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KINGA DÉVÉNYI

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APOSTASY IN MODERN EGYPTIAN LAW

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1 Apostasy in Islamic law

Šarīʿa law, according to the interpretations of the legal schools, condemns an apostate to death.[1] Egyptian state law, however, does not recognise such legislation (Berger 2005:90ff). But even classical Islamic law has never applied it rigidly, giving the accused time to convert and profess himself/herself a Muslim again. Traditionally, this command was only relevant when a Muslim publicly stated that he/she did not believe in God and the Prophet Muḥammad and did no longer consider himself/herself a Muslim, or simply converted to another religion (Hilālī 2003). In the Middle Ages, moderate religious scholars, who formed the majority, distinguished faith (*īmān*) and Islam, and condemned only those who openly denied their religion. al-Ġazālī (d. 1111), e.g. expressed his deep moral indignation when he read in the autobiographical writings of the great Muslim philosopher and medical practitioner Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) that he only prayed because others did the same around him. In al-Ġazālī's view, this is why God will condemn Ibn Sīnā in the afterworld, but people cannot condemn him because he did not deny Islam (al-Ġazālī, *Munqiḏ* 74–75). Modern Islamist extremist trends no longer follow this view when they consider that issues of faith should be brought to court even in the case of persons who proclaim that they are Muslims.

Before dealing with the application of this command in connection with a few select cases in late 20th – early 21st century Egypt, and in order to provide a historic background to the treatment of this question, it seems appropriate to quote in detail the relevant passage from aš-Šaʿrānī's seminal work on the comparative presentation of the teachings of the four great legal schools of Sunnī Islam (aš-Šaʿrānī, *Mīzān*, III, 307–309, *Bāb ar-Ridda*).[2]

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[1] Here the use of strict Arabic terminology is avoided because it differentiates between divine law (*šarīʿa*) and its human interpretation, i.e. jurisprudence (*fiqh*). References are generally made only to the *šarīʿa*, hiding the fact that usually it can only be explained from the source texts by having recourse to very different human interpretations.

[2] Translation by K. D. The translation does not include aš-Šaʿrānī's evaluation of the jurists' opininons based on their positions on a scale, as is indicated by the title of the work

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"The Chapter on Apostasy
Voluntary disengagement from Islam, an utterance or an act of unbelief should be interpreted as apostasy.[3] The Imams of the four schools agree that whoever leaves the religion of Islam should be killed and that it is compulsory (*wāǧib*) to kill a heretic (*zindīq*). The latter person is one who spreads unbelief and only pretends to be a Muslim. If all the inhabitants of a locality (*balad*) abandon Islam, war should be waged against them and their possessions become booty. I found agreement in all these issues.
They [i.e. the Imams], however, differ e.g. in what was said by Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767), i.e. that the apostate should be killed immediately, and that it is not dependent on whether he should be asked to repent or not. If he was asked to repent, but did not regret his sins, then [the execution] should be delayed only if he asks for it. In this case, delay can be granted three times. Some Ḥanafīs say that delay should be granted even if he did not ask for it.
According to Mālik (d. 795), it is compulsory to call for repentance. If he [i.e. the apostate] repents immediately, his repentance should be accepted. If he does not repent [immediately], delay can be granted three times, so that he may repent. If he repents [he escapes the death sentence], if not, he should be killed.
aš-Šāfiʿī (d. 820) said in the clearer opinion of his two views: it is compulsory to call for repentance, but no delay is granted after it, he should be killed immediately if he sticks to his apostasy.
Two recensions have been transmitted on the authority of Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal] (d. 855). The first one is the same as that of Mālik. According to the second, it is not compulsory to ask for repentance. The versions differ concerning whether delay should be granted or not.
It is related on the authority of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 728) that the apostate cannot be asked to repent, but should not be killed immediately.
[Wāṣil ibn] ʿAṭāʾ (d. 748) said that if he had been a Muslim and left his faith, then he should not be asked to repent. If, however, he had been an unbeliever who converted to Islam, then left it, he should be asked to repent.
It is told on the authority of [Sufyān] aṯ-Ṯawrī (d. 778) that he should be asked to repent under all circumstances.

(*Mīzān*). These, sometimes quite lengthy, passages are left out because they are not closely related to the subject of the present paper.

[3] The relevant Qurʾānic passage (2:217) does not contain punishment for apostates in this world:
ومن يرتدد منكم عن دينه فيمت وهو كافر فأولئك حبطت أعمالهم في الدنيا والاخرة وأولئك أصحب النار هم فيها خلدون
"Those of you who turn away from their religion and die as unbelievers – their works fail in this world and in the next; these are the companions of Fire, in which they will remain forever" (Alan Jones's translation).

> According to the three Imams [Mālik, aš-Šāfiʿī, Ibn Ḥanbal] the same is valid for men and women. According to Abū Ḥanīfa, however, women should be imprisoned and not killed.
> Correct views [concerning the unnecessity of calling the apostate to repent] go back to the *ḥadīṯ* "Whoever exchanges his religion, kill him" (*man baddala dīnahu fa-qtulūhu*), where the Prophet did not mention it either.
> Abū Ḥanīfa interpreted "*man*" as masculine. Women, in any case, will not be missed in the religion of Islam, if they abandon their faith, since they do not fight for the religion of unbelief (*dīn al-kufr*) if they become apostates, in contrary to men."[4]

The following tables give a summary of the above text:

Abū Ḥanīfa	Mālik	aš-Šāfiʿī	Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal	
compulsory to kill (imprison women); unrelated to the call to repent	should be asked to repent		= Mālik	should not be asked to repent
repentance accepted				
3 delays		no delay	different versions	

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī	Wāṣil ibn ʿAṭāʾ		Sufyān aṯ-Ṯawrī
cannot be asked to repent; should not be killed immediately	Muslims should not be asked to repent	former unbelievers should be asked to repent	should be asked to repent

2 Apostasy in modern Egyptian law

From among the Egyptian laws, only family laws (*aḥkām al-aḥwāl aš-šaḫṣiyya*) are those that are almost entirely based on Islamic law: the provisions of marriage, divorce, childcare and inheritance.[5] Marriage laws include the provision that in some cases the court may pronounce divorce (which is, in general, the husband's exclusive

[4] This goes back to the two kinds of interpretations concerning the word "*man*" in the *ḥadīṯ* above. The first considers *man* as a word having both masculine and feminine connotations, while the second interprets it as relating only to men.

[5] The full text of the Egyptian constitution and laws are available in Arabic on the Egyptian government's website: https://www.egypt.gov.eg/arabic/laws/default.aspx [last accessed 5 August 2017].

and out-of-court privilege). Some of these are beneficial to women, e.g. if the husband does not give any sign of life for a long time and does not provide for his family, or if he seriously abuses his wife. Besides, the court also has jurisdiction over such a case when one party converts to another religion, which is, however, very rare in the history of Islam. It is a peculiarly modern phenomenon that extremist Islamists attempt to use this law and the tribunal of family law to denounce their opponents as unbelievers. The reason for this is that family law is the only one in the Egyptian legal system where it is possible to establish apostasy, and then on that basis extremist Islamic groups can pronounce the traditional death sentence of Islamic law – which is not supported by state law – and may find someone who will finally execute it.[6] If the court decides on compulsive divorce (*tafrīq*) due to the abandonment of religion, then as a consequence, the person will lose all his/her rights in the marriage in retrospect, as for example, the care for a child, or his/her right to remarry or inherit (Sammūr 2010).[7]

3 The case of Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd

The first case of apostasy which aroused great attention all over the world was the case of Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd between 1994 and 1996. Abū Zayd had been teaching at the University of Cairo and in 1992 applied for promotion to full professor. During this process, one of the members of the committee, ʿAbd aṣ-Ṣabūr Šāhīn, a well-known religious scholar, described him as an unbeliever on the basis of his publications. Based on this opinion, an Islamist lawyer filed a lawsuit to declare Abū Zayd and apostate and separate him from his wife.[8] Instead of asking for a legal decision (*fatwā*) – as happened earlier in another case[9] –, the lawsuit was probably necessitated because Abū Zayd had not previously been sufficiently well-known to achieve any political gain from such a decision. It was the lawsuit which made him famous at home and abroad alike.

Abū Zayd expressed in many books and articles his radically novel opinion on the re-interpretation of Islamic texts, the need to develop a new Islamic discourse and the freedom of debate and thought.[10] Another question in which he had his voice

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[6] Previously, family members had been charged with apostasy only in some cases of inheritance in order to exclude these persons from the inheritance, but these cases never reached the trial stage, ending in out of court reconciliation. Cf. Berger, 2005:3–4, 89ff.

[7] For further details between the relationship between Islamic law and the Egyptian legal system, see El Fegiery 2013.

[8] Cf. among others Loza 2013, Wild 1996, Abū Zayd's own description (Abu Zaid 1998).

[9] See the murder case of Farag Fōda below.

[10] See more recently, e.g. Abū Zayd 2006. On the difficulties and near impossibility of the newly emerging discourse on the Qurʾān as a text, see Wielandt 1996.

heard and in which his accusers were personally involved was a great fraud that was revealed in the early 1990's. This fraud was committed by some banks and businesses that operated on the principles of Islamic law and that enjoyed the support of some Muslim scholars, resulting in hundreds of thousands of people losing their investments (Abu Zaid 1998:47).

On 27 January 1994, the Giza Family Court dismissed the action against Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd because of the lack of direct personal involvement of the applicant in the case, which is obligatory under Egyptian law in civil procedures (Berger 2003 and 2005). However, on 4 June 1995, the Cairo Appeal Court (*Maḥkamat al-Istiʾnāf*) accepted the action on the basis of the principle of *ḥisba*, which means that to defend public morals, actions can be filed by a person even if he/she has not direct involvement in the case. So the lower court's judgment was altered in favour of the plaintiff. The judge, ʿAbd al-ʿĀlim Mūsā, who had been working for years in Saudi Arabia, so might have been influenced by Wahhābī doctrines, found Abū Zayd an apostate, and declared his marriage with Ibtihāl Yūnis invalid. In the judgment, inter alia, the judge ruled that the accused was guilty of calling unlawful the discriminatory per capita tax (*ǧizya*) levied on Christians and Jews, and based on Q 9:29, furthermore, he did not accept that the keeping of slave girls was allowed on the basis of unequivocal Qurʾānic verses, and what is even more, he also stated that he does not believe in Jinns, which are also mentioned at several places in the Qurʾān (Berger 2005:95–96).

The first two charges are significant primarily in a historical perspective, since neither *ǧizya* nor slavery exist either in contemporary Egypt or even Saudi Arabia. Concerning the third accusation, Cook (2000:47) has proven that it was not true, since Abū Zayd merely wrote that the presence of Jinns in the Qurʾān was a historical necessity because of (the still common) popular religious beliefs which were deeply rooted at the age of the Prophet Muḥammad in 7th century Arabia. So why did the judge base his judgment on these charges instead of the hermeneutical methods of Abū Zayd, which aroused the anger of religious scholars? Obviously, because these simple questions were easily understood by the large sections of the population who were targeted by the whole trial and judgment. The ruling, in addition to Islamic law, also referred to the Egyptian constitution, Article 12 of which refers to the obligation to protect morals and traditions.[11] On the basis of this Article, the courts, in order to protect the public interest (*maṣlaḥa ʿāmma*), may consider it a disruption of the

[11] Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt 1971, Article 12: "Society shall be committed to safeguarding and protecting morals, promoting genuine Egyptian traditions. It shall give due consideration, within the limits of law, to high standards of religious education, moral and national values, historical heritage of the people, scientific facts and public morality." http://www.palatauruscentrostudi.eu/doc/EGY_Constitution_1971_EN.pdf [last accessed 15 November 2017]

public order if a Muslim converts to another religion or renounces Islam, however, the legal requirements for this were not fulfilled in this case (Berger 2005:90ff). Although the judgment could not have any other consequences beyond divorce under Egyptian law, the couple emigrated out of fear, which Abū Zayd later justified with the constant death threats and the unbearable police protection. They had not waited until the case was brought to the Egyptian Court of Cassation (*maḥkamat an-naqḍ*) in 1996, although it should be pointed out that this court also found Abū Zayd guilty. Abū Zayd became a professor at the University of Leiden where he stayed until his death in 2010.[12]

Although the state did not defend Abū Zayd, but simply hushed up his case, the whole procedure and especially the judgment had a far reaching effect. This happened because the judge not only condemned Abū Zayd, but in his verdict, he called on Egyptian Muslims to bring to the court as many similar actions as possible against persons whose writings or statements of opinion posed a threat to Islam and thus to the Egyptian state, which is based on Islam. This call triggered an unprecedented wave of actions filed in the courts. Although no verdict was rendered, the Ministry of Justice, in order to prevent the further influx of actions, submitted to the People's Assembly an amendment of the Civil Code in 1996 with the so-called *ḥisba* law, according to which only the public prosecutor may institute legal proceedings in cases of violation of public morality and religion in which nobody has any personal interest (Murphy 2002:209). From that time on, indictments have to be submitted to the public prosecutor, who considers whether to institute court proceedings.[13] This amendment of the law was justified by the fact that even at the time when the courts had been fully based on Islamic law, only the *muḥtasib*[14] – usually translated as "market inspector" – had the right to turn to the judge in such cases, and his power in the modern state was taken over by the public prosecutor.[15]

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[12] On the consequences of the case and its social effects, see Agrama 2012:42–68, Chapter One "The Legalization of Hisba in the Case of Nasr Abu Zayd".

[13] This addition has remained part of the new Egyptian Civil Code as well, cf. *Qānūn al-aḥwāl aš-šaḫṣiyya al-ǧadīd*, §. 6. Cf. Berger, 2005:94, fn. 386. See also the detailed discussion of the parliamentary debate and the new legislative amendment on *ḥisba* in *al-Ḥayāt* (5 February 1996) *Daʿāwī l-ḥisba tukarriruhā ad-dawla al-miṣriyya*.

[14] The origin of the words *ḥisba* and *muḥtasib* is not clear and they do not appear in the Qurʾān. Their first descriptions have come down to us from the 11th century, much later than their first mention by historians.

[15] It should be noted that, despite this measure, the number of such submissions did not cease, in 2016, the figure was even 30% higher than in the previous year, when 6500 such requests were submitted in Egypt, primarily by women who seem to believe that this might be an effective way to break their unwanted marriage, not taking into account the fact that it is extremely difficult to pronounce divorce on the basis of apostasy and that even women have other means to obtain divorce more easily (al-Fawzān 2017).

4 The court action against Nawāl as-Saʿdāwī

In February 2001, Nabīh al-Waḥš, an Islamist lawyer,[16] initiated legal proceedings in a Cairo personal status court against Nawāl as-Saʿdāwī (b. 1931), physician, psychiatrist and feminist writer, accusing her of expressing contempt for the Islamic faith, thereby having become an apostate (Dawoud 2001; Gardner 2001). He asked the court to establish the apostasy (*ridda*) on the basis of the evidence presented and the testimony of religious leaders, and to divorce the writer from her husband, the physician and writer Šarīf Ḥitāta (1923–2017), annulling their marriage on the basis of the law (based on the *šarīʿa*) that an apostate woman (*murtadda*) cannot be the wife of a Muslim man, and *vice versa*, an apostate man (*murtadd*) cannot remain a Muslim woman's husband (Salīm 2009:158–159, 163–164). The court is only entitled to declare the divorce, the establishment of apostasy is the task of religious scholars. The court, however, takes this into account, and the consequence of the forced divorce would be that there is now a court ruling on unbelief.

However, Nabīh al-Waḥš, the lawyer who filed the charges, said before the trial that their target is met even if the court did not separate the author from her husband, but the aroused media attention would deter her from further statements and writings against Islam. "Whether she has to divorce her husband or not, is not important. What matters is that she should keep her opinions to herself, because they are against Islam. These opinions are poison for Muslims" (Gardner 2001). In contrast, Nawāl as-Saʿdāwī has repeatedly emphasised that she considered herself to be a good Muslim, but everyone should have the right to write what he or she thinks and believes (*Ibid.*). It does seem, however, that this is not so in contemporary Egypt.

Who is the person accused? For decades, Nawāl as-Saʿdāwī has been the number one "public enemy" in certain Egyptian religious and political circles.[17] In the 1960s, she held a high post in the Ministry of Public Health, but lost it as a result of a heated discussion following the publication of her first feminist book, "Woman and Sex" (*al-Marʾa wa-l-ǧins*) in 1972. In this book, she advocated women's equality, and free divorce, at the same time condemning the suppression of women, and protest against female genital mutilation, traditionally sanctioned by religious leaders (as-Saʿdāwī 1972). For a while, she was the editor of a feminist magazine *Confrontation* (*al-Muwāǧaha*), but she was also removed from here and imprisoned in 1981. Referring to this she wrote in her memoirs that "truth in a time of lying cannot be absolutely

[16] This appellation refers in Egypt to lawyers who studied secular law, and who, in the service of various extremist religious groups, sued certain members of the "secular" intelligentsia regarded as enemies in the past few decades.

[17] For her biography, see Jalaluddin 2015, Belton & Dowding 2000, Cooke 2015, and as-Saʿdāwī (El Saadawi) 2002.

free".[18] Her books have been translated into more than 30 languages. Her fame is mainly due to her documentary novel, *Woman at point zero* (*Imraʾa ʿinda nuqṭat aṣ-ṣifr*), which contains the conversations she has conducted as a psychiatrist with a woman of ill fortune sentenced to death for killing her husband (as-Saʿdāwī 1977).

Why were the Islamist extremists in their fierce reaction trying to turn to the court in their outrage? In January 2001, in the year 1421 of the Muslim calendar, just before the month of the Meccan pilgrimage, when thousands of Egyptian Muslims were already making preparations for it, as-Saʿdāwī[19] agreed to give an interview to a journalist of the periodical *al-Mīdān* which was published with omissions and in a much simplified way, titled "Nawāl as-Saʿdāwī says that the pilgrimage is a heathen custom and kissing the Black Stone in the Kaʿba" – an important element of the ritual of pilgrimage according to ancient tradition – "counts as idol worship".[20] Since pilgrimage is the fifth pillar of Islam, the statement caused a great outrage.[21] At the same time, it is undeniable that there had been pilgrimage in Arabia in the pagan period (*ǧāhiliyya*) prior to the emergence of Islam, and the Islamic ritual is very close to the pagan ritual, as is acknowledged by the Qurʾān itself. However, the main difference, according to the Qurʾān and contemporary scholars alike, is that Muslims think of God as they follow the rites of the pilgrimage while pagan Arabs only honoured their ancestors.[22] The then Grand Mufti, Sheikh Naṣr Farīd al-Vāṣil declared that if the report contained what Nawāl al-Saʿdāwī had said, then she had indeed rejected Islam and should be considered an apostate (Hepburn 2001).

Nawāl as-Saʿdāwī, however, did not only get into conflict with this single statement with the religious elite. More outrage has been caused by the words with which she attacked the Islamic legal basis of the law of inheritance. By law, women are entitled to half of what men inherit. In her view, this is not only legally but also

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[18] as-Saʿdāwī 2000:13 (الصدق في زمن الكذب لا يمكن أن يكون حرا طليقا), see also e.g. Sharma 2001. Translated (as-Saʿdāwī 1986) as "nothing is more perilous than truth in a world that lies".

[19] The reporter of the journal *al-Midān* was Waḥīd Rifʿat, who called his own report "astonishing" (*al-Mīdān*, March 2001).

[20] The second caliph, ʿUmar I (634–644), had already resented the kissing of the Black Stone (*al-ḥağar al-aswad*) – a rock of possibly meteoritic origin built into the Eastern corner of the Kaʿba –, saying: "You are just a stone that cannot do any harm or be beneficial. Had I not seen the Prophet kissing you, I would not have kissed you." Ibn Ḥağar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ*, III, 541, no. 1520.

[21] At the same time Nawāl as-Saʿdāwī emphasised that she considered the pilgrimage as one of the pillars of Islam which she did not want to attack, and that her critique related to some of its rituals. Cf. e.g. a report with her in *aš-Šarq al-awsaṭ*, 24 April 2001.

[22] Q 2:200: "And when you have completed your rites, remember Allah like your [previous] remembrance of your fathers or with [much] greater remembrance." English translation of *Sahih International* (https://quran.com).

socially unfair, because in today's Egypt only women work in 30% of the families, they are paying the costs and they would need a full share from the inheritance of their fathers, husbands and other relatives. These words provoked the disapproval of Egyptian men in general, while religious scholars considered it as an attack against the fundamentals of Islam, since the laws of inheritance are based on Qurʾānic legislation (Q 4:11-12, 4:176). It was also considered outrageous that in the same interview she attacked the veiling of women saying that this was not a Muslim practice at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, but its origin should be sought in earlier Jewish and Christian customs in the Middle-East taken over by Muslims at a later period.[23] Many, however, consider that the veiling of women belongs to the fundamental tenets of Islam.[24]

5 The foundation of the lawsuit

The question arises what is the legal basis for someone to doubt another person's religious affiliation. This is in fact derived from the idea of ancient tribal cohesion (*ʿaṣabiyya*), which became incorporated into Islam as a foundation of the life of the entire community of Muslims. According to Q 3:103 everybody should "hold firmly to the rope of Allah" in order not to become divided. This is the only way for the members of the community to escape the fire of Hell and follow the right path: "And let there be [arising] from you a nation (*umma*) inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong" (Q 3:104).[25] This is also the basis of true faith. Another verse interprets the concept of "right" action (*maʿrūf*) very interestingly, when it uses another form of the same root (*ʿarafa* "to know"): "Enjoin [Oh,

[23] She is not alone with this view. Several scholars have said earlier that the veiling of women has no basis in the Qurʾān or in the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad, i.e. the fundamental texts of Islamic law, but it takes its origin in a Persian urban custom of the pre-Islamic era. The most well-known among these scholars was Imam Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Grand Mufti of Egypt between 1899 and 1905, see Abduh 1993: II, 105–113: "Ḥiǧāb an-nisāʾ min al-ǧiha ad-dīniyya" (Women's veil from the religious point of view"). Cf. Ṭāhā 1967:158–161, "*al-ḥiǧāb laysa aṣlan min al-islām*". A similar view was expressed more recently by Ǧamāl al-Bannā (2002). See also al-Ǧawādī 2003. Face veil (*niqāb*) was banned in 1995 at Egyptian schools by the Minister of Education. When a father of two teenage girls – who had been barred from entering their secondary school wearing a face veil – undertook a case against the minister and the principal of their school, the court ruled against him and established that the decree did neither contradict the provisions of the Constitution nor was it contrary to Islamic regulations concerning the dress of women (Brown & Lombardi, 2006).

[24] Cf. e.g. al-Kubaysī 2001.

[25] Later, this expression has become a morally obliging legal term known as "*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-n-nahy ʿan al-munkar*".

Muḥammad] what is good (*ʿurf*)" (Q 7:199). This word is then interpreted in the meaning of *maʿrūf* (Ibn Kaṯīr, *Tafsīr*).

From among the countless mediaeval interpretations of this Qurʾānic command, suffice it to mention here that of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġazālī (d. 1111). He regards this as an individual duty (*farḍ ʿayn*) of every Muslim, but also says that one must first examine himself/herself whether he/she is on the right path and if so, only then he/she can warn others. This warning, however, should also be done in private, not in front of others (al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, II, 303). This is the exact opposite of the contemporary interpretations of this Qurʾānic passage on "commanding right". Those who "command and forbid" consider themselves above all criticism, while they publicly criticize and condemn those who hold different views (al-Qaraḍāwī 1980:12ff).

Although *enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong* have originally been considered a personal task, an institution emerged in the Islamic world in the 10th century, this is *ḥisba*, the office of the person responsible for the implementation of this Qurʾānic decree in a town, for the supervision of morals, especially at the markets. This person, the *muḥtasib*, together with the *qāḍī* and the police chief was one of the most important persons in the life of a town. The existence of this office shows well that already in the Middle Ages it was the *muḥtasib*'s task to inspect public morals and turn to the court to accuse a person of immorality. Apart from him, no other person could do this. In other words, it means that *ḥisba*, i.e. the inspection of public morals and the denunciation of persons who do not observe these morals to the *qāḍī* or the police chief is not individual, but collective duty (*farḍ kifāya*), which should be carried out by a member of the community designated for this task (al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, II, 320).

It is only in the last half century that has become customary – and not just in Egypt – to take the initiation of a legal action in one's own hands, harass, or even kill with alleged reference to the Qurʾānic command. In Egypt, the first such notorious case was the assassination of Farag Fōda in 1992 who had fought for the secularisation of the country. The attack was carried out by the extremist movement, al-Gamāʿa al-Islāmiyya ("The Islamic Group"), but was also sanctioned by the previously issued *fatwa* of Muḥammad al-Ġazālī, a sheikh of al-Azhar, in which he declared Farag Fōda an apostate (*murtadd*) for his views on secularism. In addition, he subsequently referred to the murder as legitimate during the trial of the murderer (Kamāl 2016). At the hearing, the murderer stated that he had to kill the victim because of his writings expressing unbelief, although he had not read a line because he was illiterate. Before his execution, he said that the rope of hanging will bring him to Paradise (*Qātil Farag Fōda* ... 2015). The case was also turned into a highly successful Egyptian film against Muslim extremists, under the title "The terrorist" (*al-Irhābī*) (Ǧalāl 1994). To prove that not all Muslims agree on the legitimacy of the immediate assassination of apostates, suffice it to quote the title of only one book:

"The Killing of the Apostate: The Crime which was Prohibited by Islam (*Qatl al-murtadd: al-ǧarīma llatī ḥarramahā l-islām*) (Idlibī 1993).

6 The outcome of Nawāl as-Saʿdāwī's case

Despite the fact that on the basis of the 1996 *ḥisba* amendment, there was no legal justification for the case against Nawāl as-Saʿdāwī, the court took a long time to reach a decision, but finally, on 9 July 2001 they announced in front of the representatives of international journalists that this case cannot be tried at a court, so they considered it definitely closed. Although as-Saʿdāwī expressed her joy over this decision, at the same time she voiced her anxiety because of the long time which was necessary for the court to take this decision, thereby making it possible for the Islamist forces to wage war against her and the freedom of expression (Hepburn 2001). According to the general opinion of intellectuals called "laymen" (*ʿalmāniyyūn*) by extremist Islamists, the freedom of expression suffered a great blow in Egypt (Gardner 2001; Ṣalāḥ 2014; Saeed 2004; Sookhdeo 2009).

Despite the fact that Nawāl as-Saʿdāwī was not condemned in a trial, and in fact there was no trial at all, her persecution by Islamist extremist continued until she was forced to flee Egypt for a time.

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WOMEN IN THE RITUALS OF SUNNĪ ISLAM FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THESE DAYS

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1 A Classical Muslim legal opinion on the compulsory position of women

Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ, a 14th century Moroccan Mālikī scholar of law had spent the last years of his life in Egypt and died there.[1] He became horrified by the several popular customs he had met there and had found heretical, first of all, the libertinism of women, and their participation outside their houses in rituals which should have been allowed only for men or sometimes not even for them. In his book, Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ attacked the visitation of graves, the celebration of dubious festivals, including Christian ones, and the "un-Islamic" behaviour of Muslim women. He described the regulations of the Mālikī Islamic law school, which he followed and considered binding for the whole Muslim community in his four-volume book entitled "*Introduction to the Noble Islamic Law According to the Four Schools of Jurisprudence*" (in short it is simply called *Madḫal*).[2] It is an interesting speciality of this work that the author does not simply prohibit what he considers wrong and commands what he holds good, but he also gives detailed descriptions of the phenomena he considers blameworthy, giving social historical character to his work.

A second tract of the same genre is *Kitāb al-lumaʿ fī l-ḥawādīṯ wa-l-bidaʿ*, written around 1300 by Idrīs ibn Baydākīn at-Turkumānī. In it, the author criticized innovations which were widespread among Muslims in Mecca, Egypt, and Syria, such as singing and dancing at mosques during prayer time and the participation of Muslims in Christian holidays. He also condemned the veneration of graves and the cult of the dead, and women's repugnant habit of singing and dancing while performing the pilgrimage (at-Turkumānī, *Lumaʿ*, I, 76-100, 214-29, 287-316.).

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[1] Abū ʿAbdallāh ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAbdarī al-Fāsī, known simply as Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ, died in Cairo in 1336–37.

[2] Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ, *Madḫal aš-Šarʿ aš-šarīf ʿalā l-maḏāhib al-arbaʿa.* Cairo, n. d. 4 vols. As Colby (2005:34) characterizes it: "His work *Introduction to the Noble Law* can profitably assist the attempt to reconstruct the beliefs and practices of the Cairene populace in thirtenth–fourteenth century Egypt, so long as one keeps in mind its fundamentally polemical stance as a tract written to expose the malicious innovations perpetuated by that populace."

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The chapter of the *Madḫal* of Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ on the rightful behaviour of women (I, 246) begins with the following *salafī* tradition of unnamed source:

"A woman may leave her house only in three cases:

- when, after the wedding, she is conducted in solemn procession to her husband's home,
- when her father or mother dies,
- when she is brought to the cemetery.

However, Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ himself considers this standard an unattainable desire, at least in the libertine Egypt, so he states a more lenient set of conditions for the women's behaviour outside their homes.

The following descriptions deriving from different ages show that the complete segregation of sexes has always proved an impossible requirement.

2 The usual scheme of the relation between man and woman in Islam[3]

In the relevant Western literature dealing with Islam the position and roles of Muslim women, as compared with those of men, are examined according to the following scheme:

The traditional Arab family model	
Man	*Woman*
Independent, with economical-political power	Dependent without economic power
Visible public existence	Existence in the private sphere
Wide range of activities	Existence at home, the house is the space for the women
Right to learn	Limited right to learn (*changing*)
Purity of descent	Intangibility, the honour of the family

The function of the man	*The function of the woman*
Obligations of defence and supervision	Giving birth to offsprings, housework (*also at the farm*)
Pursuits for earning money	Pursuits not bringing money (*changing little by little)*
Activity, control	Passivity, subordination to and enjoyment for the man
Ideal state: father of son(s)	Ideal state: aging mother, step-mother or widow

[3] According to Ramzi-Abadir 1986:94.

This model contains many fundamental truths and generally serves as a useful starting point for the sociologists to make judgements on the position of women in a Muslim society, but only if one does not consider it more than a first approach and a simplified initial pattern to be be applied when trying to describe the complex social and private situations faced by women in their everyday life. However, it must be observed that the actual experience does not wholly conform to this pattern, since there are different kinds of divergences from the wide spread presuppositions reflected by the above scheme. From a socio-psychological point of view, this extremely abstract characterization of the Muslim woman cannot be considered a useful method because it cannot reveal how women succeed in finding different ways and practices to solve their social and private problems which comply with their particular interpretation. All these practices are of religious nature and help them not to feel their position in society and family unbearable, provided that their circumstances remain normal, not counting the death of the father, remaining spinster, becoming widow or divorcee. Following their own religious customs women do not feel that their activities are completely separated from those of the men.

The heightened interest of Western researchers to explore fundamental questions in connection with the position of women and their living conditions in Islam dates back to only about four decades, but several misconceptions which served as a basis for these studies seem to be obvious. It is a general opinion that the long standing conditions of women in the Islamic society are unalterable and cannot be changed. Another false view maintained by many experts is that Islamic law as the fundament of Muslim life is given in a definitive and stable form, which it is not. This inaccurate conviction, to be sure, has always been supported by the Islamic jurisconsults themselves, professing the eternal character of the Divine Law. Notwithstanding, they also acknowledge that, with the exception of the so called Qurʾānic laws (mainly the *ḥudūd* laws), the interpretation of the underlying texts and the methods used are the results of human effort which may differ from one legal school to another or even within a specific school. The same consideration bears on the rules concerning women and their prescribed behaviour. As Margaret Rausch puts it: "The recently established institutionalized role of *murshidah,* woman preacher and spiritual guide, trained and certified by the Moroccan state to offer spiritual counselling and instruction in Islamic doctrine and practice to women, is the most recent manifestation of the ever-changing nature of religious authority in Islam."[4]

[4] Rausch 2012:59. Evidently this and other new positions for women in Morocco invest women experts on the foundational Islamic texts, the Qurʾān, and the Sunna of the Prophet, with religious authority. Unlike many of their historical and contemporary female counterparts, the women holding these positions enjoy official state recognition.

Furthermore, it does not seem an accurate description that in the traditional Islamic societies, primarily in the mediaeval cities, women should have lived in complete seclusion in their homes. Broadly speaking, the evidence on women in early Muslim society suggests that they characteristically participated in and were expected to participate in the activities that preoccupied their community, and these included religious activities.[5] Contrary to many views, religious practices and the active participation in different public rituals and ceremonies have been essential for women to ensure their inner peace and harmony to bear the vicissitudes of everyday life.

The active and frequent participation of women in the religious rituals during the centuries generally signifies their deep religiosity. They have always been indubitably more involved in religious matters and have given more consideration to them than the men to whom, especially in the last century, the socio-political aspects of religious life have exercised the real appeal. For many men, however, the female religious life is nothing more than a bundle of superstitious fantasy. You cannot explain away everything that women practise or imagine as superstition, fear, or religious bigotry. The Nobel laurate Egyptian writer, Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ certainly belonged to these men when he depicted one of his heroines, Amīna as an extremely superstitious woman, in the novel *Bayna l-qaṣrayn* ("Palace Walk"), the first volume of his famous "Trilogy" (*aṯ- Ṯulāṯiyya* II, 328–329):

> "She had married before she reached the age of fourteen and had soon found herself the lady of a big house, after the father and mother of her husband died. … After a short nap she would lie awake for hours, waiting for her husband to return home from a long night out. … She had been terrified of the night when she first lived in this house. She knew far more about the world of the jinn than that of mankind and remained convinced that she was not alone in the big house. There were demons who could not have been lured away from these spacious, empty old rooms for long. Perhaps they had sought refuge there before she herself had been brought to the house, even before she saw the light of day. She frequently heard their whispers. Time and again she was awakened by their warm breath. When she was left alone, her only defence was reciting the opening chapter (*Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*) of the Qurʾān and the 112th chapter (*Sūrat al-Iḫlāṣ*) from it, about the absolute supremacy of God, or rushing to the lattice-work screen at the window (*mašrabiyya*) to peer anxiously through it at the lights of the carts and the coffeehouses, listening carefully for a laugh or cough to help her regain her composure. … When her children had been born … her fears were multiplied by her troubled soul's concern for them and her anxiety that they might be harmed. She would hold

[5] See, e.g., Ahmed 1992:60ff.

> them tight, lavish affection on them, and surround them, whether awake or asleep, with a protective shield of Qurʾān *sūra*s, charms, amulets and incantations. … When she was alone with an infant, rocking him to sleep and cuddling him … she would call out in a loud voice, as if addressing someone in the room: 'Leave us alone! You do not belong here! We are Muslims and believe in the One God.' Then she would quickly and fervently recite the 112th *sūra* of the Qurʾān about the uniqueness of God. … If she happened to sense one of the evil spirits prowling about she said: "Have you no respect for those who worship God the Merciful? He will protect us from you, so do us the favour of going away!"

Though the writer does not pass a sentence upon his heroine so described, it is made for him by the Algerian Sonia Ramzi-Abadir, whose main field of research is the sociology of literature and who is interested in characterizing the female figures in contemporary Arabic literature. According to her opinion, the Egyptian writer brilliantly connected Amīna's superstitious imagination and her passive mentality. Then she goes on saying: "The religiosity of a traditional Arab woman manifests itself most frequently in superstitious and magical practices" (Ramzi-Abadir 1986: 137–140).

At the same time, it is to be noted what Ramzi-Abadir does not take into consideration, i.e. that Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ does not seem to include in his novel any description of the religious activity of the husband, Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Ǧawād, which means that it may have been limited to the participation in the Friday noon prayer.

The Algerian writer, Rachid Boudjedra, sums up his characterisation of the Maghrebi women in his first novel, which deals with the negative consequences of the divorce and polygamy for the women: "Women are primarily not religious but superstitious" (Boudjedra 1969:76).

In my paper I endeavour, if not to question, but at least to amend this offensively one-sided view.

3 The classification of rituals from the point of view of women

(i) Special rituals for women with male support
  a. rituals inside the house
  b. with the participation of family members only
  c. together with neighbours and friends
  d. outside the house, participation in rituals in public spaces

(ii) Rituals for men with female support or passive presence
  a. inside the house
  b. outside the house

(iii) Rituals exclusively for men
  a. there is a parallel ritual only for women
  b. women may occasionally be present
(iv) Rituals with mixed men-women participation
  a. inside or outside the house (mainly at some Sufi rituals, in different ages and territories)

Although in one type of the religious rituals it is the woman who plays the dominant rule while in another type the man does the same, this classification reflects well the fact that both women and men participate in the rituals in one form or another, either actively or passively, as a spectator or in a preparatory or encouraging role.

4 The relation between Islamic law and the reality based on the legal handbooks and *fatwā* collections

There are two main opinions in the relevant literature in judging the regulations, suggestions and guidelines of Islamic legal writings:

(i) One regards legal regulations identical with reality.

(ii) According to the other they do not reflect real life and customs at all.

Both opinions contain truth to some extent but considering either of them as exclusively true would contort the truth and would be a simplification of the complex relations between regulations and life. Legal regulations did not always determine historical realities. Women's mosque attendance and participation are characterised by tremendous diversity across time and place and they depend on numerous factors.[6] However, even legal regulations greatly differ in the question of women's mosque attendance. An Iraqi professor of Islamic law summed up the problems connected with the extent of legality of women's participation in the communal prayer as follows: "The jurisprudents' opinions differ with regard to the legality of women's attendance of the prayer in the mosque, whether the community is obligatory (*wāǧib*) or only recommendable (*mustaḥabb*) for the women in performing the prescribed prayers" (Zaydān 1993:210).

