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- Part Two -

Islam, Popular Culture in Islam, Islamic Art and Architecture

EDITED BY

**A. FODOR**



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SERIES EDITOR  
ALEXANDER FODOR

ASSOCIATE EDITORS  
KINGA DÉVÉNYI  
TAMÁS IVÁNYI

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## PREFACE

The present volume contains the second part of the papers that were presented at the sections of the 20th Congress of the *Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants* organized by the Chair for Arabic Studies, Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest and the Csoma de Kőrös Society of Hungarian Orientalists between 10-17 September 2000. This was the second time that Budapest hosted this Congress after its first meeting in Hungary in 1988. The number of participants was nearly a hundred and some eighty papers were read in six sections. From these papers the first part of the *Proceedings* (*The Arabist*, vols. 24-25) covered subjects related to Arabic linguistics, literature and history, while the second part treats a wide variety of topics in the field of Islam, Popular Culture in Islam, and Islamic Art and Architecture.

From the nine papers under the heading of "Islam", three deal with different aspects of Sufism (Aruçi, Malinova, Pouzet), another three with questions related to Islam (Pavlovitch, Szombathy, van Reeth), two are dedicated – although not in a direct way – to Ismailism (Baffioni, De Smet), while one is treating some problems of modern Islam in the Balkans (Evstatiev).

In the field of "Popular Culture in Islam", two papers from eight are concerned with magic (Arcas Campoy, del Moral), two study the religious aspects of popular feasts (Földessy, Habib), and the other four examine questions which are connected to the cult of saints (El-Adly), material culture (Dévényi), folklore (Yousef) and the history of Gipsies in the Arab world (Kohela).

In the section of "Islamic Art and Architecture", three papers deal with objects of art. From among these three studies two comment on pieces of metalwork in the Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait (Fehérvári, Fodor), the third one examines the ceramics collection of Zsolnay (Gerelyes). Two papers deal with Islamic architecture (Ormos, Richter-Bernburg), while some problems of the reception of folkloric motifs by modern Arab painting are treated by one author (Naef).

It is with deep sorrow and grief that with his article in the present volume we have to bid farewell to Father Pouzet who has always been a pillar of the Union and a permanent contributor to the success of its congresses.

Finally, it is the pleasure and duty of the organizers to express their gratitude to the UEAI for the generous support which made the publication of the *Proceedings* possible.



## I. ISLAM

THE TOWN OF ALYAZ, IN THE MOUNTAINS

Al-ŪsŪbayĪ al-BaybārĪ, a prominent figure in the history of Islamic law, is known for his contributions to the development of the legal system in the region of Alyaz. His work, *Al-ŪsŪbayĪ al-BaybārĪ*, is a comprehensive treatise on Islamic law, covering a wide range of subjects, including the principles of Islamic law, the rights of the individual, and the duties of the community. The work is divided into several parts, each dealing with a specific aspect of the law. The first part, *Al-ŪsŪbayĪ al-BaybārĪ*, is a general introduction to the subject, while the subsequent parts deal with more specific areas of the law. The work is written in a clear and concise style, making it accessible to a wide range of readers. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of Islamic law and the development of the legal system in the region of Alyaz.

The following is a summary of the main points of the work, *Al-ŪsŪbayĪ al-BaybārĪ*, which is a comprehensive treatise on Islamic law. The work is divided into several parts, each dealing with a specific aspect of the law. The first part, *Al-ŪsŪbayĪ al-BaybārĪ*, is a general introduction to the subject, while the subsequent parts deal with more specific areas of the law. The work is written in a clear and concise style, making it accessible to a wide range of readers. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of Islamic law and the development of the legal system in the region of Alyaz.

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# AL-ĞUNAYD AL-BAĞDĀDĪ AND THE SIGNS OF THE PATH TO ALLĀH

Muhammed Aruçi

*TDV Centre for Islamic Studies, Istanbul*

Mysticism is a universal spiritual urge dating back to the early history of humanity. It indicates a certain type of spirituality, gnosis and practice and diver gently emerges in different cultures of the world. al-Ğunayd al-Bağdādī, who lived in the beginning of the third century after Hiğra, is one of the greatest mystics of Islam. He is commonly known among *şūfīs* as the "leader of the community of mystics" (*sayyid at-tā'īfa*). In his view, mysticism (*taṣawwuf*) consists of following divine rituals and observations without any compromise. It is a path to Allāh through which disciples (*ṣālik*) travel under the guidance of a master (*murşid*). This path is exclusively for the lovers of God and for the ones who like to purify themselves by submission to His will. Progress in the path is through stations (*maqāmāt*) the first of which is repenting from sins while last is the acquisition of a special knowledge about the unity of God (*tawhīd*). This paper will explore all the stations al-Ğunayd explained such as asceticism, poverty, patience, contentment and reliance on Allāh. The core of all stations, for al-Ğunayd, is a ceaseless awareness about all-encompassing divine presence (*murākaba*). al-Ğunayd's mystic views met a notable acceptance in the lower and higher ranks of Muslim community and survived until today among Muslim mystics. This, I will argue, because he grounded his path on the Qur'an and the Sunna while also emphasising that the highest station for a human is to be a perfect servant of God, which is in accordance with the common Islamic theology.

Islamic mysticism, which is commonly known as *taṣawwuf*, is usually traced back to a well-known saying of the Prophet Muḥammad where he stated that the most perfect state in religion (*al-iḥṣān*) is attained by worshipping God as if you see Him, even if you do not seem He sees you<sup>1</sup>. Yet, it is easily observable that mysticism, in the broadest sense of the word, is used to refer to a particular attitude towards life and to the question of knowledge, which exists in all the major cultures of the world. Mysticism is, therefore, a universal phenomenon that transcends beyond the boundaries of particular national and religious cultures and civilisations. It thus constitutes its own nation with a distinguished concept of civilisation and religion. Mysticism is, then, a spiritual urge which exists where man is. Its core is abstention from mundane pleasures, and its final destination is the Heavens. It is the source of all goodness, blessing and illumination. From this perspective, *taṣawwuf* is the name for the intellectual and spiritual endeavour some Muslims undertake with the purpose of knowing God through experience and getting close to Him through pious deeds. The *şūfīs*, who were sincerely loyal to their religion and civilisation, followed within

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* II, 426, IV, 129, 164; al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ: İmān* 37; Tafsīr sūra 31; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ: İmān* 1; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan: Sunna* 16; at-Tirmidī, *Sunan: İmān* 5; Ibn Māğa, *Sunan: Muqaddima* 9. See for further explanation: Muslim *Ṣaḥīḥ* I, 157-158.



Islam a particular way to reach to Allāh and formulated, in accordance with it, an ideal way of life. This paper analyses the teachings of al-Ġunayd who was one of those righteous ascetics who strictly observed the rules of religion and thus reached the highest spiritual states and levels. A *ṣūfī* according to al-Ġunayd is a migrant to Allāh and to his Prophet Muḥammad who was the most knowledgeable about Allāh and the most strict in the worship to him<sup>2</sup>. The focus of the paper is on the views of al-Ġunayd on this spiritually elevating journey which involves going through several stations called *ahwāl* and levels called *maqamāt*.

### al-Ġunayd al-Baġdādī

al-Ġunayd lived in the third century of Islam (d. 279/909) during which *taṣawwuf* began to reach its maturity. This was observable in the life style, intellectual and esthetic products. In this age, the principles for the study of *taṣawwuf* had also been developed whereby most of them endeavoured to develop a spiritual philosophy, occasionally resembling to the puritan (*salafī*) religious attitude. al-Ġunayd also contributed to this process. His views on cleansing the heart had been distinguished from others with their clarity<sup>3</sup>. Eventually, he gained the title "leader of the community" (*sayyid at-tā'ifa*), that is the leader of the *ṣūfīs*<sup>4</sup>.

His full name is Abū l-Qāsim al-Ġunayd ibn Muḥammad. He is considered one of the most leading figures in the field of *taṣawwuf* who set the signs in the path to God in an understandable way. Many ascetics benefited from him. His family came from Nihāwand but he was born and educated in Iraq. His father was Abū Yabī az-Zaġġāg. For this reason, he was called *qawāriri*, the glass seller. He was a jurist in the school of Abū Tawr, who was the friend of aṣ-Ṣāfi'ī. al-Ġunayd began issuing religious verdicts (*fatwa*) at the age of twenty in the presence of his teacher. His opinions were regarded by respect. He died in 297/909 in Baghdad. His grave still

<sup>2</sup> The Prophet is reported to have said: "It is I who is the most respectful to Allāh and the most knowledgeable about Him". In another narration: "By God! I know Allāh most and I am the most fearing of Him". See: al-Buḥārī, *Sahih: Imān* 13; *Fisām* 5.

<sup>3</sup> The following report sheds light on this issue: Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥarīrī narrated that he heard al-Ġunayd saying: "We have not acquired *taṣawwuf* from hear-say but from hunger, thirst, abstention from worldly pleasures, quitting the habits and comfort, for *taṣawwuf* is the purity of relationship with Allāh, and its core is staying away from mundane goals. The companion of the Prophet Haritha stated this as follows: "I kept my soul away from worldly pleasures until its gold and stone looked the same for me. I stayed up praying during the nights and remained thirsty [i.e. I fasted] during the day time". See: as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 158; al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 106; al-Ḥatīb al-Baġdādī, *Tārīḥ* VII, 246; al-Isfahānī, *Hilya* X, 277-278; Abū Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt* I, 128; Ġa'far n.d.:397.

<sup>4</sup> as-Subkī said about him: "The leader of the Community [of *ṣūfīs*], the forerunner of the Congregation [of *ṣūfīs*], master (*imām*) of the People of *hirka* (humble *ṣūfī* dress), guide of the *ṣūfī* path, the flag of the saints in his time and the champion of the gnostics". as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 26.

draws visitors<sup>5</sup>. al-Ġunayd is considered one of the leaders, *imām*, both in the external (*zāhir*) and internal (*bātin*) sciences. His knowledge<sup>6</sup> was a consequence of his sincerity in his relationship with God and his abstention from using the human free will against the Divine will<sup>7</sup>.

The path (*tariq*) according to the People of True Knowledge (*ahl al-haqīqa*) consists of observing the rituals and respecting the rules through the best conduct by staying away from permissible acts (al-Ġurġānī, *Ta'rifāt* 61). The *taṣawwuf* in Islam has two levels: Path (*tariqa*) and Truth (*haqīqa*). The former is called the science of conduct while the latter is called the science of exploration. In other words, they are called vocation (*sulūk*) and gnosis (*ma'rifa*). *Tariqa*, as al-Ġurġānī defines, is a special vocation for the seekers specialising in how to go through the spiritual states and levels.

Spiritual progress, according to the Prophet Muḥammad, requires the greatest of all struggles. On the way back from a battle, he is reported to have said that: "now we are going from the smaller struggle to the greatest struggle". It is interpreted that he meant the struggle against the passions and mundane desires. The Qur'ān also states that "Those who struggle for Our cause, surely We will show them our paths. Allāh is with the those who try to attain perfection in their conduct" (Q. 29.69). al-Ġunayd also followed the same tradition. According to al-Ġunayd, the ideal path to Allāh never allows a person to abandon observing religious rules and regulations because one, regardless his spiritual level, is always a servant of Allāh. Abū 'Abdallāh as-Sulamī narrated from Abū Bakr who related from Abū Muḥammad al-Ġarīrī who said: "I heard al-Ġunayd while he was talking to a man who mentioned from gnosis (*ma'rifa*) and said that the people who reach to this level are allowed not to perform five daily prayers and other acts of worship for Allāh. al-Ġunayd said to him: This is the opinion of a group who advocate that the obligation to worship ends for some people. Yet for me continuing the worship is the best way. Those who commit adultery and steal other's property are in a better spiritual state than those who advocate such a view. The Gnostics (*al-'arifūn bi-llāh*) took the forms of worship from Allāh and they always refer to him on this issue. If I live for a thousand years, I would never decrease the worship I am performing now unless it becomes

<sup>5</sup> See: as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 155-163; al-Isfahānī, *Hilya* X, 255-287; al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 105-108; al-Ḥatīb al-Baġdādī, *Tārīḥ* VII, 241-249; Ibn Ġawzī, *Sifa* II, 416-424; Ibn Ḥallikān, *Wafayāt* I, 373-375; as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 260-275; aṣ-Ṣāfīrānī, *Ṭabaqāt* I, 72-74; Abū Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt* I, 127-129; Ateş 1993.

<sup>6</sup> The manuscripts of al-Ġunayd's writings had been found [Süleymaniye Library, Sehīd Ali Paşa 1374] and translated to English. See: Abdel-Kader 1962. For a discussion of al-Ġunayd's works, see: Ġa'far 1980:303-309; Ateş 1970; Corbin 1977:212; Ateş 1993.

<sup>7</sup> al-Ġunayd said: "*Tasawwuf* is giving up exercise of the free will. If you see *tasawwuf* with, at the same time, a claim for the exercise of free will, be sure that it done for others, but not for God". See: Ġa'far n.d.:414.



impossible for me. This strengthens my knowledge and state" (as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 158-159; al-Isfahānī, *Hilya* X, 278; al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 106).

There is the Path (*ṭarīqa*) to Allāh, the seeker (*ṣālik*) who enters the path and the Guide (*mursīd*) leads the seeker through the pitfalls and passages of the way. The Prophet Muḥammad is seen as the first Guide after he learn the true faith<sup>8</sup>. He is the one who opened the way to perfection in worship to Allāh while he retreated to the cave of Hīrā' where he completely dedicated himself to supplication, prayer, worship and contemplation. One enters the Path through an act of allegiance to the Guide following the example of the Prophet who also made act of allegiance by those who accepted Islam for the first time. For instance, it is well-known that ten people gave him allegiance in the early days of Islamic history under a tree which is known as the Allegiance of the Blessed (*bay'at ar-riḍwān*)<sup>9</sup>. The beginner in the path is called *Murīd* who after passing the elementary stages becomes *sālik*. Those who complete the progress are called *al-mursīd al-mubaqqiq*.

The *sūfī* is on constant migration towards his Lord. His acts are entirely intended to please Allāh, not even to gain Paradise nor to save himself from Hellfire. The spiritual migration is then either a migration to Allāh which is in the heart and soul, whose principle is the strong will, constant awareness and sincerity, or it is a migration to the Prophet whose pillar is the submission to the law of God which is conveyed by his Messenger and to the example of the Prophet in all the acts, speeches and relations. al-Ġunayd used to say: "The path to God is entirely closed to the creation except for those who follow the footsteps of the Prophet, peace and greetings be upon him, in the field of law and customs, and strictly adhered his path. Then the gate of all good things become open for him" (as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 159). He was asked about the interpretation of the following verses from the Qur'ān: "We will read it for you, then you do not forget" (Q. 78/6). al-Ġunayd said, "We will read" that is the Qur'ān with recitation. "You do not forget", that is to say do not forget to practice it. The address is for the general people although it was initially addressed to the Prophet<sup>10</sup>.

### Signs of the Path

This path to Allāh is peculiar to the friends of Allāh (*awliyā' Allāh*), and to those who love him because of the purity of their souls in their relationship with Allāh. It is the journey of the seekers to Allāh as they go through states and levels. It consists of the beginning and the end of the path as well as the stages in between. The beginning is repenting (*ṭawba*) while the end is Allāh, his knowledge and faith

<sup>8</sup> See al-Buhārī *Ṣaḥīḥ: Imān* 13, and *Ṭiṣām* 5.

<sup>9</sup> See an-Naggār n.d.:245-253.

<sup>10</sup> See al-Manūfī 1967:I, 144; II, 149.

about his oneness. As to the stages they are states (*ḥāl*) and levels (*maqām*). Repenting is the first level. The *sūfīs* explained its prerequisites as follows: faith (*īmān*), persistence (*ṭabāt*), intention (*niyya*), truthfulness (*ṣidq*) and sincerity (*ihlās*). Thereafter, the levels follow each other with the states in between them.

Given the rule that the paths to Allāh is equal to the number of the children of Adam, as the *sūfīs* say, then the number of the states and levels vary from one *sūfī* to the other because their experiences and potentials also vary. Some said there are seven levels while others said there are nine or ten levels. Some others increased it even to hundred. All these indicate the variance in the *sūfī* experience and show the absence of a single paradigm or a binding principle. But the sole principle almost all the *sūfīs* accept is the necessity of a comrade (*rafiq*) or a guide (*mursīd*), food and preparation. The comrade is the *ṣayḥ* who earlier completed the journey in the path learned is risks and secrets. As to the food it is the *dīker* or the constant remembrance of Allāh. The *ṣayḥ* and the *dīker* are two pivotal principles of in the *sūfī* education. During this education, the most important phase is cleansing oneself from the attributes of common people and internalising the attributes of God. This is a consequence, on the moral level, of the *sūfī* education which is called journey (*sulūk*). The *sulūk* is completed by the perfection of sincere worship (*'ubūdiyya*) to Allāh as the will of Allāh becomes the will of the servant. Yet the real goal is obtaining the true knowledge about Allāh, which is an aspect the *sūfī* does not speak about with others in public.

It is known that al-Imām al-Ġunayd spoke about *ṭasawwuf* with clarity that both commoners and the educated groups understood his message. Both the critics and advocates of *ṭasawwuf* acknowledged this superior quality of him at every age (as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 155; as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 260; Corbin 1977:212). Yet, at the same time, there are some highly refined remarks by al-Ġunayd that some found difficult to interpret (Ateş 1993:VIII, 121).

al-Ġunayd proclaimed his faith in *tawḥīd* and accepted that Allāh is beyond any limitation and imperfection. He refused reincarnation of God into a person. Regardless how many secrets are unveiled to a person in the path to Allāh, it is not permissible for him to claim that he passed the level of worship and God reincarnated in him (as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 158-159; al-Isfahānī, *Hilya* X, 278; al-Manūfī 1967:II, 151). Thus it would be a mistake to accept the claim that al-Ġunayd talked about the reincarnation of God into man. In reality, al-Ġunayd was convinced with the *ḥadīṭ qudsī* of the Prophet Muḥammad where he relayed from Allāh that "I will be his hearing with which he hears"<sup>11</sup>. He strictly remained faithful to the mainstream creed and spoke with caution which does not allow any objection against it. He uses the terms "divine gift" (*luṭf*), "divine guidance" (*hidāya*), "divine endowment of

<sup>11</sup> See al-Buhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ: Riḍāq* 38.



success" (*tawfiq*) or "divine support" (*ta'yid*). It is impossible to find any expression in the writings of al-Ġunayd that implies reincarnation<sup>12</sup>.

al-Ġunayd derived the basic principles of the *sūfi* path to Allāh from the Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad which made his teaching more appealing to the majority of the Muslims. Regarding this issue, he used to say: "Our knowledge is anchored in the Book and the Sunnah. If someone does not memorise the meaning of the Qur'ān, he must have its knowledge and a deep understanding about it. If he does not write *ḥadīth*, nor does he study Islamic law (*fiqh*), he is not qualified to be followed." He used to say: "The path to God is entirely closed to the creation except for those who follow the footsteps of the Prophet, peace and greetings be upon him, in the field of law and customs, and strictly adhered his path. Then the gate of all good things become open for him"<sup>13</sup>. Tāġ ad-Dīn as-Subkī said about him the following: "al-Ġunayd ibn Muḥammad ... the leader of the Community and the guide of the Congregation. He is the *imām* of the people of *ḥirqa*, simple *sūfi* dress. Master of the *sūfi* path. He was the highest of the saints in his time and the champion of the Gnostics" (as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 260).

#### Spiritual Levels (*maqāmāt*)

al-Ġunayd explained that the path to Allāh begins with repenting sincerely (*at-tawba an-naṣūh*) which is uprooting all the sins. A man asked him: "How is the path to Allāh?" He said: "It is repenting (*tawba*) that prevents from insisting in mistakes, fearing (*hawf*) that cleans pride, hoping (*raġā'*) that motivates to performing good deeds, and observing Allāh's actions in what emerges in your heart" (al-Isfahānī, *Hilya* X, 269; Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Ṣifa* II, 42; as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 260). He also added that: "*Tawba* is based on three principles: the first one is regret, the second one is determination to leave what is forbidden and to perform what is required, and the third one is work to pay the rights of others" (al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 258-259). The one who repents and unties the rob of insistence in the mistakes keeps moving forward in the ladder of *taṣawwuf* and levels of mystic knowledge until he reaches to a level whereby he forgets all the sins which kept him away from reaching Allāh. Thereafter, he reaches to a high state where he does not remember anything except for Allāh. This is the level of those who have the true knowledge, *al-muḥaqqiqūn*.

