf* – is considered to signal the commencement of the last stage of the ripening of the dates (*qayz*) when fully ripe dates become available in large quantities.

<sup>11</sup> A variant with reference to other plants is No. 1634 (III, 145): مَا بَاذَرْنَاهَا فَسَبْخَةٌ

<sup>12</sup> Because the great expense of bringing down the produce on camel-back does not allow any profit.

2.1.2.5 *Care:*

No. 2341 (IV, 40)

(٩) النَّخْلَةُ عَطِيهَا تَعْطِيكَ

"Give to the date palm, it will (also) give you".

2.1.3 *Young palm-cuttings might not turn into real date palms:*

No. 1275 (III, 32)

(١٠) لَا تَفْسِلِ الصَّيْرِمَةَ وَلَا تَأْخُذِ الْحَرِيمَةَ

"Do not plant the young palm-cuttings and do not marry an under age woman". Advice against taking unnecessary risks. Like (6).

No. 920 (II, 221)

(١١) فَسِلْ مُخَامَرَةً

"The date palm cultivation of the Muḥāmara<sup>13</sup>! Ignorant, foolish behaviour.2.1.4 *Places where the dates are dropped:*

No. 2340 (IV, 40)

(١٢) النَّخْلَةُ تَحْتِ تَحْتِ جُوسْنَهَا

"The date palm drops its fruit to its stump". This observation is valid generally for date palms. The exceptions, however, are also mentioned in the following three proverbs.

No. 858 (II, 185)

(١٣) الْعَوَانَةُ مَا تَحْتِ تَحْتِهَا / تَحْتِ جُوسْنَهَا

"The very tall palm does not drop its fruit under itself/to its stump". A reproaching remark made to a person who prefers strangers to his relatives, or said of someone bequeathing to a non-relative.

No. 2338 (IV, 40)

(١٤) نَخْلَةُ عَبَايَةَ مَا تَحْتِ تَحْتِهَا

"The date palm of 'Abāya<sup>14</sup> does not drop its fruit under itself/to its stump".

No. 2339 (IV, 40)

(١٥) نَخْلَةُ الْمُسْفَاةِ تَعْقُ بِعِيدٍ

"The date palm of Misfāt<sup>15</sup> shoots far away".

B 21

(١٦) النَّخْلَةُ خَيْرُهَا حَالٌ غَيْرُهَا

"The date palm's goods go to others".

2.1.5 *The falling down of the palm:*

No. 2179 (III, 310)

(١٧) مِنْ طَاحَ قِشٌّ سِثْرَحْنَا مِنْهُ

"If a Qišš-palm falls down, we are relieved of it".

No. 2180 (III, 311)

(١٨) مِنْ طَاحَتْ عَوَانَةُ سِثْرَحْنَا مِنْ رِقَاطِهَا

"If a very tall palm falls down, we are relieved of collecting its fallen fruit". Undesirability; wish to get rid of something. Same as (17).

2.1.6 *Inflammability:*

No. 343 (I, 254)

(١٩) حَرَقْتُهَا بَلِيفَةً

"It [the palm] can catch fire by a fibre". Threat. 'Add fuel to the fire'.

<sup>13</sup> The advice given in proverb (10) was not obeyed by the Muḥāmara, a coastal tribe of Oman. According to the anecdote, some members of this tribe took part in the collection of ripe dates (*gayz*) and planted young palm cuttings (*ṣarm*). In the evening, however, when they returned home, they uprooted them and took them home. Then the next morning, they planted the cuttings again. And this went on and on, until their curious behaviour became proverbial.

<sup>14</sup> An Omani village.

<sup>15</sup> An Omani village.

### 2.1.7 Animals and the palm:

No. 692 (II, 95)

(٢٠) صِلَانِيَّتْهَ عَلَيْهَا غِرْبَان

"There are crows<sup>16</sup> on his Ṣallāni-palm". This proverb is applied to persons who betray those who are closest to them.

### 2.1.8 Tall and elegant tree:

No. 767 (II, 133)<sup>17</sup>

(٢١) الطُّوْلُ طَوْلُ نَخْلَةٍ وَالْعَقْلُ عَقْلُ سَخْلَةٍ

"The height is that of a date palm, but the brain is that of a kid". Appearances can be deceptive.

### 2.1.9 Differences between the types:

#### 2.1.9.1 Male palm vs. self-seeded palm:

No. 771 (II, 137)

(٢٢) طَيْحَهُ مِنْ غَدَرٍ فَحَلَّ وَلَا طَيْحَهُ مِنْ نَشْرٍ

"He fell from the top of a male palm, and not from a date palm which grew in itself". Esteem (for descent).

#### 2.1.9.2 A palm of feeble leaves:

No. 1793 (III, 196)

(٢٣) مَا مِتَّحِزَّ قِ بِخُوصَةِ قَشِ سَوِيحِ

"It is not tied together with the leaf of a Qišš Suwayḥ palm". Pride in one's aptitude; self-reliance.

#### 2.1.9.3 A palm the dates of which ripen very early:

No. 1928 (III, 235)

(٢٤) مِثْلُ مِزْنَاغٍ فَعَابِيَّةِ

"Like the Miznāg-palm in a field". Orphanhood, loneliness; peculiar situation.

## 2.2 Human activities in connection with the date palm

### 2.2.1 Ceremonies:

No. 425 (I, 303); J 106

(٢٥) دَانٌ دَانٌ عَلَى النَّغَالِ

"Music around the Naḡāl-palm"<sup>18</sup>. Flattery, its use and abuse.

### 2.2.2 Plantation:

No. 921 (II, 221)

(٢٦) الْفُسْلُ وَالنَّسْلُ لَمِنَةِ

"To plant a date palm or to beget a child is but a minute". The importance to increase property and children<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> It has been observed that crows like date very much and they eat the best ones. This observation is reflected by the classical proverb *waḡada/indahu tamrat al-ḡurāb*, i.e. he found something better than he had expected (cf. Ya'qūb 1995: V, 645). Another proverb may also be quoted: *al-ḡurāb a'rafu bi-t-tamr* (Quṭāmiš 1988:433).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. this proverb with some variation in its wording as quoted by J 202:

كِبْرُهُ كِبَرُ نَخْلَةٍ وَعَقْلُهُ عَقْلُ سَخْلَةٍ

A variant of this proverb with a somewhat different meaning can be found in Taymūr No. 1811:

إِلْطُولُ عِ النَّخْلِ وَالْتَّخَنُ عِ الْجَمِينِ

A classical version of this proverb seems to be the following: *tarā l-fityān ka-n-naḥl wa-mā yudrīka mā d-daḥl* (cf. Quṭāmiš 1988:431).

<sup>18</sup> In Jayakar's version the last word is *naḡāla*. His translation and explanation are also different: "All the drumming for a date of the kind called *naḡāl*"; (a) 'There is no smoke without a fire'; (b) 'Much ado about nothing'.

<sup>19</sup> This saying seems to echo the first part of Q 18.46 which acknowledges the importance of wealth

No. 1302 (III, 41) لا سَرَقْنَا السُّوقَ وَلَا زَرَعْنَا نَخْلَةً بِلَا عَذُوقٍ  
 "We did not steal from the market nor did we plant a date palm without raceme". Everybody was satisfied. "They ate the cake and had it as well".

### 2.2.3 *Harvesting the raceme:*

No. 1241 (III, 19) لَا تَجِيبِ الْعُرُوقَ مَعَ الْعِزْزِ  
 "Do not bring the roots with the raceme". Incompatibility.

### 2.2.4 *Selling the crop:*

No. ad 1664 (III, 157) أَنَا وَأَنَا وَمِزْنَاجُ حَالِطَنَا  
 "Here I am, here I am, and a Miznāǧ-palm[s] crop] for the auction". (a) Rare qualities, good repute; (b) Disdain for a conceited person.

### 2.2.5 *'Cleaning' the palm:*

No. 2712 (IV, 202); J 316 يَوْمَ الشَّرَاطَةِ مَا شِبَعَانُ لَيْفَ  
 "Even on the day of cleaning the date palms, he is not satisfied with their fibres". Applied to a discontented man who is not satisfied even when he has plenty.

### 2.2.6 *Uprooting the palm:*

J 9 إِذَا مَا سَدَّ عِضْقُهَا وَلَا مِنْ عَرْقِهَا  
 "If its [date palm's] produce is not enough, have it out of its roots". On the advisability of uprooting or selling off a thing which entails profitless labour.

### 2.2.7 *Ownership:*

No. 1783 (III, 194); J 263 الْمَالُ مَالُ أَبِيهَا وَيَزُودُهَا فَتَسْعِينَةُ  
 "The property [date palms] are his father's, and yet they give her food for the journey only in a small basket". Applied to one who has no control over his/her own affairs and is treated unjustly.

## 2.3 Observation of the parts of the date palm

No. 159 (I, 144) بُو تَقَصَّ الْخُوصَةَ مَا يَبْغَالُهُ مِيشَارُ  
 "What can be cut by a palm leaf, does not necessitate a saw". There is no need to exaggerate the difficulties when there are none.

No. 1024 (II, 273) الْكَرْبُ مَا يَنْحَزِمُ  
 "The bases of palm branches cannot be tied together". Non-cooperation.

No. 1211 (II, 357) كَمَا كَرَبَةٌ شَالَتْهَا/مَسِيحَتْهَا وَادِي  
 "Like a palm branch base carried away by a wadi". Like (55).

No. 1853 (III, 215) مَا يَسْتَوِي حَالُ زِفْنَةٍ وَلَا حَالُ دَعْنٍ  
 "It is not good to any kind of palm-frond-sheeting". Good-for-nothing.

No. 1917 (III, 231) مِتْعَلَمِنَهُ فَخُوصَهُ وَتَارَسِبُهُ الدُّنْيَا حُصُوصَهُ  
 "He knows it [i.e. that it sheds its bits] about his palm leaf, still fills the earth with its bits". Incorrect behaviour due to conceit and irresponsibility.

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and children, though emphasising in its second part the preeminence of good deeds: *al-māl wa-l-banūn zināt al-ḥayāt ad-dunyā (wa-l-baḥiyāt aṣ-ṣāliḥāt ḥayr 'inda rabbika tarwāban wa-ḥayr amalan)*.

## 2.4 Human and animal activity in connection with the parts of the date palm

No. 1021 (II, 272) كَيْدِي يَا جَمِيلُوهُ وَكَسَاشْ لِيَفُوهُ (٣٨)

"Work hard, small camel, and palm fibre will cover you". Contempt, disdain<sup>20</sup> for a useless effort.

No. 1207 (II, 355) كَمَا قَحْبَةٌ يَجِدُ وَلَهَا (٣٩)

"Like a whore for whom the whole raceme of dates is cut". Overflowing joy; but at the same time used to express disdain because of incorrect behaviour.

No. 1585 (III, 124) اللِّي يَسْرِقُ الشَّيْزَةَ يَسْرِقُ الْجَذْعَ (٤٠)

"Who steals the fibre of the stump, will steal the [whole] stump". Warning against the possible consequences of covetousness.

No. 1925 (III, 233); J 207<sup>21</sup> مِثْلُ عَوْرٍ بِيَاقٍ يَبْكُرُ رُشْبَهُ وَيَلُوحُ عِيسْقَهُ (٤١)

"Like the blind man of Biyāq<sup>22</sup> who is always replenishing his hookah with water and waving the date-stalk about (to kindle a fire)". Idleness and its disapproval.

## 2.5 Observation of the date

### 2.5.1 Very nutritive:

No. 280 (I, 213); 545 (II, 21) التَّمْرُ مِسْمَارُ الرُّكْعَةِ / السَّحْجُ مِسْمَارُ الرُّكْعَةِ (٤٢)

"Dates are the pegs of the knee". Emphasizes the importance of the date and stresses its nutritional value.

No. 377 (I, 270) حِمْرَانَةٌ وَزَادُوهَا/غَرَّوْهَا مَرِيْسٌ (٤٣)

"The sheep (or goat) is sick, still it was given date fodder". They made things worse. Counsel to avoid recklessness.

No. 544 (II, 21) سَحْجُ الْفَرْضِ عَمُودُ الْأَرْضِ (٤٤)

"The dates of the Fard-palm are the support of the earth". Pride in the palm; preference of a species.

### 2.5.2 Bad dates:

No. 352 (I, 259) الْحَشْفَةُ عَلَّاحَشْفَةٍ مَا تَلْصَقُ (٤٥)

"Dry date will not stick to dry date". Incompatibility of views.

No. 1714 (III, 173); J 250 مَاشِي صَبَّةٌ نَجَتْ مِنْ حَشْفٍ (٤٦)

"There is no heap of dates without dry and shrivelled ones". "There are black sheep in every flock".

No. 2198 (III, 317); J 305; R 27<sup>23</sup> مَنَقَّأِي فِي الصَّبَّةِ فَسَ فِي النَّخْدِ (٤٧)

"Selected out of the heap [of dates], it rotted in the bag". Applied to a favourite thing or person not answering one's expectations.

No. 330 (I, 248) الْحَامِضَةُ تَعَايِبُ الْفَاسَّةَ (٤٨)

"The sour [date] finds fault with the [dry] rotten one". Odd, unjustifiable disapproval. "The pot calling the kettle black".

<sup>20</sup> It is also expressed by the use of feminine forms.

<sup>21</sup> In Jayakar's version: كَعَوْرٍ بِيَاقٍ يَبْكُرُ رُشْبَتَهُ وَيَلُوحُ عِيسْقَتَهُ

<sup>22</sup> An Omani village in the *wilāya* of Samā'il.

<sup>23</sup> Reinhardt gives the following version: *mnaqqāi miṣṣubbe fessēt finnaḍīd*.

## 2.5.3 Good dates:

No. 1690 (III, 165)

(٤٩) مَا دَائِمٌ إِلَّا سَعْيُ الْبَاطِنَةِ

Nothing remains except the dates of Bāṭina<sup>24</sup>. Affection, esteem; satisfaction.

## 2.6 Human activity in connection with dates

## 2.6.1 Buying and selling:

No. 115 (I, 115)

(٥٠) بَاعَ السَّعْيَ وَشَتَرِي مَتِينِدِي

"He sold the dates, then bought the same". Foolish behaviour<sup>25</sup>.

## 2.6.2 Storing (for future use):

No. 359 (I, 262)

(٥١) حَفِظْ لِحَنَاتٍ عَلَيْنِ يَقُولُكَ الزَّمَانُ هَاتِ

"Preserve the fallen dates<sup>26</sup> until time says to you: out with them [i.e. until you need it]". The necessity and importance of saving things for possible future use.

No. 2324 (IV, 31)

(٥٢) نَاقِصٌ مِنْ خَرَسَةِ دَلَكَةِ

"A handful of pressed dates is missing from the pot". Disapproval of greed and envy.

No. 548 (II, 23)

(٥٣) سَحَّةٌ أَخْوَكُ مَا تَسْكُتُ وَلَدُكَ

"A date from your brother will not silence your son". It is not advisable to be dependent upon others.

## 2.6.3 Date processing:

No. 1178 (II, 342)

(٥٤) كَمَا دَوَّاسٌ طَاحِيحٌ فَدُوسَةٌ/فَلْهَمْبَارَةٌ

"Like one who stamps down dates and falls into them". Fulfilment of desire.

No. 1166 (II, 336)

(٥٥) كَمَا حَبَّةٌ/خِلَالَةَ فَمُوخَلٍ

"Like a seed/a date in a sieve". Unsteadiness, constant move; getting into trouble, experiencing difficulties.

No. 1218 (II, 360)

(٥٦) كَمَا مِقْلَاعُ السَّعْيِ

"Like the tool used to separate stored dates". Constant move (like 35 &amp; 55); hard work.

No. 1940 (III, 239)

(٥٧) مَحَبَّةُ الْعَسَلِ مِنَ السَّعْيِ

"The love of date syrup depends on the dates". Friendship; flattery; deception.

## 2.6.4 Eating dates:

No. 942 (II, 232)

(٥٨) فَنَوَادُهُ فَلَيْمَبَحَّةٌ وَفَنَوَادُهُ فَيَنْدَحَّةٌ

"His heart's desire is the fish and the date alike". Helplessness and confusion because of greed and disability to renounce. 'He would if he could but he can't'.

<sup>24</sup> A fertile plain in northern Oman where several types of excellent date palms are cultivated.

<sup>25</sup> This proverb, however, may also have another meaning, in echoing those traditions which give voice to the prohibition of usury by Islamic law. Dates are among the six commodities expressly stated in the *ḥadīṡ* dealing with usury. On the differences between the schools concerning usury, see Goldziher 1971:40-42.

<sup>26</sup> During the ripening of dates, it is usual for the children to go several times a day and collect the dates that have fallen down from the palm trees and to put them away for winter. Similarly to the owners of palm trees who generally collect the fallen dates separately.

## 2.7 Observation of tools

### 2.7.1 Palm leaf tools:

#### 2.7.1.1 Door:

No. 691 (II, 94)

(٥٩) صَفَّةٌ وَبَابُهَا زُورٌ

"A room [built from lasting material] but its door is made of palm leaves". It is unacceptable to use such different materials together. Similar in its application to (65).

#### 2.7.1.2 Fence:

No. 810 (II, 161)

(٦٠) العِشْبُ يَتَرَبَّى تَحْتَ لِحِظَارٍ

"The grass grows under the palm leaf fence". It is so, because the fence protects the grass from direct sunshine and the tread of animals, but at the same time the animals cannot graze on it. Protection, but of small avail. Like the property of a miser<sup>27</sup>.

#### 2.7.1.3 Baskets:

No. 1180 (II, 342)

(٦١) كَمَا زُبَيْلٌ مَخْبُوقٌ

"Like a small basket with holes in it". Said of someone who cannot keep a secret.

R 185<sup>28</sup>

(٦٢) هُوَ مُخْرَافَةٌ وَالْمَخَارِيفُ يَضْمَنَّشْ سَمِينٌ

"This is a palm leaf basket, and palm leaf baskets do not keep butter". Incompatibility.

R 17

(٦٣) الْحَبُّ إِلَّا مِنْ ظَرْفَةٍ

"[All] the seed [comes] only from the basket". We are all alike.

#### 2.7.1.4 Cover:

No. 614 (II, 57)

(٦٤) شَتَيْتُ أَخُو مَجِيمَرٍ

"Š. is the brother of M.<sup>29</sup> / The date cover is just like the censer". 'Six of one and half a dozen of the other'.

#### 2.7.1.5 Mats:

No. 496 (I, 346); 571 (II, 36); J 134 رِفْعَةُ السِّمَّةِ خُصَفٌ / السِّمَّةُ رَفَعَتْهَا خُصَفٌ

"The [proper] patch of a palm mat is [made of] palm leaves". It expresses the approval of marriage between relatives, especially if they are of the same social standing, because they harmonize the best. 'Every Jack will get his Jill'.

No. 572 (II, 36)

(٦٦) السِّمَّةُ مَا تَنْقَلِبُ عِزَافٍ

"A simple mat (*simma*) will not turn into a richly decorated one (*'izāf*)". 'You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear'. 'You cannot turn chalk into cheese'.

No. 573 (II, 37); J 135 سَمَّةٌ وَمِجْجَانٌ قَالُوا ضَعْنٌ وَبَيْتٌ لَجْنَارِيفٍ قَالُوا حَصْنٌ

"A palm leaf mat and a staff with a hooked head – they said: household furniture. A nest of black ants – they said: a fort". Everyone has things in proportion to his position and capacity.

### 2.7.2 Other tools and places:

No. 2042 (III, 270)

(٦٨) الْمِغْبَرَةُ غَطَاها قَحَفٌ

"The date-fodder pot's cover is a crock". Harmony; congruity. Same as (65).

<sup>27</sup> Similar in meaning to the classical proverb: *uṣb wa-lā ba'ir* (Ya'qūb 1995: IV, 365).

<sup>28</sup> In Rheinhardt's transcription: *hūwe muhrāfe ulumhārīf ydummēnšī semīn*.

<sup>29</sup> These can be proper names.



No. 1816 (III, 204)

(٦٩) مَا وَرَا الْمَسَاطِيحِ حَبَّةٌ

There is not one date outside the date drying area. Disappointment; futility.

## 2.8 Activity in connection with tools

## 2.8.1 Palm leaf baskets:

No. 86 (I, 95)

(٧٠) اللَّهُ مَا يَنْزِلُ بِزَبِيلٍ

"God does not provide by baskets". (a) You have to work hard for everything; (b) What is given by God is not measured, but is given bountifully.

No. 231 (I, 183)

(٧١) بُو يَفْتَحُ حَبَّةً/دَبَّةً مَا تَكْفُرُهُ/تَعْقُرُهُ حَبَّةٌ

"Who can tackle a basket/tin [full of dates] will not be frightened by one". Capability of doing great things.

No. 194 (I, 164)

(٧٢) بُو مَا يَدِّي فَتَقْفِعْتَهُ مَا تَهْمَنِي صَفِيعَتُهُ

"Whose date basket I do not put my hand in, I do not worry about his slap". 'Least said soonest mended'.

No. 1114 (II, 314); J 16; R 50<sup>30</sup>

(٧٣) كُلْنَاشْ يَسْأَعِنَّةً وَعَقْتِنَاشْ وَرَا الْعِنَّةَ

"We have eaten [dates from] you, O basket, and thrown you behind the collapsing tent". Said of an ungrateful person.

No. 2736 (IV, 210); J 320<sup>31</sup>

(٧٤) يَوْمَ النَّاسِ تَخِيظُ ثَوْبٌ أَنَا ضَرَبْتُ تَكَارِيرَ فِلْمَرَحْلَةِ

"When people sew [fine] cloth, I have been braiding the edges of a date basket". Inappropriate behaviour.

## 2.8.2 Palm leaf mats:

No. 1025 (II, 274)

(٧٥) كَسَرَ الْخُرْسُ بِكَشَفِ السَّمَةِ

"The pot is broken [only] if the mat is unfolded". Mutual exchange; condition; also revenge.

No. 1019 (II, 271); J 204

(٧٦) كَثِيرٌ فَلِعِزَافٍ غَمٌ فَلِابْطُنٍ

"Plenty on the food mat, but sadness in the stomach". A plentiful but profitless thing; quantity without quality.

No. 1863 (III, 219)

(٧٧) مَا يَشْتَلُ لِعِزَافٍ إِلَّا مِنْ يَشْبَعِ لِعِيَالٍ

"The food mat is removed only if the children satisfy their appetite". Advice to provide ample opportunity and to act according to the norms (of eating).

<sup>30</sup> The beginning of the proverb according to Jayakar is: *kilnā minniš yā s'īnna*, whereas Reinhardt gives the following version: *yā s'ē'īnne kelēne mmā fiš u'aqqēnābiš qafe l'īnne*.

<sup>31</sup> *takārīr*: a braid made from two silk strings of different colours, generally sewn to the neck or front of a shirt.

2.8.3 *Palm leaf sacks:*No. 2508 (IV, 116); B 26 (38)<sup>32</sup>

(٧٨) يَا رَمَضَانَ دُوكْ جَرَابِكْ

"Hey Ramaḍān! Take your date-sack"! Foolishness; disapproval of incorrect behaviour; acquiescence.

No. 309 (I, 233)

(٧٩) جَرَوْ وَطَايِحْ مِنْ خَنْصَفَةٍ

"A puppy falling out of a sack". Indifference, unconcern.

No. 1695 (III, 166)

(٨٠) مَا رَامَيْتْ حَلِجْرَابْ دَارَتْ عَلَى الْجِزْلَةِ<sup>33</sup>

"When she [a she-camel] could not carry a large sack of dates, she turned to a half one". Everyone must work according to his capacity.

No. 2729 (IV, 208); J 318

(٨١) يَوْمَ مَا رَامَيْتْ عَلَى النَّجْرَابِ دَارَتْ عَلَى الْجِزْلِ / الْجِزْلَةِ

A version of (80).

2.8.4 *Palm frond sheets:*

No. 2451 (IV, 94)

(٨٢) وَحَدَّةٌ تَنْسَبُ وَوَحْدَةٌ تَنْسَفُ

"One lays the foundations of a sheet made palm fronds, the other makes the sheet". Cooperation.

No. 2737 (IV, 210)

(٨٣) يَوْمَ النَّاسِ طَوَّتْ دَعُونَهَا جَا لِفْغْرَابِ يَنْسَطُّ

"When people folded up their sheets [on which they dried the dates], came the crows to spread out [the dates on the *masāṭih*]". Misdemeanour. The crow embodies negative values<sup>34</sup>.2.8.5 *Catchment-hole for date syrup:*

No. 1909 (III, 229)

(٨٤) مَا يُوْدِعُهَا الطَّلَلُ

"He does not throw it [the date] into the catchment-hole". He has nothing to hide.

3. Terms related to the date and the date palm<sup>35</sup>

## 3.1 Dates

سَح (42) dates; equivalent of تَمْر

حَبَّة (69; 71) one date

حَامِضَةٌ (48) sour date

حَشَفَ (حَشْف) (45; 46) dry, shrivelled date which can only be used as fodder; SA *haṣaf* dates of inferior quality

<sup>32</sup> For the probable origin of the word *dok*, see Reinhardt 1894:31 and Jayakar 1889:872. The story behind the saying is the following: A husband brought home a sack of dates and told his wife: 'This is for Ramaḍān', meaning the month. A few days later, when the husband was out, somebody came to the house looking for the husband (or according to another version, asking for alms). The wife asked his name, and when he said that his name was Ramaḍān, she gave him the sack of dates. When the husband returned, and was informed of what had happened, he was aghast but could do nothing.

<sup>33</sup> "to be able". يَوْمَ، رَامَ

<sup>34</sup> On the observation of crows in connection with dates, see the note to proverb (20).

<sup>35</sup> Numbers in brackets refer to the serial number of proverbs as appear above. The term's occurrence in Brockett 1985 has always been marked. References are to entry numbers in Brockett's Vocabulary. Owing to the small amount of words, the entries are arranged in strict alphabetical order under the headings. SA stands for Standard Arabic.

- خلالة (55); B 454 *xalēl*; one *xalēle* dates in the second of the five stages of ripening, green but edible
- دَلْكَة (52) a handful of pressed dates (without pits); cf. B 513 *delek*, *yidlik* to squeeze rice into a ball in the palm of the hand while eating; and B 514 *madlūke/medlūk* spiced, kneaded dates with the stones removed
- رَطْب (2) fully ripe dates; cf. B 280 *rtab* the fifth stage of ripening; and B 605 to produce ripe dates
- سَح (49; 50) / سَح (57) / سَح (42; 44; 56) / one: سَحَّة (53); B 719 *subh/sehh* preserved, semi-dried, ripe dates = pan-Arabic *tamr*; also cf. B 280: the five stages of ripening: *hbaybu*, *halēl*, *bisr*, *qārīn*, *rtab/qayz*
- صَبَّة (46; 47) heap of dates before they are packed; J 250 *subba*
- عَسَل (57) date honey, syrup derived from pressed dates; also called *dibis*
- فَاسَّة (48) rotten, shrivelled date (assimilation from فاسدة); the verb فَسَّ (47) means in connection with dates: to dry rot, shrivel
- مَتِينَدِي (50) the exact equivalent of سَح; from Swahili *mtende*
- مَرِيَس (43) date syrup made of water and dates, of very high nutritional value
- مَغْبَرَة (68) (a) fodder for cattle, cooked in an earthenware pot and containing dates or date pits and fish (b) see below under the tools; B 1150 *gubār* a fodder given to livestock on the coast, mainly composed of banana-leaves; date stones; burnt *kereb*, palm-thorns and -fibre; and sometimes anchovies
- نَدْحَة (58) date; the same as *tamra*; cf. SA اِنْدَحْ, دَح to fill (the belly: food); to be swollen (belly)

### 3.2 The date palm

نَخْلَة (3; 9; 12; 14; 15; 16; 21) a date palm; B 1525 *nahl/naḥal* date palms; palm garden, by synechdoche

مال (5; 8; 32) date palms (cf. the introduction of the present article and esp. fn 3)

#### 3.2.1 Its species

صِلَانِيَة (20) an excellent kind, frequently cultivated at the coastal regions of Oman; cf. B 605 *yertab is-Ṣallāni* the Ṣallāni-palm's dates are ripe

قَرَض (6; 44) a date palm giving dates of good quality; emblem of the *wilāya* of Samā'il; the main centres of this species are Nizwa and Rustāq; its dates are also exported

قَش [قشوش] (17) a species of date palms to which several sub-species belong; B 1295 *qašš (qšūš)* a self-seeded young date-palm. An inland word. The Bāṭina-equivalent is *nešu*, *Gešš* being a particular species of Bāṭina date palm. Cf. also B 1339, where two other species, *Qašš Zebed* and *Ummusille* are mentioned.

قَش سَوِيح (23) a species common in the Zāhira region; its leaves are very feeble and thin

مِرَنَاج (24; 29) the ripening of its red dates just precedes the season of *qayz*

نُفَال (25) its delicious dates ripen at the beginning of *qayz*; this type has been chosen as an emblem of the *wilāya* of Damā' wa-ṭ-Ṭā'iyyīn; B 1238 *tiṣqi in-Naḡāla* the Naḡāl-palm's flowers are opening; according to Jayakar (J 106) its dates are the commonest variety of dates in Oman

#### 3.2.2 Its types

صَرِيْمَة (10) (diminutive of حَرْمَة) young palm-cutting; B 929 *ṣarm; ṣarme* one; a palm-garden, by synechdoche

عَوَّانة (13; 18) very tall palm; B 1143 'awēn tall, untended old palms; 'awēna one; Reinhardt (1894:119) 'wāne a tall palm<sup>36</sup>

فَحْل (22) male palm (capable of fertilising); B 1207 *faḥal*

نَشْنُو (22) a date palm which grows in itself without being planted and which does not belong to any of the known species; B 1549 *nešu* (*nešwēn*) a self-seeded young date palm; cf. B 1295 *qašš* (*qšūš*) an inland word for *nešu* (while the latter is used in the Bāṭina)

### 3.2.3 Its parts

جَنْدُع (40) stem, stump

جوس (12; 13) the bottom of the stem/stump closest to the earth

خَصَف (65) palm leaves; cf. B 428 *ḥṣāfe* (*ḥaṣaf/ḥṣaf*) an empty sack woven from palm leaves, for *suḥḥ*

خوصة (23; 33; 37) palm leaf; SA (*ḥūs*, *ḥūṣa*)

زور (59) palm leaf midribs; B 692 *zor*

شيزة (40) part of the bast/fibre of the stump

عَذُوق (27) / عَزُوق (28) bunch of dates; date-raceme; B 1077 'idiq/'idq/'udq ('udūq) the whole date-raceme, whether only a little more advanced than the flower stage, or bearing fully ripened *suḥḥ*

عِسْقة (41) date-stalk; date-raceme; B 1092 'asq ('asaq), 'asqa one; (a) the stalks of the female palm-flowers, and later of the racemes (b) the raceme itself, once the dates are removed; J 207

عِسْقة (31) a cluster of dates on the stalk; cf. 'idq of which it seems to be a variant

عُندُر (22); B 1160 *gudr/gadr* the newest leaves in the centre

عُرُق (31) / عُرُوق (28) root

كُرْب (34) / كُرْبَة (35) bases of palm branches; B 1358 *kereb/karb* [they can be] left on the trunk during *quṣṣe*, or cut off during *ḥlēbe*. Used for fuel; fodder; net-floats.

ليف (30) / ليفة (19) / ليفوه (38) diminutive of ليفة fibre

نَبَات (1; 3) pollen obtained from the flowers of the male date palm; B 1503 *nabēt/nebēt* male date-palm-flowers

### 3.2.4 Its cultivation

يَجِدُّو (لَهَا) (39) they cut for her the date raceme; B 219 *gedd*, *ygidd* to harvest the whole raceme of dates ('idq) by cutting its stalk ('asqa)

يَحْبِتْ (12, 13, 14) / حَتَات (51) drop, droop, fall (fruit); B 282 *ḥitt/yḥitt*, *il-ḥatēt*; cf. Reinhardt 1894:260

دَوَّاس (54) one who stamps down dates; cf. B 538 *id-dūs/id-dawēs(e)* stamping down

دوسَة (54) stamping down of dates until they become pressed

سَجْل (7) to support a falling palm with a prop سَجْلَة generally made of the trunk of a date palm and a cross stick

شراطة (30) to cut off the bases of palm branches and fibre from the palm trunk; B 825 *ṣarāṭa*, a mountain-synonym of *ḥlēbe*; J 316 removing palm branch bases from the trunk with a *maḥlab* and tearing off the fibre and throwing it down

طنا (29) the selling of the date-crop at an auction; B 1036 *ṭana*, *yiṭna*, *iṭ-ṭani*

يَعْقُ (15) to shoot; to drop (fruit); cf. B 1112 'aqq, *y'nuqq*; SA *a'aqqa*

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Ibn Sīda III, 215.18, as quoted above on p. 30.

[فَسِيل] (7; 10) / فاسِلْنِهَا (4) to plant a palm<sup>37</sup>  
 قَسِيل (11; 26) the cultivation, planting of palms; cf. *fasīla* 'palm seedling, palm shoot' (Ibn Sida, *Muḥaṣṣaṣ* III, 210.6 and also 210.7-8 / *iftasaltu l-fasīla*)  
 هَمْبَارَة (54) = دوسة. A word of Persian origin, cf. *ambār* 'full to the brim'; reservoir, etc.

### 3.3 Baskets, mats and other utensils woven from palm leaves

جَبِيَّة (71) basket for the storage of dates and other fruit  
 جُرَاب (78; 80; 81) date sack; B 227 *yṛāb/ḡrāb* (*gurbān*) a sack containing *suḥḥ/temr*; without contents it is called *ḥṣāfe* or *kse*  
 جَزْلَة (80; 81) date sack, half the size of جُرَاب; according to J 318 it can also mean any piece cut off from a جُرَاب  
 حِظَار (60) fence  
 خَصْفَة (79) large sack for the storage of dates cf. خَصَف; B 428 *ḥṣāfe* an empty sack for *suḥḥ*  
 دُعُون (36; 83); B 506 *dān/d'an* (*d'ūn*) sheeting, made from midribs of palm leaves tied into lengths and used for housing, drying dates on, etc.  
 زَفْنَة (36); cf. B 678 *zefen, yizfin, iz-zufūn* to tie clipped palm fronds into sheets; SA *zifn* palm frond sheeting  
 زَبِيل (61; 70) small basket used for dates and other fruit; B 657 *zabīl*  
 سَاعِيَّة (73) / سَيْعِيَّة (32) small basket made of green palm leaves and used for dates; usually it is used only once  
 [سَف] [or rather صَف] (82) to make sheets سَفَة/صَفَة (generally from palm fronds)<sup>38</sup>; B 935 *ṣuff, yṣuff, aṣ-sfif* to stamp down newly cropped *suḥḥ* and/or pack them into bags  
 سِمَة (65; 66; 67; 75) mat made for different purposes (sitting, travel, praying) and in different patterns; B 126 *simme*; J 134, 135 *summa*  
 شَتِيَّة (64) (diminutive from شَت) conical lid for covering dates; B 808 *ṣett*  
 صَفَة (82) palm frond sheet  
 ظَرْفَة (63) basket, very narrow at the top  
 عُرَاف (66; 76; 77) richly decorated, round mat for bowls of food at a meal; B 1089 *'izāf*  
 قَنْبَة (72) big, round basket for dates, large at the bottom, narrow at the top; SA *qaf'a*  
 مَخْرَافَة (مَخَارِيف) (62) basket; cf. SA *mihraf* (*mahārīf*) 'basket for picking out the best dates'  
 مَرْحَلَة (74) basket  
 [تَنْسِب] (82) to lay the foundations of a sheet made of palm fronds

### 3.4 Other tools, containers, and places used in connection with dates

خُرْسَة (52) / خُرْس (75) large, earthenware pot for storing dates; B 410 *ḥars* (*ḥrūs*) smaller than a *ḥill*

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Brockett 1985:17-19, § 4.1.2 where the presence of *nūn* before the objective suffix of an active participles is being dealt with in some detail.

<sup>38</sup> It has already been noted by Jayakar (1889:652) that in Omani written material the letters *sīn* and *ṣād* sometimes take the place of each other.

- طَلَل (84) catchment-hole<sup>39</sup>; B 1031 *tlāl* a catchment-hole for date-syrup (*dibs*, 'asal) in the floor of a room; the cropped *suhh* are piled on matting (*gfāra*) over the *tlāl*, left to secrete for a week, and then stamped and packed into *hsāf*
- مَسَاطِج [سَطِج] (83) to put the dates on the مَسَاطِج
- مَسَاطِج (69) (sing. مَسَطَاح) a flattened area where dates are spread out for drying; it is surrounded by thorny fences to protect the dates; B 738 *mistāh*
- مَقْبُرَة (68) (a) see above under 'dates' (b) earthenware pot in which the fodder of the same name is cooked and given to the cattle
- مِقْلَاع (56) a tool used to separate stored dates
- نَضْد (47) place for the piling up of dates; also a heap of date bags arranged one over another with the object of draining off the treacle which oozes out of the dates; SA *naḍad* pile

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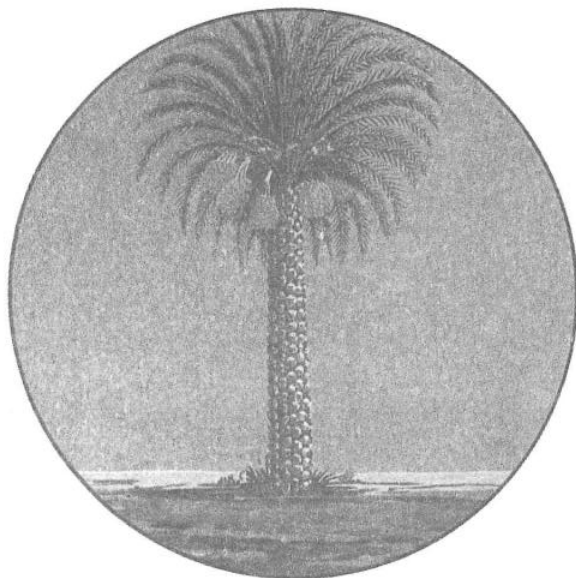
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<sup>39</sup> Not only houses, but most forts in Oman have a date storage room with channels for collecting the date syrup (or date honey).

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The Mbessili date palm, emblem of the wilāya of Bidya.



The Nağāl date palm, emblem of the *wilāya* of Damā' wa-ṭ-Ṭā'īyyīn.



The Farḍ date palm, emblem of the *wilāya* of Samā'il.



## النعش<sup>١</sup>

صابر العادلي

بودابست

ثمت واقعتان - كنت شاهدا عليهما جرتا في قرية "تلوانه" الواقعة في دلتا مصر إلى الجنوب من "منوف" والشمال من سنتريس وشطانوف، وتطل من الشرق على "البحر الأعمر" لكونه أشبه ببحيرة لا تصب ولا تفتح على مجرى.

والتاريخ الشفاهي للقرية يزعم أن الاسم هو "تل وانه" وأن وانه هذه كانت أميرة فرعونية. وفي مدونات القرن الثامن عشر، يرد الاسم هكذا "ثالوانا". واستبدال الثاء تاء هو منحنى لغوي مصري. جرت الواقعة الأولى في منتصف الأربعينات من القرن الماضي، وكانت الانتخابات النيابية في معمرتها. وما أثار أعظم الدهش هو مقدم موكب (زفة) انتخابية يتصدرها نعش تقليدي بكل المعايير، محمولا على أعنة فلاحين جلدة وفوق النعش رجل جالس لا تخلو هيئته من مهابة. صاحب الموكب الهرج والمرج وخالط زغاريد النسوة المستبشرة عنان السماء. ورغم أن النعش كان يحمل حيا لا ميتا، وأنه تحول إلى منبر نقالين لشخص ذي حيثية يراد له أن يرى، ولخطابه أن يصل. رغم ذلك فإن الاستياء لم يحل بأحد، ليس لوقع الابتداء أو الابتكار، ولا لتمييز شعب عريق بالمرونة فحسب، كما سنرى. وانفضت "العاركة" بسلام كما يقال في هذه الديار. ولم يحرك أحد ساكننا لاجترار مقدسا في بلاد قامت حضارتها على عقائد ما وراء الموت. ومولع أهلها بتوقير الموتى. ولم يمض وقت طويل إلا وقد انتصب نفس النعش أمام أحد الدور وكان هذه المرة بيتة بحلة من بهاء تأخذ بجماع النفس، مؤلفة من سبعة عقود من السعف الغض، مضفور عليها كل متاح من الزهور الحوشية من أقحوان وعليق وحتى نوار البرسيم ومن ساسابان وصفصاف وحوور وكافور.

ولقد حمل النعش هذه المرة عذراء اخترمها الموت غرقى فقد (أشتهأها) جني "بئر العبادله" فيما يزعمون، فقد تزلزلت قدمها وهي تسقى مواشيها عند الغروب. كانت جنازتها مزيجا من رقص فاجع، ينفرط له القلب ونواح أليم. وقد راحت أمها والقريبات يلطخن رؤوسهن بطين الترع ويلطمن ويفردن مناديلهن الزرقاء أمام وجوههن. فيما تذرع الرجال يصبر عظيم متمتمين: إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون.

<sup>١</sup> النعش محفة من خشب لحمل الموتى طولها ٢١٠ سم عادة وعرضها ٥٥ سم لها أربع قوائم ارتفاع الواحدة منها ٦٠ سم. ويمتد من كل ركن ذراع طول الواحدة ٦٠ سم، تحمل المحفة منها. والمحفة مسورة بسياج (كورنيش) خشبي من كل جوانبها عدا الخلفي منها تسهلا لوضع الجثمان عليهما. ارتفاع الكورنيش ٤٠ سم وقد يزدان النعش بنقوش مثل لفظ الجلالة. ومن أطرف ما صادفت عبارة "ولقد خاب من اقترى". "وأنا سرير المنايا".

<sup>٢</sup> عوض، ١٩٩٣: ١٨٣، يكتيبها Lane (1978:510) بالفاء.

<sup>٣</sup> زغرودة (ج) زغاريد: صيحات حادة متناغمة تطلقها النساء في فوره العاطفة، وعند الطرب والفرح. أصلها: رى رى رى = اسم الإله "رع"، بالقطبية. أي إنها تهتف باسم الإله. وهكذا فإن اسم العشب الطبي: (Pulicaria arabica Coss.) رعاع أيوب معناه = رع رب أيوب انظر نظير ١٩٦٧: ٩٩ وهو يستخدم في الأربعاء السابق لعيد شم النسيم بنقعه في الماء والاعتسال به، ويزعم أن أيوب قد شفى باستخدامه.

<sup>٤</sup> عن طقوس الندب، والرقص الجنائزي وتلطيف الوجه والصدر بالطين Herodotos الكتاب الثاني فقرة ٨٥، نظير Blackman 1978:99، ١٩٦٧: ١٠١.

ومضت الأيام حتى كان عام ١٩٥٧ ليستولى النعش - من جديد على أبواب أهل القرية، بل وكل القرى المجاورة. "فيشا النصارى" "السرويه" "والخضره". ولا عجب، فقد حمل النعش هذه المرة "معوضاً". وصدر عن النعش ما لا يصدق عقل. "معوض": كان أحذب، قميئاً، زري الهيئته، قبيح الخلقة، أشعث اللحية، أعمص. يرتدي زعبوطاً تجلد من سيل مخاطه ولعابه. وطرطورا من اللباد أسوأ حالا. كان معتوها وعييا. لا يعرف من الكلام إلا صوت حشرجة، أشبه بنشيج فظيع. كنا نحن الصبية - قد اعتدناه وقد اعتادنا بدوره. كان يعرف مقدمه، من زفة الأطفال، لا تعوزهم الغلظة، يرجمونه بالطوب، هازئين. وما كان يرد إساءة. ولا يؤذي نملة<sup>٥</sup>.

كان منا من يهرع إلى "مشنة البتاو"<sup>٦</sup> فيختلس واحداً ليقدمها له. وكان عرفانه لا يعدو نفس النشيج الموجع يشيعه سيل من لعابه. كانت زفته تأخذ غايتها عند "كوبري السارود". وبانعطاف معوض إلى الجبانة ليهجع في حرارة قيظ لا يرحم، كانت الصبية تنصرف عنه إلى شتات من لهو آخر فقد كانت تخشى الجبانة بالفطرة.

### النعش - النبوءة

لم يكن أصل الرجل أو فصله معروفاً. من أين يأتي؟ كثر في ذلك القول. زعموا أنه "فيشاوي" حيناً ومن "السرو" أحياناً أو من القرى الواقعة إلى الشمال. ولم يره أحد يغادر القرية ولعله لم يغادرها قط. وكان كمن تنشق عنه الأرض. كان الرجال يجتهدون في تعيين قرية موطننا، أما النسوة فكان يتغامزن ضاحكات بكلمات (مشبوهة) افتاتهن الرجل<sup>٧</sup>.

وكان من عقلاء القرية رجل يدعى "الشيخ الغلام". كان لا يعاني من شظف العيش. والأدهى أنه كان مجرباً. وضليعاً في إعداد الأحجية والتعاويد للمحتاجين والمحتاجات خاصة النسوة العاقرات. وكان هذا فضلاً منه عظيمًا. ولقد رأيته مرة يكتب بقلم (الكوبيا) على ظهر فلاح بائس، أرعن المزاج وحاده به جنه، تذهب بعقله كلما اشتد القيظ فيحرن ويشور ويجرر زوجته من شعرها على أرض تشققت بفعل الجفاف، تزحف في شقوقها السعالي والجرذان. وأغلب الظن أنه كتب بعض آيات الشفاء<sup>٨</sup>. ومن عجب أن الرجل كان ينهد ويهمد - ربما بفعل التعب أو من اليأس ويجني شيخنا ثمار العرفان، وينزل منزل التوقير في نفوس الفلاحين.

ويزعمون أن رقاءه وتعاويذه "وصوفه" لم تكن دوماً عديمة الجدوى، ويزعمون أن بركته قد لحقت بأكثر من امرأة، لم تذق طعم الأمومة.

وكانت عادة "الغلام" أن يطلب من مريدته (العاقر) ضمن ما يطلب الاستحمام يوم الجمعة، ساعد الأذان (الأذان) بالضبط بمياه من (بئر سيدى حكيم) في منوف. وتعود من هناك رأساً، إلى جبانة القرية حيث تجد في شقوق أحد المقابر المهجورة "صوفة" - ندفة من صوف رطبة - فتلبسها - وتتوكل على الله. أي تولجها قدر المستطاع إلى أقصى مهبلها.

والحصيفات والشمطاوات من أهل القرية ما كن - حاشا لله - ليتركن الأمر دون الغمز واللمز، الذي يجعل العقل أحياناً يتألق بتأويل الحدس.

<sup>٥</sup> في وصف هؤلاء الموعودين "بالولاية"، انظر Lane 1978:228. وهذا الوصف ما زال مطابقاً لهؤلاء (المرشحين) حتى يومنا هذا، ومعوض نموذج مثالي في عبادة الأولياء وبقايا العقائد السابقة في الإسلام: Goldziher 1881: Ch. 3.

<sup>٦</sup> مشنة بتاو = سلة خبز، كلمتان فرعونيتان لم تتغيرا. نظير ٩٤:١٩٦٧.

<sup>٧</sup> الكرامة: ما يأتيه (الولي) من خوارق، التواجد في مكانين في نفس الوقت، السير على الماء كما فعل الولي (أبو حصيره) في دمنهور، انظر العادلي وحواس ١٩٧٠.

<sup>٨</sup> آيات الشفاء هي السور التالية: ١٤٠٩، ٥٧، ١٦، ٦٩، ١٧، ٨٢، ٢٦، ٨٠، ٤٤، ٤٠.

أما الرجال (القوامون) فتضاحكوا من شطحات نسوة قليلات العقل والدين. معلنين على الملأ، ومتسلحين باليقين الذكوري، أن "الغلام" قد بلغ من الأمر عتيا وأنه وإن كان به فضلة لجماع فليس به فضله لتندية صوفة.

ولأن الغلام كان تقيا ورحيما وميسورا وأبتر (بلا ولد) فإن معوضا وجد في داره ملاذا آمنا، من صبية عابثين، وكسرة خبز وشرية ماء وركنا يهجع إليه. وهكذا فقدت القرية ملمحا احتفاليا سلبيا بتوقف زفة معوض. ذلك أن دار الغلام كانت تقع على الطرف الشمالي الشرقي للقرية عند (مسفة سابلة) مسقة سابلة.

حتى كان اليوم المشهود "ودبت" الزغاريد - انطلقت - عند دار الغلام وظننا أن البشارة قد وصلت بنجاح تلميذ في الابتدائي أو طالب في الثانوي أو أن محكمة قد حكمت لطرف "بالعدل". ولكن الزغاريد كانت لموت معوض، ولا يحسبن أحد أن نسوة قريتنا من فظاظة القلب وقسوته ليفرحن في موت شماته، خاصة وأن معوضا لم يرد قط إساءة، ولا رفع عكازه يوما دفاعا، لبؤسه على الأقل. على العكس فإن "أبا" ريالة هذا المعتوه العي. كان "وليا" طهورا، عندما استبان لنا الرشد: موته وجنازته؛ وحسم أمر "ولايته" - كونه ليا - بعد دفنه. ولا نحسب أن هناك من يزعم أنه يعرف كيف استلم معوض أركان ولايته ولكن خبر موته سرى سريان النار في الهشيم وتحلق الجمع بدار الغلام واعتلت الصبية نوافذها وتسلق سقف الدار من أسطح الجيران والمؤكد أن معوضا غسّل كما يليق بولي وكفن في أدراج ثلاثة. وانتصب النعش من جديد على باب دار الغلام. وخرج معوض محمولا على أكتاف رجال ذاهلة تبسمل وتحوقل<sup>٩</sup> مستسلمة منبهة بالمعجزة: "بركاتك يا سيدي معوض" شفاعتك<sup>١٠</sup> يا شيخ، سماح يا مولانا. كان يوم الحشر - ومن يومها ونحن نورخ عظيم الأحداث بهذا اليوم المشهود ولم يخب (ولينا) رجاء فلاحينا، المشرقين بنور الإيمان وروح المعجزة. فما كاد موكبه وعلى رأسه النعش يمضي خطوات في "درب الغيبة"، في طريقه إلى الجبانة، حتى شعر حاملوه - حسب زعمهم - بأن جبال الأرض حلت على كواهلهم، وركع حاملو النعش من أمام. واختلط الحابل بالنابل وجأرت الحناجر بذكر معوض والله وساد هوس ديني أرعن. وتعلقت الجماهير بالجثمان والنعش "بركاتك يا قطب". "سامحني يا سيدي معوض إن كنت سهوت وأسأت" عبارة طالب أزهرى. "العفو من شيم الكرام" هكذا أفصحت اللغة عن مضمونها الراقي في شكله الأسمى وكنت أحسب أننا أفقر عباد الله لغة وتدينا. والتقف الجمع هذه التعبيرات مستبشرا<sup>١١</sup>.

وتقدم الشيخ الغلام من نعش ربيبه وجعل رأسه فوق رأسه المغطى وغمغم بما لا يعلمه إلا الله. واستقامت الأمور. فلم يخطئ الناس تفسير إشارته، "العلامة". وهب الرجال بالنعش الذي قام بدورة كاملة إلى الخلف والجمع ذهول والزغاريد لا تني تلعلع والتضرعات تلعو. وارتد الجميع إلى دار الغلام: "بيودع يا عيني بيودع حبيبته". هتفت امرأة تقصد أن معوضا يودع الغلام وداره، واستقر النعش على الأرض. وحل الصمت والترقب حتى انه كان يمكن سماع "سقوط الإبرة". وانطلق الموكب يقوده النعش طائرا حيننا متباطئا أحيانا عنيدا حرونا حيننا. توقف النعش على أبواب دور عُرِف أطفالها بالرحمة، وتقديم البتاو والجينة القريش لمعوض. وأخيرا وصل الموكب

<sup>٩</sup> (أبو رياله) تعبير مصري لوصف البلهاء وبطاء العقل والصغار الذين يسيل لعابهم دوما وكذا مخاطهم، ويسخر الصبية من بعضهم بترديد "أبو الرياله عالسياه". أي يمتد لعابه حتى جيبه السفلى من جلبابه على جانبه الأيمن.

<sup>١٠</sup> بسمل وحوقل: سمى اسم الله فقال "لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله".

<sup>١١</sup> الشفاعة: هي سعي صاحب مكانة لدى آخر لخير طرف ثالث (محمد شفيع المسلمين لدى الله).

<sup>١٢</sup> عن سلوك الجماعة في الزحام انظر Durkheim 1938:5, Freud 1959:Ch.2

إلى الجبانة. وكانت "مقبرة الغلام" قد جهزت لاستقباله. وأقيمت صلاة الميت لمعوض. وقد اعتلت الصبية والنسوة القبور منتهكة حرمتها، وبدا وكأنه يوم الحشر. وعندما كان معوض يُلَقِّن الإرشادات الأخيرة التي لا غنى عنها لرحلته وحيدا: "إذا سألك الملكان فقل: أنا عبد الله، أموت على دينه، وأشهد أن محمدا رسوله" ١٣ ... وإذا بصبي "مشاغب" يقول: أنت "بتفششه"، "يقصد تلقنه الجواب" "وهو عارف ربنا أحسن منك". وانهالت صفة على قفا الصغير. وانتهت "الدفة" بالسلام. واضطربت الناس، وانفض الجمع. كان للمعجزة فعل السحر وغمر الجميع الرضا. وبدأت الوفود تصل من كل القرى المجاورة. راكبة الحمير "والكومبيلات" وعربات النقل، زاعمين أنهم أحق بمعوض لأنه من بلدياتهم. وثار لجاج ثم خصام وشحان. وفي صباح الباكر كان من أغرب ما سمعنا، أن قبر معوض وجد مفتوحا وأن جثمان "المبارك" لم يكن هناك.

ورضي التلوانيون بضريح صغير خال. واضطربت الروايات عن أن "معوضنا" قد طار إلى دياره. وثمة ضريحان في السرو، وفيشا شاهدة على (ولاية) الرجل.

إن ظاهرة النعش "الطائر والحرون"، معروفة في كل مصر، وتكاد تكون نمطية. وإنها ولا بد تستمد حيويتها من مصر التقاليد، ومن حقيقة واقع الموت، ومحاولة الانتصار عليه، بابتداع الخلود. والأبدية فالتحنيط والبعث فحتى الإله يموت ويبعث (أسطورة إيزيس وأوزيريس). وهذه الظاهرة تحمل من ذكريات الماضي البعيد الكثير، كما أن النعش يمثل المرحلة الأخيرة من علاقه الميت بالأحياء. فتسعى الجماعة طبقا لنظامها المعلوماتي بتأمين هذا الانقطاع خوفا أو احتراما للميت. وذلك بتصفية الحسابات بين الطرفين، بإشباع حاجات الميت المعروفة سلفا، بتأويل للعلامات. هذا وتعرف كل الشعوب تقريبا، نظاما أو نظاما، لتأمين علاقات الفصل، والارتباط بين الأحياء والموتى: نظم لاستحضار أرواح الموتى (السلة) زعم البعض بظهور الميت لأشخاص بعينهم، (Blackman 1995:95-96) فتظهر قتيلة لأخيها وأما، كاشفة عن قاتلها وموضع دفنها - وحالات أخرى لا تحصى. إن معطيات حياة القتيلة وعلاقتها بزوجها... الخ. هو النظام المعلوماتي الجمعي، والتأويل هو حل شفرات المعلومات الكودية. بالحدس شبه اليقيني لعقل باطن مشغول ووعي متحفز.

وفي حالتنا هذه فإن القاتل المحتمل هو الزوج. أما شريكه فإنه لا الأم ولا الأخ تكتن به. ولسنا بحاجة إلى التأكيد على أن العقل الباطن للحالم هو القوة المبدعة للحلم، وليس المرثى في الحلم. والتاريخ حافل بروايات عن نابهين، ومبرزين، حلوا معضلات، رياضية وفيزيائية وغيرها، في أحلامهم بفعل الانشغال والتوتر. وأية جماعة تدفن ميتا تعرف - فعليا وعاطفيا، بمطالب الميت. التي لم تتحقق وهي - أي الجماعة - مستعدة لإشباع بعض هذه الاحتياجات حتى بعد الموت. وإفادة (Lane 1978:510) تفضع وعي الجماعة (باعتقاد) الميت بحقه في مدفن أليق ... الخ. ومع ذلك فيبدو أن الضرورات الاقتصادية هي سيدة الموقف، وهكذا يجرى خداع الميت كذا! وتدويخه كذا! ثم الإسراع به (طائرا) إلى قبره المعد له. أي أن الجماعة تقوم "بالتشويش" على العلامات التي يرسلها الميت. إن العقل الجمعي هنا مبتذل، رخيص الفطنة، غيبي وناصح، شاطر.

يورد (Lane 1978:510) إفادة على قدر كبير من الخطورة، لم يتنبه لها أحد - ولا هو طبعا - فيما أعتقد - بإضاءة الظاهرة كلها:

١٣ (التلقين): آخر ارتباط فيزيقي بين الميت والأحياء، وفي تسجيلاتنا قام المؤذن بإرشاد الميت. لدى تلقي اللاحد له من رأسه وصدره، ليسجيه في قبره: يا عبد الله، إذا سألك الملكان فقل: إني عبد الله وأؤمن بدين رسول الله الله ربي لا أشرك به أحدا ... إلخ. وهذا شديد الشبه بما نشره Lane 1978: 517-518. ولكن شعلان (١٧٠:٢٠٠٠) يورد نصا أزهريا مدبجا سخيفا وطويلا ومصطنعا أشبه بموعظة الجمعة، يلقيه الملكن بعد الدفن وعلى جانب الآخر من القبر (الخلف) حتى يسمع الملكان أيضا. ولدينا من القرائن ما يؤكد أن هذا الطقس هو استمرار لطقس فتح الميت بعد انتهاء التحنيط - عندما يقوم كبير الكهنة بواسطة يد خشبية بفتح فم المومياء لتمكين صاحبها من النطق أمام محكمة أوزيريس (Budge 1972:194-9).

"The funeral of a devout sheykh, or of one of the great 'Ulama, is still more numerously attended, and the bier of such a person is not covered with a shawl. A welee is further honoured in his funeral by a remarkable custom. Women follow his bier, but instead of wailing, as they would after the corpse of an ordinary mortal, they rend the air with the shrill and quavering cries of joy called "zagháreet;" and if these cries are discontinued but for a minute, the bearers of the bier protest that they cannot proceed - that a supernatural power rivets them to the spot on which they stand."

إن معنى هذا، أن العقل الجمعي بعقيدته الراسخة يستعيد بالتداعيات ذكريات ظهور الإله - محمولا على محفة - متصدرا موكبا. وإن التمجيد الذي يحظى به إذا ذاك لاغنى عنه. رع... رع... رع... رى رى رى - راجع الملاحظة رقم (٣). المجد لـ "رى رى رى". تمجد اسمك يا "رى" أيها الرب. ولكن ثمة معضلة تحتاج لحل! من أين يا ترى للمصريين بهذا النظام العلاماتي المرجعي المؤسس على تذبذبات نعش تؤول على هذا النحو. ونعود إلى الواقعتين اللتين استهللنا بهما ورقتنا هذه الأولى مقدم موكب (المرشح - الإله) محمولا على محفة (النعش). ولنفهم الظاهرة علينا باكتشاف نظائرها المتوازية من الماضي والحاضر. إن الإله رع، أو آمون القابع في قدس أقداسه، كان يخرج وفق مواقيت محددة محمولا على قاربه - محفة. لزيارة نظائره من الآلهة الأخرى أو لمجرد الطواف بالبلاد (حج)<sup>١٤</sup>. ولما كان - وهو العليم المنزه عن الخطأ. والعدل يرد على أسئلة رعاياه وعباده التواقين إلى نبؤة تجلب عليهم الطمأنينة. سواء عند خروجه أو داخل قدس أقداسه. والأدبيات حافلة بالعشرات من: "استنباء الإله" من المغمورين والمبرزين. وحسبنا رحلة الاسكندر المرهقة والطويلة - سبعة أسابيع. في قلب الصحراء إلى واحة آمون - سيوه - طالبا نبؤة من (أبيه) آمون. وتوحد في (أبيه) الإله (ذا القرنين) ويتسمى هو الآخر بذى القرنين توحد في الإله.

وفي حال خروج الإله فإن نبوءاته كانت تتوسل (بإيماءات) النعش "شفرة" أن حاملي القارب - المحفة - كان عليهم التوقف من حين لآخر - للراحة على الأقل - وإن ذاك فإن طلاب النبوءات كانوا يتوجهون إلى الإله بأسئلتهم. كان المؤمن يسأل: هل العجل سليم فيشتريه؟ أين عنزته المفقودة؟ هل سينجب ابنا؟... الخ. فإذا كانت النبؤة إيجابية فإن صدر المحفة القارب كان يهبط إلى الأرض (يفعل الكهنة طبعاً) ناءوا وكأنهم تحت أثقال من رصاص. وإذا تقدم القارب المحفة كان الرد إيجابياً أيضاً وإذا ارتد فمعنى ذلك أن الإله قد رفض (Sauneron 1975:104-105). إن "التقليد" الذي وصفناه آنفاً هو ينبوع الذي استمد منه "النعش الطائر والحرون" أصوله. ولا تني الوقائع تتواتر عن "نعوش" تؤول تحركاتها الذاكرة الجمعية والوعي والمعلوماتية. وثمة واقعة حدثت في الخمسينات، حدث أن "الجماهير" أقدمت على قصاص (مشروع): قتل قريب الميت! ذلك أن النعش رفض المرور من وراء بيت القاتل ومن أمامه. مما أثار الشك فالحدس ثم اليقين وطبعت "الجماهير" عدالتها. Sauneron 1975:105-106 ترجم مقالا لصحيفة قاهرية بالواقعة.

والواقعة التي أوردها (Lane 1978:510) إنما تؤكد على أن الوعي والذاكرة الجمعية تسعى إلى تأمين التداعيات وتشبيهه، توحيد صاحب النعش المبرز (الولي) بالإله. وذلك بإطلاق صيحات التمجيد رع رع رع - رى رى رى "الزغاريد". تباركت يا رع. ولماذا اقتصر ذلك على النساء في

<sup>١٤</sup> لقد احتفظت الأقصر (طيبة) بنصيب مدهش من طقس خروج الإله محمولا على محفة - زورق. في الرابع عشر من شعبان (توفيق عفاثي مصري - إسلامي) فيما يطلق عليه مولد "سيدي أبي الحجاج" والاسم ليس الا ترجمة لخروج "آمون" كبير الآلهة حاجا إلى نظرائه من الأرباب الآخرين. وحيث يطوف موكب الإله "زورقه" - بعد خروجه من الضريح المصطنع القائم فوق معبد الكرنك - وتهتف الجماهير آمون... آمون... آمون. وجدير بالذكر - كمثال - وجود مركب فوق قبة مدفن الإمام الشافعي في مقام الإمام إلى الجنوب من القاهرة وغيره الكثير، ويسمى هذا (القارب)، المركب معدية الشيخ. انظر Blackman 1995:198 نظير وليم Sauneron 1975:45.

أيامنا فمرده أساسا إلى دور المرأة كمحامية عن التقاليد وعزلتها النسبية في مجتمع إسلامي واضطرار الرجال المختلطين بالفاتحين بأحكام الضرورة إلى تبني (سلوكهم). ولكنهم - أي المصريين - يحزنون ما لم تتصد النساء لهذا الدور وبالنسبة (لمعوض) فإن الظاهرة تتألف من موتيفات ثلاث تؤسس نمطا:

(١) المستضعف الأبله المجذوب العيي حبيب الله ومريده. الغائب العقل الموعود بالولاية لما أوردناه.

(٢) هذا (المتفرد) يحدد مسار جنازته. يرتد إلى بيت وليه. يتوقف بدور هؤلاء الصبية العطوفين عليه - (هذا كان نظاما معلوماتيا متاحا).

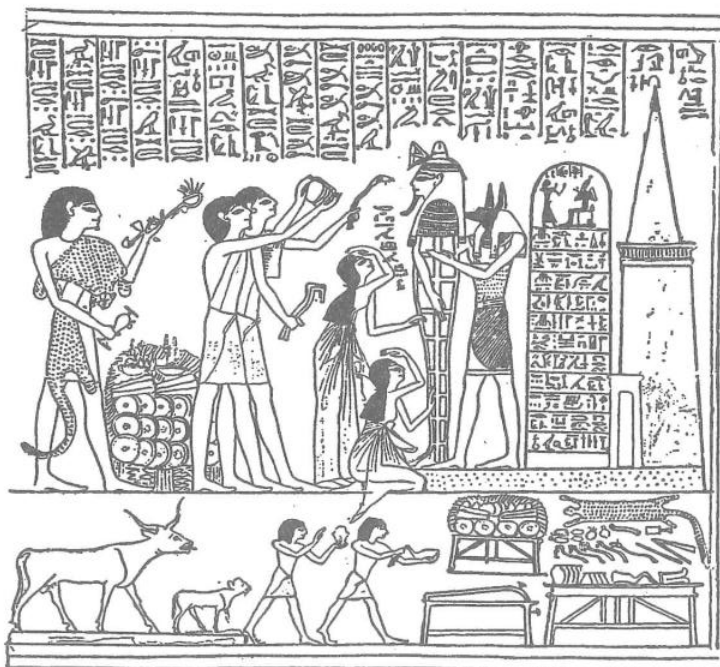
(٣) انفراج الموقف بطيران النعش بعد تصفية الميت حساباته مع الأحياء وإبلاغ رسالته. (هذا يذكرنا بشدة بموتيف السجادة الطائرة في الأحاديث الشعبية. ثم هجر الميت (الولي) قبره ليحل في بلاد أخرى أي بعثه. ووراء هذا التقليد بلا شك، بعث أزوريس<sup>١٥</sup>، وقبر يسوع المفتوح والخالي في أسطورة "المسيح".

ومن الغريب أن التقاليد والمعتقدات المتعلقة بالنعش و"حفلة الإله" ما زالت في عنفوان سيرورتها. وأن آلاف السنين لم تغير كثيرا من ملامح تجلياتها. ولا تفسير لدينا إلا تأجج العاطفة الدينية لدى المصريين وأن رع تحول لديهم إلى رب.