The position of women and their possibilities for attending Islamic religious rituals and ceremonies in the Middle Ages may be best reflected in a special kind of legal literature, that of the *fatwā* collections. However, the uncertainty surrounding, for example, the permissibility of women's prayer attendance in mosques appears in the total lack of this important question in many great *fatwā* collections, like those

[6] For a summary of legal discourse on the topic of women going to congregational prayer in mosques, see Zaydān 1993: I, 209–215.

of al-Wanšarīsī's[7] or Ibn Taymiyya's.[8] Ibn Taymiyya, for instance, speaks about the clothes that should be worn by women and men during prayer in the mosque, and he answers the questions concerning the visibility of women's hair or the appearance of their legs from under their cloak and similar questions concerning women's head wears (Ibn Taymiyya, *Maǧmūʿat al-fatāwā*, XXII 76, 91–97), but not one relates to the impermissibility of women's mosque attendance, which, considering the several sayings of the Prophet on the contrary cannot be surprising. In his special collection of *fatwā*s on women[9] Ibn Taymiyya does not mention this topic either. The large Ḥanafī collection, *al-Fatāwā al-Hindiyya* compiled by Indian scholars in the 16th century did not mention women in connection with prayer.[10]

In our days, however, the *fatwā*s making objections to women's mosque attendance have multiplied, mainly in Saudi Arabia, though they do not, and cannot, contain unequivocal prohibition, only suggestions for them to remain at home.

Muslim women attend mosques throughout much of the Islamic world, from the Masǧid al-Ḥarām at the Kaʿba in Mecca to mosques from diverse backgrounds worldwide. However, not all Muslims agree that women should be present in communal worship, and even mosques that accept the practice often treat women differently from men. As UCLA Islamic law professor Khaled Abou El Fadl observes, accounts of women attending worship services at mosques go all the way back to the time of the Muḥammad himself. Not only does the Qurʾān emphasize equality and condemn keeping people away from communal worship, but the several pieces of *ḥadīṯ* make also reference to women praying and speaking in mosques with men. For example, since some men were wearing robes that left them exposed when lying prostrate in prayer, a *ḥadīṯ* commands women to wait for the men to get up first before lifting their own heads off the ground. On speaking about restrictions on women's attendance he notes that not all Muslims agree that women should be allowed to attend communal worship in mosques, and even religious authorities who permit the practice can place strict limits on attendance. For example, several fundamentalist leaders have banned or discouraged women from going to mosques, arguing that their presence creates sexual temptation for men and citing a disputed *ḥadīṯ* that says that a woman's place for prayer is in her home. Among conservative Islamic leaders who do not go that far, it is nonetheless common to encounter such rules as a requirement that women arrive through a separate entrance. [11]

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[7] *al-Miʿyār al-muʿrib.*

[8] *Maǧmūʿat al-fatāwā.* These and similar topics are collected in Vols XXII–XXIV.

[9] *Fatāwā an-nisāʾ,* Cairo, Maktabat al-Qurʾān, no date.

[10] Niẓām al-Burhānpūrī *et al.*, *al-Fatāwā al-hindiyya.*

[11] Described shortly in Green 2017.

Over time, as Islam spread throughout Asia, Africa, and Europe, Muslim authorities increasingly stressed the threat posed to chastity by the interaction of men and women outside the home, including the mosque. By the premodern period, it became unusual for any woman, if not the very elderly, to frequent the mosque. By the late 1960s, increasing numbers of women were worshipping in mosques in the larger urban centres of the Middle East and South Asia, although in most areas women still generally stayed out of the mosque.

5 The main locations of the rituals

(i) Mecca, the destination of the pilgrimage, where women participate in the ceremonies together with men.
(ii) The mosque, from where women may have been excluded at certain times and places during prayer but they have always been there before and after prayer.
(iii) The cemetery, where people make visits to the graves of holy men where women have always been present.
(iv) The private house for family and small community rituals – with the participation or exclusive participation of women.
(v) Community places, on the occasion of religious processions and the birthday festivities (*mawlid*) of the Prophet and the mystical saints. There women and men have usually been mixing in spite of the prohibition of the men of religion.
(vi) Rented flats or tents for rituals where women may be present even if they remain in the background, except for the *zār*, which serves as an occasion for women to seek psychic relief.

6 Women at the Meccan pilgrimage

6.1 With uncovered faces, mixing with men

The position of women during the Meccan pilgrimage is quite specific and contrary to the theologically explained customary practice of women in other places of the Islamic world. It is prohibited by the religious law to wear any piece of clothes which touches the face. Thus, women cannot wear veil like *niqāb* or *burqaʿ* which cover their faces or gloves on their hands. This habit confirmed by the Prophet[12] goes back to the pre-Islamic era when even men were prohibited to cover their faces which they

[12] For a detailed discussion of the relevant *ḥadīṯ* literature see aṣ-Ṣubayḥī 2008:49–80.

usually did against the sand. In pre-Islamic times it happened that both men and women made their ritual circumambulation around the Kaʿba (*ṭawāf*) naked. One can read a detailed description of this custom in "The Epistle on Singing Girls" (*Risālat al-qiyān*) of al-Ǧāḥiẓ:[13] "Dubāʿa asked her husband, an old man, ʿAbdallāh to divorce her to be able to marry a younger man, Hišām. Although she did not tell him her final goal, ʿAbdallāh became suspicious and said to her: I fear you are going to marry Hišām. But she replied: I will not do so. If you do – he replied – you must (among other things) make the *ṭawāf* naked. The woman did not refuse his conditions saying that she would not intend to marry again. Hišām, however, married her and she was obliged to perform the circumambulation of the Kaʿba naked. Then the writer adds a note: "Ladies up to the present day, both daughters and mothers of the caliphs and those below them in rank, perform *ṭawāf* with unveiled faces, for only in that way is a pilgrimage performed properly."[14]

Richard Francis Burton in the 19th century observed that "The wife and daughters of a Turkish pilgrim of our party assumed the Ihram at the same time as ourselves. They appeared dressed in white garments; and they had exchanged the Lisam, that coquettish fold of muslin which veils without concealing the lower part of the face, for a hideous mask, made of split, dried, and plaited palm-leaves, with two "bulls'-eyes" for light. I could not help laughing when these strange figures met my sight, and, to judge from the shaking of their shoulders, they were not less susceptible to the merriment which they had caused" (Burton, *Personal narrative* II, 141).

The Hungarian scholar Julius Germanus who as a Muslim made the pilgrimage three times, in describing his experiences during the pilgrimage writes about the women pilgrims as follows: "Unveiled women in white clothes are hustling cautiously into the wavering, billowy mess of men. Here they are not to be feared for, here there are no women and men, there are only believer souls looking for their salvation. Bedouin women of the Najd cut through the human waves with manly intrepidity shouting toward the Black Stone: "Oh, you daughter of the black night, give rain to our earth, in that case I offer up to you butter to oil your knots of hair. The daughter of the desert thought the Kaʿba and the Black Stone to be women who use cosmetics and give rain for a votive offering. The nearby Wahhābīs pushed them away roughly and scolded them for their superstitious ignorance" (Germanus, *Allah Akbar* 457).

The mixing of men and women in such measure would be strongly criticised by the religious scholars, but all this is allowed during the Meccan pilgrimage. We may see scenes on pictures and films where the women are praying in rows in front of the men or in the same row, which counts as improper behaviour of a high grade. This kind of indecency, having occurred in the mosques of Baghdad, had horrified some

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[13] al-Ǧāḥiẓ, *Risālat al-qiyān*, no. 12, Arabic text p. 5.

[14] *Ibid.* no. 13, p. 6 (Arabic text), p. 18 (English translation).

men in the 12th century so that they asked a religious scholar whether it did not ruin their prayer. Ibn al-Ǧawzī (died 1200), however, reassured them that though this kind of behaviour did not comply with the Islamic regulations the prayer would be valid (Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Aḥkām an-nisāʾ* 43).

6.2 Love poetry composed during the Meccan pilgrimage (ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa and Ibn ʿArabī)

This libertinism encouraged some poet to write poetry to unknown girls and women in different ages. The most famous of them was ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa (died in 711), a poet regarded as of easy virtue, who lived in Medina as a rule but during the pilgrimage he regularly moved into his Meccan house. He only participated in the pilgrimages to accost unknown women and to write poems praising their beauty. The women celebrated in the poetry concealed their contentment by apparent indignation. Some of them had been ready even before entering the holy precinct to accept the poet's approach and became offended if the poet had not written poetry about them. The poet had made the acquaintance of a woman he had fallen in love with in Mina, one of the sacred sites of the pilgrimage. He wrote: "If I am on the fire of love, do not hurt me, since I will remain her captive for ever. First, we met by the walls of the Ḫayf mosque (in Mina), oh, what a sweet moment it was!" In another case he wrote: "As I have gone across the rough ground of Mina a heavenly phenomenon unfolded herself, in the shape of an unveiled face" (ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa, *Dīwān,* 178, no. 171).

The garland of love poetry "The interpreter of desires" (*Tarǧumān al-ašwāq*) by the great Arab mystic, Ibn ʿArabī (died in 1245) was composed in similar circumstances in Mecca. On his arrival at Mecca in 598/1202 Ibn ʿArabī found several scholars and divines, both male and female. Once when the night had fallen in the grip of ecstasy Ibn ʿArabī started performing the ritual circumambulations round the Kaʿba, while at the same time composing verses aloud, when he became aware of a presence by his side. "All I felt was a light tap on my shoulder, made by the gentlest of hands. I turned around and saw a young woman. Never have I witnessed a face that was more graceful, or speech that was so pleasant, intelligent, subtle and spiritual. After that I took my leave of her and departed. I subsequently made her acquaintance and spent time in her company."[15] The inspiration of this girl, Niẓām, induced him to write the *Tarǧumān al-ašwāq.*

All this was only made possible by the free movement of unveiled women in the holy precinct of Mecca. Although he warned the reader in the introduction to his poems that "in composing these verses my allusions throughout were to divine inspiration and spiritual revelations" (Ibn ʿArabī, *Tarǧumān al-ašwāq* 24), his

[15] Ibn ʿArabī, *Tarǧumān al-ašwāq* 26. Cf. Addas 1993:208–210.

carefully worded precautions were in vain and did not prevent the jurists of Aleppo from accusing him of producing an erotic work under the pretence that they were mystical poems. So, he decided to write a commentary on the *Tarǧumān* in which he disclosed explicitly the spiritual meanings of the usual language of worldly love poetry, the *ġazal* (Ibn ʿArabī, *Tarǧumān al-ašwāq* 26).

6.3 Modern Saudi fatwā *on the prohibition of veil and gloves for women in the pilgrimage*

In the modern Islamic world, it is the Saudi community of believers who finds the rules of the pilgrimage strange and astonishing since the customs of face veil of face and wearing gloves in the street are most severely adhered to. Therefore, people are continuously asking decisions from their *muftī*s regarding the obligations for women. The former Saudi grand *muftī,* Ibn Bāz gave in 2006 the following *fatwa* to be considered obligatory for Saudi women during the pilgrimage: The woman in *iḥrām* for *ḥaǧǧ* or *ʿumra* should not wear a *niqāb* or gloves, until she has gone through the first stage of exiting *iḥrām*.[16] Then he added that she should follow the example of the wives of the Prophet and should let her head cover (*ḫimār*) come down over her face if she is worried that non-*maḥram* men may see her. But that concern is not ongoing, because some women are among their *maḥram*s. Those who cannot be away from non-*maḥram* men can continue to let their head covers come down over their faces, and there is no blame on them for doing so.[17] This, however, can only be regarded as a suggestion (*mustaḥabb)* and no law (*ḥukm*) can be based on it for most of the legal schools. It is so, on the one hand, because this tradition goes back to ʿĀʾiša, and not to the Prophet. On the other hand, it speaks specially (*taḫṣīṣan*) about the wives of the Prophet, and not about an obligation for every Muslim. As videos and pictures taken during the pilgrimage show most of the female pilgrims do not follow this suggestion.[18]

6.4 Can a woman go on pilgrimage without her husband?

The purpose of the rulings of the Islamic jurisprudents in connection with this question should be, according to all legal schools, to guarantee the security and comfort of Muslim women. Inasmuch as a woman performs the pilgrimage with a person to whom marriage is not permissible (*maḥram*), a trustworthy companion,

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[16] "The *muḥrima* (a woman in the state of *iḥrām*) should not cover her face, or wear gloves." See al-Buḫārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* III, 64.

[17] See in more detail in Ibn Bāz, *Fatāwā.*

[18] However, the Ḥanbalīs and the Šīʿīs do not accept this interpretation followed by the three other Sunnī legal schools.

through responsible official supervision, or similar people, and she feels safe and secure, then it is permissible for her to perform the pilgrimage even when a *maḥram* does not accompany her. According to a *ḥadīṯ* included in the collections of al-Buḫārī and Muslim, the Prophet once said: "It is unlawful for a woman who believes in God and the Day of Judgment to travel for three or more days without being accompanied by her father, brother, husband, son, or another male companion" (al-Buḫārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* 288, no. 1197; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* 976, nos. 416–418). In another *ḥadīṯ* included in the *Miškāt*, a man told the Prophet: "O Prophet! I have been chosen to take part in a raid (*ġazwa*) but my wife has left for the pilgrimage." The Prophet replied, "Go and perform the pilgrimage with your wife" (al-Ḫaṭīb at-Tibrīzī, *Miškāt al-maṣābīḥ*, 773, no. 2513). Scholars disagree on the meaning of these and similar texts. The question is, whether or not a *maḥram* must accompany a woman on her pilgrimage. Ḥanafī scholars argue that a woman must be accompanied by either her husband or a *maḥram*. Holding a contrary position, the Šāfiʿīs maintain that the presence of a *maḥram* is not necessary; rather, the main condition is a woman's safety and security. According to those who follow the Šāfiʿī School of jurisprudence, if a woman's security is guaranteed by the presence of her husband, a *maḥram* or even trustworthy women, then she must be allowed to travel. Some of them go as far as to argue that while she is legally obligated to travel with at least one woman, if her safety is guaranteed without the need for any *maḥram*, she may travel provided she remains with the group. The Mālikīs do not insist on the presence of a *maḥram* provided her safety is guaranteed. In one account, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal does make the presence of the husband or *maḥram* an obligatory condition though in another account, he does not.[19]

7 "Women's sins" in Islamic rituals

According to mediaeval, and some modern, religious scholars, women commit the following sins during their participation in religious rituals:

*7.1 Leaving the house (*ḫurūǧ*)*

Although Islamic family law, the so called personal status law (*al-aḥwāl aš-šaḫṣiyya*) only prescribes for the woman the obedience to her husband, namely, that she cannot leave the house without the permission of her husband (*ṭāʿat al-bayt*),

[19] "Narrated by Ibn ʿAbbās: The Prophet said: "A woman should not travel except with a *maḥram*." A man got up and said, "O Allah's Apostle! I intend to go to such and such an army and my wife wants to perform *ḥaǧǧ*." The Prophet said (to him), "Go along with her (to *ḥaǧǧ*)" (al-Buḫārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* III, 85).

some men of religion have considered the presence of women outside their houses to be dangerous for the community even if it happened with permission, especially without male accompaniment.[20]

*7.2 Mixing with men (*iḫtilāṭ*)*

It is the necessary consequence of the former sin, since women are necessarily mixing with unknown men meeting them and occasionally speaking with them when participating in the external religious rituals and ceremonies, either they are alone or together with their close relatives. It has been considered immoral and even dangerous, causing temptation (*fitna*) or even discord and dissension between people. Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ also describes what he sees as reprehensible innovations (*bidaʿ*) in the observance of Muslim religious festivals in Mamlūk Egypt. Furthermore, speaking about the Night of the Ascension festival in the night of the 27th of the month of Rağab, Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ objects to the manner in which men and women interact in the mosque during the evening of the festival. Such mixing between the sexes, according to the author, allows for too much of an opportunity for impropriety, especially since the women customarily adorn themselves with jewellery and makeup on this occasion (Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ I, 297).

7.3 Gatherings and meetings of women

The consideration of these gatherings as sinful is based on the fear of the unknown since one cannot find out, as it was frequently said, what happens during the meetings of the women and as far as one learns these events "are to be condemned". These anxieties, which almost form a "phobia", result from the apprehension that women are apt to ruin the morals of the whole Islamic community and their too frequent meetings may lead to straying from the right path. To control women's immoral actions, or immorality in general, was traditionally the task of the so-called market inspector (*muḥtasib*) in the cities. However, according to the principle of "enjoining right and forbidding wrong" (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-n-naḥy ʿan al-munkar*), prompted by the Qurʾān[21], every member of the community has the right to step up against a deplorable act in defence of the common morals. This principle has always been applied mainly to women.

[20] See, e.g. the opinion of Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ, *Madḫal* I, 246.
[21] In many places, e.g., 3:110, 7:157, etc.

8 Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ's condemnatory description of the common participation of women and men in the rituals of 14th century Cairo

8.1 The author condemned what he called immoral female "innovations", foreign to Islam, primarily the long absences of women from their houses. He objects, for example, to the presence of women in the annual *maḥmal* festivities. The severe Moroccan scholar, however, did not consider these women heretical or unfaithful only erring and straying, thus it is, he said, the obligation of men to show them the right path revealed in the Qurʾān (*ṣirāṭ mustaqīm*) (Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ, *Madḫal* I, 267–268).

8.2 Visitation to the graves at night unveiled together with men

"As far as the visiting of graves is concerned, it is their ugliest and worst custom of all, since it comprises several harmful things. One of these is that women go out to the graves late at night together with unrelated men, despite the many cavities and smaller houses scattered among the graves, meant for the relatives of the deceased, which could be used for (illegal) seclusion (*ḫalwa*)" (*Ibid*.).

9 Women in the mosque

The assumption that women have been largely excluded from mosques for much of Islamic history is one that has longly prevailed, though historically neither scholarly disapproval of women's mosque attendance nor the absence from mosques was uniform or monolithic.

9.1 Prophetic traditions on the praying of women

The *ḥadīṯ* of Ibn ʿAbbās in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Buḫārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* said: "I accompanied the Prophet on *ʿīd al fiṭr*. The Prophet prayed and then delivered the sermon. Upon completing the sermon, he approached the women and delivered a speech to them, he reminded them and encouraged them to give charity" (al-Buḫārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* 237, no. 978; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* 603, no. 885). The early mediaeval scholars of tradition understood this to be a proof for the impermissibility of mixing, thus Muslim placed this *ḥadīṯ* under the chapter title "The Permissibility of Women Leaving their Homes to Conduct the *ʿīd* prayers, attend the prayer area, observe the sermon, in a manner, in which they abstain from mixing with men" (an-Nawawi, *Šarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* VI, 174). Ibn Ḥaǧar al-ʿAsqalānī (died 1449) commented on this narration saying: "This *ḥadīṯ* indicates that women were separated from men and they were not mixed with them" (Ibn Ḥaǧar, *Fatḥ al-Bārī* I, 192–193). an-Nawawī (died 1277) mentioned: "This narration informs that the women would conduct the prayer at the same time

as the men but their place was in a separate area. This was done out of fear of evil, looking, thoughts or other than this." And: "The best (prayer) rows for the men are those at the forefront and the worst are those in the back; and the best rows for the women are those at the back and the worst are those at the forefront" (an-Nawawi, *Šarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* IV, 159). Commenting on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* an-Nawawī stated: "The reason why the last rows are preferred for the women who are attending prayer with the men, is in order that they remain distant from mixing with the men and in order that they do not see the men, so that their hearts do not become attached to them due to their seeing (the men's) movements and hearing their speech" (an-Nawawī, *Šarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* no. 440, IV, 369). Ibn Rağab (died in 1335) said: "If the women pray at the back, this will allow them to quickly leave before the men." (Ibn Rağab, *Fatḥ al-bārī* V, 314). The *ḥadīṯ* of Umm Salāma is recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Buḫārī (205, no. 837). She said: "If the Prophet completed his prayer, the women would (immediately) stand (to leave the mosque). The Prophet would also wait (in his position) before standing." In Ibn Ḥağar's *ḥadīṯ* commentary one can read the following remark: "This narration informs of the dislike of mixing between men and women" (Ibn Ḥağar, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, no. 875. II, 352). Ibn Qudāma said in his legal handbook: "If there is a congregation of men and women praying with the *imām*, then it is recommended that the *imām* and the men remain seated until it is felt that the women have left. The women should leave immediately after the completion of the prayer. This is because if the women remain seated and the men stand up quickly, this will lead to their mixing" (Ibn Qudāma, *al-Muġnī*, II, 254–255). Ibn Taymiyya wrote on the segregation: "Separation between men and women was the way of the Prophet and his rightly guided caliphs. This was done because mixing between the two is the cause of great temptation which may lead to evil and sin. If men mix with women, it is like fire mixing with wood" (Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Istiqāma*, I, 182).

9.2 The opinion of an influential mediaeval religious scholar

Ibn al-Ǧawzī (died 1200) wrote a whole book on the legal rules relating to women. In the chapter "The praying of the women in congregation"[22] he stated that women should not be allowed to go to the mosques and pray together with men since, according to him, the Prophet himself urged women to pray in the house. He even prayed together his wives in his house. A similar view was formulated by al-Ġazālī.[23]

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[22] *Aḥkām an-nisā'*. The title of the chapter is: *Ṣalāt al-mar'a fī l-ǧamā'a*, 36ff.

[23] al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm ad-dīn*, handles this problem in the "*Kitāb an-nikāḥ*", vol. II, 48.

9.3 The circumstance prevailing in the al-Azhar mosque in the 19th century

St. John, a 19th century English traveller described his visit to the Azhar Mosque, from which it can be seen clearly that he found the same conditions there as had been observed five hundred years earlier by the Moroccan religious scholar, Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ:

"I visited, shortly before my departure, the two most remarkable mosques of Cairo, the interior of which few travellers have beheld, and none described. The first I entered was the celebrated mosque El Azhar … On arriving at the gateway, we doffed our slippers, and entered a marble-paved court, surrounded by an elegant colonnade, the entablature of which is adorned with arabesques of bright red colour. Numbers of poor Musulmans, maintained by the charity of the foundation, were lying asleep on mats in various parts of the area; while others, in their immediate vicinity, were engaged in prayer. To avoid attracting the attention of fanatical worshippers, we passed on rapidly, as if brought thither by devotion, and traversing the court, proceeded into the body of the mosque, where a numerous congregation was assembled. Contrary to the ideas commonly prevailing in Europe, a large part of the votaries consisted of ladies, who were walking to and fro without the slightest restraint, conversing with each other, and mingling freely among the men" (St. John, *Egypt*, II, 335).

Based on this text it is clear, that urban women have continued to participate in the apparently religious social life with men, although some religious circles have not always greeted this behaviour with enthusiasm or found it pious. The Azhar Mosque, Egypt's supreme religious body, has made countless provisions to limit undesirable behaviour during religious ceremonies, including women's participation.

In addition to this, in 1881, the state also felt that it was necessary to intervene, and an official state circular governing religious life, which was issued by a semi-state-owned agency controlling Sufi orders, which had been created by Muḥammad ʿAlī in 1812 as the *šayḫ as-saǧǧāda* ("the shaykh of the prayer rug"), forbade the use of drums when women were present and explicitly provided for gender segregation when visiting cemeteries. However, the fact that this circular was needed meant that there was little progress in the way the reformers of al-Azhar would have wished, and many of the most disconcerting traditional customs, such as women's active participation in certain ceremonies remained unchanged.[24]

9.4 The place of women in the mosque – before and during prayer

In the last quarter of the 20th century many anthropoligical research dealt with the position of women in modern Islamic societies. In one of them, Evelyn A. Early

[24] See the description of Tucker 1985:109–110 and 114.

gives an excellent description of women's everyday behaviour forty years ago in one of the so called popular (*baladī*) quarters of Cairo, Būlāq, where the women preferred to visit the largest mosque of the district, Abū l-ʿAlāʾ (Early 1993:90). They spent more time in the mosque than men. "While *baladī* men tend to gather at the coffee-houses, *baladī* women's one acceptable public meeting place is in the mosques, where they not only pray but also sit in the quiet coolness. When I accompanied my friends to the market, we might slip into a mosque for a few minutes to rest. At formal prayer, women pray behind a curtain, to the side, or in the balcony, at other times they move freely throughout the mosque. Some *baladī* women pray five times a day and attend the morning religious instruction, which rotates among six mosques in Būlāq. *Baladī* women prefer companionship in rituals and they mobilize their associates to enhance the experience. Women attending such classes recognize their own hierarchy of religious learning and urge forward the woman most suited to lead the prayer" (Early 1993:93). Namely, most religious scholars acknowledge the imamate of a woman if only women participate in the prayer.

10 Visiting the graves of holy men

The *ziyāra* was another popular practice which, as we saw, drew scholarly fire. It also became a target for governmental action. We have scattered information about its banning. As early as 865 the prefect of Fusṭāṭ forbade women to continue their custom of visiting graves. He also inflicted severe punishments on professional women mourners.[25] A ban against women's *ziyāra* was declared once again in 1011, fearing the spreading of plague.[26] In the early fourteenth century, amīr ʿAlāʾ ad-Dīn Ṭaybars barred women from outings to Cairo Necropolis, the Qarāfa on special days *(mawsim) (*Ibn Taġrī Birdī, *an-Nuǧūm az-zāhira* VIII, 230). At the end of the same century, in *ramaḍān* of 793 (1391), women were prevented once again from visiting graves at the Qarāfa.[27] A ban on women's custom of performing *ziyāra*s on Fridays was announced in 1421 and again in the following year, around the time of *ʿīd al-fiṭr*, as well as on Fridays in 1432 **(**al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk* IV, 486, 594, 619; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ* II, 147; Ibn al-ʿUmrānī, *Inbāʾ* Ill, 470, Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḫ* IX, 266.).

"Some graves (*maqam*) have a holy tree attached, where people hang a bit of cloth belonging to someone who needs to be cured. Visits to saints are undertaken by both men and women. Women tend to be in the majority, both because a number

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[25] al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫiṭaṭ*, I, 313: *nahā … an taṣīḥa mrʾatun (ʿalā mayyitin) wa-ʿāqaba fī ḏālika wa-šaddada.*

[26] al-Maqrīzī, *Ḫitat*, II, 287: *manaʿa n-nisāʾa min ziyārati l-qubūri fa-lam yura fī l-aʿyādi bi-l-maqābiri imraʾatun wāḥidatun.* Cf. Ignaz Goldziher 1971:320–21.

[27] This event was described by various historians, e.g., al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk* III, 749; Ibn al-ʿUmrānī, *Inbāʿ* I, 318; Ibn al-Furāt, *Tārīḫ* IX, 266.

of saints specialize in women's problems such as pregnancies, and because women do not usually take part in communal prayer at the mosque. Visits to saints and moulids are a way for women to participate in the religious life of the community" (Biegman 1990:84).

In the 19th century an American traveller, Clara Erskine Clement observed how freely the Turkish women moved in the mosques and cemeteries: "The Turkish ladies go about with a freedom that ought to be sufficient for those of any nation. … In Tuesdays they assemble in the cemetery of Scutari. On other days they go to Therapia, the Islands, or to the sweet waters of Asia. They make their devotions in the mosques or at the tombs of the Sultans. They witness the exhibition of the dervishes, and they do all these things with a will and an air of extreme enjoyment such as Christian women rarely show. … The cemetery of Pera … is called the Petit Champ des Morts. … If the stone on which one sits is favourably located, he has glimpses of the Golden Horn between the trees, while the procession of veiled women and men of various nations who move up and down the hill, distract the attention" (Erskine Clement, *Constantinople* 249–250, 256–257).

11. Remaining in the husband's house (*ṭāʿat al-bayt)*

11.1 "As the husband likes … in 1919."

The following story derives from the novel of *Bayna l-qaṣrayn* by Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ. The events of the novel begin in the aftermath of the First World War. In the followings I sum up briefly the events relevant to our topic:[28] Sayyida Amīna had longed all her life to go and visit the mosque of al-Ḥusayn in Cairo, one of the most important and favoured holy mosques and shrines in Egypt, having special attractiveness to women. Although the mosque lies some hundred metres from their flat in the Gamāliyya quarter of Old Cairo she could never go there because her husband had prohibited her to go out of the house. She was allowed only to visit her mother who lived next door, and this too in the company of her husband. However, when her husband, as-Sayyid Aḥmad had travelled to Port Saʿīd for a day, her 15 and 17 years old sons persuaded her to seize the opportunity and visit the mosque accompanied by them. The visit meant an enormous experience for the mother but in returning home she was run over an automobile and broke her shoulder. Since her husband at his return found her in bed she was obliged to confess her disobedience to his husband. During the weeks of her ailment the husband did not say a word but after Amīna had recovered from her illnes he drove her away from the house. However, he did not divorce her wife who had moved back to her mother's house

[28] This story is shortened from Chapters 27–33 of the book.

and some weeks later when the son of an important man had proposed to one of his daughters he allowed her to come back to her home because, according to the custom, the mother should be present at the proposal. Later she was allowed in the house, but her husband never said a word to her till his death. The severity of the husband's behaviour was based on the rule of the obligatory obedience of the wife to her husband, sanctified by Islamic law (*ṭāʿat al-bayt*), though it originated in the requisits of male society not religion proper. The disobedient woman hurts the socially recognized honour of the husband not his religious feelings.

The husband's prohibition would have been opposed even by Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ, known of his strict views in the questions of female behaviour, since he wrote in his above mentioned famous book: "If the wife asks her husband to let her leave the house in a religious matter the husband is legally obliged to give her the permission. Otherwise the wife may turn to the judge for legal redress" (Ibn al-Ḥāǧǧ, *Madḫal* I, 39)[29].

Although this is a literary example which, however, reflects perfectly the age in which the plot of the novel is placed as well as the age in which Naǧīb Maḥfūẓ wrote it, 1956, and represents in a faithful way the fact that the limitation of the liberty of women's movements has always been a matter of social requirements rather than religious regulations.

11.2 "The reward of obedience"

In 1980 the American anthropologist, Evelyn A. Early talked in Cairo to ʿAzza, the daughter of a family well known to her, who had made a "conversion" to true Islam according to the new tendency which rapidly spread at that time and had dressed the *ḥiǧāb* (having become a *muḥaǧǧaba*) veiling her face in the street, and joined together with her cousin one of the *ǧamāʿāt islāmiyya*, the extremist Islamic groups. She said to the anthropologist (Early 1993:121–122): "A *muḥaggaba* woman follows injunctions such as that she should obey her husband over her father. The *Qurʾān* tells of a woman whose husband was traveling and had told her not to leave the house. People came to tell the woman her father was dying. She went to the Prophet and said she needed to see her father, but the Prophet advised her: "Follow the words of your husband." People approached the woman when her father was in his last throes of death. She went to the Prophet again. He told her: "Follow the orders of your husband." The woman's father died, and she still stayed at home, following her husband's orders, and because of her obedience, the woman's father went straight to heaven." It would be a nice story showing the dividing line in a woman's life before and after wedding, the only trouble being that this story does not form part of the *Qurʾānic* text and the *Qurʾān* does not contain at all stories like this with the Prophet

[29] See also Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Aḥkām an-nisāʾ* 95.

speaking to Muslims. It is, however, a Prophetic tradition (*ḥadīṯ*) of some kind, used for the re-education of newly convert girls.[30]

11.3 "The wife's place is in the house"

In conclusion, I would like to quote a few lines from the autobiography of an Iraqi female doctor. Though there are some similarities with the description of the Egyptian writer, it also stands in contrast to that (as-Saʿdī, *Ṭabība* 36): "My mother had never left our house, except when she brought us girls to the public bath, without the accompanyment of our father. They went to visit our aunt or one of the holy places in Baghdad.[31] As for the shopping it was always my father who went to the market and shops in my early youth when our family was well off. In later times he had been ashamed of not being able to do the shopping in such a rich way and so he sent us girls to do the shopping in the nearby small shops."

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[30] In reality it is a so called weak tradition which was used in the Middle Ages, too, to discipline women. See for its weakness al-Qādirī, *Silsila*. It occurs in Ibn Baṭṭa's *Aḥkām an-nisāʾ* referred to in *al-Mawsūʿa al-fiqhiyya*, X, 224, where he explains that the obedience to the husband is obligatory (*ṭāʿat az-zawǧ wāǧiba*), while to visit a sick relative is only recommendable (*mustaḥabb*). It is also cited by al-Ġazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm ad-dīn*, "*Kitāb an-nikāḥ*", II, 58-59, under the heading "On the rights of the husband over his wife". The *ḥadīṯ* in question is interpreted by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-ʿIrāqī, in his *Taḫrīǧ aḥādīṯ Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm ad-dīn al-musammā Iḫbār al-aḥyāʾ bi-aḫbār al-Iḥyāʾ*, edited below the pages of the original work. In the original tradition, of course, the woman did not go to the Prophet, since at that case she should have already left the house against the will of her husband, but only sent a message to the Prophet. In the variant tradition quoted by al-Ġazālī the husband is even more severe because the father of his wife lived in the same household, but only on the lower part while the wife's family in the upper portion. He said "Do not go down from the upper part to the lower one" *(ʿahida ilā mraʾatihi an lā tanzila min al-ʿulū ilā s-sufl*).

[31] The expression used is *al-ʿatabāt al-muqaddasa* which means mosques containing a mausoleum of a member of the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*). One of these sacred mosques is the Kāẓimayn Mosque in Baghdad. Though this description is about a Šīʿī family, the customs and behaviour of women do not differ from those of Sunnī Islam.

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MISSION DAKAR-DJIBOUTI : LA BOÎTE OUBLIÉE.
II.
DEUX ROULEAUX MAGIQUES ÉTHIOPIENS
(MS. BNF AR. 7337 (2), (4)) [1]

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I. Introduction

La mission ethnographique et linguistique Dakar-Djibouti, consacrée par la loi spéciale du 31 mars 1931, organisée par l'Institut d'ethnologie de l'Université de Paris et le Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle et conduite entre le 10 mai 1931 et le 18 février 1933 par l'anthropologue français Marcel Griaule (m. à Paris le 23 février 1956), est à l'origine de la constitution d'une documentation écrite et orale, visuelle et sonore. Elle est aussi revenue avec une grande quantité de masques, statues, instruments de musique, … (Griaule 1933)[2]. Au-delà de la sphère scientifique, ces derniers ont inspiré l'imaginaire pour finalement imprégner la création artistique[3].

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[2] Sur la critique de la méthode de leur collecte par Leiris, en tous les cas en 1931, et les différentes questions, humaines, scientifiques, d'autres encore, qu'elle soulève, voir en particulier sa lettre du 19 septembre 1931, partiellement reproduite dans Leiris 1996a:204 ; la position de Leiris a suscité une dissension entre lui et Griaule.

[3] Ce fut une source documentaire pour Pablo Picasso, qui est resté lié à Michel Leiris. Pour leur correspondance, dont une petite partie est publiée, voir le catalogue de l'exposition, *Gallimard, un siècle d'édition, 1911–2011*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 22 mars–3 juillet 2011:304–305 ; 373–374, ainsi que le catalogue de l'exposition, *Picasso, voyages imaginaires*, Marseille, Centre de la Vieille Charité, 16 février–24 juin 2018.

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Parmi les préoccupations des membres de la mission, traduisant celles de M. Griaule lui-même, la médecine, la magie et le champ du magico-thérapeutique ont tenu une place notable. Sylvain Grébaut le rappelle, du séjour écoulé à Gondar du 1er juillet au 5 décembre 1932, ont été collectés « quantité de rouleaux magiques pour la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris »[4]. Et c'est bien à Gondar qu'il faut rapporter « l'importante collection d'amulettes magiques et de manuscrits, qui sont destinés à la Bibliothèque Nationale » (Griaule 1933:4). Plus généralement, « Les collections d'Abyssinie comprennent des collections zoologiques et botaniques, établies en liaison avec l'ethnographie, c'est-à-dire avec l'étude des usages magiques, médicaux, etc. » (Griaule 1933:4). En sont issues de nombreuses publications scientifiques, parmi lesquelles figurent, outre celles de S. Grébaut et de M. Griaule eux-mêmes, celles de Deborah Lifchitz (Lifszyc), membre « temporaire » de la mission Dakar-Djibouti, de Stefan Strelcyn, enfin, les travaux sur le *zār* de Michel Leiris, membre « permanent » de la mission Dakar-Djibouti[5], et le livre de Maxime Rodinson, *Magie, médecine et possession à Gondar*, qui sont parvenus à toucher un public plus large[6].

L'importance des textes magico-religieux en Abyssinie n'a pas échappé non plus à la sagacité du célèbre linguiste sémitisant Marcel Cohen[7]. Au croisement de préoccupations religieuses et linguistiques, la mission porte plus l'intérêt conçu autour de ces sujets qu'elle ne le précède[8]. Ce que les publications de textes magiques ou magico-thérapeutiques en guèze et en amharique ne laissent pas entrevoir toutefois, c'est la collecte, y compris à Gondar, de textes en arabe ou bien concernant la communauté musulmane d'Éthiopie par ladite mission. C'est ce que révèlent les documents de la BnF sous la cote générale Arabe 7337, recouvrant quelques onze textes.