The seeker continues in the path to Allāh not only by making all his material gains legal (*ḥalāl*) but at the same time by staying away from speeches Allāh is not

<sup>12</sup> Cf. as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 158-159; al-Isfahānī, *Hilya* X, 255-287; al-Munāwī, *Kawākib* I, 214; Ġa'far 1980:232, 305; Zaehner 1961:150.

<sup>13</sup> See: as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 159; as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 274; al-Manūfī 1967:II, 149.

pleased with. This principle is probably derived from the following ḥadīth: "Keep your tongue from errors!"<sup>14</sup>.

Thus he reaches to the level of asceticism (*zuhd*) the core of which, according to al-Ġunayd, is cleansing the heart from mundane passions until the servant never forgets Allāh. Once al-Ġunayd was asked about asceticism, he responded: "It is cleansing the hands from belongings and cleansing the heart from desires". When he was asked about mundane desires (*dunyā*), he said: "What is it? It is what approaches the heart and keeps it away from Allāh" (as-Sarrāġ, *Luma'* 72; al-Manūfī 1967:II, 151).

The level of asceticism overlaps with the next level, satisfaction (*qanā'a*), which is feeling satisfied with what is available without desiring what is far away. This way, the heart becomes ready to receive the wisdom from Allāh as it becomes empty from everything else<sup>15</sup>.

The level of poverty (*faqr*) is the principle of those who aim getting close to Allāh through worship in seclusion. Poverty may have visible signs that distinguish its different types from each other. They are the real poor before Allāh externally and internally. The level of poverty is what distinguished the Prophet Muḥammad from other prophets. Once al-Ġunayd said while he was talking about *taṣawwuf*: "*Taṣawwuf* is built upon eight principles. Each principle is borrowed from a Prophet, peace and greetings be upon them. Generosity (*sabā'*) is from Ibrāhīm. Contentment (*ridā*) is from Ishāq. Patience (*sabr*) is from Ayyūb. Pointing (*iṣāra*) is from Zakariyyā. Seclusion is from Yaḥyā. Wearing wool is from Mūsā. Travelling is from 'Īsā. Poverty (*faqr*) is from Muḥammad, peace and greetings be upon him" (aṣ-Ṣa'rānī, *Ṭabaqāt* I, 73). The truthfulness in poverty leads the poor to stay away from asking from people due to a complete reliance to what is in the presence of Allāh instead of what is in the hands of people. This also leads to staying away from debate and argumentation about religion. He does not argue with anyone. If someone wants to draw him in an argumentation he keeps silent.

The level of patience (*sabr*) indicates enduring the difficulties that come from Allāh. Allāh sends them to sincere believers who mix good deeds with mistakes as punishment for their sins, to the truthful believers as a cleansing from their sins, and to the Prophets for a reason no one knows save Him. The core of the path to Allāh is faith in Allāh the Most High. A believer is required to continue his journey with patience yet the journey sometimes requires higher qualities other than patience which are possessed only by a few people. Regarding this, al-Ġunayd said: "The

<sup>14</sup> at-Tirmidī, *Sunan: Zuhd* 60; See also: al-Isfahānī, *Hilya* X, 269; al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 284.

<sup>15</sup> Once a man brought al-Ġunayd five hundred dinar and said to him: "Distribute this money to your community". al-Ġunayd asked him: "Do you have money other than that?" The man said: "Yes". al-Ġunayd asked: "Do you want more than what you have?" The man said: "Yes". al-Ġunayd said to him: "Take your money back, because you need it more than we do. The need for money is taken away from us". See: aṣ-Ṣa'rānī, *Ṭabaqāt* I, 72-73.



journey from this world to the next is easy on the believers. Separation of people from Allāh is very difficult to endure. Travelling from ego to Allāh is hard and highly difficult. Patience with Allāh is even harder" (al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 397-398; as-Subkī, *Tabaqāt* II, 264-265).

Contentment (*riḍā*), in al-Ḡunayd's view, is a level which does not contain any element of free choice. It requires complete submission to the eternal will of Allāh. The elimination of free will, in this context, does not mean that the servant becomes "predetermined" (*mağbūr*) in his wilful actions. Contentment means gladly accepting what Allāh chooses for one as a trial. The servant does not have any control on these trials anyway. Contentment, correctly understood, indicates a high level in the knowledge of Allāh. al-Ḡunayd says on this issue: "The contentment (*riḍā*) is the second level of gnosis. Whoever shows ceaseless contentment his knowledge about Allāh reflects the truth"<sup>16</sup>.

The last level according to al-Ḡunayd is "reliance on Allāh" (*tawakkul*). It means trusting Allāh about the sustenance of all living creatures as Allāh states in the Qur'ān: "There is no moving creature on the earth whose sustenance is not taken care of by Allāh" (Q. 11.6). When al-Ḡunayd was asked about the meaning of *tawakkul*, he said, "reliance of heart to Allāh" (as-Sarrāḡ, *Luma'* 79). For him, reliance on Allāh is not simply saying it verbally but it is a state of consciousness that covers one's complete existence and puts his hearts trust in Allāh. al-Ḡunayd, therefore, said about the level of *tawakkul*: "*Tawakkul* was a piece of knowledge, but now it became a reality" (al-Isfahānī, *Hilya* X, 267). Yet some people find it difficult how to combine the faith about reliance on Allāh for everyone's living, and working to meet the requirements of life. Likewise, Islam encourages at once both believing in Allāh's support and working for a living. Speaking from an Islamic perspective, there is no conflict between the two teachings. al-Ḡunayd set a concrete example on this issue by his way of live: His father was selling glass and he was selling construction materials. While he was working in his shop, his daily custom was to make three hundred *rak'a* voluntary *ṣalāt* with a thousand *tasbiḥa*, praise for Allāh<sup>17</sup>.

This is how al-Ḡunayd interpreted the spiritual levels. For him, the path to Allāh required one go through levels. Each level consisted of various type of sincere worship by the saints and selected servants of God.

<sup>16</sup> See as-Sulamī, *Tabaqāt* 162.

<sup>17</sup> They asked al-Ḡunayd: "Should we look for our living?" He said: "If you know where it is, look for it". They said: "Should we ask from Allāh?" He said: "If you know that He forgot you, then remind Him". They said: "We stay home and rely on Allāh?" He said: "The experience is doubt." They said: "What is the solution?" He said: "Living up the search for solutions." See al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 376; Ibn Tagrī Birdī, *Nuḡūm* III, 168-169; as-Subkī, *Tabaqāt* II, 264.

### The Essences of the States (*ahwāl*)

The state (*ḥāl*) in the terminology of the *ṣūfīs*, is a meaning that comes to heart, without an effort on the part of the person, such as sorrow, sadness, anxiety or joy. These states are replaced by other states, which may be similar or not, as other qualities of soul become manifest. If a state continues and becomes a property, then, it is called a level (*maqām*). The states are gifts from Allāh while the levels are earned by people. The states spring from the fountain of divine generosity yet the levels emerge out of efforts spent to gain them (al-Ḡurgānī, *Ta'rifat* 36). The level is not other than some religious rules concerning the etiquette. The *ṣūfī* applies them with no compromise. He spends his outmost effort to bring about a living image to the real world. But the states are the outcomes of these levels on the spiritual level such as the feeling of "passion", "anxiety" and "joy". The one who belongs to a level resides in his level yet the one who is on a state moves forward from that state. Occasionally, a state serves as an indication of the arrival to a new level but sometimes it is an indication of the level one is at. The state is called state because of it changing nature while the level is called level because its durability<sup>18</sup>. al-Ḡunayd presents us an interpretation of the states that constitute along with the levels the essence of *taṣawwuf*.

The state of observing Allāh's actions (*murāqaba*) is the highest state of understanding true faith in the oneness of Allāh. It involves thinking that the universe received its initial existence as well its continuity from Allāh the Most High. According to al-Ḡunayd, the more the servant gets closer to Allāh, Allāh also further approaches towards him<sup>19</sup>.

As to the love for Allāh (*mahabba*), it is the losing sight of himself on the part of the servant because he is preoccupied with the love of Allāh as he is in constant remembrance of him. He pays his rights and submits his heart and life entirely to him which makes his consciousness completely immersed in the remembrance and love of Allāh. Occasionally, the excess in love leads the lovers to a kind of drunkenness and to say words that are hard to interpret from an orthodox and rational perspective. Yet al-Ḡunayd was for accepting the excuse of the true lover while at the same time he put the rule that the lovers must always hold Allāh beyond any imperfection. He said, "the passion is excessive inclination without union"<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> See about *maqām* and *ḥāl*: al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 191-195; cf. al-Manūfī 1967:I, 191; and 1969:97-102.

<sup>19</sup> See as-Sarrāḡ, *Luma'* 85.

<sup>20</sup> The issue of love was raised in Mecca during the period of Pilgrimage where by the *ṣayḥs* expressed their views. al-Ḡunayd was the youngest among them. Finally his turn came. They said to him: "O the Iraqi! Tell us what you have!" He bowed his head while tears came from his eyes and said: [A lover] is a servant who gives up himself, continuously connected to the remembrance of Allāh, vigilant to observe



Fear (*hawf*) from Allāh is another state. It indicates that the consciousness of the seeker is controlled by a fear of punishment from Allāh for his mistakes at any time. Thus he does not become arrogant with his good deeds because fear of punishment takes pride away<sup>21</sup>.

Hope (*rağā'*) from Allāh is also another state which motivates the servant to do more good deeds out of expectation from the mercy and forgiveness of Allāh (as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 264).

The passion towards Allāh (*ṣawq*) is according to al-Ġunayd another spiritual state which urges the seeker to union when he faces an obstacle in the path to Allāh. al-Ġunayd used to control himself while he is at this state with the purpose of not to speak anything that may cause misunderstanding for the general public out of respect to Allāh the Most High<sup>22</sup>.

Intimacy (*uns*) is also another state which manifest itself in the soul out of joy by observing the greatness of Allāh. When al-Ġunayd was asked about it, he said: "Increase of owe with the existence of respect"<sup>23</sup>.

As to witnessing through the heart (*muṣāhada*), it is a kind of knowledge about the secrets of the invisible world, or more precisely, it is the knowledge about the invisible. Those who reach to this level are given the name of *mulhamūn*, receivers of news. There are stories from the time of the Prophet about such people. For instance, it is narrated that the third Rightly Guided Caliph 'Umar, cried Sariya, the commander of Muslim armies in Iraq, from the pulpit during his Friday sermon: "O Sariya! The mountain! The mountain!"<sup>24</sup>.

As to the certainty (*yaqīn*), it is, according to al-Ġunayd, accepting the creed with not doubt in the heart, which can happen by cleansing the heart which bring one to the level of opening (*kaṣf*) and receiving knowledge directly (*ilhām*). This type of certainty is not an outcome of studying the evidences as in the case of Theology. al-Ġunayd said: "certainty is the clearance of doubts". Once he was passing by people

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the nights of Allāh, looking towards Him with his heart, when he speaks it is from Allāh, when he moves it is with the order of Allāh, when he rests he is with Allāh. He is with Allāh (*bi-llāh*), for Allāh (*li-llāh*) and with Allāh (*ma'a-llāh*)." The *ṣayḥ*s cried and said: "There is nothing to add on that. May Allāh protect you o the crown of the gnostics." See al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* II, 617, 623.

<sup>21</sup> See: al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 310; as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 264.

<sup>22</sup> See: al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* II, 630; as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 272; al-Manūfī 1967:I, 216.

<sup>23</sup> See as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 161; as-Sarrāğ, *Lumá'* 97.

<sup>24</sup> For this reason, the *ṣūfī*s have never claimed that they reached the level of Prophets by their *muṣāhadāt*, witnessing through the heart, which is an outcome of abstention, asceticism and worship. A man asked him: "Are not the speeches of the Prophets are signs from *muṣāhadāt*?" The *ṣūfī* smiled and said: "The speech of the Prophets are based on divine revelation and the speech of the saints are signs from the *muṣāhadāt* which descend through inspirations (*ilhāmāt*) in the heart." See as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 162; al-Manūfī 1967:II, 151.

who immersed themselves in finding rational evidences to prove that Allāh is away from imperfection, he said: "Trying to disprove the existence of a shame where there is no shame is a shame"<sup>25</sup>. Certainty leads to *kaṣf* (opening) which was denied by those who did not experience it (Ḥağğāğ 1978:24).

These are the spiritual states, according to al-Ġunayd, in the path to Allāh. It is path to follow for those who want to make journey to Allāh. The *ṣūfī* must strictly observe the rules of the path regardless to his level and state. One saw al-Ġunayd in his dream. He was carrying a rosary (*tasbeḥ*) in his hand. The person who saw the dream asked him: You reached a high level, why do you still carry a rosary? He responded: "This is the means with which I reached high levels. I do not leave it." He always encouraged his students to worship which required them to spend a great effort in the struggle against ego and mundane desires. Therefore he was always saying: "When you oppose your ego's desire, its poison becomes a medicine for you"<sup>26</sup>.

#### Education and Moral Growth in Practical Life

Despite all these constructive teachings by al-Ġunayd, he was subject to trials as he had to face a plot against him by Ġulām Ḥalīl. The result was execution of seventy *ṣūfī*s and the imprisonment of al-Ġunayd. Ġulām Ḥalīl was known as someone who fabricated hadith. He was jealous of al-Ġunayd as more and more people were attracted to his teachings. Yet he was not considered a reliable scholar<sup>27</sup>. This shows that the plot against al-Ġunayd was due to a slander by Ġulām Ḥalīl against al-Ġunayd who came to be known as the leader of the Community<sup>28</sup>.

At the end, I would like to include a story which give an idea about how al-Ġunayd educated his disciples and the methods he used to make them grow in morality. This story will also illustrate the way *ṣūfī* way of live is implemented in the practical life.

as-Siblī was a pupil of the famous theosophist al-Ġunayd al-Bagdādī. On a conversion, he asked al-Ġunayd: "They tell me that you possess the pearl of divine knowledge: either give it to me or sell it". al-Ġunayd answered: "I cannot sell it, for you have not the price thereof; and if I give it to you, you will have gained it

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<sup>25</sup> He also said: "Certain knowledge (*yaqīn*) is the stability of knowledge in the heart in a way that does not change, nor does it gets transformed or modified." See al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 392; as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 270; as-Sarrāğ, *Lumá'* 103.

<sup>26</sup> See al-Ḥatīb al-Bagdādī, *Tārīḥ* VII, 246; 'Afīfī 1963:113-114.

<sup>27</sup> About the views of scholars on al-Ġunayd, see al-Quṣayrī, *Risāla* I, 73; al-Ḥatīb al-Bagdādī, *Tārīḥ* VII, 241-243; as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 260-263.

<sup>28</sup> See as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt* 155; as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* II, 260; Corbin 1977:212.



cheaply. You do not know its value. Cast yourself headlong, like me, into this ocean, in order that you may win the pearl by waiting patiently”.

aš-Šibli asked what he must do. “Go,” said al-Ġunayd, “and sell sulphur”. At the end of a year he said to aš-Šibli: “This trading makes you well known. Become a dervish and occupy yourself solely with begging”. During a whole year aš-Šibli wandered through the streets of Baghdad, begging of the passers-by, but no one heeded him. Then he returned to al-Ġunayd, who exclaimed: “See now! You are nothing in people’s eyes. Never set your mind on them or take any account of them at all. For some time you were a chamberlain and acted as governor of a province. Go to that country and ask pardon of all those whom you have wronged”.

aš-Šibli obeyed and spent four years in going from door to door, until he had obtained an acquittance from every person except one, whom he failed to trace. On his return, al-Ġunayd said to him: “You still have some regard to reputation. Go and be a beggar for one year more”.

Every day aš-Šibli used to bring the alms that were given to him to al-Ġunayd, who bestowed them on the poor and kept aš-Šibli without food until the next morning. After a year had passed this way, al-Ġunayd accepted him as one of his disciples on condition that he should perform the duties of a servant to the others.

After a year’s service, al-Ġunayd asked him: “What do you think of yourself now?”. aš-Šibli replied: “I deem myself the meanest of God’s creatures”. “Now,” said the master, “your faith is firm”<sup>29</sup>.

In sum, the path to Allāh, according to al-Ġunayd requires strictly obeying its rules through struggle against ego. al-Ġunayd called to the implementation of *sūfi* principles in the practical life as he advocated that everyone, regardless to the spiritual level he reached, is obliged to carry on his moral and religious duties.

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<sup>29</sup> See Nicholson 1963:34-35.



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## THE "FRIENDS OF GOD" IN THE *RASĀ'IL IḤWĀN AS-SAFĀ'*

Carmela Baffioni

*Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli*

In Ep. 7 *On the theoretical arts* of the encyclopaedia of the Pure Brethren (I, 267, 4-11), the Iḥwān list six kinds of "legal sciences for the cure of the souls and the search for the hereafter": 1) the science of revelation; 2) the science of interpretation; 3) the science of traditions; 4) the science of the Law, traditions and norms; 5) the science of memory and spiritual admonitions, of asceticism and of Sufism; 6) the science of the interpretation of dreams. These sciences belong, respectively, to: a) the readers of the Qu'rān and those who know it by heart; b) the *imāms* and the vicars of the Prophets; c) the authors of *ḥadīths*; d) jurists; e) worshippers, ascetics, monks and the like; f) interpreters.

Again, in Ep. 9 *On habits* (I, 322, 3-323, 20) the Iḥwān speak of the eight basic principles of the Law, represented by eight groups of followers and companions of the Lawgiver, who all have the task of perpetuating the memory of the Law, and hence allowing its implementation: 1) reciters of the Holy Book and those who know it by heart; 2) *ahbār*-tellers, *ḥadīths*-transmitters and those who keep by heart the *sīra* of the Prophet; 3) students of the Law and those who are learned in the Law and in its *sunna*; 4) commentators of the literal meaning of their expressions; 5) the fighter *ansār*; 6) vicars of the Law-giver and those who supervise the *ṣarī'a* by ordering that which is good and interdicting that which is forbidden<sup>1</sup>; 7) ascetics and worshippers, monks and those who stand up in the temples; preachers in the pulpits; 8) those who are learned in the *ta'wīl*, and those who are experienced in the theological sciences and knowledge, that is to say, the rightly guided (*al-mahdiyyūn*) *imāms* and the orthodox (*ar-rāšidūn*) caliphs.

As we see, these lists are very similar, and the encyclopaedia of the "Pure Brethren" often deals with each of these categories<sup>2</sup>. But I should like to address here the fifth category of the first passage, that of "*al-'ubbād wa z-zuhhād wa r-ruhbān wa-man ṣakalahum*", which corresponds to the seventh of the second passage, that of "*az-zuhhād wa l-'ubbād fī l-masāğid, wa-r-ruhbān wa-l-quwwām fī l-hayākil, wa-l-ḥuṭabā' 'alā l-manābir*".

<sup>1</sup> Here the Iḥwān use the typical mu'tazilī expression: *al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wa-n-nahy 'an al-munkar*.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, Ep. 22 *On animals*, II, 299, 18-20 looks especially significant. This passage is related to the well-known assertion, which the Iḥwān also repeat, that "religion and kingship are twins". See also, in the same Epistle, 301, 17-20 and 367, 20-369, 14 *passim*; Ep. 8 *On the practical arts*, I, 292, 9-18 and, more specifically on kingship: Ep. 31 *On the languages*, III, 173, 17-175, 14 and 176, 2-177, 2.



The *Iḥwān* consider this category very positively – that is obvious, given the contexts in which it is treated. On the other hand, in spite of the wide critical position of Islam versus asceticism<sup>3</sup>, and in spite of the fact that the *Iḥwān* generally appear very far from any mystical or ascetical approach to religion<sup>4</sup>, in the *Epistles* we find positive but varied<sup>5</sup> evaluations of asceticism<sup>6</sup>; and we even find a favourable mention of Christian monachism<sup>7</sup>.