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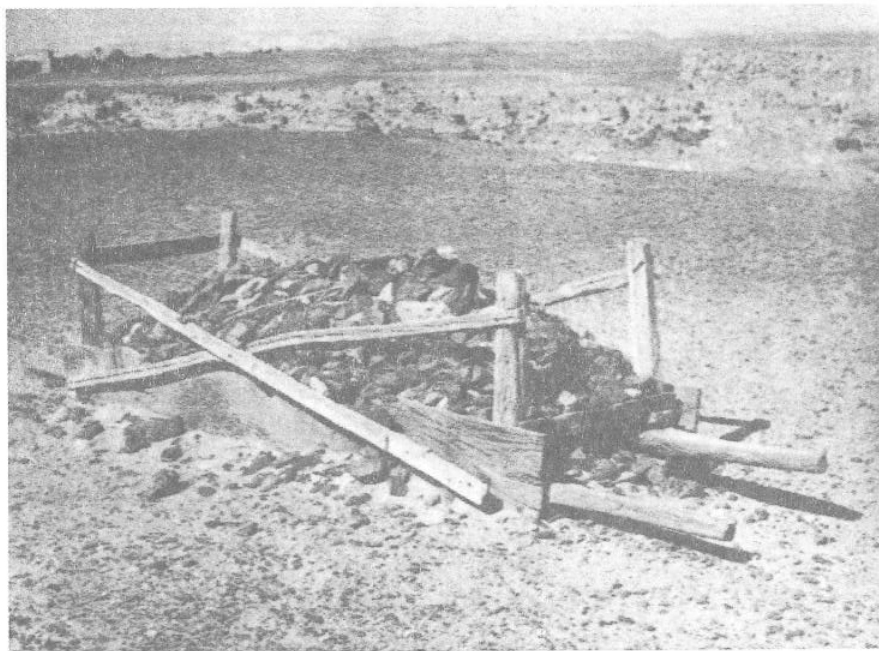


The ceremony of "opening the mouth" being performed on the mummy of Hunefer, about B.C 1350.  
(From the *Papyrus of Hunefer*, sheet 5.; Budge 1972:60.)



A funerary barge with women beating their heads in token of their grief,  
and singing dirges for the dead  
(E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Dweller on the Nile*. New York: Dover, 1977:134.)





A bier for carrying the dead to the cemetery put upside down  
and filled with small stones  
(From Ahmed Fakhry, *The Oases of Egypt*. Cairo, nd. II, 55.)



# MYSTERIOUS ALLOYS IN EARLY MUSLIM METALLURGY ON THE *ṬĀLIQŪN* AND THE *HAFT-ĞŪŞ*

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In early Muslim science several metals or alloys were known (or at least referred to), the names of which are very hard to identify now, and we do not know with certainty of any objects made of them. Perhaps the most obscure of those is the so-called *ṭāliqūn*. Lakpour identifies it expressly with white bronze<sup>1</sup>. He quotes some Persian sources too, which identify the *ṭāliqūn* with the material called *haft-ğūş*. Allan says that it is identical with *ḥāraşīnī* and the Chinese mirror alloy<sup>2</sup>.

The Arab source which writes about the *ṭāliqūn* most clearly is al-Bīrūnī's *Ġamāhir* from the years after AD 1040. al-Bīrūnī's words deny the connection of the *ṭāliqūn* with white bronze. He gives some very concise, or rather defective information about the *ṭāliqūn* (al-Bīrūnī, *Ġamāhir* 267):

## ON THE *ṬĀLIQŪN*

"There has already been a mention of the *ṭāliqūn* in this book due to its watery nature<sup>3</sup>, but its peculiarities were not explained, and I am not able to define it with the support of seeing or hearing. It is said in the Book of Medicine<sup>4</sup>, that pincers made of it, when pulling out the hairs grown by the lashes, prevent the return and stops the growth of those. It is also said that the eyes get ill and weak when looking into a mirror made of *ṭāliqūn*. It is said in the Book of Selected Pieces that it is made of brass, in the Book of Stones, that it is a kind of copper save for the fact that the ancients gained a sorely venomous drug from it, because it acts violently with flesh and blood when mixed with them<sup>5</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Lakpour 1997:135–134. He quotes the *Borhān-e-Qāte'* by Mu'in Dehğodā, and we can add al-Qazwīnī too; see the following quotations.

<sup>2</sup> Allan 1979:51. Belenitzky gives a source on it (*Ayīm-e-Akbarī*, quotes Belenitzky 1963:489): "If they do not find *ḥāraşīnī*, they make an alloy of six metals. Some call it *ṭāliqūn*, but some rather call the *ṭāliqūn* 'artificial copper'".

<sup>3</sup> Explanation of this word is dubious: either it refers to liquidity, or to the melting of the metal.

<sup>4</sup> There are several books known titled *Kitāb aṭ-ṭibb*, translations of antique works (Galenus, Rufus Ephesius) as well as new ones. Remembering that al-Bīrūnī was especially well acquainted with the life-work of ar-Rāzī, it is a most likely presumption that this is one of his many medical treatises, maybe the *Kitāb aṭ-ṭibb al-mulūkī*, which he quotes in the *Kitāb aṣ-ṣaydala* too.

<sup>5</sup> It is a book of Abū Ğa'far Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ğassār, a scholar of Qayrawān (d. 979). It is the only locus in al-Bīrūnī's *Ġamāhir* which witnesses that he knew works of authors of the Mağrib. The great importance of it is that it proves that *ṭāliqūn* was no Eastern Iranian speciality, or rather that in the 10th century they had some knowledge of it in the West, but in the East only ar-Rāzī had heard of it and even

Based on this description, *ṭāliqūn* is no difficult copper alloy at all (anyway, an alloy made of seven metals seems to be a fabulous creature). If it can be identified with any existing material, then it is mercury, or rather the amalgams of it!

Csaba Horváth, a metallurgical expert, whose kind assistance has contributed much to the explanation of the sources, says the following words concerning this question: "Unctions of mercury have been in use for a long time for depilation, and its compounds are poisonous. The mists of it are no less poisonous; it is a well-known fact that it causes mercury poisoning. A newly amalgamated mirror may cause an acute mercury poisoning too if somebody looks at himself too much."

The later sources are partially contradictory, but I see no great importance in it because on the one hand they have clearly not enough information concerning this question, on the other, they contradict among themselves too. The only scholar writing on it in a bit more detail is al-Qazwīnī in the 13th century<sup>6</sup>. He defines the material rather differently, yet its peculiarities are conspicuously similar:

"*Ṭāliqūn*: it is copper to which drug is added<sup>7</sup> till it is stiff. It is called *haft-ḡuš* in Persian. They say that a kind of blade is made of it; if an animal is hurt with it, it has a very violent effect. Aristotle says it is a kind of copper, except that a dry drug is added to it so as to make it have a very poisonous effect. If an animal is hurt with it or it is mixed with its blood, it acts very violently. Hooks are made of it for catching strong fish, because the fish cannot escape from it when it has bitten it, not even if the nature of the fish is strong and the hook is little, because there is a strength of pain in the *ṭāliqūn* due to its venom. If one afflicted with the paralysis of the cheek nerves goes into a house where he cannot see any light, and looks into a mirror of *ṭāliqūn* steadily, he will be delivered from the paralysis. He who melts the *ṭāliqūn* into pincers and pulls out hairs with it in the sunshine, the flies do not get close to him. He who makes pincers from *ṭāliqūn* and pulls out hairs with it from whichever of his members several times, the hairs will never re-grow on that place<sup>8</sup>."

This text does not rely on al-Bīrūnī's one, there is only one common element in them, the use of pincers, in a different wording. There can be a very simple cause for it: he quotes not from al-Bīrūnī, but from another *locus*, for example the above-men-

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his data are of a fable-like nature. Therefore there is no reason for accepting Allan's opinion concerning the identity of this alloy and the mirror alloy or *ḥarāṣīnī* – save for the possibility that the material was called in the East *ḥarāṣīnī*, in the West *ṭāliqūn*, and al-Bīrūnī did not know the identity of them.

<sup>6</sup> al-Qazwīnī, *Āṭār* 230. The second edition of this work was finished by the author in 1276 (*ibid.* VI).

<sup>7</sup> Drug or powdering: a technique for bettering the quality, when the rude metal is powdered with the dust of some mixture and hammered together (the technique is described by al-Bīrūnī, *Ġamābir* 256, 13-18).

<sup>8</sup> The last two sentences must be corrupted because they contain a meaningless reiteration. Presumably pincers and the pulling out of hairs were mentioned originally only in the second sentence, and there was another method of hindering the flies, which was lost from the text. There is a reiteration in the beginning of the text too: after al-Qazwīnī's own summary the same are said attributed to Aristotle. I think he used more than one source that said almost the same things, and apparently he did not know the alloy from his own experience.

tioned (unidentified) Book of Medicines. Though he makes a contrary statement on the mirrors, in fact the text speaks about the use of the exhalations of the mirror, giving some examples of its serious poisonous effect, and these examples were not known to al-Bīrūnī at all. It is important that there is no object in the broad list of the instruments made of *ṭāliqūn* of which we would know any white bronze examples (and verily it would be a rather curious thing, a hook made from the stiffly breaking white bronze), and on the other hand he does not mention any type of objects of which we know many white bronze examples. This fact, added to its poisonous character, disproves the identification with enough certainty. Nevertheless its identity with *haft-ḡūš* is stated clearly, and therefore it can be regarded certain too.

But the speculations concerning *haft-ḡūš* refer to an alloy, and, moreover, the use of mercury could not be performed otherwise but amalgamated – maybe two alloys unknown to the authors were simply identified. The statement of the *‘Ayīn-e-Akbarī* that it is a special alloy identical with no other one but similar to the *ḥāraṣīnī* (which is likely to be the zinc) is easy to explain: on the basis of the colour of the mercury amalgams.

The greatest obstacle to the definition of *haft-ḡūš* is its name, a very fabulous feature. No one can believe it was really mixed from seven materials, at least not from those seven ones the Persian encyclopaedias mention (gold, silver, copper, zinc, iron, lead and tin) (Lakpour 1997:135). It is simply an anecdotic description of the ideal metal. The hypotheses of Lakpour of an alloy seven times re-melted is more acceptable (*Ibid.*, 134), but it would be a useless procedure with an amalgam and even a highly dangerous one for the health. We must say that till we know some real objects made of *haft-ḡūš*, the reason of this name must remain obscure<sup>9</sup>.

### Other mentions of mercury and amalgams

It is not at all comforting as for the identification of *ṭāliqūn* and the amalgam that in the early Islamic era mercury was surely well known and widely used (Allan 1979: 8), and even a metallic stuff of solid state was referred to with the name of mercury (*zābūq*) – evidently some alloy of mercury<sup>10</sup>. According to al-Bīrūnī's data there are two uses of the solid metallic mercury alloy: the makers plate coins and weights with it<sup>11</sup>. This technique is not impossible, disregarding any other data, because it is a known technique for money forgery to plate the coin made from a valueless material

<sup>9</sup> *Mutatis mutandis*, we must say the same about the name of the *ṭāliqūn*. Lakpour (1997:134) quotes Dehḡodā, saying that “*ṭāliqūn* is the Roman name of *haft-ḡūš*”. As far as I know no other source tries to explain the name. Yet this word cannot be derived either from Greek or from Latin.

<sup>10</sup> Belenitzky 1963:216. *Muzabbaq* is a false dirham with mercury on its surface.

<sup>11</sup> I suppose so because the name of these weights is *muzabbaq*, too. The material of the balance weights is not mentioned *expressis verbis*.

with gold or silver amalgam, and afterwards the expelling of the mercury with glowing heat. So did *subaerati* coins originate. *Muzabbaq* dirhams are mentioned sometimes as false, sometimes as regular coins in circulation in Mecca. Yet in reality we cannot prove the existence of such coins: the standard numismatic catalogues do not know either a peculiar Meccan coinage or *subaerati* coins from the early Islamic era<sup>12</sup>. Naturally there was some activity of money forgery in that time, and some (very concise) technical description of it was preserved by al-Hamdānī, about AD 940<sup>13</sup>. This description refers to a fundamentally different technique used to forge dinars, the main point being excavating the coin, removing the inner part of it and filling the hole with antimony or lead oxide. He mentions especially that this filling can be removed from the gold with hammering. Yet, with a hardly intelligible wording, he mentions the mercury gilding: "If one places mercury on the gold coin, he makes it glow on the fire of charcoal, polishes it with sand and makes it glow again." (al-Hamdānī, *Ġawharatayn* f.81.b. /LVII/) It is not said in the description that they were *subaerati*, i.e. false ones, but there is no other technological reason for the procedure of making them glow, and therefore we can be sure of it.

We do not know of instruments made of amalgam, only of the said commercial tools (coins and measuring appliances), but even they could not be frequent, or else we would have several examples of them.

The origins of this type of objects are quite obscure. We do not know of amalgamate coins from the Sāsānid era either<sup>14</sup>. It seems that this type originates in the Caliphate. The localisation of it into Mecca is another peculiarity. On the one hand, the separation of Mecca from other parts of the Arab lands is hard to understand – one cannot accept a dating of this type before the self-reliant Arab coinage of the Caliphate, though the text itself would not contradict such a theory<sup>15</sup> –, on the other, it is dubious whether the necessary amount of mercury could be obtained in Mecca, or it would be an economic irrationality, because there are authors who say there was no mercury mining but in al-Andalus and there are other ones who mention

<sup>12</sup> The catalogue of Mitchiner does not contain Meccan mints from the era of the Caliphate at all!

<sup>13</sup> al-Hamdānī, *Ġawharatayn* LVII. This work is easy to date because it is mentioned in the other work of the author, the *Ikhlīl* written in 331/943, so it had been composed in the years before. (*Ibid.* 10.)

<sup>14</sup> Mochiri (1977) publishes some bronze coins (Nos. 22. 62. 334. 650. 757. 1111. 1113. 1115–1120. 1123. 1124. 1170. 1171. 1360. 1388. 1468–69) and some lead ones (Nos. 1122. 1469), but nothing else but dirhams and dinars. Naturally one may suppose that some examples are incorrectly registered for gold/silver coins, but we can hardly presume that the greater part of these false ones was made so expertly that modern numismatics was not able to discern them.

<sup>15</sup> It is said, "They were in circulation not long ago", but it is not strictly connected with the time of minting, and the amalgam coins which are of hard material and of narrow circulation might have been in use for a long time.

Ādarbayġān too, and no other place<sup>16</sup>. Some relevant sources do not mention mercury and its provenance at all<sup>17</sup>. al-Bīrūnī says nothing about the provenance of mercury, but he was an expert of Eastern, Iranian or Indian, geographical data. Anyway, there had to be only a few and far-lying provenances of mercury, or else such fabulous and contradictory tales as written by al-Hamdānī could not circulate (*Ġawharatayn* f.65.a). He regards two possibilities as equally likely, i.e. that there are self-reliant mines of mercury, or that it exists in the silver mines in the form of stalactites (!), or rather he mentions a wholly absurd story, according to which some people clad in red make a solemn procession, and its effect is that mercury arises from the earth all by itself, the required amount of it is cut from it by a sword (this implies that he thinks of a material of solid state, most likely mercury ore, that is *zinnabar*, which is in good accord with the red robes of the actors of this procedure), and afterwards it founders again. Naturally even he holds this story for a tale, and cites Abū l-Ḥasan an-Naqqāl al-Baṣrī (otherwise unknown), who tells a similar story about diamonds, commenting that in reality diamonds, gold and mercury are products of mines. I think it impossible that if the said mercury mine in Ādarbayġān had existed in the time of al-Hamdānī, such legends would have received credit in 'Irāq or Western Iran.

The sources know about mercury gilding (Allan 1979:8), and other goldsmith techniques made with mercury too, for example penning-out<sup>18</sup>. It is not a well-known fact that it was used for silver-plating and silver-washing too (Belenitzky 1963:216–217, Rohr-Sauer 1939:24). As generally every metal, mercury was introduced into medicinal usage, though (or even because) its poisonous effect was well-known, but naturally it caused either the recovery or the death of the patient<sup>19</sup>. We know of no other use of it, but even these ones might produce a considerable mercury industry, even though various stories concerning the forgery of mercury, its extraction from lead, seem exaggerated<sup>20</sup>. Amalgamation for the making of instruments seems

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Belenitzky 1963:478, note 3. (According to Ibn al-Bayṭār.)

<sup>17</sup> Though al-Qazwīnī speaks of the mercury very likely under the name of *ṭāliqūn*, he does not mention the mines of it.

<sup>18</sup> al-Bīrūnī, *Ġamābir* 240: "There are places at the sources [of the Indus river], where holes are dug into the bottom of the river, over which the river runs, and these holes are filled with mercury. They return to the place one year thereafter, and then the mercury is saturated with gold. This happens because the water is rapid in the upper reaches and brings tiny scale-form gold grains with it ... and transports them over the mercury surface, which retains the gold and lets the sand go."

<sup>19</sup> al-Hamdānī, *Ġawharatayn* f.65.a. It was a medicine for colic.

<sup>20</sup> al-Bīrūnī, *Ġamābir* 260: "I was informed that a man in Balḥ produced mercury from lead, he extracted one part from every five, and he provided the whole region with it." One thing is certainly proven by the story: In that time there was a considerable gold and silver industry, but obtaining the amount of mercury required for it caused some problems. It is in accordance with the rarity of the mercury quarries.

to have played a comparatively very little role, relying either on what we know about the use of *ṭālīqūn* or on the dubious mentions of coins and weights. Their number had to be small enough, as is proven by the fact that no single example of them was preserved.

### Other false identifications

The alloy comparatively closest to white bronze is the so-called mirror metal, an alloy of tin and copper the use of which spread from China, which contains even more tin than white bronze, ca. 30% or more (Melikian-Chirvani 1974: 124). Naturally, the separation of these two materials is sometimes a hard task, as far as concrete objects are concerned. The conclusion might emerge from this fact that the origins of both alloys are the same, which is to say that the Iranians would have learned white bronze making from the Chinese. A support for that conclusion is that there are Persian sources which name white bronze as "Chinese copper" (Allan 1979:49). Yet our sources mention Chinese mirrors, but they do *not* identify them as white bronzes, but as an alloy of *ḥāraṣīnī* (zinc?) and tin, or as pure *ḥāraṣīnī*<sup>21</sup>. On the other hand, we know some real white bronze Chinese or Chinese-like objects<sup>22</sup>. I think the name of "Chinese copper" is nothing but a false identification; it was applied originally to the mirror metal; such a confusion might arise easily because the real mirror metal was mostly unknown in the Muslim world from the 10th century – the typical Muslim mirrors were made of bronze<sup>23</sup>.

The mirror metal, becoming rarer and rarer, and even some other rare and legendary kinds of metal, were mostly confused with the metal called *ḥāraṣīnī*. (In modern Arabic it means zinc.)

al-Bīrūnī names three places as the provenances of *ḥāraṣīnī*: China, Kashgar and the region of the Issyk-Kul. Only a half-sentence of his is the base for the presumed identification with the Chinese mirror alloy: "it is similar to the Chinese mirrors"<sup>24</sup>. Yet, as far as al-Bīrūnī knows, the stuff of the Chinese mirrors is not pure *ḥāraṣīnī*, but mixed with tin (al-Bīrūnī, *Ġamāhīr* 262,6–7). If we believe it literally, we must say *ḥāraṣīnī* is nothing else but copper!

<sup>21</sup> al-Bīrūnī, *Ġamāhīr* 262,6–7: "It is said that they mix *qalā'ī* tin [Malayan tin] with it and it is the material of Chinese mirrors."

<sup>22</sup> Melikian-Chirvani 1974:fig. 12. (A white bronze cup from the 8th century?)

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Brosh 1986: figs. 1–6., Pugachenkova 1961:155 (the mirror of the Harari collection and a mirror found in an excavation at Termez, Turkmenistan), Museum of Islamic Art, Tehran Inv.Nr. 3472., Museum of East Asian Art, Budapest Inv.Nr. L.52.59.

<sup>24</sup> Allan 1979:51. Another name for the material of the Kashgarian bells, *ḥadīd ṣīnī*, has no connection with it.



It is hard to accept al-Bīrūnī was so inexperienced with it. Nevertheless, it is clear that *hāraṣīnī* does not always mean the same thing; its meaning varies according to regions. An evidently different, arsenic-like natural alloy is mentioned from Zābulistān: "There are stones in Zarūbān, Zābulistān, called *murdāsang*. These are of a different shape, like a black thing coloured with yellow, like arsenic. It is melted and poured into such moulds as those of the amulets or plaits<sup>25</sup> of the Indian women; it is called *hāraṣīnī*. It is similar to the Chinese mirrors, mostly there is the blackness of iron therein" (al-Bīrūnī, *Ġamāhir* 262,8–11). Otherwise *murdāsang* is a lead compound (lithargyrum).

Evidently there was a kind of comprehensive knowledge regarding *hāraṣīnī* in the ʿAbbāsīd era; even the said centres of production (wherfrom it was imported, though only in a small amount) could be connected with different techniques and types of objects: it was used in China for "elegant and fine" things, maybe (also) mirrors, in the Issyk-Kul region for cauldrons, and, as al-Bīrūnī says, "vessels at the utmost stage of ugliness". Its production in the regions of Kābul<sup>26</sup> and Zābulistān certainly refers to a different material. The Eastern metal merchandize seems to have disappeared at the beginning of the 10th century, since in that time they were no more able to define its character, and there was at least one significant author (ar-Rāzī) who declared it non-existent (al-Bīrūnī, *Ġamāhir* 261,11–14):

"Muḥammad b. Zakarīyā<sup>27</sup> says it is similar to the Chinese mirrors, but it does not exist<sup>28</sup>. This lack of it is connected doubtless only with our countries, and if it existed not, there would be no similar thing either, but it would be a pure name, like the gryphon, the *ḡabrāyil*<sup>29</sup> or the *awā*. It is said in the Book of Selected Pieces that tin resembles it in terms of colour and melting."

The *hāraṣīnī* of the Kābul region is an identifiable alloy. Csaba Horváth says: "It is most likely that the *hāraṣīnī* is zinc. It is a commonly known fact that zinc is stiff and breakable at normal temperature, but it can be shaped at a temperature of 150 to 200°C. Over 200°C it becomes rigid again, so that it can be grinded to powder.

<sup>25</sup> It can be understood in various ways: plaits of hairs, or braids of cloths, or maybe decorations of plaits?

<sup>26</sup> The same locus speaks of a tin-like glassy (?) metallic material produced along the Karān (it is a little river north from Kābul, on the Southern borders of Badahšān). It seems to be not the Chinese or Kashgarian, but the Zābulistān kind of metal.

<sup>27</sup> Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī (AD 854–925/935), a philosopher, physician and alchemist from Rayy. He wrote very abundantly, so it is practically impossible to check this declaration in his work. al-Bīrūnī knew his works very well, quoting them frequently (cf. note 4), and he collected ar-Rāzī's bibliography some years earlier (1036).

<sup>28</sup> Manuscript B of the *Ġamāhir* reads: "it is well known". But this chapter of Manuscript B is seriously corrupted, and the proposed reading is less logical than that of the other two manuscripts.

<sup>29</sup> Manuscript B: '*izāyil*, Manuscript S: '*ansābil*. These are mythological beings too, like the gryphon.

It is unlikely that they could alloy it with tin and so make mirrors thereof, because zinc dissolves tin only in a very restricted quantity in its solid state." We cannot identify the *ḥāraṣīnī* of Zābulistān. The identification with the mirror alloy is a simple error of some 10th century source of al-Bīrūnī's.

The broadening of the meaning of this word did not stop at that. Later readers might have been excited by the dubious nature of the stuff, because the manuscripts are adorned with marginal glosses which try to explain the text with the aid of ar-Rāzī's and Ḡābir's words. One of them (Manuscript S) says: "The astrologer sheikh Abū Bakr b. Dalāl told me that this material is the *zabī* (glittering, bright) used<sup>30</sup> in the saltpetre industry. It is strange in the text of ar-Rāzī that it cannot be found near his country." (Abū Bakr is a person evidently different from ar-Rāzī, but unidentifiable, because we know about several astrologers with this name, yet the name of Ibn Dalāl is unknown.)

Confusion of *ṭālīqūn* and *ḥāraṣīnī* became a constant phenomenon: al-Qazwīnī (in the 13th century) practically repeats the information given on the *ṭālīqūn*, when speaking of the *ḥāraṣīnī*<sup>31</sup>, yet he quotes it not from the same source but from a more concise one. Maybe the obscurity of the word was enhanced by the fact that there was another word for zinc too, used in the brass industry, that is the most relevant use of zinc from the 11th century: *tūtiyā*.

Presently we know no object from the early Islamic era which can be regarded with certainty as made of *ḥāraṣīnī*, or zinc.

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<sup>30</sup> *Textu editionis correcto*: تستعملها

<sup>31</sup> al-Qazwīnī, *Āḡār* I 201: "Its provenance is like that of the above-mentioned materials, its mine being in the country of China. Its colour is black inclining to red. All weapons made of it are very dangerous. Hooks are made of it for catching strong fish, the fish cannot release itself when it has bitten it, but forced. Mirrors are made of it, used by people afflicted with paralysis of the cheek nerves, sitting in a gloomy house and looking at it steadily. It is the most useful medicine for cheek neuralgia. Pincers are made of it for pulling out the hairs and the spot in which they had grown are smeared several times, and then the hairs do not grow again." On the basis of its colour, this description refers to the most important ore of mercury, *zinnabar* (HgS). We can also see that an unction was produced from it too.



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## BAYṬĀR ENIGMA OF A FĀṬIMID POTTER

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The Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait a few years ago acquired a large luster-painted jar which bears the signature of Bayṭār who, as far as it is known today, was an outstanding potter during the early Fāṭimid period (fig. 1)<sup>1</sup>. Very little is known about the work of this artist and hardly anything of his life. Most of the information we have was provided in two articles by 'Abdarra'ūf Yūsuf (1956 & 1958). He signed a floral decorated Fāṭimid lustre-painted dish, which is now preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo<sup>2</sup>. His signature appears here as *'Alī Bayṭār*. A fragmentary lustre-painted jar also bears this artist's signature where it is given as *'amal 'Alī al-Bayṭār bi-Miṣr*, "the work of 'Alī al-Bayṭār in Egypt" (Yūsuf 1956:98-99, plates 22-23, and also Yūsuf 1958:176, fig.3). A further base fragment of a bowl gives his signature as *'amal al-Bayṭār*, "the work of al-Bayṭār" (Yūsuf 1958:177, figs. 4/a-b). A second base fragment showing a standing peacock and his signature on the reverse within the foot-ring simply gives his name as Bayṭār (Yūsuf 1958:177, figs. 5/a-b). One of the most interesting examples of these base fragments depicts the hands of a female figure playing on an *'ūd* and on the reverse the potter's name appears again as simply Bayṭār (Yūsuf 1958:178, figs. 8/a-b). These last items are all in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. The Gayer Anderson Museum in Cairo also possesses a base fragment which carries this potter's name. Inside it presents a gazelle eating from a haystack, while on the back the name is given in large cursive style as Bayṭār (Yūsuf 1958:177-178, figs. 7/a-b). Finally there is a fragment with his signature, within the base of a bowl in the Benaki Museum in Athens, which was published by Helen Philon (1980: 204, fig. 420, inv.no. 11472).

Fortunately the Tareq Rajab Museum's jar, which is comparatively large, is complete. It measures 30.5 cm in height, its top diameter is 10 cm and the base is 11 cm. The vessel is made of buff earthenware and is covered by a green glaze which stops short of the base. The decoration was painted probably in olive green luster over the glaze. Its colour cannot exactly be determined, as it is partly affected by the coloured glaze and partly because something went wrong during firing, since the colour appears to be too dark. In spite of that the decoration is clearly visible and it presents

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<sup>1</sup> Inv.no. CER1760TSR.

<sup>2</sup> Yūsuf 1956:97, plates 18-19, fig. 3 on plate, showing the section of this dish; also Yūsuf, 1958:175-176, figs. 2/a-b.

three human figures, each placed within a large oval. The shape of this vessel is somewhat unusual when compared to other contemporary jars. It is considerably slender, but has a broad sloping shoulder, tapering downward, resting on an everted flat base and is provided with three small loop handles. These handles are too small and too light to be functional. Most likely they served as a decoration, filling the spaces between the ovals.

Although large number of Fāṭimid jars are known and published, but most of them have different shapes from the Museum's example. Their bodies are considerably wider, they are more globular, their necks are taller and have everted lips. Furthermore, almost all them lack any handles. Such an early Fāṭimid jar, a so-called "Fayyūm" ware, dated to the late 10th - early 11th century, was exhibited during the World of Islam Festival in the Hayward Gallery<sup>3</sup>. An early lustre-painted version, showing a Coptic priest with a rosary on one side, and two birds on the other, is in the Freer Gallery in Washington<sup>4</sup>. The fragmentary jar in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, which bears Bayṭār's name, is similar to this last example, but its body is decorated with large crosshatchings, formed by wavy lines and the spaces between are filled by heavy almond-shaped patterns, a few of them showing attached small offshoots<sup>5</sup>. A lustrepainted jar in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, comes perhaps closest to the Tareq Rajab Museum's example. It has three small non-functional handles. Furthermore, its decoration suggests an early Fāṭimid period date, which is the same as that of the Kuwait vessel (Caiger-Smith 1985: fig. 16).

The decoration of the Tareq Rajab Museum's jar, as has already been mentioned, depicts three human figures, each set in a large oval. These ovals are placed in the spaces between the handles. The three figures look almost identical, but they are presented in different functions. In all three instances the figure is surrounded by a contour panel, which is typical of early monochrome lustre vessels. The bodies and heads of the figures are always depicted in frontal position, while the legs are in profile. The facial features are simple and naïve, as they are known from contemporary Iraqi and early Fāṭimid objects, but here they differ in two small details: they eyes are shown as circles, unlike on many others where they are elongated or almond-shaped; the eyebrows and the nose were drawn in one single stroke with a sharp turn on top. A third interesting point is that the head is shown directly on the top of the body without any indication of a neck. Most contemporary figural representations display at least a short neck and, in case of female figures, are decorated with a necklace. No details are shown of the garments, but there is a straight white line in the middle of the *salvar*.

<sup>3</sup> Arts 222, no. 277. It is also illustrated in Soustiel 1985:111, fig. 123.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Atil 1973: no.4. Also illustrated in Caiger-Smith 1985: colour plate III.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Yūsuf 1956, plates 22-23, also 1958, fig.3.

The variation, which prevents monotony, is in the presentation of different functions of the three figures. In the first oval (fig. 1) the figure holds a cup in his right hand while his left hand is not clearly visible. Behind the figure's head to the right there is a word written in simple foliated Kufic: *'amilahu*, "made by...". To the left of his face there is another word, which is the signature of the artist: Bayṭār. The background space within all three ovals is dotted. In the second oval (fig. 2) the figure holds a flag with both hands. Unfortunately here the surface of the vessel is slightly damaged, thus part of the figure's face and upper part of the body is missing. Nevertheless it is clear that on the flag there is again the word *'amilahu*, "made by...", while the potter's name appears below to the right behind the figure. In the third oval (fig. 3) the figure holds a long widening club in his right hand and a drum in his left. Behind him to the right is a word which may be read as *ḥilm*, "patience"? The areas outside the ovals are filled by heavy dots and strokes.

A very similar, if not an identical human figure, also a flag-bearer, can be observed on a dish which is in the Keir collection, Richmond (fig. 4)<sup>6</sup>. The provenance of the dish is given as Mesopotamia and dated to the 10th century. The function and position of the figure, the facial features, the white line in the middle of the *salvar* are exactly the same as can be observed on the Tareq Rajab Museum's jar. It seems that the figure holds an almond-shaped object in his left hand, although it is possible that it is not connected to his hand. Behind the figure there is a three-lobed semi-palmette, hanging upside-down. The figure and all the decorative details are surrounded by contour lines. The everted, almost flat wide rim carries two lobed cartouches on the sides and on top three rounders, all with inscriptions, written in foliated Kufic. The inscriptions in the cartouches repeat the phrase: *baraka li-ṣāḥibihī*, "blessing to the owner". The writing on top is divided into the three rounders. According to Watson in the first one it says: *'amilahu*, "made it", while for the other two he suggested the reading as *baraka*, "blessing". It is very unlikely that the word *'amilahu* would be followed by *baraka*. Furthermore, when we compare the writings in the three rounders with those of the Tareq Rajab Museum's jar, we immediately recognise the close similarity of the style and therefore we should read it as *'amilahu* / Bay- / ṭār, "made by Bayṭār". The close affinity of the two flagbearers, i.e., on the Museum's jar and on the Keir collection dish offers further support to this reading. The empty spaces on the Keir collection dish are filled by short and simple strokes, while the rim is decorated with a series of lunettes, surrounded by a contour line. The reverse of the vessel is glazed only under the flat rim, while the foot-ring and the base are unglazed. Indeed, that is the case on most contemporary Iraqi vessels. The glazed part is decorated with six heavy circles with a dotted roundel inside each, while the areas between are filled by heavy dots and strokes.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Watson, 1988:146-148, C4i. Diameter 25.7 cm; ht. 3 cm.

An almost identically shaped dish, but slightly larger, is in the Tareq Rajab Museum (fig. 5)<sup>7</sup>. Although its major decorative design is different, showing a walking large peacock some of the details reveal the hands of the same artist who was responsible for the jar and for the Keir dish. The major designs, as was customary on contemporary lustre-painted wares, is again surrounded by contour lines. The peacock's large tail has an irregular roundel filled with "peacock-eye" motifs. On the bird's body there is a roundel reserved in white with a simple Kufic word in it. It can equally be read either as *baraka* or *Bayṭār*. It is possible that the potter exploited the possibility these two words offer, to sign his name in a hidden form. In front of the bird there is a five-lobed semi-palmette, which recalls that on the Keir dish. The everted flat rim, carries a number of almond-shaped patterns, not unlike that on the previous example, next to the flag-bearer's left hand. Similarly the rim carries the lunettes with countour lines, while the empty spaces, are filled by similar short strokes.

The Tareq Rajab Museum dish on the back displays the same decoration under the rim what we have seen on the Keir collection piece. The central part is also unglazed. It is beyond any doubt that this two dishes have not only the same provenance and the same dates, i.e. Iraq and, most likely the second half of the 10th century, but they are also the products of the same artist.

There are two more dishes which are related in shape and somewhat in their decoration to the last example. Both of them are decorated with a large peacock (*Treasures* 211-212, nos. 199-200.). The first dish also has an inscription, namely above the back of the bird there is the word *'amila*, while behind and below its feet *baraka li-ṣā/ḥibihi* (*Treasures* 211, no. 199). The second example is different in shape and in its decoration. It has a much wider everted rim which is decorated with a series of almond-shaped patterns, identified in the caption as 'lotus buds' on "stippled ground". The bird is considerably smaller and, unlike the previous and the Tareq Rajab Museum's dish, it faces to the right and holds a 'lotus bud' in its beak (*Treasures* 212, no. 200).

Bayṭār's name and works are not so well-known as those of *Ibrāhīm* or *Sa'd*, whose names are closely associated with the Fāṭimid period of Egypt. Yet, until recently Bayṭār was also considered to be an Egyptian potter, who was active during the late 10th and early 11th century. At the same time the two dishes which are discussed here, were made, beyond any doubt, in Iraq. Therefore the question arises whether was Bayṭār originally and Iraqi artist, who later immigrated to Egypt? This would not be surprising, since it is well-known, that in the late 9th and 10th centuries there was considerable upheaval in Iraq and due to this the pottery centres of Baṣra and Kūfa declined. Furthermore, the rising power of the Fāṭimids promised un-

<sup>7</sup> Inv. no. CER1526TSR. Diameter 27 cm; ht. 4.5 cm.

limited patronage to all kinds of craftsmen and artists, among them to potters. Bayṭār may have started his trade in Baṣra or Kūfa, where he could have spent his apprenticeship. His signatures on some of the examples are rather timid. It is hidden behind or, in the word *baraka*. Soon, however, he gained confidence and by the time he was an accepted and most likely respected artists in Egypt, his signature, as one can judge from the Cairo, the Tareq Rajab Museum's jar and the Benaki Museum's examples, his name is clearly readable. In connection with the different signatures of one of the most famous potters of the period, namely Muslim ibn Dahhān, Philon remarks, that it does not mean that we are dealing with different artists, but rather the very same one, only representing different period of his works (Philon 1980:167).

There is another interesting problem concerning Bayṭār's signature: on the Benaki Museum fragment next to his signature there is another word which was read as *ṣahḥa*. The same word occurs with signatures of other artists as well, namely with that of Ibrāhīm. According to 'Abdarra'ūf Yūsuf, it meant that the piece was "ready for firing" (Yūsuf 1956:100). Bahgat and Massoul (1930:22) interpreted it as "I have succeeded". Both suggestions are plausible. In any case the word means that the artist was satisfied with his own work and such satisfaction could be expected only from an artist who was already well established with a considerable reputation.

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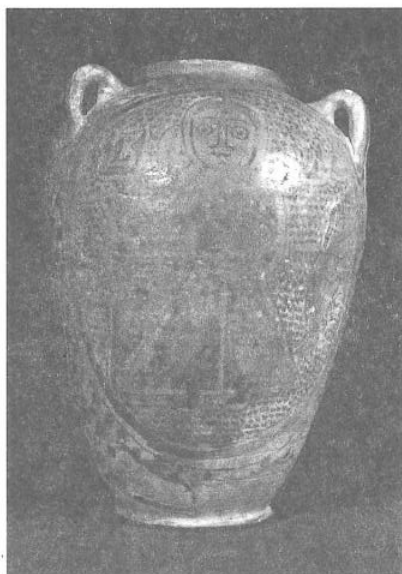


fig. 1 CER1760TSR

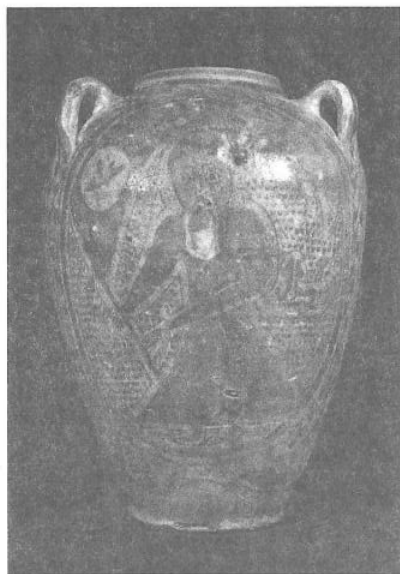


fig. 2 CER1760TSR

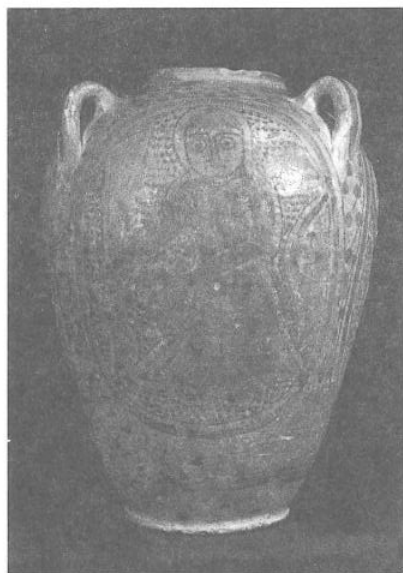


fig. 3 CER1760TSR





fig. 4 Keir collection, Richmond, Surrey, no. C4i



fig. 5 CER1526TSR

# DEMONS, SCRIBES, AND EXORCISTS IN QUMRAN

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Editing the texts from Qumran Cave 4 meant that many hitherto unknown works became known to scholars. The publication of these texts brings not a mere quantitative change in the number of known Qumran texts. New texts always raise new questions. New points of view emerge, and new horizons open, while, together with answering new questions, the assessment of the 'old' texts changes.

4Q560, an Aramaic text from cave 4 has been published recently in several editions<sup>1</sup>. It is an apotropaic incantation, written against demons breaking in upon human beings during the night. The text preserved an Aramaic magic formula typical in the ancient Near East that mentions concerns common to other similar texts: childbirth, demons, and the diseases associated with them, sleep or dreams and perhaps the safety of possessions. The offending spirit's name is Beelzebub. The text further seems to connect security from these evils with forgiveness of sin. 4Q560 also contains a quotation from Exod 34:7. The contributors of the most recent edition, Penney and Wise state that the formula found in 4Q560 "clearly stands within the broad tradition of amulets and incantation texts that spanned the ancient Near East both geographically and chronologically. 4Q560 is therefore an important witness to the development of magical traditions in the Greco-Roman world generally, and among Second Temple Jews specifically" (Penney & Wise 1994:649).

They regard 4Q560 to be in no respect "sectarian". On the contrary, it fits comfortably within the magical tradition of the ancient Near East. However, in all probability, the manuscript may not have served as an amulet in Qumran. The physical evidence contradicts this supposition, since "the photograph reveals no signs of rolling or traces of similar systematic distress to the leather such as appear, for instance, in the Qumran phylacteries" (Penney & Wise 1994:650). The editors suggest that the formula derives from a 'recipe book' containing other similar formulas that once belonged to a person of at least minimal learning about demons and magic – perhaps a Qumran *maskil* or "a village scribe".

The content and vocabulary of the text may have its roots in the ancient Near Eastern tradition of apotropaic texts, but its owner was a Jewish person or a Jewish community. The ancient Near East had no uniform religion, even if formulas of apotropaic texts offer a rather uniform picture. Formulas in every culture must have been adopted to local religions. The text was written in Aramaic, the *lingua franca*

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<sup>1</sup> Its editions are Eisenman & Wise 1992:265-267; Beyer 1994:129-130; Penney & Wise 1994.

of the ancient Near East since the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the rise of the Persian Empire. Aramaic became gradually the everyday language in Palestine during the Persian and Hellenistic periods. The legators and users of the Aramaic incantation known as 4Q560 were Jews, adherents of the Jewish religion, and supposedly members of the Qumran community. The phenomenon of magic and magic formulas were in all probability not unknown to them, but the practice of magic was not permitted in their religion. Magical practice in general is repeatedly and strictly prohibited in the Bible<sup>2</sup>.

On the other hand, the prohibition itself serves to show that magic was practised among the member of the religious community. The presence of magical practice in the pre-exile period is sparsely documented in the Bible, but no exact formulas or description of any special ritual have remained to us<sup>3</sup>. All that we know is that probably there was a belief in demons and there was a magical practice. Demons are mentioned in the Bible by a general term as *šedim* (Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; cf. I Cor. 10:20)<sup>4</sup>. The *seirim* were, in all probability, "hairy demons, satyrs" (Lev. 17:7; II Chron. 11:15). These creatures haunted ruins, along with the demon known by name, Lilith (Isa. 13: 21; 34:14). Lilith<sup>5</sup> was originally a succubus, believed to cohabit with mortals. She is represented as a winged figure and her name is mentioned in an incantation written on a tablet found in Arslan Tash. This text identifies her with the child-stealing demon, a character she retains in later folklore. The tradition that the name means "screech-owl" (in so many translations) reflects a very ancient association of birds, especially owls, with the demonic. In all probability there were incantations against them.

The Qumran library also offers further examples of apotropaic texts. 11Q11 demonstrates the use of psalms for apotropaic purpose (Puech 1992). The Qumran apotropaic texts are the earliest first-hand evidence for apotropaic practice, and as such are of immense importance. Phylacteries (*tefillin*) and *mezuzot* found in Qumran represent a special kind of apotropaic texts. They contain Biblical citations without mentioning any demon. However, it is clear that the pieces of parchment unrolled served apotropaic purposes using the Biblical text itself as an effective power against

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<sup>2</sup> Lev 19:31 "Do not resort to ghosts and spirits or make yourselves unclean by seeking them out. I am the Lord your God"; Lev 20:6 "I shall set my face against anyone who wantonly resorts to ghosts and spirits, and I shall cut that person off from his people"; Ex. 22:17: "You must not allow a witch to live". Deut 18:9-14 gives a long list of sorcerers. Their practices are abominable to the Lord, and "...it is on account of these abominable practices that the Lord your God is driving them (i.e. the Canaanites) out before you".

<sup>3</sup> An exception is 1Sam 28 where in the story of the witch of En-Dor the practice of necromancy is remembered.

<sup>4</sup> The word is related to Akkadian *šedū* ("demon"; good or evil).

<sup>5</sup> The name comes ultimately from Sumerian *lil*, "air", not from Hebrew LYLH, "night".

evil. The high number of the copies found in the caves indicates that these texts may have been copied not only for people living in the Qumran site, but also for the use of external groups. No other kind of amulets were found in the archaeological material from Qumran.

The practice of exorcism is also known from Qumran literary texts. Examples for it are Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen)<sup>6</sup> and The Prayer of Nabunai (4Q242)<sup>7</sup>. Both works were written in Aramaic, similarly to 4Q560. Both texts mention cases of healing. The method of healing is the laying on of hands (SMYKT YDYM). Both in Nabunai and Genesis Apocryphon the healer cured the patient with divine help, and exorcised the demon causing the illness through releasing the patient's sins.

Demons are genuine beings in the world view of ancient cultures – the existence of demons is accepted, and their role in the world is considered natural. Amulets, incantations, and descriptions of apotropaic practices illustrate an unbroken practice of magic in Mesopotamian culture from the Sumerian age. Defence against evil spirits was a concern in Mesopotamia. Much of the terminology and praxis connected with demons may be traced through the ages. Incantations often list several classes of demons. Demons are described in literary texts as messengers of the lord of the underworld, and march before him. They live in deserts and near graves, and many of them are ghosts, spirits of the dead, especially of those who died by violence or were not properly buried. Sickness may be thought of as caused by demonic possession, and some demons have the name of the specific disease they bring, thus "Headache," or "Fever". There are no stories in Mesopotamian literature about the origin of the demons. A vague tradition in Mesopotamian mythology claims that demons are the progeny of Anu; he created them with the Earth (Ersetu) and then, determining their fate, he gave them over to be the helpers of Erra, the god of pestilence<sup>8</sup>.

Ancient Jewish culture tried to eliminate magic and belief in demons as is demonstrated by the Biblical prohibitions of magic. To legitimize any magical practice, demonology was needed. In Qumran a special process connected with demonology can be traced in the narrative texts. It is an artificial system which came into being in order to place the demons in the world, and to determine their exact origin and function.

The group of Aramaic manuscripts containing the first part (chs. 1-36) of the book of Enoch (1Enoch) belongs to the earliest layer of the Qumran manuscript tradition. Formerly, the work was only known as a part of the pseudepigraphic tradi-

<sup>6</sup> Its first edition is Avigad & Yadin 1956. A later edition with a thorough commentary is Fitzmyer 1971.

<sup>7</sup> The text has been published in several editions. The *editio princeps* is Milik 1956. The text has recently been edited by J. Collins (*DJD* XXII, 83-93).

<sup>8</sup> Erra Epic, Lugalbanda Epic and the collection of incantations entitled 'The evil utukku-demons'.

tion, in Greek or Ethiopian translation. It was supposed that the original language may have been Hebrew or Aramaic, and that the Greek translation<sup>9</sup> had been produced from this, only a part of which survived; luckily the Ethiopic (Ge'ez) translation has preserved a much longer text. The work known formerly only in translations was uniformly dated to the middle of the second century BCE. Some parts of it (chs. 37-70) were dated to a somewhat later time<sup>10</sup>. The finding of fragments of the Aramaic original of the work among the Qumran texts (Milik 1976) was a turning point in research. The manuscript fragments found at Qumran not only answered certain questions about the history of the origin of the text, but also provided an insight into the kind of role the work played in the literary tradition of the group which left behind the library preserved in the caves<sup>11</sup>. Based on the number of fragments found<sup>12</sup> we may suppose that the work was not merely known at Qumran, but that it must have been an important work in the tradition of the community. This is also indicated by the fact that numerous other works found at Qumran, some already known from the pseudepigraphic literature and some not, contain a tradition similar to that known from 1Enoch, or mention or use 1Enoch<sup>13</sup>. No fragments of chs. 37-70 of the work appear among the Qumran fragments – it has already been suggested that these chapters are of a later origin than the other parts of 1Enoch, and that at least they show traces of a Christian revision; this lack proved these suppositions right.

The earliest Enochic tradition does not know of demons. On the other hand, the story of the Watchers is connected on several points with magic. The scene of the story is set in the antediluvian era, and it relates the story of the rebellion of the Watchers (Aramaic ʿYRYN). The two hundred celestial beings, "the sons of heaven", decide to descend to the "daughters of men". Their leader Shemihazah (šMYH·ZH) considers the plan to be sinful and wants not to bear responsibility alone (6.3);

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<sup>9</sup> Flemming & Radermacher 1901; Black 1970. On the Greek manuscripts see also Denis 1970.

<sup>10</sup> For the prior dating of 1Enoch see Schürer & Vermes 1973-79: III.1, 256.

<sup>11</sup> On the significance of the Aramaic fragments, see García-Martínez 1992:45-96.

<sup>12</sup> In his edition Milik identified seven manuscript copies on the basis of the fragments found in Cave IV, see Milik 1976.

<sup>13</sup> To mention just a few important examples: the Book of Jubilees (whose Hebrew fragments were also found in Qumran), known earlier from the pseudepigraphic literature, uses and explicitly quotes the book (see Charles 1913: II, 18-19), and elements originating from 1Enoch play an important role in its entire narrative. The Damascus Document, fragments of which were also found at Qumran, also alludes to the Enochic tradition in its historical overview; similarly the historical schema outlined in 4Q180-81 is also based on the story of the Watchers of the Enochic tradition.

therefore the Watchers, in order to fulfil their plan, swear<sup>14</sup> to unite on Mount Hermon<sup>15</sup> (1En 6.6). Then the Watchers "began [to go in to them and to defile themselves with them and (they began) to teach them sorcery and spellbinding [and the cutting of roots<sup>16</sup>; and to show them plants ...] (7.1). The women became pregnant from them and bore children, who grow up to become giants. The giants "were devouring [the labour of all the children of men and men were unable to supply them" (7.4). After this, the giants begin to devour men, then "they began to sin against all birds and beasts on the earth and reptiles ... and the fish of the sea, and to devour the flesh of another; and they were] drinking blood. [Then the earth made the accusation against the wicked concerning everything] which was done upon it" (7.5-6)<sup>17</sup>.

The evaluation of the teachings given to the earthly women is, of course, negative in the work, as in the Biblical literature which condemns all activities connected with magic. The evaluation of the bearing of the union is also negative. The punishment of the sinners is, on the one hand, the Flood where the killer giants perish together with mankind. On the other hand their fathers are punished by the four archangels who bind them and cast them into the depths of the earth. The teachings of the Watchers are supplemented with the interpretation of the signs of the earth and sky (stars, thunders, sun and moon, etc.) in what follows (1En 7). The Asael story (1En 8) attributes to them the teaching of metallurgy and making cosmetics from minerals. General understanding connected both kinds of activity with magic.

The transformation of the tradition of the Watchers already began in the later tradition of the Enochic book. Those parts of the Enochic tradition which came into being later, and those pieces of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic literature also known from Qumran which were familiar with this tradition show changes in their interpretation of the tradition about the origin of evil. The text of 1En. 15.8-12 complements the Shemihazah tradition<sup>18</sup>. According to this, the descendants of the Watchers and the daughters of men are evil spirits, demons (Ethiopian *nafsat*, Greek *pneumata*, 1En. 15.8). These beings are spiritual in nature, following their fathers' characteristics: they do not eat, are not thirsty and know no obstacles. Their

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<sup>14</sup> The root YM' ("to swear", "bind"), and the noun MWM' ("oath", "binding") are usual terms in the incantation-texts.

<sup>15</sup> Pun based on the similarity of the Aramaic word ḤRM, meaning "root", and the place name ḤRMWN.

<sup>16</sup> The word has been preserved only in the Greek and Ethiopic translations.

<sup>17</sup> Translated by Milik, based on the Aramaic text reconstructed by him; see Milik 1976:166-167.

<sup>18</sup> This part of the text is only known from Ethiopian and Greek translations; judging by the tiny fragments of 4QEn ar/c, however, it definitely belonged to the Enoch tradition, which was created before the second century BCE.



destructiveness first and foremost affects children and women, as they were born of women. This is a kind of complementary explanation to the tradition of chs. 6-7 of the text.

The Book of Jubilees is later than the above-mentioned part of the Enochic tradition. Dating the book is not an easy task; the suggested dates for the creation of Jubilees range between the third and first centuries BCE. Based on the later manuscript tradition it may be supposed that the work had definitely come into being before the turn of the second and first centuries BCE<sup>19</sup>. The history of its text is similar to that of the Enochic collection: the only complete extant text of Jubilees is the Ethiopic translation (Charles 1895). It has long been supposed that the original of the work may have been in Hebrew – and this theory was proved correct when Hebrew fragments of Jubilees were identified among the manuscripts found in the Qumran caves<sup>20</sup>. It can be supposed that the spiritual milieu from which Jubilees emerged was not far from that of the Qumran community. Beside the striking similarities of the calendar of Jubilees and of some calendrical Qumranic text there is a similarity between Jubilees and various literary texts from Qumran. The Book of Jubilees is probably the earliest example of a rewritten Bible: a work which systematically adapts the material of the Biblical narrative tradition, sometimes supplementing, sometimes contradicting it, or leaving out certain parts. The author of Jubilees discusses the tradition of Genesis 6.1-4 from a point of view similar to that of the Enochic collection (Jub. 5.1-19). At the same time there are also significant variations from this tradition: according to Jubilees the angels (as the Watchers are called in this work) came to the earth in order to teach righteousness to mankind, but their intent turned to the opposite (Jub 4.15). The children born to the angels and the daughters of men are giants; however, they have nothing to do with the proliferation of sins following their birth (Jub. 5.1-2). Following the Flood “polluted demons began to lead astray the children of Noah’s sons and to lead them to folly and to destroy them”. The demons were blinding and killing Noah’s grandchildren. The fathers of the spirits are told to be the Watchers (Jub 10.4-5). According to Noah’s prayer, the Lord let bind nine tenth of the demons; one tenth, subject to Mastema<sup>21</sup>, were allowed to work in the world (Jub 10.7-14).

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<sup>19</sup> The earliest Hebrew fragments from Qumran have been defined as ‘late Hasmonean’, and as such they are dated to between 100-75 BCE. As the writing of the fragments is semicursive, according to J. C. VanderKam they must have been preceded by an earlier written tradition, see VanderKam 1977:215-217.

<sup>20</sup> The work must have played an important role in the spiritual life of the Qumran community; 12 fragmentary copies were found in the caves. A comprehensive edition by J. C. VanderKam and J. T. Milik is to be found in *DJD* XIII.

<sup>21</sup> Name of the prince of the demons in the Book of Jubilees. It originates from the Hebrew root STM ‘bear a grudge, cherish animosity, against’; cf. Ar. STN.



1En 15 and Jub 10 witness the 'canonization' of the belief in the existence of the demons and the idea of a Lilith-type child-bed demon<sup>22</sup>. On the other hand, their leader Mastema in Jubilees does not represent the type of demons causing illness; he is rather 'the adversary', like the Satan of the book of Job, who initiates the trial of human beings by God. In Jubilees it is Mastema who suggests to God that he ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac to him in order to test Abraham's faithfulness (Jub. 17:16).

The mixed tradition of the Jubilees – a folk-tradition on the demons causing illness and a reflexive tradition on Mastema as an adversary – is present in other Qumran works like 4Q510-11<sup>23</sup>. 4Q510-11 is a collection of several fragments of two manuscripts. 4Q510 has only one major fragment and 11 minor ones; 4Q511 represents a much longer exemplary of the same work. On the basis of the palaeography both manuscripts are dated to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C. Formerly, the songs were considered to belong to the group of the Hodayot, i.e. to hymns composed in the Qumran community. The Songs of the Sage are so-called Sectarian texts, i.e. work composed in the community, and representing ruling ideas of the community. They are authored by the *maskil*, the sage. The main themes of the songs are: the glory of God, the activity of the righteous, and the works of the evil demons in the world. The parts mentioning demons are not exorcisms; they may not have been parts of any ritual. They were not written with any practical purpose (against bewitching, etc.). The structure of the text is completely different from that of the exorcisms. It has a philosophic character, its subject is the world and the powers ruling it. A dichotomic world view emerges from the songs, where God is called the King of Glory, (MLK HKBWD, 4Q510 frg. 1.1), God of knowledge ('LWHY D'WT 4Q510 frg.1.2); Lord of all the holy ones ('L 'LYM), Lord of the divine beings ('DWN LKWL QWDŠYM, 4Q510 frg.1.2). His realm is above the powerful and mighty one (4Q510 frg.1.3). Sometimes God is called El Shaddai (4Q 511 frg. 8.6), a name especially used in magical texts. Divine beings are also mentioned in the hymns.

The Sage (*maskil*) is characterized by the knowledge he has received from God. He loathes all deeds of impurity (i.e. practice resulting in impurity) (4Q511 frg. 18, II.). Associates of the Sage are: 'those who follow the path of God', (ŠWMRY DRK 'LWHYM 4Q511, frg.2, I.6) which means in the Qumran vocabulary the interpretation and practice of the Mosaic Law according to the tradition of the community. Other names for them are: 'who know justice', (YWD'Y ŠDQ 4Q511 frg.2, I.2), 'the holy ones' (QDWŠYM 4Q511 frg. 35.2-3). Knowledge, purity, and holiness are the characteristics of this group (the latter two were thought to result

<sup>22</sup> This viewpoint is similar to that of the Qumran community. In their view, the demons causing illness can be chased away by certain people with special powers, through the laying on of hands, and the 'release of sins'; cf. Jesus' dynamis, that is to say, power to heal, see e.g. Mk 6.2, 14; Acts 8.10, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Edition: Baillet 1982:215-262.

from the right practice of the Law). They receive their knowledge from God. As to the third element of the picture, the demons are listed in both copies of the work (4Q510, frg.1, 5-8; 4Q511 frg.10, 1-5). They are:

spirits of the ravaging angels: RWHY ML'KY HBL,

the bastard spirits: RWHWT MMZRYM,

demons: ŠDYM,

Lilith: LYLYT,

owls and jackals: 'HYM WSYYM,

and those who strike unexpectedly to lead astray the spirit of knowledge (4Q511 frg.1. 5-6).

The activity of the demons is, according to the Songs, not eternal, and lasts only for the period of the rule of wickedness and the periods of the humiliation of the sons of light. Periods (called QS, pl. QSYM) of human history are often mentioned in several Qumran works (e.g. 4Q180181, entitled *Pesher 'al ha-qissim*, a 'theoretical' work on these periods in human history). The various periods are characterized by the activity of various groups – the righteous or the evil. In accordance with this, they are labelled as periods of righteousness, or periods of sin (which mean, of course, periods of oppression for the righteous). So, the demons mentioned in the Songs of the Sage are subject to God's power and are tools of divine plans. As to the origin of the various categories of demons mentioned in the text, some of them are known from Biblical tradition, like Lilith (Isa 34:14), known in later Jewish tradition as a female night-demon killing newborn babies. Together with Lilith, owls and jackals are mentioned as evil spirits living at deserted ruins (Isa 13:21; 34:14).

Elements of the demonological system of the Songs of the Sage (4Q510-11) originate from various traditions. One of the sources is a longer tradition which can be detected in so-called Pseudepigraphic works – otherwise very well-known in the manuscript tradition of the Qumran community. The idea of the 'bastard spirits' (RWHWT MMZRYM) comes from the Enochic tradition. The temptational function of the demons, and the idea of the opposition of impure and pure, light and darkness, identified with the human and demonic worlds, come from other spiritual traditions of the community. This reflexive tradition is amalgamated with the widely known popular tradition on Lilith and other demons. The texts we cited are only a few examples to illustrate the many-sidedness of the sources of Qumran demonology and apotropaic practices. It is our future task to analyse this sophisticated system.

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DE L'ACHAT DES ESCLAVES:  
ENTRE EXAMEN MÉDICAL ET PHYSIOGNOMONIE.  
LE CHAPITRE 46 DU *KITĀB AD-DALĀ'IL* D'IBN BAHLŪL (X<sup>e</sup> S.)

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L'utilisation des notions de la physiognomonie (*firāsa*) dans le domaine de l'achat des esclaves est un sujet déjà bien établi et attesté par plusieurs traités de l'époque classique et postclassique. Ce qui nous semble intéressant d'étudier ici est le rapport qui lie la médecine à la *firāsa* quant à son utilisation pour le commerce des esclaves et les variations dont ce rapport a été l'objet dans la perception de certains auteurs et, en particulier, le nestorien Ibn Bahlūl (X<sup>e</sup> s.), auteur du *Kitāb ad-dalā'il* (*Ktōbō d-šūdō'ē*).

Il est peut-être nécessaire de s'arrêter sur la notion de *firāsa*, mot qui dans son acception technique désigne la physiognomonie d'origine grecque<sup>1</sup>, aussi bien que dans son acception mystico-religieuse l'intuition qui permet au musulman de comprendre ce qui est caché dans le cœur des hommes<sup>2</sup>. Dans les dictionnaires, *firāsa* signifie "observation aiguë, considération attentive" et est considérée en fait comme le synonyme de *tarwassum* ou *ism* de *tafarrus*, selon les sources<sup>3</sup>. L'étymologie du mot en dit beaucoup sur l'idée que se faisaient les Arabes de la physiognomonie par rapport aux Grecs: si pour ces derniers il s'agissait de la connaissance des règles de la nature (le mot vient de *physis*, nature, et de *gnōmōn*, connaisseur), pour les premiers il s'agissait plutôt d'une forme de pénétration et de connaissance intuitive, ce qui nous pousse tout de suite à définir la physiognomonie comme une forme de divination. La notion de *firāsa* dans le monde arabo-islamique est en fait assez complexe: il est surtout question de la capacité de connaître ce qui est inconnu, l'invisible, au travers de l'analyse de ce qui est connu, visible, par le truchement des indices. Il s'agit donc de ce que l'on pourrait définir, avec C. Ginzburg, comme "l'orgue de la connaissance indiciaire"<sup>4</sup>. Le caractère inférentiel est celui que la définition donnée par la plupart des savants musulmans souligne: en fait, *firāsa* est constamment définie comme un procédé d'*istidlāl*. La notion de *firāsa* en tant que telle est bien représentée dans plusieurs domaines: la mystique, comme en témoignent *ar-Risāla al-Quṣayriyya* d'al-Quṣayrī (m. en 465/1072) et *at-Tadbīrāt al-ilāhiyya* et *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* d'Ibn 'Arabī (m.

<sup>1</sup> Sur la physiognomonie arabe, voir Mourad 1939; Fahd 1966:369 *sqq.*; Aristātālīs, *Firāsa*.

<sup>2</sup> Voir Cor. 15:75, 47:30, 48:29 et les mots du prophète "ittaḡū firāsata l-mu'mini fa-innahu yanzuru bi-nūri'llāhi" (at-Tirmidī, *Ġāmī'* V, 298).

<sup>3</sup> al-Firūzābādī, *Qāmūs* 563; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān* VI, 160; az-Zabīdī, *Tāğ* IV, 207.

<sup>4</sup> Comme l'historien de la culture, C. Ginzburg, le remarque très clairement (1986:194).

en 638/1240), pour ne donner que les exemples les plus connus; la littérature, comme l'attestent la célèbre anecdote des fils de Nizār b. Ma'add<sup>5</sup> et plusieurs autres anecdotes<sup>6</sup>; la science, domaine qui nous intéresse plus particulièrement dans cet article.

En ce qui concerne la médecine, classée avec la *'ilm al-firāsa* parmi les sciences naturelles, on peut y retrouver la notion de *firāsa* dans les deux acceptions: celle technique de physiognomonie et celle étymologique d'observation aiguë. Dans ce dernier sens, la *firāsa* représente l'habileté du médecin à poser un diagnostic, celui-ci devant aussi être capable de reconnaître les causes invisibles des maladies à travers l'analyse des symptômes visibles, surtout dans les cas douteux (*ištibāh asbāb al-marad*). Il s'agit, évidemment, d'une capacité de type inférentiel qui pourtant ne dépend pas seulement de l'intellect (*'aql*) et des connaissances techniques (*al-'ilm bi-usūl al-firāsa*), mais aussi de la foi (*īmān*) de l'individu: c'est ce dont témoignent certains ouvrages du genre *at-ṭibb an-nabawī*<sup>7</sup> où les sens technique et mystique sont conciliés et réunis. Le caractère intuitif en est souligné par la parétymologie que nous donnent ces ouvrages, selon lesquels la *firāsa* s'empare du cœur comme le lion s'empare de sa proie (*farīsa*) (*Ibid.*). Même Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, dans son *Kitāb al-firāsa*, semble accepter cet *ištiqāq*, qu'il fait remonter à Abū l-Qāsim ar-Rāgīb, mais en précisant plutôt que ce sont les connaissances qui "ravissent furtivement" le cœur de l'homme, comme le lion le fait avec la brebis<sup>8</sup>. Il n'est pas inintéressant de remarquer que le *'ilm al-firāsa*, considéré comme faisant partie des connaissances du médecin habile, semble aussi correspondre à la connaissance des principes de la physiologie humorale plutôt qu'à la connaissance des significations psychologiques des signes physiques. Le médecin doit en fait être familiarisé avec ses principes pour identifier précisément les causes des maladies (décider si la nature d'une maladie est chaude ou froide p.e.) dans le but de préconiser la thérapie adéquate (al-Kaḥḥāl, *Aḥkām* 33-34). Il faut toutefois rappeler que physiognomonie et médecine reposent sur les mêmes principes au point que, selon Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, critiquer la physiognomonie revient à critiquer la médecine elle-même<sup>9</sup>.

Le rapport étroit entre examen médical et physiognomonie est donc attesté: la *firāsa*, en tant qu'évaluation des signes extérieurs pour connaître ce qui est intérieur, sert évidemment à diagnostiquer les maladies aussi bien qu'à parvenir à connaître la

<sup>5</sup> Dont la version la plus ancienne se trouve dans al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūğ* II, 427-431.

<sup>6</sup> Voir p. e. celles citées par Irwin 1994:191-192.

<sup>7</sup> Voir p. e. al-Kaḥḥāl (m. en 720/1320), *Aḥkām* II, 33 et ad-Dahabī (m. en 748/1348), *Ṭibb* 112: seul le second mentionne explicitement l'intellect (*'aql*).