Les manuscrits de la collection Marcel Griaule sont entrés à la Bibliothèque nationale en 1933. S'y ajoute une vingtaine de manuscrits, dont certains ont été copiés par M. Griaule ou par des écrivains, sur place, et rapportés d'Éthiopie en 1928–1929. La collection occupe les cotes 305 à 674 du Fonds éthiopien. Entreposés dans une boîte, avec l'instruction « À transférer au fonds arabe de la

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[4] Grébaut 1937:177–183, 177 ; 1933:23–35 ; 1934:16–22, 50–54, 65–69, 110–114 ; 1935:27–32, 82–84, 154–161.

[5] Deborah Lifchitz (Lifszyc) est présentée par M. Griaule comme orientaliste et Michel Leiris comme sociologue, Griaule 1933:1–2. Biographie de D. Lifszyc par Prijac:2008.

[6] Voir la bibliographie, sous Leiris et Rodinson.

[7] Dans son rapport sur une mission linguistique en Abyssinie, daté de 1912, rappelé par Deborah Lifchitz, dans sa préface à Lifchitz:1940.

[8] À titre d'exemple, Grébaut 1935:125–128, publication du document n° 35 en guèze, recueilli auprès d'informateurs par l'auteur au cours d'un séjour au Godjam en 1928–1929, donné à la BnF.

collection éthiopienne Griaule (9 manuscrits) »[9], les documents aujourd'hui sous la cote Arabe 7337 se sont pourtant retrouvés à l'écart et ont insensiblement « disparu ». La boîte est sortie de l'oubli récemment du fait du transfert des collections faisant suite aux travaux sur le site Richelieu de la BnF et de la poursuite du catalogage des manuscrits arabes. La totalité du contenu de la boîte est à présent cataloguée, les documents ont fait l'objet d'une première identification, lorsque cela était possible[10].

Sans surprise, les documents magiques de la boîte dominent : au nombre de six, on compte, sur un feuillet unique, deux extraits du *Šams al-maʿārif* d'al-Būnī, suivis d'une *fāʾida* (cote 7337 (1)) ; deux rouleaux magiques (7337 (2), (4)) ; sur un bifeuillet unique, trois graphiques et un extrait d'*al-Mafāḫir al-ʿaliyya fī l-maʾāṯir aš-šāḏiliyya* de l'Imam aš-Šāḏīlī (7337 (3))[11] ; enfin un texte sur la force magique de l'iguane (7337 (7)).

Les deux rouleaux magiques portant les cotes BnF 7337 (2) et (4) sont édités et commentés ici. Les autres textes, magiques et non-magiques, en cours d'édition par mes soins pour des revues différentes, seront en conséquence placés sous le même titre générique, « Mission Dakar-Djibouti : la boîte oubliée ».

II. Les rouleaux magiques BnF 7337 (2) et (4)

Contrairement à d'autres écrits arabes rapportés par la mission[12], ces deux rouleaux sont certainement des originaux. Ils sont rédigés sur parchemin – ce qui ne semble pas exceptionnel pour des rouleaux magiques, tandis que les livres manuscrits sont généralement écrits sur papier[13]. Aucun contenant ne les accompagne.

Dans l'*Afrique fantôme* (éd. 1996), aucune acquisition d'originaux manuscrits liée à des visites à Addis-Alam n'est notée par Michel Leiris, pas plus que celles de manuscrits arabes durant le séjour à Gondar : les manuscrits originaux acquis dont

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[9] Ms. 7337 (9), feuille 1.

[10] Informations communiquées par Marie-Geneviève Guesdon, BnF, manuscrits orientaux, http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc945949.

[11] D'après la fiche électronique. Sous le titre d'*al-Mafāḫir al-ʿaliyya fī l-maʾāṯir aš-šāḏiliyya* a été publiée une œuvre d'Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿIbād al-Maḥallī aš-Šāfiʿī (m. ap. 1153/1740–1741), Le Caire, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya li-t-Turāṯ, 2004 [nouvelle imp.]. Ce texte n'apparaît pas dans la base de données du projet ERC « Islam in the Horn of Africa ».

[12] Exemple dans Regourd:à paraître 1.

[13] En avril 2015, un antiquaire, à Addis m'a montré un rouleau magique en écriture arabe sur parchemin. Sur le support de l'écrit des codex islamiques éthiopiens, voir Regourd 2014:xlvii.

il parle semblent, d'après le contexte, plutôt chrétiens, en langue amharique[14]. Ces achats ne sont de toute manière accompagnés d'aucun commentaire ou relevé ethnographiques.

Dans l'édition des textes, pour plus de simplicité, un seul numéro de ligne est attribué à chaque figure ou carré magique.

A. Le rouleau, cote Arabe 7337 (2)

Ancienne cote : 282 (cote d'acquisition dans la collection Griaule) Ancienne cote : Ethiopien 475
Encre noire. Parchemin. 4 feuilles raboutées. 2165 x 103 mm[15]. 172 lignes.

Le document a été roulé avec le texte à l'intérieur. L'ensemble est tenu par un cordon.

Le texte du rouleau 7337 (2) porte sur la destruction de l'effet du mauvais œil et l'élimination des maux de tête.

Sa structure, thématique, est bâtie sur six sections débutant chacune par une *basmala* :

1. la première section, après la *basmala*, s'ouvre sur les lettres liminaires de la sourate al-Ḥiğr, suivies de quelques lignes écrites suivant un procédé de science des lettres (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf*), un symbole cruciforme, la désignation du mal à éliminer (*li-l-ʿayn*), le nom de Dieu al-Ḥayy, suivi de *hiya* x 24, de la lettre ع, *ʿayn*, x 24, probablement comme initiale de *ʿayn*, désignant le mauvais œil, puis de la lettre ou chiffre ه, *hāʾ*, probablement comme finale du nom Allāh, x 9, à nouveau le symbole cruciforme, un sceau de Salomon à étoile à cinq branches, un *taʿwīḏ* suivi du v. 2 de la sourate al-Falaq, et se clôt sur une *taṣliya* (l. 1–22) ;
2. la seconde section, après une *duʿāʾ*, introduit un second nom divin, al-Wahhāb, cité dans les versets coraniques 8–9 de la sourate Āl ʿImrān, suivi d'une figure à huit subdivisions avec, dans chacune, la lettre *ṣād* réitérée trois fois et d'un sceau de Salomon à étoile à cinq branches (l. 23–33) ;
3. un troisième nom divin apparaît, al-Qāhir avec une sélection de nombreux versets autour de la protection (*ḥifẓ*, l. 37–62), suivis de *lā-ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh al-ʿalī al-ʿaẓīm* ; puis entre deux sceaux de Salomon à étoile à cinq branches : *hiya* x 24, Muḥammad x 22, la lettre ع, *ʿayn*, x 24, la lettre ou chiffre ه, *hāʾ*, x 10 ; ensuite une *taṣliya*, la *šahāda*, un *takbīr*, suivis de l'affirmation par le praticien, auteur du rouleau, qui s'est situé auparavant

[14] Leiris:1996a, sous l'année 1932 : 12 juillet, p. 546 (dont amulettes et rouleaux de parchemin « ornés de figures magiques ») ; 13 juillet, p. 547–548 ; 19 juillet, p. 555 (dont amulettes) ; 17 novembre, p. 780, 781 ; 22 novembre, p. 786 ; 23 novembre, p. 787–788 ; 27 novembre, p. 790–791.

[15] Dimensions reprises du catalogue en ligne de la BnF.

par rapport au groupe des *ʿulamāʾ* (l. 77), de son efficacité à soigner du mauvais œil des patients de tous âges, sexes ou conditions avec l'aide de Dieu et des sourates al-Aʿrāf et al-Kawṯar ; ensuite, invocation adressée à l'œil (*yā ʿayn*), versets coraniques, un passage en style *saǧʿ* (*duʿāʾ* ?) dans lequel l'assèchement ou le fait pour le mauvais œil de « brûler » sont évoqués par des éléments du cosmos (pierre, mer, nuit, feu, nuages et ténèbres), enfin le texte mentionne la connaissance de noms d'après ou par le Prophète Muḥammad (l. 34–98) ;

4. la suprématie, la générosité et la puissance (*lā-ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh al-ʿalī al-ʿaẓīm*) de Dieu sont rappelées, il faut leur rendre grâce et le praticien ne fait qu'en être le représentant, verset coranique, un passage en style *saǧʿ* (*duʿāʾ* ?) rappelant celui de la section 3 (même schème *fāʿil* et noms communs) (l. 99–111) ;
5. section contre les maux de tête, nombreux versets coraniques, enfin, l. 126–129, texte imprégné de *ʿilm al-ḥurūf* (l. 111–128) ;
6. un *taʿwīḏ* formulé par la sourate 113, habituellement désignée, avec la sourate 114, comme les *muʿawwiḏatān*, suivi de nombreux versets coraniques à nouveau sur le thème de la protection divine, explicitement contre le mal sous la forme d'aš-Šayṭān, lapidé, et d'Iblis, de lettres initiales de différentes sourates et d'une allusion à la magie salomonienne (« *ʿuqūd ʿuhūd* », l. 153–154), *lā-ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh al-ʿalī al-ʿaẓīm*, qui nous a montré la voie droite et est maître de notre chef, un *taʿwīḏ*, identique à celui de section 1, l. 20–21, une *taṣliya*, une invocation adressée à Dieu (*yā Allāh*) et *lā-ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh al-ʿalī al-ʿaẓīm* (l. 129–172). La section montre tout du long une connaissance avancée en *ʿilm al-ḥurūf*.

Le rouleau se clôt par un carré magique de 5 x 3 cases.

Le plus souvent, les versets coraniques sont partiels – ou réduits à quelques mots – et juxtaposés, mais pas exclusivement. Le praticien puise à un fonds commun de magie islamique. Maîtrisant la science des lettres, il a recourt à différents procédés d'écriture avec la conscience du pouvoir des noms, qui convoquent la présence et la puissance des êtres dont c'est le nom, en particulier, lorsque ces êtres sont dangereux, par une forme de *taksīr*.

Plus intéressant encore, le texte est crypté. Certains procédés rappellent certes ceux de la science des lettres, tel le *wāw* de coordination (*waṣl*), qui apparaît ici souvent sous une forme semi-épelée, وا. Ils semblent pourtant plus proches d'un jeu d'écriture « perturbant » l'accès au texte, jetant quelque confusion dans la lecture et l'identification de ces textes. Le procédé principal consiste à déplacer, ajouter ou enlever les *alif*s des mots (ex. de déplacement, l. 82, الكبرا pour الكبار ; l. 29–30, dans : « جامع لناس ا ليوم ا لا ريب فيه», ex. de déplacement, جامع لناس ا pour جامع الناس, puis, dans : ليوم ا لا ريب فيه, l'*alif* isolé est simplement additionnel ; ex. de

suppression, l. 88, ذو لجلال pour ذو الجلال)[16]. L'unicité de Dieu et sa présence, évoquées par un *alif*, viennent se superposer, nous semble-t-il, à une autre intention. Un procédé similaire se retrouve dans un manuscrit éthiopien du début du xxe s., de style hararī à maints endroits, qui contient une version du *K. al-mandal as-sulaymānī*, un livre d'exorcisme[17]. Certains *alif*s sont ici simplement élidés, selon une modalité d'écriture fréquente dans les codex manuscrits éthiopiens en général[18], où un seul *alif* « compte » pour deux, i. e. l'*alif* final d'un mot et l'*alif* initial du mot suivant (incluant l'*alif* de *al-*) ne font qu'un. Enfin l'espace entre deux mots n'est pas nécessairement marqué. Dans cette hypothèse, le texte serait lui-même protégé de son usage par des non-initiés.

Édition du texte
Feuille 1

1. **بسم الله الرحمن \الرحيم/**[19]
2. وهو هذ "الر الر الر الر الر الر الر"[20] هو
3. هي هي هي هي هي على بلين بلين
4. بلين بلين بلين بلين
5. يمكح عنق يمكح تم تمكحا صرطو
6. نعب مكسلميا مجلسيا قو
7. طو نوسن دونو نسا بينو
8. س وا للعين الناس ونسما
9. هو ان شا الله تعالي الحي الحي
10. الحي الحي الحي الحي الحي الحي الحي
11. الحي الحي الحي الحي الحي الحي الحي
12. الحي الحي الحي الحي الحي الحي الحي
13. الحي هي هي هي هي هي هي هي
14. هي هي هي هي هي هي هي هي
15. هي هي هي هي هي هي هي هي
16. هي ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع
17. ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ٥٥٥٥٥

[16] Ce n'est pas le seul procédé, noter par ex. l'écriture de : عمن يعملوان الظلمون, l. 116.

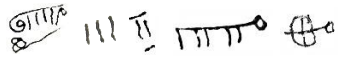
[17] En cours de publication dans Regourd:à paraître 2.

[18] Ce n'est pas exclusivement éthiopien. Reste à dater cette manière d'écrire, du moins en Éthiopie, mais elle se trouve bien dans des manuscrits tardifs.

[19] C'est nous qui soulignons la *basmala*, ici et ensuite. Quelques lettres ne sont pas diacritées, sans régularité dans la fréquence et sans qu'elles soient distinctives. Les *sīn*s, indentés, ont souvent quatre, et non trois, dents.

[20] Lettres du v. 1 de Coran, sourate 15, al-Ḥiğr (الر).

18.

19. 

20. عوذ بكلمات الله تاء ما

21. "من بشر ما خلق"[21] وصلى الله

22. على سيدنا محمد وعلى اله وصحبه

23. وسلم **بســـــم الله الرحمن الرا**

24. **حيم** للهم صلى وسلم على ا

25. سيدنا محمد وعلى اله وصحبه

26. وسلم "ربنا ا لا تزغ قلوبنا

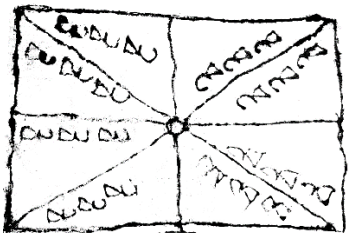
27. بعد اذ هديتنا وهب ا لنا

28. من لدنك ا رحمة انك انت

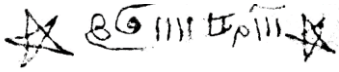
29. الوهاب ربنا انك جامع لنا

30. س ا ليوم ا لا ريب فيه ان

31. الله ا لا يخلف الميعاد"[22]



32.



33.

34. **بســـــــم الله الرحمن الرحيم** اهـ

35. "لايؤده حفظهما وهو لعلي"[23]

36. "وهو القاهر فوق عباد

37. ويرسل ا عليكم حفظة"[24] "و

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[21] Coran, sourate 113, al-Falaq, v. 2.

[22] Coran, sourate 3, Āl ʿImrān, v. 8–9 : ربنا ا لا تزغ قلوبنا بعد اذ هديتنا وهب لنا من لدنك رحمة انك انت الوهاب ربنا انك جامع الناس ليوم لا ريب فيه ان اللـه لا يخلف الميعاد.

[23] Coran, sourate 2, al-Baqara, v. 255, ولايؤده حفظهما وهو العلي العظيم.

[24] Coran, sourate 6, al-Anʿām, v. 61, وهو القاهر فوق عباده ويرسل عليكم حفظة.

38. وما انا بحفظ"[25] "وما جعلنا ا
39. عليهم حفظ"[26] ان ربي على
40. على كل \ان/ شي ق[دير]

Feuille 2

41. حفظ[27] "وما عليكم بحفظ
42. ونا ا"[28] له الحافظون[29] "ان حفظ
43. عليهم"[30] "وهو الله خير حفظا
44. راحم الرحمين ا"[31] "له مقبات
45. من بين ا يديهم ومن حفظه
46. يحفظونه من امر الله"[32] "انا
47. نحن نزلنا الذكر وان له من
48. يحفظون"[33] "يحفظونها كل
49. لشيطان الرجيم"[34] "وجعلنا
50. السماء سقفا محفوظا"[35]
51. "وكنااله لهم حافظين"[36]
52. "وربك على كل شئ حافظ"[37]
53. "وحفظا من كل الشيطان"[38]
54. "وحفظ ذلك تقد[ي]ر العزيز

[25] Coran, sourates 6, al-Anʿām, v. 104, et 11, Hūd, v. 86, وما انا عليكم بحفيظ.

[26] Coran, sourate 6, al-Anʿām, v. 107, وما جعلناك عليهم حفيظا.

[27] الله على كل شئ قدير est fréquent dans le Coran ; ربي على كل شئ حفيظ sourates 11, Hūd, v. 57, et 34, Sabaʾ, v. 21.

[28] Coran, sourates 6, al-Anʿām, v. 104, et 11, Hūd, v. 86, وما انا عليكم بحفيظ.

[29] Coran, sourate 9, at-Tawba, v. 112, où le mot apparaît dans une liste de mots suivant le même schème, dans le contexte suivant : والحافظون لحدود الله وبشّر المؤمنين.

[30] Pour : حافظ عليهم, Coran, sourate 86, aṭ-Ṭāriq, v. 4, ان كل نفس لما عليها حافظ.

[31] Coran, sourate 12, Yūsuf, v. 64, فالله خير حافظا وهو ارحم الراحمين.

[32] Coran, sourate 13, ar-Raʿd, v. 11, له معقبات من بين يديه ومن خلفه يحفظونه من امر الله. Sous le *mīm* de « مقبات » (sic), peut-être la voyelle courte *damma*.

[33] Coran, sourate 15, al-Ḥiğr, v. 9, إنا نحن نزلنا الذكر وإنا له لحافظون. Une interpolation avec le verset suivant, tiré de la même sourate est possible, puisque le « min » qui se trouve en fin de l. 47, supplémentaire par rapport au v. 9, manque à la fin de la ligne suivante, l. 48, « min kulli šayṭān rağīm ».

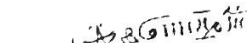
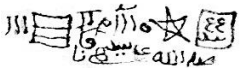
[34] Peut-être Coran, sourate 15, al-Ḥiğr, v. 17, وحفظناها من كل شيطان رجيم.

[35] Coran, sourate 21, al-Anbiyāʾ, v. 32.

[36] Coran, sourate 21, al-Anbiyāʾ, v. 82, وكنا لهم حافظين.

[37] Coran, sourate 34, Sabaʾ, v. 21, وربك على كل شئ حفيظ.

[38] Coran, sourate 37, al-Ṣāffāt, v. 7, وحفظا من كل الشيطان مارد.

55. العليم"[39] "الله حفيظ"[40] وانا "عند
56. نا كتاب حافيظ"[41] "وان عليكم
57. الحافظين"[42] "وما رسلو عليهم
58. حافظين"[43] "ان كل نفس
59. لما عليها ان حافيظ"[44] "والله
60. من ورايهم محط بل هو
61. قران مجيد في ا لوح محفو
62. ظ"[45] وا لا حول وا لا قوة لا
63. باالله لعلى العظيم ✡
64.  ا هي
65. هي هي هي هي هي هي هي هي ا
66. هي هي هي هي هي هي هي هي هي
67. هي هي هي هي هي هي محمد محمد ا
68. محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد
69. محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد ع
70. محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد محمد ع ع ع
71. ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع ع
72. ع ع ع ع ع ٥٥٥٥٥٥٥٥٥٥
73. 
74. وصلى الله على سيد ـــــ\نا/[46]
75. محمد وعلى اله وصحبه وسلم
76. وهي هذه الا اله الا الله اا
77. بما نا والعلاما والله اكبر ا
78. لله تحصنت باالله من عين
79. مقروره اليهودية من ا
80. ية من للرجال والنساء وا

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[39] Coran, sourate 41, Fuṣṣilat, v. 12, وحفظا ذلك تقدير العزيز العليم.
[40] Coran, sourate 42, aš-Šūrā, v. 6.
[41] Coran, sourate 50, Qāf, v. 4, وعندنا كتاب حفيظ.
[42] Coran, sourate 82, al-Infiṭār, v. 10, وان عليكم لحافظين.
[43] Coran, sourate 83, al-Muṭaffifīn, v. 32, وما ارسلوا عليهم حافظين.
[44] Coran, sourate 86, aṭ-Ṭāriq, v. 4, إن كل نفس لما عليها حافظ.
[45] Coran, sourate 85, al-Burūǧ, v. 20–22, واللـه من ورايهم محيط بل هو قرءان مجيد في لـوح محفوظ.
[46] Deux mots sont imbriqués.

81. لخدم والصبيان والصغا
82. ر والكبرا تحصنت باالله
83. وبسورة الاعراف[47] و"انا
84. عطيك الكوثر ا الخ"[48] اذ هي ا
85. ذ هي عنا يا عين اذ هي
86. عنا يا عين "اكشفت عنا"[49] يا
87. عين دخلنا صفك عين
88. الخ (؟) حرر الله "ذو لجلال
89. الا كرام"[50] له هبت[51] العين

Feuille 3

90. بحق ويد لكل الخ للهم
91. رب عبسا عابس وحجر
92. يابس و"بشهاب قاب
93. قابس"[52] وبحر طامس و
94. ليل دامس ونار ياب
95. بس وسحاب مساءَ
96. كسفا[53] وظلمات بعضها
97. فوق بعض تحرقت ا
98. لعين باا لنا عن محمد هذ
99. ا لاسماءَ **بـــسم الله** اكبر \ا/
100. عظما ا ما وسبحان الله ان
101. حسنا واكرما ولنحمد ا
102. لله فضلا وانعاما وا لا
103. قوة الا باالله العلى العظيم
104. توكيلا "الله الذي خلق
105. السموات والارض ومَا
106. بينهما في سنة ايام ثم

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[47] Sourate al-Aʿrāf, 7e sourate.

[48] Coran, sourate 108, al-Kawṯar, v. 1, إنا أعطيناك الكوثر.

[49] Coran, sourate 7, al-Aʿrāf, v. 134, كشفت عنا.

[50] Coran, sourate 55, ar-Raḥmān, v. 27, ذو الجلال والإكرام.

[51] Dans ce cas, le point qui se trouve au-dessus du *bāʾ* de *habata* est celui d'al-Ǧalāl (l. 88).

[52] Coran, sourate 27, an-Naml, v. 7, بشهاب قبس.

[53] وسحاب مساءَ كسفا apparaissent dans : Coran, sourate 52, aṭ-Ṭawr, v. 44, وإن يروا كسفا من السماء ساقطا يقولوا سحاب مركوم. Le mot مساءَ est sans doute mis pour سماءَ.

107. ستوي على العرش مالكم
108. من دون عن ولي ا وا لا يشفع
109. فلا تذكرون"[54] اللهم بحق انس
110. انس ونفس نافس وعبس
111. عابس وشهاب **بـــسم ا**
112. **لله الرحمن الرحيم** لوجع الر
113. س[55] "ذلك تقدير العزيز لعليم"[56]
114. "وعلى الله فليتوكل المومنيـ
115. ـن"[57] "وا لا تحسبن الله غافل و
116. عمن يعملوان الظلمون"[58] "وان
117. تعدو نعمت الله لا تحصوها"[59]
118. "وقضين ربك"[60] "ان لا تعبدو
119. الا لله"[61] "وبالوالدين احسنا"[62]
120. "تنزيل ممن خلق الارض
121. والسموت لعلي ا"[63] "وا للارض
122. ايتيا طوعا او كرها قالتا
123. اتينا طايعين"[64] "يوم لا ينفع
124. مال وا لا بنون"[65] "وفى السما\ء/[66]
125. رزقكم وما توعدون"[67]

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[54] Coran, sourate 32, as-Sağda, v. 4,
اللـه الذي خلق السموات والارض وما بينهما في سنة أيام ثم استوى على العرش مالكم من دونه من ولي ولا شفيع أفلا تتذكرون.

[55] L. 112–113 : الر[أ]س.

[56] Coran, sourates 6, al-Anʿām, v. 96, et 36, Yāsīn, v. 28.

[57] Coran, verset fréquent : sourates 3, Āl ʿImrān, v. 122 et 160 ; 5, al-Māʾida, v. 11 ; 9, at-Tawba, v. 51 ; 14, Ibrāhīm, v. 11 et 12 ; 57, al-Muğādala, v. 10 ; 64, at-Taġābun, v. 13, وعلى اللـه فليتوكل المؤمنون.

[58] Coran, sourate 14, Ibrāhīm, v. 42, ولا تحسبن الله غافلا عما يعمل الظالمون.

[59] Coran, sourates 14, Ibrāhīm, v. 34, et 16, an-Nahl, v. 18, وان تعدوا نعمت الله لا تحصوها.

[60] Pour Coran, sourate 15, al-Ḥiğr, v. 66, قضينا ذلك ?

[61] Coran, sourate 11, Hūd, v. 26, ان لا تعبدوا الا للـه.

[62] Coran, sourates 2, al-Baqara, v. 83 ; 4, an-Nisāʾ, v. 36 ; 6, al-Anʿām, v. 151 ; 17, al-Isrāʾ, v. 23.

[63] Coran, sourate 20, Ṭāhā, v. 4, تنزيلاً ممن خلق الأرض والسماوات العلى.

[64] Coran, sourate 41, Fuṣṣilat, v. 11, وللارض ائتيا طوعا او كرها قالتا اتينا طائعين.

[65] Coran, sourate 26, aš-Šuʿarāʾ, v. 88, يوم لا ينفع مال ولا بنون.

[66] Le *hamza* est au-dessus du *mīm*.

[67] Coran, sourate 51, aḏ-Ḏāriyāt, v. 22.

126. هيجم (هيجيم ؟) محيم ميرمجم
127. صرم باكر صُرْم هي يد
128. صرم هيوم رءسك طع
129. فارق الدال[68] **بـــــسم الله**
130. **الرحمن الرحيم** "قلو اعوذ
131. برب الفلق من شر ما خلق
132. ومن شر غاسق اذ وقب
133. ومن شر النفاسات في لع
134. قد ومن سر

Feuille 4

135. حاسد اذ حسد"[69] قالت
136. اولها حفو س "وا لايؤ
137. ده حفظهما وهو العلي
138. لعظم"[70] دو س "فالله خير
139. حفظا وهو ارحم الرحمين"[71]
140. معطو س "يحفظون من
141. امر الله"[72] سلما "وحفظا ا
142. ذالك تقدير"[73] "نا كتاب يحا
143. حفيظ"[74] دحة "وان عليكم ن
144. فظين كراما كاتبين يعلمو
145. ـن ما يفعلون"[75] طغو سة
146. "والله من وريهم محيط
147. بل هو قران مجيد فى لوح
148. محفوظ"[76] دو س "ان كل
149. نفس ا لما عليها حافظ"[77]
150. دو سه "وحفظناها من

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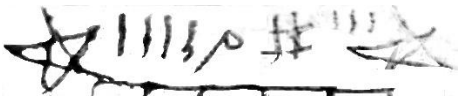
[68] *Dāl* sous-ponctué.
[69] Coran, sourate 113, al-Falaq,
قل أعوذ برب الفلق من شر ما خلق ومن شر غاسق إذا وقب ومن شر النفاثات في العقد ومن شر حاسد إذا حسد.
[70] Coran, sourate 2, al-Baqara, v. 255, ولايؤده حفظهما وهو العلي العظيم.
[71] Coran, sourate 12, Yūsuf, v. 64.
[72] Coran, sourate 13, ar-Raʿd, v. 11, يحفظونه من امر اللـه.
[73] Coran, sourate 41, Fuṣṣilat, v. 12, وحفظا ذلك تقدير.
[74] Pour Coran, sourate 50, al-Qāf, v. 4, عندنا كتاب حفيظ?
[75] Coran, sourate 82, al-Infiṭār, v. 10–12, وان عليكم لحافظين كراما كاتبين يعلمون ما يفعلون.
[76] Coran, sourate 85, al-Burūǧ, v. 20–22, واللـه من ورايهم محيط بل هو قرءان مجيد في لـوح محفوظ.
[77] Coran, sourate 86, aṭ-Ṭāriq, v. 4, أن كل نفس لما عليها حافظ.

151. كل شيطان الرجيم"[78] "الم ا
152. الم الم الم المص" فرجم
153. "الر الر المر الم" عقود د عهو
154. د "كهيعص ط ط طسم
155. طسم طسم طسم طس
156. الم الم الم حم حم حم
157. حم"[79] ت وهذا دين ابل وبل
158. ويس سيل يا بنوا ابلس
159. لا تقدير هذا لكتاب بلا
160. حول وا لا قوة الا بااله
161. العلى العظيم "هو بناصيتها
162. ان ربى على صراط مستقيم"[80]
163. ومن بشر كل دابت انت
164. اخذ بناصيتها[81] عوذ بكلما
165. ت الله تاء ما "من بشر ما ا
166. خلق"[82] وصلى الله على سيدنا
167. محمد وعلى اله وصحبه و
168. سلم يا الله يا الله يا ا
169. لله وا لا حول ولا قوة
170. الا بالله العلي لعليم

171. 

[78] Coran, sourate 15, al-Ḥiğr, v. 12, وحفظناها من كل شيطان رجيم.

[79] L. 151–157 : lettres du v. 1 de Coran, sourates n° 2 al-Baqara ; 3, Āl ʿImrān ; 29, al-ʿAnkabūt ; 30, ar-Rūm ; 31, Luqmān ; 32, as-Sağda (الم) ; n° 7, al-Aʿrāf (المص) ; n° 10, Yūnis ; 11, Hūd ; 12, Yūsuf ; 14, Ibrāhīm ; 15, al-Ḥiğr (الر) ; n° 13, ar-Raʿd (المر) ; n° 19, Myriam (كهيعص) ; n° 26, aš-Šuʿarāʾ (طسم) ; n° 27, an-Naml (طس) ; n° 40, al-Ġāfir ; 41, Fuṣṣilat ; 42, aš-Šūrā ; 43, az-Zuḫruf ; 44, ad-Duḫān ; 45, al-Ǧāṯiya ; 46, al-Aḥqāf (حم).

[80] Coran, sourate 11, Hūd, v. 56, وربكم ما من دابة الا هو أخذ بناصيتها ان ربي على صراط مستقيم.

[81] Variation sur le verset précédent.

[82] L. 164–166, voir ci-dessus, l. 20–21, et note 22 ; Coran, sourate 113, al-Falaq, v. 2.

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ا	ح	ا	ط	ا
م	ا	ا	٩	م
ع	ع	ا	د	لى

B. Le rouleau, cote Arabe 7337 (4)

Ancienne cote (cote d'acquisition dans la collection Griaule) : 286 (à l'encre noire sur le rouleau)
Ancienne cote : Eth. 516, 192081 (à l'encre bleue sur le rouleau)
Parchemin. Encre noire. 7 feuilles raboutées. 2645 x 73 à 90 mm[83]. 180 l.

Le document a été roulé avec le texte à l'intérieur.

Le manuscrit est désorganisé et lacunaire. Il manque l'exposé sur le mardi, et peut-être un texte liminaire (plus d'une feuille ?). La feuille 4 traitant du dimanche et du lundi n'est pas à sa place ; en conséquence, la section sur le vendredi, commençant à la feuille 3, se retrouve interrompue et reprend feuille 5.

Dans les cas d'*alif* avec *hamza*, le *hamza* est placé avant l'*alif*, sur la ligne, une écriture que nous avons personnellement notée dans quelques manuscrits de la région de l'Ifat[84].

Le texte, tel qu'en notre possession aujourd'hui, comprend 6 séquences, construites selon le même formulaire[85] :

1. *basmala* et *taṣliya*,

2. confirmation de l'efficacité du talisman pour les femmes enceintes et de l'efficacité dupraticien, mots-clés : *ḥağabtu wa-ḥaṣantu*,

et indication des éléments concourant à l'efficacité du talisman du jour de la semaine (livres canoniques, prières, prophète, sourates, noms divins…), suivi d'une *tawakkala* ;

3. confirmation de l'efficacité du talisman contre telles et telles causes de maux, puis *tawakkala* (l. 14–18),

et indication des éléments concourant à l'efficacité du talisman du jour de la semaine (les archanges et anges Mikā'īl (مكيايـيل), Isrāfīl (اسرافيل), 'Anyā'īl (عنيايل), Kašġyāf'īl (كشغيايل), Ruqā'īl (روقيايل), Ğibrā'īl (جبرايل) ; les astres ; etc.) ; cette

[83] Dimensions reprises du catalogue électronique de la BnF.
[84] Lors d'une mission en 2009.
[85] Comparer avec El-Tom 1987, et sa conclusion:242.

partie du formulaire se clôt sur un anneau inscrit, un carré magique de 7 x 7, et un sceau de Salomon à étoile à cinq branches.

Au-delà du formulaire, le texte suivant est repris pour les jours différents de la semaine :

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
وصلي الله على سيدنا محمد وعلي ءاله وصحبه وسلم
حجبت وحصنت حامل كتابي

créant, avec les verbes à la première personne du singulier, ce qui a été appelé une « voix du talisman » (« a talismanic voice »)[86].

Il y a un talisman par jour de la semaine, chacun de ces jours a son astre.

Ces talismans protègent (*ḥiǧāb*) les femmes enceintes de la sorcellerie, du sacrilège, d'esprits variés et s'étend à l'ensemble des maux susceptibles de l'affecter (l. 43–44). Les esprits maléfiques dont il faut se préserver, sont nommés par des génériques. Seule, la djinniyya Umm Ṣibyān est désignée nommément. Célèbre pour sa laideur repoussante, Umm Ṣibyān, nommée par antiphrase « la mère des enfants », est connue dans l'ensemble du monde arabe, de la littérature scripturaire et orale au vaste monde oral, comme cause de la perte d'enfants. À titre d'illustration, les enfants qui ne sont pas sages sont menacés par les aînés d'enlèvement par Umm Ṣibyān s'ils continuent, façonnant leur imaginaire depuis leur plus jeune âge. Mais au Yémen, la tradition orale rapporte qu'elle fait disparaître les nouveau-nés à peine sortis du ventre de leur mère, à la barbe des sages-femmes[87].

Umm Ṣibyān fait partie des armées de Salomon. Aussi le registre de magie salomonienne de ce rouleau est-il attendu.

Très différent typologiquement et par ses ressorts magiques du rouleau (2), le rouleau (4), en sa dernière feuille, porte un texte similaire par sa structure et son contenu à celui de la dernière feuille du rouleau (2), formé de certains versets et lettres liminaires coraniques, de formules religieuses et d'élaborations venues de la science des lettres.

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[86] Al-Saleh:2014, ainsi que sa communication récente : « The Talismanic Voice: The investigation of a Medieval Islamic scroll », présentée à la Conférence : « The Islamic Multiverse and Histories of Everyday Social Discourse », New York University Abu Dhabi, printemps 2017.

[87] Voir notre étude, au Yémen, Regourd:2012.

Édition du texte
Feuille 1

الملـــــــ

24. دارت عطارد و
25. بحق هذ الخاتم
26. ق ج ش ث ظ خ
27. زقـــــــهطـــــــهطـــــــــيل
28.

قـــــــــ

Feuille 3

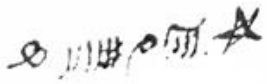
42. و[93] التعطيل[94] والقرناء
43. وام الصبيان وجميع
44. المردات توكلت
45. واحجبت عن حامل
46. كتابي هذا بحق
47. شمهروش[95]
48. بحق يوم الخميس
49. عليك وبحق
50. الملك عليك
51. اسرافيل وبحق
52. دارت المشتري
53. وبحق هذ الخا
54. تم ف ج ش
55. ث خ ظ زجـــهطـــهطل[96]
56.

قـــوله

ل	ي	٩	٩	٩	٥	ن
ل	ي	٩	٩	٥	ن	٥
ل	ي	٩	٩	٥	ن	٥
ل	ي	٩	ت	٥	٥	٩
ل	ي	ن	٥	٥	٩	٩
ل	ي	٥	٥	٩	٩	٤
ي	٥	٥	٥	٩	ي	٩

[اليمن : المـــــــــــلـــــــــــك
اليسر : الحـــــــــــــــــــــق
تحت : لـــــــــــــــــــــــله]

[93] Réclame.
[94] تعطيل : « sacrilège », Dozy 1881:vol. 2, 140a, sans doute en référence à la doctrine théologique.
[95] Sans doute le nom d'un djinn, éthiquement bon.
[96] زجهطهطلى ؟



57. و ★ **بـــــسم الله**
58. **الرحمن الرحيم**
59. وصلي الله على سيد
60. نا محمد وعلي ءاله و
61. صحبه وسلم
62. حجبت وحصنت
63. حامل كتابي
64. هذا بحق ايوب عليه
65. السلام وبحق يوم الجمعة
66. وبحق سورة الجمعة[97]
67. العهد وبحق سيهزم[98]
68. الجمع ويدلون الزبر[99] السا
69. عة موعدهم اذ هي واهـ \بسم/[100]

Feuille 4

70. **بـــــسم الله الرحمن الرحيم**[101]
71. وصلي الله علي سيدنا محمد وعلي
72. ءاله وصحبه وسلم حجبت و
73. حصنت حامل كتابي هذا بحق يو
74. م الاحد الفرد الصمد الذي لم
75. يتخذ صاحبة ولا وله "ولم
76. يكن له كفواً احد"[102] توكلت و
77. احجبت به حامل كتابي هذا بحق
78. يوم الاحد عليك وبحق الملك
79. الغالب عليك روقياييل وبحق
80. دارت الشمس وبحق هذ الخا
81. تم ف ح ش ظ خ ز للـطـهطـــيل

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[97] Coran, sourate 62, *al-Ǧumʿa*.
[98] Les deux derniers mots de la ligne ont été écrits sans lever la plume.
[99] az-Zubra : nom d'une mansion lunaire.
[100] Réclame.
[101] La *basmala* est presque totalement dissimulée par le raboutage.
[102] Coran, sourate 112, at-Tawḥīd/al-Iḫlāṣ, v. 4.