But a reading of the encyclopaedia shows above all that asceticism is the main feature of the so-called “Friends of God”, the *Awliyā’ Allāh*. As is well known, etymologically this name emphasizes the “closeness” of some kinds of “special” believers to their Lord. Then, within Islam it designates “the saints” and/or the mystics. The same thing happens in the encyclopaedia of the Pure Brethren, where, for instance, we find a long passage in which the *Awliyā’ Allāh* are identified with “the saints” according to the usual Muslim hierarchy (Ep. 9, I, 376, 14-378, 16)<sup>8</sup>. And

<sup>3</sup> Cf. e.g. the comparison between “the way of God” of the Muslim and that of the monk in his cell, in the apologue, entirely against the latter, in Ep. 9, I, 338, 22-342, 15. Also in Ep. 22, II, 286, 1 the Qurayṣite praises God because He gave to his people “the best of religions”. More generally, we read in Ep. 46 *On the essence of faith*, IV, 84, 3-4 that “revelation is the noblest gift man finds in the world”.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. e.g. the harsh description of ascetical practices in Ep. 22, II, 359, 13-360, 6.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, in Ep. 25 *On conception*, II, 444, 13 asceticism from world is said to be ordered by Prophets. In Ep. 27 *On the development of the particular souls within the natural human bodies*, III, 15, 9 “adoration, asceticism, mysticism, adherence to the school of the Divines” (*at-ta’alluh wa-z-zuhd wa-t-tasawwuf wa-luzum madāhib ar-rabbāniyyin*) are quoted among the praiseworthy qualities.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. e.g., with reference to the abstention from food, Ep. 9, I, 358, 3-14.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Ep. 27, III, 8, 16-17, where “mysticism, asceticism and monachism according to the Christian tradition, attachment to the *hanafi* religion” (*at-tasawwuf wa-t-tazahhud wa-t-tarahhub ‘alā l-minḥağ al-masīhi, wa-t-ta’alluq bi-d-dīn al-ḥanafi*) are quoted among the means for perfecting souls. On the Christian monks as believers in the immortality of the soul cf., instead, Ep. 44 *On the beliefs of the Iḥwān as-Safā’*, IV, 32, 2-6.

<sup>8</sup> The *Iḥwān* report *Qur’an* and *ahbār* for their description. Finally, they quote a *ḥadīṭ* (missing in Wensinck /1936-/ as far as I could see), which reads as follows: “This *umma* always needs forty just men from the sect of Abraham, the friend of God”. After a presentation of Abraham, which recalls the haggadic story of his being thrown into fire, Qur., XXI, 69 is quoted (which closes his story in the Holy Book). Then (377, 3-13) we read that “among those forty men four of them are *abdāl*, and they are called *abdāl* because they substitute one creature with another, and make one purification after another. In fact, these forty men are selected from a total of four hundred ascetics (*zāhidīn*), gnostics (*‘arīfīn*) and sure (*muḥaqqiqīn*), and these four hundred are selected from four thousand penitent (*ṭā’ibīn*) and sincere (*muḥlisīn*) believers, and every time that one of the four passes away, one of the forty takes his rank (*rutba*); and when one of the forty passes away, one of the four hundred takes his rank; and when one of the four hundred passes away, one of the four thousand rises to his status (*manzila*), reaches his grade (*marṭaba*) and takes his place; and every time that one of the four thousand passes away, one of the penitent and sincere believers raises to his position (*makān*), reaches his degree (*darağā*) and takes his place”. After the quotation of a series of *ḥadīṭs* and of Qur., XXXV, 32, the *Iḥwān* conclude that these people are the heirs of the Prophets and the vicars of God; their heritage is science (*‘ilm*), faith (*imān*),

there are many passages in which the *Awliyā’ Allāh* share the qualities and behaviour of people whom we could consider “mystics”, or even “Sūfīs”. I have already addressed the question whether the “Friends of God” can be identified with the “mystics” of the Muslim tradition, e.g. the *ṣūfī*, or not<sup>9</sup>. In this paper I address the problem mainly from the linguistic point of view, taking into consideration the rich and various features related in the *Epistles* to the “Friends of God”, and evaluating their terminology.

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The majority of the passages related to our topic are in Ep. 9, but the features of the “Friends of God” are also dealt with in other *Epistles*, e.g. in Ep. 22, II, 179, 7-8, which refers just to Ep. 9, stating that there it is explained “how everybody should behave, in order to be worthily counted among the Friends of God”<sup>10</sup>.

The features, or “distinguishing marks” of the “Friends of God” are widely and multifariously considered. The complete lexicon will be published soon<sup>11</sup>; here, I consider only the most important items.

From the complete reading of the whole encyclopaedia we find first of all personal features related to the “Friends of God”. An examination of the terms recorded shows that the most frequent roots are AMN, RHW, ZHD, SLM and ṢDQ.

- 1) AMN, 4 items: *amān*, security (Ep. 38, III, 312, 5); *amāna*, trustworthiness (Ep. 9, I, 359, 16: as a consequence of abstinence and chaste life); *imān*, faith (Ep. 9, I, 378, 2: inherited from the Prophets); *āmin in*, peaceful (Ep. 9, I, 376, 11: they lived in this world —)

devoutness (*ta’abbud*), reception of divine confirmation (*ta’yīd*) and inspiration (*ilhām*), renunciation (*zahāda*) of the world and neglect of his quest, and craving (*ragḥba*) and longing (*iṣṭiyāq*) for the hereafter (378, 1-4). That of *abdāl* is “one of the degrees of the *ṣūfī* hierarchical order of saints” according to *El’*, s.v. *abdāl* (they are also forty for some *ḥadīṭ*-transmitters, like Ibn Ḥanbal). For the same position cf. Marquet 1973:139. We can also recall that the *Iḥwān* speak, e.g., also of *al-ḥukamā’ an-nuğabā’* (so combining two other *ṣūfī* hierarchical degrees) in Ep. 38 *On resurrection*, III, 303, 9, in a passage interesting for the topics dealt with in the present article.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Baffioni 2000, where I hinted at the possibility that the *Iḥwān* Friends of God are just the *Ṣūfī* *imāms* (in spite of the fact that, in the passages of Eps. 7 and 9 quoted above – like in a sort of *ta’qiyā* – the *imāms* are placed in another category). In many places, moreover, the *Iḥwān* urge the imitation of the “Friends of God” (cf. Ep. 9, I, 334, 10-15 and 360, 8-13) and, finally, just as the *Iḥwān* regret that caliphs kill the *imāms*, they also regret the murder of the “Friends of God” (cf. Ep. 22, II, 361, 4-22: an allusion to the condition of the *Iḥwān*, themselves persecuted as *ismā’īlīs*?). Finally, it could be meaningful to recall that the listing of “distinguishing marks” is a constant practice of the *Ismā’īlī* propagandists in reference to the Prophets.

<sup>10</sup> In this *Epistle*, the “Sincere Friends” are again spoken of, cf. 376, 22, and 377, 19. On the “Friends of God” cf. also Ep. 38, III, 298, 16, 21, 24; 299, 4 and 9; on their qualities cf. Ep. 22, II, 376, 24-377, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Baffioni in print.



- 2) RHW, 1 item recurring 4 times: *rāha*, rest (Ep. 38, III, 312, 5; Ep. 9, I, 360, 3: from pains; Ep. 38, III, 312, 3: their hearts [are] in —; Ep. 38, III, 312, 5: in — with themselves)
- 3) ZHD, 3 items: *zuhd*, asceticism, recurring 2 times (Ep. 9, I, 333, 16; Ep. 9, I, 369, 12); *zahāda*, renunciation (Ep. 9, I, 378, 3: of this world, inherited from the Prophets); *tazhīd*, incitement to abstention (Ep. 9, I, 375, 15: from this world, their work)
- 4) SLM, 3 items: *salāma*, safety, recurring 2 times (Ep. 9, I, 359, 17: as a consequence of abstinence and chaste life; Ep. 9, I, 376, 11: from trouble and pains); *taslim*, submission (Ep. 9, I, 360, 3); *sālim īn*, safe (Ep. 9, I, 376, 11-12: they left this world —)
- 5) SDQ, 3 items: *ṣidq*, sincerity, recurring 2 times (Ep. 9, I, 333, 14: of speech; Ep. 9, I, 360, 5: in speech); *ṣadaqa*, charity (Ep. 9, I, 359, 21); *taṣdīq*, confirmation (Ep. 9, I, 360, 6: of faith in conscience).

But in the encyclopaedia we find more features and attributes, which I have subdivided as follows: a) further definitions of the *Awliyā' Allāh*; b) features introduced by negations or privative terms; c) relationship of the *Awliyā' Allāh* with God; d) their behaviour towards other people; e) behaviour of other people towards them; f) their religious knowledge; g) attributes of the *Awliyā' Allāh* linked to religion; h) attributes of the *Awliyā' Allāh* linked to gnosiology.

Among the features introduced by negative terms or negations are: 1) absence of doubt and uncertainty, twice (Ep. 9, I, 375, 17; Ep. 39, III, 343, 2-3); 2) abstention from eating and drinking (Ep. 9, I, 333, 9; Ep. 9, I, 358, 10<sup>12</sup>), from carnal passions (Ep. 9, I, 358, 3<sup>13</sup>; Ep. 9, I, 378, 5) and from evil thoughts and behaviour, each twice;

<sup>12</sup> Eating little is also defined: *mazra'at al-fikr* (field where cogitation is cultivated, Ep. 9, I, 358, 11); *yunbū' al-hikma* (source of wisdom, 358, 11); *hayāt al-fitna* (life of sagacity, 358, 11); *mishbāh al-qalb* (lamp of the heart, 358, 12); *tabīb al-badan* (physician of the body, 358, 12); *qātil aš-šahawāt* (killer of carnal appetites, 358, 12); *hādīm al-waswās* (what demolishes temptation, 358, 12); *munzil al-ilhām* (what sends down inspiration, 358, 13); *'isma min šarr an-nafs* (hindrance from spiritual vice, 358, 13); *amāna min šiddat al-hisab* (safety from the severity of reckoning, 358, 13). Consequences of eating little, moreover, are *šukr* (thankfulness, 358, 13) and vanishing of *kufr an-ni'ma* (ingratitude, 358, 14).

<sup>13</sup> As a consequence of asceticism expressed in Ep. 9, I, 358, 3 as *qillat al-akl* (little eating) and *tark aš-šahawāt* (neglect of carnal appetites), one is *ašahh ġisman* (healthier in body, Ep. 9, I, 358, 6); *aḡwad hiḡzan* (better in memory, 358, 6); *azkā ḡahman* (purer in mind, 358, 6-7); *aḡlā qalban* (higher in heart, 358, 7); cf. my text *aqall nawman* (less needful of sleep, 358, 7); *aṣdaq ru'yan* (more sincere in viewing, 358, 7); *aḡaff naḡsan* (lighter in soul, 358, 7); *aḡadd baṣaran* (sharper in insight, 358, 7-8); *altaf fikran* (finer in mind, 358, 8); *asḡā sam'an* (more disposed to pay attention, 358, 8); *asahh hiṣsan* (healthier in sensation, 358, 8); *aṭbat ra'yan* (firmer in opinion, 358, 8); *aqbal li-l'ilm* (more receptive of science, 358, 8-9); *asra' harakatan* (faster in motion, 358, 9); *aslam tabī'atan* (safer in nature, 358, 9); *aqall mu'natan* (lesser in trouble, 358, 9); *awsa' muwasātan* (wider in charity, 358, 9); *akram ḡuluqan* (nobler in natural dispositions, 358, 10); *aṭbat suḡbatan* (firmer in friendship, 358, 10); *ahlā fi l-qulūb* (sweeter in hearts, 358, 10).

- 3) absence of ill-will or evil intention towards the others (Ep. 38, III, 312, 5-6; Ep. 38, III, 312, 6), each twice.

As to the relationship of the *Awliyā' Allāh* with God, among the other statements, we can here recall that the "Friends of God" are said to be "those who love God and whom God loves" (Ep. 9, I, 360, 9), and consequently their invocations are always answered (Ep. 38, III, 312, 2). Moreover, the "Friends of God" constantly behave as if they have seen God (Ep. 9, I, 338, 13-14; Ep. 39, III, 343, 2-3); they experience Him in every situation (Ep. 9, I, 376, 6); they crave for the encounter with God (Ep. 9, I, 360, 10).

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Let us now come to the personal qualities ascribed to the "Friends of God", which could belong to the *ṣūfī* tradition. I am, of course, aware that our discussion cannot enter into any details of the various *ṣūfī* personalities and schools:

- 1) *taqwā*, godliness (Ep. 9, I, 369, 13; Ep. 9, I, 359, 17: as a consequence of abstinence and chaste life); *maḡabba*, love (Ep. 9, I, 360, 1; Ep. 9, I, 359, 18: of the hearts, as a consequence of abstinence and chaste life); *riḡā*, satisfaction (Ep. 9, I, 327, 5-6: with little of the delights and pleasures of the world; Ep. 9, I, 333, 13; Ep. 9, I, 360, 2); *zuhd*, asceticism (Ep. 9, I, 333, 16; Ep. 9, I, 369, 12); *tawakkul*, trust (Ep. 9, I, 369, 13); all of these belonging to the *ṣūfī* experience since its beginnings;
- 2) other attributes such as some of the so-called *maqāmāt* in *ṣūfī* authors: *amāna*, trustworthiness (Ep. 9, I, 359, 16: as a consequence of abstinence and chaste life); *rifq*, kindness (Ep. 9, I, 359, 22; Ep. 9, I, 363, 4);
- 3) qualities like *taslim*, submission (Ep. 9, I, 360, 3); *ṣabr*, patience (Ep. 9, I, 333, 13; Ep. 9, I, 360, 3-4: in misfortunes and trial); *kafāf*, sufficiency (Ep. 9, I, 360, 3); we could also recall the expression *tafarrud fi l-halawāt* (Ep. 9, I, 327, 9) very akin to the *ṣūfī* *ḡalwa*; other qualities concerning the relationship with God, such as *maḡabba*, love (Ep. 39, III, 342, 19); *ḡusn az-zann*, good belief (Ep. 9, I, 369, 15); *taḡaqquq*, certitude (Ep. 9, I, 376, 3); *iḡlās*, sincere devotion (Ep. 9, I, 360, 5); *ḡawf*, fear (Ep. 9, I, 369, 14; cf. also Ep. 9, I, 376, 2); *raḡā'*, hope (Ep. 9, I, 369, 14; cf. also Ep. 9, I, 376, 1); *ṡuma'n īna*, repose (Ep. 9, I, 360, 5); *ma'rifa*, knowledge (Ep. 9, I, 376, 5: soundness of their — of their Lord; Ep. 39, III, 342, 5-6; cf. Ep. 9, I, 375, 22-376, 1); *ṡiqa* (Ep. 9, I, 360, 5); *tawakkul*, trust (Ep. 9, I, 360, 4); *yaḡīn* (Ep. 9, I, 338, 13; Ep. 9, I, 376, 10) and *tayaqqun*, certainty (Ep. 9, I, 376, 5). We can also recall other passages, like Ep. 9, I, 375, 20-21, which recalls *ḡikr*; Ep. 9, I, 338, 13-14, which recalls *muḡāsaba*; Ep. 9, I, 376, 6, which recalls *muṡāhada*; and the expressions *yaṡawnahu ru'yat al-ḡaqq*, they see God truly (Ep. 9, I, 376, 5-6: in every circumstance) and *inmaḡaḡat al-aḡyār 'inda ru'yatihim ḡaḡīqatihī*, every other thing is effaced, when they see (God's) true nature (Ep. 9, I, 376, 9-10).



I would like, finally, to recall the beautiful passage in which the *Iḥwān* say that the "Friends of God" "are people for whom every place and time are the same"<sup>14</sup>... Every day is to them like one and the same feast, and one and the same Friday; every place is like one and the same mosque, every direction like a *qibla* and a *mihṛāb*: withersoever you turn, there is the Face of God<sup>15</sup>; all their movements are like an act of worship to God" (Ep. 38, III, 311, 9-12)<sup>16</sup>. As is well known, this state is typical of the mystic and *sūfī* experiences.

At the same time, our analysis reveals a quite complex picture, because in spite of the Sufism-flavoured terminology just examined, the "ascetics" – with whom the "Friends of God" share, as we have seen, most of their attributes – are placed by the *Iḥwān* within a strictly "legal" vision in the passages of Eps. 7 and 9 recalled at the beginning of this article; and we read, also in Ep. 9, that the *Awliyā' Allāh* are those who warn people against neglect of the practice of the disposition of the Law (I, 323, 11-12).

Moreover, the passages dealing with their "religious knowledge" recall notions strictly speaking proper to the *ṣarī'a*, such as: 1) the straight way towards God (Ep. 9, I, 369, 16); 2) the method (*minḥag*) of the *sunna* (Ep. 9, I, 369, 16); 3) hereafter and things related to it: resurrection, announcement, congregation, reckoning, balance, guidance and requital (Ep. 9, I, 363, 12-13; Ep. 9, I, 375, 11); 4) the angels and the way of their inspiration, the devils and the way of their temptation and possession (Ep. 9, I, 363, 6-9); nn. 3 and 4 being introduced by the term *ma'rifa* or the verbal form *ya'rifūna*, just as the *Iḥwān* relate also the term *tayaqqun*, certainty, to the hereafter when speaking of the Friends of God (Ep. 9, I, 327, 14), who are also called *al-mutahaqqiqūna*, those who are convinced (Ep. 9, I, 357, 6) and *al-muqirrūna*, those who confess (Ep. 9, I, 323, 14) the hereafter.

And there is still a very important reason which could hinder us from identifying the *Iḥwānian* "Friends of God" with the Sufis: namely, that the Epistles emphasize the gnosiological attributes in directions other than the *sūfī*, as is confirmed from the use of "gnosiological" roots like 'RF, YQN, BSR, R'Y and NZR, which are the most frequently recorded in the encyclopaedia. I would like to recall here that, even if – as we have seen – the *Iḥwān* speak for the "Friends of God" of *ma'rifa*, knowledge, of their Lord, at least three times, the root 'RF is used also to introduce the "legal" knowledge recalled above. Moreover, the Epistles say that the "Friends of God" are *al-ārifūna*, those who know the shortcomings of this world (Ep. 9, I, 357, 6). But, what is more relevant, the *Iḥwān* twice relate them to the term *ma'rifa* together with

<sup>14</sup> Cf., on the same line, Ep. 9, I, 376, 9.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Qur., II, 115.

<sup>16</sup> The same ideas and Qur'anic verse are repeated in ll. 15-16, 20, 23.

*baṣīra*, *istibsār* and *yaqīn* (Ep. 9, I, 374, 7; Ep. 9, I, 375, 17), and say, again twice, that the "Friends of God" are *al-ārifīn*. The contexts show that, in the first case, we could translate this term by "the gnostics" (Ep. 9, I, 338, 13); the second time, the allusion is to "those who know the true natures of things" (Ep. 38, III, 311, 8).

As to the root BSR, the "Friends of God" are twice called *ulū l-absār*, persons of view (Ep. 9, I, 357, 8; Ep. 9, I, 378, 24)<sup>17</sup>; *baṣīra* (Ep. 9, I, 374, 7) and *istibsār*, inner vision (Ep. 9, I, 375, 17; Ep. 9, I, 376, 3) are related to them; and they are finally called *al-mustabsirūna*, those who are endowed with inner vision (Ep. 9, I, 338, 13; Ep. 9, I, 375, 11; Ep. 38, III, 311, 7-8: through the eye of certainty and the light of guidance). As to the root R'Y, I think that the context of the expression *lā yarawna ḡayrahu 'alā l-ḥaqīqa*, do not see anything else in its truth (Ep. 9, I, 376, 7) could also shift the question of the *ru'yat Allāh* to the gnosiological issue, in spite of the passages quoted above. On the same line could be read the words *yarawna ḡazā' sayyi'ātihim*, they see the requital of their sins (Ep. 9, I, 338, 16). In fact, they belong to the text which opens by hinting at the elect (*ḥawāss*), the gnostic (*ārifīn*) believers and those endowed with inner vision (*mustabsirīn*), and runs as follows: "[they] appeal to God with sincerity and certainty, and night and day they are careful about what they do, as if they experienced and saw God, and find the reward of their deeds hour by hour, without any delay, even of a sole moment, and it is the good announcement (*buṣṣā*) in the worldly life, before they reach the hereafter; and they also see the requital of their sins, through which their acts are sanctioned, and only a small part of it is hidden to them". Here, also Qur., VII, 201 is quoted (where the form *mubṣirūna* appears). In my opinion, deeds are in this passage a clear consequence of knowledge, and any reward and requital can thus be known or fore-known by the *mustabsirīn*. In the same Epistle, finally, the *Iḥwān* relate right opinions, *ārā'* to the "Friends of God" (Ep. 9, I, 376, 3).