<sup>8</sup> *Apud* Mourad 1939:6 (texte arabe) et 78 (traduction). La source mentionnée est ar-Rāgīb al-Iṣfahānī, philologue, théologien et philosophe mort au début du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle.

<sup>9</sup> *Apud* Mourad 1939:6 (texte arabe) et 78 (traduction).

psychologie des individus. Ce type de savoir est exactement celui que l'on utilisait pour choisir les esclaves lors de l'achat: il fallait non seulement que les esclaves fussent en bonne santé, mais aussi qu'ils eussent les caractéristiques psychologiques appropriées aux activités auxquelles ils étaient destinés. L'examen physique et psychologique des esclaves était donc confié aux médecins, et c'est à des médecins que nous devons la plupart des manuels sur l'achat des esclaves que nous possédons. Le rôle important que la *firāsa* caractériologique joua dans ce domaine est établi par le fait que des chapitres spécifiques sur les esclaves étaient inclus dans les traités de physiognomonie, comme nous le verrons plus tard.

Parmi les ouvrages qui traitent spécifiquement de l'achat des esclaves, le premier dont nous avons connaissance est la section que le médecin Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī (m. en 303/925) consacre à ce sujet dans son célèbre *al-Mansūrī fī ṭ-ṭibb*. En effet, le chapitre 21 de la deuxième *maqāla* a pour titre *Fī širā l-mamālīk*: il est question d'une liste des parties du corps que le médecin doit prendre en considération avec les signes qui indiquent des pathologies éventuelles. C'était sans doute un aide-mémoire à l'usage des spécialistes qui pouvaient appliquer toutes leurs connaissances dans cette activité. De toute façon, ce qui nous intéresse ici n'est pas le texte, qui est bien connu et a déjà été l'objet d'une traduction moderne (Müller 1980:34-36), mais c'est plutôt de vérifier comment examen médical et physiognomonie entrent en jeu dans l'examen des esclaves. ar-Rāzī insère ce chapitre dans la *maqāla* de son livre consacrée aux tempéraments qui a pour titre *Ġumal wa-ġawāmi' fī ta'arruf al-mizāğ*. Il le place exactement entre une section introductive sur les différents tempéraments des corps et des organes, comme le cœur et le foie, et sur la façon de les reconnaître, et une section de physiognomonie caractériologique, un court traité de *firāsa*, qui présente en détail les signes de toutes les parties du corps et leur signification physiognomonique, suivis par les portraits des différents caractères, y compris ceux des femmes et des eunuques. Cette disposition en dit beaucoup sur le rapport entre la physiologie humorale, la physiognomonie et l'examen des esclaves, mais le lien entre l'achat des esclaves et l'utilisation de la *firāsa* caractériologique est confirmé encore plus explicitement par la phrase qui conclut le chapitre 21 et qui sert en quelque sorte de transition aux chapitres suivants sur la physiognomonie. Après avoir terminé la description de l'examen physique auquel on doit soumettre les esclaves, ar-Rāzī invite à avoir recours à la *firāsa* pour tout le reste<sup>10</sup>. En fait, ce qui suit c'est une liste de signes physiognomoniques organisés selon un critère topologique, de la tête aux pieds. Il est donc évident que l'achat des esclaves requiert une visite médicale aussi bien qu'une évaluation psychologique, examens auxquels les notions de *firāsa* contribuent autant que celles de médecine.

<sup>10</sup> ar-Rāzī, *Mansūrī* 97: "wa-ammā sā'iru umūrihi l-ukrā fa-stā'in 'alayhā man ta'arrafa l-amziğa bi-l-firāsa".



Ce qui ressort de cette disposition est donc le rapport organique dans lequel se trouvent médecine et physiognomonie en ce qui concerne l'activité d'achat des esclaves, rapport qui trouve une confirmation dans les autres ouvrages sur le même sujet, comme le traité (*Risāla*) d'Ibn Buṭlān (m. en 458/1066). Cet ouvrage est peut-être le plus célèbre travail qui traite de l'achat des esclaves et en tant que tel il a été utilisé par plusieurs savants qui se sont occupés du phénomène de l'esclavage dans le monde arabo-islamique, comme p. e. A. Mez et B. Lewis. Il a aussi fait l'objet de traductions<sup>11</sup>. L'auteur, un célèbre médecin bien connu en Occident, surtout pour son traité d'hygiène *Taqwīm aṣ-ṣiḥḥa* (*Tacuinum sanitatis*), offre un panorama complet des notions utiles à l'achat des esclaves, y compris les conseils à caractère général dictés par le bon sens. Les six chapitres de l'ouvrage présentent donc l'avis des Anciens, les règles pour l'examen médical des esclaves, les notions de *firāsa* nécessaires pour connaître leur psychologie, l'influence du climat sur leur caractère, les trucs utilisés par les marchands pour cacher leurs défauts, et leurs aptitudes professionnelles. Le texte sur la visite médicale ne coïncide pas avec celui d'ar-Rāzī, ce qui témoigne en faveur de l'indépendance de son auteur, tandis que la partie sur la *firāsa* est bien plus proche du texte correspondant d'al-Manṣūrī. Comme dans celui-ci, l'analyse physiognomonique est une partie intégrante de l'examen des esclaves et les notions de *firāsa* caractériologique sont présentées immédiatement après celles à caractère diagnostique qui servent à reconnaître les maladies cachées.

Le rapport étroit qui relie achat des esclaves, médecine et *firāsa* est évident aussi dans les ouvrages du médecin égyptien Ibn al-Akfānī (m. en 749/1348) et d'al-Amṣāṭī (m. en 902/1496). Le premier, auquel nous devons un célèbre livre de classification des sciences, est aussi l'auteur d'un traité de *firāsa* (*Kitāb ikmāl as-siyāsa fī 'ilm al-firāsa*) de même que d'un traité spécifique à l'achat des esclaves (*an-Nazar wa-t-ṭahqīq fī taqlīb ar-raḡīq*) qui ne nous est parvenu que partiellement<sup>12</sup>. Ce qui reste de cet ouvrage traite seulement de l'examen médical des esclaves, mais une phrase qu'Ibn al-Akfānī énonce dans son manuel de *firāsa* nous fait soupçonner la présence d'une partie où la physiognomonie était appliquée d'une façon spécifique à cette activité<sup>13</sup>. Le deuxième auteur, al-Amṣāṭī, qui en fait retravaille l'ouvrage d'Ibn al-Akfānī, inclut

<sup>11</sup> Voir la traduction allemande de Müller 1980:45-80; nous en avons fait une traduction italienne.

<sup>12</sup> Traduction dans Müller 1980:177-180. Voir Witkam 1989:72 *sqq.*

<sup>13</sup> Voir Witkam 1989:74: *wa-bādā ma tayassara mim mā yata'allaqu bi-ahwālī r-riḡālī; ammā mā yata'allaqu bi-ahwālī l-'anā [ʔ] fa-qad yunāsibuhū kutubū l-bāhī wa-ṣirā r-raḡīqī akṭara mim mā naḥnu bi-ṣadādihī...* Or, les livres d'érotologie (*kutub al-bāh*) sont justement la source du genre qu'on appelait *firāsāt an-nisā'*, où les signes physiognomoniques sont interprétés comme indices de la *libido* des femmes et de leur capacité de reproduction: ces notions étaient utilisées pour l'achat des femmes réduites en esclavage (voir p. e. le traité d'al-Manūfī, m. 1032/1623, résumé dans Müller 1980:191). Ceci, avec la mention du genre *ṣirā r-raḡīqī*, indique qu'Ibn al-Akfānī fait référence à une application spécifique des notions de *firāsa* dans le domaine des achats des esclaves.



dans son traité (*al-Qawl as-sadīd fī ihtiyār al-imā' wa-l-'abīd*, écrit en 883/1478) un chapitre sur l'examen physiognomonique des esclaves<sup>14</sup>, ce qui était désormais devenu canonique pour ce genre<sup>15</sup>.

La perception de la spécificité de l'application de la physiognomonie aux domaines de l'esclavage apparaît encore plus forte lorsqu'un chapitre spécifique sur l'achat des esclaves est carrément placé dans des traités de *firāsa* comme le pseudo-Polémon arabe dont Förster<sup>16</sup> donne la version latine ou celui d'al-Anṣārī (m. en 727/1327). Le premier, un court traité de 26 chapitres qui dérive du pseudo-Aristote, contient une brève section sur l'achat des esclaves qui en fait n'est que le début de la section correspondante dans *al-Manṣūrī*. Malgré le titre (*de physiognomonia quae cum mancipiorum emptione cohaeret*) qui annonce un contenu physiognomonique, on n'y trouve que les démarches bien connues de l'examen médical. En ce qui concerne al-Anṣārī, cet auteur nous a laissé une excellente synthèse du savoir physiognomonique d'origine grecque dans un ouvrage qui porte le titre de *Kitāb as-siyāsa fī 'ilm al-firāsa*, rédigé en 723/1323<sup>17</sup>. Le chapitre 11 de ce livre (ff. 13v sqq), que le titre présente comme réservé aux signes que l'acquéreur doit considérer pour les *mamālīk* et les *ḡawārī*, ne contient en réalité que le texte sur l'examen médical des esclaves d'*al-Manṣūrī*. Ce qui est intéressant, c'est plutôt la mention explicite qui est faite, après le titre, d'une branche spéciale de la physiognomonie (*naw'un tāmmin min anwā'i 'ilmi l-firāsa*) reconnue comme étant destinée à connaître l'aptitude des femmes esclaves au coït<sup>18</sup>. Curieusement, cette branche demande une attention toute particulière si on commence, pour la présenter, un nouveau chapitre. C'est en fait le douzième (ff. 15r-18r) qui est entièrement consacré à cette discipline particulière: la *firāsāt an-nisā'* ou, pour mieux dire, la *firāsāt al-ḡawārī*, qui permet de connaître à travers l'observation des parties du corps visibles celles qui sont cachées, avec une forte connotation sexuelle. La source citée par al-Anṣārī est encore une fois *al-Manṣūrī*, mais nous n'avons trouvé ce passage ni dans le chapitre sur l'achat des esclaves ni dans la cinquième *maqāla*, où une partie est pourtant consacrée à la sexologie. Le rapport entre médecine

<sup>14</sup> Voir Witkam 1989:76-79; Fahd 1966:387-388. Le texte est partiellement édité *apud* Mourad 1939:83-84 (texte arabe).

<sup>15</sup> Rappelons p. e. le traité anonyme publié par Hārūn 1991:349 sqq. Voir Müller 1980:111 sqq. et celui d'un certain al-Gazālī (XVII<sup>e</sup>/XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, publié aussi par Hārūn 1991:421-442), où pourtant les indications physiognomoniques ne sont pas réunies dans un chapitre à part, mais sont incorporées dans les chapitres réservés à l'examen médical des parties du corps.

<sup>16</sup> Förster 1893: II, 149-160 (voir *Prolegomena*, I, XCIX et CLXXVII): il s'agit du ms. Gotha ar. A85, fol. 23v-29v.

<sup>17</sup> Il en existe une édition faite au Caire en 1299/1882, que nous n'avons pas pu consulter. Nous avons par contre pu lire le microfilm du manuscrit Bursa, Hüsāyın Çelebi 882, copié en 724 h. sur l'autographe.

<sup>18</sup> Sur ce sujet, voir Ghersetti 1996 et 1999.

et physiognomonie quant à l'achat des esclaves a donc ici été inversé: si auparavant il était nécessaire de s'adresser aux ouvrages de médecine, où une section était consacrée à la *firāsa*, dans ces cas-ci c'est un ouvrage de *firāsa* qui inclut une section sur l'examen médical des esclaves.

Étrangement, le lien entre médecine et *firāsa* dans le domaine spécifique de l'achat des esclaves paraît échapper à l'esprit d'un auteur du dixième siècle, le nestorien Ibn Bahlūl<sup>19</sup> ou, en syriaque, Bar Bahlūl. Ce notable de l'Église d'Orient, Mésopotamien de Séleucie-Ctésiphon, qui étudia dans sa jeunesse la médecine, était bien connu comme lexicographe (il écrivit un lexique grec-syriaque-arabe) et comme traducteur. Il traduisit en fait du syriaque en arabe la version abrégée du manuel du médecin Yūḥannā b. Sarābiyūn, *al-Kunnāš as-ṣagīr*. Il écrivit aussi, très probablement en 942 A. D.<sup>20</sup> une *malḥama*<sup>21</sup>, le *Kitāb ad-dalā'il* (*Le livre des signes*) qui est une véritable encyclopédie des signes en tous genres<sup>22</sup>. En fait, les 49 chapitres du livre traitent des pronostics qui peuvent être tirés des saisons, des mois, des semaines aussi bien que des calendriers des Chrétiens, des Juifs, des Arméniens, des Coptes, et de leurs fêtes. Les signes d'un autre genre, comme ceux ayant trait à la météorologie, aux poisons, aux maladies, et à l'interprétation des songes sont aussi représentés<sup>23</sup>. En quelque sorte, il s'agit d'un ouvrage où la notion de *firāsa* en tant que "orgue de la connaissance indicielle" trouve sa réalisation la plus parfaite: les signes, dont ce traité est un recueil, ne sont que l'élément qui se trouve à la base du procédé inférentiel qui mène à la connaissance de ce qui est caché. Les chapitres qui nous intéressent d'une façon particulière, s'agissant de leur contenu mais aussi de leur emplacement réciproque, sont au nombre de deux: le 46ème (*Fī širā l-mamālīk wa-ʿalāmāt šihḥat abdānihim*) et le 43ème (*Bāb min al-firāsa min Kunnāš al-Manṣūrī wa-ḡayrihi*). Pour ce qui est de leur contenu, il faut dire tout de suite que tous les deux sont tirés d'*al-Manṣūrī* d'ar-Rāzī, mais avec une petite différence. Examinons avant tout le chapitre 43 sur la *firāsa*, pour lequel l'attribution est explicite dès le titre: les signes physiognomoniques des parties du corps, ainsi que les portraits psychologiques, sont copiés fidèlement de la

<sup>19</sup> Son nom complet est (Abū) al-Ḥasan b. (al-) Bahlūl al-Awānī al-Ṭabarhānī. Voir GAS VI (1978), 231 et VII (1979), 332-333; Ullmann 1970; Habbi 1984.

<sup>20</sup> Voir Habbi 1984:212, note 12.

<sup>21</sup> Le mot indiquait au Moyen Âge un écrit à caractère divinatoire; voir Fahd in *EP* s.v. *malḥama* et Fahd 1966:224 sqq. (en ce qui concerne Ibn Bahlūl en particulier aussi 333, 384 note, 388 note, 411-412).

<sup>22</sup> L'ouvrage, dont un seul manuscrit nous est parvenu (Millet, Hekim Oğlu 572/1, du 556/1161), a été édité par J. Habbi.

<sup>23</sup> Pour la table des matières complète, voir Habbi 1984:211-212.

deuxième *maqāla* de l'ouvrage d'ar-Rāzī dont nous avons parlé ci-dessus<sup>24</sup>, avec une brève observation personnelle d'Ibn Bahlūl à propos des mâles et des femelles des animaux (p. 296). Des informations sur les caractères des animaux, évidemment tirées d'une source différente que nous n'avons pas pu identifier, suivent cette première partie<sup>25</sup>. Pour le chapitre 46, celui sur l'achat des esclaves, l'auteur ne déclare pas quelles sont ses sources, mais la comparaison avec le chapitre 21 de la deuxième *maqāla* d'*al-Manṣūrī* démontre qu'il s'agit, avec peu de différences, du même texte<sup>26</sup>. Évidemment, Ibn Bahlūl a exploité d'une manière extensive l'ouvrage d'ar-Rāzī, et surtout dans ce cas-ci, la deuxième *maqāla*, mais il l'a utilisé d'une façon plutôt incohérente. Comme nous l'avons déjà souligné dans ce qui précède, dans le texte d'ar-Rāzī l'examen médical des esclaves et leur analyse physiognomonique sont placés l'un après l'autre, et reliés par une connexion étroite. Le tout est placé à l'intérieur d'un cadre théorique qui remonte aux principes de la physiologie humorale typique de la tradition hippocratique et galénique: la disposition réciproque de ces deux sujets, et leur disposition dans l'ensemble à l'intérieur du livre qui traite des tempéraments, le confirment. Cette connexion n'était pourtant pas aussi évidente aux yeux d'Ibn Bahlūl, qui extrait la section sur la *firāsa* de son contexte, la sépare de celle sur l'examen médical des esclaves et la traite comme une section indépendante, en la plaçant entre les chapitres sur les signes météorologiques et les signes des poisons<sup>27</sup>. Le lien entre *firāsa* et examen médical des esclaves, puissant dans la conscience des autres auteurs, est ainsi estompé et les deux éléments, déracinés de leur cadre théorique, sont réduits à des listes isolées de signes qui n'ont apparemment aucun rapport réciproque.

Même si le chapitre 46 du *Kitāb ad-dalā'il* d'Ibn Bahlūl n'est pas un texte original, nous croyons intéressant d'en donner ici une traduction accompagnée de notes qui indiquent les différences par rapport au texte d'ar-Rāzī<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Voir Ibn Bahlūl, *Dalā'il* 284-297 (cfr. les observations de Habbi, 284 note 2, qui apparemment n'a pas identifié la partie exacte de l'ouvrage d'ar-Rāzī).

<sup>25</sup> La comparaison avec le texte de Polémon publié par Förster (1893: I, 95-293) et avec le pseudo-Aristote traduit par Hunayn n'a donné aucune confirmation d'une dépendance directe.

<sup>26</sup> Comme Müller l'avait déjà affirmé et Habbi suggéré dans son édition.

<sup>27</sup> Cette "décomposition" de la *maqāla* d'ar-Rāzī se rapproche de celle faite par un autre auteur du X<sup>e</sup> siècle, le médecin al-Siġzī, qui traite de l'achat des esclaves dans la troisième *maqāla* de ses traités médicaux (*ar-Rasā'il al-tibbiyya*): voir Müller 1980:39-40.

<sup>28</sup> Nous n'avons signalé que les différences qui avaient une valeur en fonction de la traduction: p. e. nous n'avons pas mis en note la variante d'*al-Manṣūrī* (éd. Kuwayt, dorénavant MT) quand il s'agissait tout simplement d'une inversion de mots, d'une variante concernant les catégories grammaticales comme le nombre et le genre des noms et des adjectifs ou l'usage de prépositions synonymes.

DE L'ACHAT DES ESCLAVES (ET DES SIGNES DE LA SANTÉ DE LEUR CORPS)<sup>29</sup>

Il est nécessaire, avant tout, d'examiner la couleur avec grand soin. En fait, la couleur, si elle est altérée, est signe de la maladie du foie ou<sup>30</sup> de la rate ou de l'estomac ou d'hémorroïdes dont s'écoule beaucoup de sang.

Par la suite, que l'on examine l'aspect extérieur de son corps<sup>31</sup> dans un endroit lumineux, clair<sup>32</sup> et évident<sup>33</sup>, afin qu'un herpès subtil – au cas où il y en aurait un – ou bien un début d'eczéma, n'échappe pas à la vue. En effet, l'herpès, au stade initial, est peu visible car seul du blanc ou du noir, peu évident, apparaît dans l'endroit, et ce n'est que par la suite<sup>34</sup> qu'il devient fort<sup>35</sup> et qu'il se développe avec le temps. S'il y a dans un endroit de son corps une espèce de grain de beauté ou de cautérisation ou de marque<sup>36</sup>, qu'on l'examine avec un grand soin parce que dans cet endroit il pourrait y avoir eu une affection de lèpre qui a été cautérisée ou marquée en la brûlant au fer<sup>37</sup> [ou]<sup>38</sup> teinte pour être dissimulée. En fait, avec le temps qui passe, la teinture disparaît ou<sup>39</sup> la tache de lèpre s'agrandit en sortant des limites de la cautérisation et de la marque<sup>40</sup> et redevient visible<sup>41</sup>. S'il s'agit d'un grain de beauté à propos duquel on a des doutes, qu'on le fasse entrer au *ḥammām*, qu'on le lave à l'eau chaude en frottant avec toute l'énergie nécessaire<sup>42</sup> au moyen de salicorne<sup>43</sup>, borax et vinaigre et qu'on l'examine par après. S'il y a eu cautérisation ou brûlure de fer dans un endroit désagréable et merveilleux (*sic*), qu'on [le]

<sup>29</sup> La partie entre parenthèses manque dans MT.

<sup>30</sup> *Aw*; MT *wa*.

<sup>31</sup> MT ajoute *kulluhu* "tout".

<sup>32</sup> *Nayyir*; MT *mustanir*.

<sup>33</sup> *Bayyin*; ce mot manque dans MT.

<sup>34</sup> MT ajoute ici *yastahkimu* "qu'il est raffermi et".

<sup>35</sup> Par rapport à MT il y a eu une saut du même au même. Voici la traduction de la ligne qui manque: "En ce qui concerne l'eczéma, au début il y a une dureté qui arrive aux endroits [où il y a l'affection] et par la suite elle devient forte".

<sup>36</sup> *Wasm*; MT *wašm* "tatouage".

<sup>37</sup> *Wusima*; MT *wušima* "tatoué".

<sup>38</sup> Le mot manque; MT *aw*.

<sup>39</sup> *Aw*; MT *wa*.

<sup>40</sup> *Wasm*; MT *wašm* "tatouage".

<sup>41</sup> Ce dernier verbe manque dans MT.

<sup>42</sup> Ici MT ajoute *tumma* "ensuite".

<sup>43</sup> Plante qui pousse naturellement sur le bord de la mer. Elle était utilisée, elle ou ses cendres, comme détergent.

flaire<sup>44</sup>, et qu'on frotte bien, et qu'on examine ses limites et ses extrémités avec grand soin, puisque dans cet endroit cela reste encore plus caché<sup>45</sup>.

Ensuite qu'on l'interroge et qu'on lui demande de parler et [que l'on examine]<sup>46</sup> la vivacité de son ouïe, l'état de son discours et de son intellect. Qu'on examine les cheveux et la peau de sa tête pour voir s'il y a des squames qui s'en détachent ou un ulcère.

Qu'on examine sa prunelle, sa proportion, sa limpidité et sa grandeur<sup>47</sup>, et le terme extrême de la force de sa vue, et la limpidité du blanc de ses yeux car en fait, s'ils sont ternes ou sombres, c'est un signe qui met en garde contre l'éléphantiasis. S'il y a du jaune dans le blanc cela indique une maladie<sup>48</sup> du foie. S'il s'y trouve de nombreuses veines rouges évidentes, il s'agit d'un pannicule.

Qu'on considère<sup>49</sup> ses paupières pour voir si elles sont lentes<sup>50</sup> et si elles se meuvent aisément, car les paupières épaisses sont dans la plupart des cas galeuses ou bien disposées à le devenir et celles dont le mouvement est lent<sup>51</sup> sont mauvaises. En d'autres termes, les paupières de celui qui est dans cet état doivent être frottées longtemps lorsqu'il se réveille avant qu'il n'ouvre les yeux. Qu'on palpe le coin de l'œil qui se trouve près du nez, parce qu'il se pourrait qu'il s'en écoule à ce moment-là de l'humidité sortant des polypes<sup>52</sup> qui s'y trouvent.

Que l'on examine ses cils<sup>53</sup> et ses sourcils, parce que leur exiguïté est un mauvais signe<sup>54</sup>, en particulier quand cela va de pair avec une voix rauque et un visage rouge. Que l'on considère<sup>55</sup> l'état de son visage<sup>56</sup> en ce qui concerne le nez et la bouche, afin qu'ils ne soient pas fétides. Que l'on regarde la forme du nez parce que s'il est gros<sup>57</sup> et recourbé, cela indique qu'il y a des polypes à l'intérieur: qu'on les regarde alors au soleil et qu'on fasse attention à ce qu'il respire facilement. Que l'on examine l'état de ses dents en ce qui

<sup>44</sup> *Fa-l-yuṣamm*; MT *fa-l-yuttaham* "qu'on soupçonne".

<sup>45</sup> *Yastatiru*; MT *yastabīnu* "est manifeste".

<sup>46</sup> MT ajoute *wa-yutafaqqad*.

<sup>47</sup> MT a une tournure de phrase un peu différente: "si elle est limpide et bien proportionnée dans sa grandeur".

<sup>48</sup> *Illā*; MT *radā'a* "mauvaise qualité".

<sup>49</sup> *Tuta'ammal*; MT *yutafaqqad* "qu'on examine".

<sup>50</sup> *Baṭī'a*; MT *naqiyya* "pures".

<sup>51</sup> *Baṭī'a*; MT *'asira* "difficile".

<sup>52</sup> *Barwāsir*; MT *nawāsir* "fistule".

<sup>53</sup> *Wa-yutafaqqad šā'ru aḡfānibi*; MT *wa-yutafaqqad bi-stiqṣā' aṣfāruhu* "que l'on examine à fond les bords de la paupière où naissent les cils".

<sup>54</sup> *Alāma*; ce mot manque dans MT.

<sup>55</sup> *Tuta'ammal*; MT *yutafaqqad* "que l'on examine".

<sup>56</sup> *Waḡb*; MT *nafas* "haleine".

<sup>57</sup> MT ajoute *iḥtišā'uhu* "remplissage".

concerne leur égalité, leur force et leur blancheur en vérifiant s'il y en a qui bougent et qui sont cariées. En fait, les dents longues<sup>58</sup> durent longtemps tandis que celles qui sont fines tombent vite et en même temps c'est un signe qui met en garde contre la faiblesse de tout le corps.

Il faut<sup>59</sup> examiner aussi son cou, s'il est droit, et le palper et le tâter et voir s'il n'y a pas de protubérance ou la trace d'une plaie, parce qu'alors il y a des nœuds dans lesquels naissent rapidement les écrouelles<sup>60</sup>.

Que l'on considère<sup>61</sup> la poitrine, si elle est large et charnue, parce que celle qui est mince<sup>62</sup> et maigre, avec les épaules proéminentes est un avertissement contre la paresse<sup>63</sup>. Qu'il s'allonge<sup>64</sup> sur le dos et qu'on en palpe les intestins<sup>65</sup> afin de vérifier qu'il n'y ait rien<sup>66</sup> à l'endroit<sup>67</sup> de son foie, de sa rate et de son cardia.

Qu'on lui commande de marcher et qu'on examine sa démarche et<sup>68</sup> la façon de poser ses pieds. Qu'on lui commande de saisir quelque chose et qu'on examine la force avec laquelle il la saisit parce que la faiblesse de cela indique la faiblesse des nerfs<sup>69</sup>. Qu'on lui commande de courir [afin de vérifier] qu'il<sup>70</sup> ne fait pas partie de ceux qui sont pris<sup>71</sup> d'asthme et<sup>72</sup> de toux vilaine.

Qu'on mesure ses bras et ses jambes et qu'on les compare<sup>73</sup> l'un à l'autre, car il se pourrait que l'un soit plus court que l'autre.

<sup>58</sup> *Tawīla*; MT *qawiyya* "fortes".

<sup>59</sup> Ce verbe manque dans MT.

<sup>60</sup> Dans MT la phrase est hypothétique "s'il y a des nœuds les écrouelles y naissent rapidement".

<sup>61</sup> *Yuta'ammal*; MT *yunzar ilā* "que l'on regarde".

<sup>62</sup> *Raqīq*; MT *daqīq* "fin".

<sup>63</sup> Dans le texte *kasī*, sans doute à corriger en *sill* (phtisie pulmonaire): cfr. MT et Ibn Buṭlān, *Risāla*. En fait tous les signes considérés par Ibn Bahlūl ont une valeur clinique et non psychologique, ce qui nous démontre qu'ici il ne peut pas s'agir de paresse mais plutôt de phtisie.

<sup>64</sup> *Yanūm*; MT *yulqā* "soit fait allonger".

<sup>65</sup> *Aḥṣā'uhu*; MT *baṭnuhu kulluhu* "tout son ventre".

<sup>66</sup> Ce mot manque dans MT.

<sup>67</sup> Ici par rapport à MT il y a eu un saut du même au même: voici la traduction de la phrase qui manque "de celui-ci une protubérance et une douleur quand on le palpe et en particulier à l'endroit".

<sup>68</sup> *Ḥutāhu wa...*; MT *quwwatu* "la force".

<sup>69</sup> MT ajoute *wa-stī'ādāhi li-l-faliḡ* "et sa prédisposition à l'hémiplégie".

<sup>70</sup> *Li-allā yakūna*; MT *wa-yunzaru hal* "qu'on regarde si".

<sup>71</sup> MT ajoute *bi-'aqbihi* "tout de suite".

<sup>72</sup> *Wa*; MT *aw*.

<sup>73</sup> Ce verbe manque dans MT.

Qu'on examine<sup>74</sup> ses articulations par rapport<sup>75</sup> à leur souplesse et leur mouvement, et les veines de ses jambes, [afin de vérifier] qu'elles ne soient pas dures<sup>76</sup>, parce que cela conduit aux varices et à l'éléphantiasis.

Quant au reste, qu'on demande secours à celui qui connaît les tempéraments et la physiognomonie<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> MT ajoute *ḥāl* "l'état".

<sup>75</sup> *Fi*; MT *wa*.

<sup>76</sup> MT a une tournure de phrase un peu différente: "et que l'on examine sa jambe, s'il y a des veines grandes et larges".

<sup>77</sup> *Man ya'rifu al-mizāḡāti wa-l-firāsa*; MT *man ta'arrafa l-amziḡata bi-l-firāsa*. La différence, apparemment petite, révèle deux approches très différentes. Si ar-Rāzī intègre, comme on l'a vu, la physiognomonie dans la contexte de la physiologie humorale (il s'agit de connaître les tempéraments au travers de la *firāsa*, et la variante du Ms Paris BNF arabe 2866, fol. 30 r "*man ya'rifu l-amziḡata mina l-firāsa*" confirme cette interprétation), Ibn Bahlūl déracine la *firāsa* de son cadre théorique étant donné que pour lui il s'agit plutôt de connaître les tempéraments et la physiognomonie.



- ar-Rāzī, *Manṣūrī* = Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī, *al-Manṣūrī fī ṭ-ṭibb*. Edité par H. B. aṣ-Ṣiddiqī, Kuwayt 1987.
- at-Tirmidī, *Ġāmi'* = Muḥammad b. 'Īsā at-Tirmidī, *al-Ġāmi' aṣ-ṣaḥīḥ*, 3 vols., Le Caire 1937.
- az-Zabīdī, *Tāğ* = Muḥibb ad-Dīn Abū l-Faḍl as-Sayyid Muḥammad Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī, *Tāğ al-'arūs*, 10 vols., Baṅgāzī 1966.

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## كتب العجائب والغرائب

شوقي عبد القوي عثمان حبيب

القاهرة

يصادف القارئ لكتب التراث العربية بعض الكتب يشتمل عنوانها على كلمتي عجائب وغرائب أو على إحداهما. وقد ذكر حاجي خليفة في مؤلفه كشف الظنون أربعة وعشرين عنوانا اشتمل عنوانها على كلمة العجائب وكلمة الغرائب أو على الكلمتين معا. ولكن من المؤكد أن العدد أكثر من ذلك لأن هناك كثيرا من عناوين لم يرد ذكرها لديه.

وقبل أن نرى إذا كان هنا خطأ مشتركا أو نمطا معيناً أو منهجا خاصا بهذا الموضوع سار عليه الجميع، أم كان عبارة عن رصد مشاهدات أو تسجيل لمرويات تروى، أو نقل عن آخرين فجدير بنا أن نذكر بعض عناوين هذه المصنفات فمنها على سبيل المثال. ابن وصيف شاه، جواهر البحور ووقائع الأمور وعجائب الدهور وأخبار الديار المصرية وما ورد فيها من الآيات العظيمة.

محمد القزويني المحلي، مختصر العجائب والغرائب. أبو جعفر محمد بن حمزة بن عبد الله الأسدي الكوفي، عجائب الملكوت. مجهول المؤلف، عجائب البلاد والأقطار والنيل والأنهار والبراري وتعرف بقصة حايذ بن سالوم مجهول المؤلف، العجائب التي على الأرض.

أبو حامد الفارابي، تحفة الألباب ونخبة الأعاجاب. الشيخ أبو الحسن علي بن الحسين بن علي بن عبد الله الهذلي المسعودي، أخبار الزمان وعجائب البلدان والغامر بالماء والعمران.

برزك بن شهریار الناحذة الرام هرمزي، عجائب الهند بره وبحره وجزره الدمشقي (شمس الدين أبو عبد الله محمد بن أبي طالب) نخبة الدهر في عجائب البر والبحر.

- القزويني (زكريا بن محمد بن محمود) عجائب المخلوقات وغرائب الموجودات - ابن الوردي (سراج الدين بن حفص عمر) خريدة العجائب وفريدة الغرائب ابن بطوطة (عبد الله بن محمد بن إبراهيم اللواتي) تحفة النظائر في غرائب الأمصار وعجائب الأسفار.

وغير ذلك كثير. ولكن ماذا تعني كلمتا عجائب وغرائب في مفهوم ذلك العصر؟ في لسان العرب مادة عجب "إنكار ما يرد إليك لقلة اعتياده ويقال جمع عجب عجائب" وتحت مادة غرب جاء "الغريب الغامض من الكلام ولم ترد معنى غرائب ولا أنها جمع لغريب، وفي حديث الحجاج لأضربنكم ضرب غرائب الإبل .. أي أنه عندما ترد الإبل الماء فدخل عليها إبل غريبة عنها تضرب وتطرد".

ولم يترك لنا أي كاتب من كتاب هذه المصنفات تفسيراً يشير إلى ما يرمي إليه بكلمتي عجائب أو غرائب سوى القزويني، وربما كان ذلك راجعاً إلى أن المقصود أو المعنى الذي يرمي إليه الكاتب معروف، لذلك لم يعمد أحد منهم إلى تبيان معناه، ولكن بماذا عرف القزويني صاحب كتاب عجائب المخلوقات وغرائب الموجودات "العجب" قال: "العجب حيرة تعرض للإنسان لقصوره عن معرفة سبب الشيء أو عن معرفة كيفية تأثيره فيه"<sup>١</sup>. والغريب "كل أمر قليل الوقوع مخالف للعادات

<sup>١</sup> لمزيد من التفاصيل، القزويني، عجائب ٣١- ٣٢.

المعهودة والمشاهدات المألوفة وذلك إما من تأثير نفوس قوية أو تأثير أمور فلكية أو أجرام عنصرية كل ذلك بقدره الله تعالى وإرادته ...” (القزويني، عجائب ٣٨-٤١).

هذا هو التعريف الذي أورده القزويني وهو الكاتب الوحيد من العجائبيين الذي شرح الكلمات التي اشتمل عليها عنوان الكتاب ومعناها، لكي يتبين منها مقصود الكتاب فشرح العجب، وتقسيم المخلوقات، وما هو الغريب ثم تقسيم الموجودات.

ولم يعن أحد من كتاب هذه المصنفات بشرح ما يعني بالعجائب والغرائب، ولكن نستطيع أن نقرر بقدر كبير من الإطمئنان بأن ما ورد منها في مختلف المؤلفات لا يخرج في معناها عن المعنى الذي أوضحه القزويني، وإن كان هناك اختلاف فيأتي في طريقة تناول ومحاولة تفسير العجيبة أو إيرادها دون تفسير أو تحليل.

ونستطيع أن نستثني كتابين من هذه المنظومة، رغم أن عنوانيهما يشتمل على كلمتي العجائب والغرائب وهما ”تحفة النظر في غرائب الأمصار وعجائب الأسفار“ لابن بطوطة، والآخر عجائب الآثار في التراجم والأخبار. لأن أولهما كتاب في الرحلة عاينها صاحبها فهو يحكي مشاهداته وبعضها مما سمع به وربما يقصد بالعجب هنا ما اختلف عما اعتاده في بلاده بالغرب.

أما الكتاب الآخر وهو عجائب الآثار في التراجم والأخبار للجبرتي، فهو كتاب في التاريخ يتناول يوميات تاريخ مصر التي عايشها المؤرخ في القرن الثامن عشر والتاسع عشر وليس به من العجائب أو الغرائب التي شرح معناها القزويني شيء.

وبدراسة بعض العجائب والغرائب نجد أنها لا يجمعها منهج واحد في الكتابة حيث نجد أن:

- كثير من مؤلفيها نقل مادته من سابقه.
- أغلب مادتها عبارة عن مرويات تحكي.

- المادة التي كتبها المؤلف بناء على مشاهداته وهي التي تبدو أقرب إلى أن تكون مادة يقبلها عقل الإنسان دون دهشة مادة قليلة لا تقاس بالمادة التي استقاها المؤلف بالسماع، أو بالنقل ورغم تأكيد البعض مثل أبو حامد الغرناطي في كتابه تحفة الألباب ونخبة الأعجاب بين الحقائق والعجائب، من أن المادة التي تعين أفضل من التي يخبر عنها، حيث يذكر ”أنه ليس الخبر كالمعاينة“ (الغرناطي، تحفة ٨١)، وإلا أنه جمع بين هذا وذاك.

- بعض تلك الكتب خاص ببلد من البلدان مثل مخطوط ابن وصيف شاه المعنون باسم ”جواهر البحور ووقائع الأمور وعجائب الدهور وأخبار الديار المصرية وما ورد فيها من الآيات العظيمة والأحاديث الشريفة وما اختصت به دون غيرها من البرية ومن الجهابذة والفراعنة وغيرهم من الخلفاء والسلطين“، وكتاب ابن إياس ”نزهة الأُمم في العجائب والحكم“ والمادة التي بهذين الكتابين خاصة بمصر.

أيضا هناك عناوين أخرى مثل ”الباهر في عجائب الحيل“ ويشتمل على ما نسميه نحن بعض ألعاب الحواة والسحرة. ومنها ما يتكلم عن عجائب المدن والبنيان مثل ”العجائب التي على الأرض“ مجهول المؤلف.

وبقراءة كتب العجائب نجد أن معظمها صنف عجائبه على أربعة موضوعات بصفة أساسية.

الموضوع الأول: قصة الخلق وأخبار البلاد والشعوب

الموضوع الثاني: وصف الكون والأجرام السماوية

الموضوع الثالث: عجائب البر (الأرض)

الموضوع الرابع: عجائب الماء (البحار والأنهار)

ولا يعني ذلك أن كل كتاب تناول مختلف الموضوعات السابقة، ولكن محتواها يدور حول ما سبق من موضوعات.

ويلاحظ على هذا النوع من الكتابة أنها:

أولاً: حفلت بكثير من الغرائب والعجائب التي يحار العقل في تفسيرها، وتبدو لمن ينظر إليها أنها معجزة. على أن بعضاً منها - وبعد تقدم العلوم خاصة - أصبح تفسيره معروفاً على أنه مجرد ظواهر طبيعية. ولكن لعجز العقل الإنساني حينذاك عن إيجاد تفسير أو تبرير لما يحدث فقد أرجعها إلى خارج المألوف وسماها غرائب أو عجائب.

ثانياً: أن أغلب ما ورد بها من عجائب أو غرائب ولم تجد تفسيراً لها إلى الآن لم يرها أو يشاهدها كاتبها بل نقلها أو سمعها من آخرين.

ثالثاً: لم تكن مادة هذه الكتب كلها غرائب ولم تجد تفسيراً لبعضها إلى الآن لم يرها أو يشاهدها كاتبها بل نقلها أو سمعها من آخرين.

رابعاً: لم تكن مادة هذه الكتب كلها غرائب وعجائب فقط بل إن بها كثيراً من المعطيات الواقعية والحقائق التاريخية.

وربما يحاول كتاب تلك المؤلفات في الغالب التحقق من مادتهم أو تحليلها، رغم أن هناك بعض الكتاب الذين اتبعوا ذلك في بعض كتاباتهم ولنضرب مثلاً بالتنين.

ورد ذكر التنين في معظم كتب العجائب، وكانت صورة التنين التي وردت في معظم تلك الكتابات متشابهة، فعلى سبيل المثال كتب ابن الوردي المتوفى القرن الثامن الهجري عن التنين حين يتكلم عن بحر الخزر "ذكروا أنه يرتفع من هذه البحر تنين عظيم يشبه السحاب الأسود وينظر إليه الناس وزعموا أنها دابة عظيمة في البحر تؤذي دوابه فيبعث الله عليها سحاباً من سحب قدرته، فيحملها ويخرجها من البحر وهي صفة حية سوداء لا يمر ذنبها على شيء من الأبنية العظام إلا وسحقته وهدمته، ولا من الأشجار إلا هدمتها وربما تنفست فأحرقت الأشجار والنباتات قال فليلقها السحاب في الجزائر التي بها يأجوج ومأجوج وتكون غداء" (ابن الوردي، خريدة ١٣١-١٣٢).

أما المسعودي المتوفى في القرن الرابع الهجري فكتب عن التنين "اختلف الناس في التنين فمنهم من رأى أنه ريح سوداء تكون في قعر البحر فتظهر إلى النسيم فتحلق السحب كالزوبعة، فإذا صارت من الأرض واستقرت وأثارت معها الغبار ثم استطالت ذاهبة الصعداء توهم الناس أنها حيات سوداء، وقد ظهرت من البحر لسواد السحاب وذهاب الضوء وترادف الرياح ومنهم من رأى أنها دواب تكون في قعر البحر... وكذلك حكى قوم من أهل السير وأصحاب القصص أموراً فيما ذكرنا أعرضنا عن ذكرها" (المسعودي، مروج ج ١، ١٢٣-١٢٢).

وبالنظر إلى تناول كل من الكاتبين نجد أن المسعودي يقترب من المنهج العلمي، حيث يذكر الآراء المختلفة وعندما يجد أن هناك وصف للتنين يخرج عن دائرة المعقول امتنع عن ذكر هذه الأوصاف التي سمعها أو قرأ عنها.

بينما لم ينهج ابن الوردي وغيره هذا النهج غالباً بل كانوا يكتبون ما يسمعه أو ينقلوه دون تمحيص أو تحليل. فلماذا لم يقتدوا بالسابقين عليهم؟ هل هو رغبة في إثارة الشوق وجذب الاهتمام لولع الناس بكل عجيب وغريب، ومع ذلك فإن كثيراً مما قصه كتاب تلك العجائب لم يبعد كثيراً عن الواقع.

وعلى كل يرى البعض أن هناك تدرجاً وتفاوتاً كبيراً بين كتب العجائب، يجعل من بعضها ما يصح أن يوضع في مصاف الكتب ذات الصبغة العلمية والنظرة الأقرب إلى الموضوعية، ومن البعض ما يقربها من أراجيف العوام ولكن ليس معنى هذا أن هذه الأخير صفر من الحقائق العلمية أو أن الأولى خلو من التحريف (فوزي ١٩٤٣: ٣٥).

وإذا تناولنا تلك المؤلفات سنجد أن مصادرها ثلاثة هي النقل من كتب السابقين، السماع، والمشاهدة وكان المصدرا الأولان هما سبب حصول تلك الكتب بكل هذه العجائب والغرائب، ذلك لأن كثير من المادة الموجودة بالكتب المنقول عنها، وصلت إلى صاحب الكتاب أيضاً بالسماع. وخطورة السماع هنا أن الراوي عندما يروي حكاية ويجد سامعه مندهشاً ربما يعمد إلى التضخيم والتهويل في أحداث حكايته، وربما يؤلف أحداثاً فورية لكي يحصل على المزيد من

إعجاب واندعاش سامعيه. كذلك غالباً ما تتزايد الأحداث بانتقال الرواية من راوٍ لآخر. فكل يزيد فيها وهذا طبع بشري معروف. وما على الكاتب إلا أن يكتب ما سمعه دونما تدقيق أو تمحيص ويكتفي بذكر حدثني فلان وكان ذكر الاسم كاف لكي نتأكد من صدق الحكاية. وفي المقابل نجد أننا لو طالعنا أحد كتب العجائب، وفحصنا المادة التي يرويها الكاتب عما شاهده بنفسه نجد أن أغلبها مادة حقيقية. ولكن ليس معنى ذلك أن المادة المكتوبة بالسماع بالضرورة تكون مادة ضعيفة فربما كان العكس صحيحاً بالإضافة إلى كونها مادة تجذب السامع وتجعله أكثر تشوقاً إلى متابعتها.

ولسنا هنا في مجال التقييم التاريخي أو العلمي أو التحقق مما ورد في تلك الكتب، فمن المؤكد أنه قد اختلطت الأساطير بالمرويات بما جاء في كتب الدين كل ذلك لكي تؤدي في النهاية تفسير وإجابة لحيرة الإنسان وتطلعه الدائم للمعرفة، ولايجاد إجابة لكل أمر غريب يعن له. وبقراءة كتب العجائب نجد أن عجائب البحر والأنهار هي أكثر تلك الموضوعات مدعاة للدهشة والعجب، رغم أن بعضاً منها وبعد تقدم العلوم عرف أنها عبارة عن بعض الظواهر الطبيعية التي تخدع البصر.

وقد حازت عجائب البحر وجزره قصب السبق في تلك المصنفات، مما حدا بكثير من قصاصي تلك الأزمان إلى إدخالها في سياق حكيمهم ومزجها بمروياتهم مزجاً فنياً رائعاً. يشعر القارئ بأنه يحيا أحداث الحكاية ويعايشها، دون أن يرد على خاطره ولو للحظة أن هذه الحوادث مستحيلة الصدور، كما في حكايات ألف ليلة والأدب الفارسي في هزار افسان والأدب الهندية والإغريقية والأدب الأوروبية كما في قصة القديس برندان. ويرجع هذا إلى أن مؤلفي تلك الحكايات ضمن تلك العجائب في نسيج حكايته ليضفي عليها إثارة وتشوقاً.

وبقراءة تلك الكتب قراءة متأنية خاصة الأجزاء الحافلة بالغرائب والعجائب، يشعر القارئ بأن الكاتب يعتقد اعتقاداً تاماً بحقيقة وصدق العجائب التي يسردها، بل يحدد زمانها ومكانها ومن مشاهدتها وإن كان هو نفسه لم يصادفها.

حقيقة لقد تفاعلت مع تلك الكتب وقد شدتني وكنت لا أترك الكتاب إلا بعد الانتهاء من الفصل الذي أقرأه، لقد تعايشت معها، وكأنتني في خضم أحداثها تتجاذبني الرهبة والشوق، الخوف وحب المغامرة، الخشية من المجهول والبعد عنه مع الرغبة في سبر غوره. ولكن لماذا تغرد البحر بكثرة عجائبه وغرائبه، مع ملاحظة أن أغلب المادة المكتوبة عن عجائب البحر كانت نقلاً عن آخرين أو بالسماع، ولم يشاهدها كاتبها عكس عجائب البر، فما كتب عنها نجد أن الكاتب قد شاهد بعضاً منها.

وهذا شيء طبيعي فإن البحار تلك المياه الشاسعة التي يشعر الإنسان فيها بضعفه ويمتلئ قلبه رعباً حين تحتويه، ولا بد وأنه في ظلمات الليل وبين ضوء القمر وضياء النجوم وزبد البحر وأمواجه وأحيائه وجزره وأرباحه وتياراته المائية الدافئة والباردة، كل هذا يشكل شاشة كبيرة ترسم عليها خيالات عديدة في ذهن المشاهد وهي خيالات غير سارة حيث تثب الخوف والرعب في قلب راكب البحر سمعها ممن سبقوه في ركوب البحر، أو في حلقات السمر حينما يجلس سمار الليالي يتجاذبون أطراف الحديث، أو يستمعون لقاص يقص عليهم ما لم يحيطوا به خيراً.

ولن نجد أروع من هذا المشهد الذي يجسد لنا رهبة البحر في قول ابن ماجد لراكب البحر "ينبغي عليك إذا ركبت البحر أن تلزم الطهارة فإنك في السفينة ضيف من أضياف البارئ عز وجل فلا تغفل عن ذكره فإنه شديد العقاب" (ابن ماجد، فوايد ورقة رقم ٥٨).

"وقبل الخروج إلى عرض البحر المفتوح كانت تقرأ سورة الفاتحة، بصوت مسموع ثم يتلوها دعاء بأن يسمعه الخضر حاكم البحر وحامي المسافرين" (ابن ماجد، ثلاث ١٠٢).

وسنعرض في عجالة لكتاب اختص بعجائب الهند وهو كتاب "عجائب الهند بره وبحره وجزايره" لبرنك ابن شهريار الناخذاء الرام هرمزي. ويوجد خلاف حول تاريخ تأليف الكتاب حيث

يرى البعض أنه كتب في الفترة ما بين ٩٠٠/٢٨٨ - ٩٥٠/٣٣٩ (حبيب ١٩٨٨: ١٨). والكتاب صغير الحجم ويقع في مائة وأربعة وأربعين صفحة وطبع على النسخة المطبوعة بليدن. والكتاب جمعت مادته بالسماع ومسرح الأحداث هو المحيط الهندي وبعض بلدانه وجزره، وعندما يروي المؤلف قصة يسندها إلى قائلها مثل حديث أبي عبد الله محمد أبي الحسن أو يونس بن مهران السيرافي، وأحيانا لا يذكر الاسم فيقول حدثني بعض التجار أو بعض البحرينيين وهكذا. ورغم أن المؤلف كما يتضح من اسمه كان يمتن مهنة الملاحة، بل كان ريانا حيث ينتهي اسمه بصنعة والناخذاه وتتكون من مقطعين ناؤ وتعني السفينة بالهندية "وخدا" بمعنى مالك بالفارسية أي مالك السفينة (شير ١٩٨٠، كلمة ناخذاة). إلا أنه لم يحدثنا بشيء صادفه - ولم يخط صاحب منهج للكتاب، ولم يحاول ذلك، بل يتضح أنها كان يكتب كل ما يسمعه دون ترتيب معين أو تصنيف خاص أو خطة واضحة. وكانت عنايته البالغة بإسناد كل حكاية إلى قائلها. وربما كان هذا الإسناد لكي يعطي الحكاية وزنا وثقة. وعندما يغيب اسم صاحبها يقول حدثني بعض البحرينيين أو بعض التجار. مما يشاء أنها ليست بنت خياله نظرا لغرابتها. وهل كان هذا ما ناء به عن حكي ما صادفه إذا كان قد صادف اعجوبة ما. ولغة الكتاب لا تتميز بالجزالة كما أنها ليست ركيكة بل هي سلسلة مشوقة.

وواضح أن برزك كان يكتب دون أن يعني بالأسلوب فعنايته الأولى بالأحداث. والكتاب عبارة عن مجموعة من المعارف والأحداث التي صادفت البعض صيغت في قالب وصفي، ويتراوح الحدث بين عدة أسطر وعدة صفحات ومحتوى تلك الأحداث أو القصص هي أخبار عن قروود عجيبة أو طيور لم تر من قبل أو أناس أشكالهم غريبة وهكذا.

ومع أن مادة الكتاب خاصة بعجائب بحر الهند وبره، إلا أنه يبقى من أهم ما كتب عن المحيط الهندي وبلدانه، ورغم ما عنون به الكتاب إلا أن به الكثير من المعطيات الحقيقية. وإذا رجعنا إلى بعض حكايات ألف ليلة وليلة خاصة أسفار السندباد، لوجدنا أن كثيرا من أحداثها هي نفسها قريبة من أحداث هذا الكتاب، وإكاد أن أجزم بأن أحدهما أخذ عن الآخر، بعض تلك الأحداث وضمفها في ثنايا كتاباته فزادها جمالا وإثارة ورغبة في استكمال القراءة لمعرفة نهاية العجائب أو ماذا تم في الليالي.

يبقى أن هذا الكتاب لو خطه يراع أبرع الكتاب، لعجز عن تصوير هذه المنطقة منطقة المحيط الهندي عصب الحياة في ذلك العصر الذي كتب فيه هذا الكتاب، فقد كان منطقة التجارة الرئيسية للعالم المعروف حينذاك، وكانت أغلب حاصلات العالم تنقل عبر المحيط الهندي، وقد تركزت الثروات في تلك المنطقة كما اشتهرت بمختلف الصناعات. لذلك كانت تلك المنطقة مسرحا لأجمل حكايات الليالي وموطنا لأغلب العجائب والخرائد.

وقد استطاع برزك أن يمزج بمهارة بين الواقع والخيال أو العجائب على حد قوله - لأنه كانت كلها لديه حقائق - مزجا فنيا حول به تلك الحوادث إلى قصص قصيرة، فنرى فيها لعبتها عبارات قصيرة متدافعة وحوادث متتالية وبداية وعقدة ونهاية، والأجمل من هذا والأكثر أثرا لهذا الكتاب، هو أنه من أكثر الكتب القديمة التي كتبت حول المحيط الهندي وبلدانه - التي تجعلنا نحس بريح البر وحياة البحر فأحداثه هي نبض البهر. ولا أنكر أنه عند قراءتي له تنقلني أحداثه بحواسي وعقلي لكي أحيا حياة البحر في القرن الرابع الهجري، أشعر بأهواله ومخاطره، ثرواته وراثته. هذه هي روعة الكتاب فكأننا نفرق مع الغارقين وننجو مع الناجين ونعيش مع الحيوانات ونتعلق بأرجل الطيور.

وأخيرا نجد أنفسنا بمواجهة سؤال يطرح نفسه حول الدوافع خلف كتابة تلك المؤلفات وعنوانتها بتلك العناوين التي تثير شهية القارئ ودفعه لقراءته، ونحن نعرف شوق الإنسان الدائم لمعرفة وسماع كل أمر غريب وعجيب، فعلى سبيل المثال فإنه رغم تقدم العلوم وحل كثير من

الغاز تلك العجائب، إلا أن الإنسان دوماً في شوق إلى كل خارج عن المؤلف والأفلام الخيالية خير شاهد على ذلك.

ويبدو أن تلك المؤلفات كانت تقوم بهذا الدور في ذلك العصر حيث يتحلق المتسامرون حول راو أو قارئ وكان الحكيم هو الوسيلة الوحيدة للتسرية عن النفس وسبيلاً إلى بعض المعرفة. هذا جانب، والجانب الآخر أنه بالنظر إلى محتوى تلك المؤلفات نجد أنها تقدم تفسيراً لكثير مما يدور بذهن الإنسان من تساؤلات حول بعض الظواهر أو الأمور التاريخية أو العجائب المعمارية وغيرها من أشياء تستدعي التساؤل.

ومن المؤكد أنه كان لانتشار الإسلام في كثير من أنماط العالم القديم، وتداول الملمين في ربوع ذلك العالم بسهولة ويسر، أدى إلى زيادة المعارف ورؤية الغرائب والسماح عن العجائب، فظهر تأثير ذلك في تلك المصنفات. بل وفي القصص الذي كتب في ذلك الحين مثل الف ليلة وليلة كما سبق ذكره.

وأخيراً فمن المؤكد أنه كان لهذه المادة نفع كبير في تلك العصور، حيث أنها كانت منيعاً هاماً للترفيه عن النفس والترويح عنها بعد عناء يوم حافل فكانت هي أحاديث السمار في الليالي، فضلاً عن أنها كانت دافعاً وباحثاً لروح الرحلة والمغامرة والبحث. لذلك فقد أدت خدمة كبيرة للمعرفة ولو بطريق غير مباشر.

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# ON THE HISTORY OF THE ISMĀ'ILĪ "HIDDEN IMĀMS" AS REFLECTED IN THE *KITĀB AT-TARĀTĪB AS-SAB'Ā*

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1. The short treatise that forms the subject of our study, the full title of which is *Kitāb at-tarātīb as-sab'a wa-hiya sab'a tarātīb 'alā t-tamām wa-l-kamāl* (The Book of the Seven Successions, or Seven Successions to the Perfection and Completeness), has been published by Suhayl Zakkār in the collection that he edited of the sources of the early Ismā'īlī (Qarmatī) movement (Zakkār 1987:I, 287-91). This work, which appears to be part of a longer one, originates, to the best of our knowledge, in Ismā'īlī circles. Its author is thought to have been Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl b. 'Alī al-Bazā'ī (Ivanow 1963:173; Poonawala 1977:297; Zakkār 1987:I, 38-39), an otherwise unknown personage within the Ismā'īlī *da'wa* who was a contemporary chronicler of the establishment of the Fātimid state (297/909) and perhaps of earlier events too. Unfortunately, nothing else is known about his life and works.

Provided this work is genuinely his, it is particularly worth studying, since it offers such contemporary, if brief, information on the early period of the movement, the internal affairs of the Ismā'īliyya, and especially the forerunners of the self-declared leader of the movement (the hidden imāms), as will, after a comparison with sources already familiar to scholars, help modify, nuance and perhaps alter our perceptions of the events of the relevant historical era.

2. The beginnings of the Ismā'īlī movement – the self-styled 'rightly-guided mission' (*ad-da'wa al-hādiya*) – can be traced back to the heated controversies surrounding the choice of the successor of the sixth Šī'ite imām, Ġa'far aṣ-Šādiq (d. 148/765). These controversies already began in his lifetime. According to most sources, he named his eldest son, Ismā'īl as his successor, in accordance with the principles of 'appointment' (*nass*). Ismā'īl, however, died before his father, and Ġa'far aṣ-Šādiq appears not to have made a second appointment in favour of any of his remaining sons. This would explain the fact that on the death of aṣ-Šādiq, as many as three of his offspring, including his son Mūsā al-Kāẓim (the seventh imām of the 'Twelver' Šī'a) and Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl (his eldest grandson), claimed the imāmate each for himself<sup>1</sup>. On account of the disputes over entitlement to the supreme authority, the Imāmite Šī'ite community centred in al-Kūfa split into no less than six groups, two of which would serve as a core for the emerging Ismā'īlī movement. It was at this

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<sup>1</sup> On the disputes surrounding the succession after Ġa'far aṣ-Šādiq and the events subsequent to them, as well as a re-evaluation of the relevant sources, see Daftary 1990:93-97.

phase that the two groups acknowledging the legitimacy of either Ismā'īl b. Ġa'far aṣ-Ṣādiq or Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl (*al-ismā'īliyya al-hāliṣa* and *al-mubārakiyya* respectively) grew out of the Imāmite movement (Daftary 1991).

Precious little is known about the career of early Ismā'īli cells up to the time when the united Ismā'īli movement suddenly appears on the scene around the middle of the 3rd/9th century. By this time, the Ismā'īliyya had evolved into a well-organized, centralized revolutionary movement with an elaborate doctrinal system. The leading personalities of the movement are likewise shrouded in obscurity. The first phase of the history of the early Ismā'īliyya and its most famous offshoot, the Fāṭimids, is the period of 'hiding', for the imāms of this phase took care to hide themselves well<sup>2</sup>. Ismā'īlis seem to have vacillated between the two concepts of the real, living, manifest imām, and the absent, 'hiding' imām, respectively. The original doctrine of the movement was, however, that of 'hiding'. According to the internal sources, the period of 'hiding' began with Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, when he was entrusted, either by his grandfather Ġa'far aṣ-Ṣādiq or his father Ismā'īl, to the care of Maymūn al-Qaddāh (Ġa'far, *Sarā'ir* 262-264; Idris, *Uyūn* IV, 332-335)<sup>3</sup>. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was recognized to be al-Mahdī (the 'Divinely Guided One') and al-Qā'im ('He Who Appears'). He was conceptualized as having concealed himself somewhere and coming back soon to restore justice to the world and herald the ultimate, seventh epoch of human history as envisaged by the cyclic world-view already elaborated by the early Ismā'īlis.

3. A fundamental problem in the study of the period of 'hiding' is of a genealogical nature, since several, heavily divergent, versions of the imāms' lineage between Ismā'īl and 'Abdallāh ('Ubaydallāh) al-Mahdī (founder of the Fāṭimid dynasty, d. 322/934) have been transmitted to us, which makes the continuity of succession less than certain. The genuine 'Alid descent of the Fāṭimid caliphs recruited from the leadership of the movement has continued to be questioned ever since their appearing on the scene, and these controversies have not subsided to this very day<sup>4</sup>.

3.1 'Abdallāh ('Ubaydallāh) al-Mahdī reports in his *Kitāb (Letter to the Yemeni Community)* that the imām after Ġa'far aṣ-Ṣādiq was not his son Ismā'īl, but his other son, 'Abdallāh [al-Aḫṭaḥ], who was later given his brother's name, Ismā'īl, as an as-

<sup>2</sup> Regarding this fact, Halm (1988:194) observes that the Ismā'īli movement underwent repeated crises during its early career, as had happened before to the Imāmite Šī'ites.

<sup>3</sup> For an evaluation concerning the sources on Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, see Daftary 1990:102-103; and cf. Gālib 1964:447-454 & 1965:130-139; Tāmīr 1970:47-49.

<sup>4</sup> For different modern views concerning the problem Fāṭimid lineage, see Lewis (1940:71-73), Ivanow (1940:73-74; 1942:54-56; 1946:28-103), al-Hamdānī (1958:180, 188), 'Inān (1959:47-78), Stern (1961:100, 101, 104), Madelung (1961:69ff), Gālib (1964, 1965), Makarem (1969), Tāmīr (1970: 46-68, 107-112), Nagel (1972), Naššār (1977:279-283, 285-289, 293-298), Hamdani & de Blois (1982:200-202), Gālib (1982), 'Awīs (1986:3-

sumed name. After him, his son Muḥammad became imām and assumed the name of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl. Then came his son 'Abdallāh, followed by the latter's son Aḥmad, followed in turn by Aḥmad's son Muḥammad.

"Then Muḥammad b. Aḥmad appointed his nephew and entrusted him, by God's preference, with all the affairs [of the imamate]. [The nephew] styled himself Sa'īd [°Alī] b. al-Ḥusayn. The *da'wa* was directed in his name for some time. When he came to power, he declared his position and declared that his name was 'Abdallāh"<sup>5</sup>.

3.2 We know from the sources, that Aḥmad's younger son Abū °Alī Muḥammad was also known as Abū š-Šalaḡlaḡ (Šala°la°). Abū š-Šalaḡlaḡ died in approximately 286/899, and having no male offspring of his own, he appointed his nephew Sa'īd b. al-Ḥusayn to be his successor and married his daughter to him. Abū š-Šalaḡlaḡ abandoned the auxiliary job of the 'hiding' Mahdī's trustee, claiming, at least among his intimates, the rank of imām, or legitimate successor of °Alī. The earliest extant Ismā'īlī writing reports these events as follows:

"Muḥammad b. Aḥmad [Abū š-Šalaḡlaḡ] at first concealed his real identity from his enemies as a precautionary measure (*taqīya*), pretending to act as a 'trustee' (*ḥuḡḡa*), always referring to the "imām" but actually meaning himself. This fact, however, was known only to the few who were his most trusted *dā'īs*" (Ġa°far, *Kašf* 98)<sup>6</sup>.

Ġa°far also alludes that Abū š-Šalaḡlaḡ had already toyed with the idea of declaring himself the Mahdī. The historical if perilous assignment of the imām who appears to lead the community and replaces the ideal of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was finally undertaken by his nephew, Sa'īd al-Ḥusayn, later known as °Abdallāh (°Ubaydallāh) al-Mahdī. It was in accordance with his doctrinal reforms that earlier tenets of the movement concerning Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl's being the Mahdī came to be rejected and the legitimacy of the imāmate of the past leaders of the movement was now openly taught. These alterations led to a schism in the movement (286/899) and were in fact instrumental in facilitating the founding of the Fātimid empire (297/909).

3.3 Another Ismā'īlī source, titled *Kitāb istitār al-imām*, was composed by a certain an-Naysābūrī sometime between 365/975 and 411/1021<sup>7</sup>. It lets us know that the first imām of the 'hiding' period was called °Abdallāh ar-Raḏī [al-Akbar], who had come from the East in the mid-3rd/9th century, sought refuge from the persecution

<sup>5</sup> al-Hamdānī 1958:11. The Arabic version runs as follows:

ثم أوصى محمد بن أحمد إلى ابن أخيه، وأعطاه باختيار الله أمره كله، وتسمى سعيد بن الحسين. فجرت الدعوة إليه زماناً (يعد) ذلك. فلما ظهر أظهر مقامه وأظهر اسم عبدالله ...

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Madelung 1961:55. The original version is:

الإشارة في هذا كانت في عصر الإمام محمد بن أحمد علينا سلامه لأنه في أول أمره ستر نفسه للتقية من المنافقين، وجعل نفسه في مقام الحجة يشير إلى الإمام وهو يشير إلى نفسه ولم يكن يعلم ذلك إلا القليل من خواص دعائه.

<sup>7</sup> For all we know, the author was a high-ranking official in the Fātimid court, and the work was intended to serve as an official chronicle acceptable to the rulers themselves. As such, it contains information on the founder of the mission and his progeny, the 'hiding' imāms, and is likely to have incorporated several family traditions.

by 'Abbāsids in various regions of Persia, revealing his identity and place of residence solely to a handful of his trusted companions. He disseminated the new tenets in *Hūzistān* in the Northern Gulf area, in the vicinity of the river *Kārūn*, whence he travelled on first to Iraq, then to Salamiya in North-Central Syria, pretending to be an ordinary Hāšimite and trader. Salamiya was to be the headquarters of the *da'wa* and the residence of the imāms right up to the split that occurred within the *Ismā'īliyya* in 266/899. 'Abdallāh had two sons, named Aḥmad and Ibrāhīm respectively, of whom it was Aḥmad that he appointed as his successor before his death (ca. 212 / 827-28)<sup>8</sup>. After Aḥmad's death the imāmate passed on to his son al-Ḥusayn who, in turn, appointed his son, 'Abdallāh al-Mahdī (the first caliph of the Fāṭimid state) as the next imām. Feeling the approach of death, al-Ḥusayn appointed his brother Sa'īd al-Ḥayr (= Muḥammad b. Aḥmad) to the post of trustee imām who tried unsuccessfully to usurp the imāmate from his brother's son (an-Naysābūrī, *Istīṭār* 93-107)<sup>9</sup>.