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قـــــــــــــــــــــــــــــوله

الله	ا	٩	هـ	م	لله	لله
ا	الله	٩	٩	٩	هـ	الله
الله	و	لله	٥	٣	٩	ا
الله	٩	٩	الله	و	الله	و
الله	و	لله	لله	٩	الله	ا
٩	٩	لله	الله	الله	الله	ا

[اليمن : المـــــــــــــــــــلـــك
اليسر : الحـــــــــــــــــــق
تحت : لـــــــــــــــــــــله]

83. **بـــــسم الله الرحم والرحيم**
84. وصلي الله علي سيدنا محمد
85. وعلي ءاله وصحبه و
86. سلم حجبت وحصنت
87. حامل كتابي بحق يو
88. م الاثنين ثاني الاثنين
89. اذ هما في الغيار اذ يقول
90. لصاحبه لا تحرز ان
91. الله معنا واحجبت عن
92. حامل كتابي هذا من
93. جميع الاسحار والتوا
94. بع والزوابع والقرنا
95. وام الصبيان عن
96. حامل كتابي هذا بحق
97. يوم الاثنين عليك
98. و بحق الملك الغا
99. لب عليك جبرا
100. يل وبحق ودارت

101. القمر وبحق هذ الخا
102. تم ف ج ش ث خ ظ ز مهطـهطـــييل
103.
قـــــــ

.116

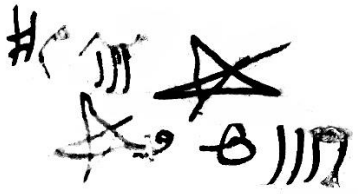
قـــــــ

133. السبت عليك وبحق
134. الملك الغالب عليك
135. كشغياييل وبحق
136. دارت ....[106] وبحق
137. هذ الخاتم حهـــيطـــهطـتول
138. ولا حول ولا قوة الا
139. بالله العظيم وصلي الله علي \ءاله/
140. وصحبه وسلم
141.

قـــوله

ل	ي	٩	٩	٥	ج	ل
٥	ي	٩	٩	٥	ل	ح
ي	٩	٩	٥	ل	ج	ي
و	ي	ج	ل	ج	٥	٩
ل	ي	ج	ل	ج	ل	٩
ل	ي	ج	؟	٩	٩	ي
؟	ل	ن	٩	٩	ي	ي

[اليمن : المـــلك
اليسر : الحـــق
تحت : لـــله]



Feuille 7

142. **بـــسم الله الرحمن الرحيم**[107]
143. وصلي الله علي سيدنا محمد

[106] زحل ؟.
[107] La *basmala* est dissimulée par le raboutage.

144. وعلي ءاله وصحبه و
145. سلم جنوبين "ولايؤده
146. حفظهما وهو العلي"[108]
147. دد س "والله خير حفظا وهو
148. ارحم الراحمين"[109] مغطو س
149. "يحفظونه من امر الله"[110]
150. سما نوس "وحفظا ذلك
151. تقدير العزيز العليم"[111] ما يؤ
152. من "وعندنا كتاب حفيظ"[112]
153. دا و س "ان كل نفس لما عليها
154. حفيظاء"[113] وجه "وان عليكم
155. لحافظين كراما كاتبين
156. يعلمون ما تفعلون"[114] مطو
157. سه "والله من ورايهم محيط
158. بل هو قرءان مجيد في لوح محفو
159. ظ"[115] دد سه "وحافظناها
160. من كل شيطان الرجيم"[116]
161. "الم الم الم المص"[117] فرج
162. "الرالرالرالرالر"[118] بحق و
163. دعهد "كهيعص
164. طه طسم طس
165. طسم يس يس
166. يس يس يس يس يس
167. ص حم حم حم عسق حم حم
168. حم حم"[119] انه من سليمان و

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[108] Coran, sourate 2, al-Baqara, v. 255, ولايؤده حفظهما وهو العلي العظيم.
[109] Coran, sourate 12, Yūsuf, v. 64, فالله خير حافظا وهو ارحم الراحمين.
[110] Coran, sourate 13, ar-Raʿd, v. 11, لـه مـعـقبات من بين يديه ومن خلفه يحفظونه من امر اللـه.
[111] Coran, sourate 41, Fuṣṣilat, v. 12, وحفظا ذلك تقدير العزيز العليم.
[112] Coran, sourate 50, Qāf, v. 4, وعندنا كتاب حفيظ.
[113] Coran, sourate 86, aṭ-Ṭāriq, v. 4, أن كل نفس لما عليها حافظ.
[114] Coran, sourate 82, al-Infiṭār, v. 10–12.
[115] Coran, sourate 85, al-Burūǧ, v. 20–22.
[116] Coran, sourate 15, al-Ḥiǧr, v. 17, وحفظناها من كل شيطان رجيم.
[117] Lettres du v. 1 de Coran, sourates n° 2, al-Baqara ; 3, Āl ʿImrān ; 29, al-ʿAnkabūt ; 30, ar-Rūm ; 31, Luqmān ; 32, as-Sağda (الم) ; n° 7, al-Aʿrāf (المص).
[118] Lettres du v. 1 de Coran, sourate n° 15, al-Ḥiğr (الر).

169. "**انه بــسم الله الرحمن**
170. **الرحيم** ان لا تعلوا علي وا
171. توني مسلمين"[120] .....
172. دين وبل ... . و
173. بنات ابليس لا ت...ز بها حا
174. مل كتابي هذا بحق "قل اعوذ
175. برب الفلق" وبحق "قل اعو\ذ/
176. برب الناس"[121] وبحق الغاالب
177. الف الف الف الف الف لا حول
178. ولا قوة الا بالله العلي العظيم
179. وصلي الله على سيدنا محمد و\على/
180. [ءاله] و[صحـ]به و\سلم ؟/ تحية وانتها (؟)

III. Conclusion

Les textes des rouleaux 7339 (2) et (4) rapportés de Gondar par la mission Dakar-Djibouti sont très différents. Typologiquement, le premier est thématique, le second suit un formulaire. Ils diffèrent également par les magies auxquelles ils recourent. Mais ils puisent ensemble à un fonds arabo-islamique connu par ailleurs. En termes de circulation de textes magiques, l'Abyssinie n'est pas un cas séparé : on y a accès à ces modèles, dont l'étude des autres manuscrits de la boîte oubliée devrait accroître la diversité.

Le texte des rouleaux fait état d'un savoir approfondi dans des magies de lettrés. Des caractéristiques d'écriture et la similarité de la dernière feuille des deux manuscrits conduisent à s'interroger sur la transmission des savoirs au sein de la zone (Gondar, Abyssinie, Harar, Ifat, …).

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[119] Lettres du v. 1 de Coran, sourates n° 19, Myriam (كهيعص) ; n° 20, Ṭāhā (طه) ; 10, Yūnis ; 11, Hūd ; 12, Yūsuf ; 14, Ibrāhīm ; 15, al-Ḥiǧr (الر) ; n° 26, aš-Šuʿarāʾ (طسم) ; n° 27, an-Naml (طس) ; n° 36, Yāsīn (يس) ; n° 38, Ṣād (ص) ; n° 46, al-Aḥqāf (حم) et v. 2 de Coran, sourate n° 26, aš-Šuʿarāʾ (عسق).

[120] Coran, sourate 27, an-Naml, v. 30–31.

[121] Coran, v. 1 des sourates 113, al-Falaq, et 114, an-Nās, appelées *al-muʿawwiḏatān*.

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Annexe

Sourates citées

Sourate	Verset	Verset
	Rouleau (2)	Rouleau (4)
2, al-Baqara	83 ; 255	255
3, Āl ʿImrān	8–9 ; 122 et 160	
4, an-Nisāʾ	36	
5, al-Māʾida	11	
6, al-Anʿām	61 ; 96 ; 104 ; 107 ; 151	
7, al-Aʿrāf	titre ; 134	
9, at-Tawba	51 ; 112	
11, Hūd	26 ; 56 ; 57 ; 86	
12, Yūsuf	64	64
13, ar-Raʿd	11 ; 17 ?	11
14, Ibrāhīm	11 ou 12 ; 34 ; 42	
15, al-Ḥiğr	9 ; 12 ; 17 ; 66 ?	17
16, an-Nahl	18	
17, al-Isrāʾ	23	
20, Ṭāhā	4	
21, al-Anbiyāʾ	32 ; 82	

26, aš-Šuʿarāʾ	88	
27, an-Naml	7	30–31
32, as-Sağda	4	
34, Sabaʾ	21	
36, Yāsīn	28	
37, al-Ṣāffāt	7	
41, Fuṣṣilat	11 ; 12	12
42, aš-Šūrā	6	
50, al-Qāf	4	4
51, aḏ-Ḏāriyāt	22	
52, aṭ-Ṭawr	44	
55, ar-Raḥmān	27	
57, al-Muğādala	10	
62, al-Ğumʿa		titre
64, at-Taġābun	13	
82, al-Infiṭār	10 ; 10–12	10–12
83, al-Muṭaffifīn	32	
85, al-Burūğ	20–22	20–22
86, aṭ-Ṭāriq	4	4
108, al-Kawṯar	1	
112, at-Tawḥīd/al-Iḫlāṣ		4
113, al-Falaq	complète ; 2	1
114, an-Nās		1

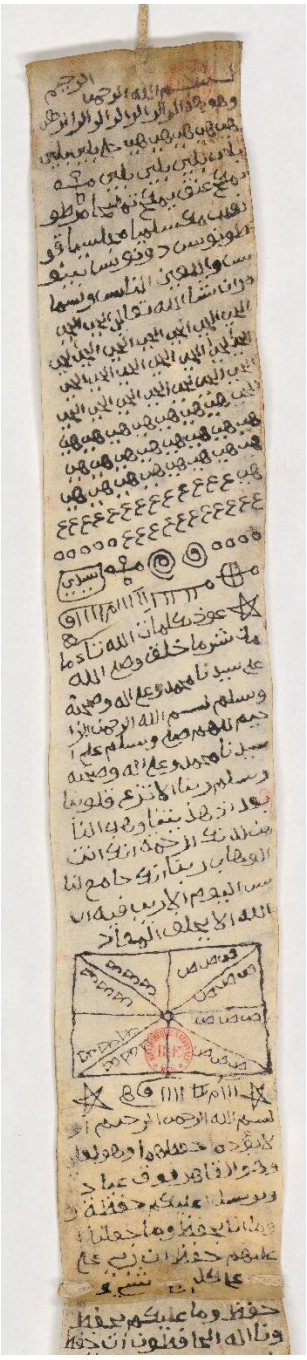
Lettres liminaires

Rouleau 7337 (2)

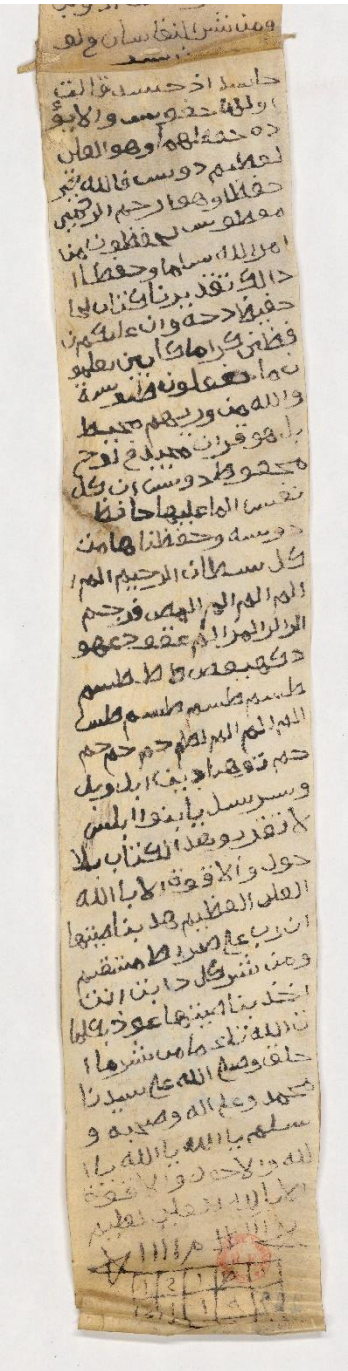
lettres du v. 1 de Coran, sourates n° 2 al-Baqara ; 3, Āl ʿImrān ; 29, al-ʿAnkabūt ; 30, ar-Rūm ; 31, Luqmān ; 32, as-Sağda (الم) ; n° 7, al-Aʿrāf (المص) ; n° 10, Yūnis ; 11, Hūd ; 12, Yūsuf ; 14, Ibrāhīm ; 15, al-Ḥiğr (الر) ; n° 13, ar-Raʿd (المر) ; n° 19, Maryam (كهيعص) ; n° 26, aš-Šuʿarāʾ (طسم) ; n° 27, an-Naml (طس) ; n° 40, al-Ġāfir ; 41, Fuṣṣilat ; 42, aš-Šūrā ; 43, az-Zuḫruf ; 44, ad-Duḫān ; 45, al-Ğāṯiya ; 46, al-Aḥqāf (حم).

Rouleau 7337 (4)

Lettres du v. 1 de Coran, sourates n° 2, al-Baqara ; 3, Āl ʿImrān ; 29, al-ʿAnkabūt ; 30, ar-Rūm ; 31, Luqmān ; 32, as-Sağda (الم) ; n° 7, al-Aʿrāf (المص) ; n° 10, Yūnis ; 11, Hūd ; 12, Yūsuf ; 14, Ibrāhīm ; 15, al-Ḥiğr (الر) ; n° 19, Maryam (كهيعص) ; n° 20, Ṭāhā (طه) ; n° 26, aš-Šuʿarāʾ (طسم) ; n° 27, an-Naml (طس) ; n° 36, Yāsīn (يس) ; n° 38, Ṣād (ص) ; n° 46, al-Aḥqāf (حم) et v. 2 de Coran, sourate n° 26, aš-Šuʿarāʾ (عسق).

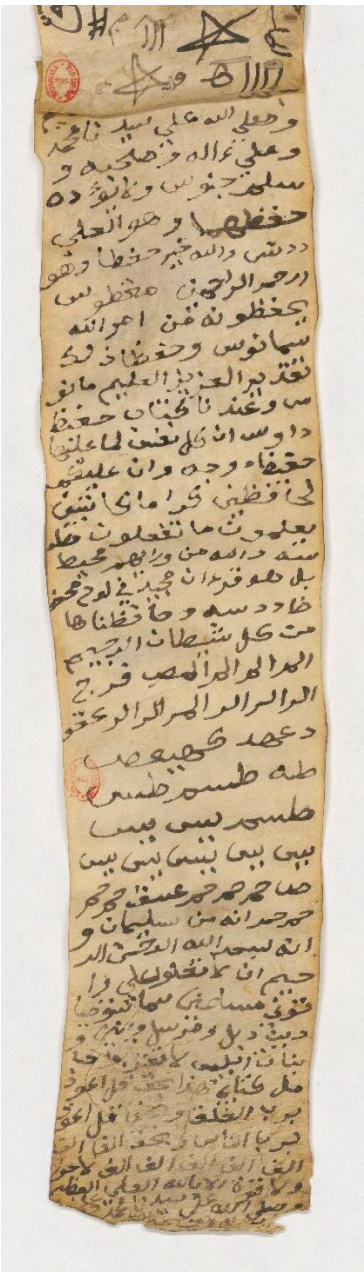


Ms. BnF Arabe 7337 (2), Bibliothèque nationale de France, feuille 1



Ms. BnF Arabe 7337 (2), Bibliothèque nationale de France, feuille 4 et dernière

Ms. BnF Arabe 7337 (4), Bibliothèque nationale de France, feuille 2



Ms. BnF Arabe 7337 (4), Bibliothèque nationale de France, feuille 7 et dernière

MAPPING THE SEMANTICS OF *DĪN* ('RELIGION') IN 9TH CENTURY ARABIC CHRISTIAN CONTROVERSY

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1 Introduction

The term *dīn* has always played a fundamental role in Christian–Muslim controversy, which, especially in its first phase (8–12th centuries), was revolving around the "true religion" and the belief in the Trinity. (al-Khoury 2004:5, Griffith 2002:I, 63–87) The etymology of the term and the contents of its notion in a pre-Islamic and Islamic sense have been elaborated on by such scholars as L. Gardet (1965), P. C. Brodeur (2004), Y. Y. Haddad (1974), T. Izutsu (2008), G. Monnot (1994) and others, however, the Arabic Christian counterpart is understudied.[1]

Yet, investigations of the Christian *dīn* would complement the picture, due to various reasons. First, the meanings present in Qurʾānic usage might have entered the Arabic language through Syriac, which is implied by the fact that the very same meanings are attested in Early Syriac Christian writings (Brodeur 2004:396–397); and as 9th-century Arabic Christian writers were immediate heirs to the Greek–Syriac Christian tradition, the way they used *dīn* is expected to be informative as far as the richness of its connotations translated into Arabic is concerned. Second, according to the scholarly consensus, by the time Christians living under the dominion of Islam first composed theological works in Arabic, this language had been determined by the Islamic religion and its terminology; furthermore, due to encounters and disputes, Arabic Christian and Islamic theologies developed in a parallel manner, influencing each other with the questions posed,[2] which is

[1] Publications in the field include collections and classifications of *dīn*-related quotes. E.g. al-Khoury 1989, 1991, 2004. See also the notion of the "true religion" in Christian apologetics that has been examined by such scholars as e.g. S. H. Griffith (2002), and M. Swanson (2010).

[2] Islamic "theology", *ʿilm al-kalām* appeared and developed in the first Abbasid century, when Muslim and Christian *kalām* advanced and formulated in an analogous, parallel form, due to the frequent public disputes of the period. At least in the beginning, Christians must have been influenced by the questions of Muslims posed in Islamic phraseology. These provoked answers from Christian scholars, who sought to phrase them in a way that should be intelligible to Muslims, so they explained their doctrines using the Arabic phraseology

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reflected in their respective vocabularies: so the use of the term *dīn* in Arabic Christian writings is also expected to reflect this interaction.

In this paper, I first sum up briefly the results of previous research on pre-Islamic and Islamic *dīn* that provides the background for an analysis of occurrences of *dīn* and related terms in the earliest Arabic Christian sources at our disposal: the Melkite Theodore Abū Qurra's (d. probably after 816) *Maymar fī wuǧūd al-ḫāliq wa-d-dīn al-qawīm* (Treatise on the Existence of the Creator and on the True Religion); the Jacobite Ḥabīb ibn Ḫidma Abū Rāʾiṭa's (d. ca. 830) *Risāla fī iṯbāt dīn an-naṣrāniyya wa-iṯbāt aṯ-ṯālūṯ al-muqaddas* (Treatise on the Verification of the Christian Religion and the Holy Trinity), and the Nestorian ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī's (d. ca. 840 AD) *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-aǧwiba* (The Book of the Questions and Answers). I seek to examine in what contexts and with what meaning the term is used, identify similarities and differences between Christian and Islamic usage; and reflect on the shaping of the notion of "religion" in the Islamo-Christian religious milieu.

2 Islamic and Pre-Islamic *dīn*

The major contributions in the field, i.e. the works of T. Izutsu,[3] L. Gardet,[4] P. Brodeur,[5] J. D. McAuliffe and C. Wilde[6] all agree in that it is "one of the most

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and terminology of contemporary Muslim *mutakallimūn*. Polemics and *kalām* are also complementary and interdependent: they developed in an analogous way, and it is theologians who wrote the polemical works. (Cf. Charfi 1994:49; Cook 1980:32–43; Griffith 1993:2; *Idem*. 1980:170; and van Ess 1976.)

[3] In his *God and Man in the Qurʾan* (first published in 1964), Toshihiko Izutsu claims that the two generally acknowledged meanings of *dīn* in the *Qurʾān* are 'religion' (this sense of the word is thought to be originating in the Persian *den*, 'systematic religion') and 'judgment' (coming from the Hebrew *dīn*, 'judgment'; Izutsu also refers to the "Day of Judgment" (*yawm ad-dīn*) as typically Jewish, c.f. p. 240). He then identifies three meanings belonging to the Arabic roots *d-y-n* in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry: 'custom, habit'; 'requital'; and 'obedience/subduing', and suggests that this latter meaning might also be the origin of the meaning 'religion', which would make the derivation from the Persian word unnecessary. Turning to W. C. Smith's distinction between personal and reified/institutional religion (cf. Smith 1964), T. Izutsu demonstrates that at least the meanings 'system of ritual practices/reified religion' of *dīn* must have been deeply rooted in pre-Islamic usage, though he adds that the personal *vs.* institutional distinction is not likely to have been sharp in people's minds that time. Finally, turning back to Qurʾānic occurrences and drawing parallels between *dīn* and its synonyms, i.e. *ʿibāda* (worship, serving), *islām* (surrendering one's self to God), and *milla* (religious community), Izutsu suggests that in the *Qurʾān*, both reified and non-reified connotations might be attested.

[4] L. Gardet's *Dīn* (1965) elaborates on the meanings of the term as used in the *Qurʾān*: 'judgment/retribution' (coming from Hebrew-Aramaic roots with reference to *yawm ad-dīn*); 'custom/usage' (from the Arabic *d-y-n*); and 'religion' (allegedly coming from Pehlevi *dēn*, though the notion is different in Mazdaism and Islam). Gardet corroborates Izutsu's thesis when writing that the first two meanings can interact, and from the web of connotations that come into being, 'religion' is easily derived even without going back to Persian roots. As an alternative to 'religion', Gardet offers the translation of the term as 'an act of worship,' saying that 'cult' is seen to be an essential part of *dīn*, which is evidenced by the frequent association of *ʿibāda* and *dīn* in the text. *Dīn* is often specified with other terms (*ad-dīn al-qayyim*, as Gardet translates it: 'immutable religion', , but could be rather rendered as 'firm', 'true', or 'most valuable' religion; *dīn al-ḥaqq*, 'religion of Truth/true religion'; *ad-dīn al-ḫāliṣ* 'pure religion') to have a narrower sense; and is also associated with others, like *islām*, *hudā* ([God's] guidance), and *ḥukm* (judgment). As for the content of the notion, he says that the *Qurʾān* associates it with worship; and later on, *hadīṯ* literature lists its "components" in the following: faith (*īmān*), practice of *islām*, and interiorization of faith: i.e. good deeds, *iḥsān*. Early Muslim theologians (8th–9th centuries) often define *dīn* as faith, *islām*, law, doctrine (*maḏhab*), and religious community (*milla*).

[5] P. C. Brodeur (2004) follows Y. Y. Haddad's division of meanings attached to the word *dīn* in the *Qurʾān* into three chronological stages, according to the Meccan periods and one later Medinan period (see also: Haddad 1974). These are 'judgment/retribution' (when used in the expression *yawm ad-dīn*); 'God's right path for human beings on earth' (implying obedience and commitment); and 'religious community' (synonymous to *milla*). *Dīn* then includes the meanings of 'a prescribed set of behaviours' as well as the 'community'. As for the term's etymology, Brodeur also speaks of polysemy, according to which *dīn* goes back to the Persian *dēn* as far as the meaning 'code of law' is concerned; while the meaning 'judgment' derives from Aramaic. Given that both meanings are attested in early Syriac Christian works, it is possible that the term and its meanings entered Arabic through this language.

[6] In their investigation titled *Religious pluralism*, J. D. McAuliffe and C. Wilde place the term *dīn* into a wider context, introducing the investigation with the remark that "the Qurʾān uses a range of words, both Arabic and Arabized non-Arabic to signify what contemporary readers understand as religion" (McAuliffe and Wilde 2004:400). Among these there are general terms that can refer to both Islam and other sets of beliefs, and specific ones, referring only to Islam. *Dīn* as presented in the first category, is traced back to Persian *dēn* 'religion' and Akkadian *danu* 'judgment'. Where it appears in the sense of religion, it involves the meaning of an act of worship, which relates to the Arabic *dayn*, 'debt' (rendering to God what is due). Other general terms include *milla* and *ʿibāda*. *Milla* (of Syriac origin, meaning religion and sect in the Scripture) is held to be unattested in Arabic prior to the appearance of the *Qurʾān*; *ʿibāda* appears with the meaning of 'serving', service being directed towards God, or other Lords. In the Qurʾān, *islām, ḥanīf* (true monotheistic believer), and *šarīʿa* are the religion-related terms applied exclusively with an Islamic reference. *Šarīʿa*, "perhaps parallel to the Christian designation of their religion as the "way", with one occurrence at Q 45:18 has been understood with the sense of God's

difficult Qurʾānic key-terms to handle semantically", and consider it "problematical as regards its original meaning" (Phrases taken from Izutsu, 2008:239–240). There might have been more words of different origins behind it that assumed the same form with different but related meanings. As Brodeur (2004:395) and Gardet (1965:293) claim, it is generally translated as "religion", but while *religio* refers to what binds man to God, *dīn*, in its general meaning, evokes the obligations imposed by God on humankind, and its other connotations are not included in this translation. All the major studies on the concept and term identify the following two meanings of *dīn* in the *Qurʾān*: "(institutional) religion/code of law" (supposedly of Persian/Pehlevi origin) and "judgment" (of Hebrew/Aramaic/ Akkadian origin). Other possible translations are seen to be "God's right path" and "religious community" (like *milla*). Almost all mention the Arabic root (*d-y-n*), as well, claiming either that derived forms are attested even in pre-Islamic usage with the meanings "custom", "requital" and "obedience", or that the inherent notion in *dīn*, worship can be traced back to them. The meanings "reified and non-reified religion" in *dīn* are also established. Studies list Qurʾānic synonyms like *ʿibāda* ("worship"), *islām* ("surrendering one's self to God"), *milla* ("religious community"), *hudā* ("[God's] guidance"), and *ḥukm* ("judgment"), as well as forms specified with other terms: *ad-dīn al-qayyim* ("firm/true religion"), *dīn al-ḥaqq* ("the religion of Truth"), and *ad-dīn al-ḫāliṣ* ("pure religion"). The notion of *dīn* in the *Qurʾān* and subsequent Muslim theological or legal elaboration is seen to include worship; *īmān* ("faith"), practice of *islām*, *iḥsān* ("good deeds"), *šarīʿa* ("law"), *maḏhab* ("doctrine"), and religious community. The studies also investigate which terms have a general, or an exclusively Islamic reference. Now let us turn to Christian texts to see how they may add to our understanding of the term and respective concept.

3 Christian *dīn*

The term frequently appears in Christian works written by all denominations living under the dominion of Islam: Melkites, Maronites, Nestorians, Jacobites, and Copts (al-Khoury 2004:5–7), but we restrict our investigations to the first period of Christian–Muslim interaction in Arabic, and concentrate on writers from the main denominations of the age. Prior to any investigation, we need to indicate that the term is never defined (al-Khoury 2004:15–16), so we can only work with an inductive method based on the context of its occurrences.

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having sent Muhammad on the "open way, clear way, right way" (McAuliffe and Wilde 2004:402).

3.1 Theodore Abū Qurra

The Melkite scholar and polemicist, Theodore Abū Qurra is the first known Christian author who wrote theological works in Arabic. Born in Edessa, he is likely to have been a monk in the monastery of Mar Sabas, before becoming a bishop of Ḥarrān. He was known by Christians of other denominations as well as by Muslims, and disputed even in the court of the caliph al-Maʾmūn (Griffith 1993: 6–8). Some of his *opuscula* survived in Greek (Abū Qurra, *Opuscula*); and his main Arabic works include the *Treatise on the Existence of the Creator and the True Religion* (Abū Qurra, *Maymar fī wuǧūd al-ḫāliq*), and the *Treatise on the Veneration of Icons* (Abū Qurra, *Maymar fī ikrām al-īqūnāt*).

The former one is his general apology, in which he seeks to determine which one among the contemporary religions is the "true" one. A part of its contents is shortly presented here, for the sake of the induction regarding Theodore's understanding of *dīn*. The author introduces a narrator who grew up in the mountains alone. Upon descending, he finds that people adhere to different religions,[7] and all invite him to join them. In order to find the right *dīn*, he starts his quest which is described through an analogy built upon the figures of a hidden king, his son, and a doctor, whose task is to protect him. The son falls ill, so the king, by way of a messenger, sends him medicine and a book with a description of himself, of the use of the medicine and with a prescription of what the son should do to recover, and what he should abstain from. It also tells what the result of committing "healthy" or "forbidden" actions would be. The enemies of the king also send messengers with poison and forged books with false descriptions. The doctor, knowing what makes man ill or healthy, says he can judge the things prescribed or forbidden in the different books; and, from the attributes of the son, he is sure to recognize those of the king. He sees that, with one exception, all the books exhort the son to do things that would harm him, and discourage him from doing things that would benefit him. He finds that this is the only book in which the description of the king shows similarity to the features of the son, and that the remedy belongs to it. The king stands for God, the son for humankind, the doctor for the intellect. The son's ignoring the doctor and getting ill alludes to humankind's neglect of the intellect

[7] In my translation: "I grew up in the mountains, and there I had no knowledge about men. One day, due to an emerging necessity, I descended in the sphere and community of people, and I found them to belong to different religions." Arabic text (Abū Qurra, *Maymar fī wuǧūd al-ḫāliq,* 200): *innī našaʾtu fī ǧabal, lam aʿrif mā an-nās fīhi. fa-nazaltu yawman li-ḥāǧatin ʿaraḍat lī, ilā l-madāyin wa-ǧamāʿat an-nās. Fa-raʾaytuhum fī adyānin muḫtalifa.*

and going astray. Enemies are daemons; their messengers are false prophets that initiate false religions. Abū Qurra says that

> "The king's sending him a messenger represents God's sending, in truth, a messenger (*rasūl*) and a book (*kitāb*) to his creation. In this book, he gives them a true description of himself, according to which he is to be worshipped (*yuʿbad*). In it, he forbids them from every form of evil and insolence (*nahy*) and commands them to do good in this world (*amr*). In it, he proclaims for those who do good their blessedness in the next world, as well as unending comfort, while for evildoers he promises hell, the fire of which is not extinguished. This is the one true religion (*ad-dīn al-ḥaqq*)."[8]

We can see in this analogy and its interpretation that *dīn* is a relationship between man and God. Given that every religion was examined according to the following elements, i.e. criteria, we may say that what constitute a religion are:

1. a messenger;
2. a book – and this comprises the rest of the components: the teaching on
    a. the attributes of God;
    b. moral prescriptions;
    c. reward and punishment in the hereafter.

The analogy that presents a book of teachings as a component of 'religion' lets us interpret *dīn* as set of teachings (doctrine), as well as a set of moral prescriptions (ethics), and a forming factor of a community, given that people create groups according to the religion they follow. At the same time, as shown in the quest, *dīn* also has an individual aspect. The term is not exclusively used to refer to any religion; in this, we can compare it to the Islamic interpretation.[9] The component

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[8] Lamoreaux's translation (Abū Qurra, *Theologus autodidactus* 9). Arabic text (Abū Qurra, *Maymar fī wuǧūd al-ḫāliq* 217–218): *wa-baʿṯuhu ilayhi rasūlan bi-ḥaqq ilā ḫalqihi bi-kitābihi yuʿallimuhum fīhi ṣifatahu al-ḥaqīqiyya llatī yaǧibu an yuʿbada ʿalayhā, wa-nahyuhu iyyāhum ʿan kulli sūʾin wa-qabīḥin wa-amruhu iyyāhum bi-ʿamali l-ḫayri fī d-dunyā wa-saʿādat al-ṣāliḥīn fī l-āḫira naʿīmuhu llaḏī lā yazūl wa-waʿd aṭ-ṭāliḥīn ǧahannam allatī lā taṭfaʾ nāruhā wa-ḏālika d-dīn al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq*.

[9] Cf. McAuliffe and Wilde 2004. For another example for the general use of the term see also Lamoreaux's translation (Abū Qurra, *Theologus autodidactus* 9): "In the real world, there are yet other religions and still more disagreement (*iḫtilāf kaṯīr fī l-adyān*). We, however, have restricted ourselves to the aforementioned eight or nine and explained what each proclaims (*daʿā*) with regard to the attributes of God, the permitted and forbidden (*ḥalāl – ḥarām*), and reward and punishment. (*ṯawāb – ʿiqāb*)." Arabic text (Abū Qurra, *Maymar fī wuǧūd al-ḫāliq* 217): *wa-hunāk iḫtilāf kaṯīr fī l-adyān illā annanā iḫtaṣarnā ʿalā hāʾulāʾi ṯ-ṯamāniya l-adyān aw at-tisʿa llaḏīna ḏakarnā wa-aḫbarnā ilā māḏā daʿā kull wāḥid minhum min ṣifāt Allāh wa-l-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām wa-ṯ-ṯawāb wa-l-ʿiqāb*.

"reward/punishment" implies 'judgment' that is an essential element of the meaning of *dīn* in both Qurʾānic and Syriac Christian usage.

Dīn appears in a variety of contexts throughout the treatise. We may draw attention to the last words of the quote, i.e. the idiom *ad-dīn al-ḥaqq* ("the True Religion"), a variant of *dīn al-ḥaqq* ("the religion of the Truth") which is of paramount importance in the *Qurʾān*, where it refers to the exclusive claim to truth on the side of Islam. It is deliberately relativized by Abū Qurra, when he puts it in the mouth of different religious groups, sometimes even used in indefinite form (*dīn ḥaqq*).[10] At least on a phraseological–terminological level, he is seen to be influenced by an Islamic frame of reference. Abū Qurra claims that the only true religion, "*ad-dīn al-ḥaqq*" must correspond to what human reason can establish concerning the matter:

> "We must now … compare the religions (*adyān*) we encountered and examine what each says about God, the permitted and the forbidden (*ḥalāl – ḥarām*), and reward and punishment (*ṯawāb – ʿiqāb*). If we find one that agrees with what our own nature has taught us, we shall know for certain that it is true (*al-ḥaqq*), that it is from God, and that through it alone God is to be worshipped (*yuʿbad*). We shall wholeheartedly accept it, take our stand on it, and worship (*naʿbud*) God through it, casting aside, rejecting, and despising the rest."[11]

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[10] E.g. Lamoreaux's translation (Abū Qurra, *Theologus autodidactus* 3), where Christians say: "You should adhere to the religion of Christ (*dīn al-Masīḥ*) and to his teaching, that is, that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, three persons, and in this essence a single God. This is the true religion (*ad-dīn al-ḥaqq*). It was given to us by Christ, the Son of God, in the gospel. He also declared for us the permitted and the forbidden (*ḥallala l-ḥalāl – ḥarrama l-ḥarām*), and promised to raise the dead, rewarding those who did good with the kingdom of heaven and punishing those who did evil with hell. The only true religion (*dīn ḥaqq*) is ours." Arabic text (Abū Qurra, *Maymar fī wuǧūd al-ḫāliq* 205): *wa-lākin ʿalayka bi-dīn al-Masīḥ wa-taʿlīmihi. wa-ḏālika anna Allāh Ab wa-Ibn wa-Rūḥ Quds, ilāh wāḥid ṯalāṯat wuǧūh. wa-fī hāḏā l-ǧawhar wāḥid. wa-hāḏā d-dīn al-ḥaqq, allaḏī aʿṭānā l-Masīḥ ibn Allāh fī l-Inǧīl. wa-qad ḥallala la-nā al-ḥalāl, wa-ḥarrama l-ḥarām, wa-waʿada annahu yubʿiṯu al-mawtā, wa-yukāfiʾ al-muḥsinīn bi-mulk as-samāʾ, wa-yuǧzī al-musīʾīn ǧahannam. fa-lā dīn ḥaqq illā dīnunā*.

[11] Lamoreaux's translation (Abū Qurra, *Theologus autodidactus* 18). Arabic text (Abū Qurra, *Maymar fī wuǧūd al-ḫāliq* 240): *yanbaġī lanā an naṣnaʿ miṯlamā ṣanaʿ ḏālika ṭ-ṭabīb al-ḥakīm: an nuqaddim ǧamīʿ al-adyān allatī laqīnā fa-nanẓur fī qawl kull wāḥid minhum, fīmā yaṣifu Allāh wa-fīmā yaṣifu ayḍan min raʾyihi min al-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām wa-ṯ-ṯawāb wa-l-ʿiqāb. fa-llaḏī naǧiduhu muwāfiqan li-mā ʿallamatnā ṭabīʿatunā min ḏālika, ʿallamatnā bi-yaqīn annahu l-ḥaqq allaḏī ǧāʾa min ʿinda Allāh wa-llaḏī yaǧib an yuʿbad bihi waḥdahu wa-lā bi-ġayrihi, fa-naqbaluhu wa-nattaḫiḏuhu, wa-nuqīmu ʿalayhi wa-naʿbudu Allāh bihi wa-narmaḥ ġayrahu wa-nubʿiduhu wa-nabġaḍuhu*.

He arrives at the conclusion that it can only be Christianity:

> "The gospel is thus the true religion of God (*iḏan al-Inǧīl dīn Allāh al-ḥaqq*), through which alone he is to be worshipped (*yuʿbad*). This we learn from the three things our nature taught… Because of this, we believe this religion (*nuʾmin*), accept it, and cling to it. For its sake, we endure tribulations in this world, through the promised hope."[12]

Remarkably, instead of 'Christianity', the Gospel is named as God's true religion, which suggests that religion (*dīn*) and scripture (*kitāb*) are co-extensive.[13]

In Abū Qurra's usage, related terms include worship (*ʿibāda*) and faith (*īmān*):

> "Notwithstanding this faith (*īmān*) and these circumstances that we mentioned, we see that all the Gentiles accepted them. The disciples turned them from the worship (*ʿibāda*) of their filthy and unclean demons … and filled the four corners of the world with this religion."[14]

The term worship, *ʿibāda* was seen in other examples cited above, as well, and was seen to be an essential constituent of religion (*dīn*); the object of such worship being God.[15] However, as this example indicates, worship can be directed towards daemons, as well – so it is not a term used in an exclusive sense, directed towards only a given religion. Both features – its being a general term and its being a part of *dīn* – show similarities with Islamic usage (Gardet 1965; and McAuliffe – Wilde 2004. Cf. notes 4 and 6 above). The other term, faith: *īmān* is narrower in sense than *dīn*, restricting its meaning only to belief, as a component of *dīn*, which incorporates it. However, its being a part of "religion" shows similarities with Islamic usage.