And even if we are told that the "Friends of God" regard God alone (*lā yanzurūna illā ilayhi*, Ep. 9, I, 376, 6-7) and the varieties of His beneficence, the greatness of His favour and the courtesy of His blessings (Ep. 9, I, 375, 21-22), on the other hand, the texts state that they are engaged in the *nazar*, study of the vestiges of the past (Ep. 9, I, 327, 10); of the writings of wise men and of the reports of the campaigns of past kings (Ep. 9, I, 327, 11-12) and of teachers suggestions (Ep. 9, I, 369, 15).

A careful study of such and other attributes calls for further analysis, but I will only recall here the fact that the "Friends of God" are considered as "having a firm grasp in science", *rāsihūna fi l-'ilm*, by the same words of Qur., III, 7 which, according to the *Ismā'īlī* perspective, can be referred only to the *imāms*<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> And, in the same passages, *ulū l-albāb*, persons of understanding, and *ulū n-nuhā*, persons of mind (Ep. 9, I, 357, 8-9; Ep. 9, I, 378, 24).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. e.g. Ep. 9, I, 323, 18-20; 357, 6 and 375, 16; Ep. 46, IV, 82, 19-21.



In conclusion, it should be clear, even from this very partial analysis, that the *Ihwān as-Safā'* mainly stress the qualities and activities of the *Awliyā' Allāh* related to gnosiology, as I hope to demonstrate more fully on another occasion.

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L'ELABORATION DE L'ELIXIR SELON PS.- SIGĪSTĀNĪ.  
ALCHIMIE ET COSMOGONIE DANS L'ISMAELISME TAYYIBITE

Daniel De Smet

K. U. Lewven

Parmi les manuscrits ismaéliens conservés à la Bibliothèque Universitaire de Tübingen figure un petit traité intitulé *Kitāb al-Ḡarīb fī ma'nā l-iksīr* ("Le Livre de l'Étranger concernant l'essence de l'élixir")<sup>1</sup>. Il est attribué à Abū Ya'qūb as-Sigīstānī (*li-sayyidinā Abī Ya'qūb as-Sigīstānī*) le célèbre *dā'i* ismaélien d'époque fatimide, probablement exécuté par le gouverneur du Sistān Ḥalaf b. Aḥmad vers 971 (Walker 1996:XIII). Le mot *Kitāb* dans le titre s'avère quelque peu prétentieux vu la brièveté du traité: notre manuscrit compte à peine 18 folios, d'une écriture spacieuse mais soignée. Il est daté du vendredi 25 Ḡumādā al-Awwal 1333, soit le 11 avril 1914.

Le texte semble peu répandu. Poonawala n'en mentionne que quatre manuscrits, tous modernes et transmis par la communauté Bohra aux Indes<sup>2</sup>. Ceci est confirmé par Ivanow, qui en connaissait une copie "in a private collection"<sup>3</sup>.

Déjà Ivanow avait émis des doutes quant à l'attribution de ce texte à Abū Ya'qūb as-Sigīstānī: il le classe parmi les "works doubtful" de cet auteur (Ivanow 1963:30). Le même scepticisme prudent a été adopté depuis lors par Poonawala, Sezgin et Ullmann<sup>4</sup>. Mais aucun de ces auteurs nous dévoile la raison de ses doutes.

Dès une première lecture, je ne pouvais que m'associer à leur avis: rien dans le contenu ni dans le style ne rappelle les ouvrages d'as-Sigīstānī; le traité ne comporte même aucun élément spécifiquement ismaélien<sup>5</sup>. Au contraire, une étude plus poussée

<sup>1</sup> Il porte la cote Ma VI 314 et fait partie des 44 manuscrits ismaéliens vendus en 1971 par Muḥammad Ḡālib. Selon l'inventaire inédit de cette collection, dressé par Abbas Hamdani et que Heinz Halm a eu l'obligeance de me communiquer, le manuscrit proviendrait de la collection Hamdani. Nous tenons à remercier les responsables de la Bibliothèque de Tübingen de nous en avoir fait parvenir un microfilm.

<sup>2</sup> Poonawala 1977:88 no 21: outre celui de Tübingen, il signale trois exemplaires (dont les deux premiers sont datés resp. 1313 [1895-96] et 1378 [1958-59]) dans la collection des Dā'ūdī Atbā'i Malak Wakīl à Bombay (désignée sous le sigle "Wak."). Les Dā'ūdī Atbā'i Malak Wakīl, connus également sous le nom de Artāliswālās, constituent un groupe dissident dans la communauté Bohra Dā'ūdī; cf. Daftary 1990:312.

<sup>3</sup> Ivanow 1963:30 n° 52. Ivanow et Poonawala relèvent une variante dans le titre du traité: certains manuscrits donneraient *fī ma'rifat al-iksīr* au lieu de *fī ma'nā l-iksīr*.

<sup>4</sup> Poonawala 1977:88: "It is probably not an authentic work of Sijistānī"; Sezgin 1967:575: "Die Autorschaft ist zweifelhaft"; Ullmann 1972:208: "er soll auch ein alchemistisches Werk ... geschrieben haben".

<sup>5</sup> Fait significatif, les invocations d'usage au début du traité concernent Allāh, Muḥammad et sa famille, sans aucune mention des Imams chiites.



a révélé que le texte s'apparente, tant par le style et le vocabulaire que par son contenu, au corpus des textes alchimiques transmis sous le nom de Ġābir b. Hayyān.

Ainsi, certaines particularités de style, voire certaines incorrections de langue relevées dans les écrits ġābiriens, se retrouvent dans notre traité<sup>6</sup>. L'emploi fréquent de l'expression *lā budda* en est l'exemple le plus apparent<sup>7</sup>. Mais la parenté avec la tradition ġābirienne ressort encore davantage du contenu.

Dès les premières lignes, l'auteur tente de décourager le simple curieux: "sache, ô frère, lecteur de ce livre, qu'il est le plus difficile parmi tous les livres, pour celui qui ne connaît pas notre Art" (Ps.-Siġistānī, *Garīb* 2). Certes, il s'agit là d'un préambule conventionnel dans la littérature ésotérique, mais Ġābir<sup>8</sup> se plaît à répéter que ses écrits s'adressent aux seuls "frères", tout en demeurant inaccessibles aux non-initiés<sup>9</sup>. Puis, notre Pseudo-Siġistānī, passant en revue les différentes significations du terme *ġarīb*, nous assure avec beaucoup d'emphase qu'il n'a pas choisi ce titre au hasard: il existe au contraire un lien très étroit entre le titre (le nom, *ism*) et le contenu (la signification, *ma'nā*) du livre (Ps.-Siġistānī, *Ġarīb* 2-6). Si cette remarque peut surprendre de la part d'un auteur arabe – la plupart d'entre eux semblent préférer des titres éloquentes mais fantaisistes, sans rapport direct avec le sujet traité! – elle s'explique à la lumière de la théorie du langage élaborée par Ġābir. Celle-ci conçoit le rapport entre le *ism* et le *ma'nā* comme un lien naturel et non conventionnel, ce qui forme une prémisse indispensable au *mīzān al-hurūf*, la "Balance des lettres", le fondement même de l'alchimie ġābirienne<sup>10</sup>. Dès lors, Ġābir peut se vanter, tout comme le Ps.-Siġistānī, que "dans chacun de ces livres, la part de ces sciences que nous mentionnons est celle qui correspond à la signification de son titre"<sup>11</sup>.

Le texte devra donc traiter du *Garīb*, l'"Etranger" ou plutôt l'"Etranger", notion qui s'applique à deux réalités différentes, mais complémentaires: dans la première partie du livre (soit les pages 1 à 18) elle désigne l'Imam, dans la seconde le Philosophe, l'Alchimiste qui confectionne l'Elixir.

<sup>6</sup> Notons, p. ex., la forme *awwala* au lieu de *ulā* dans Ps.-Siġistānī, *Ġarīb* 31.4; sur la présence de cette "faute" grammaticale et autres du même ordre dans le corpus ġābirien, voir Marquet 1988:134; cf. Lory 1988:8 n.3.

<sup>7</sup> Ps.-Siġistānī, *Ġarīb* 13.5, 15.1, 18.4, 20.4-5. En maint texte du corpus ġābirien, cette expression est devenue une véritable cheville; voir, p. ex. Lory 1988:140, 142 (partie arabe); Kraus 1942:5 n.l.

<sup>8</sup> Dans la suite de l'article nous désignons par cette appellation non la figure (historique?) de Ġābir b. Hayyān, mais l'auteur ou les auteurs du corpus transmis sous son nom.

<sup>9</sup> Lory 1989:106-107. Tout comme l'auteur de notre traité, Ġābir interpelle le lecteur en tant que "frère" (*ah*); cf. Lory 1989:78, 107.

<sup>10</sup> Kraus 1942:236-270 (accentue fortement les sources pythagoriciennes et platoniciennes); Lory 1989:129-134; Corbin 1950:76.

<sup>11</sup> Nous reprenons ici la traduction de Corbin (1950:87); cf. Ġābir, *Māġid* 115.

A travers une phraséologie délibérément obscure, l'auteur développe un rapport entre *al-Ġarīb* et les lettres *hamza* et *alif*: "Le *hamza* est celui qui descend dans le monde de la génération et de la corruption en vue de la rédemption (*halās*) du monde"; le *alif*, par contre, lui semble supérieur, car il s'agit d'une lettre lumineuse qui fait jaillir sa lumière sur le monde (Ps.-Siġistānī, *Garīb* 6, 9). Le *hamza* est *ġarīb* pour autant qu'il s'incorpore en prenant des apparences diverses. Malgré sa science et sa vertu, il apparaît comme un "étranger", quelqu'un de différent au commun des mortels: dès lors, les hommes ne l'aiment guère et rejettent sa mission. Mais il quitte sa qualité de *ġarīb* lorsqu'il se manifeste par la rédaction de livres (*sannaṣa lahum al-kutub*), l'établissement de lois et le fondement d'un pouvoir politique (*wada'a lahum as-siyāsāt wa š-šarā'i*). Le *alif*, par contre, est *ġarīb*, pour autant qu'il se mélange (*mazaġa*, terme alchimique!) aux hommes, tout en se soustrayant à leurs yeux: il ne peut être aperçu que par les "exilés" (*ġurabā'*, pluriel de *ġarīb*) du fond de leur exil (*ġurba*, terme tiré de la même racine que *ġarīb*) (Ps.-Siġistānī, *Garīb* 7-10).

Ce passage énigmatique s'éclaire cependant à la lumière du corpus ġābirien. Ici, le *hamza* désigne le *Nātiq* ("celui qui parle"), le Prophète législateur personnifié en Muhammad, alors que le *alif* symbolise le *Šāmit* (le "silencieux"), c'est-à-dire l'Imam dont 'Alī est le prototype. Si le *alif* muet est le *Šāmit*, connu uniquement par une élite d'initiés, parfois au terme d'efforts pénibles, le *hamza* terrestre vocalisé est le *Nātiq*, qui se manifeste dans le monde de la génération et de la corruption, "qui entreprend toute chose, qui compose les livres, qui produit arts et métiers, les sciences subtiles et les modes de gouvernement qui assureront la rédemption (*halās*) de l'univers"<sup>12</sup>.

L'irruption de l'Etranger, poursuit l'auteur du *Kitāb al-Ġarīb*, qui sans doute se réfère ici au *Šāmit*, ouvre aux adeptes la voie pour s'assimiler à lui, pour former avec lui un alliage (*mizāġ*). En s'identifiant à cette Noble Personne (*aš-šahs al-karīm*), ils atteignent le bonheur suprême. La Noble Personne de l'Etranger est alors transférée ("transmuée", *yantaqil*) en de nombreuses personnes (apparemment celles de ses initiés) qui se manifestent dans les contrées les plus diverses et les plus lointaines: en tant que Grecs (*Rūmiyyan*)<sup>13</sup> ou Persans, non-Arabs ou Arabes. Malgré ces manifestations multiples, son essence (*ma'nā*) demeure une (Ps.-Siġistānī, *Garīb*, 12-16).

Dans les écrits ġābiriens, la "noble personne" n'est autre que le *alif*, le *Šāmit*, l'Imam<sup>14</sup>, qui accomplit sa mission terrestre, perçue comme un "exil", en revêtant successivement une multitude d'enveloppes charnelles différentes (Marquet 1988:109-110, 116-117; Lory 1989:73). Du coup il devient clair que Ps.-Siġistānī partage avec

<sup>12</sup> Ġābir, *Bayān* 10-12 (cf. Marquet 1988:98, 101-102; Corbin 1950:80; Kraus 1930:37); Ġābir, *Māġid* 120, 124 (cf. Corbin 1950:93, 94 n. 105, 99; Marquet, 1988:108).

<sup>13</sup> Sans doute faut-il corriger ainsi la forme *rūsiyyan* ("Russe") dans le manuscrit, p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> Ġābir, *Bayān* 10-12; cf. Marquet 1988:98-99; Kraus 1930:37-38.



Ġābir la même imamologie ultra-chiite: préséance du *Sāmit* ou Imam (‘Alī) sur le *Nātiq* ou Prophète législateur (Muḥammad); incorporation d’un principe “divin” unique dans la lignée des Prophètes et Imams (*ḥulūl*)<sup>15</sup>.

En outre, la figure mystérieuse du *Garib* semble correspondre au personnage tout aussi énigmatique du “Glorieux” (*Māḡid*) ou de l’Orphelin-Solitaire (*Yatīm*) que Ġābir présente dans le *Kitāb al-Māḡid*. Selon l’interprétation de Corbin, il s’agirait de l’archétype de l’initié, en quelque sorte le “prototype de Ġābir”, qui se manifeste à la fois dans la personne de l’Imam et dans la multitude des initiés, les multiples “Ġābirs” qui se sont mélangés à lui, transmutés en leur essence par un processus alchimique<sup>16</sup>. La lecture de Corbin s’avère confirmée par notre texte: même ambivalence entre le *Garib* et les multiples *ḡurabā’*, même “transmutation” (*intiḡāl*) des uns dans l’autre. Le héros se révèle, de part et d’autre, comme un autodidacte: incorporant lui-même la Gnose, la connaissance ultime de l’Art, le *Garib* ou le *Māḡid* n’a pas besoin de maîtres, ni de professeurs, car il est parvenu par soi-même au rang qui constitue son essence<sup>17</sup>.

Dans la seconde partie du *Kitāb al-Ġarīb* (à partir de la page 18), Ps.-Siḡistānī change de registre, en passant du *ḡarīb* en tant que prototype, au *garīb* en tant qu’initié concret: le philosophe (*al-faylasūf*)<sup>18</sup>, le sage (*al-ḡakīm*). Celui-ci possède une doctrine (*madḡhab*)<sup>19</sup> qui est également *ḡarīb* à cause de son caractère occulte, car elle concerne la manipulation (*tadbīr*) de la Pierre au cours du Grand Œuvre, “la Porte Suprême” (*al-bāb al-‘a‘zam*)<sup>20</sup>.

L’auteur se met alors à décrire, à un niveau purement pratique, l’élaboration de l’*élixir*. En fait, il ne dévoile qu’une partie du processus, fidèle au principe ḡābirien de la “dispersion de la science” (*tabdīd al-‘ilm*). Celle-ci consiste à éparpiller sur plusieurs traités les instructions concrètes concernant les opérations alchimiques, afin de les rendre inutilisables au lecteur occasionnel. Chaque traité n’abordant qu’un aspect

partiel du Grand Œuvre, seul l’initié en possession de la clé pourra réunir toutes les pièces de façon cohérente (Lory 1988:9; Kraus 1943:XXVII-XXXIII).

Aussi, notre traité n’aborde que la phase de la fixation (*‘aqd*) de l’*élixir*. Placé au fond d’une *qārūra*<sup>21</sup> le “médicament” (*darwā’*)<sup>22</sup> est réchauffé sept fois à des feux de différentes intensités, afin de séparer la vapeur de la matière. En fonction de la température, la vapeur monte (*irtifa’*) et descend (*hubūt*) dans la bouteille (Ps.-Siḡistānī, *Ġarīb* 23-30). Après la cération (*tašmī’*), qui transforme le “médicament” en une substance visqueuse et gluante comme le miel<sup>23</sup>, vient la phase de la projection (*tarḡ*): l’*élixir* est projeté sur de l’argent blanc à raison d’un *qirāt* pour cent *raṡl* d’argent. Cet argent devient alors de l’or pur (*ibrīz*)<sup>24</sup>.

Il résulte de cette analyse que le *Kitāb al-Ġarīb fī ma’nā l-iksīr*, tant par sa terminologie<sup>25</sup> que par son contenu, s’avère très proche du corpus ḡābirien et qu’il en fait probablement partie. Parmi les quelques 3000 titres transmis sous le nom de Ġābir b. Hayyān, figure effectivement un *Kitāb al-Ġarīb*<sup>26</sup>, dont des extraits sont conservés dans le *Kitāb al-Wāfi fī t-tadbīr al-kāfi* de Muḥammad b. Aḡmad al-Masmūdī, somme alchimique composée à Tlemcen en 1492<sup>27</sup>. Dès lors, la tentation est grande d’y reconnaître notre traité<sup>28</sup>. A défaut d’avoir pu vérifier sur les manuscrits, nous ne pouvons pour l’instant trancher cette question<sup>29</sup>.

Quoi qu’il en soit, comment expliquer la présence d’un texte ḡābirien dans la littérature religieuse des Ismaéliens tayyibites?

<sup>21</sup> Sorte de grosse bouteille en verre utilisée par les alchimistes; cet instrument est fréquemment mentionné dans les écrits ḡābiriens; voir, p. ex., Lory 1988:48.10, 15; 57.14, 16, 18-22; 73.12; 142.6.

<sup>22</sup> Terme technique pour l’*élixir*; cf. Lory 1988:57.18; Kraus 1942:193 n.8, 223 n.7, 234 n.4, 262 n.2. Ġābir, en tant que médecin, aimait se servir d’un vocabulaire médical; voir Lory 1989:137; Ullmann 1972:260; Kraus 1942:2-3: “l’alchimiste emploiera des ‘médicaments’ appropriés pour guérir les ‘maladies’ des métaux. Et ces médicaments ne sont autres que les *élixirs*”.

<sup>23</sup> La comparaison de l’*élixir*, après fixation et cération, avec du miel épais revient, p. ex., dans un texte attribué à Ġa’far aṡ-Ṣādiq mais proche du corpus ḡābirien; cf. Ruska 1924:100, 118.

<sup>24</sup> Ps.-Siḡistānī, *Ġarīb* 30-32; cf. Ullmann 1972:452.

<sup>25</sup> Notons encore des expressions comme: *mīzān al-‘aql* (Ps.-Siḡistānī, *Ġarīb* 25; cf. Kraus 1942:187 n. 2) et *rafa’a al-mā’* (*Ġarīb passim*; cf. Lory 1988:41.13; 42.13; 84.12).

<sup>26</sup> Il s’agit du n° 982 dans l’inventaire de Kraus 1943:124.

<sup>27</sup> Brockelmann 1943-49: II, 334, 1937-42: II, 367 et Ullmann 1972:245, relèvent trois manuscrits complets, conservés resp. au Caire, à Alexandrie et à Rabat.

<sup>28</sup> Ce rapprochement a d’ailleurs déjà été suggéré par Kraus (1943:124), qui toutefois ne connaissait notre texte que par la brève mention dans Ivanow 1933.

<sup>29</sup> Toutefois, vu que le terme *al-ḡarīb* circule également dans la littérature alchimique arabe comme prêtre-nom au sel ammoniac (*nūsādīr*), il se pourrait que le traité de Ġābir soit consacré à la fonction de ce produit et qu’il ne présente par conséquent aucun rapport avec le nôtre; cf. Siggel 1951:46.