3.4 A very similar account is mentioned by the Ṭayyibī-Ismā'īlī *dā'i* in Yemen, Idrīs 'Imād ad-Dīn (d. 872/1468) in his work *'Uyūn al-ahbār*, which is the sole comprehensive historical work on the *Ismā'īliyya*, that the first imām of the 'hiding' period was 'the Hidden' (al-Maktūm) 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad, also known under the sobriquet ar-Raḍī. He was the one to move to Salamiya and send missionaries over to North Africa (*al-Maḡrib*). 'Abdallāh ar-Raḍī appointed his son Aḥmad at-Taḡī to the dignity of being the next imām, who in turn appointed his son al-Ḥusayn az-Zakī to the same position, who in turn was succeeded by his son 'Abdallāh al-Mahdī. Idrīs also makes mention of the story of Sa'īd al-Ḥayr and his failed attempt to usurp the imāmate (Idrīs, *'Uyūn* IV, 357-358, 365-366, 393, 402)<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Idrīs, *'Uyūn* IV, 366, 394; Ibn ad-Dawādārī, *Kanz* VI, 19.

<sup>9</sup> For the English translation, see Ivanow 1942:157-183. The Arabic original is as follows (an-Naysābūrī, *Istīṭār* 95-96):

وهو عبدالله الأكبر، وبعث دعائه إلى جميع البلدان سراً، (...) وولد له بها (بسلمية) أحمد وإبراهيم وتوفي وكانت الإمامة بعده لأحمد دون إبراهيم، وولد لأحمد بن عبدالله الإمام الحسين وهو والد المهدي، وسعيد الخير، وأقام الحسين إلى أن ولد له المهدي عليه السلام. فلما أتت نقلته استودع له أخاه سعيد الخير إذ كان ولده يومئذ في حالة الطفولة، واستبد سعيد بالإمامة ونص بها على ولده، فهلك الولد، ثم نص على ولده الثاني فهلك، وكان له عشرة أولاد فلم يزل ينص على كل واحد منهم إلى أن هلكوا بأجمعهم، فعلم حينئذ سعيد الخير أن الحق لا يفارق أهله، فتاب وأناب إلى الله تبارك وتعالى، وجمع دعائه وعلمهم أنه مستودع للمهدي صلوات الله وسلامه عليه، وسلم إليه الإمامة واعترف له بالوديعة، وتنصل إليه مما تقدم منه قبل ذلك، وصارت الإمامة إلى المهدي عليه السلام.

<sup>10</sup> A number of apparent contradictions exist between the respective data on the 'hiding' imāms furnished by the sources cited above. This makes it all the less surprising that even greater contradictions can be observed among non-Ismā'īlī sources. al-Maqrīzī (d.845/1441) claims in his historical work on the Fāṭimid caliphate that the first imām of the period of 'hiding' was Ḡa'far b. Muḥammad 'the Hidden' (al-Maktūm), who used the sobriquet al-Muṣaddiq. Ḡa'far al-Muṣaddiq appointed his son Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb to be the next imām, and the latter was the father of 'Abdallāh al-Mahdī, the first Fāṭimid ruler (al-Maqrīzī, *Ittī'āz* I, 16). The evident contradictions in the historical accounts were happily utilized by the 'Abbāsīd propagandists to cast doubts on the 'Alid descent of the Fāṭimids (Mamour 1934:16-29; Lewis 1940:117-63; Daftary 1994:23-25).

4. The identity of 'Abdallāh, the *de facto* founder of the movement, the initiator of Ismā'īlī teachings, and the predecessor of the Fāṭimid caliphs is rather obscure. According to Ismā'īlī traditions, he was an 'Alid, being a great-grandson of Ġa'far aṣ-Ṣādiq. The polemic sources coming from non-Ismā'īlī, mostly Sunnite, circles, however, paint 'Abdallāh – who is the first person of the Ismā'īlī movement mentioned in non-Ismā'īlī sources – as an impostor of dubious if not forged pedigree, and a heretic too (Ibn an-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 238; Ibn ad-Dawādārī, *Kanz* VI, 17-19).

4.1 In the early 4th/10th century, the adversaries of the Ismā'īliyya and the Fāṭimids spread rumours to the effect that 'Abdallāh had in fact been a son of the heretic Maymūn al-Qaddāh, bent on destroying Islam from within by his evil tenets. The first Sunnite work to incorporate the 'black' legend of Maymūn al-Qaddāh and his putative son 'Abdallāh is an anti-Ismā'īlī pamphlet by Ibn Rizām (early 4th/10th cent.), who sought to trace the ancestry of the Fāṭimids back to these two individuals (Ibn an-Nadīm, *Fihrist* 238-240; an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* XXV, 187-317; Ibn ad-Dawādārī, *Kanz* VI, 44-179; al-Maqrīzī, *Itti'āz* I, 151-178)<sup>11</sup>. There is no mention of Ibn Qaddāh either in other Sunnite, Imāmite, or early Ismā'īlī sources. After Ibn Rizām had composed his work, the official Fāṭimid ideology refused to acknowledge any connection whatsoever between these personalities and the Ismā'īlī movement<sup>12</sup>.

4.2 We must not fail to mention the arguments provided by the imāms themselves for a scrutiny of the 'hiding' period. We are well aware of the enormous secretiveness, going as far as a deliberate concealing of one's identity, that characterized the lifestyle of the leaders of the early Ismā'īlī movement, owing to the persecution they continually faced. As 'Abdallāh ('Ubaydallāh) al-Mahdī tells in his *Kitāb*, the real imāms after Ġa'far aṣ-Ṣādiq assumed sobriquets to hide their own names, referring to themselves as Mubārak (Blessed), Maymūn (Lucky) or Sa'īd (Happy) (al-Hamdānī 1958:9-10)<sup>13</sup>. Ismā'īlī sources made it clear that the pseudonym Mubārak in fact concealed Ismā'īl b. Ġa'far. The name Sa'īd, according to several sources, was used by 'Abdallāh ('Ubaydallāh) al-Mahdī prior to his appearance in North Africa<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Halm 1991:17-18, 24-25; Daftary 1995:25-26.

<sup>12</sup> Daftary (1990:112-13; 1994:26-27) and Halm (1991:18; 1988:165), equally reject the Qaddāhid legend as a fabrication of an obviously polemic nature by opponents of the Ismā'īlī movement. Halm (1988:197) interprets the ever-modifying 'Alid pedigree of the Fāṭimids as a tool of political propaganda aiming at legitimizing the dynasty.

<sup>13</sup> See also Idrīs, *Uyūn* IV, 393-394. Cf. Tāmir 1964:109-110; Halm 1978:9-10. The original text reads: فلما أراد الأئمة من ولد جعفر إحياء دعوة الحق خافوا من نفاق المنافقين، فتسموا بغير أسمائهم فجعلوا أسماءهم للدعوة في مقام الحجج، وتسموا بمبارك وميمون وسعيد للقال الحسن في هذه الأسماء.

<sup>14</sup> As Ivanow indicated (1946:110-12) before the publication of al-Mahdī's *Kitāb*. Cf. Mamour 1934:68. Daftary (1990:112) opines that the identity of 'Abdallāh b. Maymūn can also be determined in view of the fact that Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl used Maymūn as his pseudonym, as hinted at by al-Mahdī, *Kitāb*.



The earliest 'official' refutation of the Qaddāhid legend, however, is in all likelihood a letter (*ṣiḡill*) written in 354/965 by the Fāṭimid caliph al-Mu'izz to his chief *dā'i* in Sind, in which he confirms the 'Alid descent of the Fāṭimids (Idris, 'Uyūn V, 160-162)<sup>15</sup>. In this letter, the caliph claims that once the missionary activity conducted in the name of Muḥammad b. Ismā'il had spread wide, the 'Abbāsid authorities took to seeking the individual whom they could regard as the head of the movement, forcing thereby the imāms to go into hiding, and the *dā'is* to protect the imāms by using pseudonyms or esoteric names in reference to them. Thus did they come to mention 'Abdallāh, actually the son and heir of Muḥammad b. Ismā'il, as son of Maymūn al-Qaddāh. Imāms coming after 'Abdallāh would use similar names. The meaning of such cryptic names could not be divulged to outsiders, therefore they were a source of mistaken and misleading notions. Qādī an-Nu'mān (d. 363/974) has documented a conversation between the caliph al-Mu'izz and his *dā'i*'s messengers, which confirms the contents of the above-mentioned letter (an-Nu'mān, *Maḡālis* 405-411, 523-525)<sup>16</sup>. In this conversation, the Fāṭimid caliph emphasized that 'Abdallāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh was in fact a pseudonym of 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'il, the 'hiding' imām whom the Fāṭimids regarded as their forefather, since the appellations al-Maymūn and al-Qaddāh were commonly used as pseudonyms of the real imāms originating from the Prophet's lineage<sup>17</sup>.

5. Having presented the information contained in the sources, Ismā'ilite and otherwise, and touched upon the chief problems that have emerged in the study of Ismā'ilite history, let us turn our attention to the information contained by the tradition of the *Tarātīb*.

5.1 The author of the *Tarātīb* informs us that the imāmate was inherited after 'the Hidden' (al-Maktūm) Muḥammad by his son Aḥmad ar-Raḍī, who found a way of hiding himself behind the persona of a certain individual, whom he used for protection, as a 'veil' (*ḥiḡāb*). This individual, known as Maymūn al-Qaddāh, was given this appointment by the then imām himself. With the demise of Aḥmad, the imāmate went to his son Muḥammad. By appointment from the imām, 'Abdallāh, son of Maymūn al-Qaddāh, acted on behalf of Muḥammad, even making people swear allegiance to himself. The source thus testifies that al-Qaddāh and his son 'Abdallāh acted as trustees (*mustawda'*) of the imāms. With the death of Muḥammad, the imāmate was

<sup>15</sup> Also cf. Ivanow 1940:74-76; Stern 1955:11-13, 26-27.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Stern 1955:14-17, 28-33.

<sup>17</sup> Daftary (1990:113) opines that the notions over the supposed Qaddāhid descent of the Fāṭimids must have been formed within such Ismā'ilī circles as, having been influenced by the Eastern sectarian Qarmatis, differed from the official view, and opined that the leadership of the Ismā'ilī movement had passed into the hands of 'Abdallāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh and his descendants and had only subsequently been retaken by the offspring of Muḥammad b. Ismā'il, the later Fāṭimid caliphs. Cf. Stern 1955:18-22.

inherited by his son Aḥmad, who, having died at an early date, appointed before his death his brother as a 'trustee' imām temporarily to substitute his son, the 'real' or 'permanent' imām, Muḥammad [sic] al-Mahdī<sup>18</sup>. This is how we learn of the fact that the role played by the family al-Qaddāh in the career of the hiding imāms had come to an end. And to this paternal uncle did Muḥammad al-Mahdī link his filiation. As the uncle acting on behalf of the real imām had several sons, he started to arrange for his sons to inherit the imāmate, only to be frustrated by the successive deaths of his sons. Eventually the imāmate returned to its legitimate holder, Muḥammad al-Mahdī, who, after the death of his uncle, appointed his brother ʿAbdallāh to the position of trustee imām. It was during his being imām that the 'manifestation' took place, but it was cut short by his sudden demise (*Tarātib* 289)<sup>19</sup>.

The content of this passage of the *Tarātib* is virtually identical with that presented by other Ismāʿīlī sources reporting on the same sequence of events. Two remarkable differences are the occurrence of Muḥammad as the personal name of al-Mahdī, as opposed to the commonly cited and accepted ʿAbdallāh (or ʿUbaydallāh), and the mention of the uncle (presumably Abū š-Šalāḡlaḡ) as a 'trustee' imām. The report that the death of the imām (Muḥammad al-Mahdī) had happened prior to the full manifestation of his imāmate may well be a covert reference to his careful re-directing all eschatological expectations away from himself and towards another person.

5.2 Further on, we learn from the reports of the *Tarātib* that Muḥammad al-Mahdī, before his death, handed over the imāmate to his son al-Qā'im in an assembly of the leaders of his mission, ordering his brother ʿAbdallāh to act on his behalf, borrow his name, pretend to be identical with him – in short, replace him fully, even to the extent of adopting al-Qā'im as his own son, strengthening thereby al-Qā'im's position and mission, as he (al-Mahdī) was to be the 'Master of the Revealing', by whom the process of 'manifestation', salvation and the revelation of esoteric

<sup>18</sup> Imām Aḥmad's brother (or, according to other sources, a son of his and brother of the next imām, al-Ḥusayn) was named Muḥammad, or Saʿīd al-Ḥayr, or Abū š-Šalāḡlaḡ, or al-Ḥalūm. See an-Naysābūrī, *Istīṭār* 95; Idrīs, *Uyūn* IV, 402, 404; Ibn ad-Dawādārī, *Kanz* VI, 19, 21; al-Maqrizī, *Itṭīʿāz* I, 26, 41-42; al-Ḥamdānī 1958:10-11.

<sup>19</sup> The original is as follows:

فأمر الإمام أحمد أخاه أن يقوم مقام ولده، ويأخذ العهد لنفسه، وحجاباً لولده، محمد المهدي عليه السلام، وأنه إذا حضرته النقلة يسلم الأمر إليه بمحضر من الدعاة والحجج ويعلمهم أنه كان خليفة الإمام مستودعاً لا مستقراً، فقام محمد المهدي عليه السلام بالإمامة وقام عمه بالخلافة، وانتسب محمد المهدي عليه السلام بالنبوة [بالنبوة؟] لعمه كما جرى ذلك فيما تقدم، كيما تثبت فضيلته ويتم أمره، وأن هذه الخليفة كان له عشرة أولاد ذكور، فطمع في الأمر، وأراد أن يكون في عقبه، ويخرج ابن أخيه منه، فلما كان ذلك في وهمه أحضر بعض أولاده ممن ارتضاه لذلك الأمر، وأضاف مقاليد الدعوة ليهده، فلما كان إلا قليلاً حتى مات ذلك الولد الذي سلم إليه الأمر، ولم يزل يسلم إلى ولد بعد ولد وهو يموت حتى مات جميع أولاده، وانتسب الأمر من يده، فلما أيسر ورجع بالأمر إلى مستحقه وهو محمد المهدي ابن أخيه أحمد عليهما السلام (...) وكان أمر الظهور قد اقترب بأوان طلوع الشمس من مغربها، فحضرته النقلة دون الظهور الكلي ...



meanings should be complete<sup>20</sup>. If we accept what this source tells us, 'Abdallāh was the first Fāṭimid caliph to become known under the *laqab* al-Mahdī (*Tarātib* 288-290).

The remarkable element in this report is that on the end of the 'trusteeship' of the uncle (Abū š-Šalaḡlaḡ?) it was another member of the family, a brother of al-Mahdī, by name 'Abdallāh, who filled this position and administered the duties incumbent upon the function of al-Mahdī. This description of the events, however, is diametrically opposed to the information on al-Mahdī and his son that one can gather from other Ismā'īlī sources. Some of the later Ismā'īlī sources, as well as anti-Ismā'īlī works, question the filial relationship between 'Abdallāh ('Ubaydallāh) and al-Qā'im, attributing a Qaddāhid ancestry to the former while taking al-Qā'im and his offspring for genuine Fāṭimids. In contrast, the report of the *Tarātib* casts doubts on the real identity of al-Mahdī by its calling the 'permanent' imām Muḥammad and the 'trustee' imām 'Abdallāh. However, the doubts in both cases are closely linked with the appearance of the 'trustee' imāms, ascribing to them a Qaddāhid descent in the former case and a real 'Alid one in the *Tarātib*. That said, the latter source of information regrettably leaves it in obscurity just where and in what circumstances the appointment of the 'trustee' took place. The last passages of this source show how important it would be to get answers to these questions if we are to make judgements over the later course of events, and indeed the reliability of our source as a whole.

5.3 The report then concludes with an extraordinarily obscure piece of information which, if we interpret it correctly, could be summarized as follows: the 'trustee' who went to Siḡilmāsa and grabbed the leadership there was actually 'Abdallāh, brother of Muḥammad al-Mahdī. The move to al-Mahdiyya, however, was made by the 'Master of the Revealing', the real (Muḥammad) al-Mahdī, who had been born in Salamiya. It was in 'Abdallāh's time that the mission's message was disseminated in Yemen by Maṣṣūr al-Yaman and in the Maḡrib by Abū 'Abdallāh aš-Šī'ī. Seeing that his cause had made a progress even greater than expected, 'Abdallāh made an open declaration of his imāmate and rule; his name was subsequently included in the Friday sermons far and wide. He claimed to have reinforced the laws of his ancestor the Prophet Muḥammad which he claimed had been sadly neglected before, and to have explained the esoteric meaning hidden behind the Revelation. This change of roles nevertheless did not escape the attention of Abū l-'Abbās, a brother of the chief North African missionary, Abū 'Abdallāh aš-Šī'ī, being as he was personally acquaint-

<sup>20</sup> The Arabic original reads:

فعندهما أحضر المهدي ولده القائم وسلم إليه بمحضر من خواص الدعاة وأكابر الحجج، وأمر أخاه عبدالله أيضاً بأن يقوم مقامه - أي الإمام محمد المهدي أبو القائم - وينوب منابه ويتسمى باسمه وينعت نفسه بنعته وينسب القائم عليه السلام أنه ولده كيما تعلق كلمته تثبت دعوته، لأنه صاحب الكشف، على يده يكون الظهور والفرج، ويروى كل أمر من الدين مستور.

ed with al-Qā'im's father, the real Mahdī. Doubts having arisen in his brother too, they both rejected the 'trustee' imām, which put an end to their earthly career<sup>21</sup>.

5.4 Analysing these data, we must again conclude that it would be crucial to have a sound knowledge of where and in which phase of the events the appointment of the 'trustee' imām was done. The more so because, for all we know, the events described here and in this context represent a unique piece of information<sup>22</sup>. Noteworthy, however, is a statement in our source to the effect that there was a continuous succession of 'trustees' assisting the hiding imāms. Without wishing to revive the claims of Lewis regarding this point (1940:44-54), we favour the opinion that the sources do tangibly suggest the existence from quite early times of a division of tasks within the family that served as the fundament on which to build the leadership of the Ismāʿīlī movement and the mission (*daʿwa*). According to the information provided by Idrīs ʿImād ad-Dīn (*ʿUyūn* IV, 362), a spirit of family cooperation was already observable when ʿAbdallāh al-Akbar entrusted his brother al-Ḥusayn to act on his behalf in the affairs of the *daʿwa*. Idrīs also tells us that this entrustment, which is likely to have been born within a comparatively restricted circle of intimates, eventually led to serious disputes over the identity of the real imām<sup>23</sup>. As to exactly which members of which branch of the family, when, where, and in what capacity, participated in the family-wide division of labour, it is for the above-mentioned reasons impossible to tell with absolute certainty. At any rate, participation in organizing the *daʿwa* network was largely determined – as Hamdani has pointed out (1990:236) – by a strong call for a radical stance against the ʿAbbāsīd government.

The most important observation that we are able to make in an evaluation of the *Tarātīb* is that in case it is indeed an authentic source, the information it provides

<sup>21</sup> Halm (1988:209) holds the view that ʿAbdallāh (ʿUbaydallāh) al-Mahdī's being unable to bring about the divine signs expected of him led to a feeling of despair among his supporters, turning later into outright rebellion, which could only be quelled by killing the leaders of the movement.

<sup>22</sup> It would certainly prove worth comparing this information of the *Tarātīb* with two other sources: a work titled *Gāyat al-mawālīd*, written by the Yemeni Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī* al-Ḥaṭṭāb b. al-Ḥasan al-Hamdānī (d. 533/1138) (Ivanow 1942:37), and the *Zahr al-maʿānī* of Idrīs ʿImād ad-Dīn (Ivanow 1942:66).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 363-64:

وخرج الحسين بن محمد عليه السلام مع الحاج إلى مكة في ذي التجار، ووصل إلى سامرا ومعه جماعة من الدعاة والأولياء، وفرق بها الدعاة إلى الآفاق للدعوة إلى أخيه الإمام عبدالله بن محمد بن اسماعيل عليه السلام (...) وكان رجل من الدعاة يدعو إلى الحسين بن محمد بن اسماعيل وقال لهم: إن الإمام عبدالله بن محمد أوصى إليه وأنه الإمام فلما بلغ ذلك الحسين رضوان الله عليه قصد الموضع الذي فيه الداعي، ذلك الذي يدعو إليه، وجمع الناس والمستجيبين وقال لهم ما أنا الإمام، وإنما استخلفني أخي عبد الله عليه السلام وهو الإمام، وأنا من خوله وعبيده، وأنكر على الداعي ما دعا إليه من إمامته، فلما سمع الناس قوله ازدادوا رغبة في طاعة عبد الله عليه السلام، ولا يعلم أحد مودعه إلا من اختصه من الدعاة بمعرفة ذلك. This opinion is given substance by the evidence amassed by Halm (1988:197, 1991:19-20) to confirm the ʿAqīlī ancestry of the movement's founder, ʿAbdallāh al-Akbar, as well as the reports about the appearance from Ṭāliqān of a close relative of the late Grand Master Abū š-Šalāḡlaḡ (or, probably, a brother of al-Mahdī) among the seceded communities, then among the Syrian rebels, after the schism within the movement (an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* XXV, 230; Ibn ad-Dawādārī, *Kanz* VI, 69, 2; an-Naysābūrī, *Istīṭār* 97, 14-16).

makes it probable that the text dates from a later, Fāṭimid, period, since it includes a certain version of the Qaddāhid legend, which is never mentioned in the earlier extant Ismāʿīlī writings.

6. This as yet initial evaluation of our source certainly confirms Daftary's view (1990:108) that there existed very serious differences of opinion amongst the Ismāʿīlīs regarding the names, number, order and descent of the hiding imāms. Pinning down the actual facts is further hampered by the widespread practice among the imāms, the leaders of the movement, of using aliases to protect themselves. Opponents of the Ismāʿīlīs, for their part, also created their own (non-ʿAlid) version of the Fāṭimids' genealogy; and these fictitious reports, merging as they do legends with facts, only help obscure things further.

In view of this state of affairs, the Fāṭimid pedigree is understandably surrounded with many doubts and will obviously remain unsolved for some time to come.

#### THE BOOK OF THE SEVEN SUCCESSIONS

(*Kitāb at-tarātib as-sabʿa*)

You should know, oh my brother – and God be praised, who is exalted above [all] causes and results, and who created with his order the essence of [all] souls and intellects -: [...] And in a similar manner had Muḥammad's cycle (*dawr Muḥammad*) proceeded, with the imāms being related to him through filiation (*min intisābi l-aʿimmati ... bi-l-bunuwwati lahu*), for He wished to be elevated and honoured. It is quite like Ġaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq, who took up the responsibilities of imām, and whose time was a period similar to the cycle of the Prophet (*wa-kāna zamānuhu zamāna fatratin miṭla dawri r-rasūli*). In his era, an arch-enemy (*didd ʿazīm*), a [veritable] damned Satan, appeared, who is known as Abū Ġaʿfar the Penny-Pinching (*ad-Dawānīqī*) [the Caliph al-Manṣūr]. Now, this enemy was manoeuvring to get Ġaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq assassinated somehow, intending thus to extinguish God's light. God, however, will not let His light be put out! [The caliph] had spies around Ġaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq, who were bringing to the former daily, nay hourly, reports. aṣ-Ṣādiq, for his part, was quite aware of the [Caliph's] intents against him, and of all the disbelief (*kufri*) and hypocrisy that burned in [the Caliph's] soul. All this led [Ġaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq] to declare his giving the imāmate over to his son Ismāʿīl, so that the burning fire of this accursed [Caliph] should subside. Thus, aṣ-Ṣādiq summoned his envoys (*ḥuḡaḡ*), missionaries, followers and entourage, and in their presence handed over [the imāmate] to his son Ismāʿīl, ordering them to call the people to [Ismāʿīl] in all the major divisions (*ḡazāʿir*) of the world and all its subdivisions (*aqālīm*), and make them swear allegiance to him and [declare] that control over the missionary activity is entirely in his hands.

Therefore Ismāʿīl took up this responsibility, arranging the ranks of the missionaries, appointing envoys (*al-ḥuḡaḡ*), ordering them to call to his cause and forward all the levies, religious taxes and fees to him (*wa-rafʿ al-aʿmāl wa-z-zakawāt wa-l-fiṭr ilayhi*). The missionaries and the envoys did [as instructed]; and with the news having spread throughout the lands, the spies of Abū Ġaʿfar ad-Dawānīqī also learned of the handing over of the leadership to [Ismāʿīl], and duly notified him of aṣ-Ṣādiq's having given over [the imāmate] to his son Ismāʿīl and totally renounced the imām's responsibilities, and Ismāʿīl's

having acquired full control of the propaganda activities. On learning this, [the Caliph], determined to do harm to Ismāʿīl, sent out someone to kill him, as he had already done with aṣ-Ṣādiq. This brought about the demise of Ismāʿīl. aṣ-Ṣādiq then gathered witnesses to testify to the death of Ismāʿīl, not letting him be buried for the length of three days, [during which] he collected written testimonies from all the pilgrims on [Ismāʿīl's] death. After three days, he had him buried. Descending to put him to his grave, he said: 'My grief is not over Ismāʿīl but over a deposit that I have placed with him.'

Upon this, the spies of Abū Ḡaʿfar ad-Dawānīqī hastened to write a letter, informing him of the passing away of Ismāʿīl. On receiving the news, he was overwhelmed with joy and his heart calmed down and his fright evaporated. The ignorant fool supposed that the descendants of al-Ḥusayn were done with forever, and they would be no more. Soon, however, he had to learn from some trustworthy person working for him that Ismāʿīl had appeared in al-Baṣra. When, accompanied by a multitude of people, he passed by a man suffering from an incurable disease for forty years, [those around him] were addressing him by his personal name and byname (*wa-hum yusammūnahu wa-yukannūnahu*), and [the sick man] said to him: 'Take my hand, oh you grandson of the Prophet, and may God take yours too!' Stepping near him, [Ismāʿīl] did take his hand and helped him stand up. At that very moment, [the patient] recovered and fully regained his health. Thereupon this incurably sick man, whenever asked by anyone who it was who had cured him, declared that he, Ismāʿīl b. Ḡaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq, had done so. Now, Abū Ḡaʿfar ad-Dawānīqī, having received news of the [re]-appearance of Ismāʿīl and his above-mentioned doings, felt frightened and all but overpowered. He sent for aṣ-Ṣādiq and had him brought before him. When [aṣ-Ṣādiq] was there, he addressed him thus: 'You tell me that Ismāʿīl has died and that you have received written testimonies on his death from the pilgrims, then I receive news that he has appeared. Well, what is this matter?' On hearing this, aṣ-Ṣādiq asked for the documents to be brought there in which all the pilgrims testified to the death of his son Ismāʿīl. Also, there were some individuals at [the Caliph's] *maḡlis* who had personally witnessed [Ismāʿīl's death]. aṣ-Ṣādiq stayed with [the Caliph] until the latter's alarm died off. That enemy of God had no knowledge of how God's secret [plan] runs through his chosen ones (*ḳayfa yaḡrī sirr Allāh fī awliyāʾihi*), and how they administer the world!

The explanation of all that, my meritorious brother, is that the righteous imāmate (*al-imāma al-mardīyya*) and God's own word was already embodied in aṣ-Ṣādiq's lifetime by the true imām, Ismāʿīl, who was to appear in al-Baṣra and cure that incurable man. Mūsā al-Kāzīm, for his part, gave this outstanding post (*faḍīla*) to [Muḥammad, ] the son of his brother Ismāʿīl, submitting it to him so as to divert the plots of that accursed enemy and show [the latter's] impotence, powerlessness and immeasurable ignorance. Ismāʿīl concealed himself behind a 'veil' [*alter ego*] (*satara ʿalā nafsīhi ḡiḡāban*), for this was a trying epoch (*li-izām al-fatra*) and the enemy had gained the upper hand. After Ismāʿīl, the [post of] imām was transferred to his nephew [*sic*], or rather: his son], Muḥammad, because of the increasingly horrible epoch and the appearance of a lot of enemies. Muḥammad, feeling his death approaching, handed over the leadership to his son ar-Raḍī, who is the first of the 'hiding imāms' (*al-aʿimma al-mastūrūn*). Thus Aḥmad [ar-Raḍī] took up the responsibilities of imām, whereas his 'veil' [*alter ego*] behind whom he hid himself, putting him in his own place, was Maymūn al-Qaddāh. He was instructed by the imām to make people swear allegiance to himself, that is to Maymūn al-Qaddāh. And he did act as instructed by the imām, exercising his authority right up to the time when Aḥmad was about to die. When

the latter felt his death drawing near, he summoned his son Muḥammad, and transferred the imāmate to him in the presence of the cream of the most pious missionaries who had a sound knowledge of the Book. Thus Muḥammad assumed the position of authority. The imām also ordered the son of Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ to act as his 'veil' (*an yaqūma maqāmahu*) and make people swear allegiance to him as his father Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ had done. He did not cease to exercise control by appointment from the imām (*an idni l-imām*) until Muḥammad felt the approach of death, whereupon he summoned his son Aḥmad, as well as the most prominent missionaries and the cream of his special envoys (*ḥawāṣṣ al-ḥuḡaḡ*), and in their presence handed over [the imāmate] as all his predecessors had done before him. So the imām Aḥmad ordered his brother to act as the substitute of his son, making people swear allegiance to him and concealing thereby his son, Muḥammad al-Mahdī [from all evil intents], and, should he feel his death approach, to hand the leadership over to [Muḥammad] in the presence of the missionaries and the special envoys (*ḥuḡaḡ*), informing them of the fact that he has been only a temporary, rather than a permanent, successor of the imām (*ḥalīfatu l-imāmi mustawdaʿan lā mustaqarran*). Thus did Muḥammad al-Mahdī assume the duties of imām, whereas his paternal uncle acted as a temporary successor (*qāma ʿammuhu bi-l-ḥilāfa*). Muḥammad al-Mahdī connected his filiation to his uncle (*intasaba ... bi-l-bunwuwati li-ʿammihī*) as had been the custom before, so that his high position (*faḍīla*) should gain stability and his purpose (*amr*) come true. Now, this [temporary] successor (*ḥalīfa*), who had ten male children, raised his ambitions to grab the leadership (*ṭamaʿa fī l-amr*), which he wished his own offspring to inherit, by excluding his nephew from it. Having become possessed of these vain ideas, he called for a son of his whom he thought fit for the position and handed over the control of the mission (*maqālīd ad-daʿwa*) to him. It did not take long, however, before this son to whom the leadership had been transferred died. He would then give the leadership over to one son after another as they were dying successively, till all his sons were dead, and all power slipped out of his hands. Thoroughly desperate, he returned the authority to its rightful possessor, that is Muḥammad al-Mahdī, the son of his brother Aḥmad. He composed these two verse lines on his rights: "God has given you that above which there is nothing, after [some people] wished to bar and block [your way to] it. "Yet God will not give it to anyone but you, and will adorn you with it!"<sup>24</sup> So did al-Mahdī put it to him in these two lines; God be praised, and not you, oh uncle!<sup>25</sup> Therefore al-Mahdī acted as imām and came to be famous as such. And the manifestation [of the truth] (*aẓ-ẓuhūr*) was to take place shortly, when the sun would rise from the West<sup>26</sup>. Death, however, approached him before the full manifestation (*aẓ-ẓuhūr al-kullī*),

<sup>24</sup> The original text of this poem (also transmitted with very minor variations in an-Naysābūrī, *Istīṭār* 97) is given as follows in the *Tarātib* (290):

لما أرادوا منعها وعوقها	*	الله أعطاك التي لا فوقها
إليك حتى طوك في طوقها	*	عك وبأبي الله إلا سوقها

<sup>25</sup> Obviously, a sarcastic remark from the author.

<sup>26</sup> It is evidently a metaphorical reference to al-Mahdī, who did appear from the West. 'Rising Sun' (*aš-šams at-tāliʿa*) is the epitheton ornans of the Mahdī usual in Ismāʿīlī writings. Cf. Idrīs ʿImād ad-Dīn, *Zahr al-maʿānī* in Ivanow 1942:66:

...وأمر الحدود (...) وأن يكنوه بالشمس الطالعة سترأ على ولي الله (...) وبشروا بظهور الشمس من غربها ووعدوا بدنو الميقات لظهورها من استتار حجبها.

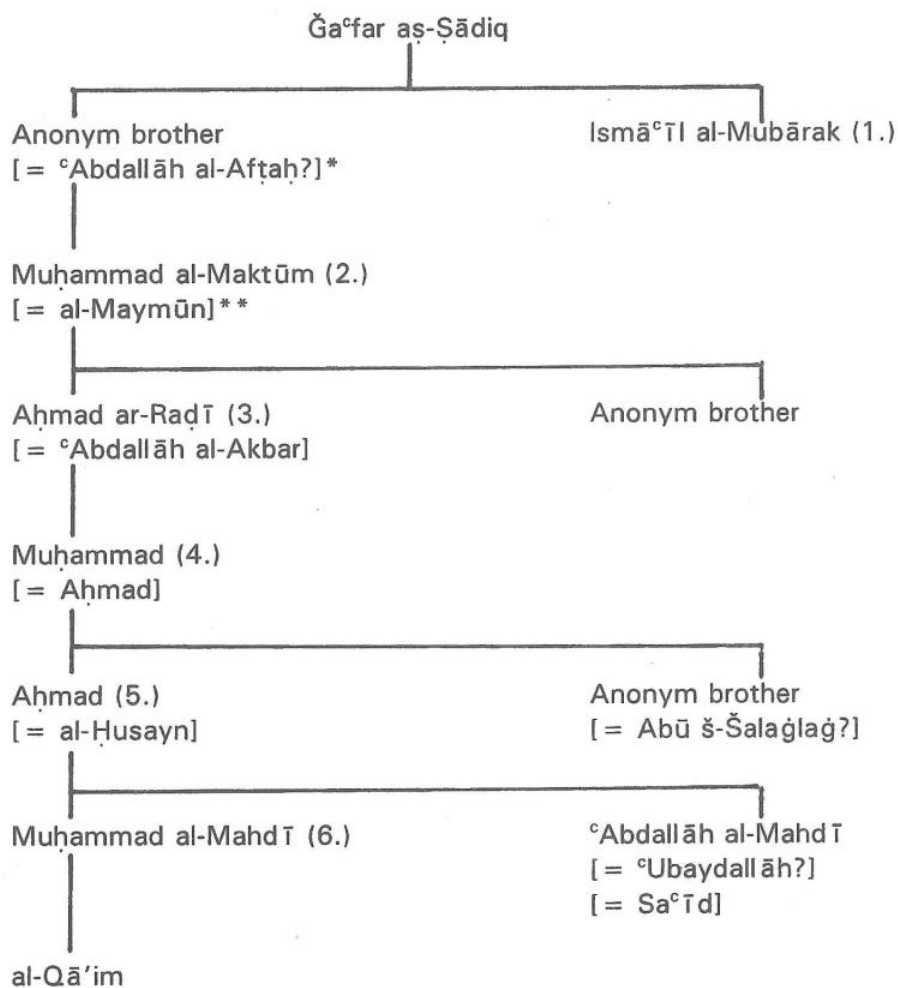


and then al-Mahdī summoned his son al-Qā'im and handed [the imāmate] over to him in the presence of the missionaries and the senior envoys (*akābir al-ḥuḡaḡ*). He also instructed his brother, ʿAbdallāh to substitute him, that is Muḥammad al-Mahdī, the father of al-Qā'im, act on his behalf, and even take his name and pretend to be the same person, adopting al-Qā'im as his own son, so as to strengthen [the latter's] authority and stabilize his mission. For he [al-Mahdī] should be the 'master of the revealing' (*ṣāhib al-kašf*), who should fulfil the manifestation and bring salvation (*ʿalā yadibi yakūnu z-zubūru wa-l-faraḡ*) and bring to the light all the esoteric meanings of religion (*kullu amrin min ad-dīni mastūr*). al-Qā'im assumed the form of the absolute beneficence and the divine emanation (*al-ḡūd al-kullī wa-l-fayḍ al-ilāhī*), while his paternal uncle ʿAbdallāh acted as a temporary successor and deputy (*bi-l-ḥilāfa wa-n-niyāba*), taking up the nickname of al-Mahdī in accordance with the [former] imām's instructions. He conducted the propaganda for himself, sending forth missionaries and special envoys all over the major and minor divisions of the earth (*fī l-ḡazā'ir wa-l-aqālīm*) to call people to his cause and rule, he being the presupposed imām to whose rule the leading personalities of the *dā'wa* (*al-ḥudūd*) guided [the people], and who would undertake the manifestation (*aḡ-zubūr*) and the revealing of all the esoteric meanings of religion. So did he act, till one of his missionaries, known as Maṣṣūr al-Yaman, introduced his propaganda to the Yemen. The propaganda also entered the West through the efforts of an Abū ʿAbdallāh aṣ-Ṣīrī and grew ever more solid, as could be desired. He then openly declared himself to be the imām and the sovereign, and his name was mentioned in the Friday sermons in every city and region. What had previously weakened of the divine law of his ancestor [the Prophet] Muḥammad (*min ṣarīʿati ḡaddihi Muḥammad*) now gained renewed strength; what deviated from [that law] was now suppressed; for he restored [the *ṣarīʿa*'s] fundamentals and raised it high, revealed the knowledge of esoteric meanings (*ʿilm at-ta'wīl*), explained the truths of the divine revelation, and strove as best as he could for the cause of God. He did not cease to do so until at last he felt his death draw near, whereupon he summoned his envoys and all his propagandists (*ḥuḡaḡahu wa-ḥudūd dā'watibi*) and, in their presence, handed the supreme authority over to its rightful possessor, that is al-Qā'im Muḥammad b. al-Mahdī, the true imām. He asked all those present to testify that he had faithfully carried out all the tasks of the services and the temporary successorship (*al-ḥidma wa-l-ḥilāfa*) as he had been obliged to, and was now handing over the authority to its legitimate possessor (*sallama l-amra li-ṣāḥibi l-amr*).

al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im's father, was a brother of [the man] who moved to Siḡilmāsa. al-Mahdī, the 'Master of the Revealing' (*ṣāhib al-kašf*), was the one who had been born in Salamya and moved over later to al-Mahdiyya, as the chronicles make clear. That is why Abū l-ʿAbbās, the brother of Abū ʿAbdallāh aṣ-Ṣīrī would not accept the imāmate of al-Mahdī appearing in Siḡilmāsa, since he had [personally] known al-Mahdī, father of al-Qā'im. When he saw this affair, he aroused doubts in his brother Abū ʿAbdallāh aṣ-Ṣīrī, saying: 'This man who claims to be the imām, to whom you have handed over the sovereignty (*mulk*) that lay in your hands, and who you have claimed is the awaited mahdī, has nothing that you have attributed to him. This matter is quite unlike you suppose it to be: he is not the Master of Authority (*ṣāhib al-amr*), and indeed you have more right than he does the succession (*al-ḥilāfa*) and for the deputyship (*an-niyāba*).

As for the doings of Abū ʿAbdallāh aṣ-Ṣīrī and his brother Abū ʿAbbās, they are well documented [in the chronicles].

**The Family-Tree of the six "Hidden Imāms"**  
**of the Ismā'īlīs in the *Tarātīb***



\* Equivalent personalities known from other sources.

\*\* He is first mentioned in the *Tarātīb* as Ismā'īl's son, then as his nephew.



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"ILAYKA L-MUŠTAKĀ LĀ MINKA RABBĪ ..."  
THE YOUNG GOLDZIHHER AT WORK

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*"Exegi monumentum ..."*

1. In 1870 Goldziher arrived to Leiden to continue his research after successfully finishing his studies in Berlin and Leipzig and receiving the title of doctor of Semitic studies at the age of 20. He was received cordially by the famous Dutch professors of the age, Dozy and de Goeje. The latter, as keeper of the Library, handed over to him many precious rare books and MSS to read in his room at long nights. Once he was given a unique MS for one day and one night<sup>1</sup>. It was Ibn al-Ğawzī's *Kitāb al-quṣṣās wa-l-mudakkirīn*, which he copied during this limited time<sup>2</sup>. This work, as is well known today, is about the popular recitation of forged *hadīṭs* which, however, served in many occasions the purposes of serious ethical and religious education. Goldziher liked very much the style of Ibn al-Ğawzī's material, the nice anecdotes shedding light on the everyday life of the ninth-twelfth centuries as well as the significance and the character of the *hadīṭ* literature in those days. He had no special purpose with copying this special MS at that time, being basically occupied with linguistic and lexicographical studies, though he wrote three decades later into his diary, speaking about his youth: "I was lured more by the historical than the factual side" (Goldziher 1978b:45). But twenty years later he turned to these handwritten pages and made this work the core of a whole chapter in his famous study on the development of the *hadīṭ*, Chapter 5 on "*Hadīṭ* as the Instrument of Amusement and Ethical Building"<sup>3</sup>. If we closely investigate his hastily copied MS we can appreciate his achievement. Comparing Goldziher's copy with the fourth, seemingly the best, edition of the MS (that of aṣ-Ṣabbāğ), we find that the number of readings where Goldziher diverted from this modern and thoroughly examined and re-examined

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<sup>1</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, who is considered one of the founders of modern Islamic scholarship, has carried out his research activity since his youth following the positivist-historic method. Its essence was the discovery of sources (as early as possible) and the interpretation of the facts (data) included therein, putting them in historic perspectives. At that time, when the Arabic printing press had just started to function, all this primarily meant an acquaintance with the manuscripts and their analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Now in the Goldziher Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, see Goldziher, *Bequest*. It consists of 40 large pages, written with small letters and in serried rows. The information about the circumstances of the copying is given on a small paper to be found in the *Bequest*.

<sup>3</sup> See Goldziher 1967-71, vol I.

edition is minimal (not considering the abbreviations and the omission of the repetitive *isnāds*). It is an extraordinary good result reached within the limits of one day and one night at the age of 20.

2. Previously, when Goldziher reached Leipzig in 1869 coming from Berlin, he was warmly received by Fleischer, the great *sheikh* or Teacher of the age. Fleischer directed the attention of his pupils to the importance of precise textual philology and linguistic studies. So Goldziher started studying lexicographic works extant in the German Manuscript collection and soon published a series of articles in Vienna under the title "Beiträge zur arabische Sprachwissenschaft". The second article of this series is devoted to al-Ġawharī and the works related to his *Ṣaḥāḥ*, what he calls the Ġawharī-literature<sup>4</sup>. On the 24th page of his article Goldziher turns his attention to an apologetic work with respect to al-Ġawharī's dictionary, which is in reality a *ḥāṣiya* commentary to al-Firūzābādī's *Qāmūs*. The name of the author is a certain Ibn Iyās Dāwūdzāde, the title of his book is *ad-Durr al-laḳīṭ fī aḡlāt al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ allatī al-Firūzābādī 'azāhā li-l-Ġawharī*. He did not find much in the biographical works on this Turkish author who died in the year 1017 AH (1608 AD). After stating these facts he unexpectedly starts citing long pages from the *Hāṣiya* of Ibn Dāwūdzāde just to testify the melancholic nature of the author, who had lost his desire to live in a dark age when foolishness directs the world and university professors are complete *ignorami*. In connection with the word *aš-šaraf* al-Firūzābādī mentions that there is an elevated place in Sevilla called *aš-šaraf* and there was a certain *ḥaṭīb* and *wā'iz* in Sevilla whose *nisba* was *aš-šarafī* from this place. How wonderful it is – says al-Firūzābādī. "Had the Imām al-Firūzābādī lived in our age he had found even more wonderful and stranger things than this" – says Ibn Dāwūdzāde.

At the word *wada'* al-Firūzābādī speaks of a certain Habannaqa *Dū l-wada'āt* (the one having sea-shells on himself) who received his name because he always wore a necklace of sea-shells, bones and pottery as long as his beard. When asked why he answered: in order not to lose my way going home, etc., and so his name became notorious for idiocy. Ibn Dāwūdzāde's commentary runs as follows:

{... وذو الودعات هَبْنَقَةُ بْنُ يَزِيدَ بْنِ ثِرْوَانَ لِأَنَّهُ جَعَلَ فِي عُنُقِهِ قِلَادَةً مِنْ وَدَعٍ وَعِظَامٍ وَخَزَفٍ مَعَ طُولِ لِحْيَتِهِ فَسُئِلَ فَقَالَ لَثَلَا أَضِلُّ فَسَرَقَهَا أَخُوهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ وَتَقَلَّدَهَا فَأَصْبَحَ هَبْنَقَةً وَرَأَاهَا فِي عُنُقِهِ فَقَالَ لَهُ أَخِي أَنْتَ أَنَا وَمَنْ أَنَا فَضُرِبَ لِحْمَقِهِ الْمَثَلُ انْتَهَى وَمِنْ حِمَقِهِ أَيْضًا أَنَّهُ ضَلَّ لَهُ بَعِيرٌ فَجَعَلَ يَنَابِي مِنْ وَجَدٍ بَعِيرِي فَهُوَ لَهُ فَقِيلَ لَهُ فَلِمَا تَنْشُدُهُ فَقَالَ فَأَيْنَ حَلَاوَةُ الْوَجْدَانِ { لَعَلَّ وَجْهَهُ كَوْنُ هَبْنَقَةٍ مِثْلًا فِي الْحِمَقِ أَنَّهُ كَانَ فِي زَمَانِهِ وَحِيدًا مَنفَرْدًا فِيهِ وَأَكْثَرُ الْمَدْرَسِينَ فِي زَمَانِنَا أَحْمَقُ مِنْهُمْ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى التَّكَلُّمِ بِلَفْظِ تَرْكِي عَلَى وَجْهِ الصَّحَةِ سِيَمَا الْمَخَادِيمِ الْعِظَامِ الْمَدْرَسِينَ بِالْمَدَارِسِ الرَّفِيعَةِ الشَّامِخَةِ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَفْرُقُونَ الْمَدَارِسَ عَنْ حَوَانِيتِ السَّفَلَةِ وَلَوْلَا

<sup>4</sup> See Goldziher 1972.

قدامهم خدامهم لذلّوا وأذلّوا الطريق وبيوت آبائهم الظلمة مع أنهم يتولّون المدارس الخاقانية.

ومن جملة ما أساءني الدهر وأصابني به العصر أن المدرسة الشريفة السلطانية الخاصكية الواقعة في دار السلطنة السنية قسطنطينية المحمية أعطيت للمجنون المعتوه الجاهل ابن الجاهل ابن الجاهل الذي لا يقدر على التمييز بين الأسود والأحمر بل الشجر والحجر فضلا عن الذهب والمدر ولم تعط لهذا العبد الفقير الحقيّر ابن الفاضل النحرير ابن العالم الخطير المذنب الضعيف المؤلف لهذا التأليف المنيف مع كونها مشروطة إلى على شرط الواقفة المرموقة المرحومة بأن قالت متى خلت المدرسة الخاصكية الشريفة المنتمية إلى أعطيت لكل من وجد مدرسا بالمدرسة المعروفة بخانقاه التي بنيتها بمدينة قسطنطينية المحمية المحسكية والعبد الفقير الغريق في بحر العصيان كنت مدرسا بالمدرسة المزبورة في ذلك الزمان (بيت) إليك المشتكى لا منك ربي \* فانت لنائب الدهر حسبي

Perhaps the real reason why Habannaqa's name became proverbial for stupidity is that he stood alone in his time. In our time, the majority of teachers are more stupid than he, since they cannot speak Turkish in a proper way at all. Especially the great masters who teach at high-ranking, noble schools, they cannot even differentiate the schools from the taverns of the riff-raff and had their servants not escorted them they would go astray and lose their way even to their homes [i.e., the homes of their wrongful forefathers], although they are in charge of the Sultan's schools.

Of all the bad things with which time afflicted me [the worst] was that [the chair in] the noble imperial school "al-Hāṣikiyya" in the sublime capital of the Sultanate, Constantinople, [well] protected [by God], was given to a fool, an idiot, an ignorant, son of an ignorant son of an ignorant, who cannot differentiate black from red, nay a tree from a stone, or gold from clay. And it was not given to this poor and miserable servant – son of a skilful learned man, son of a distinguished scholar –, the guilty and weak author of this excellent work, although it had been stipulated for me in a condition by the eminent woman, the late donor of the *waqf*, since she said: When there is vacancy in the noble school of "al-Hāṣikiyya" which belongs to me, it should be given to those who teach at the so-called "Hānqāh" school which I had built in the town of Constantinople, [well] protected and armed [by God]. And I – poor servant, immersed in the sea of rebellion – was at that time teacher of the above-mentioned school.

To You, I complain my God, not of You \*

Since You are enough for me in vicissitudes

These lines of complaints are strange enough in the original work of Ibn Dāwūdẓāde. But even stranger is the fact that Goldziher quoted Ibn Dāwūdẓāde's commentary in such length (the quotation runs even further). There are no such other quotations from other works in Goldziher's articles and this quotation has nothing to do with "Sprachgelehrsamkeit" or linguistics.

The answer may be found in Goldziher's *Tagebuch*. Speaking about these days he wrote (twenty years later, in the end of 1870): "My parents ... had more and more serious doubt in the reality of the chair of professorship which Eötvös [the minister

of culture and education in Hungary at that time] had promised to me"<sup>5</sup>. And in fact, Eötvös died in February 1871, and the chair was given to a completely ignorant person – during Goldziher's stay in Egypt in 1873 – who did not write an article on Islam or Arabic studies in his whole life and whose knowledge of Arabic was on a very basic level. So Goldziher had premonitions and unfortunately for him, they became true. He had written his own bad fortune by the lines of Ibn Dāwūd zāde as if he were a medieval painter painting his portrait into an altar-piece.

3. Goldziher set an incredible pace of work in his late teens and early twenties which made him highly-strung and responsive to the lives and works of earlier Muslim scholars. He had become especially interested in the life and oeuvre of the polygraph of the 15/16th century, Galāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505).

"My attraction to as-Suyūṭī urged me to scrutinise all *Suyūṭica* in the Library [in Leiden], collating and excerpting them; I copied the whole synonym literature, then examined all the MSS in Leiden relevant to the edition of [aṭ-Ṭaʿālibī's] *Fiqh al-luġa*, a task assigned to me by Fleischer" (Goldziher 1978b:49).

A decisive impulse to write a brief history of Arab linguistics was given to him by as-Suyūṭī's *Muzhir*<sup>6</sup> about which he expressed his admiration in his *Tagebuch*:

"It was an uplifting scholarly activity, in the true meaning of the word, to penetrate into its study that strengthened and consoled me in these days. I felt very fortunate to get acquainted with the *Muzhir*, and I was sitting day and night over it. It grabbed me so much! God bless the old Suyūṭī for it! Therefore my copy of this book has become a memorable piece of my library. It reminds me the deep spiritual excitement which overcame me during its study" (Goldziher 1978b:48).

So, interestingly enough, he interrupted his lexicographic research for a while and prepared an article on as-Suyūṭī<sup>7</sup>.

The subjects Goldziher dealt with were always turned into his personal matter, he did not keep aloof, but entered fully into their spirit. He handled the facts with objectivity, but at the same time he considered the scholar's attitude a moral question. His ideal was firm puritanism accompanied by modesty. Accordingly, he later condemned aš-Šaʿrānī for his accessive self-assertion and immodesty (Goldziher,

<sup>5</sup> In the German original it runs as follows: "... meine Eltern, die meine Fähigkeiten freilich überschätzten, meinen aufgewendeten Fleiss höher taxirten, als dass er zu einem jahrelangen Almosenleben führen sollte, zweifelten immer mehr und ernstlicher an der Realität des Katheders, welchen Eötvös mir in Aussicht stellte. Die Bedenken der Leute, die mir es doch unter allen Menschen am besten meinten, fand ich nicht unbegründet. Im Umgange mit den Menschen musste ich ja die Überzeugung gewinnen, dass Eötvös einen aus dem Meere von Beschränktheit und Schlechtigkeit herausragenden Felsblock bedeutet, einen Leuchtturm, eine hohe Warte, eine Oase inmitten der Wüstenei von mittelaltlicher Barbarei und geschmückter Rohheit" (Goldziher 1978b:46).

<sup>6</sup> See Goldziher 1871b:63 ff. Cf. Goldziher 1878.

<sup>7</sup> This article (Goldziher 1871b) is still considered of prime importance within the literature dealing with as-Suyūṭī. See its English translation: Goldziher 1978.



1910, Ch. Four). He rebuked even his beloved as-Suyūṭī, though he was attracted both by his immense literary output and his multi-coloured personality. "In this paper we shall have occasion to learn that our ingenious Suyūṭī did not shrink from drawing up treatises which ... prove to be nothing other than polemical works whose sole purpose is to serve as an exaggerated advertisement for their author and as instruction to his contemporaries in his unsurpassed and unsurpassable greatness and erudition" (Goldziher 1871b:53 = 1978a:80-81).

يبعث الله على رأس كل مائة سنة رجلاً من أهل بيتي يبين لهم أمر دينهم. (حديث). وإنما حمل هذا الرجل على ذلك أنه فهم عني أنني ترجيت من نعم الله وفضله كما ترجى الغزالي لنفسه أنني المبعوث على هذه المائة التاسعة لانفرادي عليها بالتبحر في أنواع العلوم من التفسير وأصوله والحديث وعلومه والفقه وأصوله واللغة وأصولها والنحو والتصريف وأصولها والجدل والمعاني والبيان والبدیع والتاريخ وتصنيفي في جميع ذلك المصنفات البارة الفائقة التي لم أسبق إلى نظيرها وغدتها إلى الآن خمس مائة مؤلف.

God sends at the 'head' of each century a man from among the people of my House who will explain to them the affair[s] of their religion ... That man was driven to what he did because he understood from me that I hope, through the bounty and favour of God, just as al-Ġazālī hoped for himself, to be the one sent to this ninth hundred, since I am the only person therein who has studied thoroughly all branches of the sciences: Qur'anic exegesis and its principles, tradition and its sciences, jurisprudence and its principles, lexicography and its principles, grammar and morphology and their principles, polemics, rhetoric and history, and since I composed in all these branches of knowledge brilliant and outstanding works, the like of which none before me has produced, and which number five hundred to date.

It appears from Goldziher's article, that he recognized in as-Suyūṭī different types of scholars of his own age, side by side to the supercilious, presumptuously confident scholars he could see the innovator, the founder and initiator of new fields of research, whose death falls on the dawn of a new century, *i.e.* himself. It does not seem forced to say that with the excerpts taken from as-Suyūṭī's autobiography Goldziher drew his own (would be) portrait.

وقد اخترعت علم أصول اللغة وورثته ولم أسبق إليه وهو على نمط علم الحديث وعلم أصول الفقه وسارت مصنفاتي وعلومي في سائر الأقطار ووصلت إلى الشام والروم والعجم والحجاز واليمن والهند والحبشة والمغرب والتكرور وامتدت إلى البحر المحيط ولا مشاركة لي في مجموع ما ذكرته ولا اجتمع لأحد من الموجودين الآن مجموع العلوم التي اجتمع لي ولا وصل الآن أحد إلى رتبة الاجتهاد المطلق غيري فيما أعلم.

I have created the branch of knowledge called principles of philology which I have bequeathed and in which I have no precursor. It follows the pattern of the principles of tradition and the principles of jurisprudence. My writings and my knowledge have penetrated to all lands, reaching Syria, Rūm, Persia, the Ḥiğāz, Yemen, India, Abessinia,



the Mağrib and Takrūr, even to the Atlantic Ocean. No one else shared with me all [these sciences] that I have mentioned, nor has any one save myself attained to absolute individual judgement (*iğtihād*) in our days so far as I know.

In his youth, when he was struggling between two branches of sciences, one prescribed by obligation and the other attracting his soul, he may have read with great pleasure what as-Suyūṭī had written on this:

علم الحديث واللغة أخوان يجريان من وادٍ واحد.

The science of tradition and the science of philology are two brothers [like twin rivers], flowing out of the same valley [i.e. they are alike in every respect].

4. Goldziher's personal adherence to subject matters and topics in his scholarly research originated many times from his personal attachment to his teachers and close friends, especially to Professor Fleischer. He promised him to edit one of the Leiden MSS, Ibn Sikkīt's *Kitāb al-alfāz*<sup>8</sup> when he left Leipzig travelling to Leiden in 1870 and a quarter of a century later he fulfilled his promise. Although Fleischer had died some years earlier, he felt obliged to do so. It had taken a quarter of a century to complete his edition, since in the meantime he had finished some of his great studies in the field of Islamic research, among them especially the one on *ḥadīṭ* literature.

So he had finished his MS of the edition of Ibn Sikkīt's work, together with at-Tibrīzī's *Tabdīb*, but we cannot find the book in the list of Goldziher's works<sup>9</sup>. The reason is simply that although he had written on the cover of his MS "to be sent to the publisher" in 1894, but in the meantime Louis Cheikho, in Beirut, also had been working on the edition of the same work, based on the same MSS, and Goldziher may have heard about this edition or may have seen the book and so he had never sent his MS to the Dutch publisher. It could not be the publisher who dropped the idea of publishing Goldziher's edition, since there is no letter in the vast correspondence of Goldziher who preserved every letter written to him. Even more astonishing is the fact that Goldziher did not write any remark about the case in his *Tagebuch*. The whole story is very characteristic of Goldziher's shyness and proudness – he did not want any comparison between the two editions. Also, at that time if one edition was prepared there seemed to be no reason to do it in a second time. Goldziher, however, was not quite right in his decision, since after comparing the texts of the two editions it appears that his is the much better and reliable one. Louis Cheikho intimidates the reader with his list of corrections (but he left much to be corrected), and with the arbitrary and unnoted alterations of the MS.

<sup>8</sup> "I copied the whole Ibn as-Sikkīt". Goldziher 1978b:49.

<sup>9</sup> The MS is kept in the Goldziher Collection, no. 2. See Goldziher, *Bequest*.

Limited space does not allow us to go into details, but it must be emphasized that Goldziher edition, though it remained in manuscript, reflects not only his personal attachment to his late professor Fleischer, but also the exactness and thoroughness of his methods when working on the edition. His editorial technique may well be considered modern in his faithfulness to the original text, always noting and explaining the alterations<sup>10</sup>.

5. In conclusion, Goldziher's world of ideas and his moral standing can easily be identified from the works he published or intended for publication. He wrote himself and his *Weltanschauung* into almost every piece he wrote, sometimes *expressis verbis*, sometimes only through allusions.<sup>11</sup> "When he [Goldziher] is discussing and dissecting any phase of the development of Islamic thought, one feels that he is speaking not of an abstract subject with which he had familiarized himself over many years of unflagging study of books and manuscripts but of a live entity of which, for a short time at least, he himself was part" (Patai 1987:78).

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<sup>10</sup> On Goldziher's edition of the *Kitāb al-alfāz* and his copy of the *Qusṣās* as well as his editorial technique in general see Iványi, Forthcoming.

<sup>11</sup> The diaries, however, – the publication of which may be considered disquieting in itself, since they had never been intended for the public, not even after the death of their author – should not, one may think, be used for Goldziher's moral-ideological judgement. In the case of *The Oriental Diary* it is evident from the great number of unfinished sentences and phrases that Goldziher had meant it for himself only, to help him recall the events of his journey.

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## THE REAL SATANIC VERSES?

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Whatever its other ramifications, Salman Rushdie's novel has, by its very title, served to focus attention on an alleged incident in the life of Muḥammad. The traditional sources depict him as having been tempted by Satan to utter a Quranic recitation which included material that was not part of the Holy Writ - a damaging situation that was put right only by the intervention of the archangel Gabriel.

Whilst the majority of Muslim scholars were willing to transmit the story, its contents were unacceptable to others. Thus we know from aṭ-Ṭabarī that Ibn Ishāq (d. c. 767 AD) included the story in his *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*<sup>1</sup> but Ibn Hišām (d. c.835 AD) omitted it from his abridgement of Ibn Ishāq's work. There were other scholars who were deeply unhappy about the story, perhaps the most prominent being one of the major commentators on the Qur'ān, Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī (d. 1209 AD)<sup>2</sup>.

The crucial source which gathers together the various recensions of the story is the *Tafsīr* of aṭ-Ṭabarī (839-923 AD). One of the verses on which he has to comment is *sūra* 22, verse 52, which reads as follows<sup>3</sup>:

Whenever We sent a messenger or a prophet before you,  
and he had the desire [to recite],  
Satan tampered with his desire.  
But God annuls Satan's tamperings,  
and then God confirms His signs.  
God is Knowing and Wise.

aṭ-Ṭabarī explains the verse by reference to a passage in *sūra* 53. Why he should do this is problematical, as the passage in *sūra* 53, which deals with Muḥammad and his contemporaries, is not a particularly apposite explanation for a verse that apparently refers to Muḥammad's prophetic predecessors ['before you']. I am inclined to think that this apparent mismatch indicates that the story about the passage in *sūra* 53 was already in existence in some form or other before any need was felt to explain *sūra* 22, verse 52, and that it is not simply a story that came into existence to explain

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<sup>1</sup> See aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* on *sūra* 22, verse 52, and *Tārīḥ* 1192. Cf. Guillaume 1959:165-167.

<sup>2</sup> See ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* on *sūra* 22, verse 52.

<sup>3</sup> The translation of the verse is mine, as is that of *sūra* 53 and the 'Satanic verses'.

*sūra* 22, verse 52. The story and the verse had come together with the passing of time.

In commenting on *sūra* 22, verse 52, at-Ṭabarī gathers together all the traditions that he knows about the passage in *sūra* 53. Though these cover just over four quite densely printed pages of roughly A4 size, they boil down to one story with variations in fairly minor detail. at-Ṭabarī gives just one version in his other great work, the *Tārīḥ*. This version was translated into English by Guillaume in 1959, when he included it in his translation of the *Sīra*. Basically, Guillaume was translating Ibn Hišām's work, but in an attempt to get as near as possible to Ibn Ishāq's earlier and more detailed version, he included passages from Ibn Ishāq that had survived in other sources, particularly at-Ṭabarī. Guillaume's translation, with one or two minor alterations, runs as follows:

Now the apostle was anxious for the welfare of his people, wishing to attract them as far as he could. It has been mentioned that he longed for a way to attract them, and the method he adopted is what Ibn Ḥamīd told me that Salama said Muḥammad ibn Ishāq told him from Yazīd ibn Ziyād of Medina from Muḥammad ibn Ka'b al-Qurazī: When the apostle saw that his people turned their backs on him and he was pained by their estrangement from what he brought them from God, he longed that there should come to him from God a message that would reconcile his people to him. Because of his love for his people and his anxiety over them it would delight him if the obstacle that made his task so difficult could be removed; so that he meditated on the project and longed for it and it was dear to him. Then God sent down 'By the star when it sets, your comrade errs not and is not deceived. He speaks not from his own desire.' [These are the first three verses of *sūra* 53.] When he reached His words 'Have you thought of al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā and Manāt<sup>4</sup>, the third, the other', Satan, when he was meditating on it, and desiring to bring it (*sc.* reconciliation) to his people, put upon his tongue 'these are the exalted *garānīq* whose intercession is approved [*or* hoped for].' When Qurayš heard that, they were delighted and greatly pleased at the way in which he spoke of their gods and they listened to him; while the believers were holding that what their prophet brought them from their Lord was true, not suspecting a mistake or a vain desire or a slip, and when he reached the prostration and the end of the *sūra* in which he prostrated himself the Muslims prostrated themselves when their prophet prostrated, confirming what he brought and obeying his command, and the polytheists of Qurayš and others who were in

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<sup>4</sup> Information about pre-Islamic deities is not very reliable, but it would seem that al-Lāt was particularly venerated in at-Ṭā'if, al-'Uzzā by the Qurayš in Mecca, and Manāt by the Arabs of Medina. See Fahd 1968.

the mosque prostrated when they heard the mention of their gods, so that everyone in the mosque, believer and unbeliever, prostrated, except al-Walīd ibn Muġīra who was an old man who could not do so; so he took a handful of dirt from the valley and bent over it. Then the people dispersed and Qurayṣ went out, delighted at what had been said about their gods, saying, 'Muḥammad has spoken of our gods in splendid fashion. He alleged in what he recited that they are exalted *garānīq* whose intercession is approved.'

The story concludes by telling us, with some variation of detail, of Gabriel's intervention and the dropping of the 'Satanic verses'.

Though, as mentioned above, there were some objectors, the accounts found in aṭ-Ṭabarī's works were widely accepted, and we find them frequently retold not only in other commentaries on the Qur'ān but also in such widely read works as the *Tārīḥ* of Ibn al-Aṭīr (1160-1234 AD). One can therefore expect any Muslim with a good traditional education grounded in the major Arabic sources to know of it, at least in outline, and to accept it.

The common attitude amongst western scholars has been to accept the substance of the story, mainly on the basis that it is impossible for the story to have been invented. However, its accuracy has been attacked from time to time, notably, from the historical point of view, by Caetani (1905-26: I, 278-282). However, the best and most interesting critique is in an article by John Burton (1970), which is particularly concerned with the problem of the abrogation of Quranic material. I share Professor Burton's view that the text that we now find in *sūra* 53, verses 19-23 is due to abrogation of earlier material and is not merely the text minus the so-called Satanic verses, two verses<sup>5</sup> that, according to the Muslim view, were never really in the text at all. I shall not attempt to summarize Professor Burton's detailed and technical arguments, which should be read in full.

My own focus is on the wider problems of the revelation, and I am therefore interested to see whether the story preserved by aṭ-Ṭabarī is compatible with the text of *sūra* 53 as it survives in the 'Uṭmānic recension or in any earlier version that can be discerned behind this.

Central to aṭ-Ṭabarī's accounts is the assumption that the text of *sūra* 53, as it figures in the story, was that of the 'Uṭmānic recension, revealed as a single entity, plus, of course, the two extra verses. This seems to me to be quite impossible with the text of *sūra* 53 as we now have it, even if we ignore the later insertion of verse 23, which is generally recognised (e.g. by the standard Egyptian edition) as being Medinan<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> According to the Egyptian edition, verse 23 is the only Medinan verse in *Sūra* 53.

One should always remember that the basic unit of the Quranic revelation was a randomly variable number of verses. Except with some of the earliest passages, this did not normally coincide with the working unit of revelation, the *sūra*. *Sūra* 53, like the vast majority of *sūras*, appears to be a composite piece. There is nothing doctrinally difficult for Muslims about this process of collation and revision: Tradition tells of Gabriel visiting the Prophet to go over and revise the text of the Qur'ān from time to time.