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[12] Lamoreaux's translation (Abū Qurra, *Theologus autodidactus* 23). Arabic text (Abū Qurra, *Maymar fī wuǧūd al-ḫāliq,* 252–253) : *iḏan al-Inǧīl dīn Allāh al-ḥaqq, allaḏī yaǧibu an yuʿbad bihi, ʿalā ṣifat tilka ṯ-ṯalāṯa al-anwāʿ allatī kunnā ḏakarnā anna ṭabīʿatanā ʿallamatnā iyyāhā … wa-li-ḏālika nuʾminu bi-hāḏā d-dīn, wa-nattaḫiḏuhu wa-natamassaku bihi, wa-nuṣbiru ʿalā l-balāyā fī d-dunyā min aǧlihi, li-r-raǧāʾ allaḏī waʿada.*

[13] On the close connection between 'religion' and 'Scripture' in Arabic Christian apologetics, see also al-Khoury 2004:12.

[14] Lamoreaux's translation (Abū Qurra, *Theologus autodidactus* 44). Arabic text (Abū Qurra, *Maymar fī wuǧūd al-ḫāliq* 264): *fa-naḥnu narā l-umam aǧmaʿīn qad qabilūhum* [i.e. *qabilū talāmīḏ al-Masīḥ*] *ʿalā hāḏā l-īmān wa-ʿalā l-ḥālāt allatī ḏakarnā wa-ḥawwalathum at-talāmīḏ min ʿibādat šayāṭīnihim aṭ-ṭafisa an-nasiǧa llatī kānū našaʾū ʿalayhā, wa-hum wa-ābāʾuhum wa-aǧdāduhum wa-aǧdād aǧdādihim, wa-malaʾū d-dunyā min hāḏā d-dīn fī arbaʿ zawāyāhā ilā yawminā hāḏā.*

[15] Cf. Abū Qurra, *Maymar fī wuǧūd al-ḫāliq,* 217–218: God must be worshipped; 210: in the *dīn* of Islam, God is the only one to be worshipped; 240 and 252–253: after recognizing and accepting the true religion, one must worship God through it.

Abū Qurra's *dīn* is then a general term referring to a relationship between God and man, including a messenger, a book/scripture (which is sometimes used co-extensively with *dīn* itself) and teachings on God, a set of prescriptions and teachings on the hereafter. It can denote communal as well as personal adherence. The most frequently used related terms, as its components, are faith and worship. Let us now turn to the next author, and examine the similarities and differences between their usages.

3.2 Ḥabīb ibn Ḫidma Abū Rāʾiṭa t-Takrītī

Abū Rāʾiṭa was a famous lay theologian, whose native language was probably Syriac. He belonged to the earliest generation of Arabophone Christians living under Abbasid rule in Iraq, where the increasing influence of the Muslim community enticed him to begin writing apologetic works in Arabic. His extant texts (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften*) include pieces written against Muslims and Melkites (Griffith 1980:164–165). His general apology, the *Risāla li-Abī Rāʾiṭa at-Takrītī fī iṯbāt dīn an-naṣrāniyya wa-iṯbāt aṯ-ṯālūṯ al-muqaddas* (A Treatise of Abū Rāʾiṭa at-Takrītī on the proof of the Christian religion and the proof of the Holy Trinity), is the longest and the most comprehensive among his writings. It provides the reader with responses to be used in debates with Muslims over the truth of Christianity, i.e. arguments from logic and reason, as well as scriptural proofs (Keating 2006:73–81, Swanson 2003:174–181).

The most general interpretation of *dīn* in this work is an occurrence that can be compared to the ideas of Abū Qurra:

> "The proof of this is the statement of God, … to His intimate friend, Moses, when he begged Him to save the Sons of Israel from the hand of Pharaoh…, and to reveal to them His religion (*iẓhārahu dīnahu lahum*) and send down to them His book (*inzāl kitābihi ʿalayhim*) with His practices (*sunan*) and His law (*šarāʾiʿ*) by His [own] hand in mercy to them".[16]

This example includes a messenger, through whom God could reveal his religion and a Scripture. The phrases 'revealing the religion' and 'sending down the book' are arranged in a parallel structure, and given that parallelism had become the leading style in Arabic prose writing by the ninth century (Beeston 1974:134–146, *Idem* 1983:180–185, Sperl 1989:5), taking into consideration the arrangement of the ideas, we have every reason to believe that these two phrases

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[16] Keating's translation: Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies* 97, 99. Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 138): *al-burhān ʿalā ḏālika qawl Allāh … li-naǧīhi Mūsā ʿinda iltimāsihi ḫalāṣ banī Isrāʾīl min yad fir*ʿ*awn… wa iẓhārahu lahum dīnahu wa-inzāl kitābihi ʿalayhim bi-sunanihi wa-šarāʾiʿihi ʿalā yadayhi rāḥiman lahum hunāka*.

(*iẓhāruhu dīnahu lahum – inzāl kitābihi ʿalayhim*) are structured this way intentionally with a synonymous meaning in mind. The book in turn comprises what makes up a religion: practices (*sunan*) and law (*šarāʾiʿ*). *Sunan* may be paralleled to the attributes of God as referred to by Abū Qurra, given that the term, at least in Qurʾānic usage, usually denotes God's "custom", something specific of Him.[17] *Šarāʾiʿ*, law (used in the *Qurʾān* with a meaning exclusively referring to Islamic law) is not specified here any further, but it may include positive and negative commands. On a general level, Abū Rāʾiṭa's idea of religion and its components resembles that of Abū Qurra; but the use of the terms of *sunna* and *šarīʿa* can also be considered as references to the Islamic vocabulary.

For the sake of brevity, the remaining occurrences are treated in a summarized form. *Dīn* is frequently used together with other terms, and sometimes other terms are used instead of it. Relying on linguistic evidence in interpreting the different terms, we can say that *dīn* is used synonymously with the following terms and notions: *īmān* ("faith"), *maḏhab* ("ideology/doctrine"), *iʿtiqād* ("belief or conviction"), *šarīʿa* ("law"), *ʿibāda* ("worship"), and *ṭāʿa* ("obedience").

The synonymy with *īmān* is indicated by e.g. the combined genitive construction "pillars of faith and religion":

> "We are speaking in this [book] in accordance with our beliefs (*iʿtiqādāt*) and [drawing] from the teaching (*qawl*) of the best [of our] chosen leaders and pillars of faith (*īmān*) and religion";[18]

The extract also includes the term *iʿtiqād*, translated as belief or conviction, which, based on the context can be interpreted as a personal commitment to and acceptance of the teachings of a religion. This is also visible in the next example, which, at the same time illustrates the synonymy with *maḏhab* with the following parallel structure: "every ideology that has spread throughout the earth" – "every religion which has appeared in the world":

> "Know, my brother, that in every ideology (*maḏhab*) that has spread throughout the earth, and every religion (*dīn*) which has appeared in the

[17] Cf. Monnot 1994: 98: "… le mot de *sunna* ... est 18 fois dans le Coran, soit au singulier, soit (…) au pluriel *sunan*. Il y désigne la voie au sens de « coutume », mais toujours ou presque toujours la coutume de Dieu, sa manière d'agir, et non pas la coutume d'un homme ou d'un groupe religieux."

[18] Keating's translation (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies* 83), *vs.* Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 131): *wa-naqūl fī ḏālika bi-ḥasb iʿtiqādinā min qawl as-salaf al-afāḍil min al-aʾimma al-muntaḫabīn wa-daʿāʾim al-īmān wa-d-dīn*.

world, it does not fail that the conviction (*iʿtiqād*) [of those who believe in the religion] necessarily has its source in one of seven types [of reasons]."[19]

Šarīʿa is the law of the Gospel in the next extract, but is interpreted as the religion established by the Gospel; while the synonymy with *ʿibāda* is implied by the parallelism between "the aim of worship" and "what is wanted in religion" (*al-maqṣūd bi-l-ʿibāda – al-maṭlūb bi-d-diyāna*):

"As for the fifth type [of reason for acceptance of a religion], which is the approval to adorn and ornament oneself with finery, this is also not permitted in the law (*šarīʿa*) of the Gospel. Because the aim of worship (*al-maqṣūd bi-l-ʿibāda*), what is wanted in religion (*al-maṭlūb bi-d-diyāna*), is the storing up of treasure for the end [of time], the reward hoped for."[20]

The term *ṭāʿa* is also used in synonymous parallelism with *dīn*: "diverge from the religion of God" – "lie outside of obedience to Him" (*ḫāʾida ʿan dīn Allāh – ḫāriǧa ʿan ṭāʿatihi*), as it is shown in the following example:

"[But] these six types [of reasons] diverge from the religion (*dīn*) of God, and lie outside of obedience (*ṭāʿa*) to Him, and so are separated from His religion because of the depravity which possesses them, and the contradictions inherent in them.[21]

This usage of *dīn*, i.e. that the Scripture is co-extensive with it, that it contains practices (*sunan*) and law (*šarāʾiʿ*), that it is synonymous to faith (*īmān*), ideology/doctrine (*maḏhab*) and obedience (*ṭāʿa*) is similar to the features mentioned by T. Izutsu in pre-Islamic and Qurʾānic use, and resembles Abū Qurra's notion.

Looking at the elaboration of the reasons for converting to a religion other than the true one, we can sum up that according to Abū Rāʾiṭa, these false motives are:

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[19] Keating's translation (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies* 83), *vs*. Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 131): *iʿlam yā aḫī anna kulla maḏhab tafarraʿa fī d-dunyā wa-kull dīn ẓahara fī l-ʿālam lā yaḥlū iʿtiqād fāʿilihi min aḥad sabaʿt aqsām iḍṭirāran.*

[20] Keating's translation (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies* 89, 91); *vs*. Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 134–135): *ammā l-qism al-ḫāmis allaḏī huwa l-istiḥsān li-tanmīqihi wa-zaḫrafatihi fa-ḏālika ayḍan ġayr ǧāʾiz fī šarīʿat al-Inǧīl li-anna l-maqṣūd bi-l-ʿibāda al-maṭlūb bi-d-diyāna al-muddaḫar li-l-ʿiqāba al-marǧūww al-mukāfaʾa al-muʿtamad ʿalayhi fī d-dunyā wa-l-āḫira*.

[21] Keating's translation (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies*, 85) ; *vs*. Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 132): *wa-hāḏihi s-sitta l-aqsām ḫāʿida ʿan dīn Allāh, wa-ḫāriǧa ʿan ṭāʿatihi wa-mufāriqa dīnahu li-mā yaʿtarīhā min al-fasād wa-yaltaḥiq ʿalayhā min at-tanāquḍ*.

		the Gospel of God (1st reason) (*Inǧīl* – i.e. the divine message, manifesting itself in a Book/Scripture)
set up against deviate from are forbidden to are not permitted in	:	the law of the Messiah (2nd reason) (*šarīʿa*) the Christian religion (3rd reason) (*dīn*) the Christian proclamation (4th reason) (*daʿwa*) the law of the Gospel (5th reason), etc.

It implies then that the meanings of the terms (Gospel – law – religion – proclamation) are connected, even synonymous. In this, Abū Rāʾiṭa follows the Islamic usage, in which "the words *daʿwa, sunna, šarīʿa, dīn,* are often used interchangeably" (Canard 1965:168). The phrase "law of the Gospel" (*šarīʿat al-Inǧīl*), i.e. the use of the name of the Gospel instead of the (Christian) religion recalls Abū Qurra's view, where we could see that the Scripture is close to 'religion' in meaning, given that it comprises everything that makes up a religion.

Personal adherence and 'beliefs' are expressed by *iʿtiqād(āt)*, as it is implied by the participial form *muʿtaqidī dīn an-naṣrāniyya* ('believers of the Christian religion'), as it can be seen in the passage where Abū Rāʾiṭa elaborates on the only right reason that justifies the adherence to a religion, i.e. the one that has proof (*burhān*),[22] and endorses faith (*īmān*):

> "[However,] the seventh type is one for which there is proof, and upon it faith (*īmān*) is sanctioned by the support of the Lord of Majesty. For understanding is too weak to grasp it, and creation is prevented from effecting [this true religion], apart from the rightly-guided People of Truth. We find that the believers of the Christian religion (*muʿtaqidī dīn an-naṣrāniyya*) reject the six types [of reasons to convert to another religion] foreign to the will of God, His remembrance is exalted! [and] contrary to the religion of truth (*dīn al-ḥaqq*)."[23]

Iʿtiqād implies belonging to a religious group or a set of beliefs. At the end of the sentence God's religion is referred to by the Qurʾānic phrase: *dīn al-ḥaqq*, which, as seen in Abū Qurra's case, is probably deliberately used here.

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[22] The use of the term *burhān* is a deliberate choice, responding to *Qurʾān sūra*s like 2:111: "Produce your *proof*, if you should be truthful" (*Sahih International Translation*).

[23] Keating's translation (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies* 85), *vs.* Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 132): *fa-ammā l-qism as-sābiʿ allaḏī bihi yaqūm al-burhān wa-ʿalayhi muʿtamad al-īmān min taʾyīd Rabb al-ʿizza bi-mā yaʿǧiz al-ʿaql ʿan taḥṣīlihi wa-yamtaniʿ al-ḫalq ʿan fiʿlihi illā li-ahli l-ḥaqq al-muršadīn waǧadnā muʿtaqidī dīn an-naṣrāniyya munābiḏīn al-aqsām as-sitta al-ḫāriǧa ʿan irādat Allāh … al-muḍādida li-dīn al-ḥaqq.*

Other synonymies include: "the Gospel of God", "God's Covenant", and the "proclamation" (*daʿwa*), as illustrated by the following:

> "The first [motivation] is the longing of this world, the desire of worldly people which [their] souls greedily accept, that is set up against the Gospel of God (*Inǧīl Allāh*) and promise of His Covenant (*ʿahd mīṯāqihi*) by which, for which and to which the peoples were guided to the proclamation (*daʿwa*) of the Messiah."[24]

The "Gospel of God", i.e. the Scripture is used in the meaning of the Christian religion, similarly to Abū Qurra's usage. The Scripture is paralleled to the "Covenant", implying that religion is a relationship between God and man. Though its literal meaning is call, invitation, or a proclamation to accept a religion, *daʿwa* has an implication close to that of religion, as implied by the arrangement of the phrases.

Worship at the same time is seen to be a neutral term, like in Abū Qurra's case, since it can refer to the worship of idols (translated by S. Keating as service of their idols),[25] and the notion expressed by it is not connected to any religion exclusively.

The meaning of *dīn* includes proclamation, which, as can be seen in the following example is synonymous to it, and *iḥsān*, i.e. "charity/good deeds":

> "As for the third kind [of reason to convert], the over-powering fear that compels [one] to accept the Christian religion (*dīn*), this is forbidden and foreign to the Christian religion (*dīn*). Its missionaries (*ad-dāʿīn*) were humble men. […] They taught among the peoples to whom they were sent, prohibiting and forbidding[26] them to carry the sword, and the one who accepts their proclamation (*daʿwa*) is restricted from battle and fighting, and the forgiveness of enemies and charity (*iḥsān*) to the one in distress is incumbent upon them." [27]

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[24] Keating's translation (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies* 85), *vs.* Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 132): *fa-awwaluhā ar-raġba al-ʿāǧila al-multamisa min ahl ad-dunyā allatī tašrah al-anfus li-qabūlihā fa-innahā munāṣiba li-Inǧīl Allāh wa-ʿahd mīṯāqihi llaḏī bihi wa-lahu wa-ilayhi inqādat al-umam ilā d-daʿwa al-masīḥiyya*.

[25] Keating's translation (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies* 95, *vs.* Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 137): *ʿibādat awṯānihim*.

[26] I translate this part differently: "They taught among the peoples that who was sent to them (*al-mursal lahum*) prohibited and forbade...…"

[27] Keating's translation (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies* 87, 89), *vs.* Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 133–134): *wa-ammā l-qism aṯ-ṯāliṯ allaḏī huwa ar-raġba al-qāhira allatī taḍṭarr ilā qabūl dīn an-naṣrāniyya fa-ḏālika mumtaniʿ ḫāriǧ ʿan dīn an-naṣrāniyya … inna ad-dāʿīn ilayhā ḫāmilūn ḍuʿafāʾ masākīn fuqarāʾ mutawāḍiʿūna mabdūdūna ṣay-yādūna … yuʿallimūna bayna l-umam anna l-mursal lahum nahāhum wa-ḥarrama ʿalayhim*

Though in the quote charity and forgiveness are equally positioned as parts of the (Christian) religion, the present paper only highlights *iḥsān*, "charity", given that it is the feature that can also be found in Islamic theory – as seen above. *Dīn* also includes *divine precepts* (*farāʾiḍ*), which are then classified.

> "We find that the people of the Christian religion (*dīn*) are obligated by the divine precepts of the Gospel (*farāʾiḍ al-Inǧīl*) to renounce the attainment of the longing[s] of this world and to do away with them. What obligates [these people] is humility, submissiveness, obscurity, and poverty, and they are charged with patience and modesty." [28]

As it can be seen in the text, followers of (the Christian) religion are *obliged* by them, which implies that an important component of religion – similarly to Theodore Abū Qurra's interpretation – is prescriptions: some precepts are positive, while others speak of bans, which parallels the *amr* – *nahy* distinction seen in Abū Qurra's description.

The notion of charity and righteous deeds (also expressed by appellatives as *ḫayr* and *barr*) is connected to the "difficulties or burdens" Christians must endure; and these attitudes are both associated with obedience (*ṭāʿa*), making a part of it, i.e. these are commands.

> "That which they are assured of is that when, during their lives, they do acts of goodness and righteousness (*afʿāl al-ḫayr wa-l-barr*) [and] all of what is enjoined upon them, [such as] the acceptance of hardship and exertion (*at-taʿb wa-n-naṣab*) in obedience (*ṭāʿa*) to God and for His pleasure, and if they count all of this to themselves, they say that they are useless servants (*ʿabīd*), doing what they were commanded (*umirū*) by Him [that] service [for] their Master made incumbent upon them, without [the expectation of] praise or thanks. What [worldly] longing could lead someone in this position to accept a religion (*dīn*) whose commandments (*farāʾiḍuhu*) are like these?"[29]

ḥaml as-sayf, wa-ḥaṣara ʿalā qābilī daʿwatihim al-mukāfaḥa al-munāḍala wa-iftaraḍa ʿalayhim al-ṣafḥ ʿan al-aʿḍāʾ wa-l-iḥsān ilā mā asāʾ.

[28] Keating's translation (Keating 2006:85), *vs.* Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 132): *wa-waǧadnā ahl dīn an-naṣrāniyya qad alzamū min farāʾiḍ al-Inǧīl tark idrāk ar-raġba al-ʿāǧila wa-izālatahā mā alzamahum min at-tawāḍuʿ wa-ḏ-ḏilla wa-l-ḫumūl wa-l-qilla yukallifuhum al-ṣabr wa-l-qanūʿ.*

[29] Keating's translation (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies* 85–87), *vs.* Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 132–133): *mimmā akkada ʿindahum annahum iḏā faʿalū afʿāl al-ḫayr wa-l-barr kullahā allatī afraḍahum ʿalayhim min qabūl at-taʿb wa-n-naṣab fī ṭāʿat Allāh wa-murḍātihi madā ḥayātihim an yaʿdū ḏālika kullahu ʿinda anfusihim fa-yaqūlū annahum ʿabīd bāṭilūn faʿalū mā umirū bihi mimmā yalzamuhum min ḫidmat sayyidihim bi-ġayr*

Those who adhere to the "obedience to God" are considered "servants" (*ʿabīd*), which corroborates the synonymy of religion and obedience. However, given that the Arabic term *ʿabd* ("servant"), i.e. one who follows a religion goes back to the same roots as those of worship, or service, it indicates a relatedness between religion and worship as well. The commands that made part of religion in Abū Qurra's usage, are also seen here to constitute parts of a religion. On the other hand, command (*amr*) and religious duty, commandment (*farīḍa*) are seen to be semantically connected. In the passage, the double-faceted meaning of *dīn* (including both reified and non-reified religion), demonstrated by T. Izutsu can be discerned: in line with the Semitic thinking, this distinction might go back to early Christian (even Jewish) understanding, while *ʿabīd* (servants) is in line with Qurʾānic usage as well. Both features resemble Islamic usage, as well as Abū Qurra's interpretation.

The concluding remarks on the false reasons put law, religion, proclamation, and obedience in a context that confirms the inherent synonymy of the terms and the connection of their notions; e.g. synonymy is enhanced by the fact that 'Christian law' prevails over other 'religions'; while proclaimers and obedience are seen to be essential parts of religion – similarly as seen in Abū Qurra's case:

> "Since it has been shown that the Christian law (*šarīʿa*) differs from [these] six kinds [of false reasons to follow a religion], it remains that the characteristic of it, the inherent property belonging to it, is that it is evident and demonstrated to be above every religion (*dīn*) by the confirmation of the Lord of the Worlds, Who confirmed with it those who proclaimed [the Christian law] (*ad-dāʿīn*) through signs and miracles and clear proofs which led all of the peoples to accept it willingly (*ṭawʿan*)."[30]

The passage introduces another idea of major importance to Abū Rāʾiṭa, namely that the true religion is accompanied by miracles. Abū Rāʾiṭa's frequent references to the latter phenomenon constitute an implicit allusion to Islam's not being a true message, given that no miracles prove its truth. What S. T. Keating translates with the word "willingly" may eventually refer to obedience, too, since the Arabic word

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ḥamd wa-lā šukr. fa-ayyat raġba qādat man kānat ḥālatuhu hāḏihi ilā qabūl dīn farāʾiḍuhu hākaḏā?

[30] Keating's translation (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Christian Apologies* 91–93), *vs.* Arabic text (Abū Rāʾiṭa, *Die Schriften* 135): *wa-lammā tabayyana anna š-šarīʿa l-masīḥiyya mufāriqa li-l-aqsām as-sitta fa-qad baqiya an yakūn al-ḫāṣṣ bi-hā al-lāzim lahā annahā ẓaharat wa-istaẓharat ʿalā ǧamīʿ al-adyān bi-taʾyīd Rabb al-ʿālamīn allaḏī ayyada bihi ad-dāʿīn ilayhā min al-āyāt al-muʿǧizāt wa-l-barāhīn al-wāḍiḥāt allatī qādat ǧamīʿ al-umam ilā qabūlihā ṭawʿan.*

goes back to the same roots. Willingness is a key factor in Abū Rāʾiṭa's apology for Christianism juxtaposed to the coercion that he implies to be present in Islam.

We could see that many of Abū Rāʾiṭa's terms and notions overlapped those presented by Abū Qurra, but the Jacobite author used a greater variety of terms. The notion of "religion" that implies or includes teachings on God and moral prescriptions was a shared idea, and both authors used *dīn* as a term not exclusively denoting Christianity. In both cases, we could see that most terms and notions referring to religion or a component of it could be used interchangeably. Now let us turn our attention to our last author and examine his understanding of religion.

3.3 ʿAmmār al-Basṛī

ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī (d. ca. 840 AD), a Nestorian theologian of vast religious and philosophical education, is a poorly studied yet interesting author. (The fragments of information we possess about him have been collected by M. Hayek 1976 and 1986.) His name implies that he was a native of Basra, an important Nestorian centre of the age. Two of his works survived: *The Book of the Proof* (*Kitāb al-Burhān*), a reference work for Christians who might be interrogated by Muslim opponents on controversial issues (Beaumont 2011:68; Griffith 1983 and 2009); and *The Book of the Questions and Answers* (*Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba*), a general apology. These are among the most sophisticated texts in early Arabic Christian theology. The present paper will concentrate on the second part of the latter piece, where ʿAmmār seeks to demonstrate the reasonableness of the Christian faith and the authenticity of the Gospels, using mostly rational arguments.

First, let us examine an example that may parallel the "general definition" of the previous authors. ʿAmmār says that

> "different groups take up different religions (*yatadayyanūn bi-adyān*), they have different books (*kutub*) at hand, which include orders and prohibition (*amr wa-nahy*), laws and religious duties (*šarāʾiʿ wa-farāʾiḍ*), mention resurrection and resurgence, reward and punishment (*ṯawāb wa-ʿiqāb*); while all parties claim that their book is the Covenant of God with humankind, which was given to them by His messengers (*rusul*), through whom God showed His signs (*āyāt*) and proof (*burhān*)."[31]

[31] ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba*, 135–136: *wa-qad narā aqwāman mutašattita yatadayyanūn bi-adyān mutafāwita, wa-fī aydīhim kutub muḫtalifa min amr wa-nahy wa-šarāʾiʿ wa-farāʾiḍ wa-ḏikri baʿṯin wa-nušūrin wa-ṯawābin wa-ʿiqābin yaddaʿī kull ḥizb minhum anna kitābahum huwa ʿahd Allāh ilā ḫalqihi atāhum bihi rusuluhu wa-aẓhara ʿalā*

The same "components" are listed that were the parts of religion in Abū Qurra's interpretation, and even the major part of the terms are mutually shared ones, though ʿAmmār mentions some new aspects, or slightly modifies the notions included. The things ordered and prohibited are expressed the same way, though there is no mention of licit and illicit (as referred to by previous authors using Islamic terminology). Besides order and prohibition, law, and religious duties, as well as reward and punishment are also mentioned as constituents of religions, which is also a shared notion of all authors examined. At the end of this quote, we can see that he emphasizes the importance of signs as much as his Jacobite contemporary. We can see that the terms used are not restricted to an exclusively Christian sense, since the author discusses religions in general.

For the sake of brevity, the remaining occurrences will be presented in a summarized form. ʿAmmār frequently uses the words *sabīl*, *ṭarīq* ("road"/"path") instead of religion, especially in phrases like "God's paths", "the paths of the Truth", etc. In the second question, al-Baṣrī makes the opponent ask why God quit showing signs through his messengers (he uses the term *rasūl*, messenger, also used in Islamic phraseology.)[32] His answer is that it would be contrary to the reward God prepared for the considerate, who walk on the ways of truth.[33] The way or path of truth, *sabīl al-ḥaqq* appears in the context with a meaning close to religion, but with ethical connotations, given that it is rewarded in the hereafter. We may here recall the importance of the concept of "way, road" in Semitic languages in general and in the religions that were first expressed in these languages (which then appeared in other ecclesiastical languages, too – cf. the Greek ἡ ὁδὸς). As G. Monnot (1994:97) claims, words referring to way, road, path are frequently used in the *Qurʾān*, but mostly with the meaning of conduct, and not as technical terms referring to religion. We may also see in the passage that an important part of religion is freedom: constantly produced miracles and signs would be a forcing factor, they would necessitate obedience (*ṭāʿa*), taking human freedom away. Signs were shown only to those who lived in the age of the covenant that God made with humankind, since they had no basis for inferring the truth of the message. However, the situation has changed, and signs are not sent so

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aydīhim bi-ḏālika āyātihi wa-burhānahu. The translations from ʿA. al-Baṣrī's work are mine.

[32] "What restrained Him from sending his messengers (*rusul*) to them again and again, and stick to the performance of His signs (*āyāt*) through the hands of His messengers?" ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba*, 128: *fa-mā manaʿahu an yuwātir rusulahu bi-ḏālika wa-yudmin iẓhār āyātihi ʿalā yaday* [*sic*!] *rusulihi?*

[33] "He was prevented by His own preparation of a great reward for the considerate who walk on the paths of truth." ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba*, 128: *manaʿahu min ḏālika … taʿammuduhu ğazīl ṯawāb ahl al-ʿināya wa-l-baḥṯ as-sālikīna subul al-ḥaqq*.

that the ones who work for the recognition of truth, walk obediently (*ṭāʿa*) and according to their custom (*sunnat anfusihim*) on God's ways (*subul*) should deserve reward (*ṯawāb*).[34] The term and related notion of covenant (*ʿahd*) is of great importance for the Nestorian author, as we will see in the next example; here it can stand for Scripture or a pact, or relationship between God and man. The way ʿAmmār emphasizes the importance of signs resembles the Jacobite author's idea concerning their significance. Obedience (*ṭāʿa*) is a central part of religion in ʿAmmār's understanding, but the Nestorian author emphasizes the necessity of its voluntary nature.

Dīn is also equated with a covenant, i.e. a connection between God and humankind in the following passage, where the opponent asks:

> "What is his covenant (*ʿahd*) that He confirmed as his religion (*dīn*) and through which he taught to them His ways (*subul*) and how to obey Him (*ṭāʿa*)?"[35]

This can be taken for another definition for *dīn*, which is then an alliance between God and man; of which human obedience (*ṭāʿa*) constitutes a major part; and through which God's teaching concerning the right path is revealed. Obedience on the other hand is structured to be parallel to [the following of] God's ways, which implies the synonymy of the two words. These ingredients are in line with previously seen Christian attitudes. ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī answers the question the following way:

> "the covenant [that can be taken for God's *dīn*] is the one which conforms to his justice and which is accommodated to his excellence. By this, I mean his Gospel […] and Scripture that has spread among the peoples and nations."[36]

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[34] "He performed them for those who lived at the time when He sent down His Covenant for them, given that at that time they had had no previous proof which they could have used as a basis for inferring the justification for what He sent down to them – [it was possible] only by the signs. Later, He quit producing them or their offspring, for He wanted them to reward those among them who acquired knowledge of Him by searching, and those who walk His paths in obedience and according to their custom." ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba,* 129: *aẓharahā li-ahli l-ʿaṣr allaḏīna anzala ʿahdahu ʿalayhim, li-mā lam takun ʿalayhim iḏ ḏāka ḥuğğa mutaqaddima yastadillūna bihā dūna l-āyāt ʿalā taḥqīq mā anzala ilayhim. ṯumma manaʿa ḏālika min aʿqābihim min baʿd, li-mā arāda min inğāb aṯ-ṯawāb li-muktasibī maʿrifat ʿahdihi baḥṯahum, wa-sālikī subulihi bi-ṭāʿatihim wa-sunnati anfusihim.*

[35] ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba*, 129: *fa-ayyamā ʿahduhu llaḏī raḍiya bihi l-Ḥaqqu li-dīnihi, wa-ʿarrafahum fīhi ṭāʿatahu wa-subulahu?*

[36] ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba*, 129: *ʿahduhu ḏālika llaḏī yušākilu ʿadlahu wa-yulāʾimu faḍlahu. Aʿnī Inğīlahu al-mafsūr wa-kitābahu al-manšūr fī aydī l-umam wa-š-šuʿūb.*

This interpretation is similar to Abū Qurra's rational approach to the cognition of the true religion: the lore of religions has to be compared to what can rationally be known of God (in this case it is justice and excellence), and the one conforming this is the right one. The covenant, i.e. God's *dīn* is interchangeable with the Gospel, which is a feature also seen at the Melkite author.

To make a shift from the Gospel to a more general approach, we may add that *dīn* is sometimes used co-extensively with Scripture (*kitāb*): e.g. in the fifth question when the opponent refers to "those who have accepted this religion and this scripture" (*dīn wa-kitāb*);[37] or when ʿAmmār refers to "Scripture that explains a religion"[38] (every religion has such a book); but the synonymy of *dīn* and *kitāb* is also attested in the example where a proclaimer invites to the Torah – i.e. instead of the invitation to Judaism, the name of its Scripture is given; which is followed by "the taking up of the Torah", i.e. instead of the name of religion, i.e. Judaism, the name of the Scripture, the Torah is given.[39] (The non-exclusive nature of these terms is indicated by the fact that apart from the Torah and Judaism, the same idea is expressed with Mani's message and religion, the Qurʾān and Islam, etc.) In the very same extract faith (*īmān*) is mentioned along with practice (*aʿmāl*), and the two are contrasted to proclamation (*daʿwa*) and laws (*šarāʾiʿ*) – implying religion. It is suggested then that religion is made up from deeds (*aʿmāl*) and faith (*īmān*).

Sometimes *dīn* is replaced with proclamation (*daʿwa*), e.g. when ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī uses *dīn* and *daʿwa* alternately in similes and comparisons to the Kingdom of Heaven, the mustard seed, a net for catching fish, the fermenting dough, and a feast,[40] which proves evidently the synonymy of the two terms.

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[37] ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba*, 130: *allaḏīna qabilū hāḏā d-dīn wa-hāḏā l-kitāb*.

[38] ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba*, 145: *kitāb mubayyin dīn*.

[39] "We do not doubt that the proclaimer to the Torah – given that we find that his whole community stands firm in the devoutness/religiosity of the Torah – from the time he started his proclamation for his religion has never displayed anything that would contradict to his proclamation: i.e. the *tawḥīd* and the laws established in his Torah. Should his proclamation and action have had contradicted his proclamation and the laws of his Scripture, then his community would not have had accepted his religion and would not have inclined to his Scripture." ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba*, 145: *ka-mā lā našukk fī d-dāʿī ilā at-Tawrāt, iḏ ulfiyat ummatuhu muqīmatan bi-ağmaʿihā alā at-tadayyun bi-Tawrātihi, annahu munḏu inbaʿaṯa li-daʿwa ummatihi ilā dīnihi lam yuẓhir min nafsihi ḫilāfa mā daʿāhā ilayhi min at-tawḥīd wa-š-šarāʾiʿ al-muṯbata fī Tawrātihi. wa-law ḫālafat aʿmāluhu wa-īmānuhu daʿwatahu wa-šarāʾiʿ kitābihi, iḏan la-mā qabilat ummatuhu ʿalā ḏālika dīnahu wa-lā dānat bi-kitābihi.*

[40] "The Kingdom of Heaven – I mean its religion – resembles the mustard seed… This proclamation resembles a net … this religion resembles the fermenting dough … this proclamation resembles a feast … ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-ağwiba*, 131: *tašbahu*

In a similar manner to other Christian authors' usage, ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī does not use these terms referring to Christianity exclusively. E.g: he refers to the worship of idols (*ʿibādat awṯān*) and the obedience to Satan/Evil (*ṭāʿat aš-šayṭān*),[41] which indicates that both worship and obedience are general practices and are not exclusively dedicated to God; but the parallel structure they are put in also indicates their synonymy.

'Religion' (*dīn*) can also refer to other religions, not just to the true one: e.g. when ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī writes that "the Wise has sent his messengers and performed signs and wonders through them in order to establish his religion (*dīn*) and proclamation (*daʿwa*) among the people, and in order to overthrow the religions of forgers (*adyān al-mubṭilīn*)."[42]

Related terms include 'confession' and 'faith', which are parts of a religion, e.g. when ʿAmmār writes that "God sent messengers (*rusul*), whom he ordered to invite (*daʿwa*) people to the faith (*īmān*) and confession (*iqrār*) of a Father, a Son and a Holy Spirit, as one God, one Creator, and one Lord."[43] Proclamation, or invitation (*daʿwa*) implies that there is a religion, here, however, instead of using a single term: *dīn* a circumscription is given by the list of its components.

Another synonym of religion is *milla* – in the sense of the religious community, which in turn reflects Qurʾānic usage:

> "You have [certainly] not heard of or seen a man of the world who had left his community (*milla*) in which he had grown up for another community (*milla*) except for one of the reasons we have mentioned."[44]

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malakūt as-samawāt, wa-yaʿnī bi-ḏālika dīnahu, ḥabbat al-ḫardal … tašbahu hāḏihi d-daʿwa šabakatan… yašbahu hāḏā d-dīn ḫamīratan laṭīfatan … tašbahu hāḏihi d-daʿwa walīmatan.

[41] "His Scripture relates His commanding His messengers to proclaim with a clear proclamation [that] the peoples [should turn away] from the worship of idols, [the peoples] who had previously been dedicated to the obedience to daemons." ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-aǧwiba*, 132: *fa-huwa llaḏī yuḫbiru kitābuhu min amrihi li-rusulihi bi-daʿwat aš-šuʿūb min ʿibādat al-awṯān al-munhamikīn kānū fī ṭāʿat aš-šayṭān daʿwatan ḫāliṣatan.*

[42] ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-aǧwiba*, 132: *kāna l-ḥakīm … arsala rusulahu wa-aẓhara ʿalā aydīhim āyātihi wa-aʿlāmahu li-yuqīm bi-hā fī n-nās dīnahu wa-daʿwatahu wa-li-yubṭil bi-hā adyān al-mubṭilīn*.

[43] ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-aǧwiba*, 139: *arsala rusulan amarahum bi-daʿwat an-nās ilā l-īmān wa-l-iqrār bi-l-Ab wa-l-Ibn wa-r-Rūḥ al-Quds, ilāh wāḥid, ḫāliq wāḥid rabb wāḥid*.

[44] ʿA. al-Baṣrī, *Kitāb al-Masāʾil wa-l-aǧwiba*, 142: *wa-anta lam tasmaʿ wa-lam tara bi-raǧulin wāḥid min ahl ad-dunyā intaqala ʿan milla naša'a ʿalayhā ilā milla uḫrā siwāhā dūna iḥdā l-ḫiṣāl allatī ḏakarnāhā.*

Leaving a community for another one – taking the wider context into consideration which elaborates on the reasons that make someone adhere to a religion – means conversion form one religion to another.