<sup>15</sup> Marquet 1988:110-113; sur la notion de *ḥulūl*, voir Straface 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Corbin 1950:104-105; cf. Lory 1989:81, 83-84. Marquet 1988:109, a sans doute raison d’insister sur le fait que Corbin exagère chez Ġābir le rôle de Salmān, notamment en voulant à tout prix reconnaître des traits “salmāniens” dans la figure du *Māḡid*.

<sup>17</sup> Ps.-Siḡistānī, *Ġarīb* 16-17; Ġābir, *Māḡid* 118, 119, 123; cf. Corbin 1950:74-75, 90, 92, 98, 104; Marquet 1988:107.

<sup>18</sup> Dans le vocabulaire ḡābirien, *faylasūf* désigne l’alchimiste, celui qui est initié aux arcanes de l’Art. La fréquence de cet emploi ressort, p. ex., de l’index dressé par Lory 1988:188 (*s.v. al-falsafa et al-faylasūf*); cf. Marquet 1988:116; Lory 1989:54, 55 n. 54, 145.

<sup>19</sup> Ġābir désigne les différentes fractions ou écoles d’alchimistes avec les termes *ṭawā’if*, *madāhib* ou *milal*; elles ont toutes leur propre doctrine (*madḡhab*) quant à la confection de l’*élixir*; cf. Lory 1988:13-14.

<sup>20</sup> Ps.-Siḡistānī, *Ġarīb* 18-22. La “Porte Suprême” se réfère chez Ġābir à l’ensemble des opérations alchimiques; cf. Kraus 1942:7.



Certes, depuis Kraus, on a beaucoup écrit sur l'appartenance religieuse de Ġābir. Kraus, suivi encore récemment par Yves Marquet, était persuadé que les auteurs ġābiriens étaient des Ismaéliens de tendance qarmate, voire même pro-fatimide<sup>30</sup>. Toutefois, les analyses de Pierre Lory ont montré de façon convaincante que l'imamologie ġābirienne appartient au courant ultra-chiite, proche des mouvements *ġulāt*<sup>31</sup>. En soi, il n'est pas rare que des textes ultra-chiites étrangers à la doctrine ismaélienne aient été conservés en un milieu ismaélien, suite aux aléas de l'histoire: ainsi, l'*Umm al-Kitāb* a été transmis par les Ismaéliens d'Asie Centrale et le *Kitāb al-Haft*, apparenté au Nusayrisme, par les Ismaéliens de Syrie (Ivanow 1932:419-420, 427-428; Halm 1978:219-223, 263-265). Mais dans le cas présent, il pourrait y avoir une raison plus profonde.

En effet, les auteurs tayyibites développent volontiers des thèmes empruntés à l'alchimie. Leur système repose entièrement sur la notion de continuité, non seulement entre le monde spirituel des archétypes et le monde sensible, mais également entre les trois règnes qui constituent ce dernier. D'où la présence d'une chaîne ininterrompue d'êtres, véritable *scala naturae* qui relie en une hiérarchie très stricte les métaux les plus vils – les substances noires et puantes comme le naphte et le goudron, le point le plus bas dans la procession des êtres – au corps camphré (*ġism kāfūrī*) de l'Imam, dans lequel la matière sublimée rejoint le Plérôme des Intelligences séparées<sup>32</sup>. Si les nombreux maillons de cette chaîne constituent autant de jalons, d'étapes intermédiaires dans la remontée de l'âme déchue vers son origine céleste, la matière elle-même, porteuse de ces âmes, peut se sublimer, se purifier en une matière plus noble. Aussi les minéraux, tous dotés d'une âme, croissent sous certaines conditions au sein de la terre et peuvent se transmuier en des espèces plus nobles, jusqu'à atteindre le rang de l'or et du rubis. Selon un auteur tayyibite anonyme, chaque âme minérale loue le

<sup>30</sup> Kraus 1943:XLVIII-LVII; Id. 1930:30-36, 38-40; Marquet 1988:96-129, 132-133; Id. 1986. Sous l'influence du livre de Lory (voir note suivante), Marquet s'est montré par la suite plus prudent, tout en demeurant fidèle à sa thèse ismaélienne; cf. Marquet 1991a et 1991b. De même Corbin, bien que de façon moins explicite, voit dans le corpus ġābirien un produit ismaélien; cf. Corbin 1950:55-56, 61, 66; Id. 1964:184-189. Vouloir déceler des tendances ismaéliennes dans le corpus ġābirien n'est possible que si on lui assigne, comme font Kraus et Marquet, une datation tardive (2<sup>e</sup> moitié du 9<sup>e</sup> s.). Si, par contre, on le fait remonter un siècle plus tôt, à l'époque de Ġa'far as-Sādiq, on voit mal comment Ġābir aurait pu être ismaélien; pour un état de cette question fort débattue, voir Haq 1994:8-30 (en particulier pp. 21-24).

<sup>31</sup> Lory 1989:41-44, 62-66, 73, 85-94, 96, 115-119; cf. 116-117: "plutôt que de 'tendances ismaéliennes' pourrait-on parler de mouvance 'pré-nusayrie' à propos de notre Corpus". Le climat intellectuel qui serait à la base de la science ġābirienne a été étudié par Capezzone 1997.

<sup>32</sup> Sur cette *scala naturae*, voir De Smet 2001.

Créateur à sa façon: en fonction de la sincérité et de la pureté de ce *taṣbīḥ*, elle transmue le corps minéral auquel elle est liée en une substance supérieure<sup>33</sup>.

La conviction que les minéraux, en tant qu'êtres animés, croissent lentement au sein de la terre, est le postulat fondamental de l'alchimie. Il se retrouve par ailleurs dans les "Épîtres des Frères Sincères" (*Rasā'il Ihwān as-Safā'*) (Marquet 1988:23-27) auxquelles les Tayyibites ont tant emprunté. Pour ne citer qu'un seul exemple de cette dépendance: la gnose tayyibite fait éclore le premier homme de notre présent cycle – l'Adam partiel (*al-Ādam al-ġuz'i*) – et ses 28 compagnons dans les cavernes de l'île de Sarandīb (Ceylan), suite à une génération spontanée pleine de réminiscences alchimiques (Ibn al-Walīd, *Mabda'* 112-113, §§ 31-32; al-Hāmidī, *Kanz* 150, 154). Déjà pour les *Ihwān*, Sarandīb se prêtait admirablement à la génération spontanée (Marquet 1988:36).

Malgré cet héritage alchimique commun, la littérature tayyibite accorde au vocabulaire de l'alchimie partique un sens symbolique dont on cherchera en vain l'équivalent chez les *Ihwān*. Sans pouvoir entrer ici dans les détails, il suffit de lire les textes tayyibites décrivant les différentes étapes de purification et de sublimation qui mènent à la constitution du "corps camphré" de l'Imam<sup>34</sup>, pour s'apercevoir qu'ils reposent sur toute une doctrine alchimique, liée de surcroît à une symbolique des couleurs<sup>35</sup>.

Dès lors l'Imam, qui représente par la noblesse de son âme et de son corps la nature sublimée, est comparé au rubis, ce précieux joyaux qui forme avec l'or le point ultime de l'évolution des minéraux, le but final de la quête alchimique (Strothmann 1943:7-8). En tant que produit du Grand Œuvre, l'Imam est pareil à l'élixir (al-Hāmidī, *Kanz* 153, 221; Strothmann 1943:45-46). Tel un orfèvre qui travaille l'argent (Strothmann 1943:22-23), il opère sur les créatures – corps et âmes – et accélère par son action et par son enseignement le processus de maturation et de purification; il est "le levain créateur" (*al-ḥamīra al-ibdā'iyya*)<sup>36</sup> qui excite la fermentation des êtres, active leur passage de la puissance à l'acte et prépare leur transmutation vers la perfection seconde (De Smet 1999b:266-269).

<sup>33</sup> Strothmann 1943:97-98; cf. *ibid* 105-106, 106-107, 127; al-Hāmidī, *Kanz* 134-148, 275; 'Imād ad-Dīn, *Zahr* 83-96.

<sup>34</sup> Ainsi, p. ex., al-Hāmidī, *Kanz* 150, 153-154, 185-186, 189-193, 201, 212-213; Ibn al-Walīd, *Mabda'* 119-120, 123-125, §§ 48-51, 60-64; Strothmann 1943:7-9, 55-56, 75, 155, 164; cf. De Smet 1999a:45-53; Feki 1978:203-209; Filippani-Ronconi 1973:88-89.

<sup>35</sup> Un symbolisme alchimique très analogue se retrouve par ailleurs dans certains courants du chiisme duodécimain, notamment au sein de l'école *Ṣayḥī*; cf. Corbin 1979:211-249.

<sup>36</sup> al-Hāmidī, *Kanz* 173-175. En alchimie arabe, le levain (*ḥamīra*) désigne l'élixir; cf. Ullmann in *Et* s.v. "al-Iksir"; Id. 1972:259.



Il serait certes téméraire dans l'état actuel des recherches ismaéliennes, de vouloir s'exprimer sur les sources alchimiques auxquelles ont puisé les auteurs tayyibites<sup>37</sup>. Toutefois, la notion de l'Imam-élixir nous ramène à Ġābir et à notre Ps.-Siġistānī. En maint endroit du corpus ġābirien, l'Imam est associé à l'élixir, qui par son action provoque une transmutation dans l'âme du croyant: il la blanchit, la rend plus subtile et lumineuse (Corbin 1950:59-60, 75, 112; Kraus 1930:35-36; Lory 1989:60-62, 74-75, 80; Id. 1988:17). Le message central du *Kitāb al-Ġarīb* consiste justement à montrer que l'Imam-étranger, prototype de l'initié-alchimiste qui grâce à l'enseignement du maître élabore l'élixir, n'est autre que l'Elixir Suprême personnifié. Même si l'Imam dont parle Ġābir n'est pas tout à fait l'Imam des Ismaéliens, on conçoit aisément que ceux-ci aient pu lire leur imamologie dans un traité comme le *Kitāb al-Ġarīb*.

La présence dans la littérature tayyibite d'un traité alchimique de tradition ġābirienne, circulant sous le nom d'un des grands docteurs fatimides, pourrait s'expliquer comme une tentative de récupération de l'œuvre de Ġābir b. Hayyān par les Ismaéliens postérieurs. Le fait serait alors analogue au sort des *Iḥwān as-Ṣafā'*, dont les écrits ont été accaparés par les Tayyibites, qui les ont attribués à un des Imams ismaéliens cachés, antérieurs à l'avènement des Fatimides (al-Hamdani 1932).

Cependant, si les citations des *Iḥwān as-Ṣafā'* abondent dans les traités tayyibites, les références explicites à Ġābir b. Hayyān semblent rares, pour ne pas dire inexistantes<sup>38</sup>. Notre *Kitāb al-Ġarīb*, traité ġābirien transmis par les Ismaéliens, constituerait-il alors une curiosité? Une exploration plus systématique de la littérature ismaélienne permettra peut-être un jour de répondre à cette question.

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<sup>37</sup> Outre les *Rasā'il Iḥwān as-Ṣafā'*, des allusions alchimiques sont contenues dans la *Risalat al-Ġāmi'a*, attribuée aux *Iḥwān* et à laquelle les Tayyibites se réfèrent fréquemment (voir, p. ex., *Ġāmi'a* 18-21, 471). Mais à elles seules ces deux sources ne suffisent pas à expliquer la riche symbolique alchimique dans la littérature tayyibite.

<sup>38</sup> Cortese (2000:97) signale dans une *maġmū'a* ismaélienne [155/1033] un traité intitulé: *Masā'il Ġābir ilā Mawlānā as-Ṣādiq* (fols. 34v-43v).

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ON THE PERIPHERY OF TWO WORLDS:  
SOME ASPECTS OF THE CONTEMPORARY PERCEPTION  
OF ISLAMIC TRADITION AMONG THE MUSLIMS IN THE BALKANS

Simeon Evstatiev

*St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia*

The last decade of the post-communist history of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe after the end of the cold war are accompanied by a specific process in which the growing importance of two factors in the life of the individual and the society is remarkable. The first one is religion and the second one is nationalism; however, as the case of Bosnia has already proved, they have frequently been interwoven. Certainly, the characteristic features of this return to religious roots differs according to the social and cultural background in any particular region and country in the post-communist world. In the Balkans, and particularly in Bulgaria, they are variable in keeping with regional peculiarities. Here, as Sabine Riedel pointed out, the discourse about Islam is frequently influenced by "The Clash of Civilizations" of Samuel Huntington, who argues that the contemporary conflicts are rooted not in the ideological and economic but in the cultural background (Riedel 1997:539).

Our analysis of the contemporary situation of Islam in the Balkans will be more comprehensive if we consider it in its relation to Islam in the central Islamic lands, because we face here the issue of the re-establishment of contact with the great centers of Muslim education and propaganda, which had been broken for half a century. Certainly, I could not pretend to present here a comprehensive study of the issue in the Balkan Peninsula as a whole, which explains why the contemporary situation in Bulgaria has been chosen as a representative case for some recent tendencies.

Contemporary Islam is a dynamic and diverse complex of doctrines and social practices. This process, in which Islam, or some of its dimensions, have been involved, has been defined in a variety of ways. It has been called "Islamic revivalism", "Islamic resurgence", or "Islamic fundamentalism". In a similar context, we also frequently meet the term "political Islam", occasionally associated with "militant Islam" and "radical Islam", though the last two, defined as "extremism" (Sivan 1997:3), are not our concern here. Thus has the image developed of an Islam which is expected to become the greatest danger to Europe after the fall of communism (Leveau 1997:3). Recently, the term "Islamism" has been adopted to refer to those who wish to see Islam play a greater role in society and politics (Heper 1997:33). That is why "Muslim" is not synonymous with "Islamist" in the sense that the former expresses a religious identity, while the latter implies a political consciousness and social action (Göle 1997:47). Generally speaking, since the 1970s the dominant theme of Islam has been its resurgence (Esposito 1998:158).



However, from its earliest history, Islam was closely related to the ideas of renewal (*tağdīd*) and reform (*islāh*), which we find in the Qur'ān (7:170, 11:117; 28:19) and the prophetic Sunna. *Tağdīd* is based on the following tradition (*hadīth*) of Muḥammad: "God will send to this *umma* [the Muslim community] at the head of each century those who will renew its faith for it" (Voll 1983:33).

The misunderstanding of the core of Islamic reformism and renewal frequently originates from this early perception of renewal in Islam. I am referring to the fact that although Muslim dogma prescribes the necessity of renewal (*tağdīd*), this *tağdīd* has been perceived as a restoration rather than an innovation of religious and social principles. Thus, in medieval Muslim awareness renewal meant a return to the roots and fundamentals of Islam. The fundamentals are, of course, the Qur'ān and the Sunna, but the ideal of early Muslims (*as-salaf as-sāliḥūn*) and their religious-political community (*umma*) are also important in this context. That is why it is crucial to study the neorevivalist notion of the Muslim community (*umma*) as a reinterpretation of the classical medieval *umma* doctrine. Moreover, it appears that the understanding of human rights by modern Muslims is also based on it.

The classical (medieval) *umma* doctrine can be defined as a metahistorical, multi-ethnic logocracy, where the latter refers to obedience to God's Word. If for Christians God's Word is the person of Jesus Christ, for Muslims it is incarnated in the Scripture (van Ess 1991:I, 34). The *umma* in its classical meaning is thus a theocratic social community which is obedient to ontological purposes. Still, in medieval Islam the ideal of this theocracy required political rule to be linked not to a king but to Allāh and his messenger Muḥammad (Wellhausen 1960:5-6). That is why "there could be no distinction here of Church and State. The *umma*, the "Community" partook of the nature of both and the purposes of one are the purposes of the other" (Levi 1979:275-276). This community, historically established by the prophet Muḥammad, has both historical and metahistorical purposes and is defined by the Qur'ān as "the community of the centre" by the following statement of God: "Thus we appointed you a midmost nation (*umma wasat*) that you might be witnesses to the people, and that the Messenger might be a witness to you"<sup>1</sup>. The notion of the importance of the *umma* in the history of mankind has been elaborated by the religious scholars (*ulamā*).

Furthermore, as Ira Lapidus argues, the Middle Eastern Islamic heritage provides two basic paradigms of society in history. The first one is the society integrated in its various dimensions – political, social, and moral – under the aegis of Islam. It was historically implemented during the life of Muḥammad and the 'Pious Caliphs' (*ar-Rāṣidūn*) who ruled the *umma* in the first three decades of Islamic history (632-660) until the first civil war (*fitna*) and the dynastic consolidation of the Caliphate. This

<sup>1</sup> The Qur'ān, 2:143. The translation used throughout is that of Arberry (1983).

historical period constitutes the normative revivalist ideal of society, which has inspired ever-renewed movements to restore the wholeness of the *umma*. The second paradigm is the imperial Islamic society, built on the manifold structures of previous Middle Eastern societies. By the eleventh century, Middle Eastern states and religious communities were highly differentiated and the state and religion were practically separated (Lapidus 1992:14-16).

However, the idea of Islam as a religious belief that covers all aspects of life and denies the theoretical separation between religion and politics is formulated in the prescription according to which "Islam is religion and state" (*al-Islām dīn wa-dawla*). That is why, theoretically, in medieval Islam political life could not exist separately from the *ṣarī'a*. The system of the caliphate (*ḫilāfa*), to which the greater part of the Islamic world's social history during the Middle Ages is linked, should be a practical implementation of the theoretical ideal of the inseparability of religion and politics. Historical practice, however, often comes into conflict with that ideal system, as predicted by the *ṣarī'a*, which enabled the recent rise of a differentiated nonreligious concept of political authority.

Although this secularist perspective was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century by the modernists, the majority of Islamic reformers in modern times have accepted the revivalist ideal of the early *umma* because of its unifying character. Neorevivalism emerged in the first half of the twentieth century and was most remarkably represented by the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Iḥwān al-Muslimūn*) of Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906-1949) in Egypt and the Islamic Society (*Ġamā'at-i-Islāmī*) of Abū l-'Alā' al-Mawdūdī (1903-1979) in the Indian subcontinent. Both of them combined religion with a social activism in order to solve the problems of the Islamic community (*umma*) which they considered to be at a critical crossroads. That is why Ḥasan al-Bannā, his later influential ideologue Sayyid Quṭb (d. 1962), and al-Mawdūdī reinterpreted classical Islamic historical paradigms to respond to the sociohistorical demands of the twentieth century. They regarded Islam as an all-embracing ideology (Esposito 1998:151).

Sayyid Quṭb stated that "Islam needed a revival"<sup>2</sup> in order to save the contemporary society from the new "ignorance" (*ġābiliyya*) in which it had fallen again. And according to al-Mawdūdī, "the *ṣarī'a* is a complete scheme of life and an all embracing social order" (al-Mawdūdī 1977:5).

As John Esposito pointed out (1998:165), analysis shows that in spite of the diversity of interpretations, there is a common ideological framework of Islamic revivalism which includes the following set of ideas:

- Islam is a totalistic and comprehensive "way of life". Religion is an integral part of politics, law, and society. Here the following statement of the late Ayatollah Ḥomeynī is representative: "Islam is politics, or it is nothing."

<sup>2</sup> As quoted by Ignatenko (1988:134).



- The secularism and “materialism” of Western societies are condemned while modernization as such is not.
- Islamic law must replace the Western inspired civil codes.

This call for re-Islamization requires organizations of trained and educated Muslims who should struggle against corruption and social injustice.

In our case, it would be very interesting to compare this revivalist paradigm from the central Islamic lands with the situation in Bulgaria in order to trace its influence on Bulgarian Muslims. In the last years, substantial research on the religious situation in Bulgaria has been carried out by a variety of scholars. Their efforts were largely united by the valuable activity of the *International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations* which contributed to the increase of historical, ethnological and sociological knowledge of the Muslims in Bulgaria and their relationship with the Christian majority. This is why I try only to assess the current development of the situation of the Muslims in Bulgaria from the viewpoint of the neorevivalist perception of the classical *umma* doctrine. In post-communist Europe, the situation of the Muslim community has changed. In Bulgaria, though some differences between Christians and Muslims in the perception of human rights remain, a dynamic and comprehensive progress in observing the Muslims' human rights is obvious. On the other hand, the democratization of society and state allowed the Bulgarian Muslims to establish direct and free contacts with Muslims from Europe, Turkey, Iran, and the central Arabic-speaking lands of Islam.