*Sūra* 53 in its present form runs as follows:

1. By the star when it sets,
2. Your comrade has not gone astray,  
nor has he erred,
3. Nor does he speak out of caprice.
4. This is simply a revelation that is being revealed,
5. Taught to him by one great in power,
6. Possessed of strength.  
He stood straight
7. On the highest horizon;
8. Then he drew near and came down,
9. [Till] he was two bows'length away or even nearer;
10. Then he inspired his servant with his inspiration.
11. His heart has not lied [about] what he saw.
12. Will you dispute with him about what he sees?
13. Indeed, he saw him on another descent
14. By the *sidr*-tree of the boundary,
15. Near to which is the garden of refuge,
16. When the *sidr*-tree was covered by its covering.
17. His eye did not swerve nor turn astray.
18. Indeed, he saw [one] of the greatest signs of his Lord.
19. Have you considered al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā
20. And Manāt, the third, the other?
21. Do you have males, and He females?
22. That would then be an unjust division.
23. They are merely names  
which you and your forefathers have bestowed.  
God has sent down no authority in them.  
They follow only surmise and what their souls desire  
– and that when guidance has come to them from their Lord.
24. Or will man have whatever he desires,
25. When the hereafter and the first life belong to God?
26. How many an angel is there in the heavens  
whose intercession is of no avail



- save after God gives permission  
 to whom He wills and is pleased.  
 27. Those who do not believe in the hereafter  
 give the angels the names of females.  
 28. They have no knowledge of that.  
 They only follow guesswork,  
 and guesswork is of no avail against the truth.  
 29. So turn away from him who turns his back on Our Remembrance,  
 and desires only the present life.  
 30. That is the sum of their knowledge.  
 Your Lord knows full well those who have gone astray from His way,  
 and He knows full well those who are guided.  
 31. To God belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth,  
 for Him to requite those who do evil for what they have done,  
 and to requite those who have done good with the fairest [reward].  
 32. Those who avoid the heinous sins and wrongdoings,  
 [but commit] venial offences  
 - [for them] your Lord is embracing in His forgiveness.  
 He is well aware of you  
 [from the time] when He raised you from the earth  
 and when you were foetuses in your mothers' bellies.  
 Do not assert yourselves to be pure.  
 He is well aware of those who fear God.  
 33. Have you considered  
 the person who turns his back  
 34. And gives little and is grudging?  
 35. Does he possess the knowledge of the Invisible,  
 so that he sees?  
 36. Or has he not been told  
 of what is in the scrolls of Mūsā  
 And Abraham, who paid his debt in full?  
 38. - That no laden [soul] bears the load of another,  
 39. And that a man will have to only as he has striven,  
 40. And that his striving will be seen,  
 41. Then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense?  
 42. And that the final end is to your Lord,  
 43. And that it is He who makes [men] laugh and makes [them] weep,  
 44. And that it is He who makes [men] die and makes [them] live,  
 45. And that He created the two pairs, male and female,  
 46. From a drop of sperm when it was ejaculated,  
 47. And that on Him rests the second growth,

48. And that it is He who gives wealth and riches,  
 49. And that it is He who is the Lord of Sirius,  
 50. And that He destroyed 'Ād, the first,  
 51. And Thamūd, and He did not spare them,  
 52. And the people of Noah before  
     - for they did grievous wrong and were vile transgressors -  
 53. And He also overthrew the overturned settlements,  
 54. So that they were covered by that which covered [them].  
 55. Then on which of your Lord's bounties do you cast doubt?  
 56. This is a warner, of the warners of old.  
 57. The Imminent is imminent.  
 58. None apart from God can remove it.  
 59. Do you then marvel at this discourse,  
 60. And do you laugh, and do you not weep,  
 61. While you amuse yourselves?  
 62. Bow down before God and serve Him.

A basic division into five sections virtually imposes itself: -

- (a) 1-18      The assonance is in *-ā* (as it is for the first 56 verses). The verses are addressed to the Meccans, and they have some internal cohesion. As with most of the *sūra*, the material is relatively early.
- (b) 19-25      Similarly addressed to the Meccans, but with an abrupt change of theme. This does not necessarily show that they are a separate revelation from verses 1-18, but they could well be. These remarks do not apply to verse 23, which is accepted as being a verse added at Medina. Thematically, verse 23 is integrated, but with its later, more diffuse, style - it is more than four times as long as the surrounding verses - it has all the appearance of a substitution that makes points that would have not been in the original text.
- (c) 26-32      Here the verses are considerably longer than those that have preceded (with the exception of verse 23). The Meccans are no longer being addressed. Instead, Muḥammad is addressed in verses 29 and 32 and mankind in verse 32. In verse 26 we find the word *ṣafā'a* 'intercession', which, as we shall see, was in the second of the 'Satanic verses' (S2). This could be a faint echo of the 'intercession' theme of S2. There can be little doubt that this section is a few years later than most of the material in the *sūra*. It is not unreasonable to suppose that it was added at the same time as verse 23.
- (d) 33-56      Here the short verses return, the assonance still being in *-ā*. First there is an address to Muḥammad and then a sketching in of some

basic beliefs. There must be some doubt whether verse 56 is integral or a bridge verse to the final section.

(e) 57-62

The assonance in *-ā* ceases. We have two verses with assonance in *fā*, three with *-ūn*, and a final verse ending in *-ū*. This little peroration fits neatly on to what has preceded, but the breaking of the assonance in *-ā* may well point to it originally having been a separate revelation.

This means that at-Ṭabarī's accounts, if they have any validity at all, must refer to an earlier version of *sūra* 53, of which verses 23 and 26-32 were not a part. On the other hand, at-Ṭabarī's accounts require the presence of verses 1-2, 19-20, the 'Satanic verses' and verse 62. Thus, at-Ṭabarī's implied earlier version would have been composed of verses 1-20, the 'Satanic verses', 21-22, 24-25 and 33-62. I am not convinced that such a long piece would have been recited as a unity on its first recitation at what was an early period in the development of the Qur'ān; and I suggest that the five divisions I have made correspond with what were originally separate revelations. However, that problem is peripheral to the main one, the position of the 'Satanic verses'. Let us look at the crucial passage, starting at verse 19. According to at-Ṭabarī, the text of the initial recitation would have been as follows:

19. Have you considered al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā
20. And Manāt, the third, the other?
- S1. They are the exalted *ḡarānīq*
- S2. Whose intercession is approved.
21. Do you have males, and He females?
22. That would then be an unjust division.
24. Or shall man have whatever he desires,
25. When the hereafter and the first life belong to God?

The implication is that S1 and S2 then disappeared almost instantly; that they were never really part of the original text. That takes us to:

19. Have you considered al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā
20. And Manāt, the third, the other?
21. Do you have males, and He females?
22. That would then be an unjust division.
24. Or shall man have whatever he desires,
25. When the hereafter and the first life belong to God?

It is normal for little or no attention to be paid in the commentaries to the later insertion into the text of additional material, and the implication that there was yet

a third version, in which verse 23 was now included, is accepted without comment. That gives us the version that we find in the 'Uṭmānic text:

19. Have you considered al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā
20. And Manāt, the third, the other?
21. Do you have males, and He females?
22. That would then be an unjust division.
23. They are merely names yourselves and your forefathers have bestowed. God has sent down no authority in them. They follow only surmise and what their souls desire – and that when guidance has come to them from their Lord.
24. Or shall man have whatever he desires,
25. When the hereafter and the first life belong to God?

This sequence of development simply lacks credibility. It is most unlikely that a very sensitive passage evolved in such fits and starts. It is much more probable that the original arrangement was:

19. Have you considered al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā
20. And Manāt, the third, the other?
21. Do you have males, and He females?
22. That would then be an unjust division.
- S1. They are the exalted *garānīq*
- S2. Whose intercession is approved.
24. Or shall man have whatever he desires,
25. When the hereafter and the first life belong to God?

With this version, the evolution of the present text is absolutely straightforward. S1 and S2 are not 'Satanic' at all, but a couple of verses which, having served their original purpose, were dropped (abrogated, if one wants to use that term) and replaced by verse 23. An echo of the abrogated material does, however, appear in the use of *ṣafā'a* at the beginning of the other added passage, verses 26-32.

It should be noted that if we accept this as the probable way in which *sūra* 53 evolved, it would mean that the abrogation would have had to have taken place at Medina, as verse 23 is a Medinan verse. This is a long way from at-Ṭabarī's story, in which Satan's success is envisaged as being very short-lived, a matter of days, not years.

That is probably as far as we can explain a perplexing story at this distance in time. Certain awkward questions remain. First, if at-Ṭabarī's accounts are untrue, how did they arise? In my view, the most likely explanation is that although the 'Satanic verses' were dropped from the text, they were nevertheless remembered by

some members of the Muslim community, in the same way that many variant readings were remembered. In fact, not only were they remembered; an explanation for their excision was also propounded: they were the work of Satan. A simple statement like that could have evolved, with the passing of time, into the more elaborate accounts that we find in at-Ṭabarī.

Another mystifying problem is that it is S1 and S2 that have disappeared but not verses 19 and 20, which look much more like the Devil's temptation than S1 and S2. The non-Muslim is hardly likely to be satisfied by the argument to which a Muslim can turn, that the Devil's work cannot be laid bare by rational critique, and that clearly Gabriel confirmed 19 and 20 whilst removing S1 and S2 as the work of Satan.

Finally, what does *garānīq* mean? I suspect that this is at the centre of the re-working of the passage. Unfortunately, we are totally let down by the commentators and lexicographers, who have not a sensible suggestion to make between them<sup>7</sup>. *Sūra* 53, verse 28, describes their position precisely. As is always the case with the Qur'ān, Allah knows best.

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<sup>7</sup> The confusion and ignorance is epitomized in a note to the section of Guillaume's translation of the passage quoted in the text: 'The word is said to mean "Numidian cranes" which fly at a great height.' We all know what happens with birds that do that.



## THE ILLUSION OF WEALTH

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My friend Professor Fodor has been deeply interested throughout his scholarly career in popular Islam and in the survivals of Ancient Egyptian religion as well. This fascinating field of interest invites me to deal in the following with several motifs attested from Pharaonic ages onwards through to Late Antiquity even up to recent folklore.

Desire for growing rich had been at all times an omnipresent agent of human behaviour. This has been particularly true of Egypt where the soil, the rocky mountains and the immeasurable space of the desert concealed fabulous treasures of the Kings and nobles of a remote misty past.

Papyri containing the acts of tomb robberies in the Valley of the Kings and other areas of the west bank of Thebes during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty provide extensive evidence for the dimensions of the devastating activity of the well organized predatory bands (Peet 1930). Besides robbery a lucky accident could also lead to the discovery of valuable objects. An ostrakon from the Ramesside period relates how a jar, carefully sealed, was found under the floor of a stable by a private individual. Being an honest man, he took care not to break open the jar, he learned yet from the list written on the side that it contained jewellery of gold and silver<sup>1</sup>. We do not know how the events evolved further.

Magical spells, names and rituals were expected to provide potent assistance in discovering hidden treasures. In this connection a remarkable story presents itself. It is a legendary episode of the life of Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> cent. A.D. Returning from a funeral ceremony he and St Cyril arrived to a pagan temple decorated with three *thetas* on the lintel of the door. (The symbols interpreted as capital *thetas* Θ were obviously three sun disks, a common ornament in Egyptian temples.) Theophilus "filled with a holy prophetic spirit" found the clue to the riddle by saying that the first is for God (*theos*), the second for emperor Theodosius and the third for Theophilus himself. As he said these, the door of the temple swung open and a lot of gold streamed out of it<sup>2</sup>. The three *thetas* (or rather the triple sun-disk ornament) were regarded by the author of the narrative as talismans which lost their power as Theophilus revealed their secret. As a remote parallel the tale of Ali Baba of the Arabian Nights can be quoted with the word *sesame* acting as

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<sup>1</sup> Verns 1989:36-37. (Ostr. British Museum 5631, Černý & Gardiner 1957: pl. 88.)

<sup>2</sup> Coptic manuscript Vatic. Copt LXII and LXIX. de Vis 1929:163-5; Zoega 1810:50; Kákosy 1982.



a charm in opening the treasure-trove. This tale represents a connecting link between Late Antique-Coptic and later Arabic magical literature captured by the desire for finding hidden treasures. It will suffice to mention that even the great philosopher and statesman Ibn Haldūn (*Muqaddima* 301-304) considered this topic important enough to include in his extensive historical work.

Until recently a bulky Arabic compendium of magical practices served as a handbook for treasure hunters who plundered numerous archaeological sites and monuments by illicit digging. Oddly enough, archaeologists tried to deprive it of its mystical aura by editing it in a book form in Arabic and French language (Kamal 1907). In spite of all efforts of scholars and state authorities, maniacs and swindlers still continue their criminal practices.

The Egyptian press in the past years published a number of reports about the notorious red substance or red mercury allegedly found in ancient Egyptian tombs and reputed to be the life-giving blood, a kind of elixir, of jinns because it helps to restore the youth of old jinns. If one is in possession of the substance, he will bring the jinn under his control and compel him to bring immense amounts of money. The trouble is that the impostors trading on gullible people's naiveté, ask astronomical sums of money for one gram of the substance thus plunging their clients into ruin<sup>3</sup>. The latest news published a story about three swindlers who pretended to be in contact with jinns which enabled them to locate treasures and heal illnesses. They began digging in a house in the province of Asyūt. The householder's family "could only hear them digging while murmuring unintelligible prayers and also smelt powerful incense allegedly used to communicate with the jinn that guards the treasure"<sup>4</sup>. The impostors cheated considerable sums of money out of their clients with their hocus-pocus.

The mystic atmosphere of hidden treasures is greatly enhanced by beliefs in guardian spirits. In Gurna village, the site of Hungarian excavations since 1983, on the west bank of the Nile opposite Luxor the people, living in the area of colossal mortuary temples and a necropolis of vast expanse, display a particularly vivid imagination when talking of the richness of the past.

I noted down the following story there in 1995 related by one of the inhabitants of the village, Aʿzab Ismāʿīl Aḥmad. A family living in the area of the mosque of the famous local saint Šeḥ Tayb one day somehow detected a hiding place with a treasure guarded by an afrit (or afrits). In spite of the spirit guards they managed to seize the gold, became rich and built a new house for themselves. The new wealth did not, however, bring blessing; on the contrary, they were hard hit with misfortune and at the same time strange incidents hinted at the wrath of supernatural powers. (The

<sup>3</sup> *The Egyptian Gazette* 7 April 1998 p. 1; 27 October 1998 p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *The Egyptian Gazette* 22 April 2001 p. 1.

house caught fire no less than three times in a year; the housewife was pushed down by an invisible power on the stairs of the house, etc.) Finally, the family, although Muslims, sent for help to a Coptic priest (*abūnā*) who exorcised the afrit. Those who were present at the ritual heard his dispute with the spirit who was finally compelled by him to leave the house. Although not related by the story-teller, they obviously had to get rid of the remnants of the treasure.

The remarkable, though vague concept of *raṣad* is also known in Gurna. One of the residents there is quoted to say "the treasure ...is guarded by a *raṣad*, a legendary creature that appears sporadically in the form of a snake"<sup>5</sup>. The same resident "has burned various types of Moroccan incense called *gast* and has recited magical spells. If he gets rid of the snake - he says - the treasure will be revealed, and we will be able to claim it for ourselves." The treasure he has hoped to find was a golden waterwheel supposed to be located in the courtyard of his house.

When talking on *raṣad* with one of my friends in Gurna, he expressed his view that *raṣad* is something like a spirit, as *jinn* or *afrit*, and it can manifest itself in various forms, and can also be killed. He knew also the derivative of this word, *marṣūd*. This term is applied by the villagers on the mysterious ancient Egyptian tomb in which five members of a family met their tragic death in 1905 (Weigall 1906). "Their deaths were registered as being due to asphyxia produced by poisonous gases which had accumulated in the lower parts of the passage (of the tomb)" (*Ibid.* 12). People held that the tomb was inhabited by an *afrit* who guarded a treasure there and strangled the five victims who entered the tomb. The case is unique, indeed, in the history of Egyptology, and it has been never satisfactorily explained so far what kind of gases could be the cause of the death of the five persons.

While Gurna is one of the places in Egypt where the craving for discovery of hoards of gold has a particularly strong hold on the residents' imagination, it can be found, as a manifestation of human greed, all over Egypt and, naturally, all over the world.

Rituals intended to bring hidden treasures to the light are described by Winifred S. Blackman the eminent anthropologist and one of the best specialists of Egyptian folklore who worked in the region of Asyūt and al-Fayyūm in the 1920s and 1930s (Blackman 1927). The protagonist of one of her stories is a Coptic priest who owned a book with the list of hidden treasures. He tried to find one of them believed to be buried under a large stone in the outskirts of a village<sup>6</sup>. He went to the stone at midnight, burned incense and recited incantations from his book. "Suddenly the great stone broke into two, the two halves banging together and making a sound like the roar of a lion." When the villagers came out to see what had happened, the priest,

<sup>5</sup> *Al Ahram Weekly* 1-7 February 1996 p. 14 (Omayma Abdel-Latif and Rehab Saad).

<sup>6</sup> Blackman usually did not give the name of the villages where she worked.

terrified by the crowd, ceased burning and reciting and climbed up a palm tree. The "the two halves of the stone joined together again ... The people say that it would be useless for anyone to attempt to dig up the treasure, for the deeper you dig, the lower the stone goes into the earth" (Blackman 1927:189). A more intellectual group of such find-stories deals with concealed books and inscriptions of wisdom<sup>7</sup>.

So far cases of hunting for real treasures or those existing only in the imagination of the people have been treated in this article. In any event, the aim was to grow rich through their discovery.

Another form of obtaining wealth by means of magic<sup>8</sup> displays a rather different aspect. The Graeco-Egyptian papyrus Berlin 5025 (Late Roman Period), a compendium of magical recipes, includes a prescription for acquiring a tutelary spirit (*παρέδρος*). This aerial spirit should be on service for the magician's client and perform whatever his master would command him. In the passage relevant to our subject (Preisendanz 1973: I, 8 /I. lines 96 ff.; Betz 1986:95-96) it is promised that if the master wants to give a dinner, the spirit will prepare chambers with golden ceilings, with walls covered with marble; he will bring costly wine and servant-demons will be at his command during the banquet. The magician, however, alludes cautiously the reader *καὶ ταῦτα ἡγεί τὰ μὲν ἀληθῆ τὰ δὲ βλέπεσθαι μόνο[ν]* "and you consider these things partly real and partly just illusionary"<sup>9</sup>.

It should not go unmentioned in this context that the belief in acquiring a tutelary spirit can be traced back to Pharaonic Egypt. An ostrakon from Deir el-Medine preserved a supplication of man to a God to create for himself a weret-demon (Černý 1939: IV, no. 251).

The remarkable passage quoted from papyrus Berlin 5025 invites comparison with an episode of the life of Apollonius of Tyana, the famous philosopher and thaumaturge. When one of the disciples of Apollonius fell in love with a Phoenician woman who was living in a suburb of Corinth, Apollonius tried to dissuade the youth from marrying her but his words were of no avail. Seeing the obstinacy of his disciple, Apollonius appeared himself at the wedding breakfast and looked around in the banquet hall full of silver and gold. In the presence of all the guests he disclosed without delay the secret: the woman is one of the empousas (a kind of vampire) who fall in love with human beings to devour them on their feasts afterwards. After his disclosure of the truth, the splendid wealth immediately fluttered away and the retinue of the servants vanished too (Philostratos, *Life of Apollonius* IV, XXV). In this way

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Fodor 1970: esp. 337-345; Fodor 1976:157, 161, 169-170; Fodor 1974:97.

<sup>8</sup> On magical abundance in the next world in Pharaonic religion see Kákósy, *Zauberei im Alten Ägypten*, Budapest 1989, 95-100.

<sup>9</sup> Preisendanz 1973: I, 8 /I lines 110-111/; Betz 1986:6. Translation of Betz.

it became evident to everybody that the wealth of the woman was actually nothing more than the semblance of reality.

The motif that spirits (afrits, jinns) or magicians are capable of producing imaginary riches, still survives in Egyptian popular beliefs. H. A. Winkler's well-known book (1936) includes the story about a man who was served by a spirit-assistant who provided his master with gold coins. People readily accepted the gold as payment but found later only potsherds in their pockets (Winkler 1936:13).

A recent story heard during my excavation in 2001 speaks of a bridge made by an afrit which proved to be again an illusion. People who wanted to cross the canal over the non-existent bridge fell, of course, into the water.

These stories are varied in their details, but the underlying idea remains the same. Magicians and later spirits were credited with the miraculous power to evoke in the eyes of the spectators the semblance of reality. With regard to their interpretation a variety of assumptions are available: play of pure fantasy; tenacity of folk-traditions handed down through subsequent generations; or may we venture the daring hypothesis that at least in the first two instances (the Graeco-Egyptian papyrus Berlin 5025 and the Life of Apollonius) we are confronted with hypnotic suggestion? Later on such stories survived as mere motifs of fairy-tales and fiction. In modern literature Thomas Mann's novel *Mario and the Magician* had elevated the motif of hypnotic deception with its tragic consequences to the highest artistic level. Egyptians had, by the way, rich experience in hypnotic trance which was a common practice in one of the prophesying methods, the vessel inquiry (lecanomancy).

The romanticism of treasure hunting seems to be an inseparable element of the excavations in Egypt in the eyes of the amateurs. These reveries are in actual fact, kept alive by the successive new discoveries. It will suffice to make an overview of the past decades of archaeological activity in Egypt (Reeves 2000) to see that the discovery of the dazzling treasures in the royal tombs in Tanis (1939) was not the last one in the series of sensational new finds. The treasure from Tell el-Maskhuta (1947), the burial of queen Takhot (1950), the unfinished pyramid of Sekhemhet (1952) with its golden objects, the jewellery in the tomb of princess Noferuptah (1956), the ear-pendant from Saqqara, (1975) (Reeves 2000:198-200, 204, 218) and the Valley of the Golden Mummies in the Bahariya Oasis (1999)<sup>10</sup> are all finds of prime importance. All of them was surpassed by the treasure from Dush in the Kharga Oasis (1989) including a superb gold crown, bracelets, a collection of plaques and numerous other objects (Reddé 1992; Reeves 2000:228).

Without doubt the cemeteries of Egypt do conceal further finds and new great discoveries are to be expected. Hopefully, they will come to light in scholarly excavations and not through tomb robberies.

<sup>10</sup> Hawass 2000. Actually mummies with gilded masks and cartonnages.

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# REFERENCES TO ANIMALS IN THE *DĪWĀN* OF AL-HANSĀ'

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In the *Dīwān* of al-Hansā' (ca. 575 A.D.- ?), we find 57 elegies, the verses of which, taken together, come to a grand total of 627 lines<sup>1</sup>. Approximately 18 percent of these, or 109 verse lines, contain the names of 20 animal species, or various adjectives describing them; in addition to a number of lines of particular relevance which are concerned with the characterization and depicting of some animals' qualities and habits, out of which there are no less than 13 that make mention of more than one species each.

The purpose of the present paper is to present and analyse all the sentences containing references to animals that occur in the collected *oeuvre* of al-Hansā', and offer a translation of each, replete with brief notes that may serve to facilitate a better knowledge of either the word itself or the animal it signifies. Longish explanations I have consciously striven to avoid for obvious space limits, yet some important information on etological and etymological aspects of the sentences might not infrequently be conveyed sufficiently clearly by the translation itself.

Animal species occurring only once or, at any rate, very rarely, in the *dīwān* are singled out first:

مَشَى السَّبْنَتَى إِلَى هَبْجَاءَ مُضْلِعَةٍ \* لَهَا سِلَاحَانِ : أَثْيَابٌ وَأَظْفَارٌ

(1) 228.49.10<sup>2</sup> "The leopard (*as-sabantā*) marched forth for a fierce battle, aided by two kinds of weapon – teeth and claws." Commentators are unanimous in that the word means 'leopard', although some insist it actually signifies a feature ascribed to the panther: 'brave of heart'. (b65, d44, 'Aṭwī 1944:104). The poetess characterises her brother Ṣaḥr as a leopard, when he is leaving to meet a ferocious fighter, that is death, who, quite like the leopard itself, is armed with teeth and claws. Death, therefore, is also likened to a wild animal in the metaphor, which makes the line even more picturesque.

وَإِذَا مَا الْبَيْضُ يَمْشِينَ مَعًا \* كَبَنَاتِ الْمَاءِ فِي الضُّحُلِ الْكَدِرِ

(2) 245.53.4 "And when the white-complexioned [damsels] walk together like [white] water-fowl (*ba-nāt al-mā'*) in the turbid, shallow water." The aesthetic beauty of the six-line poem is enhanced by the continuous presence of the concept of whiteness as an undercurrent; thus, this line compares the fair-complexioned women to water-fowl (a) (presumably white too), while two lines further her

<sup>1</sup> Throughout my study, I have relied on the edition of Fāyiz Muḥammad that follows the version of Abū l-ʿAbbās ʿAlī, since this appeared to be the most complete of all the editions available to me. Hereunder, I shall refer to it as (a). Given the considerable divergences among the various editions, I have found it imperative to keep comparing all the data with those offered by the rest of the published versions. These will be marked here as (b-f). For details, cf. the References. For a general survey of the poetry of al-Hansā's, cf. the short article of Fariq (1957) or the elaborate essay of Rhodokanakis (1904).

<sup>2</sup> The order is as follows: page number, verse number, line number.



brother is said to have dealt to the enemy a blow so heavy that even the white fruit of the *rā'* tree<sup>3</sup> is unable to alleviate the damage.

تَرَكْتُ بِهِ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا وَمَنْزِلًا \* تَعَاوَى عَلَى جَنْبِ الطَّرِيقِ عَوَاسِلُهُ

(3) 140.27.8 "[And you was the first to pitch camp there, then] you left there a long night and a camping-place, where the *wolves* (*awāsil*) were howling to each other on the roadside." This word is an adjectival form referring to their 'trotting, ambling, or running' (a), though some say it is the plural of 'wolf' (c165) or 'female wolf' (b124), or else is a term for 'trembling' applicable only to wolves.

فَهْنُ قَبِّ كَنْحِيَّاتِ الْآبَاءِ بِهِ \* يَجْذِبْنَ نِيًّا وَلَا يَجْذِبْنَ قِرْدَانًا

(4) 109.16.2 "On such camels [is he travelling], which are like the *serpents* of *al-Abā'* (*hayyāt*), [and when he returns] their humps get fatter but *ticks* (*qirdān*) do not settle on them." His camels were so very lean, as a result of heavy marching and fighting, as to resemble serpents, for they, even if having swollen sometimes, are quick to become as thin again as an arrow. It is said that ticks settle on camels when the latter grow thin. According to another tentative, ticks are to be found exclusively in filthy places (a).

تَالهِ أَنْسَى أَبْنِ عَمْرٍو الْخَيْرُ مَا نَطَقَتْ \* حَمَامَةٌ أَوْ جَرَى فِي الْبَحْرِ عَلْجُومٌ

(5) 59.7.4 "I swear by God, I shall not forget the son of 'Amr, the son of goodness, as long as the pigeon coos, or there is a *frog* (*ulğūm*) to be found in the sea." The meaning of the word remains a matter for speculation. It is likely to mean 'male frog' (a, d97), yet whenever used together with the noun 'sea' in the construct state, it will come to mean 'the life, or bulk thereof' (a). Its multiple meanings also include 'darkness', 'duck', as well as 'wave of the sea'. The interpretation may be somewhat modified by the substitution of the word *al-gamr*, 'copious waters' (b128, c169) for 'sea' in some versions. The gist of the sentence, at any rate, is the notion of 'never'.

عَلَى كُلِّ عَجْمَاءٍ الْبَغَامُ كَأَنَّهُ \* وَأَقْتَادُهُ مِنْهَا عَلَى أُمِّ تَوْلَبٍ

(6) 114.17.8 "[*Ṣaḥr*, when mounted] on any female animal with a mute voice, is as though he and his camel-saddle had been [placed] on a *wild she-ass* (*umm tarwlab*). She likens *Ṣaḥr*'s camel – or, more appropriately, its carriage and/or energy – to that of a female wild ass, which, as expressed in the next line, roams the spacious deserts, 'singing' in a resonant voice, as though sounding a multi-holed wooden flute (a).

وَأَبِ الْيَتَامَى يَنْبُتُونَ فَيَنَاهُ \* نَبْتُ الْفِرَاحِ بِمُكْلَى مِعْشَابٍ

(7) 129.24.4 "The father of orphans, who grow up with him in opulence, like *small chickens* (*firāḥ*) on a grazing grassland." Comprehending this sentence will pose no trouble.

وَحَيْلٌ تَكْدُسُ مَشْيَ الْوَعُولِ \* نَازَلَتْ بِالسَّيْفِ أَبْطَالُهَا

(8) 34.4.10 "What a multitude of riders who came jostling as *mountain goats* (*wu'ūl*) do, and you massacred their prominent heroes with your sword." The difficulty of this sentence lies to a great extent in interpreting the verb *takaddasu*, which has a pronouncedly varied meaning, including, e.g., 'to be pressed together', 'to go hurriedly', 'the gait of a mounted battalion in iron armour', 'to jump', 'a group of riders and their combined force', 'to go in a single throng' (a), or, elsewhere, '(horses) pressing together', 'to make haste while walking', 'to go with difficulty on account of the movements of shoulders or chests', 'to move one's sides while walking', 'the horse's pacing to war', 'an unhurried pace', 'the advance of mountain goats', 'to run wild' (d93), and, finally, 'the walk of horses when they appear to carry a burden' (f237). This very verb occurs in another passage too

<sup>3</sup> A tree common in the Ḥiḡāz, whose white, soft and pulpy fruit used to be utilized to dry up the bleeding by crushing it over the wound (a246).



(157.32.8), where it is explained as follows (a): 'to go to war neither too fast nor too slowly; used primarily in reference to war', 'a mounted battalion and their concerted jump resembling that of a flock of mountain goats'. The first hemistich of the line corresponds to a verse of *al-Mubalḥil*, to which the following explanation is proposed: the movements made by the two shoulders and two sides of the horse while walking, which are similar to those made by the mountain goats; and this is a sign of the horse's leisurely pace in entering the war (Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ānī* 40).

تَقْدُ الذُّؤَابَةَ مِنْ يَذْبُلْ \* أَبَتْ أَنْ تَفَارِقَ أَوْعَالَهَا

(9) 47.4.32 "Which [, like a sharp sword,] will cut the summit of Mount *Yadbul* off, from which its mountain goats (*awāl*) will not leave." That is to say, the peak of Mount *Yadbul*<sup>4</sup> is so high as to make the habitat of those goats all but inaccessible. The two sentences display two different plural forms, and that within one single verse too.

وَأَبَكَ أَخَاكَ لَخِيلٍ كَالْقَطَا قَطَعَ \* لِبَسْخَا وَالدُّنَى وَالْعَقَرُ لِلنَّشِيبِ  
فَنَابِكِي أَخَاكَ لَخِيلٍ كَالْقَطَا عَصَبٍ \* فَتَقْدَنْ لَمَّا ثَوَى سَيْبًا وَأَنْهَابًا

(10) 184.38.7 "And wail for your brother, on whose death the cavalry split up into bands like sand-grouse (*qaṭā*) do, and who was generous and magnanimous, slaughtering fat she-camels [for his guests]." (11) 75.10.3 "And wail for your brother of the cavalry groups, [so numerous] as sand-grouse (*qaṭā*), which have [forever] lost, with the death of *Ṣaḥr*, [the usual] gifts and booty." In both verse lines, riders are likened to birds, on account of their dispersal and numbers, respectively.

وَنُوحٍ بَعَثَتْ كَمِثْلِ الْإِرَا \* خَ أَنْسَتِ الْعَيْنُ أَشْبَاهَا

(12) 43.4.24 "How many wailing women you have driven to crying, who [wail and gesticulate] like young wild cows (*irāḥ*), [their voices being like that of] cows (*in*) looking at their calves [to summon them]." The singular of the word *irāḥ* is *irḥ*, and it means 'wild cows' (b123, d95), or 'wild cow calves' (a, c163). The noun *in* signifies either 'cows' (a, Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ānī* 696), or 'having wide/black eyes', the singular being *a'yan*. The interpretation of this line is that cows, when catching sight of their calves, moo to them to call them to be suckled, and the voices of mourning women are compared to this sound (a, c163). According to other sources, however, women leave their dwellings as wild cows do their corral, enjoying the rainfall; or else the gathering of women is likened to cows coming together, and their subsequent stampede out to the rain (b123, d95).

كَأَنَّ الْقَتُودَ إِذَا شَدَّهَا \* عَلَى ذِي وَشُومٍ يُبَارِي صَوَارًا

(13) 128.23.11 "Like a camel-saddle when fastened to a tattooed beast which competes with a herd of wild cows (*ṣuwār*) [in its speed of running]." The following lines(a) proceed to describe the behaviour of 'a herd of cows' (Aṭwī 1994:113, Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ānī* 709) or 'a herd of oxen', which has sought refuge under an *arṭā* tree<sup>5</sup>, only to be disturbed by her brother's camel and becoming agitated. The camel, feeling the approach of a hunter towards the herd, lost no time to flee, making the herd flee too, while some of its animals take to fighting the hunter's dogs.

وَسَبَّحِي كَارَامَ الصَّرِيمِ حَوَيْتَهُ \* خِلَالَ رَجَالٍ مُسْتَكِينٍ عَوَاطِلُهُ

(14) 141.27.9 "And many a humiliated and plundered captive whom you have gathered like white antelopes (*ārām*) of a sandy land, leaving them [in safety] among your people." The collecting and freeing of captive women are compared to a hunter's capture of white antelopes or gazelles (a, b125, c165, Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ānī* 696). There is a difference of opinion as to what is meant by the

<sup>4</sup> A mountain situated in the farthest reaches of the land of the *B. Kilāb* (a48).

<sup>5</sup> *Arṭā*, *arṭā'* (a) or *arṭāt* (b55, c77, Aṭwī 1994:113); a tree the fruit of which resembles that of the jojobe.

possessor in the construct state, as it may be explained as either 'sandy land' (c165, f226) or 'a place which is full of gazelles' (b125).

فَأَوَّلَجَ السَّوْطَ إِلَى حَوْشَبَرٍ \* أَجْرَدَ مِثْلَ الصَّدْعِ الْأَعْفَرِ

(15) 82.11.3 "Then he raised his whip [to urge] a huge, short-haired horse, which is like a dust-coloured gazelle (*ṣada'*). It may be a young ewe among the grey, dust-coloured he-goats, or a gazelle of middling stature (a), or else a he-goat of middling stature (b53, c74, d48, *Atwī* 1994:110).

بِمَقْوَمٍ لَدُنِ الْكُؤُوبِ سِنَانُهُ \* ذَرْبُ الشَّيْبَةِ كَقَادِمِ النَّسْرِ  
فَانْتَبَهَ بِهَ اسْلُ الْأَسِنَّةِ ضَامِرٌ \* مِثْلَ الْعُقَابِ غَدَّتْ مِنَ الْوَكْرِ  
تَهْرِي إِذَا أُرْسِلَتْ مِنْ مَنَهْلٍ \* مِثْلَ عُقَابِ الدُّجْنَةِ الدَّاجِيَةِ

(16) 132.25.6 "With a precious, firm lance, sharp-pointed and straight as the wing of an eagle (*nasr*)."

(17) 132.25.8 "He was saved from the points of the lances by a lean horse, which is [as swift] as an eagle (*uqāb*) setting out from its nest to take prey." (18) 253.51.20 "[The horses], when driven to the well, swoop down [on the water], as does the eagle (*uqāb*) of darkness." In the first verse line the lance, sharp and straight as it is, is likened to an eagle's wing; in the second, a lean horse's light-footed rapidity is to a flying eagle's body; in the third, the swift running of horses with their riders is to an eagle's flight.

وَمَلْحَمَةٍ سَوْمَ الْجَرَادِ وَزَعَّتْهَا \* لَهَا قِرَوَانٌ يَسْتَنْدُ مِنَ الْأَسْرِ

(19) "65.8.12 "Many a bloody battle that you stopped, [in which the riders] were like locusts (*ḡarād*), and an army of men ran [to flee from] being taken captive." The truly problematic point is not the word 'locusts' but the noun *sawm*, juxtaposed to it in the genitive structure, which may signify 'as numerous as locusts', 'going like locusts' (a), or 'the herd is heading for the pasture'. This very noun occurs again in another passage too (*sawm al-arāḡili*; 181.37.1), where it is rendered as 'men walking', or 'those differing from him' or 'the rich'. In other *dīwāns* (b51, c72, d48) this word is replaced by *mitla*, and the rest of the sentence is likewise heavily different.

صَبَحَتْهُمْ بِالْخَيْلِ تَرْدِي كَأَنَّهَا \* جَرَادٌ زَقَتْهُ رِيحُ نَجْدٍ إِلَى الْبَحْرِ

(20) 68.8.13 "[You attacked] them in the morning with horses whose hoofs clattered on the earth, as though they had been [as quick as] locusts (*ḡarād*) driven by the wind of Naḡd towards the sea [of Iraq]." These locusts are moving along from the Tihāma to Naḡd, being driven as they are toward the sea of Iraq by the wind of Naḡd, that is a southerly one (a). As can be seen here, the metaphor of locusts appears no less than twice within one poem, and in two consecutive lines too, probably in an effort on the poetess' part to make palpable the multitude and rapidity of the horses spoken of.

تَكَفَّكَتْ فَضْلُ سَابِقَةِ دَلَاصٍ \* عَلَى خَيْفَانَةٍ خَفِيفِ حَشَاها

(21) 164.33.19 "[Fighting], you hold up the hanging extremities of [your] loose, long armour, [mounted] on your thin [horse like a] locust (*ḡayfāna*). The phrase means 'a horse that is as thin as a locust', 'a locust that his horse resembles in its thinness and quickness', 'a locust that has turned red from its original colour of blackish-yellow', 'a horse with a long body and scanty flesh' (a), 'locusts with multi-coloured stripe patterns on their wings'.

شَعْنًا شَوَاحِبَ لَا يَنْبِيْنَ \* (م) إِذَا وَنَى لَيْلُ الثَّوَابِ

(22) 197.42.17 "With dishevelled hair and pale colour, they do not cease crying [even] if the barking dogs (*nawābih*) have ceased [their concert] at night." Some *dīwāns* (b23, c34, d29) substitute the word *nawā'ib* for *nawābih*, but that is also likely to refer to dogs (c43, e260).

بِدَاهِيَةِ يَضْغِي الْكِلَابَ حَسِيْسَهَا \* وَتَخْرُجُ مِنْ سِرِّ النَّجِيِّ عَلَانِيَةً

(23) 18.1.2 "A disaster, when the dogs' (*kilāb*) voices are made tremble by hunger, and the secrets of whisperers is made public." The most enigmatic word in this line is *yudḡi*, which is interpreted

variedly as 'tremble with hunger', 'hush someone', 'shout' (a, e4), although in some versions (b145, c191, d108) prefer the reading *yaṣṣā*, which probably means 'be silent, listen'.

إذا زَجَرُوهَا فِي السَّرِيحِ وَطَابَقَتْ \* طَبَاقَ الْكِلَابِ فِي الْهَرَّاسِ وَصَرَتْ  
(24) 101.14.2 "When he is reprimanded for its wearing a leather horse-shoe, it starts trotting quickly, in the manner of dogs (*kilāb*), in the thorny bush, listening intently." Again, it is the verb that we must pay special attention to: *ṭābaqa*. The trot of the horse is likened to that of dogs when the latter are running with a hopping gait. According to the commentaries, the precise meaning is 'when the horse keeps putting its hind feet in the footsteps of the front ones' (a, Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿānī* 46). (This word occurs again in 126.23.5).

The following species appear in more than one line in al-Hansa's *oeuvre*:

تَاللهِ أَنْبَسَى أَبْنِ عَمْرٍو الْخَيْرِ مَا نَطَقَتْ \* حَمَامَةً أَوْ جَرَى فِي الْبَحْرِ عَلْجُومٌ  
تَذَكَّرْتُ صَخْرًا إِنْ تَفَنَّتْ حَمَامَةً \* هَتُوفٌ عَلَى غُصْنٍ مِنَ الْأَيْنِ تَسْجَعُ  
(25) 59.7.4 "I swear by God, I shall not forget the son of 'Amr, the son of goodness, as long as the pigeon (*ḥamāma*) coos, or there is a frog in the sea." (26) 184.39.1 "I recalled Ṣaḥr when [hearing] a high-pitched pigeon (*ḥamāma*) sing and coo on a branch of the *ayn* tree." The pigeon plays a prominent role in laments, for wherever it appears in a poem it will remind the poetess of her brother with its unceasing cooing, or it is evoked to make us understand that she will continue remembering and lamenting her beloved until it ceases singing, that is forever. An interesting element is the tree mentioned in the second line, the singular form of which is *ayna*.

أَبْكِي لِيَصْخُرَ إِذَا نَاحَتْ مُطَوَّقَةً \* حَمَامَةً سَجَّوْهَا وَرَقَاءَ بِالْوَادِي  
لَأَبْكِيَنَّكَ مَا نَاحَتْ مُطَوَّقَةً \* وَمَا سَرَيْتُ مَعَ السَّارِي عَلَى سَاقٍ  
وَسَوْفَ أَبْكِيكَ مَا نَاحَتْ مُطَوَّقَةً \* وَمَا أَضَاءَتْ نَجُومُ اللَّيْلِ لِلْسَّارِي  
إِنِّي تَذَكَّرُنِي صَخْرًا إِذَا سَجَّعَتْ \* عَلَى الْغُصْنِ هَتُوفَ ذَاتِ أَطْوَاقٍ  
كُونِي كَوَرَقَاءَ فِي أَفْتَانٍ غِيلَتْهَا \* أَوْ صَائِحٍ فِي فُرُوعِ النَّخْلِ هَتُوفٍ

Besides the general name 'pigeon', we also often encounter the expression 'ringdove', as well as, on one occasion, 'turtle-dove'. (27) 235.50.1 "I wail for Ṣaḥr whenever I [hear] a grey ringdove (*muṭawwāqa ḥamāma*) shout away its anguish in the wadi." (28) 176.35.6 "I shall lament you as long as there is a ringdove (*muṭawwāqa*) to wail on a tree's branch and there is a night-time traveller for me to travel with." (29) 168.34.9 "I shall lament you as long as there is a ringdove (*muṭawwāqa*) to wail and there are stars to illuminate the night for those travelling." (30) 202.43.2 "I am reminded of Ṣaḥr whenever a ringed [dove] (*dāt aṭwāq*) coos with its high-pitched voice among the branches." In all of these lines, we can observe virtually identical images of the dove. (31) 243.52.2 "And be like a turtle-dove (*warqā'*) among the twigs of its bush, or a crying, cooing [creature] (*hattāf*) on the branches of the palms."

حَامِي الْحَقِيقِ تَخَالَهُ عِنْدَ الْوَعَى \* أَسَدًا بَيْبِشَةً كَاشِرَ الْأَثْيَابِ  
مِنْ أَسَدٍ بَيْشَةً يَحْمِي الْخَلَّ ذِي لَبَدٍ \* مِنْ أَهْلِهِ الْحَاضِرِ الْأَذْنَيْنِ وَالْبَادِي  
(32) 130.24.5 "A superb protector, whom you would imagine is a lion in Biṣā (*asad bi-Biṣā*) that is revealing its teeth." (33) 236.50.5 "He is one of the maned lions of Biṣā (*usd Biṣā*) which will protect its friends [and] relations, be they sedentary or Bedouin." Besides the camel and the horse, the lion is the third most important animal motif in this poetry. The location mentioned here is, according to the sources, a place famous for its predatory fauna (a, f208), or a territory of the Arabs infested with lions (b11), or a wadi in the Yemen, populated primarily by the *Ḥaṭ'am* and the *Ka'b* tribes, which lots of lions roamed (a).

كَأَنَّ مَدْلًا مِنْ أَسْوَدٍ تَبَالَتْ \* يَكُونُ لَهَا حَيْثُ اسْتَفَاءَتْ وَكَرَّتْ

In yet another line, the poetess again refers to her brother as a lion from a Yemeni town (f208) or an Arab settlement (b17, c26): (34) 105.14.11 "[And *Ṣaḥr* was] like a brave lion of *Tabāla* (*usūd Tabāla*) to the cavalry when they were returning and attacking." In all the above three lines, her brother is visualized as a lion (*asad*) bravely protecting its habitat and family.

يَفِيلِقُ الْخَيْلَ تَنْزُو فِي أَعْيُنِهَا \* مِثْلَ الْأَسُودِ تَرَأَتْ عِنْدَ جَرْجَارِ  
(35) 174.34.26 "With a great army on horses hopping in their bridles like lions (*usūd*) appearing in a teeming crowd." Which is to say the bravado of these riders makes them resemble ferocious lions.

أَسَدًا تَنَادَرَهُ الرِّفَاقُ ضَبَارِمًا \* شَتْنُ الْبَرَائِنِ لَاحِقُ الْأَقْرَابِ  
(36) 130.24.6 "A lion (*asad*) of whom companions are wary, [being as he is] of a hard disposition, strong of claws and slender of hips." There are a number of verses which do not simply describe him/them as a lion, merely mentioning some of the latter's stereotyped inner attributes, but also give a description of the appearance of the animal, which is, naturally, suggestive of some inner qualities too. Here, the *asad* is characterized by one of its typical attributes (b11, c12, f227), *ḍubārim*, which might be rendered as 'of a hard disposition', 'with a broad neck and waist' (a), 'of a strong integrity' (f227, 'Aṭwī 1994:101). This word also occurs in the following lines, which are the poetess' longest and most detailed, hence probably most beautiful, similes describing the lion.

مِنْ الْقَوْمِ مَغْشَى الرُّوَقِ كَأَنَّهُ \* إِذَا سِيَمَ ضَيْمًا خَادِرٌ مَتَّيْسِلٌ  
شَرْنِيَتْ أَطْرَافَ الْبَنَانِ ضَبَارِمًا \* لَهُ فِي عَرِينِ الْفِيلِ عَرَسٌ وَأَشْبِلٌ  
هَزْبَرُ هَرِيَتْ الشَّدَقُ رِثْبَالُ غَابَةِ \* مَخُوفُ اللَّقَاءِ جَانِبُ الْعَيْنِ أَنْجَلُ  
(37) 188.40.9 "[And you are of such] a people to whose tent visitors are always coming, and who, when wronged, become like a lurking (*ḥādir*), severe-looking (*mutabassil*)," (38) 188.40.10 "Whose fingertips are broad, whose neck is broad (*ḍubārim*) [of a hard disposition], and whose den in the bushes hides a lioness and cubs." (39) 189.40.11 "A lion with broad jaws (*hizabr*), a ferocious lion (*ri'bāl*), which one fears meeting, the eyes of which are wide open." *Hizabr* means a stout and strong lion (a), while *ri'bāl* does a brave (b108, 'Aṭwī 1994:126) and strong (a, d84) one, of a proud gait (a). The first hemistich of this line also appears in a poem of al-Farazdaq (Ibn Qutayba, *Mā'ānī* 252).

هَرِيَتْ الشَّدَقُ رِثْبَالُ إِذَا مَا \* عَدَا لَمْ تَنْهَ عَدُوَّتَهُ يَزْجُرُ  
(40) 97.13.11 "And [at] a broad-jawed lion (*ri'bāl*), which, when running [to catch its prey], cannot be stopped." Here, as in the previous line, the adjective preceding *ri'bāl* is 'broad-jawed'.

وَأَحْيَا مِنْ مَخْبِئَةٍ حَيَاءً \* وَأَجْرَأَ مِنْ أَبِي شَيْلٍ هَزْبَرُ  
(41) 97.13.10 "And he is more demure than a shy virgin, while being braver than the father of lion cubs (*abū šibl*), a male lion (*hizabr*)." A prominent feature of the lion in similes is its having cubs and females around it, which it is intent on protecting.

تَدِينُ الْخَادِرَاتُ لَهُ إِذَا مَا \* سَمِعْنَ زَنْبِيرَهُ فِي كُلِّ فَجْرٍ  
(42) 98.13.12 "And [he] is obeyed by the lions (*ḥādirāt*) of the bush [which will not leave their hiding-places for the fear that they feel] when they hear his roar in every dawn." Vide supra; *al-ḥādirāt* means such lions as use small thickets as hiding-places and will not leave them (a, 'Aṭwī 1994:101); that is lions hidden in their dens, looking surreptitiously at their surroundings.

كَالْإِيْثِ يَحْمِي عَرِيْنًا دُونَ أَشْبِلِهِ \* ثَبَتَ الْجَنَانُ إِذَا مَا زَعَزَعَ الْأَسْلَ  
أَشْجَاعٌ فَأَثَتْ أَشْجَعٌ مِّنْ لَيْثٍ \* (م) عَرِينِ نِي لِبْدَةٍ وَشِبَالِ  
سَمَحَ الْخَلِيْقَةِ لَا يَكْسُ وَلَا غَمَرُ \* بَلْ بِأَسْلٍ مِثْلَ لَيْثِ الْغَابَةِ الْعَادِي

The following three lines feature the bold and energetic *layt*. (43) 182.37.4 "You are like a lion (*layt*) protecting its den and cubs, of a solid heart when the spears tremble." (44) 204.44.3 "Oh you brave man, you are braver than a maned lion (*layt*) in its den protecting its cubs." (45) 236.50.4 "[*Ṣaḥr*] is of a pliant nature, neither a weakling nor an ignoramus, but bold like the predatory lion (*layt*) of the forest."

عَبِلُ الذَّرَاعَيْنِ قَدْ تَخَشَّى بَدِيهَتَهُ \* لَهُ سِلَاحَانُ : أَثْيَابٌ وَأَظْفَارُ  
كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ رَأَمُوهُ بِأَجْمَعِهِمْ \* رَأَمُوا الشَّكِيمَةَ مِنْ لِبْدَةٍ خَارِ

There remain two verses, one of them containing an *isti'āra makeniyya*, the other describing a maned sort of animal, which is quite likely to be a reference to a lion. (46) 234.49.38 "With a thick [strong] arm, he is much feared for his unexpected [attacks], [and he resembles a lion by virtue of] having two weapons, teeth and claws." (47) 171.34.15 "As though they, on the day of their turning against him to a man, had encountered [the living embodiment of] fury and force, [bursting forth from] a maned predator."

The most important animal species to appear in poems are the two essential domestic animals of the Arabs, the horse and the camel. To comment on horses first. There is a fair selection of terms for them in modern standard Arabic; out of these, however, only *ḥayl* occurs in pre-Islamic poetry. On the other hand, it will not always signify 'horse', but often 'rider(s)', the exact meaning being determined only by the context, and even then left uncertain occasionally. Thus, in 157.32.9 Ṣaḥr shaves off the forelocks of enemy riders after being victorious over them. In contrast, 234.49.37 describes Ṣaḥr as 'shaver of forelocks', which probably refers to his shaving off the forelocks of looted horses, a customary thing in those days, although this is not an unequivocal point. All the following five lines mention *ḥayl*; and it is to be noted that this word is used by the poetess in speaking of horses in a general sense, as opposed to one particular horse, named for some important feature of it. Which, of course, does not imply that *ḥayl* could not be combined with adjectives.

يَا مَنْ يَرَى مِنْ قَوْمِنَا فَارِسًا \* فِي الْخَيْلِ إِذْ تَعْدُو بِهِ الضَّافِيَةَ  
وَلَقَدْ تَدَارَكَ رَأْيُنَا فِي خَالِدٍ \* مَا قَادَ خَيْلًا آخِرَ الدَّهْرِ  
أَعْيُنَ أَلَا فَبِكِي لَصْفَرٍ بِدَرَّةٍ \* إِذَا الْخَيْلُ مِنْ طُولِ الْوَجِيفِ أَتَشَعَّرَتْ  
صَبَحَتْهُمْ بِالْخَيْلِ تَرْدِي كَأَنَّهَُا \* جَرَادٌ زَفْتُهُ رِيحٌ تَجْدُ إِلَى الْبَحْرِ  
لَا نَوْمَ حَتَّى تَعُودَ الْخَيْلُ عَابِسَةً \* يَنْثِيزُنَ طَرَحًا يَمْهَرَاتُ وَأَمْهَارُ

(48) 242.51.16 "Oh you who catches sight of a rider among the cavalry (*ḥayl*), [his] long-tailed steed carrying him running." *Dāfiya* means 'long-tailed' (a, b148, c195, d110). (49) 133.25.10 "And should we have been alert to Ḥālid's doings, he should never more be able to lead a stud of horses/horsemen (*ḥayl*)."

(50) 101.14.1 "Oh my eyes, do wail over Ṣaḥr, pouring forth copious [tears, like] horses (*ḥayl*) when sweltering with the long forced march." The meaning of the verb is 'to grow weak and thin with a long foray' (a, b16, c24, d25), 'for one's condition to worsen' (a), 'to tremble, wither' (f236). (51) 67.8.13 "[You attacked] them in the morning with horses (*ḥayl*) whose hoofs clattered on the earth, as though they had been [as quick as] locusts driven by the wind of Naḡd towards the sea [of Iraq]." *Vide supra* (locusts). Horses that hit the ground hard and scatter pebbles with their hoofs when running (b52, Aṭwī 1994:109). (52) 173.34.22 "No sleep until the horses (*ḥayl*) return with stern glances [because exhausted], casting away [the care of] fillies (*muhṛāt*) and foals (*amḥār*)."

فَتَلَّهَمَهُ الْقَوْمَ تَحْتَ الرَّعْيِ \* وَأَرْسَلَتْ مَهْرَكَ فِيهَا فَعَارَا

(53) 126.23.4 "And you made the people swallow him during the fight, then sent your foal (*muhṛ*) to the cavalry, and it duly went there."

فَقَدْ فَقَدْتِكَ طَالِقَةً فَاسْتَرَا حَتَّ \* فَلَيْتَ الْخَيْلَ فَارِسَهَا يَرَاهَا  
وَحَسَنَاءَ فِي الْقَوْمِ مَنْسُوبَةٍ \* تَكْشِفُ عَنْ حَاجِبَيْهَا السَّيْبَا

(54) 164.33.20 "You have been lost by [your horse] Ṭalqa, who gained some rest [after ever so many forays]; oh, if only their owner could see the group of horses (*ḥayl*) [now that they have put on weight and had a long rest]." Ṭalqa is the name of a horse of Ṣaḥr's (a, al-Gundiḡānī, *Asmā'* 158). Another verse line also mentions the name of a horse, Ḥasnā', which probably belonged to Ṣaḥr (a); this, however, may well mean 'a horse of noble breed' (a). Al-A'rābi does not mention this



latter name, but this matters relatively little as he likewise fails to mention aš-Šamā', the favourite horse of Mu'āwiya. (55) 145.31.2 "Many a horse of noble pedigree (*ḥasnā*'), the eyebrows of which flashed out from under the locks [in running], [were owned] by the tribe." "Of an evening, he fastened the saddle onto the horse's back and made it run, [the horse] enjoying marching in a circle if mounted by him." "Slicing the earth with its hoofs around him, thrusting itself [with vivacity] beyond the hillocks, [surveying the surroundings], lest he should fail to notice something." "And he made [the horse] run in various manners, and it was not found lacking in any kind of run." "After he had made it prance, the horse proceeded [to carry him running, as quick] as water [runs when] the owners of water-carrying camels empty the huge buckets."

يَعْدُو بِهِ سَابِیحٌ نَهْدٌ مَرَاكِلُهُ \* إِذَا اكْتَسَى مِنْ سَوَادِ اللَّيْلِ جِلْبَابًا  
وَالرَّاهِبِ الْعَيْسِ الْعَيْتَا \* قَمَعَ الْخَنَازِيرَ السَّوَابِجَ

*Sābiḥ* is a horse that is running with outstretched front legs as though swimming (a, b7, d19, 'Aṭwī 1994:80), that is to say very swiftly (b7, c15/40, d19, f221, 'Aṭwī 1994:80). This noun appears in as many as three lines: (56) 76.10.5 "It runs with [the rider, who urges it by kicking] its waist; a superb, healthy horse (*sābiḥ*), when the night has put its garment of darkness on." Here, the horse is further characterized as 'enormous' (c15), 'strong' (a, f243), 'having a nice physique' (b7). (57) 201.42.24 "The giver of camels of a noble breed and exceedingly swift horses (*sawābiḥ*)." In this line, yet another interesting word, meaning 'long, tall' (a, 'Aṭwī 1994:94), 'having firm flesh' (c32), is added to 'running as though swimming'.

وَكَاثِنٍ قَرَيْتَ الْحَقِّ مِنْ ثَوْبِ صَفْوَةٍ \* وَمِنْ سَابِیحِ طَرْفٍ وَمِنْ كَاعِبٍ يَكْرُ  
وَطِيفًا نَجِيبًا مُعَرَّبًا مُتَطَلِّقًا \* وَدَوْدَا إِذَا مَا قَالِ فَارَسَهُ هَبِ

(58) 69.8.15 "How often you have treated the visitor to a nice garment, a noble horse (*sābiḥ*) and a plump virgin." *Sābiḥ tīrf* is a 'horse that runs as though swimming and has a thoroughly noble pedigree on both sides' (a, f228). The second word also introduces the following line, and is then accompanied by several adjectives describing the horse: (59) 116.17.12 "And a horse of noble pedigree on both sides (*tīrf naḡīb*), of noble Arabic blood (*mu'rib*), a swift runner (*mutatalliq*) with a tame nature (*wadūd*), which, if asked by its rider, sets off [with no delay]." *Mu'rib* means 'a thoroughbred Arabic horse, which is made evident even by its neighing' (a), whereas *mutatalliq* is one that is 'happy to be trained to race' (a), and *wadūd* is 'of a cheerful disposition' (a).

وَأَنْتَ عَلَى مُعَرَّبٍ قَارِحٍ \* كَأَن بِهِ حِينٌ يَرْدِي جُنُونًا

(60) 211.46.24 "You [were] sitting on a powerful, young thoroughbred (*mu'rib qāriḥ*), which seems to be insane when galloping." The term for a thoroughbred horse that we encountered in the previous line is here combined with *qāriḥ*, that is 'a horse over five years of age (a) with a fully grown set of teeth' (f235).

فَأَرْلَجَ السَّوْطَ إِلَى حَوْشَبٍ \* أَجْرَدَ مِثْلَ الصَّدْعِ الْأَعْفَرِ

(61) 82.11.3 "Then he raised the whip to a huge, short-haired horse (*hawšab aḡrad*), which was like a dust-coloured gazelle." *Hawšab* means 'huge, having a huge belly, with puffed-up sides' (a, b53, c74, d48, 'Aṭwī 1994:110), while *aḡrad* is a horse 'with short hairs' (f210).

عَلَى كُلِّ جَرْدَاءٍ النَّسَالَةَ ضَامِرٍ \* بِأَخْرِ لَيْلٍ شَاهِرِينَ الْحَدَائِدَ

(62) 28.3.7 "[And attack them] on every lean mare with clipped hairs (*ḡardā' an-nusāla dāmīr*) at the end of the night, brandishing your swords." The adjective 'short-haired', which we have seen used in its masculine form in the above line, re-appears here as a feminine adjective, suggestive of 'mares', which, neighing as they do in a far less audible and shrill voice, help avoiding to arouse the attention of the enemy during raids. *Nusāla* means 'hairs plucked or fallen out (a, b32, c46), hairs lost'; while *dāmīr* is a horse grown lean not because debilitated but as a result of heavy

training that has led to a loss of all fat on its body and the thinness and hardness of its musculature.

فَاتَتْ بِهِ أَسْلَ الْأَسِنَّةِ ضَامِرٌ \* مِثْلَ الْعُقَابِ غَدَتْ مِنَ الْوَكْرِ  
(63) 132.25.8 "He was rescued from the points of the lances by a *lean horse* (*dāmīr*), [as rapid] as an eagle setting out from its nest to hunt." *Vide supra* (eagle), and the previous line.

يَقِينٌ وَتَحْسِبُهُ قَافِلًا \* إِذَا طَابَقَتْ وَغَشِيْنِ الْحِرَارِ  
إِذَا زَجَرُوهَا فِي السَّرِيحِ وَطَابَقَتْ \* طَبَاقَ الْكِلَابِ فِي الْهَرَّاسِ وَصَرَّتْ  
I have already touched upon the meaning of the verb *tābaqa*; see above, at the similes about dogs.  
(64) 126.23.5 "[The horses] are ambling along cautiously [for the pain they feel in their hoofs], yet you would say [Šahr's young horse] is [still] *rigid* (*qāfil*), even when it had walked for long and they had entered al-Ḥarār." *Qāfil* refers to a horse that is 'rigid with leanness' (a), 'a lean horse'. (65) 101.14.2 "When he is reprimanded for its wearing a leather horse-shoe, it starts trotting quickly, in the manner of dogs, in the thorny bush, listening intently." In this line, not only the exact purport but also the very use of the word *sariḥ* are questionable; it may mean 'leather horse-shoe' (a), 'a swift horse with no saddle on', but is replaced by different words in the rest of the *dīwāns* (b16, c24, d25). The last verb in this verse signifies 'let out an excited sound' (a), or 'prick up one's ears' (a).

تَحْتَكَ كَبْدَاءَ كُمَيْتٍ كَمَا \* أَدْرَجَ تَوْبَ الْيَمْنَةِ الطَّارِيَةِ  
In the following lines a wide array of terms is to be found for various species and qualities of horses. (66) 242.51.17 "Under you is a *huge-flanked* (*kabḍā*), *reddish-brown* (*kumayt*) mare, which resembles someone arranging his garb on his right arm, coiling it up." *Kabḍā* means a horse 'having huge flanks' (b148, c195, d110), that is to say offering an extensive surface for the rider to urge it on by kicking it; whereas *kumayt* describes 'a dark chestnut horse, with a certain reddish-black hue' (b148, f238).

فَرَأَتْ تَبَارَى أَعْوَجِيَاءَ مُصَدَّرًا \* طَوِيلَ عِذَارِ الْخَدِّ جَوْجُوهُ رَحْبُ  
(67) 91.12.9 "And the camel set out on a race against a *prime* [horse] with a *curved back* (*awaḡī*), a *broad chest* (*muṣaddar*), long cheekbones, and a huge chest." *Awaḡī* designates a putative descendant of a celebrated stallion of the *Kinda* confederation<sup>6</sup> (a) which was then taken from that tribe by the Banū Sulaym, al-Ḥansā's kin during the *yawm 'llāf*. *Muṣaddar* means 'broad-chested' (a), whilst *muṣaddir* does 'a horse one chest's length ahead of the rest in a race' (b10).

وَرُبَّ غَفَرٍ مَخُوفٍ خَضَّتْ غَمَرَتُهُ \* بِالْمُقَرَّبَاتِ عَلَيْهَا الْفَتِيَّةُ الصَّيْدُ  
(68) 143.30.3 "Many a frightful scene that you have entered deep with noble youths on their *treadured horses* (*muqrabāt*)." The word means 'horses tied up quite near their owners', either because of their being cherished by the latter, or with an eye to the possible necessity of mounting them quickly for a raid (a). Other sources prefer the interpretation 'highly esteemed horses' (c55) or 'saddled thoroughbreds'.

مُقْبِلَاتٍ حَتَّى يُولَيْنَ عَنْهُ \* مُدْبِرَاتٍ وَلَا يَرِدْنَ كِفَاحًا  
فَيَوْمًا تَرَاهُ عَلَى هَيْكَلٍ \* أَخَا الْحَرْبِ يَلْبَسُ سِرْبَالَهَا  
(69) 136.26.16 "[He stabs at their horses, which are] *advancing* (*muqbilāt*) toward him, then *turning away* (*mudbirāt*) and retreating, reluctant to fight [any more]." (70) 48.4.36 "Of a day, you see him seated on an *enormous horse* (*haykal*) like a combatant igniting the fire of war." *Haykal* is something 'of enormous proportions' (a).

وَفَيْتَانِ صِدْقٍ عَلَى شَرْبٍ \* إِذَا وَجَّهُوهُنَّ وَجْهًا هَوِينَا

<sup>6</sup> A tribal alliance formed in the late 5th century by the Ḥimyarites of Southern Arabia (Yemen) in order to protect their trade routes.



(71) 211.46.25 "And what a multitude of real men on their *svelte horses* (*šuzzab*), [who], directing [their horses] in the direction [of war], [went] galloping." *Šuzzab* are 'well-trained, perfectly fit horses (a), svelte and delicate animals'. For other renderings, *vide supra* (eagle, locust, mountain goat).

The lines in al-*Hansā's* *dīwān* with references to camels can be analysed by grouping them into three categories. The *first category* comprises verses in which the emphasis is on noble deeds, namely on lavish presents of precious, fat camels, or massive slaughters thereof for the purpose of feeding guests.

رَفَعُ الْعِظَامِ مُهْفَفٌ فَهَوَ الْفَتَى \* مُتَسَهِّلٌ لِلْأَهْلِ وَالْأَجْنَابِ

(72) 129.24.2 "Fatty bones (*raḥḥ al-izām*) [has the camel that you have slaughtered for your guests]; there is a man who lets his guests, rather than himself, eat, and does entertain both his kin and strangers." Other *dīwāns* substitute 'fatty bones' (a, e158) with 'scented robe' (b11, c12, d21).

وَعَنَسَ أَمُونٌ بَخْدُ مَتْنِهَا \* لِيُطْعِمَهَا نَفَرٌ جَوْعُ  
فَطَلَّتْ تَكْوُسٌ عَلَى أَكْرَعٍ \* ثَلَاثٌ وَكَانَ لَهَا أَرْبَعُ  
وَحَمْرَاءُ فِي الْقَوْمِ مَظْلُومَةٌ \* كَأَنَّ عَلَى دَفْتِنِهَا كَثِيبًا  
فَطَلَّتْ تَكْوُسٌ عَلَى أَذْرَعٍ \* ثَلَاثٌ وَغَادَرَتْ أُخْرَى خَضِيبًا  
فَرَّاحٌ يُفْدِي عَلَى جَسْرَةٍ \* أَمُونٌ وَغَادَرَ رَحْلًا جَنْبِيًا

(73) 206.45.7 "Many a reliable (*amūn*), strong she-camel (*ʿans*) that you have slaughtered, distributing its flesh to feed the starving people." 'Ans is a 'strong she-camel' (a), whereas *amūn* signifies a camel 'that you can rely on in a combat' (a, f206). The following verses also clarify the method of slaughtering the camels, namely 'with a shiny white sword resembling lightning; being grabbed by an eminent leader'. (74) 206.45.9 "It was crawling along on three legs after losing a fourth." "By a sword, when you aimed at it, it became as though its bones were [as soft as] a castor plant." *Tahad-dama* is 'tearing apart and distributing' (a). These lines are of particular interest, displaying as they do marked similarities to the description in another poem of a slaughter of camels. The adjective *amūn* occurs there too, as does the verb *takūsu*, which means a camel's 'staggering or crawling on three legs and chest' (a), 'going' (c124), 'walking paralysed' (b93). (75) 150.31.12 "Many a she-camel killed fully healthy (*ḥamrā' mazlūma*) in the company, as though there had been a sand-dune on its two sides [with its back fat and hump grown]." "You aimed at him without having asked for permission, then let [his blood] flow and dressed [your] sword with it." (76) 152.31.14 "It was crawling along on three legs, after you had left there another [, the fourth one,] dyed [with blood]." (77) 154.31.16 "And [the camel that had been killed] was ransomed by a strong camel (*ḡasra*) dependable in combat, and the camel-saddle [the former] had left behind was put [on the latter]." *Ḥamrā' mazlūma* is a 'red camel unjustly accused', or one 'killed when totally healthy' (a). *Ḡasra* is a 'powerful (a) and splendid (f210), tall camel'.