ʿAmmār's usage has several shared features with that of the previous two authors, but he introduces new terms, as well, as it could be seen e.g. in the field of "path, way". While the previous two authors mostly wrote about carrying out good deeds/charity, ʿAmmār's approach brings "practice" into the fore, as a constituent of any religion – together with faith (or cf. Abū Qurra's pair of faith and worship). Though "community" played an important role in the previous two authors' discourse, too, ʿAmmār's *milla* is of a higher level, being a synonym for religion.

4 Concluding remarks

In the course of investigation, I demonstrated that the ways the first Arabic Christian authors used *dīn* reflect a richness of connotations. These imply such a variety of meanings and tones that it is improbable to be the invention of the first generation of Arabophone Christians. There must have been a preexistent set of concepts which they could rely upon and which then came to be articulated in Arabic by them. Furthermore, there are a lot of similarities between the usage of terms and the interpretations, which further reflects a preexistent Greek/Syriac tradition known by all denominations. On the other hand, some Semitic-Islamic features in the use of synonymous terms were identified, which attests to the role of the Muslim–Christian interaction in the development of Arabic theological terminology.

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A JUDEO-ARABIC FRAGMENT OF THE MAGICAL TREATISE *KITĀB DĀʾIRAT AL-AḤRUF AL-ABĞADIYYA*[*]

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Manuscript G-I-13 (11) preserved in the *Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial* contains several short magical texts. The first of these, entitled "Universal adjuration" (*al-qasam al-ğāmiʿ al-šarīf*[1]) is in fact a fragment of a Judeo-Arabic version of an anonymous Arabic magical treatise, the *Kitāb dāʾirat al-aḥruf al-abğadiyya*.

Dāʾirat al-aḥruf is a treatise of letter magic attributed to Hermes, which pertains to the genre of the science of the letters *(ʿilm al-ḥurūf)*. Long extracts of this treatise were combined in a composition attributed to a certain Ḫwārazmī, whose identity is not clear.[2] Both were preserved in the same manuscript (BnF, Arabe 2357, fols. 175r-204v and 207r-213v, respectively). Cécile Bonmariage and Sébastien Moureau have recently prepared the critical edition and translation of the treatise attributed to Hermes.[3] After a meticulous philological comparison they concluded that version A (fols. 175r–204v, attributed to Hermes) is not the direct original of version B (fols. 207r-213v, attributed to Ḫwārazmī), which possibly represents another branch of tradition. Version B has a short and incomplete parallel in manuscript Ankara, Milli Kütüphane, Ankara Adnan Ötüken İl Halk Kütüphanesi, 968, fols. 63v–66v (version C) pertaining to the same branch of tradition. Some extracts of the *Kitāb dāʾirat al-aḥruf al-abğadiyya* are cited in the name of Ḫwārazmī also in the *Manbaʿ uṣūl al-ḥikma* attributed to al-Būnī (version D).[4]

To these Muslim variants of the magical treatise a Jewish rendition can be added, since a section of the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf* is preserved in a Judeo-Arabic magical handbook copied by different hands with Sephardic semi-cursive script in the 16th–

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[1] In the Judeo-Arabic original "*qasam al-ğāmiʿ al-šarīf*" appears without the definite article, which is grammatically problematic. It has been corrected in the English translation according to the Arabic parallel of the text published by Bonmariage and Moureau 2016:70.

[2] His identity cannot be established with certainty, for various proposals see Bonmariage and Moureau 2016:6–8.

[3] Bonmariage and Moureau 2016. (Critical edition, annotated translation and study.)

[4] Bonmariage and Moureau 2016:2–3.

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17th centuries, which is preserved in the Library of the Escorial.[5] The provenance of the Escorial manuscript is unknown, but according to Francisco Javier del Barco del Barco, its peculiarities suggest that it was copied in North-Africa.[6] Like most magical texts, the Escorial manuscript is also a compilation of passages of diverse origin. The copyists freely handle their sources adding and removing whatever they choose. Owing to the different hands easily discernible in the manuscript, not to mention the obvious dialectal varieties of the language employed, the various stages of the manuscript's composition are evident. This is not the case with the original *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf*, the different strata of which cannot be determined exactly. Being conscious of the difficulties, the modern editors of the work proposed a tentative division of the text indicating the diverse layers which constitute the work: theoretical elements (lists of angels, spells attracting and releasing demons, etc.) and the different types of magical recipes.[7] According to this division, the fragment preserved in the Judeo-Arabic manuscript belongs to the central, "primary section" of the work. However, it is not identical with it. The Judeo-Arabic text follows quite closely version B attributed to Ḫwārazmī, in which the text of the "universal adjuration" is longer than in version A. On the other hand, the recipes attached to the adjuration are not identical with those in the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf al-abǧadiyya*. Moreover, the Judeo-Arabic text contains a seal (amulet), a 7x7 magic square closely connected to the "universal adjuration".

The contents of the Judeo-Arabic parallel

The manuscript begins with the "Chapter on the universal adjuration", which is almost identical with fols. 184v–186r of the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf*, but also contains the long addition at the end of the chapter that can be found in version B (published by Bonmariage and Moureau 2016:74, n. 1). The introduction of the adjuration explains that its function is to evoke the seven celestial beings ("kings", *mulūk,* as they are

[5] Thus the Judeo-Arabic manuscript either predates, or it is contemporary with the Paris manuscript (BnF Arabe 2357), which was dated by Bonmariage and Moureau to the 17th century, and which is the earliest Arabic manuscript of the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf*. (Bonmariage and Moureau 2016:10)

[6] According to Barco del Barco 2003 G-I-13 (11) is a magical text by an unknown author, copied possibly in the 16th–17th cent., 10 fols., (27–30 lines/page), old foliation (no. 5) can be seen on fol. 1r. It is written in Sephardic semi-cursive script on paper (dimensions: 21.5x15.5 cm. The manuscript is not bound and its provenance is unknown, perhaps it was copied in North Africa. It contains magical texts and recipes. There are eleven fragmentary manuscripts under the same shelf mark (G-I-13) treating different subjects (grammar, responsa, Biblical commentary and exegesis).

[7] Bonmariage and Moureau 2016:8–9.

identified later) by seven letters that rule over them. Through the interaction of these seven kings connected to letters, the practitioner is capable to mobilize and rule over other spirits. The spells also serve to dispel the "inhabitant demons" *(ʿummār)* of a certain place. The invocation addresses "the inhabitants of the seven heavens, the celestial spirits" and "the seven kings of the earth, the terrestrial spirits" (fol. 1r–v), together with various angels including the angel Metatron. The end of the adjuration employs divine names, also in Hebrew ("Answer immediately obeying the names of God […] the Magnificent, the most Sublime, ʾHYH [ʾehyeh, "I am"] Allāh", fol. 1v).

The text of the adjuration is followed by magical recipes both in the Arabic and the Judeo-Arabic versions. From this point, however, the two versions diverge to a major extent. In the Arabic text (version A, fol. 186v ff.) several recipes are enlisted (annulation of a talisman that protects a treasure; manifestation of a treasure or a hidden thing; subjugation of certain demons, etc.). In the Judeo-Arabic text there is only one recipe, under the heading "Chapter on the explication of the above adjuration", which gives practical instructions to perform the *mandal*[8] (fol. 1v). The performance of the magical act begins with the subjugation of the "inhabitant demons" *(ʿummār)* mentioned also in the "universal adjuration", thus the recipe seems to pick up a theme of the previous text and to further elaborate on it. The spell contains a Hebrew phrase (*qadoš huʾ ʾAdonay*, Holy is the Lord), but also Qurʾānic phrases: Q 2:255 and 7:143 (the latter is a reference to God's revealing himself to Moses on Mount Sinai), and a combination of disjoined letters *(muqaṭṭaʿāt)* that stand at the beginning of several *sūra*s of the Qurʾān.

The spells of the Judeo-Arabic text are supplemented with an amulet composed of a 7x7 magic square placed in the middle of seven concentric circles, each one of them connected to a passage of the Qurʾān (fol. 2r). The passage related to the innermost circle is "Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth" (Q 24:35), and the six others are connected to six parts of Q 6:59 describing God as having the keys of the unseen, as knowing and perceiving everything. The 7x7 square operates with the initials of seven from among the 99 beautiful names of God. Considering the introduction of the "universal adjuration" (fol. 1a) attributing the effectiveness of the adjuration to seven letters, and the repeated reference to the inhabitants of the seven heavens and the seven kings of the earth, the amulet seems to be a figural representation of the adjuration, in which the 7x7 magic square corresponds to the seven kings of the earth, and the seven concentric circles correspond to the seven heavens. This supposition is corroborated by the passage of the Qurʾān in the first circle referring to the heavens and the earth.

It is interesting to note that the word "Allah" beginning the text in the first circle is written with unconnected Arabic characters. These are the only Arabic characters appearing in the Judeo-Arabic text. Employing the independent form of the Arabic

[8] See below in detail.

letters has clear magical functions.[9] Each sequence of the Qurʾān is used as a spell conjuring well-known demons (Maymūn, Aḥmar, Abyaḍ)[10] and some more obscure ones. There is a short sentence under the image, which seems to be from Qurʾān 2:72 "Allah brings forth what you were hiding" cited in a corrupted form. The theme of the Qurʾānic passages suggests that the amulet serves to uncover hidden things or treasures.

In the Arabic version no amulet is attached to the adjuration, but several of the recipes enumerated there have the same purpose as the Judeo-Arabic amulet and recipe.

On fol. 2v a long spell *(ʿaẓīma)* is cited after the amulet, introduced by the heading "This is the spell of the seal/amulet *(ḫātim)*". The spell contains the seven letters and the seven names that appear in the magic square, lists a great number of the most beautiful names of God, cites various passages of the Qurʾān, mentions Solomon the son of David and a Hebrew phrase as well ("*ʾEhye ʾašer ʾehye ʾAdonay Ẓevaot ʾEl Šadday*", I am who I am, the Lord of Hosts, the Mighty God).

From fol. 3r the Judeo-Arabic text diverges completely from the Arabic *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf.* Fol. 3r contains a spell for safekeeping the house that should be hidden in the wall; and another protecting a person. Both were copied by the same untrained hand, and both employ dialectal form of Arabic. Fol. 3v begins a new unit with an adjuration called *"qasam an-našra"* that certainly has a Muslim origin since it cites various Qurʾānic verses and expressions besides a great number of *nomina barbara.* Fol. 4v contains an adjuration called *"qasam Ǧabrāʾīl"*. Fols. 5r–8v constitute a separate section copied by a different hand, containing a rhymed introduction, the division of the letters of the alphabet according to the four elements, a dialogue between king Solomon and the angels of the signs of the zodiac, each one of them revealing his name and specialties. Fol. 9r contains a magical recipe written possibly by a later hand with very marked cursive features; on fol. 9v there are signs of geomancy; on fol. 10r there is again an adjuration of Muslim origin with numerous Qurʾānic passages, and on fol. 10v a new unit begins treating the fifth sign of the zodiac "which is the sign of the Lion and the Sun". The text ends abruptly, and the catchword on the bottom of the page proves that the continuation was lost. Fols 5r–8v and 10r–v are copied by the same hand.

Although only a part of the Judeo-Arabic manuscript runs parallel to the Arabic *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf,* the Judeo-Arabic magical manual as a whole pertains to the same

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[9] Unconnected writing is frequently used in Arabic magical texts. The sequence of full, independent forms of the characters without diacritical marks and any segmentation in the text results in a continuous series of consonants making the reading very difficult. According to the interpretation of T. Canaan the disjoint, full forms of letters display all their elements, representing the full power of the demons associated with them, multiplying the magical effect produced by the significance of the words. See Canaan 2004:96-97.

[10] Cf. Blackman 2000:193.

genre (letter mysticism) and presents the same peculiarities as the Arabic treatise. The Arabic *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf* is an eclectic compilation of various sources that was finally conceived as one treatise. The Jewish version may be an excerpt of this supplemented with other texts, or might be the vestige of a parallel generation of a magical manual in which the various layers are clearly visible due to the alterations of the hands. In the latter case the Jewish copyist seems not to have known the complete *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf* but only some of its sources.

Letter mysticism

The "science of letters" *(ʿilm al-ḥurūf)* is a mystico-magical practice that operates with the esoteric properties of the letters of the alphabet.[11] Besides its obvious numerical value, each letter is supposed to be connected to an angel called "servant" *(ḫādim)* of the letter, a celestial body and one of the four elements. The numerical equivalent of a word (that is, the sum of the numerical value of its letters) reveals its essence, since every denominated thing is essentially identical with everything else the name of which has the same numerical equivalent. For example, in Jewish mysticism, the name *El Šadday* (Almighty God) is regarded as the par excellence name of God (*ha-Šem*, the Name) since the numerical value of both is 345.[12] The denominations do not necessarily have to be in the same language: the essential sameness of two things can also be revealed by the numerical equivalency between two words in different languages. Isaac of Acre (13th–14th cent.) quoted his master's, Abraham Abulafia's saying according to which "the young is called old, since he is the oldest [=the latest] in creation, therefore it is appropriate to call him old, not young. Thus in Arabic they call an old person *šēḫ* [the transcription according to the colloquial pronunciation is deliberate], and the secret of young is old".[13] This identification is based on the equal numerical value (320) of the Hebrew word *naʿar* (young) with the Arabic word *šēḫ* (old), pronounced in the colloquial way, that is, omitting the consonant *yāʾ* (the numerical value of the standard form *šayḫ* would be 330). This principle led to onomatomantic interpretations in both Islam and Judaism (arithmomancy, *ḥisāb al-ǧummal* in Arabic and *gematria* in Hebrew). According to these interpretations, the secret properties of the existents are hidden in the letters that form their names. He who knows the name of a thing is capable of controlling it. By manipulating the letters of a denomination it is possible to achieve a change in the essence of the denominated thing. Spiritual entities like demons or angels can be

[11] For more details see for example Fahd 1972, Ebstein 2014:77-122 and the bibliography cited there.

[12] See, for example Abraham Abulafia's *Ḥayyei ha-nefeš* cited in Idel 1988:29.

[13] Isaac of Acre: *ʾOẓar Ḥayyim*, the Hebrew original is quoted in Idel 1981:123. English translation by D. Zsom.

controlled by the letters of the alphabet; demons can be compelled by the knowledge of their names to present themselves and to carry out different acts. Names are conceived as numerical codes that reveal the hidden, the real substance of the denominated beings. Each existent of the universe is connected to the other through a numerical system that can be altered and manipulated. The letters are also connected the one of the four elements, thus evoking a letter of certain character is supposed to convey the nature and effect of the element to which the letter pertains. For example, in magical procedures love can be induced by the employment of letters connected to the element of fire, etc.

Possibly the most influential work on the science of letters is the *Šams al-maʿārif* attributed to al-Būnī. According to Bonmariage and Moreau the letter mysticism of al-Būnī is very close to the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf*, but there is a fundamental difference between the two: the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf* does not make use of texts from the Qurʾān, and does not mention divine names. In a sense, it lacks the dimension of Islam.[14] The Judeo-Arabic fragment is different in this respect, since although it is evidently intended for a Jewish audience, it does contain passages from the Qurʾān and many of the so-called beautiful names of God. A peculiar feature of the Judeo-Arabic version is precisely the use of seven letters representing seven divine names from among the beautiful names of God. These elements could obviously not have been supplied by the Jews, therefore the Judeo-Arabic parallel points toward the existence of a more Islamic version of the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf* tradition.

Techniques and terms employed in the Judeo-Arabic text

The term *ǧalb* (attraction) is a technical term peculiar to the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf*. It means summoning demons, making angels or spirits to descend and to present themselves. In other magical texts this procedure is usually called *istiḥḍār, istinzāl,* or *istiǧlāb.* The appearance of the demons is achieved through the recitation of the required spell that contains letter combinations and various *nomina barbara.* The demon thus attracted becomes the servant of the practitioner, who can compel it to reveal hidden things, disclose information, or to carry out any command of the practitioner. The spirit of attraction *(rūḥāniyyat al-ǧalb)* attracts other spiritual beings by the command of the practitioner (Bonmariage and Moureau 2016:17, 20). It appears in the Judeo-Arabic fragment in a quite obscure passage on fol. 1r, which mentions another concept characteristic of the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf*, the mixing of the

[14] Bonmariage and Moreau 2016:15: "C'est du *ʿilm al-ḥurūf* de Būnī que se rapproche le plus le *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf,* avec cependant une absence presque totale de la dimension islamique: le *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf* n'utilise pas les versets du Coran, et ne mentionne pas les noms divins".

four elements (fire, air, water, earth) by the letters (or by the letters' servants) with the spiritual being the practitioner wishes to control. The practitioner summons the spiritual beings "to obey these mighty letters, magnificent and powerful names", than he recites several *nomina barbara* combined with divine epithets like "the Powerful, to whose names everything is subjected". After that he calls four angels (each name recited by the practitioner ends in *-ʾīl*) to appear and to mix their four elements with the "spirit of attraction", so that it may bring before the practitioner whatever he wishes. The immaterial spirits *(al-arwāḥ ar-rūḥāniyya)* can be subjected to the will of the practitioner by the intermediation of the angels, or servants connected to the letters of the alphabet by means of mixing the elements represented by the letters to the spiritual beings whose control is sought.

Several kinds of magical beings appear in the Judeo-Arabic fragment, and their function and identity are not always entirely clear. These include terrestrial and celestial kings and spirits *(mulūk ʿulwiyya wa-sufliyya, arwāḥ ʿulwiyya wa-sufliyya)*, inhabitants of the seven heavens *(ahl as-samawāt as-sabʿa*, [*sic*]*)*, seven kings of the earth *(mulūk al-arḍ as-sabʿa)*, inhabitant spirits *(ʿummār),* Satans *(šayāṭīn),* immaterial spirits *(arwāḥ rūḥāniyya),* radiant lights *(anwār sāṭiʿa)*, all corporeal and spiritual souls *(kull rūḥ ǧuṯmānī wa-rūḥānī),* the spirit of attraction *(rūḥ al-ǧalb)*, angels *(malāʾika)*, spirits of the jinns *(arwāḥ al-ǧinn)*, the spirit of the great names *(rūḥāniyyat al-asmāʾ al-ʿaẓīma),* assistants *(aʿwān),* servants *(ḫuddām),* and several angels bearing well-known or obscure proper names. These magical beings are identical with those in the Arabic *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf.*

The amulet composed of the 7x7 magic square and the seven concentric circles, which seems to be a figurative representation and a permanent realization of the adjuration intensifying its effect, is peculiar to the Judeo-Arabic text. The Arabic *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf* makes reference to the inhabitants of the seven heavens and the seven kings of the earth, and the introduction to the adjuration explains that its effect is due to a name contained in it which "incites the seven celestial ones" (fol. 184r). The Judeo-Arabic version, however, slightly changes the introduction, and attributes the power of the adjuration to seven letters: "it incites the seven celestial [kings] because the adjuration contains seven letters that incite them" (fol. 1r). On fol. 2v (lines 15–27) the Judeo-Arabic version cites a spell known as *daʿwat al-ḫalḫala* (or: *qasam ḫalḫalat al-hawā wa-fatq al-ǧawā*) which is lacking in the Arabic *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf*. The text of this incantation can be found in various versions in several magical works.[15] These ascribe the effectiveness of the spell to a divine name composed of seven letters ("*aqsamtu ʿalaykum … bi-l-ism as-sarīʿ … wa-huwa ism Allāh … wa-hiya as-sabʿa aḥruf*"). In the Judeo-Arabic text this sentence is completed with seven names of God the initials of which appear in the 7x7 square ("*aqsamtu alaykum … bi-l-ism as-sarīʿ … wa-huwa ism Allāh … yā Fard, yā Ǧabbār, yā Šakūr, yā Tawwāb,*

[15] For example in Ḫallāwī 2005:153.

yā Ẓahīr, yā Ḫabīr, yā Zakī", fol. 2v, lines 20–23). This attests to the process of editing the Judeo-Arabic text, which merged different sources and created links between them by the recurring reference to the seven letters of the 7x7 magic square.

In contrast with the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf*, the Judeo-Arabic fragment specifies the magical procedure called *mandal* as one of the uses of the "universal adjuration". *Mandal* is a widely practiced ceremony that aims to reveal unknown information, to find lost or hidden objects. It consists of gazing into a reflective surface, such as oil, ink, water, mirror, polished metal, yolk of the egg, etc. The procedure was common in Middle Eastern cultures even in antiquity, but the origin of the name *mandal* is obscure and seems to be a relatively late denomination. In any case, it appears in Ibn Ḫaldūn's *Muqaddima*, Ch. 54 (Worrell 1916:39). The modern practice of *mandal* in Egypt was observed and described by Lane (1860:267–275) and Worrell (1916). The practitioner first needs to remove the inhabitant spirits that control the place where he wishes to carry out the magical act, and then he should recite an adjuration making different kinds of demons appear. He, or his assistant, should gaze into a reflecting surface where the required information will appear. Seals (amulets), and other magical devices appear in the different descriptions, and some of the spells collected by Worrell are indeed very close or almost identical with the Judeo-Arabic version.[16]

Transfiguration of an Arab demon to a Jewish Rabbi

A well-known peculiarity of magical texts in general is that they combine elements pertaining to different religious traditions. In a similar vein, *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf* and its Judeo-Arabic fragment mixes Jewish and Muslim components: Biblical phrases, Hebrew divine and angelic names on the one hand, and Qurʾānic passages and Muslim phraseology on the other. Evidently the numerous citations from the Qurʾān and the marked Muslim character of the *Dāʾirat al-aḥruf* did not disturb or worry the Jewish users of the adjurations, who neither emended these passages nor did they replace them with others of Jewish nature.

Apparently an element of the Judeo-Arabic version found its way to a Hebrew magical manual preserved in the Kaufmann Collection in Budapest. Manuscript Kaufmann A240 is a magical handbook copied in the 17th–18th centuries in Sephardic script. The whole text is in Hebrew with the exception of page 49, that contains a number of lines in Judeo-Arabic, and a magic square that happens to be identical with that of the Escorial manuscript. The editor of the Hebrew manual (or someone else before him) possibly tried to eliminate the evidently Muslim vestiges of the amulet, removing the concentric circles together with the quotations from the Qurʾān and the Arab demon names. The seven letters of the square are, however,

[16] Cf. especially Worrell 1916:50 with fol. 1v lines 21–22.

supplemented with seven beautiful names of God (in Arabic), and one if the instructions for the use of the square is in Judeo-Arabic again. An interesting coincidence points toward the possibility that the more complete form of the amulet (with the circles, Qurʾānic verses and demonic names) was known to the Jewish user: one of the demons' names, Maymūn seems to be retained in the attribution of the square to the famous Rabbi Maimonides (d. 1204) (Mošeh ben Maymon, in Arabic: Mūsā ibn Maymūn). According to the Hebrew text that accompanies the square "*ze ha-ḥotam yeš bah* [*sic*] *harbeh toʿaliyot we-hu min ha-RaMBaM*". (This seal has many profitable uses, and it is from the RaMBaM, i.e. Maimonides).[17]

The Judeo-Arabic instruction is written in a mixed language starting in Hebrew *"le-niqšar"* (to a person "bound" or "tied up", that is, in a state of impotency; the Hebrew term corresponds to the Arabic equivalent *marbūṭ*), but the spell itself, beginning with "*tawakkal yā Maymūn*" – just as one of the circles of the Escorial manuscript – is in Arabic.

Transcription of the Judeo-Arabic text

Peculiarities of the orthography: the copyist employed a kind of *plene* script indicating some of the short Arabic vowels with the corresponding consonants (for example, *kūllahā* instead of *kullahā,* "all of it", etc.). Short vowels of case endings are also frequently indicated with the corresponding consonants (*bi-ḥaqqī* instead of *bi-ḥaqqi*, "by the power of", etc). In the genitive construction the ending of the first, governing element (*status constructus*) is always indicated with *waw* irrespective of the noun's actual case, e. g. אסרע מן טרפתו עין for أسرع من طرفةِ عين "faster than the twinkling of an eye"; ואזג'רו רוחאניתו אלג'לב for وازجروا روحانيةَ الجلب "incite the spirit of attraction", etc. The pronunciation of the *tāʾ marbūṭa* is usually indicated by a ת in *status constructus* (see the two previous examples), otherwise it is marked by the letter ה. The word *šayʾ* always has the accusative ending *-an, e.g.* כל שיאן for كل شيءٍ "everything". In general, the accusative ending *-an* is frequently indicated in the Hebrew transcription, *e.g.* טועאן או כריהאן for طوعا او كرها "willingly or forcedly". Sometimes the accusative ending *-an* is indicated by the letter *he, e.g.* דלילה כאציעה for ذليلا خاضعا "humbly and submissively". Sometimes the nominative ending *-un* is also indicated, *e.g.* ואנהו לקסמון for وانه لقسمٌ "it is indeed an adjuration". The tendency to indicate the case endings is especially strong in quotations from the Qurʾān, *e.g.* Q. 6:29 ולא חבתין [...] ומא תסקוטו מן וראקתין for ولا حبة [...] وما تسقط من ورقة "not a leaf falls, nor a grain", where not only the Genitive endings are indicated, but also the

[17] This, however, cannot be considered a compelling evidence. It is clear in both manuscripts that the square is related to (the demon) Maymūn, and the Jewish redactor identified Maymūn with Maimonides. Whether he saw the square with the circles as they appear in the Escorial manuscript or not, is undecidable.

sentence is almost fully vocalized. The indication of the case endings suggests that they were actually pronounced, both in Qurʾānic and incantation texts. Some of the emphatic sounds are transcribed in an unusual way: *ẓ* (ظ) with *ẓadi* and a dot above (צ') instead of the customary *ṭet* and a dot (ט'), etc. Sometimes even the letter *d* (ذ) is transcribed in this way (for example, צ'הור for ذهور), which probably proves that in pronunciation the contrast between the two sounds was neutralized. The sound *ǧ* (ج) is transcribed with a *gimel* (ג) and a dot below, while *gimel* and a dot above indicates *ġ* (غ). *Kaf* (כ) with a dot in the letter corresponds to the Arabic *kāf* (ك). When the dot is above the letter it indicates *ḫāʾ* (خ). *Alif maqṣūra* is transcribed with *alef*: עלא for على etc.[18]

Fol. 1r

1) באב קסם[19] אלג'אמע אלשריף אלדי הוא טאעה עלא ג'מיע אלמלוך אלעלוי' ואלספל'
2) והי' תרחל[20] אלסבעה אלעלוי' לאן פי וסט אלקסם סבעה חרוף הי' אלדי[21] תרחלהום[22]
3) ותהרב אלעומאר מן אלמטרח ואלשיאטין כולהא והוא האדא תקול * בסם אללה
4) אלמלך אלקדוס אלצ'אהר אלעלי אלעצ'ים אלקאהר אלקאדר רב אלצ'הור ואלאזמנה
5) ומוקדר אלאוקאת ואלאמכנה אבדא לא יחול ומולכהו לא יזול צאחב אלעז אל
6) שאמך ואלג'לאל אלבאדיך אלדי אחתג'ב באלאנואר ותעזז באלקתדאר[23] דו אלמלך
7) ואלמלכות ואלעזה ואלקוה ואלג'בראות[24] באסמאיהי אלעצימה אדעוכום יא
8) דו[25] אלארואח אלרוחאנייה עלא טאעתי האדהי אלחרוף אלג'לילה ואלאסמא
9) אלשריפה אלעצ'ימה בטפ"ר טמהט"ף היש"ף טשהו"ה הלי"ט ובחקי טיהוב
10) היף בהשט"ף אלמנוור כל שיאן מן נורהי ואה"ף ראה"ף טילהו"ף טערשף
11) הברי"ה אלשדיד אלדי כצ'ע כל שיאן לאסמאהי טרפיק"ש משוריט"ש גאלב
12) עלא כל שיאן פלצתעגב"ה הלהילי"ע אשללימו"ת כ'וק"טהש[26] שקיפי"ע שפו"ץ
13) אשטמט"ך שלשהשי"ן מלך ג'באר מותכבר אנת ינבו[27] עין חיאת כל רוח
14) חחמשטיטליאי"ף מא שמע[28] אסמך רוח ועצאה אלא צעק ואחתרק שמעלאית"ך
15) שמעלאינ"ך שמעלאינ"ך חמטהיטהי"ה אג'יב יא טוניאל וגלמשיאל ועטיאל ועג'ציאל

[18] About the peculiarities of Middle Arabic appearing in Judeo-Arabic texts see Blau 1981, especially pp. 27-35, 76, 84 (pseudo-Classical features, hyper-correction, merging of *ḍād* and *ẓāʾ*, the use of diacritical points, etc.).

[19] See note 1.

[20] Correction in the margin: תרג'ל

[21] *Sic*, instead of אלתי

[22] *Sic*. Correction in the margin: תרג'להום

[23] *Sic*, instead of באלאקתדאר

[24] *Sic*, instead of ואלג'ברות

[25] *Sic*, instead of דוי

[26] Some letters are crossed over in the middle of the word.

[27] *Sic*, instead of ינבוע

[28] *Sic*, instead of סמע

16) ואחצ'רו ואפעלו מא תומרון בהי והוא כדא וכדא בעזתי האדהי אלאסמא אלדי טאעתוהוא
17) עלא כל רוח ג'תמאני ורוחאני ואזג'רו רוחאניתו אלג'לב יתוכלו בכדא וכדא
18) ויג'עזו[29] רוחאנייתו אלמומתג'יזה[30] בטבאיעכום אלארבעה חתא יאתיו אלא מכאני
19) האדא אסרע מן טרפתו עין בכדא וכדא דלילה כ'אצ'יעה אלי מוחיבתו [?] כדא
20) וכדא בחקי מא אקסמת בהי עליכום ומא אקסם בהי עליכום מן עצ'ם אלאסמא
21) [ב?]הללוי"ה הללוי"ה קדו"ש קדו"ש קדו"ש המיכא"ל היכא"ל המטשא"ל המטשא"ל זלזלת
22) אלרעד באלדי קאל ללסמואתי ואלארץ' איתיאן[31] טועאן או כריהאן קאלת[32] אתינא טאיעין
23) עלט"ך בהל"ך בעזתי אללה אלואחד אלאחד אלפרד אלצמד אלדי לם יתכיד צאחיבתאן
24) ולא ולד[33] לם ילד ולם יולד ולם יכון להו כפואן אחד[34] בהלט"ף הלט"ף שליטי"ע טו"ן
25) אטו"ן בהב"ש בהכ"ש יוק"ש מוק"ש שכ"ש שליכי"ע הלט"ף תבארך אללה רב אלעאלמין
26) תרעד אלמלאיכה מן כיפתהי ותזעק[35] ארואח אלג'ן ואלשיאטין מן סטותהי
27) לעצ'מתו אללה תכצ'עון ולאסמאהי תטעון[36] אללה ג'באר אלג'באברה ומביד אל
28) אכאסרה ומאלך אלדוניא ואלאכ'רה קוי לא יטאק קדו"ש קדו"ש קדו"ש קדו"ש קדו"ש
29) קדו"ש קדו"ש י"ה י"ה י"ה י"ה י"ה י"ה צבאות ג'ל אסמך דרכ'שו"ך בדא"ג' בדא"ג'
30) פבירו"ג' פבירו"ג' פחג"וח פכג'ו"ס פירו"ך כרו"ך יא הר"ך אשמ"ך שמא"ך עאלי
31) עלא כל בראך יא אהל אלסמואתי אלסאבעה ואלארואח אלעלוי' ויא מלוך אלארץ'

Fol. 1v

1) אלסבעה ואלארואח אלסופלי' אגיבו בחקי האדהי אלאסמא עליכום
2) ובחקי אברו"ש אברו"ש גיר"ש גיר"ש תרו"ש תרו"ש איו"ש איו"ש יושכ'ו"ך יושיכ'ו"ך
3) יפר"ך אגיבו דעותי ואכ'דמו טאעתי בחקי אראר"י כפתיא"ן לא"ך לא"ך שלהיש שלהיש
4) מלהי"ש מלהי"ש אכילי"ל אכילי"ל נמוהי"ן נמוהי"ן בדמלא"ך דמלא"ך ברא"ך ברא"ך ג'ול"א
5) ג'ול"א בהיל"א בהיל"א בטפני"ש טפני"ש בה"ן בה"ן ה"ן ה"ן בחקי שד"ת שד"ת בצ"ק צ"ק
6) בהיהיליו"ה אלארכיאץ' היבו"ר סריאו"ב אקבלו כלמח אלבצר וכאלברק אלכ'אטף
7) ואלריח אלעאצף אלסאעה אלסאעה אפעלו מא תומרון בהי והוא כדא אגיב יא
8) אלסייד מיטטרו"ן אלמלך ויא אלסייד טחיטמגיליא"ל אלמלך בחקי האדהי אלאסמא
9) והאדהי[37] אלקסם אלשריף אנאמא אג'זרתם[38] שרטיא"ל ורוקיא"ל וסמסמא"ל וג'מיע אעואנכום
10) אלאיג'אבתו[39] דעותי וקצ'א חאג'תי והוא כדא בחקי אמי"ל אמי"ל ובחקי אלאסם אלאעצ'ם[40]
11) אלדי אולה אל ואכרהו אל אג'יבו מוסרעין טאעין לאסמא אללה רב אלעאמין אג'יבו

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[29] In MS A ويزجروا, the word in the present manuscript is obviously a scribal error.
[30] In MS A الممتزجة
[31] *Sic*. In MS B: ايتيا
[32] In MS B قالتا
[33] Q 72:3.
[34] Q 112:3–4.
[35] In MS B وتزهق
[36] In MS B مطيعون
[37] *Sic*.
[38] *Sic*. In MS B: اجب يا ميطاطرون الملك بحق هذا القسم والاسما الشريفة وازجروا
[39] *Sic*. IN MS B: لاجابة
[40] *Sic*.

12) יא רוקיא"ל ואנת יא לומ"א ואנת יא מהרכי"ל ואנת יא לשמו"ן ואנת יא כירו"ש ואנת
13) יא איט"ש ואנת יא אצראפי"ל ואנת יא עלפכטהטו"ל אלמלך ואנת יא כמהטוי"ל
14) בעזתי אללה ועוצ'מתו אללה אלעצ'ים אלאעצ'אם אהי"ה א"ה אללה אהי"ה א"ה אללה
15) אהי"ה א"ה אללה אפעלו מא תומרון בהי והוא כדא וכדא מן ג'מיע מא תוריד
16) מן כיר ושר וטרד אלמאנע ואלמנדל וגירהו * פצל פי שרח אלקסם אלמדכור
17) אדא תריד תעמל עמאל[41] תסתאדן עאמר דאלך אלמוצ'ע אלדי תעמל פיה אלעמאל[42] תוצ'ע
18) קודאמך מנדל ג'דיד אבייץ' ומג'מרה ג'דידה ותקלו[43] האד אלקסם סבע מראת
19) ואמארת אלחוצ'ור אן מאכאן חדאך נאצ'ר אלישארה אנך תתאוב[44] ותדמע עינך או
20) יקיף[45] שער בדנך והוא האדא אלגמושי"ן אלגמושי"ן אילגמושי"ן אילגמושי"ן גאמושי"ן גאמושי"ן
21) מרשי"ן מרשי"ן מריושי"ן מריושי"ן ג'ל אלג'ליל צאחב אלאסם אלעצ'ים אלארץ' בכום תרג'ף
22) ואלריח בכום יעצף ואלברק בכום יכ'טף ואלבחר בכום יקדף ואסמא אללה אלעצ'ימה
23) מוחיטה בכום יא עאמר האד אלדאר ואלמכאן ליס לך מלכא ולא מנג'א ולא מותג'ה
24) ולא ראחה חתא תג'יבו ותחצ'ירו אינמא כונתום מן מלכות אללה תעאלה[46] אלכביר אלמותכבר
25) אלמותעאלי אג'יבו בחק מירמוהי"ן מירתוהי"ן ספועי"ן ספועי"ן דיעוג'י"ן דיעוג'י"ן
26) נהרשי"ר הישי"ר שיתימו"ן מומיאנקקך ומשי"ע פאנך קדוש הוא אדוני אג'יב בחקי
27) מן תג'לא עלא אלג'בל פג'עלהו דכאן[47] וכ'ר[?] מוסה צעיקאן[?] [וכייר מוסה צדיקאן] אג'יב בארך אללה פיך
28) ואיאך אדעו יא עאמר האד אלדאר ולך אעני יא עאמר האד אלדאר ואלמכאן אן תאתי לי
29) בין ידי ותוסאעדני פי קצ'א חאג'תי ותעזל חרימך ותקיף פי כ'דמת מן אריד אטלבהו
30) פי עמלי והוא כדא ותעינני עליה בחק אלם אללה לא אלה אלא הוא אלחי אלקיום[48] * תם וכמל

Fol. 2r
Concentric circles from inside to outside:

1) ا ل ل ه נור אלסמואת ואלארץ' אג'יב יא מרהב ותוכל בכדא וכדא
2) וענדהו מפאתח אלגאיבי אג'יב יא מרב [?] ותוכל בכדא וכדא ו[א]פעל כדא וכדא
3) לא יעלמוהא אלא הוא אג'יב יא אחמר ותוכל בכדא וכדא ואפעל כדא וכדא
4) יעלמו מא פי אלבר ואלבחר אג'יב יא בורקאן ותוכל בכדא וכדא ואפעל כדא וכדא
5) ומא תסקוטו מן וראקתין אלא יעלמוהא אג'ב יא שמהורש [?] ותוכל בכדא וכדא ואפעל כדא וכדא
6) ולא חבתין פי צ'לומאתי אלארץ' אג'יב יא אבייץ' ותוכל בכדא וכדא ואפעל כדא וכדא

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[41] *Sic*, possibly instead of אעמאל
[42] *Sic*, possibly instead of אלעמאל
[43] *Sic*.
[44] *Sic*, probably instead of תתוב
[45] *Sic* (يقف)
[46] *Sic*.
[47] Q 7:143.
[48] Q 2:255.