That is why we do find some evidence of the efforts of the “small” Bulgarian *umma* to return to the greater Islamic community. This tendency has been manifested in some data according to which a variety of Muslim emissaries came to Bulgaria in the last few years. If we trust the information on such emissaries, there are representatives here from Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Furthermore, one reads in the press of the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood (Dimitrova 303-305) and some sects like the Ahmadiyya which has troubled the main office of the Mufti in Bulgaria<sup>3</sup>. In this context, a significant example is the activity of the newspaper “Myusulmani” which is generally deeply interested in the affairs of the “greater” *umma*.

One finds in this newspaper a calendar for 1995 in which some dates, apparently accepted as memorable for Muslims, are given with the respective dates in the Christian and Muslim eras. Example of such memorable events are: (3.1) the foundation of the Movement for Rights and Liberties; (7.1) the end of the forcible change of the names of Turks in Bulgaria; (13.1) the foundation of the Ottoman empire (1299); (5.4) the death of Gāzī ‘Uṭmān Pasha (1900) etc. Most of the events are taken from Ottoman history and, though the national holiday of Bulgaria is mentioned (3.3), we also find some of the most tragic events of Bulgarian national history: the battle of

<sup>3</sup> Cf. “Opasnostta Ahmadiyya”, v. *Myusulmani*, 2/1999.

Nikopol (1396); the fall of Tarnovo (1389), as well as the victory at Kosovo (1463) <1389><sup>4</sup>. This calendar is an evidence of an attempt for the restoration of the broken relations of Bulgarian Muslims to the greater Islamic community. As we saw, the Ottoman Empire has been chosen to be a specific center for “our” *umma*.

In order to test the level of religiosity and affiliation of the future Muslim “clerical” elite to the *umma* in 1999, I made a sociological investigation in the recently established Islamic High Institute in Sofia. I suggest that it is important to survey the views of young Muslims who study at this Institute with the intention of receiving later a job as *hugḡas* or *muftī*s. Of course, the female students are supposed to work later as teachers of Islamic religion in the schools that have recently been allowed to operate by the Bulgarian state. My research was stimulated by an analysis of the census data from 1992 made by Petar-Emil Mitev. Apparently, the census made in 1992 was in itself evidence of the heightened level of formal religious affiliation, shown in the censuses of the population in 1926, 1934 and 1946. In these censuses, 84 to 86% of the population were Christians, mainly Orthodox while 14 to 15% were Muslims. In 1992 these data show 86,6% Christians, of whom 80% are Orthodox, and 13,1% Muslims, who are either Sunnī or Šī‘ī. Here we see an interesting phenomenon defined by the author of the survey as a “new type of religiosity”. Every fifth Bulgarian Christian identifies himself with “Christian culture as a whole”. As far as Muslims are concerned, the tendency is even more strongly emphasized: only 17% of the Turks and 13% of the Pomaks identify themselves as Sunnī. 2% of the Turks and 1% of the Pomaks are Šī‘ī. However, 68% of the Turks and 52% of the Pomaks identify themselves with “Islamic culture as a whole”.

We face the question, then, whether this affiliation with “Islamic culture as a whole” is in fact “a new type of religiosity” or just an expression of the efforts of the “small” Bulgarian *umma* to be part of the “big” *umma* and the greater Muslim world. Here the issue appears of what Bulgarian Muslims mean when the expression “Islamic culture as a whole” is used – whether the classical achievements of Arab-Islamic civilization, deprived of political relevance, or just the religious-political community of Islam (the *umma*). Such an aspect is very important because it shows the rate of the integration of Muslims into Bulgarian society. For this time, we only introduce the issue without being comprehensive. The increasing importance of education in the life of Bulgarian Muslims (for example, many children study the Qur’ān in certain villages) is exemplified by the foundation of the Islamic High Institute in Sofia. It was there that I tried, by means of sociological inquiry, to observe how the future “clerical” elite of Bulgarian Muslims imagine some of the basic and most representative formulations of Islamic doctrine. For the purpose of our investigation, 25 students

<sup>4</sup> See Peev 1997:195.



of the Islamic High Institute participated in the inquiry. They were 16 men and 9 women from the first, second and third grade.

They all identify themselves as Sunnī (of whom 16 are Turks and 3 Pomaks, while 6 did not disclose their ethnic affiliation). For 96% of those asked the role of religion in their lives is significant. 52% of the sample respond that they belong to the whole Muslim community (*umma*) and 44% – to “Islamic Culture as a whole”. That is why it is interesting to hear their own definitions of the *umma*, presented as answers to the question “What does the Islamic community (*umma*) mean to you?”. The responses can be divided into three types:

1. The first one can be formulated briefly as: “absolutely everything.”
2. In the second, the *umma* is defined as “the followers of Islam”. The following concrete responses are given as examples of this category:
  - “The cultural, spiritual, moral, social and economic connection of all Muslims without ethnic, national and racial divides.”
  - “A community of people who believe in Allāh and monotheism, and stick to the Qur’ān, the Sunna and the five pillars of Islam.”
  - “Brotherhood, unity among people in the name of Allāh; people following the path of Allāh.”
  - “All people who believe that Allāh is One and Muḥammad is his messenger and follow the Sunna.”

There are also definitions of the kind:

- “The nicest and most preferred, the most modern.”
3. The third type is: “Self-identification by showing religious tolerance”. Here the following responses are given:
    - “Devotion to the Qur’ān and the Sunna without intervening in someone else’s [spiritual] life. [Islam] must not be imposed on anyone by force.”
    - “The Islamic community aims to create connections with other communities and religions in order to develop cultural and socio-political relations”.

According to two thirds of those asked, the affiliation of a Muslim to a certain legal-theological school (*madhab*) or an Islamic sect is of great importance for his cultural and social life. The majority (88%) prefer the classical Qur’ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*) to its allegoric interpretation (*ta’wīl*). Most of them believe that the fate of man and community are guided by the interference of Allāh – either on a permanent or an occasional basis.

To the question “which is the greatest sin”, the majority answers that it is idolatry (*shirk*), i.e. associating other creatures with Allāh, as well as disbelief (*kufir*). 92% consider that religion must cover all spheres of the society nowadays (that is why 72% think that it is not necessary to divide power into secular and spiritual, while 24% consider this division an important factor).

Two thirds of those asked think that Islam must not be reformed because everything is defined clearly by the Qur’ān and the Sunna, and it must be followed with-

out any invention. One third think that Islam needs to be reformed by interpreting these two fundamental sources having in mind the contemporary reality, because historic development leads to the reinterpretation of religious fundamentals.

As far as the constitution of society is concerned, closest to their ideal of a state with an overwhelmingly Muslim population is, according to 44% or 12 persons of those asked, Turkey. Another four persons mentioned Saudi Arabia, two Egypt, one person each opting for Kuwait, Iraq, Syria, Chechnya, Indonesia and Bulgaria. Three think that no country is close to their ideal. The following answer is interesting: “There is no such a country; though I wish that all people become Muslims and save themselves, I would not live in the countries founded by them”.

To the question who is the most liked Muslim statesman and politician of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 16 persons did not respond, four (3 women and a man) mentioned the deceased king of Jordan Husayn (though Jordan was nowhere indicated as an ideal of social system). Two of them mentioned N. Erbakan, and one did Sultan Abdul Hamīd, Johar Dudaev and Saddām Husayn, respectively. Therefore we have received a variety of opinions.

There was a special question: “Are the human and civil rights of Muslims in Bulgaria observed by the state”. Only 12% responded negatively. It is worth mentioning that more than half (52%) think that those rights are fully observed, while 24% responded “to a certain extent” or “regarding the government in Sofia – yes, but not in some regions”.

Only one person of those asked thinks that the relations between Christians and Muslims are not of particular importance, while 12 of them consider these relations very useful in the educational and cultural sense; and nine, in the socio-economical and political sense.

Considering that only one of the students was married, we may find interesting the answers to the question: “Would you marry a person different from your own confession?” The answers are respectively: “no (76%, or 19 persons), “yes” (16%, or 4 persons, and one of them gives a specific answer – “yes, a Christian woman”). Another (woman) said, “I do not know”; and one person did not respond to that question.

If we summarize the data and the responses in our inquiry, we shall not be able to give a definite answer about the influence of neorevivalism on the Muslims in Bulgaria. Until now, they have not been united by a comprehensive ideology. We face a variety of influences and forms of re-Islamization, which has gained momentum after the end of the Cold War. However, Muslims in Bulgaria are unified by a common tendency of the gradual returning of the “Bulgarian” *umma* to the values and virtues spread by the greater *umma* in the central Islamic lands. It is natural that this ideal in Bulgaria focuses on the Ottoman past and the Turkish world embodied today by Turkey. Thus, religious identity is frequently “absorbed” by an ethnic one, and Islam is mixed up with nationalism in a complex way.



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## DIE WEIBLICHEN ASPEKTE DES GÖTTLICHEN IN DER MYSTISCHEN THEOLOGIE VON IBN 'ARABI

Mariana Malinova

*St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia*

Die Feminisierung des Göttlichen<sup>1</sup> ist ein wichtiger Aspekt in der mystischen Theologie von dem Grossen Scheich Ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240). Ihm kommt eine wichtige Rolle in der Darstellung des Archetypus des Weiblichen im Islam zu. Das Ziel unseres Artikels ist die mannigfaltigen Äusserungen dieses Archetypus zu verfolgen.

Die weiblichen Dimensionen des Göttlichen stellen sich im Kurationsmodell von Ibn 'Arabī dar, in dem er die absolute Transzendenz Gottes und die Vielfalt der erschaffenen Welt zu versöhnen versucht. Dabei finden wir ein kompliziertes kosmologisches Bild, in dem das Weibliche eine mittlere Stellung in der mystischen Vision einnimmt und immer dort auftaucht, wo man die göttliche Rechtfertigung der Schöpfung und den göttlichen Ursprung der erschaffenen Welt sucht.

Nach dem mystischen Mythos ist die göttliche Liebe und die Sehnsucht Gottes nach Selbst-Erkenntnis die einzige Ursache der Schöpfung. Entsprechend dem *ḥadīth qudsī*: "Ich war ein verborgener Schatz und wollte erkannt werden, so erschuf Ich die Welt", stellt Sich der Gott Selbst durch die Welt dar, oder, anders gesagt, Er macht Sich selbst als Objekt Seiner Erkenntniskraft. Die göttliche Wesenheit (*ad-dāt al-ilāhiyya*), die die Fülle von unendlichen Möglichkeiten der Schöpfung in sich enthält und durch welche Sich der Gott in der Welt offenbart, gibt den Anfang einer Reihe von göttlichen Manifestationen – Theophanien (*tagalliyāt*). Das erste, was vom Gott erschaffen wurde, ist der Geist, durch dessen Vermittlung das Weltall entstand, weil er der Vermittler vom Wort Gottes ist, durch das alles geschaffen wurde. Diese erste Offenbarung Gottes besitzt die höchste Weisheit (*al-ḥikma al-ulwiyya*) Gottes (*Targumān* 168). In der geschaffenen Welt bilden die Weisheiten der Propheten (ihnen wurden die einzelnen Kapiteln in *Fusus al-ḥikam* gewidmet), das gesammte und in der Vielfalt der Welt zerstreute Bild dieser höchsten Weisheit. Die Prophetenkette ist von ihrer Seite die Offenbarung vom Wort Gottes in der menschlichen Geschichte, und Ibn 'Arabī nennt ihren ewigen Prototyp *al-ḥaqīqa al-muḥammadiyya*. Die "muhammadanische Realität" ist das Erste, was vom Gott erschaffen wurde, weil sie in dem Kurationsprozess da war, "als Adam zwischen Wasser und Erde war (*Fusus* 214)". Als das organisierende Prinzip des Seins, trägt sie und vermittelt die göttliche Energie, wobei sie das reine Sein und die Welt verbindet.

<sup>1</sup> Siehe: Austin 1984; Corbin 1969:136-145; Schimmel 1992:612.



In einer anthropozentrischen Perspektive erscheint die "muhammadanische Realität" als der vollkommene Mensch. Während Gott das absolute und vollkommene Sein ist, ist der vollkommene Mensch die vollkommene Darstellung Gottes. Nur der Mensch hat die Möglichkeit Gott zu erkennen, weil er noch bei seiner Kreation durch Gott als Symbol der göttlichen Selbsterkenntnis wurde (*Er lehrte Adam alle Namen*. Q. 2:31). Der vollkommene Mensch als die beste Schöpfung Gottes enthält in sich alle göttlichen Namen, umfasst die geschaffene Welt in Potenz und ist die eigentliche Verbindung zwischen der göttlichen Wesenheit und der geschaffenen Welt. Alles in der Welt hat seinen Anfang und sein Ziel in ihm<sup>2</sup>.

Der vollkommene Mensch ist bei Ibn 'Arabī auch der himmlische Adam als Symbol des menschlichen Geschlechts von einer Seite und von der anderen ist er der konkrete Mystiker, der sich nach der Vollkommenheit und der Erkenntnis des geistigen Prototypus strebt. Die Dynamik des Kurationsprozesses wird bei Ibn 'Arabī durch die Liebe bestimmt. Sie ist die wichtigste Etappe in der mystischen Praxis der *tariqa*. In seiner Liebe lässt sich der Mystiker vom Vorbild des Propheten leiten. Nach der Überlieferung sagte der Prophet: "Gott hat mir drei Dinge lieb gemacht: Parfüm und Frauen, und mein Herzenstrost ist im Gebet". Diese Tradition liegt der universellen mystischen Vision des Grossen Scheichs zugrunde, und ihr ist das 27. Kapitel von seinen *Fuṣūṣ al-hikam* gewidmet. Während in der Kreation der vollkommene Mensch das Medium ist, mit dessen Hilfe der Gott Sich erkennen und offenbaren kann, so ist im Prozess der geistigen Vervollkommnung des Mystikers die Rolle des Mediums von der Frau übernommen. Die Frau ist das schönste Geschöpf auf der Erde und deshalb ist sie die höchste Theophanie in der Welt, weil nach der Überlieferung *Allāh schön ist und die Schönheit liebt*. In diesem Sinne ist die Frau das volle Symbol der göttlichen Präsenz in der Welt. Die Frau fokussiert in sich die beiden Pole der Schöpfung – den aktiven und kreativen und den duldligen und sich hingebenden. Die Kreativität der Frau bezieht sich nicht auf ihre Funktion als Mutter, sondern auf ihre Funktion als Vermittlerin, denn durch ihre Schönheit erweckt die Frau im Herzen des Mannes die irdische Liebe, die im mystischen Pfad die Brücke zur göttlichen Liebe ist. Wenn der Mystiker die Schönheit der Frau genießt, erreicht er einen neuen geistlichen Aufstieg auf dem mystischen Pfad, der ihn zu einer neuen höheren Stufe in der Seinshierarchie führt.

Wenn der Mann Gott (*al-haqq*) in der Frau schaut, dann betrachtet er Ihn als etwas passives (*munfa'al*). Wenn er Ihn in sich selbst durch die Frau, die von ihm erschaffen wurde, schaut, dann schaut er Ihn als aktiv (*fā'il*). Die Betrachtung von Allah in der Gestalt der Frau ist die vollste und die höchste [Schau], weil der

<sup>2</sup> Das erinnert uns an die Sophiologie in der christlich orthodoxen Mystik. Die Idee der göttlichen Weisheit (*Sophia*) ist die Idee der Teilnahme der Welt an dem Wesen Gottes und der harmonischen Ordnung des Universums.

Mann Allah als aktiv und passiv betrachtet [...] Deshalb liebt der Prophet die Frauen, wegen der vollen Schau Gottes in ihnen (*Fuṣūṣ* 217).

Nach dem Grossen Scheich ist die irdische Liebe das Symbol der göttlichen. Die Frau, nach ihm, ist ein Teil von dem Mann und deshalb stellt die Liebe des Mannes zur Frau die Sehnsucht des Ganzen dar, das sich mit seinen in der Schöpfung zerstreuten Teilen zu vereinigen versucht.

Ihm [Muhammad] wurden Frauen lieb gemacht, und deshalb sehnte er sich nach ihnen, das war das Sehnen (*hanīn*) des Ganzen nach seinen Teilen (*Fuṣūṣ* 217).

Die göttliche Liebe ist nichts anders als die Sehnsucht "des verborgenen Schatzes" nach der Schöpfung und die Sehnsucht der erschaffenen Welt sich zu seinem Kreator zurückzukehren.

Im Mikrokosmos wiederholt die Beziehung zwischen der göttlichen Wesenheit (*dāt ilāhiyya*), dem Menschen Adam und der von ihm erschaffenen Frau Eva (*Ḥawā'*) die Beziehung im Makrokosmos, die im Kurationsprozess bedingt ist, wo der Gott, als Gott der Schöpfer, sich zwischen Seiner göttlichen Wesenheit und Weisheit und der geschaffenen Welt als die Universelle Natur, befindet. In allen Fällen steht der Subjekt, der Mann und der Gott zwischen zwei Objekten, die symbolisch als feminin bezeichnet sind. Der Grosse Scheich betont sogar die symbolische Bedeutung der grammatischen Kategorie des Genus:

Allah hat ihn [Muhammad] gelehrt was er nicht wusste, und so herrscht das Genus femininum über das maskulinum vor [...] Deshalb fängt er mit den Frauen an und endet mit dem Gebet (*aṣ-ṣalāt*), und die beiden sind weiblichen Geschlechts. Das Parfüm (*at-tīb*) zwischen den beiden ist wie der Mensch im Sein, denn der Mann ist geortet zwischen der göttlichen Wesenheit, von der er erschien, und der Frau, die von ihm erschien (*bayna dāt zahara 'anhā wa-mra'a zaharat 'anhu*), also er befindet sich zwischen zwei Nomina in femininum. Das erste ist das Femininum der Wesenheit, und das zweite ist das echte Femininum. So sind die Frauen das echte Femininum, und das Gebet ist kein echtes Femininum (*Fuṣūṣ* 220).

Das erste von den beiden Objekten ist unzerteilt, verborgen und unerschöpfbar, das zweite ist vielfältig und in der Schöpfung zerteilt. Die beiden sind aber der Spiegel, in dem sich der Subjekt betrachtet. Die beiden Objekte stellen das Vielfältige, die Welt dar, einmal als Potenz und das zweite Mal als ein unerschöpfendes Werden und Veränderung. In diesem Sinne ist es auch nicht zufällig, dass in *Fuṣūṣ al-hikam* Muhammad zur Personifizierung eines besonderen Aspektes von der göttlichen Weisheit wird – *al-hikma al-fardiyya*. Unter *afrād* werden hier die ungeraden Ziffern gemeint. *Der Anfang der afrād ist die Drei*<sup>3</sup>. Die Dreieinigkeit (*taṭlīt*) erinnert uns an die sophiologischen Ideen in der christlich orthodoxen Mystik, in der die Sophia,

<sup>3</sup> *Fuṣūṣ* 214; s. auch Smirnov 1993:278.



ganz im Widerspruch zur orthodoxen Dogmatik, sogar zur vierten Hypostase Gottes erklärt wird<sup>4</sup>. Die Dreieinigkeit ist das Grundprinzip der Schöpfung. Die drei bedeutet nicht, dass die göttliche Wesenheit in sich eine Mehrheit enthält, sondern spiegelt, dass in seinem Wesen das Erkennen, das der Schöpfung zugrunde liegt, ein dreieiniger Prozess ist, weil er den Subjekt, das Objekt und die Erkenntnis voraussetzt. Und anders gesagt, soweit "Allah schön ist und die Schönheit liebt, so ist Er der Schöne, die Schönheit und das Objekt Seiner Liebe (*mahbūb li-dātihī*) (*Futūhāt* II, 114)". Alle drei Aspekte spiegeln die selbe Realität und ihr Verhältnis zur Welt. Sie deuten die Dreieinigkeit der erschaffenen Welt an, denn sie ist gleichzeitig die Wesenheit Gottes, die Sehnsucht Gottes nach Selbst-Erkennen und der göttliche Befehl: "Sei!"