وَأَبْكَ أَخَاكَ لَخَيْلٍ كَالْقَطَا قَطَعَ \* وَلِلْسَخَا وَالنَّدَى وَالْعَقَرِ لِلنَّيْبِ  
وَأِنْ صَخْرًا لِمَقْدَامٍ إِذَا رَكَبُوا \* وَإِنْ صَخْرًا إِذَا جَاعُوا لِعَقَارِ

(78) 184.38.7 "And wail for your brother, on whose death the cavalry split up into bands like sandgrouse do, and who was generous and magnanimous, slaughtering fat she-camels (*nīb*) [for his guests]." *Nīb* are 'old and fat she-camels' (a). 'Aqr means 'the act of slaughtering a camel' (a, b48), 'killing a sheep' (f231). The same verb is applied in the next line; 'aqqār being 'a person who slaughters great numbers of camels' (a, b48, c67). (79) 230.49.15 "Šahr would be bold when setting out for a fight, and Šahr would magnanimously slaughter his camel for the starving."

تَشْتَقِي بِهِ الْكُومَ لَدَى قِدْرِهِ \* وَالنَّابِ وَالْمُصْنَبَةِ الْخَنْشَلِيلِ

(80) 181.36.21 "He, when his pot is boiling, is a distress for the camel herds (*kūm*), as well as for the old, fat, powerful [hence not easily driven] she-camels, and the fast-trotting she-camels of middling [size]."

The word *muṣāba* designates 'obese camels, having more fat than flesh on their frames' (a), noble mares' (f226), 'she-camels not easy to lead' (b115, c153). *Ḥanṣalīl* means 'camels of middling size' (a), extremely swift (b115, c153), light-footed or powerful (d89). This word re-appears in the 14th line of the same poem (or another poem, as some *dīwāns* present it), where it is explained as meaning an 'adroit, skilful swordsman' (a, b114, c151, d88).

والْعَوْدُ تُعْطَى إِذَا مَا يَأْتِ مُمْتَنِعٌ \* وَكُلُّ طَرَفٍ إِلَى الْغَايَاتِ سَبَّاقٍ  
(81) 203.43.6 "And he presents *old, strong and fat camels* (*awd*), while a miser will refuse to do so, as well as such rarities as will win in [various] competitions." *Awḍ* are 'fat' (a, b105, c140, f232) and old camels'.

وَالْوَهْبُ الْمَيْسَ الْعَيْتَا \* قَمَعَ الْخَنَازِيذِ السَّوَابِجِ  
(82) 201.42.24 "And the giver of *noble camels* (*is*) of fine breed, and of swift horses." The meaning of '*is*' is 'noble camels' (a), of a reddish-white hue; a white camel the whiteness of which is mixed somewhat with a fair or darker hue' (f232).

يَكْبُتُونَ الْعِشَارَ لِمَنْ آتَاهُمْ \* إِذَا لَمْ تَسْكَبِ الْمَائَةُ الْوَلِيدَا  
يُجِيلُ الْخِطَارَ لِيَوْمِ الْفَخَارِ \* وَيَحْمِي الذَّمَّارَ وَيُعْطِي الْمَثِينَا  
(83) 57.6.7 "They slaughter the *she-camels ten months pregnant* (*iṣār*) for those who come to visit them, even when not one in a *hundred suckling camels* (*mi'a*) can provide milk for an infant." It is regarded as an exceptionally noble deed, since slaughtering a pregnant camel was seen as a sin. *Kabba, yakubbu* means 'killing a camel for the guests' (a), lay them out on the ground, turn them on their heads' (f237); whereas '*iṣār*' designates a 'she-camel that has been pregnant for six months or more, or else for ten months' (a, c45, d34), regarded as exceedingly valuable' (Aṭwī 1994:129). The word 'hundred' occurring in the second hemistich one encounters again in the next line. (84) 208.46.7 "He has uncommon gifts and luck on a day of boasting, protecting honour and giving off *lots of camels* (*mi'ūn*). Her brother, therefore, was a noble man who loved to act as a generous host. "A man of noble deeds such as will slaughter his own camel for the guests; should you be a guest at his tent, you would see him entertain his guests, giving the fat of the camels' hump to them." (247.54.7 and 161.33.9).

The lines constituting the *second category* are those which probably come closest to a lament, that is to the emotions of a woman having just lost a darling relative. These verses describe she-camel whose offspring have died, evoking strong feelings of sympathy.

إِنَّ فِي الصَّدْرِ أَرْبَعًا يَتَجَاوَبُ \* نَ حَنِينًا حَتَّى يَلْفَنَ الْمُرَاحَا  
(85) 134.26.5 "[As though] there were *four [camels]* (*arba'*) in my heart, which keep mentioning longingly [their lost young] till the time of rest arrives." *Arba'* are 'four she-camels affectionate for their offspring' (a, e166); whilst in other *dīwāns* the second hemistich is entirely different, turning thereby the meaning of the phrase into 'the four uppermost ribs of the chest' (b26).

يَحْنَنُ بَعْدَ كَرَى الْعَيْرِ \* نَ حَنِينَ وَالْهَةِ قَوَامِجِ  
(86) 197.42.18 "They long with nostalgia even after the people's eyes have closed, crying like *she-camels unwilling to drink, having lost their young* (*wāliha qawāmih*). " *Wāliha* are 'she-camels longing after their lost offspring' (a, b22, c34); while *qawāmih* means 'camels that, dissatisfied with the pasture and water to be found on their own territory, choose to feed elsewhere' (a), or 'camels that raise their heads from the water short of having drunk because of the cold' (a, b22, d29, Aṭwī 1994:95), or else 'those which keep raising their heads, then drinking again' (c34).

فَمَا عَجُولٌ عَلَى بَوِّ طُطِيفٍ بِهِ \* لَهَا حَنِينَانِ إِصْفَارٌ وَكِتَابُ  
(87) 228.49.11 "And not an *animal having lost its offspring* (*aḡūl*) [like me], before which the *skin of its beloved, stuffed with straw* (*barw*) has been put, and it is circling around it, calling it now loudly, now all but inaudibly." The poetess then goes on to describe the situation of the poor

wretched animal, hence of herself. "It continues to feed until it [suddenly] recalls its lost offspring, whereupon it starts to wander up and down unquiet with pain; it will get none the fatter even if the springtime rains have poured upon the earth and caused everything to turn green; it will keep longing and growl loud and long." *ʿAḡūl* is 'one whose infant baby has died (a), a woman bereft of her child (a, c66, d44, 'Aṭwī 1994:104), or a camel bereft of its offspring'. *Baww*: 'when a baby camel dies, it is common practice to skin it and stuff its skin with grass or other vegetable material, then give it to its mother for the latter to continue fondling it and caring for it' (a, c66, d44, 'Aṭwī 1994:104); a young camel or a stuffed camel skin to trick the mother into continuing to yield milk.

شَدَدَتْ عِصَابَ الْحَرْبِ إِذْ هِيَ مَانِعٌ \* فَأَلْقَتْ بِرِجْلَيْهَا مَرِيًا وَدَرَّتْ  
وَكَانَتْ إِذَا مَا رَامَهَا قَبْلُ حَالِبٌ \* تَقْتَهُ بِإِزَاقِ دَمَاً وَاقْتَمَطَرَتْ

(88) 102.14.3 "You have participated in the fight [just as you desired to], which is [like] a [she-camel] refusing [to suckle], yet surrendering [eventually, like a] *suckling she-camel (mariyy)* [having lost its offspring] which yields abundant milk." *Mariyy* is a 'milch camel' ('Aṭwī 1994:90), 'one whose offspring has died yet it still gives milk when milked' (a). This line, together with the following one, describe war as an obstinate she-camel refusing to yield milk. The first hemistich may well be a reference to the fact that a camel will not give milk unless its nose or thigh is fastened (a); that is to say, metaphorically, that her brother has put a halter on the unbounded ferocity of war, while the second hemistich's reference is likely to be that an animal being milked will stand with its legs apart, avoiding all rudeness (a), which is to say war has totally surrendered to her brother. This same image is continued in the following line. (89) 103.14.4 "And previously, whenever a milker would take to [milking] it, it wounded him [to protect itself], besmeared him with blood, and pressed its legs together with its tail held high." That is to say, war had previously wounded and killed anyone bold enough to defy it.

إِذَا الْبَازِلُ الْكَوْمَاءُ ضَنْتَتْ بِرِفْدِهَا \* وَلَا ذَتْ لِيَوَادًا مِلْمَدِرَيْنِ بِالسَّلَامِ

(90) 107.15.4 "When the milk of the *powerful she-camel with a thick hump (bāzil kawmā)* dried up, and it fled the milkers to seek refuge at the acacia tree." *Bāzil* signifies a 'camel whose teeth grew out (b130, c171) when eight or nine years old' (a, f207); or 'whose first teeth had just appeared; the small of a riding beast' (c171). *Kawmā* is a 'camel with a thick hump' (a). Whereas *rifd* means 'milk' (a) in this line, it does 'donation' (a) in the next one.

عَلَى صَخْرٍ رَأَى فَتَى كَصَخْرٍ \* إِذَا مَا النَّابُ لَمْ تَرَ أَمْ طَلَاهَا

(91) 158.33.2 "On account of *Ṣaḥr*, and which man can be like *Ṣaḥr*? when even the old *she-camel (nāb)* ceases to fondle its offspring [on a freezingly cold night]." *Vide supra (nāb)*.

Finally, let us turn to the *third category* of verses containing references to camels in the *diwān* of al-*Hansā*; one that encompasses verse lines about camels used for raiding as well as lines that cannot be grouped into either of the previous two categories.

وَمُجْمِعَةً سَقَّتْهَا قَاعِيدًا \* فَأَعْلَمَتْ بِالرَّمْعِ أَغْفَالَهَا

(92) 40.4.20 "Many a *herd [of camels] (muḡmī'a)* that you have led seated [on your horse], and you have put a brand on them (*aḡfāl*) with your spear." *Aḡfāl* are 'camels having no mark on them (a, b123, c162, d94), that is animals the buttocks of which have never been stabbed' (a).

وَنَاجِيَةً نَقَبَ خَفْئُهَا \* غَادَرَتْ بِالْخَلِّ أَوْصَالَهَا

(93) 41.4.21 "Many a *camel of extraordinary speed (nāḡiyya)* whose hoofs are worn off [with frequent running], which [you have slaughtered, then] left their joints in the sand of the road." *Nāḡiyya* designates a 'swift she-camel' (a, b123, c163, d94).

فَرَلَوْا شِلَالًا وَالْفَيْتَهُمْ \* يَسْوَقُونَ نَهْبًا وَجُونًا حَوِينًا

(94) 211.46.26 "Defeated, they withdrew, and [on returning], you found your companions laden with booty, with *black/white camels* (*ḡūn*).” Meaning either ‘black’ or ‘white’ (a), *ḡūn* is an example of the *addād*, and it most likely refers here to camels of either colour.

وَصَخْرًا وَمِنْ ذَا مِثْلٍ صَخْرٍ إِذَا غَدَا \* بِسَاهِمَةِ الْإِبْصَارِ قُبَّ يَتَقَوَّدَا  
فَهُنَّ قُبَّ كَحَيَاتِ الْإِبَاءِ بِهِ \* يَجْذِبْنَ نَيًّا وَلَا يَجْذِبْنَ قِرْدَانَا

(95) 217.47.3 "Nor *Ṣaḥr*; and who can be like *Ṣaḥr* setting out of a morning, driving before him a camel (*qubb*) with a piercing glance." (96) 109.16.2 "On such camels (*qubb*) [is he travelling], which are like the serpents of al-*Abā*, [and when he returns] their humps get fatter but ticks do not settle on them." The noun *qubb*, occurring in both lines, properly means 'she-camels with narrow hips' (a, f235). For the second verse, *vide supra* (ticks, serpent).

وَالْحَرْبُ قَدْ رَكِبَتْ جَرَبَاءَ بَاقِرَةً \* حَلَّتْ عَلَى طَبَقٍ مِنْ ظَهْرِهَا عَارٍ

(97) 169.34.12 "And war [after breaking out and intensifying] mounted a scabby, wretched camel (*ḡarbā* *bāqira*), settling on a bare spot on its back." A line containing an extremely beautiful simile to characterize war.

قَطَعْتُ بِمِجْدَامِ الرِّوَاخِ كَأَنَّهَا \* إِذَا حَلَّ عَنْهَا كَوْرُهَا جَمَلٌ صَغْبٌ

(98) 88.12.2 "I crossed [that desert] with a quick-paced she-camel (*miḡdām ar-ravāḥ*), which, when rid of its saddle, is like a camel (*ḡamal*) hard [to lead]." *Miḡdām ar-ravāḥ* is 'a camel that moves quickly' (a, b9, c17, d20, 'Aṭwī 1994:82), being as swift as evening is followed by morning. *Kūr* is a 'camel-saddle' (a, 'Aṭwī 1994:82); cf. 128.23.11, where *qutūd* carries the same meaning. The subsequent lines of this poem of al-*Ḥansā*, in which she probably addresses a son or daughter of hers, say that her child 'reproaches the camel for the mistakes it made during the journey, occasionally beating it even if it has done nothing bad; and [the camel] is frightened of him, beaten by him or not; and [during the journey] the camel set out on a race against a prime [horse taken as booty] with a curved back, a broad chest, long cheekbones and a huge chest."

وَإِذْ فِينَا مَعَاوِيَةُ بْنُ عَمْرِو \* عَلَى أَدْمَاءَ كَالْجَمَلِ الْفَتِيْقِ

(99) 24.2.9 "And when Mu'āwiya b. 'Amr was among us on his white she-camel (*admā*), which was quite like a noble camel (*ḡamal faniq*).” *Admā* is a 'perfectly white (a) or brown she-camel', while *faniq* is a 'noble he-camel' (a, b104, c137), 'a prime breeding camel'.

حَلَرٌ حَلَاوَتُهُ فَصْلٌ مَقَالَتُهُ \* فَاشْرَ جَمَالَتُهُ لِلْعَظَمِ جَبَّارٌ

(100) 231.49.19 "He is a pleasant person; his words are unequivocal; his camels (*ḡumāla*) [graze] scattered [on the pasture]; and he keeps mending the [broken] bones." The noun signifies 'she-camels, a camel herd'.

فَإِنْ بِالْمَعْدَةِ مِنْ يَلْبَنٍ \* عَبِيرَ السَّرَى فِي الْقُلُصِ الضَّمِيرِ

(101) 86.11.7 "For [you have to wail *Ṣaḥr*, being reminded of him by] a wooded part of *Yalban*, where there is [his] camel (*'ubir as-surā*) among the lean she-camels (*qulus*).” Camels would be used for travelling, especially at night, only if extremely powerful, '*ubir as-surā*. *Qulus* are 'she-camels' (f236), or 'young she-camels'.

حَلَفْتُ بِرَبِّ صُهْبٍ مَعْمَلَاتٍ \* إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْمُحَرَّمِ مُنْتَهَاهَا

(102) 159.33.3 "I have sworn by the Lord of reddish camels (*ṣuḥb*) that are headed for [His] Sanctum." *Ṣuḥb* are 'camels with a variegated colour, white mingled with a reddish hue (a), reddish-chestnut, reddish.'

وَأَلَجَّ بِرَدُّهَا الْأَشْوَالَ حُدْبًا \* إِلَى الْحَجَرَاتِ بَادِيَةً كَلَاهَا

(103) 160.33.8 "The frost [of those nights] forced the pregnant camels (*aṣwāl*) into the pens, with curved bodies and kidneys visible [for skinniness]." The word *aṣwāl* designates 'camels whose milk has become abundant (a, c186), she-camels in the seventh month of pregnancy' (b140, f225). As we

could observe before, the poetess depicts the severe cold of winter by describing the wretched condition it brings for the (pregnant) camels, and sometimes in a quite detailed manner too.

فَيْضًا كَمَا فَاضَ الْغُرُ \* بَ الْمُثَرَّعَاتِ مِنَ التَّوَاضِيعِ  
(104) 192.42.2 "A torrent of water, as [the water] bursting forth from the full containers on the camels' (*nawāḍih*) backs." *Nawāḍih* means either 'camels used for carrying water from the well' (a, c31) or 'containers for carrying water' (b21, c31, f242).

تَذْرِبِي السَّوَافِ عَلَى السَّوَا \* مَ وَأَجْدَبَتْ سَبِيلَ الْمَسَارِحِ  
إِذَا لَحِقَتْ مِنْ خَلْفِهَا تَدْعِي \* مِثْلَ سَوَامِ الرَّجُلِ الْفَادِيَةِ  
(105) 196.42.14 "The winds blow [dust] onto our *beasts let loose to pasture* (*sawām*), and the paths of our grazing-grounds have become barren." (106) 242.51.18 "When overtaken from behind [being otherwise as quick as always to be followed by all the riders], it claimed to be like *animals, let loose to pasture* (*sawām*), of a man setting out in the morning." The meaning of the word *sawām* is 'animals grazing freely, or all one's property, especially land' (a), or else 'beasts' (ʿAṭwī 1994:90), 'camels headed for the pasture or already there' (b148, c196, d110, f223).

عَلَى كُلِّ عَجَمَاءِ الْبَقَامِ كَأَنَّهُ \* وَأَقْتَدَاهُ مِنْهَا عَلَى أَمِّ تَوَلَّبِ  
لَهَا مِشْفَرٌ سَابِغٌ طَوْلُهُ \* وَلَا عَيْنَ فِيهَا وَلَا فَا لَهَا  
تَوَلَّوْا ظُهُمَهُمْ خَامِيسَةً فَأَمْسَوْا \* مَعَ الْمَاضِيْنَ قَدْ لَحِقُوا ثَمُودًا  
Finally, there are still other lines that seek to characterize camels from some aspect or another, of which noteworthy examples include: (107) 114.17.8 "[*Ṣahr*, when mounted] on any *female animal with a mute voice* (*ağmā' al-buḡām*), is as though he and his camel-saddle had been [placed] on a wild she-ass[, so energetic is he]." The mute animal is in all probability a reference to a camel. (108) 40.4.19 "[These armies] had long and broad lips [like those of a camel], [and they swallow anyone who approaches them, despite] having no eyes or mouths." The *avant-garde* of the army, when lining up for attack, is likened here to a camel's mouth. (109) 53.6.3 "They kept dying in about a week's time, becoming like the peoples that had perished before, and following [the fate of] the *Tamūdites*." The interesting element of this line is the phrase *zim' hāmisa*, which means 'about a week's time', and is derived from the vocabulary of camel rearing: 'a five days' period without watering the herds' (a, b31, c44, f228); 'when someone was preparing for a long journey, he would water his camel only once in every five days to train it to bear thirst' (b31), or else 'the most burning thirst felt by the camel during the scorching summer days', 'grazing between two waterings' (a). "Like a camel-saddle when fastened to a tattooed beast which competes with a herd of wild cows [in its speed of running]." 128.23.11, *vide supra* (camel-saddle, wild cow); the 'tattooed beast' is likely to be a camel (a) or a wild ass with a striped skin (ʿAṭwī 1994:113).

In summary, we must observe that animals play a very prominent role in the poems of al-*Hansā*. Like the poetry of the *Ġāhiliyya* in general, hers also offers a detailed description of various facets of Bedouin life, with many ever-recurrent images and themes, which is of course due to the ever-unchanging kind of environment. Animals she presents in such vivid images as to make us all but feel, see and hear what she is describing. Her sentences are sometimes simple as befits a depiction of the extreme simplicity of the desert, but one occasionally encounters quite complex phrases and examples of *ḡarīb* too in this poetry. In al-*Hansā*'s poems, animals often appear in similes, which represent the most frequently applied poetic device of the *Ġāhiliyya* era, conveying as they do the gist of the verse, the image formed in the poet's mind in a condensed and powerful way, in order to make tangible the inner and outer



qualities of her beloved brothers, to express the pain felt by her – since she presents highly emotional and lyric pictures when describing animals –, and, eventually, to lend strength to her statements and describe everyday life. Although hyperbole is a common phenomenon in al-Hansā's poetry, it is not applied in reference to animals. The description of animals always serves to characterize certain individuals (her beloved brothers, captive women, etc.) or other species of animals (a horse being as swift as an eagle, etc.), or else it is a mere depiction of the environment.

It is to be noted that some animal species that, appearing frequently in al-Hansā's poems, are the focus of special attention are described in minute detail, in spite of the *dīwān*'s being essentially a collection of laments. This may be explained by the fact that *tā'bīn*, or praise of the deceased, is given a much more prominent place in her *oeuvre* than in comparable collections of elegies; moreover, perhaps to counterweigh the relative absence of the theme of *hikma* in her collection, al-Hansā' offers us plenty of *wasf*, or description. In alluding to ferocity and strength, the image of the leopard is evoked. Various feminine features are described by similes of white waterfowl, wild cows, or white antelopes. Perishing is shown through images of the wolf; leanness is characterized by describing serpents, ticks or locusts; perpetuity by pigeons and frogs; swiftness and multitude by mountain goats, sandgrouses, locusts, eagles, dogs and horses. It may therefore be stated as a general observation that horses, if in a group, tend to be likened to locusts, as well as to sandgrouses, as the latter fly in one single group but scatter when forced to do so, whereas the swiftness of horses is compared to the flight of eagles. The most important attribute of dogs is their barking, that of pigeons and doves, rueful cooing. It is to be observed that lions are referred to as *asad*, horses as *ḥayl*, when no particular feature of them is emphasized; while a lion may be called *layl* when bold, *ri'bāl* when proud and strong, *hizabr* when huge and powerful. Speaking of horses, the poetess puts an emphasis on their noble pedigree, broad chest, lean but muscular body, and swift pace. Her poems also testify that horses were held in very high esteem among these people, as every reference to horses bespeaks praise and affection towards them. Camel, the mainstay of desert life, is spoken of in quite varied phrases. This being the animal that lived closest to the ordinary Bedouin, even a woman was able to describe the various characteristics of the species, including the strikingly affectionate treatment displayed by she-camels towards their calves.

APPENDIX<sup>7</sup>

1. leopard (1) 1	9. mountain goats (8-9) 2	14. eagles (16-18) 3
2. water-fowl (2) 1	10. sandgrouses (10-11) 2	15. locusts (19-21) 3
3. wolves (3) 1	11. young wild cows	16. dogs (22-24) 3
4. serpents (4) 1	(12) 1, herd of wild	17. doves (25-31) 7
5. tick (4) 1	cows (13) 1	18. lions (32-47) 16
6. frog (5) 1	12. cows (12) 1	19. horses (48-71) 24
7. wild she-ass (6) 1	13. white antelopes,	20. camels (72-109) 38
8. chicks (7) 1	gazelles (14-15) 2	

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<sup>7</sup> Numbers in brackets refer to paragraph numbers in the article, whereas the numbers outside the brackets refer to the number of occurrence in the *Dīwān*.



# THE HORSE AS SEEN BY A MEDIEVAL ARAB SCHOLAR ABŪ 'UBAYDA: *KITĀB AL-ḤAYL*

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The subject of this article is the body-parts of the horse as Arabic authors observed them. The horse, thanks to its elevated role among the Arabs inspired many writers, poets and scholars to write about it. For example, Abū 'Ubayda, Ibn al-Kalbī, Ibn al-A'arābī, Ibn Qutayba (*Ma'ānī*), Ibn al-Anbārī, al-Aṣma'ī, an-Nuwayrī (*Nihāya* X, 342 ff), Ibn Sīda (*Muḥassaṣ* II, 138-145), Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, an-Naḥḥās, ar-Riyāšī and so on.

The books about the horses are – sometimes literally – similar to each other in many aspects, such as the commentaries to the various body-parts and the quotations from some verses to support them. The Arab authors usually borrow explanations in their entirety from each other then record variations of the body-parts, distinguished by special features. By choosing one of the descriptions, the others can be understood too. The main source of this article is Abū 'Ubayda's *Kitāb al-ḥayl*, compared to relevant chapters in Ibn Qutayba's *Ma'ānī*, Ibn Sīda's *Muḥassaṣ* and an-Nuwayrī's (*Nihāya*) where the views of many different authors are expounded.

Abū 'Ubayda (d. 209/824-5) the scholar from Baṣra in the 8th century, about whom Abū Nuwās wrote that "he was a skin stuffed with knowledge"<sup>1</sup>, knew all the names of the horses and their riders, their stories and their origins in the *ǧāhiliyya* as well as in Islam. According to reports on him, it would not have been possible for two horses to meet in the time of Islam, without his knowing their names and their riders's names.

He wrote ten books about horses: *Kitāb al-ḥayl* (The book of horses), *K. ad-dībāǧa* (The book of prestige), *K. asmā' al-ḥayl* (The book of the names of horses), *K. ḥudr al-ḥayl* (The book about the horses's gallop), *K. ṣifāt al-ḥayl* (The features of horses), *K. faḍl al-faras* (The book of the advantageous features of a noble mount), *K. al-liǧām* (The book of the rein), *K. as-sarǧ* (The book of the saddle), *K. ḥiṣā' al-ḥayl* (The book of the castration of horses). He gave a detailed description about the body-parts of a horse in his book *Kitāb al-ḥayl*, where his knowledge about the horse compares with that of the Baṣran philologist al-Aṣma'ī (d. 213/828)<sup>2</sup>. It is said in later times too that they were like two horses of betting, who reach the goal all together but for a nose's length (aṣ-Ṣalqānī 1977:84). A lot of anecdotes were hatched about the

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Gibb 1963:54.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Abū 'Ubayda, *Ḥayl* 22-23.

distinction between the two scholars, and one of these concerns a story that happened during one of their visits to al-Faḍl b. Rabīʿa. Making an account of the body-parts of a horse, al-Aṣmaʿī turned out to be able not only to list and show them on the horse presented, but to recite a poem too on each of them. Abū ʿUbayda retreated by referring to his being a philologist and not a veterinary. Thus the winner was al-Aṣmaʿī, who riding on the visual aid would remind Abū ʿUbayda several times of the distinction between the two of them (al-Qifṭī, *Ruwwāt* II, 202). Although the winner was not Abū ʿUbayda, his book about the horse had nevertheless become a classic on the subject.

The account of the body-parts of the horse in his book resembles that in the anatomy books of European scholars, but his description is not an exact work of anatomy. It is instead, partly a visual account and partly a scientific description. Therefore it is rather difficult to find the exact equivalent of the various parts in another language. It seems that the Arab authors in the Middle Ages had looked at a horse quite differently from the way European authors did or do. For example, the accounts of the parts of the forehead and the croup of a horse, and their names, reflect a view from the outside and are not a result of an exact account of the muscles under the skin.

Abū ʿUbayda divided the forehead into three parts, in the upper part of the forehead is the *nāṣiya* (under the forelock) and below this is the *ḡabha*, while at the bottom of the forehead between the two eyes is the *ḡabīn*. At the lower part of the *nāṣiya*, where the two bones leading to the eyes fork off, is the *muḥayyā*, and in the middle of the *ḡabha* is the *latma* or *latāt* (Abū ʿUbayda, *Ḥayl* 125-129). In a simpler manner, Western anatomical description does not differentiate between these parts and only uses the words forehead or 'parietal bone'.

Abū ʿUbayda uses different names for the various sections of the back's stringy muscle of the croup. The part above the tail, where the two muscles join, is the *ḡurāb*. The upper part of the semitendinosus muscle (*ḡāʿirat*) near to the tail is the *ṣalā* and its lower part is the *kādatān*, at the upper part of the hind leg. The upper part of the croup is *ḥaḡabatān* (Abū ʿUbayda, *Ḥayl* 143-144, 213).

The description includes some inner parts too, but these also seem to result from simple observation. This and the comments offered on the names of the various body-parts show that an Arab author would describe the muscles in relation to one another, sometimes giving them names of animals (perhaps because the resemblance). For example,

- sparrow (*ʿusfūr*): the root of the forelock;
- owl (*ḥamā*): top of the head;
- fly (*ḡubāb*): iris, corpora nigra or the tip of the ear;
- titmouse or finch (*ṣurraḍ*): vein at the bottom of the tongue;
- butterfly (*farrāṣa*): fine bones at the top of the head;

bee queen (*ya'sūb*): white stripe on the nose that reaches neither the forehead above nor the nostrils below;

young eagle (*nāhiq*): the fleshy part of the humerus, biceps brachii;

falcon (*ṣaqr*): hair ridge at the groin;

sandgrouse (*qatā*): place behind the rider on the horse's croup;

crow (*ḡurāb*): the upper part of the croup above the tail, where the two muscles join;

male bustard (*ḥarab*): hair ridge at the loin;

eagle (*nasr/nusūr*): frog;

Elanus Caeruleus (*zurraq*): whiteness in the eyes.

Abū 'Ubayda lists 16 animal species or more accurately, 16 species of animals that fly (*Hayl* 153 "*asmā' at-ṭayr fi l-faras*"). Other authors, like al-Aṣma'ī, mention further animal species like the ostrich (*na'āma*), the pigeon (*sa'dāna*), and the hawk/falcon (*bāz*) (ad-Damīrī *Hayāt* II, 160).

Abū 'Ubayda listing the names of species, does not juxtapose explanations, so the reader has to find them elsewhere in the book, among the explanations on the various body-parts. Sometimes the reader may suspect that the writer hides himself behind the veil of simplicity, leaving the task of precise identifications to the reader. For example, the *ḥadaqa* is, in his description, a black circle in the eyes, whereas the *insān* is the blackness in it (Abū 'Ubayda, *Hayl* 129). The iris is a *dubāb*. Or, in another passage, the *mukḥulān* is a well visible bone inside the carpus (Abū 'Ubayda, *Hayl* 135). In the account of some body-parts, all the writers whom I have consulted tell the same commentaries, word by word, while in other cases they differ totally from one another.

Ibn Sida (d. 488/1066) summarizes best the various commentaries (*Muḥaṣṣaṣ* VI, 135-204). For example the *ḥāfir* in most descriptions means the hoof, yet in the opinion of Ibn Sikkīt it may also mean the ankle (*ḡubba*). According to Ibn Sida, the *'usfūr* is the area extending from *nāṣiya* down to the eyes (*mā taḥt an-nāṣiya ilā l-'aynayn*). Abū 'Ubayda says that the *'usfūr* is the root of the *nāṣiya* (*Hayl* 125). As regards the *ḥawṣab*, Abū 'Ubayd (d. 224/838) states that it is the interior of the hoof (Ibn Sida, *Muḥaṣṣaṣ* II, 145) whilst Abū 'Ubayda holds that it is the two bones of the pastern (*ḥawṣabān*) (*Hayl* 137).

Abū 'Ubayda describes the horse together with its rider mounted on its back, which can be gathered from the commentaries on the body-parts: the *mustaf'am* is the place between the halter's nose-strap (*marsin*) and the lips (*Hayl* 130), the *sālifa* is the place where the collar is put (*Hayl* 132, 185), the *qaṣara* is the place on the neck of a horse behind the collar's position (*Hayl* 133), the *ṣafḥa* is the place on the horse's sides which the horseman's thighs touch (*Hayl* 139, 204), the *ma'add* is the place on the sides of a horse pressed by the horseman's feet (*Hayl* 134), the *markal* is the place on the horse's sides where the rider urges him for a gallop (behind the elbows) (*Hayl*

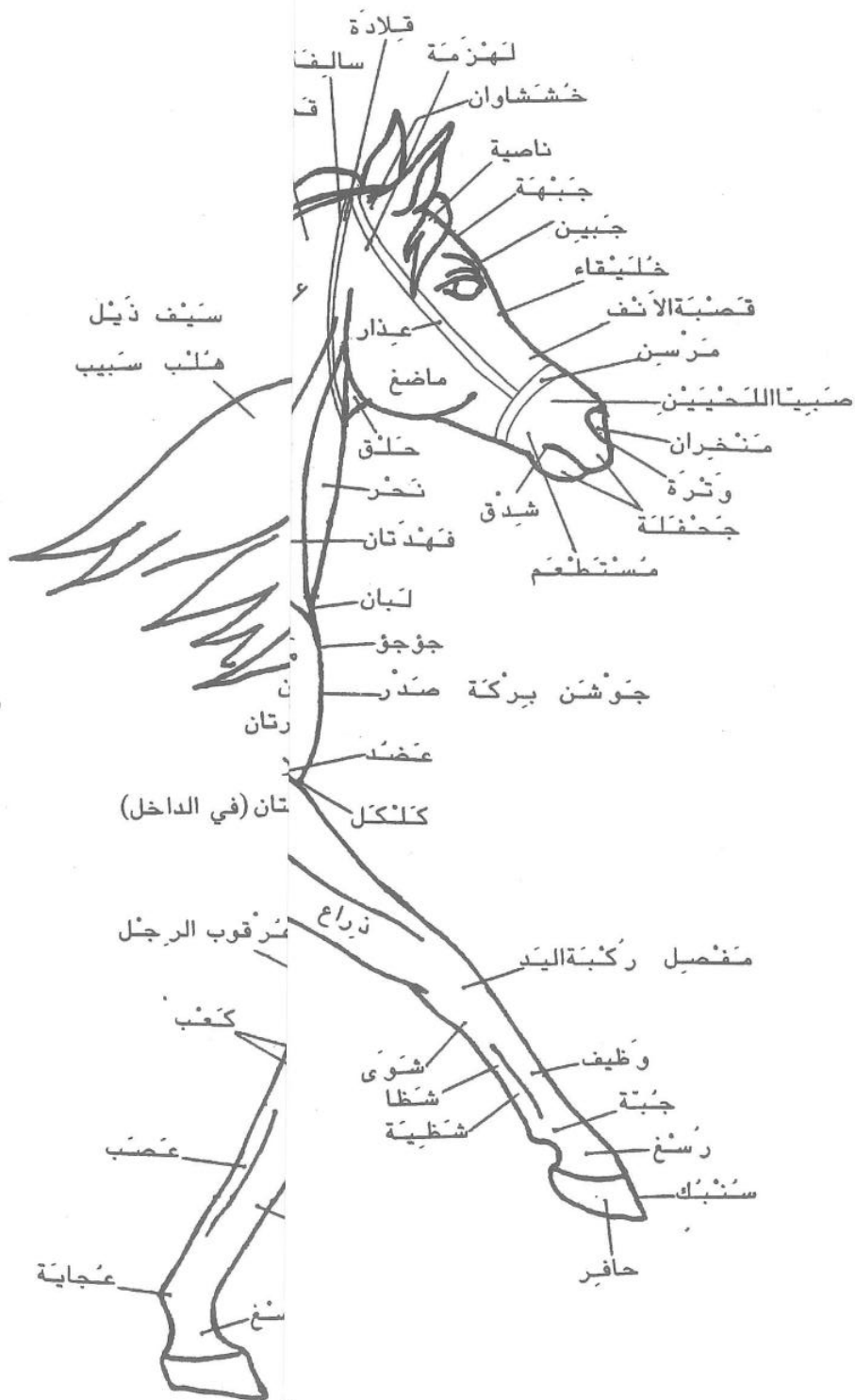
139, 191). The *qadāl* is the place behind the *nāṣiya*, where the halter's forehead-strap is (*Hayl* 128).

Sometimes the descriptions concern various regions of the horse's body, and not concrete things, and the adjoining parts with the same function bear the same name. For example, the *nāṣiya* is the forelock and the part of the forehead under it, just as *sālifa* means a part of a neck and a mane above it (Abū 'Ubayda, *Hayl* 125, 185). There are some parts of the horse which European scientists totally neglect, but the Arabs do not: wrinkles at the throat (*ḡirān*), the place before the rider on the withers of a horse (*kāṭiba*) and so on (Abū 'Ubayda, *Hayl* 133, 186, 188). The Arabic descriptions about the horse include some variations according to features in addition to the general commentaries, for instance, long or the short ears, with straight or loose edges, hairy ears or smooth ears and so on, and these types have different names. This kind of description confirms that the aim of describing the horse in the Middle Ages was not only to have a sound knowledge of the horse, but to prove the author's ability to collect ever more words referring to the horse. In this mentality, I see both the characteristic Arab competitiveness and the precision of the philologists. The books about the horses were written by philologists or more accurately, by real factotums who aspired to learning everything they could. The horse thus all but became secondary in the books written about it, the main thing being to prove one's superior knowledge.

In the collection of Abū 'Ubayda we find some words which he mentions several times, relating to different body-parts. Examples include the *dubāb* and the *radfa*: *dubāb* means the tip of the ear (*Hayl* 125) or the iris in the eyes (*Hayl* 129), *radfa* means a separate bone in the hoof, in the knee or in the joint between the cannon and the pastern (*Hayl* 136, 137). It is likely to be not a bone but a cartilage in all the three cases and they could have taken the same name because of their identical function.

Abū 'Ubayda names three different bones in the hoof. I could identify one of them with certainty which is the coffin bone, that the hoof surrounds. One of the other two bones is the aforementioned *radfa* (*al-ʿazm al-munqatʿi fī ḡawf al-ḥāfir*) and another bone is perhaps the navicular bone (*ʿazm fī ḡawf al-ḥāfir fī bāṭinihi*) whose other name is *difdaʿ* (frog) (*Hayl* 137-138). This latter is used by the European scientists for the horny-matter part at the sole of the hoof, between the sulci. In the Arabic texts however the frog corresponds to the *nusūr* (*mā irtafaʿa fī bāṭin al-ḥāfir min aʿalāhu*) that is what protrudes from the sole of the hoof, namely at its surface and not within (*Hayl* 138, 201). The *watra* is the place between the two nostrils (flat tendinous plate) and the place between the hock and the outer side of the knee (*Hayl* 130, 145, 218).

The idea of making a vocabulary on the body-parts of the horse is rooted in the fact that it could greatly facilitate the understanding of other parts of the book of Abū 'Ubayda, and other medieval works about the horses. For example, the *Kitāb*





*al-hayl* of Abū 'Ubayda, as such Arabic works in general becomes after a long introduction profoundly absorbed in the explanations of the body-parts of a horse from its head to its tail, then continues to use these words without any further pieces of information. With the vocabulary, the description of the horse became easier to survey, while the illustrations make these commentaries visible.

Unfortunately, Abū 'Ubayda's book does not include figures or pictures to aid his descriptions, therefore it was necessary to use European anatomy manuals to identify the various body-parts. The difficulty lay in the fact that the descriptions had resulted from an outside observation which made it highly ambiguous what is really meant by the 'inside' or the 'outside' of this or that, or what might be 'a well visible bone' or 'tendons without flesh', or which are 'the two veins in the thigh' and so on. Since Abū 'Ubayda describes the body-parts in relation to one another, this helped identification. Whenever the names of the body-parts could be identified with European definitions they are given in this way instead of the original commentary.

The body-parts of the horse  
An Arabic-English vocabulary based on Abū 'Ubayda's *Kitāb al-hayl*<sup>3</sup>

head	(١) رَأْسِي
forelock	(٢) ذُقَابَة
forelock and the forehead under it	(٣) نَاصِيَة
root of forelock	(٤) عَصْفُور
mane plus part of the neck above the forelock	(٥) قَرْنَس
place behind the forelock where the halter is put	(٦) قَذَال
place behind the nucha, occiput	(٧) فَهْقَة
top of the head	(٨) هَامَة
line of occiput	(٩) قَمْحَدْرَة / قَمْحَدْرَة
nasal ridge	(١٠) خَلْقَاء
fine bones of the top of the head	(١١) فَرَاشَة
part of the forehead under the ears	(١٢) جَبْهَة
part of the forehead above the eyes	(١٣) جَبِين
the place of the forehead, where the two bones leading to the eyes fork off	(١٤) مَحْيَا
centre of the forehead	(١٥) لَطْمَة / لَطْمَة
the two bones above the eyes, temporal gossa	(١٦) وَتْبَان
the fleshy part at the holes above the eyes, adductor muscles and temporalis muscle	(١٧) لُخْمَتَان
palpebra	(١٨) حِجَاجَان
eyes	(١٩) عَيْنَان
upper eyelids	(٢٠) حِجَابَان
black circle in the eyes, corneoscleral junction	(٢١) حَدَقَتَان

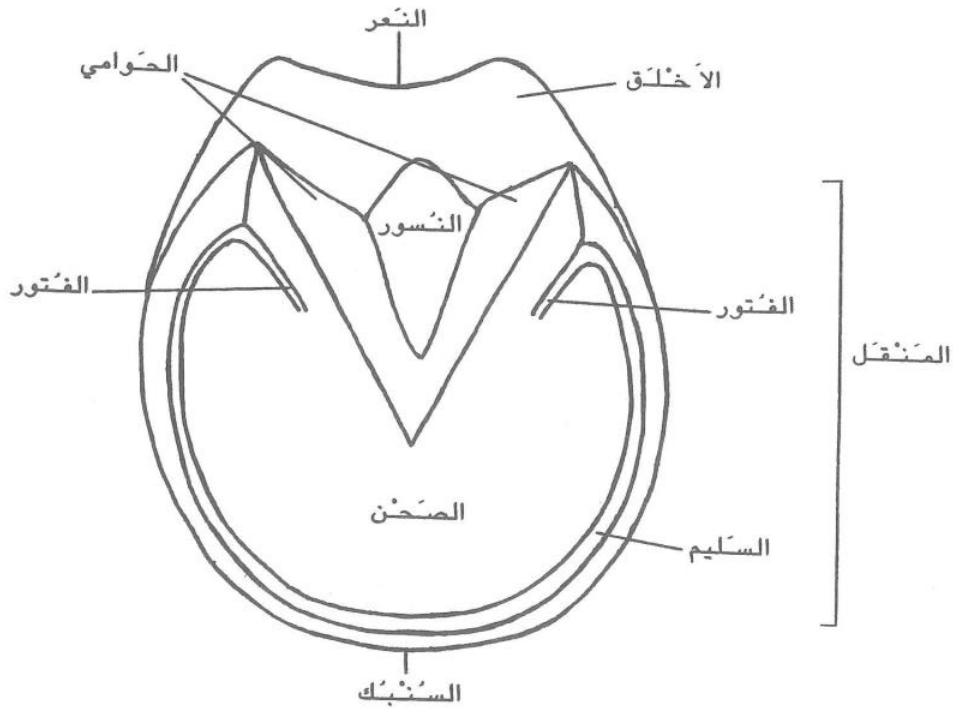
<sup>3</sup> It is outside the scope of the present paper to compare these words to those amassed by Raswan (1945) among nineteen Inner Arabian camel- and horse-breeding Bedouin tribes.



blackness inside the <i>hadaqa</i>	انسانان (٢٢)
iris, corpora nigra	ذُبابان (٢٣)
palpebrae	مَاقِر (٢٤)
palpebra which is not included in <i>hiḡāḡ</i> , palpebra tertia	جُفُون (٢٥)
edge of the eyelid	حِتَار (٢٦)
eyelashes	أَشْفَار (٢٧)
bulbus oculi	مُقَلَّتَان (٢٨)
tip of the ears	ذُبابان (٢٩)
back of the ears	عَيْرَان (٣٠)
nasal orifice	صِمَاخَان (٣١)
face	خُدَّان (٣٢)
caput mandibulae	لَهْرَمَتَان (٣٣)
concha nasalis	خَيْشُوم (٣٤)
nasal bones	سَمُوم (٣٥)
the nose from the ridge to the nostrils	قَصْبَةُ الْأَنْف (٣٦)
well visible bone under the eyes, facial crest	نَوَاقِق مَجَارِي دُمُوعِهِ (٣٧)
the place of the halter's nose- strap, caninus muscle	مِرْسِين (٣٨)
flat tendinous plate	وَتْرَة (٣٩)
medial and lateral alae of nostrils	مَنْخِرَان (٤٠)
lips	جُحْفَتَان (٤١)
corner of the mouth	شِدْقَان (٤٢)
the place between the halter's nose-strap and the lips, zygomaticus muscle	مُسْتَطْعَم (٤٣)
mandibula	لَحْيَان (٤٤)
tactile hairs of maxillary labium	لَحْيَة (٤٥)
temporo mandibular joint	نَكْفَتَان (٤٦)
masseter	مَاضِغَان (٤٧)
maxilla	شَجِير (٤٨)
tonsils	جَوَزَتَان (٤٩)
part of the maxilla nearest to the nose	صَبِيَا اللَّحْيَيْنِ (٥٠)
tongue	لِسَان (٥١)
root of the tongue	عَكْدَة (٥٢)
two veins in the tongue: arteria and vena lingualis	صُرْدَان (٥٣)
edge of lingua	أَسَلَة (٥٤)
palate	قَلْت (٥٥)
gap between the palate and the nose, rima glottidis	مَحَارَة (٥٦)
teeth	أَسْنَان (٥٧)
the two front teeth	ثَنَائِيَان (٥٨)
the two medial teeth	رَبَاعِيَات (٥٩)
the two corner teeth	قَوَارِح (٦٠)
eye-teeth	أَنْشَاب (٦١)
molar teeth	أَضْرَاس (٦٢)
diastema	عُمُور (٦٣)
mane	سَبِيب عَرَف (٦٤)
fluff at the root of the hairs	شَكِير (٦٥)
mane crest	عَرَّشَان (٦٦)
two sinews under mane crest	عِلْبَوَان (٦٧)

two sides of the neck, musculus splenius	(٦٨) مَلِيْفَان
the fleshy part of the cervical vertebra	(٦٩) لَدِيدَان
cervical vertebra	(٧٠) دَأْيَات
marrow	(٧١) نَخَاع
musculus cleidotransversarius	(٧٢) خَرَزَة
protruding bones behind the ears	(٧٣) خَشْشَاوَان
hair ridges of groin	(٧٤) مَقَرَان
neck	(٧٥) عُنُق
the part of the neck behind the ear bones	(٧٦) مَذْمَر
the part of the neck behind mudammar	(٧٧) لِبْتَان
place of the collar, upper part of the neck up to the ear bone	(٧٨) سَالِفَتَان
sternohyoides muscle, the part connecting the head to the neck	(٧٩) مَذْبَع
two veins in the neck	(٨٠) شَوَارِب
gullet	(٨١) بَلْعُوم
part of the neck behind a place where the collar is put	(٨٢) قَصْرَة
creases in the throat	(٨٣) جِرَان
the part connecting the neck and the withers	(٨٤) دَسِيع
the nethermost part of the neck at the chest	(٨٥) لَبَان
back	(٨٦) سُرَاة
upper half of the withers	(٨٧) سَيْسَاء
withers	(٨٨) مَنَسِيج حَارَك
place on the withers before the rider	(٨٩) كَائِبَة
scapula	(٩٠) كَاهِل
the rider's seat on the back of a horse	(٩١) صَبْهَة
the line of the backbone	(٩٢) قَرْدِيدَة
back strap	(٩٣) جُدَة
thoracic vertebra	(٩٤) مَحَال
intervertebral disc	(٩٥) طِبَاق
the vertebra and the intervertebral disc together	(٩٦) صَلْب
each side of the horse	(٩٧) سَنَاسِن
back	(٩٨) مَتْن
back of the two scapulas	(٩٩) أَسْنَان الْكَاهِل
place behind a rider on the back of the horse, upper part of the croup	(١٠٠) قَطَاة
upper part of the croup where the two muscles join	(١٠١) غُرَابَان
groove between the two gluteus muscles on the top of the croup	(١٠٢) قَتِينَة
back of the croup	(١٠٣) عَجَب
thorax	(١٠٤) جَوْشَن
two sides of a horse at the place of a rider's feet	(١٠٥) مَعْدَان
shoulder	(١٠٦) كَتِيف
back of the shoulder	(١٠٧) غُضْرُوف / غُرْضُوف
sinews in the back of the shoulder	(١٠٨) مَغْرِضَان
point of the shoulder	(١٠٩) أَخْرَمَان
shoulder, the part connecting the scapula to the humerus	(١١٠) مَنَكِبَان
humerus	(١١١) عَضْدَان
fleshy part near the point of the shoulder, biceps brachii	(١١٢) نَاهِض
fleshy part near the elbow, triceps brachii	(١١٣) مَرْدَغَة

groove between the two muscles of humerus	(١١٤) غُرُورِ غُرْ
breast, pectorals	(١١٥) صَدْر
upper part of the chest, musculus pectoralis descendens	(١١٦) جَوْجُوقْ
protruding part of the chest near the shoulder, musculus cleidomastoi	(١١٧) فَهْدَتَانْ
the chest as a whole	(١١٨) بَرْكَة
sternum	(١١٩) قَصْ
forearms of the forelegs	(١٢٠) ذِرَاعَانْ
elbow, olecranon	(١٢١) مِرْفَقَانْ
olecranon	(١٢٢) إِبْرَتَانْ
upper part of the forearm, where it joins the humerus	(١٢٣) قَبِيحَانْ
thick upper part of the forearm	(١٢٤) عَظْمَتَانْ
joint	(١٢٥) مَرْكَبْ
sinews	(١٢٦) حِبَالْ
place inside the forearm, which is not hairy: chestnut, tarsal pad	(١٢٧) رَقْمَتَانْ
vein inside of the forearm	(١٢٨) أَبْطَنَانْ
fine lower portion of the forearm	(١٢٩) آسَلَتَانْ
place under the <i>asla</i> , which is not hairy: chestnut	(١٣٠) مُسْتَدَقْ
visible bone inside of the carpus	(١٣١) مَكْحَلَانْ
the part connecting the radius to the cannon bone	(١٣٢) رَكْبَة
round separate bone in the <i>rukba</i> : patella	(١٣٣) رَضْفَة
sinews joining to the patella	(١٣٤) رَصْنَانْ
fat in the joint	(١٣٥) دَائِرَتَانْ
round mobile bone at the back part of the <i>rukba</i> , accessory carpal bone	(١٣٦) مَابِضْ
cannon	(١٣٧) وَظِيفْ
cannon bone	(١٣٨) قَتِينَانْ
protruding bone on the inside part of the cannon	(١٣٩) أَشْجَعَانْ
sinew inside the cannon, joining it to the accessory carpal bone	(١٤٠) عَصَبْ
veins between the sinews in the cannon, arteria digitalis palmaris communis	(١٤١) أَبَاغِلْ
sinew between the cannon and its root, musculus flexor digitorum superficialis	(١٤٢) شَطَا
splint bone	(١٤٣) شَطِيطَة
extremities of the cannon's sinews	(١٤٤) مَضِيفَتَانْ
lower side of sinew	(١٤٥) زَوَائِدْ
pure sinew with no flesh on it	(١٤٦) إِنْسِي
sinew at the back of the ankle connecting to the hoof,	(١٤٧) عَجَايَة
musculus flexor digitorum profundus, manica flexoria	
chestnut on the front part of the ankle	(١٤٨) قَمْعَة
long hairs in the back side of the pastern	(١٤٩) ثَنَة
ankle, between the pastern and the cannon	(١٥٠) جَبَّة
bone between the pastern and the cannon, large metacarpal bone	(١٥١) رَضْفَة
pastern (between ankle and hoof)	(١٥٢) رَسْغْ
the two bones of the pastern	(١٥٣) حَوْشَبَانْ
bone between the <i>tunna</i> and the <i>umm qirdān</i> , long pastern bone	(١٥٤) مَرِيطْ
short pastern bone	(١٥٥) أَمْ قِرْدَانْ
sesamoid bones	(١٥٦) بَرْجَمَتَانْ
ring above the coronary band	(١٥٧) حَصِيصَة
hoof	(١٥٨) حَافِرْ

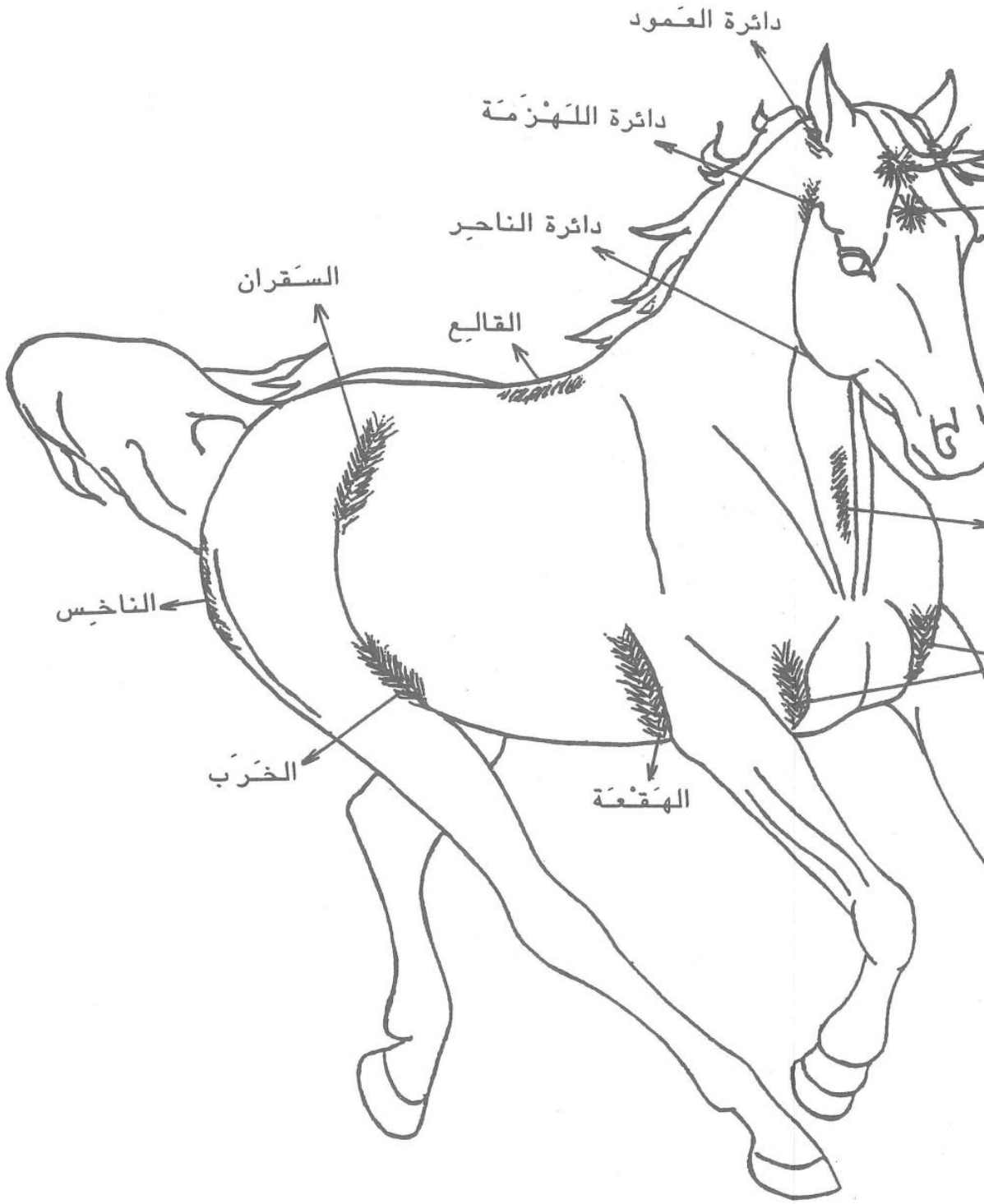




coronary band	إِطَار (١٥٩)
coffin bone	دَخِيس (١٦٠)
bulbs of heel	أَخْلَق (١٦١)
part of the hoof between <i>al-amār</i> and <i>aṣ-ṣaḥn</i>	سَلِيم (١٦٢)
bone inside the hoof, navicular bone	ضَفْدَع (١٦٣)
part of the hoof between <i>al-futūr</i> and <i>as-salīm</i> , sole	صَحْن (١٦٤)
part of the hoof at the edges of an-nusur, bar of wall	فُتُور (١٦٥)
protruding part of the sole, frog	نُسُور / نُسُور (١٦٦)
the sole as a whole	مَنْقَل (١٦٧)
paracuneal sulcus and junction between frog and sole	حَوَام (١٦٨)
interbulbar groove	فُجُوة (١٦٩)
groove in the back side of the hoof	نَعِير (١٧٠)
upper part of the hoof's back	دَوَابِر (١٧١)
fleshy part above the coronary band at the back side of the hoof	إِلِيَّة (١٧٢)
muscles of the chest that reach the earth if the horse lies down, musculus pectoralis transversus	كَلْكَل (١٧٣)
the outer side of the ribs	جَوَانِج (١٧٤)
the part of the thorax from the first rib to the sixth	زُور (١٧٥)
the third rib	بَلْدَة (١٧٦)
rib	فَلَكَة (١٧٧)
the last rib out of the <i>zawr</i>	رَهَابَة (١٧٨)
the place on the horse's sides where the rider urges him for a gallop, behind the elbows	مَرْكَل (١٧٩)
two sides of the thorax of the horse where the rider's thighs touch them	صَفْحَتَان (١٨٠)
ribs	حَصِير (١٨١)
creases	أَبْهَرَان (١٨٢)
the last ribs	قُصْرِيَان (١٨٣)
the outer side of the ribs	شَرَّاسِيف (١٨٤)
the inside of the horse	جَوَاف (١٨٥)
aorta	وَتِين (١٨٦)
heart	قَلْب (١٨٧)
vena	نَاطِط (١٨٨)
larynx	حَيَزُوم (١٨٩)
gullet	حَلَقُوم (١٩٠)
hepar, liver	كَبِد (١٩١)
lungs	رِثْتَان (١٩٢)
kidney, renis dexter and sinister	كَلْبَيْتَان (١٩٣)
intestines	أَعْفَاج (١٩٤)
belly	قُصْب (١٩٥)
ventriculus	دَمَانَة (١٩٦)
lobus hepaticus	رَيْكَتَان (١٩٧)
part of the belly in front of the navel, where the veterinary stings it	مَنْقَب (١٩٨)
the lower part of the liver	كَبِد سَفْلَى (١٩٩)
navel	سُرَّة (٢٠٠)
the navel and its vicinity	مَالَة (٢٠١)
navel	رَاهِنَة وَاهِنَة (٢٠٢)

the navel's vein	مُتَمَّ (٢٠٣)
aorta and vena epigastrica caudalis superficialis,	حالِبَان (٢٠٤)
aorta and vena mammaria media	
penis	جُرْدَان (٢٠٥)
testicle	خُصْبِيَّة (٢٠٦)
region among the penis and the testicles and the inner side	رَفْنَع / رَفْنَع (٢٠٧)
of the knee ( <i>tafina</i> ): inguinal region	
preputium	غُرْمُول (٢٠٨)
preputium	قُنْب (٢٠٩)
urethra	إِحْلِيل (٢١٠)
veins (pipes?) originating in the scrotum (testicle)	أَسْهَر (٢١١)
part between the perineum and the testicles, perineal region	صَفْن (٢١٢)
the back part of the belly	حُجْزَة (٢١٣)
converging hair ridge on the groin	خَرْب (٢١٤)
croup, gluteus	وَرَك (٢١٥)
upper part of the croup	حُجْبَتَان (٢١٦)
upper part of the thigh	تَفَاحَتَان (٢١٧)
back part of the croup between root of the tail and semitendinosus	عَزِيْزَاء (٢١٨)
semitendinosus	جَاعِرَتَان (٢١٩)
muscle with no bone underneath	خُرْبَتَان (٢٢٠)
root of the tail, dock	عُكُوَّة (٢٢١)
tail bone	عَسِيْب (٢٢٢)
hairs of the tail	هَلْب سَيْف (٢٢٣)
musculus sphincter ani externus	حَبَار حَلَقَة (٢٢٤)
anus	سَم (٢٢٥)
anus	خَوْرَان (٢٢٦)
musculus levator ani	سَعْدَانَة (٢٢٧)
preputial raphe	عِجَان (٢٢٨)
vulva	ظَبِيَّة الْأُنْثَى (٢٢٩)
vestibulum vaginae	مَهْبِل (٢٣٠)
musculus constrictor vestibuli	خَاتِم (٢٣١)
musculus constrictor vulvae	شَرِيْجَة (٢٣٢)
ventral commissure, the lower part of the vulva	شُولُول (٢٣٣)
musculus semimembranosus	رَبْلَتَان (٢٣٤)
musculus gracilis	نَدَاة (٢٣٥)
grooves between fleshy parts	غُرُور (٢٣٦)
fleshy parts in the thighs	خَصَائِل (٢٣٧)
joint between femur and tibia, on the outer part of patella	مَآيِض (٢٣٨)
joint between femur and tibia, on the inner part of patella	ثَفْنَة / ثَفْنَة (٢٣٩)
thigh, tibia	سَاقَان (٢٤٠)
fleshy upper part of thigh	حَمَاتَان (٢٤١)
sinews	حِبَال (٢٤٢)
two veins in the thigh	نَسْوَان (٢٤٣)
two tendons between 'urqub and ma'bid	وَتْرَتَان (٢٤٤)
pure tendons (with no flesh on them)	أَيْبَسَان (٢٤٥)
between the upper fleshy part of the thigh and the hock	







point of the hock, calcaneus	كَعْبَان (٢٤٦)
two bones of the hock	مَنْجَمَان (٢٤٧)
tendo calcaneus communis (Achillis) and calcaneus	عَرْقُوبَان (٢٤٨)
hock	إِبْرَتَان (٢٤٩)
cannon (between the ankle and the hock)	وُظِيف (٢٥٠)
front part of the cannon	ظَنْبُوبَان (٢٥١)
ankle between cannon and pastern	جَبَّة (٢٥٢)
hair on pastern	ثَنَّة (٢٥٣)
superficial flexor tendon	عَصَب (٢٥٤)
back part of ankle	عَجَايَة (٢٥٥)
the lower part of the knee (carpus) and the hock on the cannon	شَوَى (٢٥٦)
upper part of the hind legs	فَخِذَان (٢٥٧)
the lower part of the semitendinosus	كَاذَتَان (٢٥٨)
back part of <i>fahidān</i> under the <i>kādātān</i>	فَاشِلَان (٢٥٩)
hair ridges, tufts of hair	دَوَائِر (٢٦٠)
converging hairs at the bottom of the upper part of the forehead	دَائِرَة الْمُحَيَّا (٢٦١)
converging hairs in the middle of the forehead	دَائِرَة اللَّطْمَة (٢٦٢)
two hair ridges in the middle of the forehead	دَائِرَة النَّطِيع (٢٦٣)
hair ridge in the middle of the neck at the front part	دَائِرَة السَّمَامَة (٢٦٤)
two hair ridges in the front part of the chest	بَنِيْقَان (٢٦٥)
hair ridge in the first part of the thorax, behind the elbow	هَضْعَة (٢٦٦)
hair ridge in the loin, before the knee	خَرْب (٢٦٧)
hair ridge on the semitendinosus	نَاخِيس (٢٦٨)
hair ridges between the top of a croup and the last rib, at the groin	سَعْقَرَان (٢٦٩)
hair ridge at the place of the saddle, on the horse back	قَالِع (٢٧٠)
hair ridge at the throat	دَائِرَة النَّاجِر (٢٧١)
hair ridge on the temporo mandibular joint	دَائِرَة اللَّهْزَمَة (٢٧٢)
hair ridge at the place of the collar	دَائِرَة الْعَمُود (٢٧٣)

An alphabetical list of the body-parts of the horse<sup>4</sup>

جَاعِرَتَان (٢١٩)	أَبْجِيل (١٤١)	أَسْهَر (٢١١)	إِبْرَتَان (١٢٢)، (٢٤٩)
جَبَّة (١٥٠)، (٢٥١)	أَبْطَنَان (١٢٨)	أَشْجَعَان (١٣٩)	أَبْطَنَان (١٢٨)
جَبْهَة (١٢)	أَبْهَرَان (١٨٢)	أَشْفَار (٢٧)	إِحْلِيل (٢١٠)
جَبِين (١٣)	إِحْلِيل (٢١٠)	أَضْرَاس (٦٢)	أَخْرَمَان (١٠٩)
جَحْفَلَتَان (٤١)	أَخْرَمَان (١٠٩)	إِطَار (١٥٩)	أَخْلَق (١٦١)
جَدَّة (٩٣)	أَخْلَق (١٦١)	أَعْفَاج (١٩٤)	أَسْلَة (٥٤)
جِرَان (٨٣)	أَسْلَة (٥٤)	إِلْيَة (١٧٢)	أَسْلَتَان (١٢٩)
جُرْدَان (٢٠٥)	أَسْلَتَان (١٢٩)	أَم قِرْدَان (١٥٥)	أَسْنَان (٥٧)
جُفُون (٢٥)	أَسْنَان (٥٧)	أَنْسَانَان (٢٢)	أَسْنَان الْكَاهِل (٩٩)
جَوَانِع (١٧٤)	أَسْنَان الْكَاهِل (٩٩)	إِنْسَبِي (١٤٦)	
جَوْجُو (١١٦)		أَنْيَاب (٦١)	
أَبْجِيل (١٤١)			
أَبْطَنَان (١٢٨)			
أَبْهَرَان (١٨٢)			
إِحْلِيل (٢١٠)			
أَخْرَمَان (١٠٩)			
أَخْلَق (١٦١)			
أَسْلَة (٥٤)			
أَسْلَتَان (١٢٩)			
أَسْنَان (٥٧)			
أَسْنَان الْكَاهِل (٩٩)			
أَبْجِيل (١٤١)			
أَبْطَنَان (١٢٨)			
أَبْهَرَان (١٨٢)			
إِحْلِيل (٢١٠)			
أَخْرَمَان (١٠٩)			
أَخْلَق (١٦١)			
أَسْلَة (٥٤)			
أَسْلَتَان (١٢٩)			
أَسْنَان (٥٧)			
أَسْنَان الْكَاهِل (٩٩)			

<sup>4</sup> The words are arranged in strict alphabetical order. The numbers in brackets refer to the numbers given in the vocabulary.