7) ולא ראטכין ולא יאבסין אלא פי כתאב מובין אג'יב יא מימון ותוכל בכדא וכדא ואפעל כדא וכדא

Under the image:

ואללה מכרגך מא כנתם תלמהון [?]

7x7 magic square in the centre of the circles

ז	כ'	ט'	ת	ש	ג	פ
כ'	ט'	ת	ש	ג	פ	ז
ט'	ת	ש	ג	פ	ז	כ'
ת	ש	ג	פ	ז	כ'	ט'
ש	ג	פ	ז	כ'	ט'	ת
ג	פ	ז	כ'	ט'	ת	ש
פ	ז	כ'	ט'	ת	ש	ג

Fol. 2v

1) והאדי עזימתו אלכאתם לכל מא תריד אן שא אללה אללה ומא אני אסאלוך יא רחמן יא
2) רחים יא עצ'ים יא סבוח יא קדוס יא פרד יא צמד סובחאן אללה מא אעצ'ם
3) צולטאן[49] אללה רבאן[50] אלאהאן ואחדאן קדוסאן עצ'ימאן ג'באראן קיומאן נור אל
4) נור ומדבר אלאומור לא תדריכהו אלאבצאר והוא ידריך אלאבצאר והוא אללטיף
5) אלכ'ביר קאסם אלג'באברה לאבס אלמהאבה אלכ'פי באלכובריה ונור אלסמואתי
6) ואלארץ' עאלם אלאסראר אלמאלך אלג'באר אלדי קהר באסמאיהי אלג'ן ואלעומאר
7) אקסמת עליכום איתוהא אלארואח אלרוחאנייה אן תחצ'רו אנתום וכודאמכום
8) ואעואנכום מן אלעלוי' ואלארצ'ייה ותביינו לי מא אסאל עליה מן כדא וכדא
9) באהיה אשר אהיה אדוני צבאות אל שדי מא כאן חדיתאן יפתרי[51] ואנהו
10) לקסמון לא יתעלמון עצ'ימון[52] אן כאנת אלא ציחתאן ואחדתאן פאיד הום ג'מיעאן
11) לדינא מוחצ'רון[53] אריאח בסלימאן אבן דוד עליה אלסלאם אלא מא אחצ'רתום
12) וביינתום לי מא אסאל עליה והוא כדא בעזתי אלעזיז אלמועתז פי עז עזהי
13) באהיאכום אהיאכום באקיאשין אקיאשין שמאקישין המשקין המשקין
14) אלעג'אל ٢ אלוחא ٢ אלסאעה ٢ מן קבל אן יאתיכום אלעדאב בגתתין[54] ואנתום

[49] *Sic*, instead of סלטאן
[50] Starting from here, the accusative endings are marked in the text.
[51] Q 12:111.
[52] Sic, an erroneous rendering of Q 56:76: وانه لقسم لو تعلمون عظيم
[53] Q 36:53.
[54] Sic, instead of בגתתאן

15) לא תשערון[55] בסמי אללה אלרחמן אלרחים בסמי אללה אלמותעאלי פי דנוותי אלמתדאני
16) פי עלוותי אלמותג'בר בג'בראותיהי אלמונפרד באלעז ואלכובריה פלא אללה אלא
17) הוא אלפרד אלקאים ואלסולטאן אלדאיס אלדי כ'צ'עת להו אלמלוך וצאר אלמאלך
18) לעוצ'מתהי ממלוך פאטר אלסמואת ואלארץ' ג'על אלמלאיכה רוסלאן ולהו[56]
19) ג'נאחתו מתני ומתלת ומרבע[57] אקסמת עליכום איתוהא אלארואח אלרוחאנייה
20) אלטאהירה ואלאנואר אלסאטעה אלמושריקה אלבהייה אקסמת עליכום
21) באלאסם אלסריע אלרפיע אלמחג'וב והוא אסם אללה אלעצ'ים אלאעצ'אם פג'ש
22) תצ'כ'ז אללה ומא יא פרד יא ג'באר יא שכור יא תואב יא צ'היר יא כ'ביר יא
23) זכי יא אללה יא אללהנא[58] ואלה כל שיאן אללה ואחד יא אכרם אלאכרמין אללה ומא
24) אני תוסלת אליך בחקי אסמך אלעצ'ים אלאעצ'אם אן תוסכר לי רוחאנייתו
25) האדהי אלאסמא אלעצ'ימה פאנך עלא כל שיאן קדיר אג'יב יא רוקיאל ואנת
26) יא ג'בריאל ואנת יא סמסמאל ואנת יא מיכאל ואנת יא צרפיאל ואנת יא עניאל ואנת
27) יא כספיאל ואפעלו כדא וכדא בחקי מא תלותוהו עליכום מן אסם אללה אלעצ'ים
28) אלאעצ'אם ובחקי מן ליס כמתלהי שיאון והוא אלסמיע אלבציר[59] ובחקי מן בידיהי
29) מלכות כל שיאן ואליהי תרג'עון[60] ובחקי מן אמרהו בין אלכאף ואלנון אנמא אמרהו
30) אדא אראד שיאן אן יקול להו כון פיכון[61] ובחק מן יחיי אלעצ'אם והיא רמימון[62]
אלא

The text stops abruptly here.

Transliteration into Arabic characters according to standard orthography
Fol. 1r

1) باب قسم الجامع الشريف الذي هو طاعة على جميع الملوك العلوية والسفلية
2) وهي ترحل [تزجل][63] السبعة العلوية لان في وسط القسم سبعة حروف هي الذي[64] ترحلهم
[تزجلهم][65]
3) وتهرب العمار من المطرح والشياطين كلها وهو هذا تقول * بسم الله
4) الملك القدوس الظاهر العلي العظيم القاهر القادر رب الدهور والأزمنة
5) ومقدر الأوقات والأمكنة أبدا لا يحول وملكه لا يزول صاحب العز

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[55] Q 39:55.
[56] *Sic.*
[57] Q 42:11.
[58] *Sic*, instead of אלהנא
[59] Q 42:11.
[60] Q 36:83.
[61] Q 36:82.
[62] Q 36:78.
[63] Correction in the margin: ترجل. In MS A the verb تزجل appears in a parallel sentence, see lines 6–7: ان فيه اسم واحد يزجل السبعة العلوية. The verb زجل can be found also in the continuation of the Judeo-Arabic text (fol. 1r, line 17).
[64] *Sic*.
[65] Correction in the margin: ترجلهم

6) الشامخ والجلال الباذخ الذي احتجب بالأنوار وتعزز بالاقتدار ذو الملك
7) والملكوت والعزة والقوة والجبروت بأسمائه أدعوكم يا
8) ذو[ي] الأرواح الروحانية على طاعة هذه الحروف الجليلة والأسماء
9) الشريفة العظيمة بطفر طمهطف هيشف طشهوه هليط وبحق طيهوب
10) هيف بهشطف المنور كل شيء من نوره واهف راهف طيلهوف طعرشف
11) هبريه الشديد الذي خضع كل شيء لأسمائه طرفيقش مشوريطش غالب
12) على كل شيء فلصتعجبه هلهيليع اشلليموت خوقطهش سقيفيع شفوص
13) اشطمطح شلشهشين ملك جبار متكبر أنت ينبو[ع] عين حياة كل روح[66]
14) ححمشطيطليايف ما سمع اسمك روح وعصاه الا صعق واحترق شمعلايتح
15) شمعلاينح شمعلاينح حمطهيطهيه أجب يا طونيال وغلمشيال وعطيال وعجصيال
16) واحضروا وافعلوا ما تؤمرون به وهو كذا وكذا بعزة هذه الأسماء الذي[67] طاعته
17) على كل روح جثماني وروحاني وازجروا روحانية الجلب يتوكلوا بكذا وكذا
18) ويجعز[68] روحانيته الممتجزة[69] بطبائعكم الأربعة حتى يأتي الى مكاني
19) هذا أسرع من طرفة عين بكذا وكذا ذليلا خاضيعا الى محبة[70] كذا
20) وكذا بحق ما أقسمت به عليكم وما أقسم به عليكم من عظم الأسماء
21) بهللوية هللوية قدوس قدوس قدوس هميكال هيكال همطشال همتشال زلزلة
22) الرعد بالذي قال للسموات والأرض ايتيان[71] طوعا او كريها[72] قالت[73] أتينا طائعين
23) علطح بهلح بعزة الله الواحد الاحد الفرد الصمد الذي لم يتخذ صاحبة
24) ولا ولدا[74] لم يلد ولم يولد ولم يكن له كفوا احد[75] بهلطف شليطيع طون
25) اطون بهبش بهكش يوقش موقش شكش شليكيع هلطف تبارك الله رب العالمين
26) ترعد الملائكة من خيفته وتزعق[76] أرواح الجن والشياطين من سطوته
27) لعظمة الله تخضعون ولأسمائه تطيعون الله جبار الجبابرة ومبيد
28) الاكاسرة ومالك الدنيا والاخرة قوي لا يطاق قدوس قدوش قدوش قدوش قدوش
29) قدوش قدوش يه يه يه يه يه يه يه صباوت جل اسمك درخشوح بداج بداج
30) فبيروج فبيروج فحغوح فكجوس فيروح كروحيا هرح اشمح شماح عالي[77]
31) على كل براخ[78] يا أهل السموات السبعة والأرواح العلوية ويا ملوك الارض

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[66] In MS A انت ينبوع حياة كل روح

[67] *Sic*.

[68] In MS A ويزجروا. The text of this and the previous line seems to be corrupt.

[69] In MS A الممتزجة

[70] The transliteration of the original Judeo-Arabic text is موحيبتو, which might correspond to محبة, but the meaning of the text is dubious.

[71] *Sic*. In MS B ايتيا

[72] *Sic*. In MS B كرها

[73] In MS B قالتا

[74] Q 72:3.

[75] Q 112:3–4.

[76] In MS B وتزهق

[77] *Sic*.

[78] In MS B العالي على كل براخ

Fol. 1v

1) السبعة والأرواح السفلية أجيبوا بحق هذه الأسماء عليكم
2) وبحق ابروش ابروش غرش غرش تروش تروش ايوش ايوش يوشخوح يوشيخوح
3) يفرح أجيبوا دعوتي واخدموا طاعتي بحق اراري كفتيان لاح لاح شلهيش شلهيش
4) ملهيش ملهيش اكيليل اكيليل نموهين نموهين بدملاح دملاح براح براح جولا
5) جولا بهيلا بهيلا بطفنيش طفنيش بهن بهن هن هن بحق شدت شدت يصق صق
6) بهيهيليوه الاركياض هيبور سرياوب اقبلوا كلمح البصر وكالبرق الخاطف
7) والريح العاصف الساعة الساعة افعلوا ما تؤمرون به وهو كذا أجب يا
8) السيد ميطاطرون الملك ويا السيد طحيطمغيليال الملك بحق هذه الأسماء
9) وهذه القسم الشريف انما اجزرتم[79] شرطيال وروقيال وسمسمال وجميع أعوانكم
10) الاجابابة[80] دعوتي وقضا حاجتي وهو كذا بحق اميل اميل وبحق الاسم الأعظم
11) الذي أوله ال وآخره ال أجيبوا مسرعين طائعين لأسماء الله رب العالمين أجيبوا
12) يا روقيال وأنت يا لوما وأنت يا مهركيال وأنت يا لسمون وأنت يا كيروش وأنت
13) يا ايطش وأنت يا اصرافيل وأنت يا علفكطهطول الملك وأنت يا كمهطويل
14) بعزة الله وعظمته الله العظيم الأعظم اهيه اه الله اهيه اه الله
15) اهيه اه الله افعلوا ما تؤمرون به وهو كذا وكذا من جميع ما تريد
16) من خير وشر وطرد المانع والمندل وغيره * فصل في شرح القسم المذكور
17) اذا تريد تعمل عمال[81] تستأذن عامر ذلك الموضعا الذي تعمل فيه العمال[82] تضع
18) قدامك مندل جديد أبيض ومجمرة جديدة وتقول هذا القسم سبع مرات
19) وأمرت الحضور أن[83] مكان حذاءك ناضر الاشارة انك تتاوب[84] [تتوب] وتدمع عينك او
20) يقف شعر بدنك وهو هذا الغموشين الغموشين ايلغموشين ايلغموشين غاموشين غاموشين
21) مرشين مرشين مريوشين مريوشين جل الجليل صاحب الاسم العظيم الأرض بكم ترجف
22) والريح بكم يعصف والبرق بكم يخطف والبحر بكم يقذف أسماء الله العظيمة
23) محيطة بكم يا عامر هذا الدار والمكان ليس لك ملكا ولا منجى ولا متجه
24) ولا راحة حتى تجيبوا وتحضروا أينما كنتم من ملكوت الله تعالى الكبير المتكبر
25) المتعالي أجيبوا بحق ميرموهين ميرموهين سفوعين سفوعين ديعوجين ديعوجين
26) نهرشير هيشير شيتيمون موميانققك ومشيع فانك قدوش هوا ادوناى[85] أجب بحق
27) من تجلى على الجبل فجعله دكا[86] وخير موسى صديقا[87] أجب بارك الله فيك
28) واياك أدعو يا عامر هذا الدار ولك أعني يا عامر هذا الدار والمكان ان تأتي لي
29) بين يدي وتساعدني في قضاء حاجتي وتعزل حريمك وتقف في خدمة من اريد اطلبه

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[79] *Sic*. In MS B بحق هذا القسم والاسما الشريفة وازجروا

[80] *Sic*. In MS B لاجابة

[81] *Sic*, possibly instead of اعمال

[82] *Sic*, possibly instead of الاعمال

[83] *Sic*, probably instead of الى

[84] *Sic*.

[85] These words are inserted in Hebrew: קדוש הוא אדוני meaning “Holy is the Lord”.

[86] Q 7:143.

[87] I corrected three words in order to give an intelligible reading. The transliteration of the original text is the following: وخر موسى صعيقان

30) في عملي وهو كذا وتعينني عليه بحق الم الله لا اله الا هو الحي القيوم[88] * تم وكمل

Fol. 2r

Circles from inside to outside:

1) ا ل ل ه نور السموات والأرض[89] أجب يا مرهب وتوكل بكذا وكذا
2) وعنده مفاتح الغيب[90] أجب يا مرب وتوكل بكذا وكذا وافعل كذا وكذا
3) لا يعلمها الا هو أجب يا أحمر وتوكل بكذا وكذا وافعل كذا وكذا
4) يعلم ما في البر والبحر أجب يا بورقان وتوكل بكذا وكذا وافعل كذا وكذا
5) ولا تسقط من ورقة الا يعلمها أجب يا شمهورش وتوكل بكذا وكذا وافعل كذا وكذا
6) ولا حبة في ظلمات الأرض أجب يا أبيض وتوكل بكذا وكذا وافعل كذا وكذا
7) ولا رطب ولا يابس الا في كتاب مبين أجب يا ميمون وتوكل بكذا وكذا وافعل كذا وكذا

Under the image:

والله مخرجك [؟] ما كنتم تلمهون [؟][91]

7x7 magic square in the centre of the circles

ز	خ	ظ	ت	ش	ج	ف
خ	ظ	ت	ش	ج	ف	ز
ظ	ت	ش	ج	ف	ز	خ
ت	ش	ج	ف	ز	خ	ظ
ش	ج	ف	ز	خ	ظ	ت
ج	ف	ز	خ	ظ	ت	ش
ف	ز	خ	ظ	ت	ش	ج

Fol. 2v

1) وهذه عزيمة الخاتم لكل ما تريد ان شاء الله الله وما اني أسألك يا رحمن يا
2) رحيم يا عظيم يا سبوح يا قدوس يا فرد يا صمد سبحان الله ما أعظم
3) سلطان الله ربا الها واحدا قدوسا عظيما جبارا قيوما نور
4) النور ومدبر الأمور لا تدركه الأبصار وهو يدرك الأبصار وهو اللطيف
5) الخبير قاسم الجبابرة لابس المهابة الخفي بالكبرية ونور السموات
6) والأرض عالم الأسرار المالك الجبار الذي قهر بأسمائه الجن والعمار

[88] Q 2:255.

[89] Q 24:35.

[90] From line 2 to line 7 each line begins with a part of Q 6:59.

[91] The sentence must be a distorted form of Q 2:72 (والله مخرج ما كنتم تكتمون)

7) أقسمت عليكم أيتها الأرواح الروحانية أن تحضروا أنتم وخدامكم
8) وأعوانكم من العلوية والأرضية وتبينوا لي ما أسأل عليه من كذا وكذا
9) باهيا اشر اهيا ادوناي صباوت ال شدي[92] ما كان حديثا يفترى[93] وانه
10) لقسم لو تعلمون عظيم[94] ان كانت الا صيحة واحدة فاذا هم جميعا
11) لدينا محضرون[95] أريح بسليمان ابن داود عليه السلام الى ما أحضرتم
12) وبينتم لي ما أسأل عليه وهو كذا بعزة العزيز المعتز في عز عزه
13) باهياكوم اهياكوم باقياشين اقياشين شماقيشين همشقين همشقين
14) العجل ٢ الوحى ٢ الساعة ٢ من قبل أن يأتيكم العذاب بغتة وأنتم
15) لا تشعرون[96] بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم بسم الله المتعالي في دنوة المتداني
16) في علوة المتجبر بجبروته المنفرد بالعز والكبرياء فلا الله الا
17) هو الفرد القائم السلطان الدائس الذي خضعت له الملوك وصار المالك
18) لعظمته مملوك فاطر السموات والأرض جعل الملائكة رسلا وله[97] [اولي]
19) جناح[98] [أجنهة] مثنى ومثلث ومربع[99] أقسمت عليكم أيتها الأرواح الروحانية
20) الطاهرة والأنوار الصاطعة المشرقة البهية أقسمت عليكم
21) بالاسم السريع الرفيع المحجوب وهو اسم الله العظيم الأعظم فجش
22) تظخز[100] الله وما[101] يا فرد يا جبار يا شكور يا تواب يا ظهير يا خبير يا
23) زكي يا الله يا الهنا واله كل شيء الله واحد يا أكرم الأكرمين الله وما[102]
24) اني توسلت اليك بحق اسمك العظيم الأعظم ان تسخر لي روحانية
25) هذه الأسماء العظيمة فانك على كل شيء قدير أجب يا روقيال وأنت
26) يا جبريال[103] وأنت يا سمسمال وأنت يا ميخال[104] وأنت يا صرفيال وأنت يا عنيال وأنت
27) يا كسفيال وافعلوا كذا وكذا بحق ما تلوته عليكم من اسم الله العظيم
28) الأعظم وبحق من ليس كمثله شيء وهو السميع البصير[105] وبحق من بيده

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[92] This part is in Hebrew: אהיה אשר אהיה אדוני צבאות אל שדי (I am who I am, the Lord of the Hosts, the Mighty God). This Hebrew phrase appears frequently in (Muslim) Arabic spells and incantations.

[93] Q 12:111.

[94] Q 56:76.

[95] Q 36:53.

[96] Q 39:55.

[97] *Sic.*

[98] *Sic.*

[99] Q 42:11.

[100] The name is composed from the letters of the 7x7 magic square (containing the first letters of seven names of God). The seven names are enumerated just after the acronym.

[101] *Sic.*

[102] *Sic.*

[103] جبرئيل

[104] مخائيل

[105] Q 42:11.

30) ملكوت كل شيء واليه ترجعون[106] وبحق من أمره بين الكاف والنون انما أمره
31) اذا أراد شيئا أن يقول له كن فيكون[107] وبحق من يحيى العظام وهي رميمون[108]
الا

English translation

Fol. 1r

Chapter on the universal and magnificent adjuration to which all kings (*mulūk*) obey, both terrestrials and celestials. It incites[109] the seven celestial [demons] because the adjuration contains seven letters that incite, and force to flee the inhabitant [spirits] (*ʿummār*, pl. of *ʿāmir*) and all the Satans from their place. And the adjuration is the following: In the name of God, the King, the Saint, the Manifest, the Sublime, the Magnificent, the Victorious, the Powerful; Master of times and ages, who determines times and places; whose sovereignty never passes away; who is overwhelmingly dominant and imperiously sublime forever; who veils himself with lights and glories in His strength; possessor of kingship, sovereignty, power, strength and omnipotence. By means of His name, Oh possessors of immaterial spirits (*yā ḏawī l-arwāḥ ar-rūḥāniyya*) I summon you to obey these mighty letters, magnificent and powerful names BṬFR ṬMHṬF HYŠF ṬŠHWH HLYṬ, by [the power of] (*bi-ḥaqq*) ṬYHWB HYF BHŠṬF, whose light enlightens everything, W'HF R'HF ṬYLHWF Ṭ'RŠF HBRYH, the powerful, to whose names everything is subjected, ṬRFYQŠ MŠWRYṬŠ, victorious over everything, FLṢTʿĠBH HLHYLYʿ 'ŠLLYMWT ḪWQṬHŠ SQYFYʿ ŠFWṢ 'ŠṬMṬḤ ŠLŠHŠYN, almighty and glorious king, you bring forth all soul's fountain of life,[110] ḤḤŠṬYṬLY'YF, no soul can hear your name and disobey, unless it is struck and burnt by a thunderbolt, ŠMʿL'YTḤ ŠMʿL'YNḤ ŠMʿL'YNḤ ḤMṬHYṬHYH. Answer, oh ṬWNY'L and ĠLMŠY'L and ʿṬY'L and ʿĠṢY'L, appear and do what you are ordered to do, namely this-and-this, by the power of these names to which every spiritual and corporeal soul obey, and incite (P/2) the spirit of attraction (*rūḥāniyyat al-ǧalb*) to take charge of this-and-this, and

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[106] Q 36:83.

[107] Q 36:82

[108] Q 36:78

[109] The reading is uncertain. In the main text the verb of ترحل (drives away) appears, while according to a correction on the margin instead of ترحل the verb ترجل (lets go, releases) should be read. In MS A the verb تزجل (to repel, to spear, but also to incite, to instigate) can be found in a parallel sentence. Since that verb appears also in the continuation of the Judeo-Arabic text (fol. 1r line 17), and it seems to fit the context better, I decided to correct the reading to تزجل

[110] The translation takes into consideration the version preserved in MS A. The Judeo-Arabic text might be corrected to أنت ينبوع عين حياة كل روح

to incite its spirit *(rūḥāniyyatahu*, *hu=ǧalb*) mixed with your (P/2) four elements so that it (*hu=ǧalb*) may bring before me this-and-this humbly and submissively, faster than the twinkling of an eye, to this-and this […][111] by [the power] of the mighty names that I have adjured you and that I am adjuring you, by HLLWYH HLLWYH [Halleluiah] QSWŠ QDWŠ [Qadoš = Holy, in Hebrew] HMK'L HYK'L HMṬŠ'L HMṬŠ'L, earthquake of the thunder, [I adjure you] by He who said to the heavens and to the earth: Come, willingly or forcedly! And they answered: We are coming willingly! ʿLṬḤ BHLḤ, by the might of God, the One and Only, the Unique, the Eternal, who has not taken a wife, nor a son [Q 72:3], who begets not, nor He is begotten, and none is like Him [Q 112:3-4] by HLṬF ŠLYṬYʿ ṬWN ʾṬWN BHBŠ BHKŠ YWQŠ MWQŠ ŠKŠ ŠLYKYʿ HLṬF, blessed is God, the Master of the universe! The angels tremble because of His fear, and the spirits of the jinns and the satans yell because of His severity. Humble yourself before the might of God and obey His names! God is the most overmastering sovereign (*ǧabbār al-ǧabābira*), who annihilates the Persian kings (*akāsira*), king of this world and the world to come, powerful and irresistible! QDWŠ QDWŠ QDWŠ QDWŠ QDWŠ QDWŠ QDWŠ [Holy, in Hebrew], YH YH YH YH YH YH YH ṢB'WT [Lord of the Hosts, in Hebrew], exalted is your name, DRḪŠWḤ BD'Ǧ BD'Ǧ FBYRWǦ FBYRWǦ FḤĠḤ FKǦWS FYRWḤ KRWḤY' HRḤ ʿŠMḤ ŠM'Ḥ, exalted over all potentates! Oh, inhabitants of the seven heavens, oh, celestial spirits (*al-arwāḥ al-ʿulwiyya*)! Oh, seven kings (*mulūk*) of the earth

Fol. 1v

Oh, terrestrial spirits! Answer by [the power of] these names upon you, and by ʾBRWŠ ʾBRWŠ ĠRŠ ĠRŠ TRWŠ TRWŠ ʾYWŠ ʾYWŠ YWŠḪWḤ YWŠḪWḤ YFRḤ, answer to my summoning, serve and obey me, by [the power of] ʾR'RY KFTY'N L'Ḥ L'Ḥ ŠLHYŠ ŠLHYŠ MLHYŠ MLHYŠ ʾKYLYL ʾKYLYL NMWHYN NMWHYN BDML'Ḥ DML'Ḥ BRʾḤ BRʾḤ ǦWL' ǦWL' BHYLʾ BHYL' BṬFNYŠ ṬFNYŠ BHN BHN HN HN, by ŠDT ŠDT YṢQ ṢQ BHYHYLYWH ʾL'RKY'Ḍ HYBWR SRY'WB! Come in the twinkling of an eye, [fast] as the flash of the lightening, the stormy wind, right now, right now! Do what you are ordered to do, namely this-and-this! Answer, oh [my] lord angel Metatron, and oh, lord angel ṬḤYṬMĠYLY'L! [I adjure you] by these names and by this magnificent adjuration (*qasam šarīf*)! Incite ŠRṬY'L and RWQY'L and SMSM'L and all their assistants (*aʿwān*), answering my summons and fulfilling my wish, namely, this-and-this, by [the power of] ʾMYL ʾMYL and by [the power of] the greatest name, which begins with ʾL and ends with ʾL! Answer immediately obeying the names of God, the Master of the universe! Answer oh RWQY'L and you, oh LWM', and you, oh MHRKY'L, and you, oh LSMWN, and you, oh KYRWŠ, and

[111] The meaning of the text is obscure.

you, oh ʾYṬŠ, and you, oh ʾṢRʾFYL, and you, oh angel ʿLFKṬHṬWL, and you, oh KMHṬWYL by the might and magnificence of God, the Magnificent, the most Sublime, ʾHYH [ʾehyeh, "I am" in Hebrew, cf. Ex. 3:14] ʾH ʾAllāh ʾHYH ʾH ʾAllāh ʾHYH ʾH ʾAllāh! Do what you are ordered to do, namely this-and-this, whatever you wish, good or bad, eliminating a hindrance, [practicing] the *mandal*, and so on.

Chapter on the explication of the above adjuration. If you want to carry out magical acts ([*a*]*ʿmāl*), ask permission from the inhabitant [demon] of that place in which you carry out the acts! Put before you a new white *mandal* and a new incense burner, and utter this adjuration seven times, and order the presence [of the demon] in front of you as a radiant sign so that you repent and that your eyes will shed tears and that your hair will stand on end, and it is the following: ʾLĠMWŠYN ʾYLĠMWŠYN ʾYLĠMWŠYN Ġʾ MWŠYN Ġʾ MWŠYN MRŠYN MRŠYN MRYWŠYN MRYWŠYN, glory to the Glorious, the owner of the greatest name! The earth trembles because of you [P/2, *bi-kum*], the wind storms because of you, the lightning flashes because of you, the sea throws out because of you, the mighty names of God surround you! Oh, inhabitant [demon] of this house and this place, you [singular] will have no dominion, no safety, no place, and no repose until you [plural] answer and appear wherever you [plural] might be in the realm of God, may He be exalted, the Great, the Glorious, the Supreme! Answer by [the power of] MYRMWHYN MYRMWHYN SFWʿYN SFWʿYN DYʿWĞYN DYʿWĞYN NHRŠYR HYŠYR ŠYTYMWN MWMYʾNQQK WMŠYʿ, because you are Qadoš huʾ Adonay [Holy is the Lord, in Hebrew]. Answer by [the power of] Him who revealed Himself on the mountain and made it dust (Q 7:143), who chose Moses as His friend, answer, may God bless you! I summon you, oh inhabitant [demon] of this house, and you – I mean, the inhabitant of this house and this place – come before me and help me fulfilling my needs, to give up your inviolable place and to be in the service of whoever I wish! Request from him the act I want, namely, this-and-this, and appoint me over him, by [the power of] ʾLM[112] Allāh there is no God save Him, the Living, the Eternal (Q 2:255)! Finished.

Fol. 2r

Circles from inside to outside:

1. ʾA L L H[113] is the light of the heavens and the earth [Q 24:35], answer oh MRHB [Murahhib, Murhib = Terrible] and take charge of (*tawakkal*) this-and-this!

2. And with Him are the keys of the unseen [Q 6:59], answer oh MRB [(Murabbin?] and take charge of this-and this and do this-and-this!

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[112] *alif-lām-mīm*: One of the *fawātiḥ* or *muqaṭṭaʿāt*: combinations of unconnected letters standing at the beginning of various chapters of the Qurʾān.

[113] Unlike the rest of the text, these four letters are written with (unconnected) Arabic characters.

3. No one knows them/it save Him [Q 6:59], answer oh Aḥmar [The Red One] and take charge of this-and this and do this-and-this!

4. He knows what is in the land and what is in the sea [Q 6:59], answer oh BWRQ'N and take charge of this-and this and do this-and-this!

5. Not a leaf falls but He knows it [Q 6:59], answer oh ŠMHWRŠ and take charge of this-and this and do this-and-this!

6. Nor a grain in the darkness of the soil [Q 6:59], answer oh Abyaḍ [The White One] and take charge of this-and this and do this-and-this!

7. Nor anything fresh or dry but is clearly recorded [Q 6:59], answer oh Maymūn and take charge of this-and this and do this-and-this!

Under the image:

Allah brings forth what you were hiding. [Q 2:72]

7x7 magic square in the centre of the circles, each letter representing a name of God (F=Fard/Unique; Ǧ=Ǧabbār/Almighty; Šakūr/Thankful; T=Tawwāb/Forgiving; Ẓ= Ẓahīr/Manifest; Ḫ= Ḫabīr/Knowing; Z=Zakī/Pure)

Z	Ḫ	Ẓ	T	Š	Ǧ	F
Ḫ	Ẓ	T	Š	Ǧ	F	Z
Ẓ	T	Š	Ǧ	F	Z	Ḫ
T	Š	Ǧ	F	Z	Ḫ	Ẓ
Š	Ǧ	F	Z	Ḫ	Ẓ	T
Ǧ	F	Z	Ḫ	Ẓ	T	Š
F	Z	Ḫ	Ẓ	T	Š	Ǧ

Fol. 2v

This is the spell of the *ḫātim* (seal) for anything you want, God willing, and what I ask you oh Merciful, oh Compassionate, oh Magnificent, oh Glorious, oh Holy, oh Unique, oh Eternal, Glory to God, how great is the power of God, Lord, Only God, Holy, Magnificent, Supreme, Everlasting, light of lights, organizer of everything! He cannot be perceived, but he perceives everything *(wa-huwa yudrik al-abṣār*). He is the Kind One, the Knowing, who scatters the tyrants, who clothes himself in fear, who is concealed in magnificence! Light of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the secrets, all-powerful King, who subdues with his names the jinns and the inhabitant [demons] (*ʿummār*). I adjure you, oh immaterial spirits (*arwāḥ rūḥāniyya*) to come, you and your servants and assistants from among the celestial and the terrestrial

[spirits], and [I adjure you] to reveal me whatever I am inquiring about, namely, this-and-this, by the power of EHYE AŠER EHYE ADONAY ẒEVAOT EL ŠADDAY [I am who I am, the Lord of Hosts, Mighty God, in Hebrew]. It is not a tale invented [Q 12:111] but it is indeed a mighty adjuration if you but knew [Q 56:76]. It will be no more than a single blast, when lo! they will all be brought up before Us! [Q 36:53] [I adjure you] by [the power of] Solomon David's son – peace be upon him – until you appear before me and clarify to me whatever I ask, namely, this-and-this, by the power of the Powerful, the Glorious in the might of his strength, by [the power of] by ʾHYʾKWM ʾHYʾKWM by ʾQYʾŠYN ʾQYʾŠYN ŠMʾQYŠYN HMŠQYN quickly (twice) swiftly (twice) right now (twice) before punishment comes upon you all of a sudden while you do not even perceive! [Q 39:55] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, in the name of God, the Exalted in closeness, the drawing close in exaltedness, overpowering by His might, peerless in strength and magnificence! Surely there is no God other than Him, the Unique, the Everlasting, the Suppressing Sovereign, before whom kings humble themselves and due to whose might rulers become ruled; Creator of the heavens and the earth,[114] who made the angles His envoys having twofold, threefold and fourfold wings! I adjure you, oh you pure immaterial spirits, you radiant shining bright lights, I adjure you by the effective, sublime and hidden name, which is the greatest name of God: FĞŠTẒḪZ[115] Allāh oh F[ard] Ğ[abbār] Š[akūr] T[awwāb] Ẓ[ahīr] Ḫ[abīr] Z[akī], oh Allāh, oh our God, and the God of everything, the only God, oh you most Generous, Allāh! I implore you by the power of your greatest name to bring under my control the spirit of these mighty names, as you are capable of everything! Answer, oh RWQYʾL and you, oh Gabriel, and you, oh SMSMʾL, and you, oh Michael, and you, oh Seraphiel, and you, oh ʿNYʾL, and you, oh KSFYʾL and do this-and-this by the power of God's greatest name that I have recited to you, and by the power of Him, to whom nothing is comparable, for He is the all-hearing, the all-seeing [Q 42:11], and by the power of Him in whose hands is the dominion over all things, and to Him you will be all brought back [Q 36:83], by the power of Him whose order is between *kāf* and *nūn* [whose order is carried out immediately],[116] His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: Be, so it is [Q 36:82], and by the power of Him Who revives the rotten bones [Q 36:78].

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[114] Q 42:11

[115] The "greatest name of God" is an acronym composed from the letters of the 7x7 magic square (containing the first letters of seven names of God).

[116] *Kāf* and *nūn* are the consonants of which the divine order "*kun*" (be!) is composed.