Die poetische Parallele dieser Idee finden wir in *Tarġumān al-ašwāq*, der im Unterschied zu der schwierigen philosophischen Sprache von *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* die Gestalt des irdischen und himmlischen Weiblichen mit der Sprache der Liebesdichtung aufbaut. Die Gestalten der Frauen in dieser poetischen Sammlung sind eine Allusion an die koranische Gestalt von *Mariam*. Von einer Seite symbolisiert sie die passive und die empfangende menschliche Natur, die jungfräuliche und reine Seele, in die Allah Seinen Geist schickt und dadurch das Göttliche in der Welt erscheinen lässt. Es ist auch nicht zufällig, dass Ibn 'Arabī seine Inspiratorin Nizam die *unschuldige Jungfrau* (*al-'adṛā' al-batūl* / *Tarġumān* 12/) nennt, was eine klare Anspielung auf die selbe geistliche Quelle der beiden Symbole ist. Von der anderen Seite sind die Jungfrauen im *Tarġumān* Personifizierungen der verschiedenen Theophanien und der göttlichen Kenntnissen, die das Herz der Mystiker in der Vision erfüllen.

Das Weibliche symbolisiert bei Ibn 'Arabī die bezauerbende Schönheit des Anderen. Das Andere ist bei ihm entweder das geistliche Wesen des Mystikers, das das Ziel des mystischen Pfades und die wahrhaftige Theophanie ist, oder, in seiner Kosmologie, die Idee der universellen göttlichen Weisheit, mit der Gott die Welt erschuf. Die Frau ist das Symbol der Objektivierung, das Symbol des Anderen als das Objekt des göttlichen Sich-Erkennens. Das Sein Gottes, als die höchste Stufe in der Seinshierarchie, ist das reine, ungetrennte und totale Sein. In diesem Sinne nennt es Ibn 'Arabī *al-hāhūt*, weil auf dieser Seinsstufe Gott immer Er (*huwa*) ist, wobei die Betonung nicht auf das Genus fällt, sondern auf die Totalität und Ungeschiedenheit des Seins. Die

<sup>4</sup> Wie z. B. in den früheren Werken vom Vater Sergij Bulgakow; s. Horuzhij 1989. Die sophiologischen Ideen in der orthodoxen Mystik verwurzeln immer im Versuch, die Verbindung zwischen der realen Existenz der Welt und ihrer Existenz als Potenz in der ersten göttlichen Emanation zu beweisen. Hier ist die Sophia der Spiegel der kreativen göttlichen Energie. Die sophiologische Idee ist eng verbunden mit der Idee der Erbsünde der Menschheit. Eine von den Folgen der Erbsünde ist nach Grigorij von Nissa (IV Jhd.) das menschliche Geschlecht. Die Wiedervereinigung des androgynen Menschen als Symbol der Reinheit und Ungeschiedenheit vom Gott ist das Hauptziel der mystischen Erfahrung und liegt der sophiologischen Ideen im Orthodoxentum zugrunde.

Personifizierung dieser Totalität ist der himmlische Adam, der am Anfang in sich die beiden Aspekte des Seins enthält, den weiblichen und den männlichen<sup>5</sup>. Die Äußerungen dieser Idee in der Theosophie des Grossen Scheichs und ihre symbolischen Darstellungen sind verschieden. In jedem Fall ist sie aber auf den Archetyp des Weiblichen zurückzuführen, der in allen kulturellen und religiösen Erfahrungen vorhanden ist.

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<sup>5</sup> Erwähnenswert ist hier das originelle Kommentar von Montgomery Watt, der die 7. *qaṣida* von *Tarġumān al-Ašwāq* in dem unreligiösen Kontext der analytischen Psychologie von C. G. Jung interpretiert. In den verschleierte Pilgerinnen, die al-Ka'ba umkreisen, erkennt er die Symbole der Anima, die bei Jung der Archetyp des kreativen Weiblichen im männlichen Unterbewusstsein ist. S. Watt 1969; siehe auch: Jung 1991:117.



## THE CONCEPT OF *DAHR* AND ITS HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE IN THE ĠĀHILIYYA AND EARLY ISLAM

Pavel Pavlovitch

*The University of Varna*

Every historical stage through which cultures develop creates its own worldview structure comprising major conceptual elements as well as segments of a lesser totality. When it comes to pre-Islamic culture, there is a common tendency to accept that belief in Allāh represented one of the most significant features of that period. It is frequently depicted in terms leaving little room for doubt that almost all of the Ġāhili concepts stemmed out of the conviction that Allāh had been the creator of the universe, the giver of livelihood and the master of man's life. Nonetheless, it would be worth seeing whether there might have been different categories, which could successfully compete with the notion of Allāh's dominance over the Ġāhili worldview and set the background for an apprehension of fate and history in a way dissimilar to the Islamic one, or at least to what Islam would purport to deem as peculiar to the Ġāhiliyya. Any quest for such a dominant category would inevitably lead to the concept of *dahr*.

In his influential study about the relation between God and man in the Qur'an Izutsu encountered the major question of *dahr*, and came up with a balanced theory which tried to reconcile two apparently contradicting notions. When analyzing the already mentioned theory of Allāh's dominance over the pre-Islamic worldview and the dissimilar conclusions which a thorough review of the *dahr* notion could evince, Izutsu came to the following conceptual argument. "Man, once created by Allāh, severs his ties, so to speak, with his Creator, and his existence on earth is, from that time on, put into the hands of another, far more powerful, Master" (Izutsu 1964:124). As far as this mighty master is *dahr*, the question arises how the two powers, each pretending for ontological totality - Allāh and Fate - could co-exist in such a uniform conflation. The division between the responsibility for creation accorded to Allāh on the one side, and the sway over man's life-span and death conferred on *dahr* on the other, seems to me to spring out of a rather gratuitous foundation. The only legitimate inference from Izutsu's postulates could be that *dahr* was the main ontological power affecting men before the advent of Islam. As to whether the Ġāhili individual was concerned with the matter of his creation or frightened by his grim death-dominated future remains yet to be seen.

While asserting the ubiquity of the *dahr* concept within the Ġāhili worldview, Izutsu is inclined to confine his analysis to the individual aspect of the relation between man and Fate. This aspect is of great significance without any doubt; yet any comprehensive review of the *dahr* concept would reveal a differentiation within its



notional domain. The power of *dahr* does not affect man as much as it involves the whole Universe. It exceeds the field of personal and stretches over to the realm of the whole existence, which is effectively subdued to its unavoidable influence. Hence our analysis should follow the line of cleavage between the individual and supra-individual in the Ġāhili concept of *dahr*.

### The personal aspect of *dahr*

Texts relating to *dahr* abound in the pre-Islamic narrative discourse in such a ubiquity that one could hardly find a single genre of expression devoid of them. Ġāhili poets employ the *dahr* notion in major and minor circumstances as if there were no other ontological power holding sway over their lives. Fate is depicted responsible for all that befalls the individual: primarily disasters and misfortunes. The significance of this concept in relation to man and his life is attested by the Qur'an itself:

"*Wa-qālū: mā hiya illā ḥayātunā d-dunyā, namūtu wa-naḥyā wa-mā yuhlikunā illā d-dahrū*": "And they said: there is no other life but our mundane life, we live and we die, and only *dahr* brings our perdition" (Q. XLV: 24).

*Dahr* represents a caliginous force engulfing the whole existential realm of the Ġāhiliyya. Sometimes *dahr* could grant man little respite, but its revenge would inevitably betide him sooner rather than later:

"*Kadāka d-dahrū dawlatuhu siġalun, takirru ṣurūfuhā hīnan fa-hīnā// fa-bayna mā nusarru bihi wa-nardā, wa-law lubisat gadāratuhu sinīnā// id inqalabat bihi karrātu dahrin, fa-lfayta l-ūlā ġubitū ṭahīnā*": "Thus the power of *dahr* has been ever changing, with its vicissitudes coming and going// and whilst we rejoice and are satisfied with it, and if its goodness should continue for years// when one is smitten by the assault of *dahr*, you shall find those who were happy rendered grind" (Ibn Hišām, *Sīra* IV, 250).

Nothing can avail against the dark power of *dahr*, nor could anything escape from it, for "*dahr* devours all" (al-Maydānī, *Maġma'* II, 240). *Dahr* blindly ambushes man with his deadly arrows coming from every direction, as to make their victim standing powerless at the pale of death. 'Amr ibn Qamī'a reproves the "daughters of *dahr*", who pursue man as merciless hunters:

"*Ramatni banātu d-dahri min ḥaytu lā arā// fa-kayfa li-man yurmā wa-laysa bi-rāmī*": "The daughters of *dahr* have shot at me from where I cannot see// what can one do, when he is shot at, while being unable to shoot back" (Izutsu 1964:126).

The phrase "*banāt ad-dahr*" evokes parallels with the pre-Islamic belief in the daughters of Allāh and could well be a sign of resemblance between notions attached to both concepts. It may be that this similarity subsequently facilitated the absorption of *dahr* into Allāh.

In addition to their fear from *banāt ad-dahr*, ancient Arabs believed that *dahr* could exhaust man's stamina (al-Maydānī, *Maġma'* II, 402) and subject him to an ordeal (*ibtīlā*). In this respect Umayya b. Abī ṣ-Salt states (*Dīwān* 36):

"*Wa-man yabtalihī d-dahrū minhu bi-ṭratin, sayakbū lahā wa-n-nā'ibātu [ta]taraddadū*": "And he who should be subjected to ordeal by *dahr*, would yield to it, for misfortunes are numerous".

Hence any individual, who went through hardship, becomes *qarī'u d-dabri* – *dahr* bitten. What worsened the situation of the pre-Islamic individual facing *dahr* was the ultimate inevitability of its fatal influence. As Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā says, no rites or worship could deter the ominous power of that villain, which would finally bring about death and plunge man into the sea of eternal nothingness:

"*Wa-mā yuġnī tawaqqū'u l-mawti ṣay'an, wa-lā 'aqdu t-tamā'imi wa-lā l-ġadāri*": "The fear of death shall avail nothing, nor [shall avail] attachment of amulets and blue necklaces" (al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* X, 364).

It is not surprising therefore to find the notions of *dahr* and death co-existing in a largely synonymous context. In many instances *dahr* is juxtaposed with such terms, denoting death, as *maniyya*, *ḥaṭf*, *manāyā*, *manūn*, *ḥimām* etc. Thus the Ġāhili poet al-Ġatammaṣ ad-Dabbī laments his fellow tribesmen saying:

"*Aḥillā'i law ġayru l-ḥimāmi aṣābakum 'atabtu wa-lākin mā 'alā d-dabri mā'tabu*": "O, my loved ones, if you were smitten by one save *ḥimām*, I would have reproved, but *dahr* cannot be reproved" (Abū Tammām, *Hamāsa* I, 426).

In general, the personal aspects of the *dahr* concept permeated man's life span from its beginning till its end. It is hard to find any other ontological power which could compete with *dahr* in the sense of worldview significance. The belief in Fate appears to have held its sway over the Ġāhili mind in every respect pertaining to the personal existence. Not surprisingly, Allāh cannot be found to have occupied any important position within the Ġāhili ontology. The theory of Allāh's dominance over man's creation, emphasized in the Qur'an alone, must still be supported by more external proofs.

### *Dahr* and the destiny of mankind and the world

The oppressive kingdom of *dahr* easily extended its sway beyond the life of the individual to engulf the destiny of his folk, nay the destiny of the whole mankind and universe. The unlimited notional scope of this concept suggests its totality within the Ġāhili worldview, which – as it appears – was prone to assign both human life and the destiny of the world to the sole influence of *dahr*.

Many poetic passages show that *dahr* could effectively bring about the destruction of whole peoples. Thus we find in the pre-Islamic poetry examples of its limitless power, which would subsequently serve as a good basis for the Qur'anic admonitions and homiletic imagery. Sources reveal that the scriptural tales about people who perished due to heavenly damnation owe some or all of their origins to inveterate



pre-Islamic beliefs related to *dahr*. From amongst them we quote the following verse from the *Hamāsa*:

"*Wa-ahlakan tasman wa-ba'dahu// gadiyya bihim wa-dā Ğuduni// wa-ahla Ğašin wa-Ma'ribin// wa-hayya Luqmāna wa-t-tuqūni*": "And [*dahr*] damned Tasm and afterwards a lot of cattle, and Dū Ğudun, and the people of Ğaš and Ma'rib, and the folk of Luqmān and the experienced" (Abū Tammām, *Hamāsa* II, 14).

In this particular verse *dahr* acquires broad eschatological attributes unfolding over a vast range of old Arabian mythology and especially over those mythological strata, which are obviously related to the imagery of calamity and perdition. The eschatological flavour of the *dahr* concept is further affirmed by its believed responsibility for the end of the whole creation (*dunyā*) as in the verse of Umayya b. Abī s-Salt:

"*Wa-lam taslami d-dunyā wa in zanna ahlukā// bi-sihhatihā wa-d-dahrū qad yata-garradu*": "This world [*ad-dunyā*] shall not survive, even if its inhabitants would presume its soundness, for *dahr* might show up" (Umayya, *Dīwān* 36).

This second aspect of the *dahr* concept, which went to a great extent unnoticed by students of the Ğāhiliyya, is of greater significance for a proper understanding of the pre-Islamic worldview. The individual aspect of the *dahr*-related categories, which presents a gloomy picture of the Ğāhilī interpretation of the past and future, cannot be assumed to represent a self-sufficient notion standing aloof from any conceptual interaction with other corresponding notions. It represents instead the individual side of the more general eschatological category depicting *dahr* as the ultimate doom of mankind and its world. The individual tragedy of the Ğāhilī man would therefore be only a consequence lacking totality in comparison to the universal extensions that the belief in *dahr* appears to have acquired within the conceptual realm of ancient Arabia.

Having in mind the universal significance of *dahr* during the Ğāhiliyya, one may now ask to what extent stories about the paramount significance of Allah within the Ğāhilī pantheon might be lent credibility. Except for some vague *halq* imagery, attributed to Allah by the Qur'an but not attested by any source extrinsic to it, efforts would be needed to vindicate any of the presumed powers of that deity before Islam. It seems as if in the case of Allāh and *dahr* we face two typologically different categories pertaining to consecutive diachronic strata, while any synchrony is hard to attest.

#### *Dahr* within the conceptual transformation between the Ğāhiliyya and early Islam

Insofar as the concept of *dahr* has enjoyed an obvious totality in the Ğāhiliyya worldview, not only did it leave no substantial realm for any competing notion, but it also could seriously impede a subsequent introduction of such a one. It is therefore not surprising that when in the first quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD Islam appeared with its notion of a high deity, a dangerous conceptual clash occurred.

The gradual formation of the notion of Allāh throughout the earliest period of the activities of the Prophet Muhammad ultimately brought about a new worldview category which was aimed at substituting the concept of *dahr* in its indigenous environment. The high god, introduced by Islam, soon came to be the paramount universal force, which could only in solitude reign over the world and the hereafter and control man's fate both during his life and after death.

It appears from the extant sources about the Ğāhiliyya that Muḥammad probably embarked on some attempts to eliminate the concept of *dahr* from the notional background of the Arabic religious milieu, but his endeavor hardly attained any palpable result. Muhammad's countrymen could not easily forsake their ancient beliefs, and though some of them embraced Islam, the power of *dahr* continued to evoke their dread. We possess an instructive account to that effect about a Bedouin who came to Muhammad to announce his Islam, and endorsed his decision to accept the new religion by directing his oath towards *dahr*, the changing one ("Uyayna 1994:II, 28).

With the confusion between the notions of *dahr* and Allāh being capable of endangering the whole future of Muḥammad's religion, the Prophet had to take a resolute action to preempt an eventual melting of the concept of High God back into the old belief in *dahr*. He managed to do this suitably and quite ingenuously. On the one hand, he finally resigned to *dahr*'s ubiquitousness and seemed prone to respect it as an independent universal power. On the other hand, though, he defended his own divine concept merely pronouncing that Allāh is *dahr*. In one of his *hadīths* the Prophet is quoted to say: "*lā tasubbū d-dabra fa-inna l-lāha ta'ālā huwa d-dahrū*": "Do not abuse *dahr*, for God the Lofty one is *dahr*" (Ibn Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr* V, 295).

The reincarnation of *dahr* in Allāh has not been as much a part of Muhammad's political tactics as it was an intrinsic conclusion of the typological transformation between the culture of Ğāhiliyya and the worldview of early Islam. In the new conditions, *dahr* has been preserved as a term, but the concept behind it had already undergone a substantial shift.

It appears that with the advent of Islam Allāh borrowed the fatalistic aspect of *dahr*. Yet it was not a mechanical transition, for what had been the blind Doom now became *qadā' u llāhi* – the wise predestination of the mighty Lord, which according to Hassān b. Tābit is unavoidable:

"*Wa-ta'allam anna l-mulka li-l-lāhi waḥdihi wa-anna qadā'a l-lāhi lā budda wāqī'ū*": "You should know that power belongs solely to Allāh, and that Allāh's predestination inevitably happens" (Hassān b. Tābit, *Dīwān* 242, v. 114).

This verse evinces the gradual shift of the Ğāhilī *dahr* concept towards the early Islamic notion of divine providence. *Qadā' u l-lāhi* became the conceptual opposite of the blind Doom. Instances of this transformation abound in the Qur'an itself. Thus, if *dahr* had been bound in the Ğāhilī mind with the image of a hidden archer, who sends his arrows at random indiscriminately destroying his victims, Allāh be-



came an the epitome of divine wisdom while displaying his power. Now he helps his worshippers and aims his wrath against the infidels as in the battle of Badr:

"*Fa-lam taqtulhum wa-lākinna l-lāha qatalahum wa-mā ramayta id ramayta wa-lākinna l-lāha ramā*": "You did not slay them but Allāh slayed them, and you did not send your arrows when you shot, but Allāh sent them" (Q. 8:17).

In Islam Allāh became the sole master of life and death:

"*Wa-l-lāhu yuhyī wa-yumītu wa-l-lāhu bi-mā ta'malūna baṣīr*": "Allāh brings life and death and Allāh is aware of what you do"<sup>1</sup>.

The concept of Allāh as the wise and mighty Lord, who requites for sins and rewards virtue, has given a new content even to the old tales about the destruction of whole peoples doomed by *dahr*. Now the tribe of 'Ād has not perished due to the caprices of the blind Doom, but because of God's perdition:

"*Fa-ammā 'Ādun fa-stakbarū fī-l-ardi bi-ḡayri l-ḡaqqi wa-qālū man ašaddu minnā quwwatan aw lam yaraw anna l-lāha l-ladī ḡalaqahum huwa ašaddu minhum quwwatan wa-kānū bi-āyātina yaḡhadūn. Fa-arsalnā 'alayhim riḡan ṣarṣaran fī ayyāmin nahī-sātin li-nudīqahum 'adāba l-ḡizī fī-l-ḡayātī d-dunya wa-la-ādābu l-āḡirati aḡzā wa-hum lā yunṣarūn*": "And 'Ād had become presumptuous on Earth without any right and they said "Who is more powerful than us?". Did not they see that Allāh who created them is more powerful and they rejected our signs. And we sent upon them cold wind in ominous days to make them test the torture of humiliation in *ḡayāt ad-dunya* and verily the torture of thereafter is more disgraceful and they shall receive no help"<sup>2</sup>.

The incorporation of *dahr* into the High God concept of Islam represented the core of transition between the two worldview systems. It played a significant role to alleviate the transformation of ḡāhili Arabs to the Islamic faith, which, though rooted to some extent in the ancient Arabian tradition, marked an abrupt departure from a number of values and notional complexes peculiar to the age of heathenism. Finally one can only wonder what could have been the ultimate fate of Islam, should Muḡammad have been reluctant to merge Allāh with *dahr*.

### Islam and the emergence of historical thinking in Arabia

The ubiquity of the *dahr* concept during the ḡāhiliyya had another important reflection on the worldview patterns of that period. What I mean is the comprehension of history as a systematic vision of the past and the future.

If one looks at the accounts about the ḡāhiliyya, one should promptly observe two of their main peculiarities. They are essentially non-historically organized on the one hand, and they represent a welter of what contemporary thinking may label as

<sup>1</sup> Q. 3:156, also 2:28, 7:158, 10:56, 50:68.