قَصْرِيَّان (١٨٣)	صَلِيفَان (٦٨)	ذَوَابَة (٢)	جَوْرَتَان (٤٩)
قَصْر (١١٩)	صِمَاخَان (٣١)	رَأْس (١)	جَوْرَشَن (١٠٤)
قَطَاة (١٠٠)	صَهْوَة (٩١)	رَاهِنَة وَاهِنَة (٢٠٢)	جَوْف (١٨٥)
قَلْب (١٨٧)	ضَفْدَع (١٦٣)	رَبَاعِيَّات (٥٩)	حَافِر (١٥٨)
قَلَّت (٥٥)	طَبِاق (٩٥)	رَبْلَتَان (٢٣٤)	حَالِبَان (٢٠٤)
قَمَحْدَوَة / قَمَحْدَوَة (٩)	ظَبِيَّة الْأَنْثَى (٢٢٩)	رَسَن (١٥٢)	حَبَال (١٢٦)، (٢٤٢)
قَمْعَة (١٤٨)	ظَنْبُويَان (٢٥٠)	رَصْنَان (١٣٤)	حِتَار (٢٦)
قَنْب (٢٠٩)	عِجَان (٢٢٨)	رَضْفَة (١٣٣)، (١٥١)	حِتَار حَلَقَة (٢٢٤)
قَوَارِح (٦٠)	عُجَايَة (١٤٧)، (٢٥٥)	رَفْع / رَفْع (٢٠٧)	حِجَابَان (١٨)، (٢٠)
قَوْنَس (٥)	عُجْب (١٠٣)	رَقْمَتَان (١٢٧)	حِجْبَتَان (٢١٥)
قَيْنَان (١٣٨)	عُرْشَان (٦٦)	رَكْبَة (١٣٢)	حِجْزَة (٢١٣)
قَيْنَة (١٠٢)	عُرْقُوبِيَان (٢٤٨)	رَهَابَة (١٧٨)	حَدَقَتَان (٢١)
كَاشِبَة (٨٩)	عُرْزَاء (٢١٨)	رِثْتَان (١٩٢)	حَصِير (١٨١)
كَاذَبَان (٢٥٨)	عَسِيب (٢٢٢)	رِيكْتَان (١٩٧)	حَصِيصَة (١٥٧)
كَاهِل (٩٠)	عَصَب (١٤٠)، (٢٥٤)	زَوَائِد (١٤٥)	حَلَقُوم (١٩٠)
كَبِد (١٩١)	عَصْفُور (٤)	زُور (١٧٥)	حَمَاتَان (٢٤١)
كَبِد سَفْلَى (١٩٩)	عَضْدَان (١١١)	سَاقَان (٢٤٠)	حَوَام (١٦٨)
كَتِف (١٠٦)	عَظْمَتَان (١٢٤)	سَالِفَتَان (٧٨)	حَوْشَبَان (١٥٣)
كَفْيَان (٢٤٦)	عَكْدَة (٥٢)	سَبِيب عُرْف (٦٤)	حَيَزُوم (١٨٩)
كَلْكَل (١٧٣)	عَكْوَة (٢٢١)	سَرَاة (٨٦)	خَاتِم (٢٣١)
كَلْيَتَان (١٩٣)	عَلْبُونَان (٦٧)	سُرَة (٢٠٠)	خَذَان (٣٢)
لَبَان (٨٥)	عُمُور (٦٣)	سَعْدَانَة (٢٢٧)	خَرْب (٢١٤)، (٢٦٧)
لَبْتَان (٧٧)	عُنُق (٧٥)	سَقْرَان (٢٦٩)	خَرْبَتَان (٢٢٠)
لَحْيَان (٤٤)	عَيْرَان (٣٠)	سَلِيم (١٦٢)	خَرْزَة (٧٢)
لَحْيَة (٤٥)	عَيْنَان (١٩)	سَم (٢٢٥)	خَشْشَاوَان (٧٣)
لَحْضَتَان (١٧)	غَرَابَان (١٠١)	سَمُوم (٣٥)	خَصَائِل (٢٣٧)
لَدِيدَان (٦٩)	غَرْضُوف (١٠٧)	سَنَاسِين (٩٧)	خَصِيصَة (٢٠٦)
لِسَان (٥١)	غَرْمُول (٢٠٨)	سَنِيسَاء (٨٧)	خَلْبَقَاء (١٠)
لَطَاة (١٥)	غُرُور (٢٣٦)	شَجَر (٤٨)	خُورَان (٢٢٦)
لَطْمَة (١٥)	غُرُور غَر (١١٤)	شِدْقَان (٤٢)	خَيْشُوم (٣٤)
لَهْزَمَتَان (٢٣)	غَضْرُوف (١٠٧)	شَرَّاسِيف (١٨٤)	دَائِرَة السَّمَامَة (٢٦٤)
مَاطِيس (١٣٦)، (٢٣٨)	فَائِلَان (٢٥٩)	شَرِيحَة (٢٣٢)	دَائِرَة العَمُود (٢٧٣)
مَاضِيَان (٤٧)	فَتُور (١٦٥)	شَطَا (١٤٢)	دَائِرَة اللَّطْمَة (٢٦٢)
مَاق (٢٤)	فَجْوَة (١٦٩)	شَطِيطَة (١٤٣)	دَائِرَة اللَّهْزَمَة (٢٧٢)
مَآلَة (٢٠١)	فَخِذَان (٢٥٧)	شَكِير (٦٥)	دَائِرَة المَحْيَا (٢٦١)
مَتَم (٢٠٣)	فَرَاشَة (١١)	شَوَارِب (٨٠)	دَائِرَة النَاحِر (٢٧١)
مَتْن (٩٨)	فَلَكَ (١٧٧)	شَوَى (٢٥٦)	دَائِرَة النَّطِيع (٢٦٣)
مَحَارَة (٥٦)	فَهْدَتَان (١١٧)	صَبِيَا اللّٰحْيَيْنِ (٥٠)	دَائِرَتَان (١٣٥)
مَحَال (٩٤)	فَهْقَة (٧)	صَحْن (١٦٤)	دَآيَات (٧٠)
مَحْيَا (١٤)	قَالِع (٢٧٠)	صَدْر (١١٥)	دَخِيس (١٦٠)
مَذْبَح (٧٩)	قَبِيحَان (١٢٣)	صَرْدَان (٥٣)	دَسِيع (٨٤)
مَذْمَر (٧٦)	قَذَال (٦)	صَفْحَتَان (١٨٠)	دَمَانَة (١٩٦)
مَرْدَغَة (١١٣)	قَرْدُودَة (٩٢)	صَفْن (٢١٢)	دَوَائِر (١٧١)
مَرَسِين (٣٨)	قَصَب (١٩٥)	صَقْرَان (٧٤)	دَوَائِر (٢٦٠)
مِرْفَقَان (١٢١)	قَصْبَة الْأَنْف (٣٦)	صَلْب (٩٦)	ذَبَابَان (٢٣)، (٢٩)
	قَصْرَة (٨٢)		ذِرْعَان (١٢٠)

هَيْعَة (٢٦٦)	نَاطِط (١٨٨)	مَنْجَمَان (٢٤٧)	مَرْكَب (١٢٥)
هَلَب سَيْف (٢٢٣)	شُخَاع (٧١)	مَنْخِرَان (٤٠)	مَرْكَل (١٧٩)
وَتِين (١٨٦)	شِدَاة (٢٣٥)	مَنْسِيج حَارِك (٨٨)	مَرِيْط (١٥٤)
وَتَرْتَان (٢٤٤)	نَسْر / نَسُور (١٦٦)	مَنْقَب (١٩٨)	مُسْتَدَق (١٣٠)
وَتْرَة (٣٩)	نَسُون (٢٤٣)	مَنْقَل (١٦٧)	مُسْتَطْعَم (٤٣)
وَرِك (٢١٦)	نَعِير (١٧٠)	مَنْكِبَان (١١٠)	مَضِيغَتَان (١٤٤)
وَلِيف (٢٥٣), (١٣٧)	نَكْفَتَان (٤٦)	مَهْبِيل (٢٣٠)	مَعْدَان (١٠٥)
وَقْبَان (١٦)	نَوَاهِيْ مَجَارِي	نَاخِس (٢٦٨)	مَفْرِضَان (١٠٨)
	دُمُوعِيْه (٣٧)	نَاصِيَة (٣)	مُقَلَّتَان (٢٨)
	هَامَة (٨)	نَاهِيْض (١١٢)	مُكْحَلَان (١٣١)

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# BURĠ ʿARAB – A CRUSADER TOWER IN THE COUNTY OF TRIPOLI A PRELIMINARY REPORT AFTER THE FIRST SURVEY

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## Introduction

The northern part of the former County of Tripoli, which corresponds today to the southern littoral area of the Syrian Arab Republic, is exceptionally rich in Crusader monuments. These include the city of Ṭartūs (Crusader Tortosa) the former centre of the area, and such famous castles of the military orders as the Crac des Chevaliers or Šāfītā (Crusader Chastel Blanc). However the majority of the Crusader remains are lesser scale structures which testify the relatively dense rural settlement pattern of the Crusader times in this very fertile part of the Levant. The most significant feature of this type of Crusader monuments is the presence of a small tower or donjon. One of the best preserved and most sophisticated towers of its kind is the one standing in the village of Burġ ʿArab. The following short study tries to summarize the results of the first rapid survey done on the tower as part of a larger fieldwork project started on the summer of 2000, which aims to document the remains of the Crusader rural settlement of the area<sup>1</sup>.

## Geographical and Historical Setting

The village of Burġ ʿArab lies at a height of 170m above sea level (*Muʿġam* 1992: 272) in the Syrian part of the Plain of ʿAkkār, that lies to the north of the Nahr al-Kabīr, the main river dividing the plain on an east-west axis. Its being near to the intersection of three of the seven smaller geo-ecological regions of the area (Sapin 1989); the hill-country of Šāfītā, the Maštā and the basalt plateau of Tell Kalah, results in the varied geographical features of the territory. The village is situated on a basaltic plateau about 9.5 kms to the southeast of the town of Šāfītā as the crow flies. The only considerable river in the close vicinity is the Nahr al-ʿArūs, an important tributary of the Nahr al-Kabīr, which flows a few hundred metres to the west of the settlement. The sloping side of the deep riverbed that borders the village from the west is covered by large orchards and olive groves planted on the fertile soil. The next notable river, the Nahr al-Ḥalīfa, is more than 3 kms to the south.

The Plain of ʿAkkār forming part of the Gap of Homs, the important passage between the Mountains of Lebanon and the Anšāriyya Mountains and offering rich

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<sup>1</sup> The first report on the fieldwork undertaken on the Crusader rural structures of the region with the kind permission of the Directorate of Antiquities and Museums of the Syrian Arab Republic and the financial support of the Academy of the Hungarian Jesuits is forthcoming in *The Arabist* No. 24-25.



agricultural areas, started to attract human settlement at an early date, which is testified in the high number of tells scattered in the territory (Maqdissi 1989:99). Despite the erosion caused by continuous cultivation through the millennia, Burchard of Mount Sion writing in the 13<sup>th</sup> century still found the area "exceeding beauteous and fertile" containing "many villages, and beauteous groves of olive-tree, fig-trees, and other fruit trees of divers sorts, besides much timber" (Burchard, *Description* 18). It is no wonder that this prosperous territory was amongst the ones where considerable tracts of land were distributed amongst the vassals of the count of Tripoli, who built small towers, sometimes with subsidiary buildings such as enclosures or simple vaulted structures at the centres of their estates. The tower standing in the village of Burğ 'Arab is of this kind, and it is also similar to the majority of the rest of these structures in the region in the way that no written documentation survives on it. We do not even know its original Crusader name. In order to extract as much information on it as possible, one has to turn to the physical remains.

### Architectural Description

Unfortunately the well preserved tower did not get the attention it deserves in former works, which is partly understandable, being in the close proximity of the magnificent remains of the formerly mentioned Crusader centres. Until a short description in the work of Paul Deschamps<sup>2</sup>, the only thing mentioned in former works was the name of the place and the sole existence of a tower<sup>3</sup>.

The robust, two level tower with a house recently attached to it, stands on the western edge of the village overlooking the surrounding countryside. It measures 14 m northwest-southeast by 13.4 m northeast-southwest<sup>4</sup> with walls approximately 3m thick at ground-floor level. The walls were constructed by the typical 12<sup>th</sup> century Crusader method (Ellenblum 1992:171); the cone made of unhewn stone bounded by thick mortar with ashlar facing, the corner stones of which were marginally drafted. The majority of the stones used for the facing is of local basalt in the lower ranges, while in the upper ranges the limestone ashlars give the larger numbers. Nearly all the corner stones are rusticated, including some blocks, which were recycled from older buildings of the area. Some rusticated ashlars appear in the lower ranges of the facade as well. Most blocks in the lower parts are quite crudely cut with some

<sup>2</sup> The few sentences Deschamps devoted to the tower contained a general geographical positioning, gave the external dimensions of the structure and noted some observations concerning the spolia in its walls. (Deschamps 1973:327-328)

<sup>3</sup> Eg. Rey 1871:102; Renan 1874:126; Dussaud 1927:119. Though a short description of a tower appears under the name Burğ 'Arab in the work of Hugh Kennedy, the described tower is in fact the tower of Umm Hūš 4,5 kms to the northwest (Kennedy 1994:77-78).

<sup>4</sup> As the plan shows the tower is not directed exactly to the four main points of the compass, the deviation being 20°.

galletting of stone chips between them, but approaching higher, the size of the blocks decreases and their way of execution gets more elaborated.

There is a high number of spolia amongst the stones employed in the facades of the tower and the number of carved symbols is also quite high compared to other structures of the same category in the region. The most obvious ones are the cover of a basalt sarcophagus in the northwestern corner of the tower, the complete lintel of an antique building reused as the lintel over the medieval entrance of the tower, and two fragments of other lintels used as cornerstones in the higher ranges of the southeastern corner. The large and well cut limestone ashlar are quite probable to have been brought over from other sites and so do the neatly cut basalt stone slabs. The case of the reliefs is not as certain, though the ones carved into bossed masonry were in all probability executed in the Crusader times. These include a long basalt block in the southern edge of the northeastern facade with three circles, the two on the sides containing equal armed crosses and the one in the middle enclosing seven hemispheres, one in the centre with the others arranged evenly around it. Pierre Coupel has drawn a parallel between these crosses and a similar cross found in the church of St. Phocas in ʿAmyūn (also in the former County of Tripoli) dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century on architectural grounds (Coupel 1941-48:50). A very similar cross was observed during the survey on the lintel of the first floor entrance of the tower of Umm Ḥūš a few kms to the northwest. Other carvings of possible Crusader origin on the tower of Burġ ʿArab consist of a cross of similar kind to the ones mentioned above, but carved into an enormous limestone block of the northwestern facade and two crudely executed crosses on the same bossed basalt ashlar of the northwestern facade with straight lines closing their ends. The dating of two other carvings, both on neatly cut basalt slabs of the southeastern facade is more problematic. One is a cross formed by three wedge-like carvings, the other is an equal armed cross, its arms closed by small v-shapes. Both are on stones which might have come from former structures, and the use of the latter cross is quite widespread from Byzantine structures (eg. the pilgrimage crosses carved over the entrance of a *pandocheion* in Dayr Simʿān, the Byzantine Thelanisios in Northern Syria) to Crusader masonry marks (Pringle 1981: 187).

The entrance of the tower opened on the northwestern facade, higher than the ground level and so it could have been approached only by the help of a wooden stairway. The equally placed 0,35x0,35 m putlog holes can be the remains of this stairway. The now blocked up entrance was 2,05 m high and 0,97 m wide. The doorway is covered by a lintel transported from an antique site with a stilted relieving arch above it. The square-shaped limestone slab above the relieving arch, set among

the black basalt blocks might have once contained a crest of some kind, but is totally effaced now<sup>5</sup>.

Originally the raised entrance led on to a wooden mezzanine floor that divided the high interior of the ground floor horizontally<sup>6</sup>. The wooden floor lay on the 0,3m protrudal of the wall at the entrance level and on a row of wooden beams set in putlog holes along the southwestern and northeastern walls. Only the room above the mezzanine floor was lit by the light percolating through the arrowslits set in pointed-arched recesses in the middle of the southwestern, southeastern, and northeastern walls, one in each. The apparently unlit room under the mezzanine floor, measuring 7,5x7,4m could hardly have been used for anything else but storage. The ground floor is covered by a pointed barrel-vault with a northwest-southeast axis, which preserved some scanty traces of the plastering. The ground floor can only be entered today by a large door-like opening cut through the middle of the southeastern wall at ground level, which together with the similar, but now blocked opening in the southwestern wall testifies the efforts of the villagers to turn the ground floor into a shed for their livestock.

The first floor of the tower was reached by a stairway 0,77m wide in the thickness of the northwestern wall, which opened from the left side of the main doorway of the tower<sup>7</sup>. The now totally filled up tunnel was lit midway by an arrow slit piercing through the northwestern facade of the tower. The first floor room was approached after a right turn from the end of the stairway through an arch, of which only one of its springing survived, that on the northwestern wall. The first floor hall measuring 9,4m northwest-northeast by 8,8m northwest-southwest is covered by a pointed barrel-vault with a northeast-southwest axis. The axis of the barrel-vault of the ground floor and that of the first floor are at right angles to each other in order to diminish the downward thrust of the two vaults that would have otherwise been concentrated on two walls of the tower, seriously threatening the stability of the structure<sup>8</sup>. The vault was sturdily built with flattish stones bonded with mortar spreads preserving the remains of former plastering in some places. Several openings provide light and ventilation for the room. There was one loop-hole

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<sup>5</sup> The entrance of the enceinte of the Crusader Qal'at Yaḥmūr had a triple armed cross in a mandorla in a low relief above its lintel (Pringle 1986:18), and the traces of a coat-of-arms with the remains of a very elaborated cross on it can still be seen over the entrance of the Templar donjon of Ṣāfītā, both in the region.

<sup>6</sup> Crusader towers with wooden mezzanine floors can only be found in this region of the Holy Land (Pringle 1994:339), which had two recorded examples until now; the towers of Qal'at Yaḥmūr and Tuḥla.

<sup>7</sup> This arrangement which has a parallel in the great donjon of the Crusader Giblet, is very rare in towers of this size.

<sup>8</sup> Because of stability considerations it is rare to employ two barrel-vaults above each other, which is usually avoided by using a barrel-vault on the ground and a groin-vault on the first floor.

in the middle of the northeastern, northwestern and southeastern walls. The latter two was approached by a pointed-arched recess 2,2m high and 1,55m wide, with its upper part cutting through the curve of the vault. The loop-hole of the northeastern wall was largely destroyed by the new entrance cut through it, that could be approached from the stairway leading up to the first floor of the modern house attached to the northeastern side of the tower. The southwestern wall of the first floor contains a large window 0,9m wide, set in a pointed-arched passage 2m high and 1.17m wide through the wall. Though the lower part of the window fell out with a tract of the facade, the upper range preserved the rebates for a wooden door and the limestone jambs have conserved the holes of an iron grill. The limestone lintel of the window is held by two imposts cut from basalt. The existence of a window and its relatively big size strongly stresses the residential function of the first floor hall. Inserted into the same wall, to the right of the window is a recess 1,8m high, 1,06m wide and 0,83m deep. It is positioned 1,1m higher than the present-day level of the floor. The 0,75m wide stairway leading up to the top of the tower opens in the same wall, but to the left of the window. Its entrance is lit by a partly destroyed embrasure.

The top of the tower has no remains of its former defences. Even the original floor level of the top has eroded and the top of the vault covering the first floor juts out from the scanty soil covering the top of the tower. The width of the crenellation must have been around 1m thick as a line of stones forming the bases of its inner side indicate.

The tower of Burġ ʿArab has commanding view over the surrounding countryside. Several Crusader bases can also be seen in the distance. The most important is Šāfītā, the visual center of the region, the tower of Umm Ĥuš, the tower of Zārā and allegedly the tower in the village of Burġ Maksūr can also be seen in good weather conditions.

### Neighbouring structures

The immediate vicinity of the tower seems to be devoid of considerable medieval remains. However, a villager showed an area called *ġidār* (wall), about 200 meters to the northwest of the tower with a vaulted structure called *sirdāb* (tunnel). The length of the vault, mostly buried, is about 5,4 m and the span of it at its widest point is around 4 meters. Due to the fragmentary nature of the structure the real dimensions of it cannot be determined without an excavation. The axis of the tunnel-vault is directed east-west. At most of the villages boasting a Crusader tower in the neighbourhood, the inhabitants gladly tell legends about tunnels leading from one place to the other, and this structure is not an exception to the rule. However this vault could not have been part of any tunnel as its eastern end is closed by a wall with a 0,68m deep recess covered by stones arranged to form a half round shape. The roughly

worked stones are bonded with mortar and there are clear traces of plastering on the vault.

### Conclusion

The tower in the village of Burğ 'Arab fits well into the historical context of the region and the architectural characteristics of the same category of Crusader rural towers, though it employs some peculiar structural elements as well. Its outer appearance at first glance with its harsh execution suggests a builder with not great material resources, the complexity and durability of the structure seems to contradict it to some extent. The tower clearly reflects its most important functions in the Crusader rural settlement pattern, even without the subsidiary structures surviving at so many other towers. The ground floor room, especially its non-lit lower part must have fulfilled repository functions, which indicate the tower's administrative role in the area. The more spacious and better lit first floor hall might have functioned as the residence of the owner of the tower. This is further emphasised by the presence of the unusually large window, that is very rare in similar structures. Despite this more vulnerable large opening, the loopholes of the tower and the supposed crenellation enabled the structure to fulfil a defensive role as well. Though towers of this kind could only offer passive resistance, Burğ 'Arab could be an active member of the Crusader signalling system of the region, thanks to its good positioning. The unfinished state of the survey and the finding of the vaulted structure still undated stresses the need of continuation, which after a more thorough research setting this tower into the larger network of the Crusader rural settlement of the region could tell much more of the structure of which no written documentation survived.

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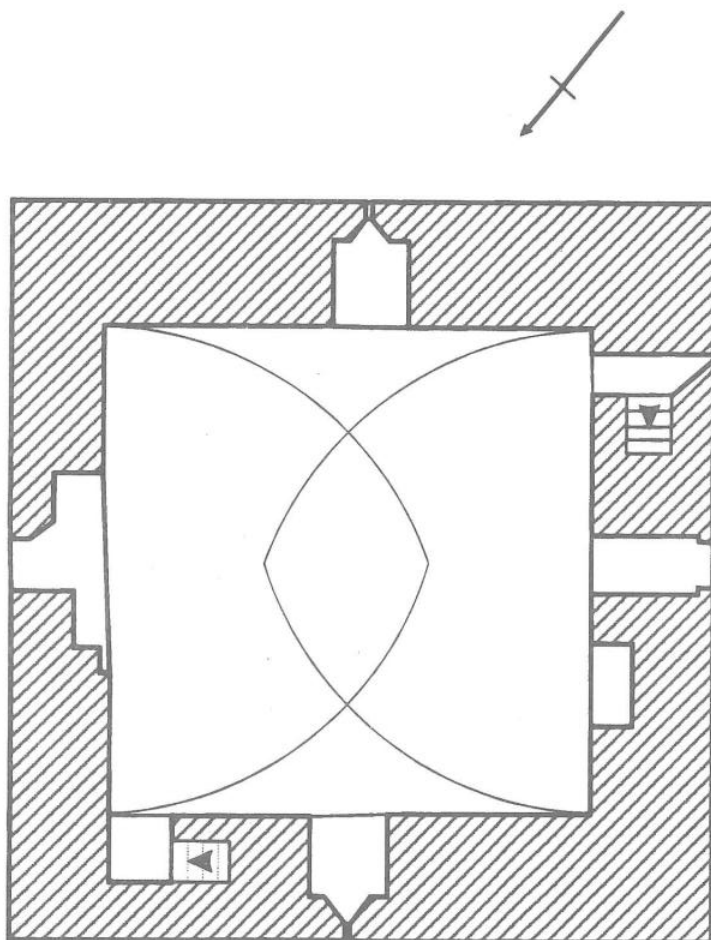
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# The Northern Part of the County of Tripoli



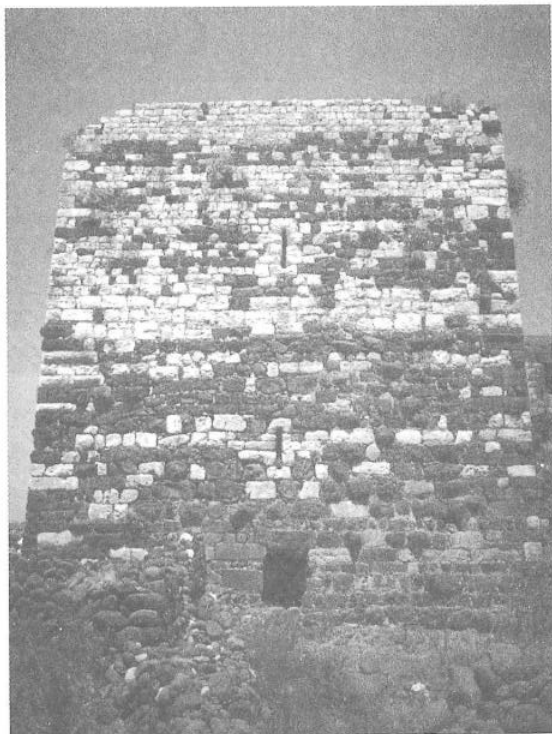




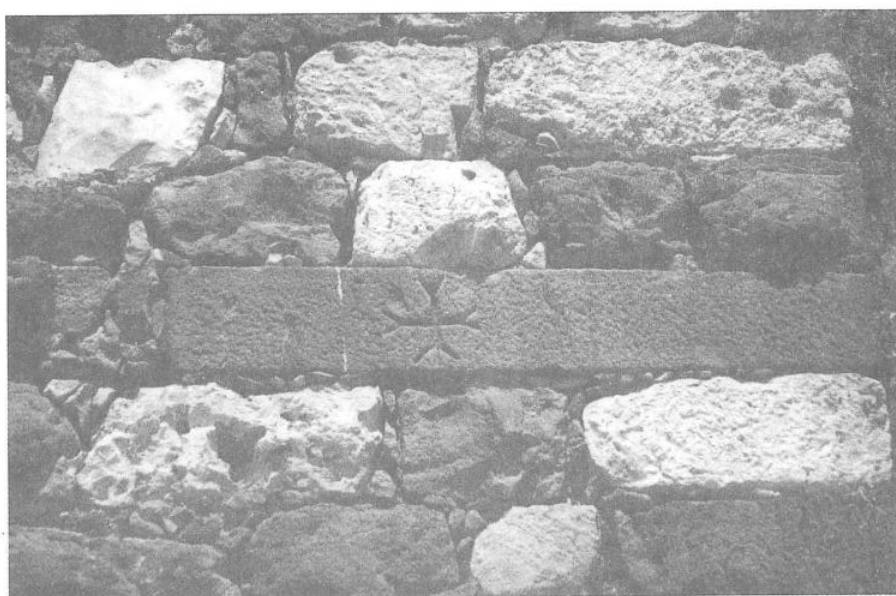
**BURĜ 'ARAB**  
First Floor

0 ————— 5m

*drawn by Balázs Major*



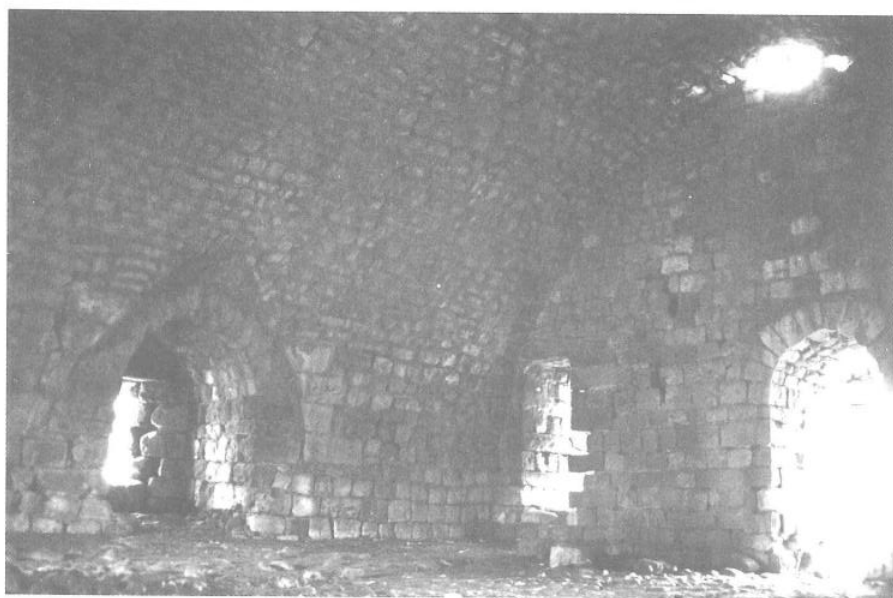
1. The southern facade of the tower



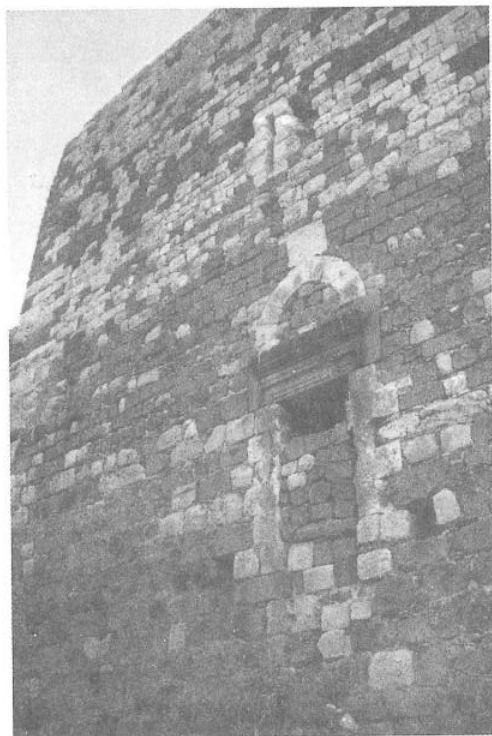
2. Cross carved on a stone slab of the southern facade



3. The ground floor room of the tower with blocked entrance and a loophole (looking west)



4. The first floor room of the tower (looking south)



5. The north-western facade of the tower with the original entrance



6. Remains of the vaulted structure from the west

# IGNAZ GOLDZIHNER'S INVITATION TO THE EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITY\*

István Ormos

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The foundation of the Egyptian University – present-day Cairo University –, the first modern secular university on Egyptian soil, was a landmark of historic significance in the cultural history of the country. It opened on December 21, 1908 in a rented mansion belonging to the Greek cigarette magnate Nestor Gianaclis and others<sup>1</sup>. The recruitment of a suitable teaching staff was not easy and the employment of European professors was also envisaged right from the beginning. Interim professors were also invited from Europe to deliver courses of lectures for shorter periods, e.g. one academic year. They could be conveniently arranged into two groups: those who lectured in French or English on topics unrelated to the Middle East, such as French or English literature or world history, and the Orientalists, who lectured in Arabic on Arab and Islamic subjects<sup>2</sup>. The heads of the fledgling University, principally its Rector, Prince Aḥmad Fu'ād, made efforts to secure the cooperation of some well-known authorities of high reputation. The Prince played a key role in the organization of the University: he became its first Rector at its opening as a private institution in 1908, and in 1925, already as king, he refounded it as a fully-fledged state institution (Reid 1990:1). In the pre-war days the Prince was simply one of the numerous members of the ruling family, the descendants of Muḥammad 'Alī, who had been mainly known for his eventful marriage with Princess Šuwaykār. Owing to the totally unpredictable and unforeseen turns of history, however, he was to become Sultan (1917) and even later King of Egypt as Fu'ād I (1922) (Kāmil 1998:10-31; Goldschmidt Jr. 2000:59-60). He also approached Ignaz Goldziher of Budapest University and made several efforts to invite him to Cairo as visiting professor. He did his best to gain the cooperation of Goldziher and persuade him to come to Cairo. He even used his connections to certain members of the ruling dynasty and the political leadership of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to exert pressure upon Goldzi-

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<sup>1</sup> The building, where the University stayed until 1915, is now the central building of the American University in Cairo in downtown Taḥrīr square. It was built around 1870, then it was acquired by the Greek cigarette magnate Nestor Gianaclis, who had it transformed to its present-day Mamluk revival form. The architect of the transformation was Max Herz, who was universally regarded as the greatest authority on Mamluk revival and who himself played an important role in the propagation and dissemination of this style in Egypt. See Ormos 2001:169-170.

<sup>2</sup> See Reid 1990:37-42.

her. This they did, no doubt because they were quick to realize how important Goldziher's eventual professorship might be in raising the Egyptian presence of Hungary and the whole Monarchy – it can be regarded as an essential constituent of imperialist aspirations that the European powers, among them the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, competed with each other fiercely to assert their presence in the field of Egyptian cultural life<sup>3</sup>. In the end these efforts did not bear fruit, Goldziher did not go to Egypt, and so, as far as the University was concerned, "Austria-Hungary lost its chance when Ignaz Goldziher turned down Fuad's invitation to teach" (Reid 1990:37-38). Among the letters of Max Herz to Ignaz Goldziher, which are preserved in the Goldziher Correspondence in the Oriental Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, there are several items dealing with this subject<sup>4</sup>. In the present paper, these letters will be reviewed in connection with other sources with the aim of shedding light on the details of this intermezzo.

Max Herz (1856-1919), the Hungarian chief architect to the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* in Cairo for a quarter of a century (1890-1914)<sup>5</sup>, came into contact with Ignaz Goldziher in 1895 and soon they became good friends. The letters Herz wrote to Goldziher contain a wealth of information on various subjects<sup>6</sup>.

In the first letter on this subject Herz states explicitly that it was he who first suggested to the organizers that they invite Goldziher<sup>7</sup>, who was universally regarded as the greatest European authority on Islam of his time, but then it was Prince Aḥmad Fu'ād, who undertook to persuade Goldziher to accept the invitation to deliver the course "History of Philosophical Doctrines" (*Histoire des Doctrines Philosophiques / il corso di storia delle dottrine filosofiche*) at the Egyptian University for one winter semester beginning on 15 November 1911<sup>8</sup>. In his letter of 16 July 1911, the Prince mentions that they had personally met in Athens, where Goldziher's behaviour had

<sup>3</sup> Reid 1985; Reid 1990:37-42; Reid 1992. On Austro-Hungarians in Egypt in this period see the contributions by Rudolf Agstner and Marcella Stern in Agstner 1994 and *Österreich und Ägypten* 1993.

<sup>4</sup> On the Correspondence see [Anon.] 1933. Somogyi 1935:149-150.

<sup>5</sup> Herz arrived in Cairo in 1880 and joined the Technical Bureau of the Waqf Administration, where he worked as architect until his appointment to the post of chief architect to the *Comité*. See Ormos 2001.

<sup>6</sup> On Max Herz's letters to Goldziher see Ormos 2001:172. Goldziher's replies do not survive: they seem to have perished together with Herz's belongings after his expulsion from Egypt as an enemy alien at the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

<sup>7</sup> Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letter from Herz dated Cairo, 6 January 1911.

<sup>8</sup> See Goldziher-Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Correspondence*. Letter from Aḥmad Fu'ād dated London 16.7.1912 [recte 1911].

led the Prince to hope that Goldziher might deliver the course in question<sup>9</sup>. At the beginning confidential feelers were put out by Herz, and then in the later phases of the undertaking, when Archduke Franz Ferdinand, crown prince of Austria-Hungary, and Count Széchenyi, the diplomatic representative of Austria-Hungary in Cairo, joined the unofficial negotiations, Herz acted as a sort of intermediary between the Prince and Goldziher – Herz's role is also attested to by Prince Aḥmad Fu'ād's letter to Goldziher where he refers to Goldziher's first answer to Herz Bey on this matter<sup>10</sup>. After some hesitation, Goldziher seems to have turned down the invitation, yet Herz did his best to convince him of the advantages and desirability of such a stay in Cairo. Goldziher seemed to have had objections, which Herz strove to allay giving details concerning the visits of such acquaintances of Goldziher as Guidi<sup>11</sup>, Santillana<sup>12</sup>, Nallino<sup>13</sup> and Littmann<sup>14</sup>. He reminds Goldziher that he would be in a good company among such persons as Littmann, Nallino and Snouck Hurgronje<sup>15</sup>. In one case Herz copied for Goldziher an Italian letter by Fago, Prince Aḥmad Fu'ād's secretary, on this subject<sup>16</sup>. This latter letter shows how important

<sup>9</sup> See Goldziher-Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Correspondence*. Letter from Aḥmad Fu'ād dated London 16.7.1912 [recte 1911].

<sup>10</sup> Goldziher-Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Correspondence*. Letter from Aḥmad Fu'ād dated Karlsbad 19.9.1911.

<sup>11</sup> Ignazio Guidi (1844-1935). See Fück 1955:220-222. Reid 1990:39.

<sup>12</sup> David Santillana (1855-1921). See Levi della Vida 1921-1930.

<sup>13</sup> Carlo Alfonso Nallino (1872-1938) held an important course on the history of Arab astronomy, in Arabic, at the Egyptian University in 1909-1910, which also appeared in print. See Meyerhof 1939. Fück 1955:299-301. Reid 1990:2, 39, 41-42, 52 (ill. 3), 95, 153-154.

<sup>14</sup> Enno Littmann (1875-1958) of Germany lectured on Comparative Semitic Languages and Literatures in 1910-1912 and returned as visiting professor in 1929. It may be remarked that Littmann reckoned Goldziher among the founders of Islamic studies in 1930 but omitted to mention his name in his overview of contributions in German to Near Eastern studies published in the days of National Socialism in 1942. Goldziher-Hartmann, *Correspondence* xxvi<sup>2</sup> (editor's Introduction); Reid 1990:2, 41, 95. On him see Paret 1959.

<sup>15</sup> Snouck Hurgronje had also been invited to the Egyptian University in Cairo but he too did not go there. I owe this piece of information to P. Sj. van Koningsveld. Cf. Goldziher-Snouck Hurgronje, *Correspondence* 357-360. See also Reid 1990:38. In his letter of 28 July 1911 (Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*) Mr. Fago informs *illustre e carissimo Herz Bey* that – among others – Snouck Hurgronje has agreed to go to Cairo: *Il principe Fuad a ottenuto l'accettazione del prof. Littmann, del prof. Snouck Hurgronje di Leiden e dei professori italiani (Nallino & Meloni)*. Gerardo Meloni taught on the history of the ancient Near East. See Reid 1990:39.

<sup>16</sup> Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letter of Fago dated Paris, 28 July 1911 (the original); Vetriolo (Trento), 4 August 1911 (the copy by Herz). Dr. Vincenzo Fago was sent to Cairo by the Italian government, accompanying a donation of 500 books. He went to Cairo from the University of Rome. His task was the organization and the administration of the University Library. See Reid 1990:39. He was also "international secretary" to the Prince. Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letters of Herz dated Cairo, 26 May



Goldziher was in the prince's eyes because he asks Herz to do everything possible (and impossible) to persuade Goldziher accept the invitation:

"My Dear Herz Bey, to come to the point at once, I am asking you most fervently in the name of His Highness Prince Fuad to be so kind as to do everything possible (and even impossible) in order that Prof. Goldziher may consent to come to the Egyptian University on November 15th of this year to deliver the course on the history of philosophical doctrines in Arabic."

*Illustre e carissimo Herz Bey, senza preambuli, La prego caldissimamente da parte di S. A. il Principe Fuad di voler fare tutto il possibile (e anche l'impossibile!) perchè il prof. Goldziher accetti di venire il 15 novembre di quest'anno all'Università Egiziana, per tenervi in lingua araba, il corso di storia delle dottrine filosofiche.*

In the course of this discussion Herz Pasha informs Goldziher that the subject he is supposed to lecture on was taught by Santillana in the previous academic year. Santillana arrived in Cairo with the fair copy of the text of his lectures but to his great distress he discovered that these lectures were pitched way over his students' heads, so he was compelled to rewrite them from day to day<sup>17</sup>. Herz also mentions that Guidi was sometimes compelled to make use of some sort of a translator to make himself understood:

"I have no doubts concerning your facility in Arabic. Prof. Guidi was sometimes compelled to make use of some sort of a translator in order to make himself understood. But of course Guidi has never been in the Orient before, while you have been here years. You can choose as you like: literary or colloquial Arabic. But I want you to ask Nallino for his opinion and suggestion concerning this matter."

*Ich zweifle nicht an Dein arab. Sprachvermögen. Prof. Guidi mußte sich einer Art Dolmetscher bedienen, um sich manchmal verständlich zu machen. Aber Guidi war ja nie im Orient. Du hast ja Jahre hier verbracht. Dann kannst Du, wie Du willst, wählen: litterarisch oder vulgärarabisch. Aber diesbezüglich möchte ich doch, daß Du Nallinos Rat u. Meinung einholst<sup>18</sup>.*

This correspondence goes on for a while but it is known that in the end Goldziher did not accept the invitation and did not go to Cairo<sup>19</sup>. In a letter to Prince Fu'ād he informs the prince that "his professional duties do not allow him to leave his chair vacant for several consecutive months"<sup>20</sup>. In a letter to Theodor Nöldeke dated Budapest, 9th November 1911 Goldziher tells his colleague and friend in strict

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and Milan, 23 June 1911.

<sup>17</sup> Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letter from Herz dated Cairo, 26 May 1911.

<sup>18</sup> Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letter from Herz dated Cairo, 26. 5. 1911.

<sup>19</sup> Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letter from Herz dated Cairo, 26 May 1911. Cf. Goldziher, *Tagebuch* 269-271, 274; Goldziher, *Oriental Diary* 51-52.

<sup>20</sup> Goldziher-Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Correspondence*. The draft of Goldziher's answer enclosed with the letter from Aḥmad Fu'ād dated London 16.7.1912 [recte 1911].

confidence of all the stress this affair has caused him and why he does not want to accept the invitation:

"The kind forwarding of your study on Schulthess' version of *Kalilah wa-Dimnah*<sup>21</sup> is an exhortation to me to send you once again a written greeting after such a long time. This was postponed from day to day because in recent weeks I was so agitated at heart that I hardly found the mood for communicativeness. I would like to hint at the cause of this mental condition in strict confidence. About nine months ago I received an invitation in a semi-official way to give a course of lectures on philosophy at the new university in Cairo in the following winter. These invitations were then followed in August by a most obliging letter from Prince Fuad Pasha<sup>22</sup>, in which I was urgently pressed to accept the invitation. I replied that I was unable to comply with the respectful appeal. Then in the middle of October the prince himself came from Vienna to Budapest accompanied by two companions "pour me convaincre". In an intercourse that lasted for hours with the amiable grandson of Muhammad 'Ali and his kind companions I was attacked in a most forcible way to give a binding consent. No matter how flattering the importance that the Egyptians attached to my personal participation and how attractive the task offered to me, after impartial and calm self-examination, I found myself unable to accede to the request. Now I am too old to catapult myself all of a sudden into strange surroundings, to subject myself to the task of preparation from one lecture to the other and finally to be compelled by the delicate nature of the subject to be constantly on my guard not to cause offence in matters of religion (cf. Vollers-Algiers)<sup>23</sup>. In addition I have the impression that the urgent character of the invitation is based on an overestimation of my qualities caused by the indulgence of my friends. I informed the prince that *for the time being* it was impossible for me but I thought I owed to the obligingness of this person, so kindly disposed towards me, the consideration of not cutting the thread once and for all. *J'y réfléchirai*: on this we parted. But with that the affair is not settled, not even provisionally. Ten days ago I received an official communication from our prime minister, Count Khuen<sup>24</sup>, in which he strongly recommends that I accede to the invitation: the state secretary at our Ministry of Education informs me simultaneously that a note of identical content has reached the Hungarian

<sup>21</sup> *Kalila und Dimna*. Syrisch und deutsch von Friedrich Schulthess. Berlin 1911.

<sup>22</sup> Goldziher-Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Correspondence*. Letter from Aḥmad Fu'ād dated London 16 July 1912 [recte 1911].

<sup>23</sup> Karl Vollers (1857-1909) was director of the Khedivial Library in Cairo from 1886 until 1896, when he was appointed professor at Jena University. Fück 1955:240. At the 14th Congress of Orientalists at Algiers, Vollers' paper on the language of the Qur'ān displeased Muslim participants so he withdrew it from publication. Cf. Goldziher-Hartmann, *Correspondence* 228-229.

<sup>24</sup> Goldziher-Khuen-Héderváry, *Correspondence*. Letter from Khuen-Héderváry dated 16.10.1911. The draft of Goldziher's answer is enclosed: he replies to the polite letter from the prime minister that "his personal conditions do not enable him to accept the gratifying invitation at present, but he will keep considering the possibility of taking another standpoint in the future" (personal pronouns altered by me - I.O.). Count Károly Khuen-Héderváry (1849-1918), conservative politician, prime minister of Hungary (1903, 1910-1912).

Minister of Education from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Aehrenthal<sup>25</sup>. I do not need to tell you that being pressed like this causes me enormous agitation. It is only under quiet and steady conditions that I can work and smooth away – as far as possible – the marks adhering to me from my past. Now I feel that mentally I am not fit – at least for the time being – for the task offered to me and thus I feel I cannot follow the advice pressing upon me. But the many discussions in connection with this cause me palpitation of the heart. I am only just equal to the tasks I have to fulfil every day; but I have the strongest and most serious doubts whether I would also be equal to the tasks I would have to confront in Egypt. In one word: doubts and more doubts, which must necessarily result in a negative decision in the end. This all strictly confidentially."

*Die gütige Zusendung Ihrer Studie über Schulthess' Kalila wa-Dimnah-Bearbeitung ist mir eine Mahnung, Ihnen nach langer Zeit wieder einen schriftlichen Gruss zu senden. Dieser ist von Tag zu Tag verschoben worden, weil ich in den letzten Wochen innerlich so aufgeregt war, dass ich kaum die Stimmung zur Mittheilbarkeit finden konnte. Ich möchte Ihnen die Ursache dieser Seelenlage im Vertrauen andeuten. Schon seit etwa ¾ Jahren habe ich von Kairo aus in halbamtlicher Form die Aufforderung erhalten, an der dortigen neuen Universität während des jetzt einziehenden Winters einen Vorlesungskurs über Philosophie zu geben. Diesen Einladungen folgte dann im August d. J. ein überaus verbindlicher Brief an mich vom Prinzen Fuad Pascha, in welchem mir die Angelegenheit aufs dringendste ans Herz gelegt wird. Ich antwortete, dass es mir jetzt nicht möglich ist, der ehrenden Aufforderung Folge zu leisten. Mitte Oktober kam nun der Prinz mit zwei Begleitern von Wien aus persönlich nach Budapest "pour me convaincre". In stundenlangem Verkehr mit dem lebenswürdigen Enkel des Muhammed 'Ali und seinen lieben Begleitern wurde mir nun in überaus eindringlicher Weise an den Leib gegangen um eine bindende Zusage von mir zu erlangen. So schmeichelhaft für mich nun auch der Wert ist, den die Aegypter auf meine persönliche Mitwirkung legen und so sehr sympathisch mir auch die angebotene Aufgabe ist, konnte ich bei unparteilich ruhiger Selbstprüfung mich zu einer Zustimmung für meine Person nicht entschliessen. Ich bin nun zu alt, um mich urplötzlich in ein fremdes Milieu zu werfen, den Arbeiten der Vorbereitung von Stunde zu Stunde mich zu unterziehen und am Ende auch noch immer auf der Hut sein zu müssen, bei der heiklen Natur des Themas nicht auch religiöse Anstöße zu erregen (cf. Vollers-Alger). Überdies scheint mir der dringliche Character der Einladung auf eine durch Nachsicht meiner Freunde hervorgerufene Überschätzung meiner Qualitäten zu beruhen. Ich gab dem Prinzen den Bescheid, dass es mir für jetzt unmöglich sei, glaubte aber der Zuvorkommenheit des mir in so lebenswürdiger Weise entgegenkommenden Herrn die Rücksicht schuldig zu sein, den Faden für alle Zukunft nicht abzuschneiden. J'y réfléchirai: damit schieden wir. Die Sache ist aber damit auch provisorisch nicht abgeschlossen. Vor zehn Tagen erhielt ich eine Zuschrift unseres Ministerpraesidenten Grafen Khuen, in welcher er mir nahe legt, der Einladung Folge zu leisten; gleichzeitig teilt mir der Staatssekretär unseres Unterrichtsministeriums mit, dass vom Minister des Aeussern, Graf Aehrenthal eine Note gleichen Sinnes an den ungarischen Unterrichtsminister gelangt sei. Ich brauche Ihnen nicht zu sagen, dass mir dieses Gepresstwerden ungeheure Aufregung verursacht. Nur unter ruhigen gleichmässigen Verhältnissen kann ich arbeiten und die Striemen, die mir aus meiner Vergangenheit anhaften, so weit es möglich ist, wegglatzen. Ich fühle mich nun für die mir angebotene Aufgabe, wenigstens für jetzt, innerlich nicht geeignet und kann da – so*

<sup>25</sup> Among Balogh's letters to Goldziher there is none relating to this affair. Goldziher-Balogh, *Correspondence*. Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal (1854-1912), Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy from 1906 until 1912.

*fühle ich es – den an mich herandringenden Ratschlägen nicht folgen. Aber das viele Antworten darüber macht mir Herzklopfen und Aufregung. Ich bin den Aufgaben, die ich tagtäglich erfülle, zur Not gewachsen; habe aber den stärksten und ernstesten Zweifel daran, ob ich es auch der mir entgegengebrachten ägyptischen Aufgabe wäre. Mit einem Wort: Bedenken und Bedenken und Bedenken, deren Resultat zum Schluss in ein negatives Urteil auslaufen muss. Dies alles im Vertrauen<sup>26</sup>.*

The polite letter from prime minister Khuen-Héderváry to Goldziher is extant with the draft of Goldziher's answer enclosed: he informs the prime minister that "his personal conditions do not enable him to accept the distinctive invitation at present but he will keep considering the possibility of taking another standpoint in the future"<sup>27</sup>.

The relevant entries in the *Tagebuch* run as follows:

"[August 25] At the same period many letters arrived from Egypt exhorting me to give a course of lectures on philosophy (again for mammon in profusion!!) in the new university in Cairo in the coming winter. Prince Ahmed Fuad is at the head of this foundation as Président-Recteur. His secretary was given the task to do "everything imaginable, even unimaginable" to induce me to take a positive decision. Finally a letter from the Prince himself dated the 16th inst. arrived from Paris, which should be consulted in the original. Before leaving for this place<sup>28</sup> I wrote my refusal. Why? Why? One should conjure up in one's mind the scars I still bear on my body from my slavery during the years 1875-1905 in order to understand why I feel incapable of undertaking anything unusual, that I can do nothing but daydream and perish in my daily work. And this daily work has been crowned with magnificent recognition. [...]"

"[October 13] The arrival of the Egyptian Prince Ahmed Fuad and his visit to our university was announced for today. The Rector told me to be present at the reception. Even during the presentation and while we accompanied him to the library, the Prince and his companions, Dr. Forti, librarian at Cairo University and Consul Bondy Bey, were already intimating to me that the Prince's excursion to Budapest was meant for me alone. During breakfast at his hotel, to which the Prince had invited me, the offensive aimed at getting me to accept the above-mentioned invitation began. "Je suis venu seulement pour vous convaincre." I am assumed to be "le plus grand arabisant du monde" and to have an obligation to bring Occidental culture and scholarship to the Orient. In Vienna he asked the minister Count Aehrenthal and even the King<sup>29</sup> to exert pressure upon me to this end. I would be "worshipped" in Egypt and the greatest respect would be shown to me. So it went on for three hours. The three gentlemen also tried to suggest patriotic motives to me. During the whole journey all over Europe all the experts had referred to me as the most qualified authority. I was entreated to yield to the "suffrage universel". At the same time

<sup>26</sup> Goldziher-Nöldeke, *Correspondence* 352-353. Cf. Nöldeke's answer of 11. November. *Ibid.*, 355-356.

<sup>27</sup> Goldziher-Khuen-Héderváry, *Correspondence*. Letter from Khuen-Héderváry dated 16.10.1911 (personal pronouns altered by me – I. O.). The draft of Goldziher's draft is undated. [Both letter and draft are in Hungarian.]

<sup>28</sup> Puszta Tövisgyháza.

<sup>29</sup> Emperor Franz Joseph (of Austria) was also the King of Hungary and it is his latter title which is always used in Hungary.

the advancement of a lot of university professors to the next rank up was published in the official gazette today. People of very inferior quality enjoyed this recognition and promotion. My name is not to be found in the list. This year I conclude the fortieth year of my activities in the university, 34 years as an unsalaried *Privatdozent*. And I am supposed to go to Egypt to seek laurels!"

"[October 17] Today I received a letter from our Prime Minister, Count Khuen Héderváry, in which His Excellency gives me to understand, at the request of Prince Fuad recently submitted to him, how much my acceptance of the invitation to Egypt would be in the interest of the reputation of Hungarian scholarship. The letter and my answer can be found among the papers concerning this affair."

"[October 28] Secretary of State Balogh<sup>30</sup>, with whom I have had to confer on professional matters this evening, informs me that a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Aehrenthal, addressed to our Minister of Education, is lying on his desk awaiting attention. Aehrenthal is asking the latter to induce me to accept the invitation to Egypt in the interests of the Monarchy. Now all at once one discovers that there are so many interests tied up with my person. Interests which Egyptian Princes had to point out to them."

[25. August.] [...] Während derselben Zeit gingen viele Briefe aus Aegypten ein, um mich zu bewegen, den kommenden Winter (wieder für reichlichen Mammon!) an der neuen Universität in Kairo einen Kurs über Philosophie zu geben. An der Spitze dieser Gründung steht als *Président-Recteur* der Prinz Achmed Fuad. Sein Sekretär hatte den Auftrag, "alles mögliche, ja auch unmögliche" zu unternehmen, um mich zu einem bejahenden Entschluss zu bewegen. Zum Schluss kam noch ein aus Paris vom 16. d. M. datierter Brief des Prinzen selbst, den man im Original lesen möge. Vor meiner Abreise hierher schrieb ich meine abschlägige Antwort. Warum? Warum? Man vergegenwärtige sich die Striemen, die ich von meiner Sklaverei 1875-1905 noch immer am Körper trage, um zu verstehen, dass ich mich zu allem Ungewöhnlichen unfähig fühle, dass ich nun nichts anderes mag, als in meiner täglichen Arbeit verdämmern, verschwinden. Und diese tägliche Arbeit ist von herrlicher Anerkennung gekrönt. [...] [13. Oktober.] Für heute war die Ankunft des ägyptischen Prinzen Achmed Fuad und sein Besuch an unserer Universität angekündigt. Der Rektor beschied mich zum Empfang. Schon während der Vorstellung und der Begleitung zur Bibliothek deutete mir der Prinz sowie sein Begleiter Dr. Forti, Bibliothekar der Kairoer Universität und Konsul Bondy Bey, an, dass der Ausflug des Prinzen nach Budapest nur mir gegolten habe. Während des Dejeuners, zu dem mich Fuad Pascha in sein Hotel einlud, gieng nun die Bearbeitung zur Annahme der auf voriger Seite erwähnten Einladung los. "Je suis venu seulement pour vous convaincre." Ich sei "le plus grand arabisant du monde" und hätte die Pflicht, occidentalische Kultur und Wissenschaft nach dem Orient zu bringen. In Wien habe er den Minister Graf Aehrenthal und selbst den König gebeten, auf mich Pressure in diesem Sinne zu üben. Ich würde in Aegypten auf den Händen getragen und die grösste Satisfaktion mir zuteil werden. So gieng es drei Stunden. Auch patriotische Motive wurden mir von den drei Herren nahegelegt versucht. Auf der ganzen Reise durch Europa haben ferner alle Kompetenten auf mich als den Berufensten verwiesen. Ich müsse mich vor dem suffrage universel beugen. Zur selben Zeit war im Amtsblatt von heute das *Avancement* einer Menge von Universitätsprofessoren in die nächsthöhere Rangelasse zu lesen. Leute von sehr inferioren Qualitäten erlebten diese Anerkennung und Beförderung. Mein Name ist in dieser Liste nicht zu finden. Ich beschliesse in diesem Jahre das 40. Jahr meiner

<sup>30</sup> Jenő Balogh (1864-1953), lawyer and politician. Professor at Budapest University (1900-1910), state secretary in the Ministry of Religion and Public Education (1910-1913), minister of justice (1913-1917).



*Wirksamkeit an der Universität, 34 Jahre als unbesoldeter Privatdozent. Ich solle nach Aegypten gehen, um mir Lorbeeren zu holen! [17. Oktober.] Heute erhielt ich ein Schreiben unseres Ministerpräsidenten Grafen Khuen Héderváry, in dem mir Se. Exc. mit Anknüpfung an ein an ihn ergangenes Ansuchen des Prinzen Fuad nahe legt, wie sehr es im Interesse der Reputation der ungarischen Wissenschaftlichkeit läge, dem Rufe nach Aegypten Folge zu leisten. Brief und meine Antwort liegen unter den auf diese Angelegenheit bezüglichen Papieren. [28. Oktober.] Staatssekretär Balogh, mit dem ich heute abends in Fachangelegenheiten konferieren musste, teilt mir mit, dass ein Schreiben des Ministers des Auswärtigen, Graf Aehrenthal, an unseren Unterrichtsminister ihm zur Erledigung vorliege. Aehrenthal bittet den letzteren mich zu bestimmen, im Interesse der Monarchie den Ruf nach Aegypten anzunehmen. So plötzlich findet man also so grosse Interessen an meine Person geknüpft. Das musste ihnen durch aegyptische Prinzen entdeckt werden. [31. Dezember. Nachts.] [...] Noch einige Notizen zu 1912. Im Juli kam wieder ein langer Brief vom Prinzen Fuad mit Wiederholung der Einladung nach Kairo. [...] (Goldziher, Tagebuch 269-271, 274).*

While these statements shed light on the personality of a great Arabist elucidating the highly personal motives behind his decision to turn down the invitation to the Egyptian University, at the same time they also offer an insight into the early days of the newly founded institution, along with glimpses into the broader implications of an undertaking which had relevance in international politics, too.

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# AN UNKNOWN MESSAGE BY MAIMONIDES (T-S NS 327.44)

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For Alexander Fodor – a friend indeed

The Cairo Genizah, which was transferred from Cairo to Cambridge by S. Z. Schechter in 1887<sup>1</sup>, has not only brought to our attention known and unknown works and correspondence by well-known personalities as well as common people, who belonged to the Jewish, Christian, Muslim and other communities, but also has provided us with important information about their daily life and milieu. Mosheh ben Maimon, or Maimonides, is one of them. The documents relating to Maimonides, which are found in the Genizah, may be divided into five types<sup>2</sup>:

a. parts of works written by him [e.g. a leaf of the first page of a draft of his famous work *Dalālat al-Ḥā'irīn* (= *Guide for the Perplexed*) written in his own hand<sup>3</sup>, as well as fragments containing some of his other works copied usually by anonymous scribes.]

b. some of his responsa<sup>4</sup>.

c. letters written by him<sup>5</sup>.

d. letters addressed to him<sup>6</sup>.

e. letters and other documents written by other people mentioning him or referring to his works<sup>7</sup>.

Most of Maimonides' responsa are usually signed by him as *ve-hata'v Mošeh* ("it was written by Moses")<sup>8</sup>, while his letters are usually signed by him as *Mošeh b"r*

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of 'the story of the Genizah', see Reif 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kraemer 1991:61. My division slightly differs from that of Kraemer's.

<sup>3</sup> See Fragment No. T-S 10 Ka 4.1

<sup>4</sup> See Fragments Nos.: T-S 12.199; T-S 12.200; T-S 12.201; T-S 12.202. For details concerning their publication, see Reif 1988.

<sup>5</sup> See Fragments Nos.: T-S 12.192; T-S 12.832; T-S 16.290; T-S 10 J 20.5v; for details regarding their publication, see Kraemer 1990 & 1991, and Reif 1988. T-S 12.192 and T-S 16.290 have been re-published by Kraemer in 1990:88-92 and 92-98 respectively; T-S 16.832 has also been re-published by Kraemer in 1991:62-65, while T-S 10 J 20.5v has been published by Goitein 1963 and others. For details concerning the publication of T-S 12.203 and T-S 12.217, see Reif 1988.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g. Fragments Nos.: Or.1081 J 1; Or.1080 J 88; 10 K 8.14; 16.291.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g. T-S 8 J 14.18.

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g. T-S 12.199; 12.200; 12.201; 12.202.

*Maimon z.ts.l.* (Moses the son of Maimon of blessed memory)<sup>9</sup>. References to him vary, and are usually containing various honorific titles before and after his name<sup>10</sup>.

To these we may now add a new short letter (T-S NS 327.44) that I have discovered, 'hidden' in a folder mainly containing fragments in Arabic, while cataloguing the Judaeo-Arabic and Arabic fragments which belong to the New Series (NS) of the Genizah collections at Cambridge University Library. The document is written on paper measuring 11.7X7.3 cm and is in a very good condition, except for the first lines which are missing. The recto contains Maimonides' letter, while the verso contains some honorific titles in Hebrew which are very common in correspondence and possibly the name *ha-šofet* (the Judge) *šēlōmō b"r Yefet* (the addressee?). It also contains five words in Arabic script which I have not been able to decipher. Since the beginning of the letter is missing we do not know whether it contained the name of the addressee, nor do we find at the end of it the signature of Maimonides. This may be explained by the supposition that it was sent by a courier to someone well-known to Maimonides (a friend, student, etc.), and therefore no names or signature were required<sup>11</sup>.

In arguing that the letter was indeed written by Maimonides I would like to apply the following points:

a. Handwriting.

A comparison with other documents written and signed by Maimonides shows resemblance, if not complete identification, between the shape of most letters of the alphabet used by the writer. Especially the letters *a*, *b*, *t* and the ligature *al*.

b. Stylistic characteristic features which are common to Maimonides writing.

1. Maimonides' letters, excluding some of his official *iggrōt* to various Jewish communities (e.g. *Iggert Teman*, *iggeret Tehiyyat ha-Metim*, etc.), are characterized by their conciseness and succinctness.

2. Although it is quite common to find many letters from the period ending with phrases and expressions mentioning the Hebrew word *šālōm* in different variations<sup>12</sup>, it seems that Maimonides had, more than others, consistently ended all his

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g. T-S 12.192; 12.203.

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g. Kraemer 1991:68-69, fn 34.

<sup>11</sup> Other examples for unsigned letters presumably written by Maimonides are: T-S 12.217; T-S 12.832; 16.290. Another explanation for the unsigned letters of Maimonides is, according to D.N. Baneth and J. L. Kraemer, that all of them "were draft copies (which) were presumably stored in an archive, and were eventually deposited in the Genizah loft". See Kraemer 1990:93.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. e.g. T-S N-S 31.26; Also, Maimonides's son, Abraham, used to sign his responsa in the same way. See. e.g. T-S 12.206, although in T-S 12.204 he signed as *ve-hata'v Abraham b"r Mōšeh z.ts.l* (written by Abraham the son of Moses of blessed memory). For other examples, see *Responsa* under *šālōm*.

letters and responsa with expressions such as: *u-šlomhā yirbeh / yigdal, u-šlomhā / u-šlōmō yirbeh ve-yigdal, u-šlomhem yisgeh*. (May your well-being increase)<sup>13</sup>.

c. Similar views expressed by Maimonides in this letter and elsewhere in his works. For example, the idea that a man is judged by people according to his deeds and his knowledge (= wisdom) is repeated in Maimonides' works<sup>14</sup>.

### The Letter (T-S N-S 327.44)

Recto

דלך וקד אעלמחה אן אלאנסאן מא  
יכרמה אלנאס אלא לאנל עלמה ועמלה  
ואלמולא לה עלי אלראי פי דלך קנה חכמה  
קנה בינה ואללה ינעלה אבדן מן  
אלטאלבין שריעתה ואלמלתזמין בהא  
שנ' לא ימוש ספר וג'  
ושלומך ירבה

Verso

שלמה (?) בר (?) הנעלה (?) הדין (?) הנכבד  
המלמד הנאמן  
שלמה בר יפת (?) הנאמן השופט  
المولا (?)  
سمل (?) وقل (?) وخل (?) يعملوفيه (?)

<sup>13</sup> For other formulae which include the word *šalōm* used by Maimonides usually at the end of his letters, responsa and essays, see Shailat 1987-89:112, 172, 242, 250, 284, 299, 422, 450, 454, 461, 464, 470, 473; 490; 554; and 562. Also see *Responsa*, under *šalōm* - *ha-Rambam*, Nos.: 55, 237, 321 (twice), 346, 351, 355. (Some of these references are duplicates).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Maimonides, *Mišneh Tōra, Sefer ha-Madda*, *Hilḥōt Tešuva*, 4:4 (p. 230) and 9:1 (p. 251).

## Translation

.... in this, and I have already indicated<sup>15</sup> it that a man is only respected by people for his knowledge (=wisdom) and his deeds<sup>16</sup>, and the Lord has said (lit. has clearly stated His view about it) "Get wisdom, get understanding"<sup>17</sup>. May God make him ever one of the seekers of His law and adherers to it<sup>18</sup>. As has been said: May this book never cease to be, etc.<sup>19</sup> May your well-being increase.

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<sup>15</sup> Although the form *ʿlamtuhu* may be interpreted in more than one way, it probably means here 'I have discussed this matter, I have explained it'.

<sup>16</sup> There is no doubt that both words *ʿilm* (knowledge) and *ʿamal* (deed) are used here as paronomasia (= pun).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Proverbs, 4:5.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Ps. 119:31 and 44.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Joshua, 1:8.