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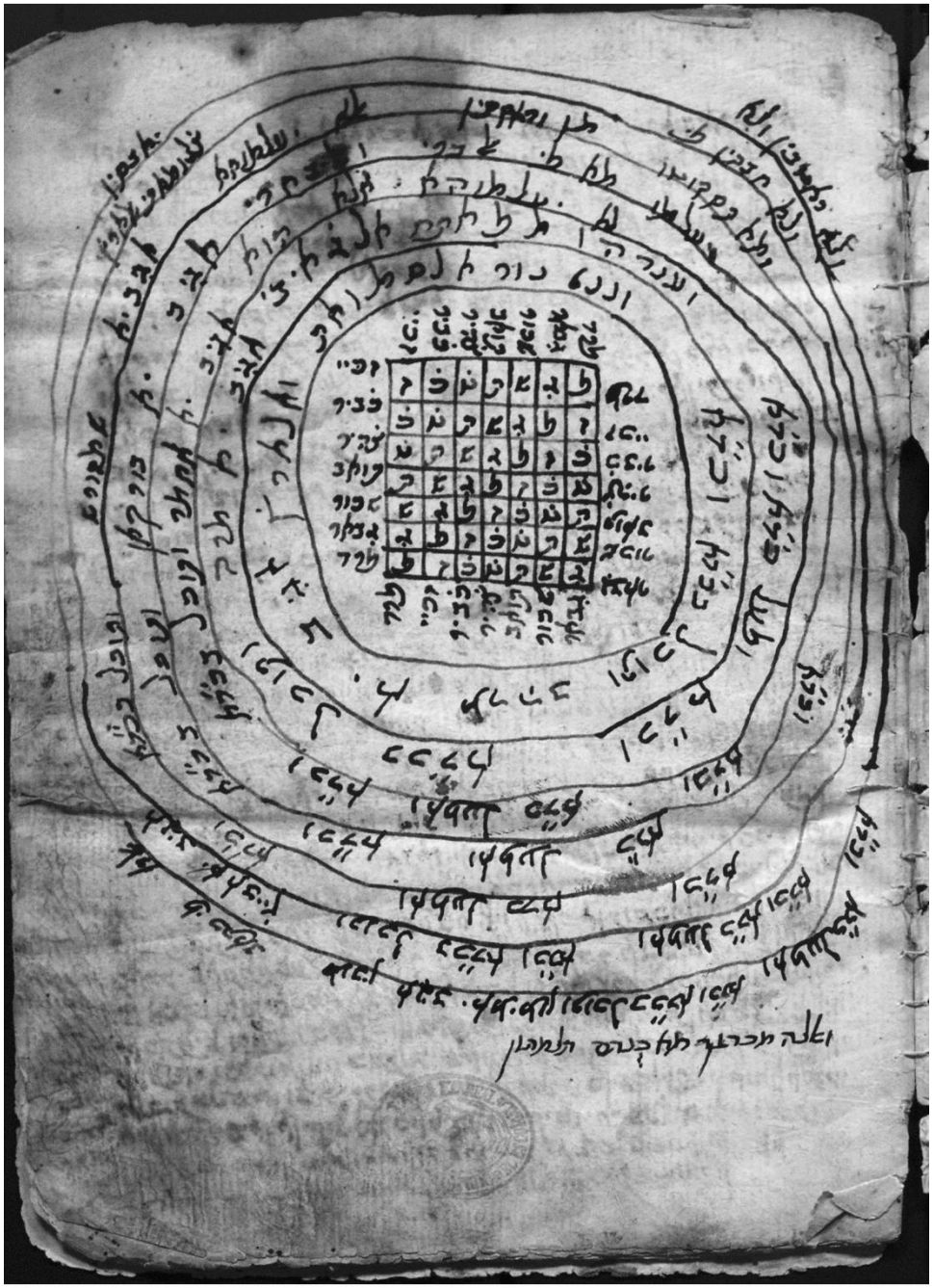

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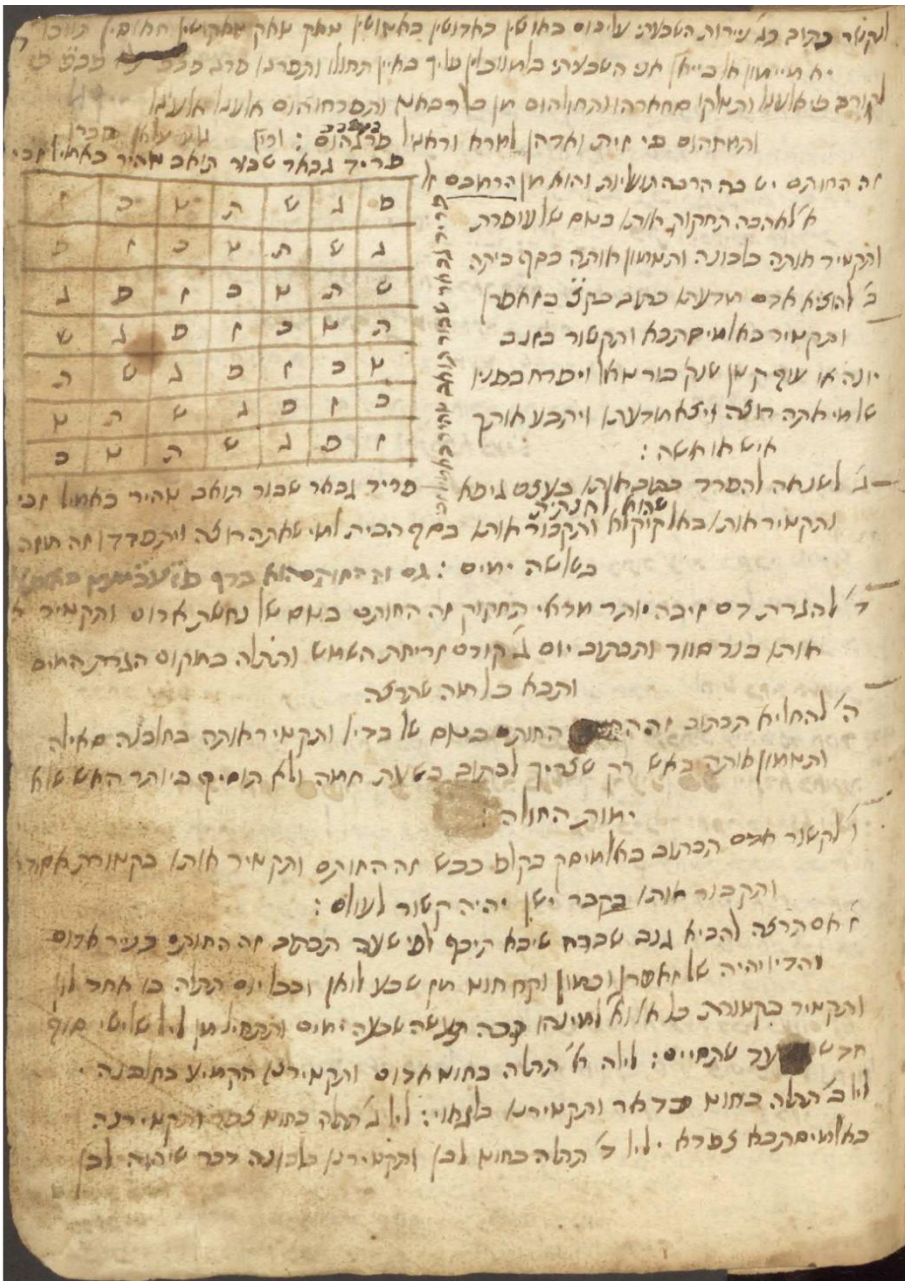

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TEXTS ON THE EARLY HUNGARIANS IN THE ĞAYHĀNĪ TRADITION REVIEW ARTICLE[1]

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István Zimonyi: *Muslim sources on the Magyars in the second half of the 9th century. The Magyar chapter of the Jayhānī*[2] *tradition.* (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 35). Leiden–Boston, Brill, 2016. ISBN 978-90-04-21437-8.

The work under review deals with an account of the Magyars in the ninth and tenth centuries, mainly before their arrival and final settlement in their present-day habitat in Central Europe. It is part of a succinct description of the peoples of Eastern Europe which has come down to us in several, slightly differing versions in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. It is generally assumed that they all derive from an Arabic work composed by the *wazīr* Ğayhānī in Buḫārā in the Sāmānid Emirate around the beginning of the tenth century, the original of which has not survived.

The present work is the English translation of a volume originally published in Hungarian in 2005 (Zimonyi 2005a). It was also published in German in 2006 (Zimonyi 2006). It deals first with the Ğayhānī tradition, presenting an account of Ğayhānī's person, his activities, his sources and the works which preserved his account of Eastern Europe. Then follow the versions of the Magyar chapter in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, accompanied by English translations. An interpretation of the contents of the Magyar chapter follows sentence by sentence, with a detailed philological analysis, in essay form, of the questions involved. Finally, the author offers a tentative reconstruction of the original text – in English translation – with a

[1] There is a growing interest in the subject and it can be assumed that readers from widely differing backgrounds will consult the present publication. Unlike its counterparts normally published in these pages, the review article offered here addresses a broader audience which is often unfamiliar with Oriental languages in general and Arabic in particular. Therefore aspects and details evident to Arabists will also be explained. Space constraints allow for only a limited number of examples illustrating the phenomena discussed. An extended version with numerous examples, more detailed analyses and more references appeared in print (Ormos 2017; 60 p.). It is accessible on the internet, too (see the Bibliography below).

[2] In this review article the transliteration system of this journal is being followed, which is different from that of Zimonyi (e.g., ğ/j, ḫ/kh, ġ/gh).

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presentation of the various stages of its growth. The present work is in fact a sequel to an earlier joint publication by the author and the late Hansgerd Göckenjan (d. 2005) of Giessen, which treated in a similar way the whole Ǧayhānī tradition, i.e. his account of all the peoples of Eastern Europe (Göckenjan & Zimonyi, *Berichte*). It contained the texts in German translation only, without the originals. As a matter of course, it dealt with the Magyars in considerably less detail than the work under review.

These works by Zimonyi go back ultimately to a collection encompassing all the basic texts in Oriental languages (Arabic, Persian, Turkish) dealing with the nomads in Eastern Europe who were migrating in an East-West direction in the period in question. Among these were the Magyar tribes, also moving westwards in the steppe belt until they finally reached their present-day habitat. This collection of texts (the originals, their translations accompanied by commentaries) was prepared in the 1920s by Mihály Kmoskó (d. 1931), professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Budapest. He more or less completed his manuscript but did not succeed in publishing it. This was finally achieved by Zimonyi about seventy years later, between 1997 and 2007 (Kmoskó, *Mohamedán*). An eminent Syriac scholar, Kmoskó dealt with relevant works in Syriac, too. His unpublished manuscript was edited by Szabolcs Felföldi, one of Zimonyi's students (Kmoskó, *Szír*). Numerous translations included in the present work were actually made from Kmoskó's Hungarian versions.

Zimonyi's book in Hungarian and its German version generated a discussion. I published an extensive review of the Hungarian original (Ormos 2005) followed by a separate publication containing further additions (Ormos 2009). András Róna-Tas published a one-page remark on my review (Róna-Tas 2006), while Zimonyi replied to the additions (Zimonyi 2010). My reply followed in two parts (Ormos 2010a; 2010b). I also published a succinct English summary of the controversy (Ormos 2010–2011). (I published altogether 148 pages, Zimonyi 9 pages and Róna-Tas one page.) Zimonyi leaves all of them, amounting to 158 pages, unmentioned in the present work, although he has tacitly accepted some of the criticisms and modified his text accordingly.

The author of the monograph is a specialist in Altaic studies and Turcology. As is clearly shown by his treatment of the Arabic texts, he knows some Arabic but his familiarity with it is not sufficient for dealing with the texts in a sovereign way. He relies on translations, without noticing when they contain omissions or mistakes, and he is often at a loss when different translations offer different interpretations of one and the same text. Every now and then, however, he modifies the translations he is quoting, yet without indicating his intervention.

Zimonyi presents the Arabic, Persian and Turkish texts of the Ǧayhānī tradition in the original with parallel English translations. In the Hungarian edition Zimonyi claimed to have presented "new critical editions" of the texts. However, it proved

demonstrable that the Arabic texts – I analyzed only them – could not be regarded as critical editions. In fact it could be shown that Zimonyi was not even familiar with the essence of a critical edition (Ormos 2010–2011:380). In the present English version, any claim to their being critical editions has been dropped and Zimonyi remains silent on the nature of his texts. In the meantime, however, he does not seem to have acquired a clear idea of the ways of publishing texts in general. Namely, he is evidently unaware that in the present case he is supposed to have presented "critical texts", i.e. texts in the shape in which their respective authors may have written them. The major problem is the treatment of the name of the Magyars in these texts, which is nothing short of completely chaotic (see below). Another basic problem is that Zimonyi does not treat his texts in a uniform way. He copies them from a variety of editions, all prepared in different ways. He often modifies them, partly on the basis of manuscripts, but without following a clear principle. His own readings are unreliable, as are his so-called "critical apparatuses". The result is a mess. There is one major improvement as compared to the Hungarian version. Namely, in Ibn Rusta's text he has finally eliminated an atrocious copyist's mistake (ويلزمؤنهم) of the London manuscript with which he had believed to have improved on both Khvol'son and de Goeje by restoring it to his "new critical text". In their turn, both Khvol'son and de Goeje had tacitly omitted the misplaced *hamza* from the *wāw*, correcting this form to ويلزمونهم, which Zimonyi evidently considered an ill-advised and unjustified interference. However, another atrocious mistake still shines in Ibn Rusta's account: المسمي as the passive participle (*al-musammā*) required by the context (Zimonyi 2006:34[3[Ar.]]; 2016:38[3[Ar.]]).[3] This means that Zimonyi's third effort within ten years at producing an acceptable text of Ibn Rusta's relevant brief paragraph has also failed. Similar considerations are valid for the other Arabic texts as well.[4]

The name of the Magyars in the Ğayhānī tradition

There is one aspect of the present work which captures the reader's attention early on: it is the name of the Magyars in the Ğayhānī tradition texts. On account of the uncertainty of transmission, the Magyars appear under a wide variety of name-forms in the actual manuscripts: *M.ḥ.f.r.ya / M.ğ.f.r.ya / M.ğ.ġ.r.ya / M.ğ.ʿ.r.ya / M.ḥ.r.qa / Muḥtariqa* etc. There is a general consensus among Arabists that the correct reading

[3] There are three possible explanations for this erroneous form, which does not even appear in the manuscript but represents Zimonyi's own contribution and his own improvement on de Goeje: Zimonyi lacks a familiarity with the elements of Arabic writing, or with the basics of Arabic morphology – or both.

[4] I did not analyze the Persian and Turkish texts.

is *Maǧġariyya*, which is based on the only precise form to be found in Arabic literature.[5] Just to name the most illustrious of these scholars: Defrémery, Khvol'son, de Goeje, Goldziher, Kunik, Rozen, Barthold, Barbier de Meynard, Kramers, Marquart, Wiet, Kmoskó, Németh, Minorsky, Czeglédy, Lewicki, Zakhoder, Martinez, Ḥabībī, Bosworth, Golden. In accordance with the rules of the art, they regard all the other forms as copyists' errors, which are very common in Arabic manuscripts. Zimonyi rejects this *communis opinio*. The reader is eager to see what he has to offer instead. However, he can hardly believe his eyes, because Zimonyi fails to give a clear-cut, definite answer to this question, and it is impossible to find out what in his view the name of the Magyars was in the Ǧayhānī tradition. In actual fact, Zimonyi does not seem to have realized the essence of the problem. In his work Ǧayhānī mentioned the Magyars several times but we do not know the actual form because his work does not survive. We know his references to the Magyars only from relatively late manuscript copies of works which were copied or excerpted from his work. The name of the Magyars appears in them in a number of varieties, most or all of which must be considered scribal errors in accordance with the rules of Arabic palaeography. *The modern scholar's task is to reconstruct (from these erroneous forms) the original name* – a single word! – *which Ǧayhānī may have used in his work.* Instead of doing so, Zimonyi adopts a number of these forms, such as *Maǧfariyya, Muḥaffariyya, Maḥǧariyya, Maǧġariyya, M.ḥr.f.h, M.ḥr.q.h*, etc., in the original texts in his book.[6] It also happens that in one and the same text the Magyars appear under different forms, which must be considered utter nonsense. Thus, for instance, in his view Gardīzī used no fewer than four different words (*Maḥfariyān/ Muḥaffariyān, Maḥġariyān, Maǧġariyān, Maǧfariyān*) indiscriminately, without any system, to denote the Magyars in his relatively brief account (Zimonyi 2016:40–44; cf. Ormos 2017:10). Nobody in the possession of any amount of sound judgement will accept this absurd claim! Zimonyi bases the adoption of the form *Muḥaffariyya* on Kmoskó's idea that this latter form (meaning "depressed" and referring to the story of the miraculous "Depressed Land" in Arabic geographical literature) is in fact a folk etymology of the name of the Magyars (Kmoskó 1927:150–150; Zimonyi 2005b; 2016:62–66). Zimonyi is unable to present his thesis

[5] Khvol'son and in his footsteps de Goeje accepted the reading *Maǧġariyya* recorded by Abū l-Fidāʾ in his *Taqwīm al-Buldān.* However, the first to do so was Charles Defrémery who in 1849 adopted this reading for the apparently nonsensical *Muḥaffariyya* form in a relevant passage by Bakrī. Defrémery also identified this form as the name of the Magyars. Abū l-Fidāʾ (d. 1331) was an unoriginal, rather late compiler who, however, had access to important sources which have disappeared in the meantime. Defrémery 1849–1850:464, n. 3; 473. Cf. also Zakhoder 1962–1967: II, 48.

[6] I have counted altogether *seven* varieties of this name of the Magyars in the main (Arabic, Persian and Turkish) texts of the Ǧayhānī tradition as determined by Zimonyi in the present book. I left his so-called "critical apparatuses" out of the equation. – I.O.

lucidly with all its details and complex ramifications.[7] There can be no doubt that the reason lies in the inconsistency of his thesis, which is not devoid of contradiction. The result amounts to total chaos.[8] One of the troubles with Zimonyi's thesis is that he is unable to assess the degree of significance, in other words the relative value of the various, often serious, copyists' errors that Arabic manuscripts abound in, as he has never worked with Arabic manuscripts.[9] He attributes great significance to forms originating with uneducated copyists, who sometimes did not even know Arabic properly, because they were Persians or Turks by birth.[10] In its present form, this section of the book gives the impression of an ignorant dilettante helplessly erring on the one hand among copyists' errors (which he imagines to be endowed with arcane meanings) and on the other among his own contradictory statements, getting completely lost in the ensuing confusion. The only relief I can feel in this respect is to see that Zimonyi has been persuaded to abandon his Arabic etymologies of the name *Mağġar* and its various manuscript forms. In the Hungarian and German versions of the present work he listed among them *mağfar,* "an impediment to venery, a cause of diminishing the seminal fluid; anti-venereal food", without offering any explanation as to why on earth the Arabs should have named the Magyars after "a cause of diminishing the seminal fluid" or a food that inhibits sexual activity (Zimonyi 2005a:54; 2006:53–54; Ormos 2005:745; 2010–2011:384–385). It was regrettable that Zimonyi did not even feel the necessity to justify such a weird claim.

There is no relationship between the Depressed Land and the Magyars. Zimonyi is unable to adduce even a single instance from Arabic literature to prove his thesis: no Arab or Muslim author ever mentions it. The originator of this thesis, Kmoskó, was unable to produce a single instance of it, either: he merely referred to what the Arabs "might have thought". The Arabs left us an immense literary legacy. There can be no doubt that somebody would have mentioned it if it had ever occurred to anyone. There is a further serious difficulty with this claim. Namely, that even if it

[7] The summary on p. 66, for instance, is vague, using the verb "may" in key positions: it is a collection of suppositions and statements lacking any foundation and with many internal contradictions. In addition, they cannot be always harmonized with statements made elsewhere in his book.

[8] For a detailed analysis of this subject see Ormos 2017:9–11, 48–51.

[9] Indeed, Zimonyi compared the few lines of some of his texts, which were available to him in printed editions, with the relevant manuscripts. However, this can hardly be regarded as serious independent activity comparable to working on a previously unknown manuscript with the aim of making sense of a text with few and in some cases misplaced diacritical dots or none at all.

[10] Khvol'son writes that the copyist of Ibn Rusta's London manuscript evidently did not understand everything he was copying, because as a Persian by birth he never learnt Arabic properly (Ibn-Dasta, *Izvestiya* 10).

existed, the popular etymology *Muḥaffariyya*, "the people of the Depressed Land", would only work in Arabic, but not in Persian and Turkish, where authors would have to explain it to their readers. There are seven authors in the Ǧayhānī tradition who write in Persian and Turkish but none does so!

Zimonyi discusses the phonetic aspects of the name *Maǧġariyya*, too, without being aware that the phoneme *ǧ* represented by the letter *ǧīm*, which is of central importance in our case, is perhaps the most unstable member of the phonemic inventory of Arabic with a wide variety of manifestations (Cf. Ormos 2010–2011:388–389).[11]

Translations

Zimonyi's present translations of the Arabic texts of the Ǧayhānī tradition contain numerous inaccuracies and errors. With a few exceptions, the texts were not translated from the originals into English directly, but came down through one or even two intermediary versions. It is also clear that one or perhaps more persons undertook a stylistic revision of the English translations without consulting the original texts. The adoption of such a multi-stage process is not devoid of problems. Even when stylistically good, the results are often inaccurate, free paraphrases of the original texts, which contain numerous errors.

Philological analyses (Essays)

Zimonyi's philological analyses of the textual passages one by one are of varying interest. On the subject of the Magyars' habitat in the vicinity of the Black Sea, he presents a twenty-eight-page essay on seas in Arab and Muslim geographical literature in general (Zimonyi 2016:202-230). For the purpose of the present book it would have sufficed to offer a summary of the information that is relevant to the book's subject on half a page or one page at most, since there are only three seas of interest here: the Caspian, the Black Sea (with the Sea of Azov) and the Mediterranean. Another possibility would have been to write an exhaustive monograph on the subject. What we have instead, are long and difficult passages from geographical works where the textual transmission is problematic and thus the texts display many variants. This is because the Arabs' and Muslims' knowledge of the seas was quite vague and controversial at the time. Therefore the texts are in need of extensive commentaries if any use is to be made of them. However, commentaries are few and meagre here. The reader acutely misses a fruitful dialogue with some

[11] For a few bibliographical items for further orientation, see Ormos 2009:1143, n. 57.

important scholarly literature on the subject, too (Beylis 1962; Kalinina, Dzhakson, Podosinov, Konovalova 2007, especially Kalinina 2007).[12] In addition, the whole section is in awkward English, so that reading it is something of an ordeal. I have serious doubts that anyone besides me will ever read it from beginning to end.

Zimonyi's long discussion of tents and his remarks on the subject elsewhere are severely handicapped by the terminological confusion they display (Zimonyi 2016:139–160). Several Arabic and Persian words (*qubba, ḫayma, bayt, ḫargāh*) occur in the relevant texts referring to "tents", and several English equivalents (dome, tent, house, yurt, felt-huts, etc.) are used to denote them in the English texts. In addition to his own text, Zimonyi quotes a number of English translations from various scholars, who all use these words in their own particular ways and Zimonyi keeps the original wording in each case. The result is that a given Arabic or Persian word has different equivalents in English in the various translations, while one and the same English word or expression stands for different Arabic or Persian forms. In the ensuing confusion the helpless reader is totally lost, unable to guess what these words exactly mean and who writes exactly what.

Zimonyi offers an essay on the fortresses which the Slavs built against the Magyars according to Gardīzī. Its central piece is an account of Slav fortress-building technique as related by the Andalusian traveller Ibrāhīm ibn Yaʿqūb, who – as Zimonyi explicitly mentions – "also visited Prague". This famous traveller hailing from Tortosa in Catalonia visited many places all over Europe in the second half of the tenth century, e.g., Utrecht, Tours, Verdun, Rome, Pavia, Verona, Prague, Fulda, Mainz, Schleswig, Dorf Mecklenburg, Schwerin, Nienburg (Saale).[13] If Zimonyi singles out Prague from all the places Ibrāhīm mentioned in his travelogue, his readers will inevitably conclude that the building technique Zimonyi is quoting refers to this famous Slav city. However, this is not the case. It is now well known that Ibrāhīm's account offers an astonishingly precise description of a particular building technique applied by Slavs living in the vicinity of the Baltic Sea in the area of present-day northern Germany before it was invaded and conquered by Germanic tribes. It has also been convincingly demonstrated that the account in question refers in fact to two Slav fortresses: Michelenburg-Mecklenburg in the vicinity of modern Wismar and the earlier Slav fortress on the site of modern Schwerin. It is also known that the Slavs did not bring with them a common building technique when they dispersed from their original habitat. Instead, each tribe developed its own technique

[12] Beylis 1962 deals with the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov in Arabic sources, while Kalinina 2007 is dedicated to the rivers, seas and lakes of Eastern Europe in Muslim sources. Kalinina, Dzhakson, Podosinov, Konovalova 2007 examines the waterways of Eastern Europe in antique and medieval sources. These works came out long before the present book.

[13] These are the modern names of these places. Ibrāhīm visited several localities which cannot be identified.

in close interaction with its new neighbours. Thus it is evident that the building technique used by Slavs in modern northern Germany in the second half of the tenth century has no relevance to fortresses built by Slavs against the Magyars in Eastern Europe at a distance of one thousand miles to the east approximately one century earlier (Zimonyi 2016:364–365. Cf. Ormos 2010–2011:392–394).[14]

Ibn Rusta informs his readers in a famous passage that at some earlier date the Khazars surrounded themselves with a moat as protection against the Magyars and other peoples. According to the generally accepted interpretation, this passage refers to the building of the fortress of Sarkel on the Lower Don, which is known from Byzantine sources. Zimonyi first addressed this passage in 1996, declaring it to be out of the question that the Khazars would have defended themselves by a moat around a fortress in the steppe, and that therefore it was impossible to establish any connection between this passage and the Magyars. Rather, Zimonyi declared, the whole passage was a literary topos relating to the famous Battle of the Moat at Medina in 627, in which the Prophet Muhammad played an outstanding role (Zimonyi 1996:57). I pointed out in a review at the time that it was difficult to see why the Khazars could not have constructed a moat around a fortress in a plain. After all, moats were usually constructed around fortresses located in plains and not on mountain peaks (Ormos 1996–2002:282–283). Zimonyi's statement was all the more remarkable because he was living in the city of Szeged in southern Hungary, a location which is geographically strikingly similar to Sarkel. Namely, Szeged lies on the river Tisza in the Great Hungarian Plain, and in medieval times a fortress was built on the banks of the river surrounded by a moat, which was connected to the river and filled with its water as an additional defensive measure. When he wrote the Hungarian original of the present book, Zimonyi was unaware that extensive archaeological excavations had been carried out on the site of Sarkel before the Tsimlyansk Reservoir waters submerged it in 1952. Indeed, both moat and rampart were found. In the interim, Zimonyi seems to have been informed of these facts. Yet he does not give here an adequate account of the present state of our knowledge concerning this question, but gets lost in unimportant details as well as offering an account of the Battle of the Moat, which is totally out of context here.[15]

Ibn Rusta mentions in a famous passage that the Magyars regularly conduct raiding parties against the Slavs, seizing captives from them whom they take to a Byzantine port, trading them with the local residents for various luxury articles (Ibn

[14] I am not happy with the use of the word "castles" by Zimonyi in this context, because it sounds anachronistic to me. Perhaps "fortress" or "stronghold" would describe better the defensive structures which the Slavs built against the Magyars in areas bordering on the South Russian steppe in the ninth century.

[15] It is evidently a remnant of his wholly untenable earlier thesis that the reference to Sarkel in Ibn Rusta is in fact a literary topos (cf. Ormos 2010–2011:390–392).

Rosteh, *Aʿlâk* 142ult.–143[5]). The name of the port appears as Karḫ in de Goeje's critical edition and its identification is hotly debated among specialists, although the majority tends to agree that it refers to the city of Kerch in the Crimea. In an essay on this problem Zimonyi repeats the argument which he adopted from one of his students, Szabolcs Polgár. This argument was based on Polgár's claim that there is a common noun, *karḫ*, of Aramaic origin, meaning "city", "town", in Arabic. Thus the sentence "they take them to the Byzantine port which is called Karḫ" simply means that "they take them to the town". Thus the word could refer to any town in the area. Without entering into the moot question of the identification of this port, I pointed out at the time that there was no such common word in Arabic. Polgár and Zimonyi seem to have overlooked the fact that the Arabic sentence is unequivocal in indicating the name of the given port (*yuqālu lahu Karḫ*; "[which] is called Karḫ"). In addition, it is hardly believable that this port should possess an Arabic name, because the local population did not speak Arabic and the Arabs living in distant lands had no particular interest in it. This untenable theory is repeated here in a rather vague and scarcely comprehensible way.

Further considerations

Zimonyi repeatedly refers to the Hungarian chronicler "Simonis de Kéza" (thirteenth century). However, the correct form is "Simon de Kéza". Zimonyi is not aware that the form he regularly uses is the genitive of the name, which appears on the title page of the relevant printed edition in accordance with accepted practice for editions of Latin and Greek authors.

One of the most important and at the same time most difficult texts treated here is Gardīzī's version, because we have only two, relatively late and corrupt manuscripts at our disposal. It is a serious shortcoming of the present book that Zimonyi did not make use of the new critical edition by Raḥīm Riḍāzāda Malik, which came out in Teheran in 2005, that is *eleven years* before the publication of the present work (Gardīzī, *Zayn*). Zimonyi appears to be unaware of the existence of this important publication although he might have read about it in Bosworth's preface to his translation of Gardīzī's work, too, which he seems to have consulted (Gardīzī, *Ornament*).[16]

[16] I am indebted to Éva Jeremiás for drawing my attention to this new edition and for putting it at my disposal. Bosworth says it does not supersede Ḥabībī's earlier critical edition, yet he also mentions that he has not been able to compare the two texts carefully by the time of writing, and on occasions he also quotes better readings by Riḍāzāda Malik. Gardīzī, *Ornament* 8. Cf. also *ibid.*, 116, n. 27; 117, n. 6. This means that it should have been consulted by all means. I have briefly checked the account on the Magyars and I have found one alternative reading worth of consideration.

One might ask: what relevance do the many minor details have to early Hungarian history which I subject to criticism? Do they affect the overall importance of Zimonyi's overarching work? We may retort: Of course, such minor details do not affect the great strands of Magyar history. But why does Zimonyi treat them at all then? The present work is not of a theoretical nature, offering a new overall view of early Magyar history, where a few minor details may not count and may not affect the validity of an entirely new theory. The book is of a philological nature, discussing many such questions of detail (in actual fact, it is a collection of such details) which, though important in themselves, do not add up to a qualitatively higher entity. It is precisely these details for which readers will consult it. And if those very details are not reliable, then the whole work loses its viability.

At the end of his work Zimonyi offers a tentative reconstruction of the original text of Ǧayhānī's chapter on the Magyars in English translation. This is an endeavour that obviously suggests itself, yet it is at the same time highly problematic, especially if we consider all the previous – often quite controversial – observations and commentaries that have been made on the subject. The result is no less problematic. First of all, it is a problem of a theoretical nature that Zimonyi should be undertaking this on the Magyar chapter alone, treating it as an independent unit, whereas it in fact forms part of a greater corpus, Ǧayhānī's account of the peoples of Eastern Europe. Thus it stands to reason that any effort at a reconstruction would first have to consider the wider context, i.e. Ǧayhānī's whole account. There are many cross-references among his data on these peoples! It is only on the basis of the findings of such an undertaking that any reconstruction of the Magyar chapter can be considered with a view to special features. Second, there are many more details to analyze and elucidate before such an attempt can be undertaken.

English style

In general, I regard it as inappropriate that persons who are not native speakers of a given language should comment on the style of a publication in that idiom. However, in the present case I cannot refrain from infringing this rule, because its linguistic shape is an essential feature of the book under review, deeply affecting its scholarly value. Three parts can be distinguished in the book in this respect. One minor part is in idiomatic American English. However, the problem with this part is that the person who undertook the stylistic revision apparently did not check the original Arabic etc. texts but relied on intermediary versions, allowing the translations to become free paraphrases under his pen.[17] A good example of this approach is the following sentence from Ibn Rusta's description of the Magyars: *lahum qibāb*. It can

[17] His name appears in the Preface. (Zimonyi 2016:XII).

be perfectly translated into English: "They have dome-shaped tents." However, here we read: "They are tent-dwelling people." (Zimonyi 2016:39). The general idea is of course correct, yet this cannot be considered an accurate translation: the words "dwelling" and "people" do not even appear in the original. Another problem is that the person who undertook the stylistic revision had little familiarity with the subject matter. Such an approach is not devoid of pitfalls, as can be shown in the sentence mentioning the Magyars in the steppe in the vicinity of the Black Sea: "The relevant section on the *Magyar capital* must have borrowed from a source which al-Ğayhānī did not improve upon with the knowledge of his contemporaries" (Zimonyi 2016:227–228).[18] There is no such section. In any case, it is anachronistic to speak of a Magyar capital in the south-Russian steppe in the accepted meaning of this word. What happened? Zimonyi or his translator mixed up the English word "capital" with the German *Kapitel* ("chapter") when preparing the first (rough) translation of the book. The person undertaking the stylistic revision found the result awkward and adjusted it to produce an acceptable sentence, but without being familiar with Ibn Rusta's text or being aware that there was no Magyar capital at the time. There can be no doubt that what Zimonyi originally meant was "the Magyar chapter".[19]

The second part, which constitutes the bulk of the book, was translated by someone whose English was mediocre at most. The text is often clumsy and difficult to read. Indeed there are many sentences which I could only understand by translating them into Hungarian in order to work out what the author might have had in mind. Some elementary errors: "Paragraphs 2 and 3 can be connected *with* ***one*** *another context,* as the first border of the Magyars east of the Volga is the consequence of their Turkic origin". *Recte:* "Paragraphs 2 and 3 can be connected with *another context,* as the first border of the Magyars east of the Volga is the consequence of their Turkic origin." This is a literal rendering of Hungarian ***egy*** *másik szövegkörnyezettel,* where the translator mixed up the singular indefinite

[18] My italics.

[19] Indeed, in one bibliographical item English "capital" is indicated as the equivalent of Hungarian *fejezet* "chapter" (Zimonyi 2016:391, line 1). English and French use the expression "false friends/*faux-amis*" for the phenomenon when two words of the same origin have different meanings in different languages or dialects: both the English "capital" and the German *Kapitel* share a common origin: Latin *capit*[*is*] (<*caput*) "head". The best example of this phenomenon I have ever encountered is the Hungarian "parízer", which is of German origin. It entered colloquial Hungarian around 1881 from the dialect of Vienna, where it meant a sort of sliced sausage and it was borrowed into Hungarian with the same meaning (*Pariserwurst,* with the short form *Pariser*). A friend of mine on a visit to Berlin wanted to display his knowledge of German when going to do some shopping and told his hosts that he wanted to buy half a kilo of *Pariser*. Whereupon they burst into laughter and it took some time before they could tell him that in northern Germany this word meant "condom" (probably from *Pariser Brief,* cf. "French letter").

article with the numeral "one" in Hungarian (Zimonyi 2016:367).[20] Elsewhere we read: "They *used to* travel with the luggages, tents...". *Recte:* "They habitually travel with luggages, tents...", because the sentence is in the present tense (Zimonyi 2016:160–161, n. 513). Hungarian *szoktak* is, as is well known, an exceptional case of a past form possessing the grammatical meaning of the present. The basic difference between "used to" and Hungarian *szokott/szoktak* is so well known even among Hungarians with a limited familiarity with English that the authors of a guide to avoid the typical mistakes committed by Hungarians learning English did not find it necessary to discuss it: "*Used to* referring to a habit or state in the past is mostly well known and causes few problems" (Doughty & Thompson 1987:130).

The third part seems to originate with the author himself, who, giving the manuscript its final shape, evidently tampered with it in many places, modifying the text or adding new sentences or expressions. The level of his English is perhaps best characterized by the sentence in the Preface in which he expresses his thanks to the series editor and the native speaker of English who undertook the stylistic revision: "I thank to him and Mikael Thompson to read my text and polishing my English version" (Zimonyi 2016:XII). The reader comes across totally unintelligible sentences every now and then, even in quotations from English sources. Zimonyi's treatment of grammatical agreement signals a boldly innovative approach to English syntax. The innocent reader encounters unorthodox forms, even in quotations, e.g., "The bride-price [they pay] for *a women* is wild animals..." in a quotation from Martinez, though the singular indefinite article is of course absent in Zimonyi's source (Zimonyi 2016:362; Martinez, *Chapters* 127). Elsewhere we read of "*a* historical *phenomena*" (Zimonyi 2016:67). Further examples: "The Slavic-Magyar *relations is* discussed ... (Zimonyi 2016:309). "*Khazars merchants* were active among ..." (Zimonyi 2016:314); "... the death of the three *brothers* (the legendary *founder* of *cities* Kiy, Shchek and Khoriv) ..." (Zimonyi 2016:315); *recte*: "... the death of the three *brothers* (the legendary *city founders* Kiy, Shchek and Khoriv) ...". It may not be evident from Zimonyi's rendering that the text is about three brothers who founded one city, Kiev. In one place Zimonyi mentions Ibn Rusta's *chapters* on the Khazars (Zimonyi 2016:28). In actual fact, there is only one such chapter. Thus the last example is possibly another case of the erroneous use of the plural. Usually the reader can quickly work out what went wrong, but this is not always the case: "The place in which the Turks used formerly to be is called after the *names* of the *river* that *run* through it, Etel and Kuzu, and in it the Pechenegs live now" (Zimonyi 2016:282). Now, is Constantine Porphyrogenitus speaking of one river or two rivers? This is an important question! One cannot guess: the answer can be found out only

[20] We disregard here the awkward construction of the sentence in general. It takes some time to work out what Zimonyi actually wants to say.

if one looks up Zimonyi's source, which he was unable to copy correctly: " after the *names of the river* that *runs* through it..." (Constantine, *De administrando* 117).[21] In one place the reader is captivated by the idea of a number of miraculous fish "that can be red". There is a strand of medieval Arabic geographical literature that abounds in all sorts of miraculous beings and phenomena (*ʿağāʾib wa-ġarāʾib*), therefore the idea seems to fit into the context. Before the reader's eyes the image of *changeant* fish is conjured up, fish resembling fabrics with changing colours and hues: "There then follows a story of miraculous, meat-giving fish that can be red which were sent to the peoples of Gog and Magog to feed them." But alas! A cursory check of Zimonyi's source reveals that there is only one fish and the source says nothing about its colour: Zimonyi simply misspelt "read" as "red" in an otherwise infelicitous sentence (Zimonyi 2016:65).

The sheer quantity of misprints, orthographical and grammatical errors in the book under review is *horrendous.* I cannot remember ever having come across a publication which contained even a fraction of the number found here.[22] To publish anything in such a condition is an insult to the reader. It is a disappointment to see that we have reached an age when a publishing house such as Brill, formerly of such repute, apparently sends a manuscript to the printer without anybody having read it. It is beyond a doubt that the author has done a formidable amount of work, especially in view of his insufficient familiarity with most of the languages involved. Yet the volume of the work he accomplished was not commensurate with the task he had set himself. He miscalculated, gravely underestimating the amount of work to be done and the difficulties inherent in the task ahead. In actual fact, much more work needs to be done in terms of carefully elaborating and clarifying many details before such a comprehensive treatment of the subject can be attempted with any reasonable prospect of success. This was a premature undertaking, ill-conceived and misbegotten. We can state that the book under review is in general utterly inaccurate and unreliable. No piece of information can be trusted unless the reader checks it for himself. In assessing the present book, the words of Mihály Kmoskó may be quoted, which he wrote in another context in 1927: "Most of our specialists in the early history of the Magyars will be familiar with the so-called Oriental sources, i.e. the relevant places in the works of Arab and Persian authors, on the basis of the present publication deluding themselves in the false hope that the heuristic part of the scholarly work pertaining to the Oriental sources has been definitely completed once and for all and there is nothing left to be done. Yet in actual fact the situation is such

[21] On this problematic passage, see Moravcsik, *Fontes* 47–48, n. 37.

[22] It is not easy to differentiate between misprints and grammatical errors. At first I was inclined to regard most unorthodox forms as misprints. However, later on I came to the conclusion that Zimonyi's English was simply miserable.

that we have to start everything from scratch again" (Kmoskó 1927:149; with slight modifications).[23]

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