## SOME NOTES ON SPIRIT POSSESSION AND ISLAM

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The idea of human beings being 'entered' and 'possessed' by spirits is a notion existing in many parts of the world, including sub-Saharan Africa where this complex of beliefs is particularly vigorous. In the core of spirit possession beliefs stands the very concept of 'possession'. In the case of black African cults, the word must be understood in a quite literal sense, meaning that the medium is actually and wholly 'possessed' by the spirit, which therefore can act in the medium's body as it pleases, with the possessed person having lost all control over his or her body and become no more than a kind of temporary lodging for the spirit, a mere tool for it to manifest itself through. Being occupied by the spirit, the medium's own personality is totally withdrawn from his/her body and nobody can blame the medium for any acts done during the trance of possession as all responsibility falls then with the spirit. This loss of personality and responsibility is carried so far that it makes no difference even which sex the medium belongs to: women can be freely possessed by male spirits and vice versa (Tremearne 1968:288)<sup>1</sup>. A comparison of the different possession cults' séances will readily demonstrate to what a surprising extent widely dispersed cults resemble one another, even on a strictly descriptive level; indeed the similarities are sometimes truly striking. For the interested, a considerable amount of descriptions on the rituals is available<sup>2</sup>. Of course, belief in the existence of spirits does not necessarily imply belief in spirit possession; ethnographical literature distinguishes various kinds of spirits besides possessive ones – local, ancestral, and so forth.

As I have already remarked, there is an almost infinite variety of possession cults in Africa and elsewhere (Greenberg 1966:30; Lewis 1970:299). The cults with which I am concerned in this article are not to be found exclusively within the confines of sub-Saharan Africa: quite a few were active in the Arabic-speaking countries of North Africa, and indeed, in some cases, outside Africa altogether (notably in the Ḥiğāz in what is now Saudi Arabia). But, as has always been obvious to virtually all observers<sup>3</sup>, even those cults which belong to the Arab world were actually imported

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<sup>1</sup> The spirits need only the body of the medium, for it is exclusively through a human bodily form that they are able to communicate with people; see Jolly 1994:6.

<sup>2</sup> Vidal n.d.:237-46; Greenberg 1966:51-3; Broustra-Monfouga 1973:200-4; Harries 1965: 58-9; Ingrams 1967:408-10; Skene 1917:423-34; Zenkovsky 1950:68-79; Westermarck 1920:102-4.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Seligman 1914.

from Black Africa and had for their members mainly people of black African descent (albeit not exclusively so). Spirits, possessive or otherwise, are plentiful in black African folklore and most ethnic groups make a clear distinction between the various types of the spirit world. Once in the Arabic countries, Black African slaves very soon had to conform with the local language, customs, and especially religion. And conform they did, although naturally they clinged on to much of their original folklore and traditions brought from their pagan homelands. The result was a peculiar 'folk' Islam, being a syncretic mixture of their new religion and the old beliefs, not least the belief in spirit possession. This syncretic religion and the (to the Arabs) strange practices very soon earned the black community a widespread reputation for magic powers, and it became a self-evident truth for most Arabs in North Africa and elsewhere that blacks possess an exceptionally great talent for all kinds of magical practices. This reputation developed quite soon, a fact illustrated by numerous remarks made by mediaeval Arab authors<sup>4</sup>. One can only wonder whether the reputation of blacks for magic rites could not be traced even further back in time, considering the frequent mention in early Arabic texts of the close association of blacks and musical séances and 'gaiety' (*tarab*)<sup>5</sup>. However, to gauge the exact antiquity of genuine possession cults in Arab lands is next to impossible due to the lack of unequivocal references to them: on the one hand, mediaeval Arabic literature tends to focus on 'high', literate culture rather to the exclusion of folklore (except ancient Bedouin folklore), and on the other, there are no early written sources on possession beliefs and cults within sub-Saharan Africa itself either. At any rate, the association of blacks with magical powers is, and seems to have long been, a recurrent phenomenon, especially in North African folk culture. Quite illustrative of this deeply implanted belief is a text that date from the last century, describing magic practices in the land of *Šinqīt* (present-day Mauritania): 'Sorcery has spread wide and assumed such great proportions among the slaves in the towns of *Šinqīt*

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<sup>4</sup> E.g., al-Qalqašandī, *Šubḥ* V, 291. I have not been able to find this text in the *Masālik al-abṣār* whence it is claimed to be quoted, but something quite similar is said there about the East African town of Malindi, today in Kenya; see al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik* I, 312, Book I; and cf. al-Idrīsī, *Nuzḥa* I, 59. The word *muqanqān* (more correctly, *muqanqā*), mentioned by al-Idrīsī and al-ʿUmarī alike, must have been a widespread term on the East African coast and is the same as the modern Swahili *mganga*, 'magician, medicine-man'. In fact, *mganga* is known to have sometimes been used in Swahili in reference to specialists of exorcising possessive spirits, in which sense it is synonymous with the more usual term *fundi*. (Interestingly, this usage has been reported precisely from Malindi district.) Cf. Skene 1917:421-2. See also al-Idrīsī, *Nuzḥa* I, 27 on the reputation of the womenfolk of the West African town of Kūga for magic (*sihr*).

<sup>5</sup> See for example an-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya* I, 282 (Book I). Also al-Ġāhiz, *Faḥr* 67. Of course it might just as well refer to any cheerful dance party without accompanying magic practices; whether it does will remain a matter for speculation. Ibn Buṭlān (*Šary* I, 374) also ascribes to the Bantu (*zim*) women an inborn gift for rhythm and dances, commenting besides on what appears to have been a less than complete cultural and linguistic assimilation into Middle Eastern society ('*li-ʿuḡmati alfāzihinna*').

that any slave in Tiġikġa who has been beaten up by his master, or anyone else, does so that [the aggressor] should fall ill within a span of one day or two, and the latter will soon die... No doubt can arise about the fact that a black slave can get hold of any man's heart; and if he puts his hand on the chest of his victim with the aim of curing him, having been duly threatened to be put to death by the victim's family, the patient recovers and stands up instantly, as if being unbound of ropes. Likewise, if the sorcerer is killed before his victim dies, the latter recovers instantly, as if being unbound of ropes. The cause of sorcery being so excessively widespread among the slaves in the land of *Šinqīṭ* is that so many slaves are brought there from among the Bambara. These are a nation of blacks among whom the practice of magic is beyond comparison...' (aš-Šinqīṭī, *Wasīṭ* 541). This extract clearly indicates a firm belief in the efficacy of the black slaves' magic among the local population in 19th-century Mauritania. Another Arabic source from the 19th century, when speaking of the Central Sudanese state of Dārūr, uses a term (*rūḥānī*) which is obviously a reference to possessive spirits (still being used in that sense in the Nilotic Sudan), and does not fail to emphasize the magical skills of the inhabitants, especially the Fulani (at-Tūnisī, *Tašḥīd* 281)<sup>6</sup>. Such stereotypes continued to be present in the Maġrib for quite a long time. At the beginning of the 20th century, a private temple for spirit possession practices was built in Tunis by none else than a cousin of the Turkish Bey, while in Tripoli members of the governing *Karamanlī* family encouraged spirit possession rites! The common populace believed even more firmly in black African magic (Tremearne 1968:23)<sup>7</sup>. The fact that North African possession cults show considerable divergences from the principles of recruitment usual in sub-Saharan Africa, inasmuch as blacks here were often cult members merely by virtue of their colour – a black person being by definition a cult member –, might be seen as yet another indication of the stereotyped image of 'African magic'<sup>8</sup>.

Spirit possession cults active in the Arab lands originate in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and were imported mainly as a result of the Arabic slave trade, which, in an ever increasing manner since the high Middle Ages, meant principally trade in

<sup>6</sup> at-Tūnisī also mentions the belief among the Fūr and the Mesālīṭ in ancestral spirits and zombie-like creatures (*Tašḥīd* 328-9).

<sup>7</sup> For the common folks' belief in African magic, there is abundant evidence. Cf. Westermarck 1920: 22, 154, 29; Crapanzano 1973: 44; Tremearne 1968:187-190; Dubouloz-Laffin 1941:51-52; Zawadowski 1942:141.

<sup>8</sup> It is a rather confused matter, since the aspects of Sufi fraternity, ethnic association and possession cult were all but inseparable in the *Gnāwa* and *Štanbālī* groups. On the other hand, it is reported that entrance to the Moroccan *Gnāwa* cult has not always been the privilege of blacks. An exorcised 'patient', for instance, may enter the cult regardless of her racial origin or colour (Pâques 1975:12). The appellation *Gnāwa* in all probability derives from the word 'Guinea', of which an early mention can be found in al-'Umarī, *Masālik* III, 51 (Book IV): '*bilād Ġanāwa*'.



African slaves. The different Arabic regions, quite logically, had different sources for the supply of slaves. A slave-supplying source, quite logically again, was as a rule the black African region with a substantial pagan population nearest to the Arab country concerned (Aḥmadu Bābā, *Mīrāğ* 141)<sup>9</sup>.

That beliefs about spirit possession among Muslims are to be seen as a typical example of religious syncretism has been quite obvious to all observers. Not a jot less evident is the fact that the various composing elements that have amalgamated into the phenomenon of possession cults are so fast intertwined as to make the task of clearly separating them as futile as it is meaningless. Therefore, in what follows, I merely want to discuss briefly some aspects of the interplay of Islamic and African cultural elements in the possession cults.

1. The spirit pantheon. The Arabic concept of *ḡinn* (pl. *ḡunūn*) may in fact refer to very different varieties of spirits, and whenever it has a strong possessive aspect, one is justified in suspecting African cultural influence behind the phenomenon<sup>10</sup>. Arabic *ḡunūn* appear to have no real personalities or characters; although some have traditionally been named, they in no way come close to the intricate African spirit pantheons that we shall presently describe (Crapanzano 1973:139, 141-8; Dubouloz-Laffin 1941:59)<sup>11</sup>. African possessive spirits are a less than homogeneous and unified lot, there being many features that divide the spirit class, not unlike human society.

<sup>9</sup> Egypt, for instance, was supplied with slaves throughout the Middle Ages from the pagan countries south of the ancient Muslim kingdom of Kānem-Bornū in the Lake Chad region, with which she had very powerful cultural and commercial links anyway. See al-Qalqaṣandī, *Ṣubḥ* V, 280. Western Algeria and Morocco imported their slaves from West Africa, especially the land of the Bambara. This was particularly true after the Moroccan conquest of the former Songay Empire in the late 16th century. Ibn Ḥaldūn in the 14th century already mentions the lands south of the Niger, the inhabitants of which were called *Lam-lam* by Arab authors, as the principal slave source for North Africa (*Muqaddima* I, 356). In later periods, the Bambara were the ethnic group regarded as the infidels *par excellence* (*kuḡfār Banbara*), hence the most important enslavable population around the Niger. For examples, cf. Taḍkira 12, 21, 45, 69, 76, etc. (and the excerpt quoted above from the *Wasīṭ*). In the list of enslavable tribes compiled by Aḥmadu Bābā (*Mīrāğ* 158), the Bambara are not mentioned; we find instead the Mossi, the Gurmanche, the Bussa, the Dogon, the Bobo, and some other less-known ethnic groups.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., Ibn al-Faqīh, in describing Wabār, the reputed abode of the *ḡinn* located somewhere deep in the Arabian desert (*Buldān* 95), depicts what approximates the concept of local spirits, rather than possessive ones, who guard their land jealously against the intrusion of humans. On the other hand, the son of the Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr was known to have been afflicted by regular visits of a female spirit (*imra'atun min al-ḡinn*) with whom he had fallen in love, losing his consciousness several times a day (al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* XIII, 313-5); yet here again we face a 'spirit-lover', a *qarīna*-type spirit, and not a possessive one which would only use the body of its medium as a mere vessel to inhabit.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. the Arabic *ḡinn* called *Umm aṣ-Ṣibyān* ('Mother of Infants') or (in North Africa) *Tābī'a* ('The Follower'; see Doutté 1909:116), who tries to rob mothers of their newborn babies through every possible means, displays truly striking resemblances to certain black African spirit characters (the Hausa *Uwal Yara*, or the Swahili *Subiani* and *Babrye Watoto*; see Tremearne 1968:246; Koritschoner 1936:211; Kindy 1972:3).

The principal dividers of spirits, precisely like in our own circles, are religion, ethnic affiliation, tribal or clan membership, race and, alas, even social standing. This practically means that we can differentiate, within the spirit pantheon of every single cult, between spirits 'who' belong to various ethnic groups and 'who' are either Muslim or infidel, black or white, free or servile, etc. As for ethnic groups among the spirits, they corresponded exactly to the ethnic groups known to the people who believed in these spirits<sup>12</sup>. Besides having ethnic affiliations, spirits are further divided into 'clans' or 'families'. Obviously, these are not subdivisions of the spirits' ethnic groups, as quite often these 'clans' seem to cut across 'ethnic boundaries': spirit figures of one and the same clan may well belong to different ethnic groups<sup>13</sup>. Finally, religion and colour are no less serious dividers of spirits than they are of men. The concept of true-believer spirits and infidel ones is a typically Muslim idea, present in the folklore of many an Islamized society, not to speak of Arabs themselves. It comes then as no surprise that we find this idea among Muslim Africans as well. What may, however, make us wonder a bit is the fact that the division of the spirit pantheon into Muslims and pagans appears, nay even plays a major role, in the spirit cults of predominantly non-Muslim ethnic groups, like the *Girama* of Kenya, who believe in the existence of a class of spirits titled 'Islamic/Arabic/Quranic' (*pepo wa Kiislamu/Kiarabu/Kikurani*) (Parkin 1970:224; Parkin 1991a:187-8). As far as thoroughly Islamized African peoples are concerned, the Muslim/pagan division within their spirit world is a natural part of their beliefs. Evidence for this comes abundant, but let it suffice here to mention only the Moroccan *Gnāwa*, the Hausa and the Songay (Westermarck 1920:7-8; Greenberg 1966:39, 60; Rouch 1945:17, 19).

The most fascinating element in spirit possession beliefs is the spirit characters themselves. These figures are by no means an undifferentiated lot of vaguely defined

<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, the Songhay-Zarma possession cults of Niger and Mali had Zarma, Fulani, Gurmanche, Hausa, Bariba, Mossi, Tuareg, and, with the advent of the colonial period, European characters among their spirits (Vidal n.d.:27, 42, 79; Gibbal 1984:74; Stoller 1984:176-7). Swahili spirits represent ethnic groups like the Abyssinians, the Malgache, the Somali, the Nubians, the Arabs, the Nyasa, the Ngindo, the Zaramo, the Manyema, the Luguru, the Masai, the Hadimu, etc. (Hurrayz 1988:69; Ingrams 1967:436; Koritschoner 1936:211-13; Gray 1969:174; Skene 1917:422; Zein 1974:249). Likewise, the Sudanese *zār* cult has spirits that belong to the Abyssinians, the Egyptians, the Copts, the *Fellāta* (West African settlers in the Nilotic Sudan), the Dinka, etc. Some spirit characters in the Omdurman *zār* cult have names which indicate their ethnic background: there is *Kalām bint Nūba* (from the Nuba Hills), *Amūna al-ʿArabīyya* (a Bedouin), *Sīd al-Ḥarb Barnāwī* (from Bornu), and a group of spirits known as *Nās al-ḡabal* ('the Hill Folk') or *Zurug* ('Negroes'), considered to be descendants of captives from the Nuba Hills of Kordofān Province. And arguably the most bizarre character in the Sudanese Šaygiyya *zār* pantheon is the spirit of a British consul-general in Egypt, Lord Cromer. See Trimmingham 1949:175; Zenkovsky 1950:70; Al-Shahi 1986:114, 117.

<sup>13</sup> The Zarma (Songay), for example, know of seven spirit clans, which system, though subject to some minor changes, has been in existence for a considerable time, exceeding in any case half a century. Cf. Vidal n.d.:41, 56, 79; Gibbal 1984:69-70, 76; Rouch 1945:18-9.

clans and ethnics; quite on the contrary, each spirit normally has a fully-developed personality, precisely like humans, with his or her own likes and dislikes, idiosyncrasies, tastes and preferences in dress, music, dances, food and drink, habits, company, etc. This makes spirits resemble humans considerably, to the extent that we can say spirits form a society which is a true replica of our own, with certainly more than a touch of sarcasm in it. Actually the spirit pantheon is a field where black African fancy is at its best, creating a grotesque, enormously entertaining world of fantasy, yet never for a moment destroying the balance between fun and the serious, even quasi-religious side of the whole affair. In some spirit cults, sometimes in some particular spirit characters, the ironic aspect predominates, while other cults are of a less profane nature.

The words 'cure' and 'exorcism' are often used in relation to possession by spirits. This is due to the fact that such possession is naturally considered to be a condition somewhat abnormal and therefore only temporarily bearable; spirits must be got rid of if at all possible. The two most important phases of possession rites are, accordingly, identification of the possessing spirit, and satisfying its needs and whimsies by way of sacrifices, music, offerings. The identification of the spirit is an element of primary importance, perhaps the single most important act during all the rites. In this aspect, possession cults again display a striking uniformity throughout Islamic Africa: identification of the spirit generally entails a sort of interrogation directed towards the medium – who is at these moments none other than the spirit –, as a result of which the spirit is forced to disclose its name and identity<sup>14</sup>.

2. Possession cults and gender. Cult leaders in the overwhelming majority of cases are female. Leadership of the cults is generally afforded to an elderly woman, although male cult leaders are by no means an unknown species. Among some peoples (like the Hausa), it is observable that the more 'Islamized' a population, the more likely that possession cult members, along with their leaders, will be women, leaving orthodox religion to be the domain of men. With other peoples, however, this observation is far from valid; the Songay and the Swahili, both thoroughly Islamized, had their *zimas* and *fundis*, respectively, and these might be, and indeed often were, men (Trimingham 1964:114, 118; Gibbal 1984:65-6). Spirit cult leaders can only be female in North Africa (called *ʿārifa* in Tunis, *moqaddma* in Morocco – although, occasionally, a male *mʿallem* may lead some *Gnāwa* groups), among the natives of Bagirmi (Chad), the Muslim Hausa, in the Nilotic Sudan (*ṣayha* or *kūdiya/gūdiya*), etc. (Pâques 1975:17; Tremearne 1968: 30, 150, 151; Vidal n.d.:129; Trimingham

<sup>14</sup> This interrogation is to be encountered in cults as widely dispersed as West Africa, the East African Coast, the Nilotic Sudan, and North Africa. Everywhere the interrogative technique forms the very basis, indeed the starting-point, of exorcism. Cf. Vidal n.d.:131, 141-5; Dubouloz-Laffin 1941: 58-9; Greenberg 1966:51-3; Harries 1965:59-60; Trimingham 1964:118; Allen 1981:101-13; Omari, Mvungi 1981:143 [on the spirit called *Kinyamkera*]; Trimingham 1949:175.

1949:175; Zenkovsky 1950:65, 68). The few isolated pagan communities of the Hausa (*Maguzawa*) display an interesting contrast to their Muslim fellows: whereas spirit cults among the Muslims are headed by women, and often prostitutes for that matter, pagan possession cult leaders are invariably male (Broustra-Monfouga 1973:207; Raulin 1962:270).

Possession cult membership may vary between exclusively female and mixed, purely male cults being next to nonexistent, at least in the Islamized regions of Africa. It is probable that this has not always been the case: the general tendency is towards a growing female dominance of these cults, together with a growing religious disapproval of them. A very indicative remark is reported from Maradi region, Niger, where men do not participate in possession rites at all: '*C'est une affaire de femme, cela ne nous concerne pas, les dieux [that is, les génies!] ne nous aiment pas*' (Broustra-Monfouga 1973:200)<sup>15</sup>. Among the just partly Islamized Giriama of Kenya, a lot of women get possessed, as opposed to a limited number of men, but, since all possessed men as a rule join the ranks of practising mediums while this holds true of only a minority of possessed women, the numbers of male and female mediums are for all practical purposes equal (Parkin 1970:224)<sup>16</sup>.

3. **The confinement of spirits during Ramaḍān.** There is a belief, of Islamic origin, ubiquitous in all possession cults covered by this study, which gained so wide acceptance in Africa that it has general currency even amongst pagan groups slightly influenced by Islam. I am referring to the belief that the month of *Ramaḍān* has particular implications within the spirit world, no less than among humans. The general tendency is to believe that spirits are 'imprisoned', 'chained', 'bound', 'fastened' during *Ramaḍān*, therefore their activity is seriously reduced in this period (Gray 1969:178)<sup>17</sup>. Evidence for this belief comes from all regions of Islamic Africa, and the whole phenomenon is not specifically African: a lot of people in many Islamized lands seem to reduce any activity considered un-Islamic or unorthodox during the fasting month<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, possession rites, considered somewhat 'un-Islamic', must

<sup>15</sup> In a similar vein, the Šāygiyya of Northern Sudan label possession cults '*amāyil an-niswān*, 'a women's affair'. See Al-Shahi 1986:109. On the appeal of possession cults to marginalized groups within the society, cf. Wilson 1967.

<sup>16</sup> On the strictly Muslim Segeju of Tanganyika, cf. Gray 1969:178.

<sup>17</sup> Among the Hausa, even such small groups as remained pagan (around Birni N'Konni town, in Niger) will believe in the spirits' imprisonment during Ramaḍān and perform the release ceremonies in their due time. See Broustra-Monfouga 1973:200-204.

<sup>18</sup> E.g., al-Isfahānī (*Agānī* VII 235) tells us a story about the infamous libertine and poet al-Ḥusayn b. aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk who invites his beloved catamite called Yusr for a drinking party before Ramaḍān sets in (*qabla ḥuḡūmihi*), for then they have to abandon that kind of behaviour for a whole month.

cease in the fasting month, only to be continued thereafter<sup>19</sup>. The idea of spirits being locked away during Ramaḍān can be traced back to mediaeval Islamic traditions attributed to the Prophet (*ḥadīṭ*), according to which malevolent spirits are handcuffed (*gullat 'utāt al-ġinn*) for the duration of the fasting month (Kayyāl n.d.: 44)<sup>20</sup>. Syrian folk belief has continued to hold that during the whole of Ramaḍān all the *'afārīt* are confined to a copper holder kept on *Ġabal Qāt* [*Qāf?*] (Kayyāl n.d.: 52). In keeping with the above-mentioned mediaeval Arabic traditions, the Sudanese *zār* displays some modification in the widespread African notion of the spirits' imprisonment in Ramaḍān: according to the Northern Sudanese, it is only the evil, infidel spirits that are locked off in that month, while benevolent, Muslim ones roam free as ever (Zenkovsky 1950:73). At any event, even the evil spirits cannot be held in capture infinitely; there comes a day when spirits have to be restored to liberty and let go. This date is fixed either on the 27th of Ramaḍān (the famous *Laylat al-Qadr*) or at the end of the month. For example, the Hausa used to hold the latter view, the Swahili were divided in this question (Middleton 1992:166; Trimmingham 1964:120)<sup>21</sup>, while in North Africa the prevailing opinion seems to have been that only good spirits are released on *Laylat al-Qadr*, wicked ones having to wait until the end of Ramaḍān (Westermarck 1920:48). Perhaps the most interesting system is that of the black brotherhood of Tunis (*Ṣṭanbālī*): the 'temple' of the spirit cult (*Gidan Kuri*) would be locked up at the very beginning of the fasting month, with all the spirits inside, except for the extremely old and deeply religious Muslim spirit, *Mallam Tsofo*, who is harmless and lurks near the threshold anyway. On the 15th of Ramaḍān, the temple was opened and its inmates checked, then the building was locked again. On *Laylat al-Qadr*, all good spirits were released, with some accompanying ceremonies, and the process culminated in the freeing of all spirits at the end of the month (Tremearne 1968:274-5).

4. The rapport between 'orthodox' piety and possession cults. That possession cults are a manifestation of religious syncretism has been noted here. The overall character of possession cults, which incorporates pagan as well as Islamic elements, is summed up well by a comment of L. Vidal on Zarma spirit cults: it is perhaps totally meaningless to speak separately of pagan beliefs and Islam, as there is no marked opposition between the two (Vidal n.d.:41). The double – both Islamic and pagan Afri-

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Al-Shahi 1986:115.

<sup>20</sup> It was classified by al-Bayhaqī as a *ḥadīṭ ḥasan*. The *ḥadīṭ* goes on to say that the gates of Paradise are kept open throughout Ramaḍān, whilst those of Hell are kept closed.

<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Middleton attributes the very word *mfunguo*, which precedes every month's name in Swahili except that of Ramaḍān, to the belief that spirits are 'let loose' (the Swahili verb *kufungua* means 'to open', 'to release') for the greater part of the year. The final day of Śā'bān is called *mfungo*, 'shutting, imprisonment'. See Middleton 1992:165.



can – origins of possession-related beliefs and rites well attest to that, and have given rise to a great deal of speculations as to ‘how Islamic’ these cults actually are, whether cult adepts should be regarded as ‘real Muslims’ or just ‘nominal’ ones, and so forth. It is imperative that we notice the utter futility, if not the absurdity, of such inquiries.

As a matter of fact, it has been claimed, and rightly too, that possession cults as we know them, far from being suppressed by Islamization, emerged precisely as a result of a growing acceptance in Africa of Islam, with which traditional religious beliefs comfortably merged. Although it is a matter for anyone’s guess if it actually happened so, a strong argument in this theory’s favour is the fact that ancestor cult, a vigorous feature of a lot of black African cultures, has been continually losing ground in the cultures of most Muslim Africans, sometimes having all but disappeared, while possession cults have quite literally flourished in those very communities.

It is remarkable how widespread Islamic observances are in possession cult activities and beliefs; of this we have already seen an example, that of the spirits’ imprisonment during the month of *Ramādān*. The significant point here is that *Ramādān* is seen as a special period even by pagans, their spirits respect the holy month no less than those of the Muslims<sup>22</sup>. Other Islamic elements in possession rites, as there are too many, will now be only mentioned in passing. In Zarma lands, even the most staunchly infidel spirits (like *Dongo*, the thunder spirit) will ask of their mediums such services as reciting certain Islamic prayers, or giving alms (*sadaqa*) to the needy. The *Gimbala* cult’s devotees in Mopti offer their sacrifices to the famous Friday Mosque of that town, to seek God’s blessing. Almost all possession séances begin with an Islamic prayer, usually the *Fātiḥa*. Also, typically Islamic expressions like *bismillāh*, *inšallāh*, *al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, have now for a long time been frequently used by pagan no less than Muslim possession cult members (Vidal n.d.:95-6; Gibbal 1984: 124, 156). On Islamic holidays, it is not uncommon for possession cults to hold a big ceremony, as is the case with the North African Hausa on the Prophet’s birthday (*mawlid*) (Greenberg 1966:24; Tremearne 1968:280). In the Kenyan island of Lamu, the slave population held poetic recitals in honour of the Prophet on his birthday (*Maulidi ya Kiswahili*), and spirits were thought to have the habit of possessing some of the participants on these occasions (Zein 1974:112-3). Quranic *sūras* occupy a significant position in many a possession rite, for instance, the reputedly very powerful *sūrat Yā Sīn*, or the last two *sūras* of the Quran. These incantations did in fact sometimes go under the name of *dawa ya pepo*, ‘spirit medicine’, in East Africa (Trimingham 1964:118, 122). North African followers of possession cults show a par-

<sup>22</sup> This strange phenomenon – of pagans taking over characteristically Islamic beliefs within the framework of possession cults – has further manifestations as well. Cf. Greenberg 1966: 27; Raulin: 1962: 270.

ticular attachment to the famous black muezzin of the Prophet, Bilāl al-Ḥabašī, who is respected as the spiritual founder of their brotherhoods and is called by them *Sīd-nā Blāl*, or *Sīyidnā Būlel*, 'our master Bilāl' (Westermarck 1920:102; Pâques 1975:12).

In many places, notably in North Africa, a close connection between spirit possession cults and popular Sufism (Islamic mysticism) can be observed. As has been mentioned before, North African spirit cults are often considered as Sufi quasi-brotherhoods with a predominantly, if not exclusively, black membership. This has resulted in a considerable number of black Sufi saints acquiring fame in the Maḡrib. As popular religion in this region is characterised above all by the influence of Sufi brotherhoods and the veneration of saints, the merging of black African cults with this 'folk' Islam should surprise none<sup>23</sup>. The merging process must have begun at a quite early date, for a 17th-century Sudanese chronicler from Timbuctoo already speaks of the well-known 'spirit saints' *Sīdī Šamharūš* and *Sīdī Maymūn* in a perfectly matter-of-fact way (Kaṭī, *Fattāš* 12, 24-9)<sup>24</sup>. On the other hand, some *zār* cults in the Nilotic Sudan conveniently accommodate well-known Sufi saints like Šayḥ 'Abdalqādir al-Ġilānī or Šayḥ Aḥmad al-Badawī among their spirit characters (Al-Shahi 1986:115).

It is perhaps superfluous to say that the relationship between possession cult adepts and the representatives of a somewhat more 'orthodox' Islam has never been an unambiguous one. Quite naturally, some of the markedly un-Islamic extravaganzas of the cults attracted the frowning attention of pious Muslims, but the interesting thing is that the latter's reactions were not necessarily, indeed were not usually, hostile. The connections of possession cults with the Islamic élite seem to have been characterised largely by mutual tolerance on a 'live-and-let-live' basis (Middleton 1992:162). Some groups, it is true, have traditionally considered it beneath their dignity to take part in such dubious activities as possession rites (a relevant example for this attitude is the aristocratic, staunchly Muslim Fulani of the last centuries), but reproach of, or hostility to, the cults is a fairly recent development, fuelled by such influences as purist and reformist movements in the Islamic world. Nonetheless, possession rites have always been equated by the pious Muslim intelligentsia with black magic (*sihr*), which is condemned by Islam (Greenberg 1966:68; Parkin

<sup>23</sup> The most famous of black Sufi saints in North Africa are *Sīdī Sa'd* (a.k.a. *Bū 'Akrūša*, a former slave from near Lake Chad, buried in Mornāg, Tunisia), *Sīdī Maṣūr* (in Sfax), *Sīdī Masari*, *Sīdī Makari* (both in Tripoli), *Sīdī Bū Sa'id* (whose name is now famous for the Tunisian resort town which has grown up around his shrine), etc. The annual pilgrimages (*ziyāra*) to the shrines of these saints are full of possession cult ceremonies (Zawadowski 1942:147-8; Dubouloz-Laffin 1941:50, 56; Tremearne 1968:224-7). Moroccans have gone so far in their veneration of saints that many 'saints' are to be found within the Moroccan spirit pantheon, exactly as if they were humans. Some of these 'spirit marabouts': *Sīdī Buqnādel*, *Sīdī Ḥammū*, *Sīdī Maymūn*; also female ones: *Lālla Rqīya*, *Lālla Mīra*, *Lālla Ġmīla*, *Lālla 'Aysa*, etc. See Westermarck 1920:36-9.

<sup>24</sup> On these spirit characters in North African folklore, cf. Westermarck 1920:28, 29; Doutté 1909:160.



1991b:135)<sup>25</sup>. But, as we have observed, eyes used to be shut and tolerance was the order of the day, especially as nobody would ever have dared to question the efficiency of possession rites. The founder of the Muslim Fulani state of *Māsina* (in Mali), Šayḥ Ḥamadun (Seku Hamadu), is reported to have officially supported the *Gimbala* spirit cult and even to have had a protecting spirit of his own, *Jiné Samurussa* (Vidal n.d.:45, 162; Gibbal 1984:117-8). Hostility towards 'folksy' religion in general, and possession cults in particular, began in the Sudanic belt with the Fulani *ḡibāds*. The attitude of Muslim zealots is well exemplified by the words of 'Uṭmān dan Fōdiō, the most famous of the Fulani *ḡibād* leaders in Nigeria. He had this to say about what he saw as the antics of 'infidels', a term in which he included 'loose Muslims' as well: 'They are like animals (...) One of their well-known ways of behaviour is that they are reluctant to abandon the traditions, however condemnable, of their ancestors. [...] [they are] engaged in wrong acts, day and night, without any purpose approved of by the *šarī'a*, such as playing the castanets, the flutes and the drums...' (Dan Fōdiō, *Farq* 560, 562-3).

Recently, quite a few reformist and purist movements have emerged, particularly in the Sudanic belt, which facilitated the gradual withdrawal of possession cults from public life. The purist *Ḥamalliyya* movement, whose members are called in Songhay lands *Labilahi* (from the Islamic credo '*Lā ilāha illā 'llāh*'), has done much to force Zarma possession cults into retreat, as have the Fulani aristocracy of Northern Nigeria. The result of these purist efforts can be seen in a good many places over sub-Saharan Africa where, although belief in spirits is far from extinct, cult activities have all but ceased (Vidal n.d.:62-3, 78, 157, 165; Tremearne 1968: 23)<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> On the condemnation of *sihr* by many scholars of the *šarī'a*, cf. Ibn Ḥaldūn, *Muqaddima* III, 1149-50 ('*wa-li-hādā kāna s-siḥru kufran*'), 1157 ('*aṣ-šarī'atu [...] ḡa'alathu kullahu bāban wāḥidan maḥzūran*').

<sup>26</sup> While purist movements have until recently kept a rather low profile in East Africa, still, they have sometimes made their presence felt there, too. See Ingrams 1967: 433; and cf. Middleton 1992: 174.

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## IBN ṬABĀṬABĀ'S POETICS\*

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Ibn Ṭabāṭabā (d. 933/34) is an outstanding representative of 10<sup>th</sup> century Arabic literary criticism whose famous *ʿIyār aš-šīʿr* ('The Criterion of the Poem') contributed to the development of medieval Arabic literary aesthetics. The work occupies a special place among critical writings because, in contrast to the contemporary writers who generally spent their efforts discussing the rhetorical details of literary works of art, Ibn Ṭabāṭabā focused his attention on the rationally apprehensible creative activity, determined by ends and means. He made a detailed analysis on the process of literary communication: he studied the creator from the angle of the created work, the work of art from the angle of its structure and the recipient from the angle of the impact of the work. His thoughts on the creator and the work were continued in critical tradition, but his observations on reception and impact were practically forgotten by literary studies. His position on poetics is determined by rational demands made of poetry, and his aesthetics too is based on a rational conception of poetry. This seminal work has come down to us in a single 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript (Escorial 238, 22 – 57). This paper sums up our investigations concerning Ibn Ṭabāṭabā's poetics and, to some extent, his aesthetics. In this work the medieval author started with the position that the poets of his age were subjected to "persecution" (*miḥna*) because they were unable to attain in their poems the poetic requirements of "old" Arabic poetry regarded as the model. To resolve this crisis he elaborated his poetics according to the considerations of the *habit* of poet (and recipient). In its essential elements this was in line with the system of medieval Arabic poetic principles developed in the works of contemporary literary scholars and summed up later in the concept of *ʿamūd aš-šīʿr* ('the principles of poem-making').

In order to place Ibn Ṭabāṭabā's critical activity in its proper context we have to study the development of medieval Arabic literature. It is known that in keeping with the animistic world view, the development of Arabic poetry began from a magic "undifferentiated art" and after the appearance of Islam it was transformed into urban-courtly "official" poetry on the one hand and "folklore" art on the other. One way of studying the transition from the popular mode to the aristocratic mode is to examine the shift in ideas on inspiration in the given literary material. This analysis shows that the sacral image of the poet as inspired by a *ḡinnī* characteristic of the early stage of Arabic poetry, gradually disappeared by the appearance of Islam. The

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\* This paper sums up the author's views on this subject as elaborated in his monograph of the same title (in print).

process was strengthened by the Prophet Muḥammad's rough outline of a cosmology which placed the traditional source of inspiration, the *ġinnī*, on a lower level of the spheres of existence. He attributed his own inspiration (*wahy*) to the "real" transcendence (*Allāh*), and so distinguished himself from the inspiration of poets, soothsayers and others which became "secondary" and so could no longer be regarded as sacral. The documents referring to "muses" can be found in the invocation parts of poems, or in the narratives discussing the poet's creative difficulties. An analysis of these shows that over the three centuries from the time immediately preceding the birth of Islam to the 'Abbāsids, the *ġinnī* addressed in this invocation gradually disappears. The fact that poetry fell silent for a while after the appearance of Islam shows that its source of inspiration was eradicated. A long transitional period followed in which poetry gradually became part of practical life showing an independent rationality of end and means, while its sacral nature was taken over by the Qur'ān. In this way the sacral was reformulated within the general frame of Islam, and the Qur'ān filled the role of sacral text. This is expressed in the dogma of the inimitability of the Qur'ān (*i'ğāz al-Qur'ān*), which gradually became fixed. And on the other side, literary activity, in contrast to inspiration, came under the paradigm of craft (*sinā'a*).

Historically, the paradigm of craft characterised literatures of the population of the conquered territories and as such became the basis of the new Arabic speaking courtly poetry and culture that was being organised. In shaping the world-view of the new empire created through conquest, it drew on Byzantine Christian, Persian Mazdaist, heathen Bedouin Arab and early Muslim traditions and by placing these on new foundations created its own distinctive system. On the general basis of *hylomorphism*, medieval Muslim thinkers interpreted the phenomena of the world from the angle of *material* and *form*, and regarded things, implements and art objects to be created as transformation or shaping, the development of new forms. "Craft" or Arabic *sinā'a*, is used to designate all kinds of courtly crafts and can mean arranging material into new form. This paradigm originated in the Hellenistic traditions and strengthened into Muslim courtly culture. Its origin can be sought among Stoics for, surprisingly, in the work of al-Āmidī (d. 987) and al-Hafāḡī (d. 1063) we find the same analysis of the Aristotelian "causes" – the material, formal, creative and the aims – characterising the process of creation that can be read in Seneca (*Epistulae* No. 61). The connection between Stoic philosophical thinking and that of medieval Arabic speaking critics is attributable to the living traditions of classical schools of rhetoric operating on the conquered territory of the Byzantine or Iranian empire. However, it is obvious that such a rigid use of the formal elements cannot lead to an understanding of the mimetic nature of poetry. While the craft paradigm helps and supports the acquisition of routine and promotes its fulfilment in creative activity, on the other hand the "cast" notion of a work of art (*sabika mufrāḡa*) restricts the assertion of its elevated generalising role. In this way the poetic work of art is rather an art of object, an objectivity that can be viewed from all sides and held in the hands



which, together with its basic literary (aesthetic) functions – *dulce et utile* – must also serve functions of social representation, particularly in the case of genres offering the possibility of serving such functions in medieval Arabic literature, such as the panegyric (*madīh*), the lament (*marṭiya*), the boasting song (*iftihār*). It was his encounter with this craft-type poetry that made Ibn Ṭabāṭabā write his work. Poetry is a craft, its function according to the prophetic tradition is to offer wisdom (*ḥikma*) and provide enjoyment (enchantment: *sahr*) for the recipients. This concept coincides with the position of other literary scholars of the time and it can be said that with the spread of Islam it became the general paradigm of the verbal arts. Systematic acquisition of the knowledge needed for the craft, study of the poetic tradition, and practice of the skills learned became the most important constituent elements of the *habit* of the craftsman-poet, in which natural endowments (such as a sense of rhythm) are not of decisive importance since man's most distinctive characteristic is his *educable reason*, and *everything can be learned*. He sums up the knowledge that can be acquired and the ability of acquisition in the concept of *kamāl al-ʿaql* ('mature reason'). Ibn Ṭabāṭabā shows the requirements made of a poetic work of art in conjunction with his detailed analysis of the creative process. Naturally the application of hylomorphism plays a decisive role in this. He regards the work as a shaped unit of a given content, as "one" (unity: *waḥda*), in which the most important criterion is the harmonious fitting (*ʾitidāl*) of the parts. It can be observed that this unity appears in the first instance on the level of rhythm, but it becomes clear from his analysis of the creative process that he also understands this *ʾitidāl*-concept to include the non-rhythmic harmony of the parts of the work. However, the text convinces us that this unity (*waḥda*) cannot be interpreted in the domain of the "organic" unity of the works of art. It can be seen that, as in the case of his contemporaries, the line (*bayt*) is the central verse concept in Ibn Ṭabāṭabā's system of thinking, because it contains in itself a thought or fact of life (*maʿnā*) which determines the whole genre. Whatever the case, the author defines the genre and from that the structure of the poem from the angle of the subject-matter and perhaps this is why, when comparing a poem with the structure of a letter (*risāla*), he cites the rhetoricising statement of al-ʿAttābī (d. 823) that "*the poem is formal prose, the letter is informal verse*." Ibn Ṭabāṭabā also demands unity in style and word usage and, in addition to the rules for the internal equilibrium and harmony of the given work of art, he expects the work to comply with the system of conditions of the audience which can be taken into account: regarding style, word usage, names, etc. Furthermore, the author supports the unity of the given work of art by stressing the significance of the *taḥalluṣ* (connective) lines which have the function of linking the parts of the poem together. He is the first author to deal with this question and in this respect he also performs a literary history analysis, showing that this type of inserted pieces is more frequent in the poetry of the "modern" writers than it is in the old ones regarded as model. So, it can be clearly seen that the work of art is in reality an art object, a real cast (*sabīka mufra-*



ga), created by craft determined by the rationality of ends and means. The harmony of the parts, the rapport with the audience, the internal (logical) and technical linking of the parts once again reinforces the assertion of the craft paradigm.

Now, the rational conception of poetry does not allow the poet to use metaphors (*isti'āra* or *mağāz*), or at least not ones that cannot be controlled by the reason. Consequently, the chief creative methods are description (*wasf*), comparison (*tašbih*) and wisdom expressed in proverbial form (*ḥikma*). The rationality demands Ibn Ṭabāṭabā's study to give prominence to similes among the creative methods. Therefore he discusses in detail meaning, structure and possibilities of similes. In this it draws on the work of predecessors, and at the same time also represents the opinion of contemporaries (e.g. Ibn Abī 'Awn d. early 10<sup>th</sup> century). We can say that the craft paradigm linked to a rational world-view does not allow for the author to prescribe usage of the uncontrolled identification by metaphor (*this is that*) in place of logically controllable full comparison (*this is like that*). In the history of poetry this means that the position Ibn Ṭabāṭabā adopts on the question of the metaphor *versus* simile gives precedence to the rationally controllable simile over the vagueness of the metaphor. Arabic literary criticism treated plagiarism (*sariqa*) as a central issue. Following from his conception of poetry, Ibn Ṭabāṭabā discusses the poetic heritage of the past as a *material* (*ma'nā*) that can be recycled, merely warning that with certain techniques modern poets should adopt the solutions, poetic images and similes of the old poets. This position legitimised borrowings and proposed standard solutions, e.g. that the poet should mask the borrowing by changing the genre or through some kind of *re-formulation*. In this way he opened a possibility for imitation similar to that proposed by Quintilian in his *Institutio*.

It is the exceptional merit of the work of Ibn Ṭabāṭabā that, after analysing the creator and the work, he also devotes attention to reception, to the impact of the work. In this too, he can be shown to draw on Hellenistic, and more precisely, on Stoic traditions. In describing reception, the *assent* of the Stoics can be recognised from the choice of words (the beautiful: actually 'full' – Arabic *wāfīn*, and the ugly: actually 'incomplete' – Arabic *nāqis*) and the train of thought. However, it is very difficult to clarify the question because the author's conception of the psyche cannot be identified clearly from the laconic sentences of our text. On the basis of the data available it can only be regarded as probable that reception (or rejection) takes place through 'comprehension' (*fahm*) under the control of the "mature reason" (*kamāl al-'aql*), operating through man's natural characteristic, the criterion of truth. In my opinion the word 'criterion' (*īyār*) in the title of the work refers specifically to this situation of *reception*. It has historical significance because the question did not arise at all anywhere else among the early Arab critics. The main point is that reception is a twofold event in the psyche leading to knowledge: first, it is a physically determined perception and second, it contains a shift of interest to comprehension and knowledge. It seems to me that this notion of reception corresponds to the epistem-

ology of theologians influenced by Stoicism who state that the basic condition for all knowledge is the existence of a correspondence between the perception of senses (*maḥsūs*) and the immediate knowledge of soul (*ma'qūl*). (This epistemology can be characterised as being built on two foundations: on the universal reliability of sense perception and on the universality of the immediate knowledge of the intellect.) The work of art is thus evaluated according to the criterion of truth. However this means that it is not the expected beauty that is the most important category, but the truth (*ṣidq*), and its opposite is not the ugly, but the false or untrue (*kaḍḥ, kaḍib*). The most important demand made of a work of art is that it correspond to reality.

However, the sense in which Ibn Ṭabāṭabā speaks of correspondence to reality is open to question. Discussing the origin of the work of art, Martin Heidegger made a distinction between the real and the means-nature of works. The real work of art can be described as "*factum est*", as truth, but the work which is of means-nature can be summed up in the formula "*N.N. fecit.*" On this basis Ibn Ṭabāṭabā's whole theory of art regards as the ideal works in the form determined by the end-means rationality of craft, technically works of means-nature in the sense of Heidegger, but it demands of these the quality (truth) which characterises the "miracle", "*factum est*" works. It seems to me that medieval Arabic literary criticism did not recognise the real difference between the pre-Islamic and the so-called "modern" (*muḥḍat*) poets. They compared the "undifferentiated art" bearing original and sacral truth of the original community with the possible poetry of their own age merely as a product of a special craft and expected it to be imitated on that level. However, they did not have the stock of tools needed to reveal the universal truth of their own courtly art. Because, on the other hand the Qur'an – as direct manifestation of the truth – fully served all the functions of "undifferentiated art" for the Muslim community. Poetry demanding to be regarded as an art became a technical question of entertainment and instruction.

The analysis of the impact of the work promises to show clearly that Ibn Ṭabāṭabā was aware of the complex phenomenon of the emotional and intellectual influence and attempted to analyse this with the method at his disposal. He saw the function of poetry as transmitting wisdom and providing pleasure, but he also recorded, even if only with a simile, the modification taking place in a non-mechanical, hidden, miraculous way in the recipient's *ethos*. Here too, the fact that we are unable to reconstruct in full the author's knowledge of psychology causes some difficulty. Whatever the case, Ibn Ṭabāṭabā writes that poetry "*makes the cowardly brave,*" and it acts like fine wine and the pleasure this brings – *aryāḥiyya* ('exaltation, joy') – appears practically as a *terminus technicus* in the relevant passages of the work. As regards pleasure, it seems to be an additional element of the psyche acquiring knowledge through a work of art, and more precisely it springs from the "tranquillity of soul" (*sukūn an-nafs*). This quietude of the soul is a positive, purely subjective experience, it is the symptom of the correctness of knowledge, or a sign of the correspondence

between external reality and subjective knowledge. And as such, it is the criterion of the poem.

Arabic literature underwent significant changes in the course of the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. In this transitional period the original poetry having the nature of "undifferentiated art" became "professional art" and within this new "professional art" two literary styles (methods) followed each other in succession: the poetry of moderns (*muhḍatūn*) and then the rhetoricised "mannerist" (*badī'*) poetry. The tension between the change in the creative method used for poetry and the traditional canon raised the questions which gave rise to an independent discipline to formulate and answer them. This was the discipline of medieval Arabic literary criticism (*naqd aš-šī'r*). The extensive interest led to the development of the distinctive discourse of medieval Arabic literary studies, providing a frame within which this culture was able to understand, interpret and appreciate works of literature. Right from the start two research directions were followed: the poetic in the narrower sense and the so-called linguistic-rhetorical method.

First, the basic principles applying to poetry, the system of norms and requirements known as the '*amūd aš-šī'r*', took shape in an early stage in the history of criticism. This system of norms was already formulated in the 10<sup>th</sup> century within the frame of general literary research and it comprised the requirements made for poetic creative activity. It rests on the foundation that in Muslim courtly culture, creation is regarded as a craft (*sinā'a*), and so works are approached from the angle of their method of production. The considerations for the study of literature were compiled on this basis, starting from the formal definition of the poem, and with the expectations and requirements formulated the foundations of the practical theory of poetry were laid. These considerations were expressed most comprehensively in al-Marzūqī's (d. 1030) edition and explanation written on the classical collection of poetry, *al-Hamāsa* by Abū Tammām. But a few coherent elements of this system of norms had also appeared earlier, here and there in fragments, for example by al-Ġāhiz (d. 868/9), Ibn Qutayba (d. 889), Qudāma b. Ġa'far (d. 948 or 956), and these norms can also be traced in the arguments contained in such works of critical production as those of al-Qāḍī al-Ġurġānī (d. 1003) or al-Āmidī (d. 987).

In addition, the linguistic means of expression became increasingly profound and the rhetorical examination that reached its peak with the activity of 'Abdalqāhir al-Ġurġānī (d. 1078) created the well-known '*ilm al-balāġa*' (the science of 'eloquent speech') which, from the summing up by as-Sakkākī (d. 1142) also formally comprised three groups of learning. These were 1) the '*ilm al-ma'ānī*' (the science of 'thought contents') analysing the means of expression from the grammatical and logical viewpoints, 2) the '*ilm al-bayān*' (the science of 'clear expression'), which examines various possibilities for the linguistic expression of a given thought, and 3) the '*ilm al-badī'*' (the science of 'linguistic ornaments') dealing with the questions of ornamentation in language. This group of learning was a kind of rhetoric and formed

the scholarly basis of medieval Arabic literary studies and also set the pattern for all Muslim literatures and literary studies. It is part of the educated literary public discourse and its influence can be traced right up to the present.

According to the material available, it can be said that the relationship between *ʿamūd aš-šiʿr* and *ʿilm al-balāġa* was that the *balāġa* disciplines focused mainly on linguistic-rhetorical phenomena, while those of the *ʿamūd aš-šiʿr* concentrated more (or more precisely, in opposition to the later *balāġa*) on phenomena of literary theory. The borderlines between the two disciplines are often blurred and in the first summing up of literary studies by Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (d. 1010) and Ibn Rašīq (d. 1063 or 1071), the considerations of literary theory and rhetoric are brought closer together, including in the form of treatment. The background to this is that, as a result of the steady spread of *badīʿ* ('mannerist') poetry, and in the thinking it evoked, attention gradually shifted from the poetic to the rhetorical. The abstract of al-Marzūqī can already be read as a system of norms and principles parallel to the *balāġa* discipline (or within the general frame of rhetoricised literary studies), which sets the closed form of the *habīṭ* poet and recipient once and for all and there is no longer a possibility for its living research basis or the many-sided scholarly interest producing it to raise new considerations.

More generally, it can be said that the summing up of the *ʿamūd aš-šiʿr*'s closed system marks a borderline between two periods in the history of medieval Arabic literary studies. It closes the period that began from naive critical reflection and may have set itself the goal of creating an independent criticism specific to poetics. This period raised the questions of stylistics, rhetoric and aesthetic through the many-sided and systematic study of the phenomena of literature. However, the work done by al-Marzūqī hides, even in form, thoughts and experiments in thinking of the previous period falling outside its own scope of interest, which for that reason it did not include among the "principles" of the canon. In this way, the change in the 11<sup>th</sup> century marks the end of the formative (*ʿamūd aš-šiʿr*) period in literary studies and at the same time opens up a new (*balāġa*) period.

The question arises of how the work of Ibn Ṭabāṭabā fits into this history of learning when we know that he was no longer cited and probably not copied either after the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The answer is that he was displaced from literary tradition as a result of this change of eras: on the one hand because the ideas later approved by the canon demand a system different from his and on the other because his insights concerning the reception and impact of the poem were not regarded as constituent elements of the *ʿamūd aš-šiʿr* and so were simply neglected. Moreover, he did not deal with the actual questions of rhetoric and stylistics and so did not provide new material for the emerging *balāġa* discipline. However, the oeuvre of Ibn Ṭabāṭabā deserves attention and a further clarification of its details can lead to a more complex picture of medieval Arabic literary studies.

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## REVIEWS

*Az arabok és az iszlám (The Arabs and Islam. Selected Studies).* [In Hungarian]. By IGNAZ GOLDZIHÉ. Edited with an Introduction by ISTVÁN ORMOS. (*Budapest Oriental Reprints*, edited by E. Schütz & É. Apor, A7-8.) 2 vols., Budapest: Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences & Csoma de Kőrös Society, 1995. xxi, 1090 pp. ISBN 963-7302-92-1.

The scholarly heritage of Ignaz Goldziher is of great value irrespective of the language he used. His writings in Hungarian, besides popularizing works of high standard, comprised scholarly articles which are often of prime importance even for the modern readers. The periodicals or collections, however, in which these articles had first been published are not easily available for the general public today. That is why the editor of the book, István Ormos, carried out an important mission by perusing, designating and preparing for publication those articles of Goldziher which are relevant from the point of view of Arabic studies. The articles thus selected fill two bulky volumes of the series of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. A part of these writings had originally been meant for the Hungarian public only, while another part contains preliminary Hungarian versions of articles that were to be published by Goldziher in foreign languages. Some articles which Goldziher had not published in foreign languages in his lifetime, were later on translated into English (e.g., *The Spanish Arabs*, *The History of Grammar*, and in the last years the *Memory of Renan to German*). Another sign of the Goldziher renaissance in Hungary is the publication of his Hungarian articles on Hebrew Studies last year, under the title *A zsidóság lényege és fejlődése* (*The Essence and Development of the Jewry*, edited by János Kőbányai).

The present edition contains 28 articles written by Goldziher between 1873 and 1912. The titles in English are as follows: Volume One: *The Question of Nationality among the Arabs*; *Report on the Books Brought from the Orient for the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with Regard to Printing Conditions in the Orient*; *On Muhammadan Travellers*; *The Place of Spanish Arabs in the History of the Evolution of Islam as Compared with that of the Eastern Arabs*; *On the History of Grammar among the Arabs*; *The Oriental MSS in the Library of the Hungarian National Museum*; *On Popular Etymology in the Oriental Languages*; *On Muhammadan Public Opinion*; *On the Origins of the Muhammadan Jurisprudence*; *Abulwalīd*; *Commemorative Address in Memory of H. L. Fleischer*; *Journeys to Mecca*; *The Poet as Perceived by the Ancient Arabs*. Volume Two: *The Tradition of the Poetry of the Heathen Arabs*; *The Collection of Papyri of Archduke Rainer*; *Muhammadan Propaganda in America*; *Historiography in Arabic Literature*; *The Latest Literature on Arabic Dialects*; *From the Country of the Mahdi*; *Egyptian Islam*; *Islam up to the Fall of the Umayyads*; *The Influence of Buddhism upon Islam*; *The Arabs (Literary History)*; *Commemorative Address in Memory of Count*

Géza Kuun; János Uri; *In Memory of A. C. Barbier de Meynard and M. J. de Goeje; The Various Trends in Qur'ānic Exegesis.*

T. I.

"Machen Sie doch unseren Islam nicht gar zu schlecht". *Der Briefwechsel der Islamwissenschaftler Ignaz Goldziher und Martin Hartmann 1894-1914.* Edited and commented by LUDMILA HANISCH. (*Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz, Veröffentlichungen der Orientalischen Kommission*, Hrsg. von Walter W. Müller, 45.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000. xxvii, 465 pp., 7 plates. ISBN 3-447-0 4289-3.

The publication of the correspondence between I. Goldziher (1850-1921) and M. Hartmann (1851-1918) was a great undertaking, the difficulties of which are well illustrated by the two autograph letters at the end of the volume (Hartmann's writing is especially hard to read), and the enormous amount of notes which may be needed by the readers in order to fully comprehend the content of the correspondence. The editor of the volume, Ludmila Hanisch, engaged herself to work on a very demanding task, while thanks are also due to Harrassowitz for undertaking the publication. Reading through the volume it becomes apparent that the correspondence is characterised by a constant interchange of scholarly views, a part of which did not appear in the published works of the two scholars, their remarks are still quite interesting in a great number of cases, and not only from the point of view of the history of science. To mention only one point for the significance of this correspondence, I. Goldziher writes in his *Tagebuch*, p. 172 "Seit mehreren Wochen fleissige Correspondenz mit Prof. Martin Hartmann in Berlin über die Entwicklung der Metrik und Reimpoesie aus der homoteleutischen Prosa (Sağ) entwickelt".

The errors that have crept into this significant and praiseworthy work are belittled by the greatness of the undertaking. One thing, however, may not remain unmentioned by the reviewer, namely the peculiarities of the Arabic script used in this edition and the disturbing mistakes in it. E.g., instead of initial *š*, *s*, *ḍ*, *t*, *w* the medial forms are used (ش, س, ض, ط, و instead of ش, س, ض, ط, و), instead of final *y* the independent one (ي → ي) or vice versa, instead of initial-independent *alif* the numeral one (ا → ا), independent *hā'* is replaced by the numeral five (ه → ه), an *alif* with a *hamza* several time gets a *šadda* as well (آ), etc. This latter sign is generally used incorrectly, since it is combined with a *kasra* (ـِ) irrespective of whether *i* or *a* should be meant, i.e. there is a total absence of *šadda* + *fatha* (ـَ). This is especially disturbing when the two scholars discuss the correct reading and cannot be justified by the editor's note at the bottom of the Contents! At the end of the words, the use of *yā'* (ي) and *alif maqṣūra* (ى) is also very clumsy and mixed, while *tanwīn damma* is used at various places within the words, among them on p. 29 where the vowelling of أَسْت is discussed, so it is quite confusing to read this word twice in the same form



and once as **أست**. The unreliable and incorrect ways of writing are disturbing especially because in some cases it may be difficult to decide whether we face a typing error, or this strange and (at least for him) incomprehensible word form was written in the original letter. At these instances the reader would like to see the original and has a feeling of uncertainty concerning the use of the book, e.g. did Goldziher really write **كتبه مستعجلا** (?) (p. 19) or did Hartmann write **بمؤد تعالی** (p. 117)? And what is to be meant on **باسملا** (p. 103)? Perhaps **بسملة** or **بسملات**? On pp. 253 and 256 one should rather expect *qudwat al-milla* and not *qudrat al-milla*. On pp. 333 and 334 **بالسور** is written (which is right), while on p. 337 **سدر** (which could not be meant by Hartmann). How to interpret Hartmann's question on an invocation beginning with **الحمد لله**, mentioned thrice in various letters? etc. Considering the great number of typographical errors one becomes filled with uncertainty, for example, in case of Hartmann's correction on p. 332.

The errors are, however, insignificant compared with the merits of this edition, and one can only welcome this excellent book from which we get a picture of the interchange of ideas between these two outstanding scholars.

T. I.

*Scienza e Islam. Atti della giornata di studio (Venezia, 30 gennaio 1999)*. Edited by GIOVANNI CANOVA. (*Quaderni di Studi Arabi. Studi e testi*, 3.) Roma: Herder Editrice for Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, 1999. 112 pp. ISSN 1121-2306.

This interesting volume contains seven contributions that were presented at a Colloquium dedicated to *'ilm* (in its broadest sense) in Islam. Accordingly, the papers deal with a wide variety of subjects. A. Regourd examines the use of the esoteric science of letters (*'ilm al-ḥurūf*) to reveal the innermost meaning of geomancy (*ḍarb ar-raml*) on the basis of two geomancers from North Yemen. A. Scarabel in his lexicological investigation tries to reveal the different meanings of terminology related to blood, especially the different meanings of coagulation and what follows from them. I. Zilio-Grandi analyses in detail Aḥmad at-Tifāṣī's (1184-1253) *Kitāb azhār al-afkār fī ḡawāhir al-aḥḡār* from the point of view of its sources. R. Tottoli deals with the *'aḡā'ib* literature, a topic further elaborated in the present volume by Sh. Habib. A. Ghersetti in her analysis of the *Kitāb al-firāsa* attributed to Polemon of Laodicea establishes that the assumed authorship must be discarded and that the real subject of the book is erotology. G. Canova examines in great detail the information about bees and honey in Arabic literature, starting from pre-Islamic poetry, the Qur'ān and its commentaries, the Prophet's *sunna*, and arriving through later sources (*Rasā'il Iḥwān aṣ-Ṣafā'*, the works of al-Ġāḥiẓ, ar-Rāzī, Ibn Sīnā, etc.) to beekeeping in 18th century Egypt and modern Yemen. The closing article of the volume is the presentation of a talismanic chart of the Tareq Rajab Museum (Kuwait) by A. Fodor. The

articles (mainly in Italian, one in French and one in English) of this excellent collection of essays are followed by brief summaries in English.

K. D.

*The Malta Language Question. A Case Study in Cultural Imperialism.* By GEOFFREY HULL. Introduction by Giulio Soravia. Valetta (Malta): Said International, 1993. 418 pp. ISBN 99909-43-08-7.

This book poses the question: Who are the Maltese and seeks satisfactory answers to it. It is a lengthy analysis of Malta's linguistic history through an interdisciplinary approach, that of a linguist writing history. The author studies the politicization of trilingualism (Maltese, Italian, English) in Malta from the second half of the 19th century till our days. Geoffrey Hull is the first to summarize the events of the Maltese language question in a comprehensive and thoroughly documented overview. He presents how the Italian culture of this insular country "disappeared" in the years preceding WW II and how it was replaced by the anglophone culture, while in the meantime powerful attempts have been made to turn Maltese, or its arabicised version, to be the main vehicle of culture in Malta. One thing established by the author is that inspite of the more than 800 years of Italian, then English, influence, the basic (lower and middle) layers of the inhabitants of the island, and more generally speaking, the inhabitants of the countryside, use the Semitic Maltese language in everyday communication.

Part One deals with the external history of the language question. Part Two speaks of the movement in defence of "Malta Italiana". Part Three is an evaluation of the relation of Great Britain and the 'New Malta'. Part Four bears the title "The Maltese in Context". Appendices (Maltese English; 'Maltese' Surnames in Sicily; Two Orthographies; Legal Maltese), a bibliography and an index of names make the volume complete.

T. I.

*Arabic Verbs in Time: Tense and Aspect in Cairene Arabic.* By JOHN C. EISELE. (*Semitica Viva*, Hrsg. von Otto Jastrow, 20.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999. xiv, 264 pp. ISBN 3-447-04062-9.

John C. Eisele's book is the most comprehensive and most useful formal linguistic treatise on Arabic verbs hitherto written. The introductory chapter gives general information on the language data and previous works on tense and aspect in Arabic. Chapter Two deals with tense and time reference in English. The purpose of this chapter "is to provide a general framework in which to analyze tense and time reference in English in order to compare it with Cairene Arabic". This seems to define the main objective of this study, i.e. to give a contrastive analysis of English and

Arabic linguistic data, which may be very important for the speakers of English who are interested in Arabic and the speakers of Arabic interested in studying English. In that case it would have been better to indicate the scope of this study in the title as well. If, however, the author thinks that in the case of analyzing any language one should basically start one's investigation with a comparison of the target language with English, he may be wrong, since English is not the equivalent of a universal grammar, though it must be admitted that the majority of modern linguistic theories have been developed on the basis of English. Chapter Three concentrates on three categories of the formal aspect: event, process and state. Chapter Four speaks about the temporal and aspectual characteristics of the basic morphological verb forms in Cairene Arabic. Chapter Five deals with present time copular sentences in CA. Chapter Six focuses on compound tenses and complement types, while Chapter Seven is consecrated to the investigation of the lexical aspectual classification of verbs and predicates in CA. Chapter Eight is a summary dealing with the interaction of time reference, lexical aspect, and formal aspect in Cairene Arabic.

T. I.

*Tempus und Aspekt in den semitischen Sprachen. Jenaer Kolloquium zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft.* Edited by NORBERT NEBES. (*Jenaer Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient*, 1.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999. viii, 192 pp. ISBN 3-447-04257-5.

Freddie Beeston, in the end of August 1995 in Oxford explained his not coming to Budapest to take part in our conference on Arabic linguistics a fourth time by that he would go instead to Jena in October. Having died on the 29th of September 1995 (at the age of 84) he could not take part in that conference the excellence of which we now are convinced by reading its proceedings. This volume contains 13 articles. There is one article, which tries to give a theoretical framework for the papers of the conference: Adolf Denz: *Tempus und Aspekt? Vorstellung eines noetischen Modells*. Five papers deal with ancient Semitic languages: Michael P. Streck: *Das "Perfekt" iptaras im Altbabylonischen der Hammurapi-Briefe*; Josef Tropper: *Imperfektive Darstellung vergangener Sachverhalte im Ugaritischen*; Ingo Kottsieper: *"und mein Vater zog hinauf". Aspekte des älteren aramäischen Verbalsystems und seiner Entwicklung*; Stefan Weninger: *kona qatala zum Ausdruck der Vergangenheit im Ge'ez?* Stefan Bombeck: *Das syrische Verbalsystem: hypothetische Sätze und hwā vor Aktiv oder Partizip*. Two concentrate on Modern Semitic dialects (other than Arabic): Werner Arnold: *Das Verbum in den neuwestaramäischen Dialekten*; Ewald Wagner: *Das Verb im alten und modernen Harari*. Two articles treat the Classical Arabic verbal system: Thomas Bauer: *Verben und Textpartikeln in altarabischen narrativen Texten*; Norbert Nebes: *Das Satzschema fa-huwa yaf'alu/fā'ilun/Prädikativ für Vergangenheit in frühklassischer arabischer Erzählliteratur*. One paper is dedicated to a modern Arabic dialect: Otto Jastrow: *Verbformen und ihre Funktionen im ara-*

bischen Dialekt von Kendērib (Südostanatolien). Finally, there is one article which lies outside the main theme of the volume, dealing with Greek: Eva Tichy: Nicht nur Vordergrund und Hintergrund: Zum Aspektgebrauch im Neuen Testament und im homerischen Epos. It is only to be regretted that the papers are published in alphabetical order.

T. I.

*Mehri Texts from Oman. Based on the Field Materials of T. M. Johnstone.* By HARRY STROOMER. (*Semitica Viva*, Hrsg. von Otto Jastrow, 22.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999. xxviii, 303 pp. ISBN 3-447-04215-X.

The volume comprises the 106 texts that formed the linguistic basis for the *Mehri Lexicon* of T. M. Johnstone. These texts, most of which are folk-tales, had been collected by Johnstone in 1969-70. The edition faithfully reproduces his transcription (checked and sometimes elucidated by the material on tape) and his translation, supplemented by a thorough introduction about the texts by the editor, H. Stroomer. Careful notes help students of Mehri in finding words in the *Mehri Lexicon*. It would also have served the reader had the editor undertaken the transcription of the missing ten lines from the incomplete tribal history of the Ḥarāsīs. Be as it may, since the texts are interesting in themselves, and not only as linguistic specimens, by making these texts available to the public H. Stroomer has done a great service not only to Semitists and Arabists, but also to a much wider public, to folklorists, ethnographers, and in general to all those who are interested in the region.

K. D.