<sup>2</sup> Q. 41:15, 16. Also in 11:59-67, 51:41, 53:49-53, 69:3-6, 89:5-14.

mere anecdotes on the other. The Islamic authors, who were so firmly devoted to a chronological marshalling of events after the *ḡiḡra*, appear far from being concerned about defining the time of *yawm al-basūs*, *yawm dāḡhis wa-l-ḡabrā*' or almost any other event dating in the times of the ḡāhiliyya.

The main cause for the ḡāhili disinterest in history lies again with the concept of *dahr*. As we have seen, this concept left people alone with the blind Doom, and one can hardly suppose that such an individual, smitten by a constant fear of the vicissitudes of *dahr*, would have any organized vision of his past, or would direct his concern towards the future, where the inevitable perdition would be the only discernible perspective. The whole ontological value of existence was concentrated in the present moment of being. The ḡāhili worldview was intrinsically pessimistic, while change and innovation were ostensibly negative categories. It is not surprising therefore to find that the concept of *dahr* has been closely bound to a number of terms representing change and transition. Umayya b. Abī ṣ-Salt calls it *al-ḡadīd* - the new (Umayya, *Dīwān* 28), while Mutammim b. Nuwayra says "*ad-dahrū aḡḡaḡa nakbatan wa-ruḡ'an*" - "*dahr* afflicted [a new] disaster and suffering" (ad-Dabbī, *al-Mufaḡ-daliyyāt* 540, v. 36). In another place the term *dū l-ḡidān* - "the renewing one" is employed (Uyayna 1994:II, 28), while ḡassān b. Ṭābit speaks of *nawā'ibu l-ḡadaḡān* (ḡassān b. Ṭābit, *Dīwān* 112, No. 18) - a locution which strongly resembles the traditional phrase *nawā'ibu d-dahr*, used in Arabic to denote vicissitudes of fortune.

It is apparent from the above fragments that the concept of *dahr* was associated in the ḡāhili mind with the change of things in general. Renewal and transition were not positive categories before Islam, for they were bound with the irreversible flow of time, which had one direction - towards death as the final boundary of existence beyond which there was nothing worth striving for. Any change would only force the ḡāhili individual out of the closed system of his momentary existence with its elusive pleasures, and make his being rather linear. Yet this kind of transformation was unbearable for a state of mind wherein change was akin to death and harmony was relegated to constancy.

Such a kind of worldview can hardly be supposed to comprise any feeling of history. The past was considered already gone and its events worth only an anecdotal recollection, while future was under the wicked sway of *dahr* and any direction of man's pondering towards it would evoke only suffering and pain. The later works of the Islamic authors only follow the main stream of the pre-Islamic worldview in its rejection of transition and change, and hence any account about ḡāhiliyya necessarily came to be a corpus of scattered anecdotes rather than a chronologically marshalled sequence of events.

With the advent of Islam came the ultimate transition from the ḡāhili non-historicity to the Islamic concept of history. Not only did the new religion effect a transformation of the fatalistic notion underlying *dahr* into the providential aspect of Allāh, but also necessitated a new vision of man's past and future. If the ḡāhili



fatalism made pre-Islamic Arabs chary of seeking cause-and-effect relations between events, the Islamic divine providentialism put them between two main axiological poles: the one of divine creation and the other of judgment after the end of *dunyā*. Due to this new feature introduced by Islam, mankind's history not only acquired its traditional chronological shape, but also emerged as a positive ethical and theological category within the divine creational providence.

Along the newly created historical line, Islam introduced another significant feature that lent history additional integrity, though making it at least partially cyclic. According to Muḥammad's religion, Allāh not only created the world and would some day bring about its end, but also sent to mankind numerous messengers, who were responsible to warn men about the coming Judgment Day and to rectify any diversions from God's path. History thus became a cycle of prophecies stretching from Adam, who had been the first messenger of God, to Muḥammad b. Abdallāh, who was the last one (*ḥātim al-anbiyā'*).

The cyclic vision of history during the pre-Islamic period facilitated the revocation of the pagan fatalism, for the *dahr* concept was not only dissolved into the concept of divine providence, but, as such, was easily projected back to the age of the Ġāhiliyya. Thus, the content of the old Arabian fatalism shifted towards the Islamic notion of divine wisdom and was finally subdued to the newly introduced vision of the prophetic history of mankind. With Muḥammad's ministry the cyclic history came to its end, and a linear chronology was introduced that began with the linear move of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina during his *hiġra*. Subsequent events were sequentially marshalled in a chronological chain that would end only when God initiates the final Judgment.

The new Islamic understanding of history, introduced by the divine revelation to Muḥammad, greatly influenced the way Muslims began comprehending facts of their common past. Their vision of these events presupposed an ever-lasting existence of Islam as the fate of the whole humanity from its very creation till the Judgment Day. This being the case the era before Muḥammad's ministry became not a self-standing historical stage in the development of Arabia, but an integral part of the prophetic paradigm ushered in by Islam. For the Islamic consciousness the Ġāhiliyya became a vivid example of how the ancient monotheism declined after the time when people had been one nation.

The global Qur'ānic understanding of the ancient monotheism and the deviation of mankind from it had its particular impact on the emergence of the concept of the Arabs' own digression from monotheism towards idolatry. The history of the Arabic nation had been permeated with monotheism from its very beginning: long before Muḥammad, Arabs had had their prophets Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl, who taught them the principles of monotheism. After Ibrāhīm and Ismā'īl died, Arabs professed Islam but gradually erred from its path and added to the one God a number of lesser deities: *ṣurakā'*.

Last but not least, the "digression story" had an enormous influence upon the subsequent development of Islamic concepts about pre-Islamic religion, which for Muslims became a pantheon where Allāh held a superior position, while other deities could not challenge him in terms of power and influence. The notion of the Ġāhili divine pantheon withstood the challenge of time and easily migrated into contemporary studies, where it acquired different methodological shapes and went through a number of analytic paths<sup>3</sup>. But in all cases, the reasoning ensued from a common premise implying that the concept of Allāh somehow managed to acquire a paramount position in the heathen milieu, which nonetheless remained faithful to the idols too. Yet any attempt to prove the existence of a Ġāhili pantheon must consider, before everything else, the Islamic perception of history as an intrinsically monotheistic phenomenon, and its strong influence upon later conceptual developments, which affected not only Islamic history, but easily stretched over the epoch prior to the rise of Islam.

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<sup>3</sup> See for instance Wellhausen's attempt (1897:218-219) to explain the emergence of the notion of Allāh as a linguistic generalization of the pre-Islamic heathen cults.



DEUX FIGURES CONTROVERSÉE DU MYSTICISME  
À DAMAS AU MOYEN-ÂGE:  
‘ALĪ AL-HARĪRĪ (m. 645/1244) ET IBN ISRĀ’IL (m. 677/1278)

Louis Pouzet

*Université Saint Joseph, Beyrouth*

Le Moyen-Âge et particulièrement le VII<sup>e</sup>/XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle a été le témoin, au Proche-Orient d'une activité remarquable du mysticisme dans ses différentes formes; il suffit de rappeler ici, pour le Bilād aš-Šām les noms d'as-Suhrawardī dit "al-Maqtūl"<sup>1</sup> à Alep et, surtout celui d'Ibn ‘Arabī (m. 638/1240 à Damas) qui, au long d'une longue pérégrination depuis son Andalousie natale se fixa enfin à Damas. Ces hommes d'allégeance et de *ṭarīqas* différentes sont également contemporains de deux autres figures, différentes elles-aussi, mais non moins célèbres, celles d'Ibn al-Fārid (m. 632/1235) en Egypte, et de *mawlānā* Ġamāl ad-Dīn ar-Rūmī mort en Anatolie à Konya en 652/1254<sup>2</sup>.

Mais si ces mystiques de "haute-volée" et de réputation quasi universelle nous sont très connus, d'autres, nombreux, seraient à recenser, qui évoluèrent dans l'orbite de ces grands "pôles"; comme leurs épigones ci-dessus nommés, ils ne manquèrent pas de susciter admiration et rejet dans la société musulmane de l'époque.

Nous en avons retenu deux qui vécurent à Damas ou dans ses environs dans la première moitié du VII<sup>e</sup>/XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle; ils sont liés l'un à l'autre par plusieurs constantes que nous essayerons d'évoquer, et qui sans faire partie directement, à l'exception d'al-Harīrī<sup>3</sup>, de la liste des "IX impies majeurs" de l'Islam<sup>4</sup> de l'époque, ne manqueront pas de susciter autour d'eux l'enthousiasme et la réprobation, monnaie courante de ces tentatives, parfois sublimes, audacieuses en tous cas, de dépasser les cadres classiques de la spiritualité musulmane.

Les deux personnages que nous allons étudier, quoique ayant vécu à Damas ou ses environs et ayant entre eux des liens très étroits, n'en sont pas moins différents par leur origine familiale et géographique et la période où ils vécurent. al-Harīrī pour

<sup>1</sup> Il faudrait évoquer aussi son homonyme qui sort un peu de la zone géographique que nous étudions ici.

<sup>2</sup> On sait qu'Ibn ‘Arabī a passé à Konya en 602/1205 avant de s'établir à Damas (cf. Addas 1989:269 et sq.). Il faudrait en ajouter d'autres, Ibn Sab‘īn par exemple mort à la Mecque en 668/9-1269/71.

<sup>3</sup> Sur lui, on a une allusion de L. Massignon, dans le court article, essentiellement critique, qu'il a consacré au mouvement que fonda al-Harīrī, al-Harīriyya, cf. *Ep* III, 229; l'auteur fait surtout allusion à la condamnation d'al-Harīriyya par une *fatwā* d'Ibn Taymiyya.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Massignon 1975: II, 330-331: Ibn Sab‘īn, Ibn ‘Arabī, ‘Afīf ad-Dīn at-Tilimsānī, ainsi qu'Ibn al-Fārid en font partie.



sa part est originaire d'un village du Hawrân, au sud de Damas, Busr, où il naquit vers le milieu du VI<sup>e</sup>/XII<sup>e</sup>, et qu'il rejoindra à la fin de sa vie controversée. Nağm ad-Dîn Muḥammad b. Sawār b. Isrā'îl b. Ḥaḍîr se rattache à l'importante tribu des Šaybānî<sup>6</sup>; il naquit en 603/1205, vécut et mourut à Damas. Chronologiquement, si al-Ḥarîrî meurt à la fin de la première moitié du siècle, en 645/1244, Ibn Isrā'îl a connu la grande coupure de la prise de pouvoir par les Mamelouks au milieu du siècle, et est mort l'année qui suivit le décès du plus grand d'entre eux Baïbars, à Damas également, en 677/1278.

Autre différence entre les deux hommes, Ibn Isrā'îl, poète célèbre dans son siècle, à Damas et au delà, ne connaîtra pas la vie aventureuse de son maître al-Ḥarîrî; il semble bien qu'il faisait partie de cette "jeunesse dorée" de la ville qu'on reprocha à al-Ḥarîrî d'avoir attiré à lui par des moyens parfois rien moins que religieux<sup>7</sup>. De milieu plus modeste<sup>8</sup>, al-Ḥarîrî venu jeune (*sabiyy*) à Damas, perdit très jeune son père et fut éduqué par son oncle paternel, auprès duquel il apprit le métier de fabricant de draps de luxe (*šinā'at al-attābî*)<sup>9</sup> où il excella sans connaître de rival.

C'est à Damas que le destin des deux hommes les fit se rencontrer, en 618/1221-22<sup>10</sup>, où Ibn Isrā'îl, adolescent de 15 ans, rentre dans le groupe des compagnons d'al-Ḥarîrî, les "Ḥarîriyya".

Ibn Isrā'îl a déjà reçu, avant de suivre al-Ḥarîrî la *ḥirqa* "le froc initiatique" de Šihāb ad-Dîn 'Umar as-Suhrawardî, mystique d'origine bagdadienne très connu auteur des *'Awārif al-ma'ārif*; il a dû le recevoir lors d'un des trois passages signalés par les sources de Šihāb ad-Dîn à Damas, probablement à celui de 612/1215 ou de 614/1217; le "novice" était encore très jeune, 9 ou 11 ans au maximum<sup>11</sup>. Cette formation précoce reçue d'un grand maître, disciple lui-même du fondateur de la confrérie des Qādiriyya, al-Ġilānî (ou al-Ġilî) mort en 561/1166, suggère une ouverture d'esprit chez ce jeune garçon, qui le fait entrer très tôt dans la mouvance

du mysticisme de l'époque où Bagdad jouait encore un rôle important et qui dépasse largement les horizons damascains un peu étroits qui resteront ceux de son nouveau maître al-Ḥarîrî.

Il reste qu'indépendamment de cette initiation précoce, Ibn Isrā'îl, comme al-Ḥarîrî son maître, ont le même *isnād* mystique essentiellement damascain qui les rattache, par l'intermédiaire du Šayḥ 'Alî al-Muğarbil (m. en 612 ou 621/1215 ou 1224) au chef de ce mouvement à Damas le šayḥ Arslān (ou Raslān), mort, lui, en 540/1145, personnage de grand rayonnement à Damas dont la mouvance se situe à l'est de la Vieille Ville, entre Bāb Tūmā et Bāb Šarqî à l'est de laquelle il sera enterré et où voudront se faire enterrer par la suite de saints personnages, Ibn Isrā'îl entre autre et sa femme Fātima<sup>12</sup>.

Après ce bref exposé des origines assez différentes des deux hommes qui nous intéressent, et de leur formation première à plusieurs égards semblable, suivons les en commençant par le maître, 'Alî al-Ḥarîrî.

Après ce premier essai, réussi, de vie professionnelle, il commence sa vie itinérante de fondateur d'une confrérie qui prendra son nom<sup>13</sup>. Comme nous l'avons vu il rassemble autour de lui un groupe de jeunes gens, issus des bonnes familles de Damas avec lesquels il va vivre cette vie ascétique, mélange d'observances, de retraites *ḥalwa*, de séances de chants spirituels (*samā'*). Il semble avoir joui auprès d'eux, pour des raisons pas toujours bien claires sur lesquelles nous reviendrons, d'un très grand ascendant, dû au moins, à première vue, au style de vie assez étrange qu'il menait lui-même, vêtu de façon originale et ne s'embarassant pas des prescriptions strictes, c'est le moins qu'on peut dire, de la *šari'a* islamique assez généralement respectées dans le milieu damascain de l'époque, assez strict<sup>14</sup>. On peut même se demander si ce qui attire en lui cette "jeunesse dorée" n'est pas surtout cet anticonformisme qu'il pratique avec eux jusqu'à une véritable *ibaha*, qui consiste à prendre le contre-pied des prescriptions extérieures de la loi, et en un véritable anomisme en morale. Les récits qui nous sont restés de ses "pratiques scandaleuses", et qui, sur la bouche de ses adversaires ne doivent pas être pris toujours au pied de la lettre, nous révèlent, chez le šayḥ, une liberté d'allure qui peut aller jusqu'à la perversion<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Il n'avait pas tout à fait 90 ans quand il est mort à Busr en 645/1244. Cf. ad-Dahabî, *Ibar* V, 186.

<sup>6</sup> al-Ḥarîrî lui aussi aurait eu des prétentions "aristocratiques"; si l'on en croit al-Kutubî (*Fawāt* II, 53) se rattachant aux Banū z-Zamān connus également sous le nom de Banū Qarqar. Mais sa mère, d'origine damascaine, se rattache à la famille princière des Banū 'Uqayl.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. la réflexion d'Abū Šāma son contemporain, *Tarāğim* 180.

<sup>8</sup> Il avait un oncle maternel qui avait une boutique au souk des orfèvres, cf. al-Kutubî, *Fawāt* II, 53.

<sup>9</sup> Sur cette sorte d'étoffe, voir Dozy 1927: II, 93.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Kaṭîr (*Bidāya* XIII, 283) nous en a retenu la date.

<sup>11</sup> as-Suhrawardî vint pour la première fois à Damas, de Bagdad en 604/1207, mais Ibn Isrā'îl n'aurait eu qu'un an. H. Mones, dans un très court article de l'*EP* III, 835, où il minimise l'importance des poèmes d'Ibn Isrā'îl, déclare cette rencontre impossible; mais il confond l'auteur des *'Awārif al-ma'ārif*, 'Umar, dont il est question ici, mort en 632/1234, avec l'autre as-Suhrawardî Yahyā, Šihāb ad-Dîn lui aussi, dit le *maqtûl* tué à Alep en 587/1191 sur l'ordre de Salāh ad-Dîn.

<sup>12</sup> Pour cette dernière, cf. al-Yūnīnī, *Dayl* III, 405 et seq. al-Ḥarîrî, exilé de Damas à la fin de sa vie, sera enterré dans son village natal de Busr au Hawrân.

<sup>13</sup> Selon la jolie expression d'ad-Dahabî: "il se fit faqîr", *tamaşqara*, (*Ibar* V, 186).

<sup>14</sup> Sur son accoutrement bizarre "avec des habits tantôt courts, tantôt longs, ... blancs et noirs, vêtu d'un seul couvre-chef, d'habits de femme, de broderies bariolées ..." cf. al-Kutubî, *Fawāt* 54.

<sup>15</sup> al-Kutubî nous rapporte d'un informateur qu'il ne nomme pas (*rağulun*) une scène dans un bain de Damas rien moins que scabreuse où al-Ḥarîrî manifeste, avec ses "beaux garçons en costume d'Adam" (*wa-ma'ahu sibyan ḥiṣān bilā mayāzir*) un cynisme qui fait fuir un šayḥ scandalisé (*Fawāt* 53).



A côté de ces pratiques morales assez scandaleuses, on rapporte de lui ces paroles qui nous montrent le *ṣayḥ* se séparer totalement des pratiques observées sur le plan de la foi musulmane elle-même; il aurait dit: "Si un de mes novices (*murīdī*) entre au pays des Rūm, se fait chrétien, mange du porc et boit du vin, je n'y vois pas d'inconvénients"<sup>16</sup>. Et pour souligner le caractère paradoxal de certains de ses aphorismes, il aurait répondu à quelqu'un qui demandait: "parmi les voies qui mènent à Dieu, quelle est la plus rapide que je puisse emprunter?": "Laisse-les toutes, te voilà arrivé à Lui" (ad-Dahabī, *Ibar* 53-54). Et encore, une parole qui, s'il l'a prononcée sans nuance, peut justifier tous les abus: "Demandez-moi de mourir dans le judaïsme; nous serons alors ressuscités en enfer, et ainsi, personne, pour quelque raison que ce soit, ne viendra plus jamais nous y accompagner". Et cette sorte de défi qui ne manque pas d'une certaine grandeur, mais peut être compris à bien des niveaux: "Il n'est pas bon pour le mystique (*ṣāqīr*) de fuir devant quoi que ce soit et, s'il a peur de quelque chose, qu'il la prenne pour but".

Les pratiques et les aphorismes rapportés plus haut, quoique sortant de la pratique "mystique" traditionnelle en Islam, ne sont pas, il faut le dire, absents du milieu religieux damascain de l'époque<sup>17</sup>; mais il faut ajouter qu'al-Ḥarīrī en est une des meilleures illustrations et qu'il est allé sur ce plan là à la limite du scandale, groupant dans sa façon de se comporter des traits par ailleurs la plupart du temps distribués entre plusieurs personnes.

On imagine qu'une telle attitude morale, jointe à des excès de langage sur le plan dogmatique, ne laissa pas insensible les milieux religieux de Damas qui prirent al-Ḥarīrī pour cible. Elle mobilisa toute une série de personnalités damascaines très connues et fit, dans ce groupe marqué par un attachement parfois un peu strict au sunnisme traditionnel, une quasi unanimité.

Nous avons fait allusion plus haut à ad-Dahabī qui, en les rapportant, critique les dires d'al-Ḥarīrī; même critique négative "chez les *fuqahā*" comme le chafiiite 'Izz ad-Dīn b. 'Abdassalām bien connu pour ses positions strictes qui le firent exiler de Damas, le *ṣayḥ* Taqī d-Dīn Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ, le très exigeant premier "recteur" du Dār al-Ḥadīṭ al-Aṣrafiyya, chafiiite lui aussi, et le *ṣayḥ* des malikites 'Amr b. al-Hāḡib. Les principaux griefs qui lui sont faits, sont groupés, selon une vieille habitude polémique sous le nom de *zandaqa*: mépris des commandements édictés dans la *ṣarī'a*, attitude provocatrice vis à vis de Dieu (*al-ḡara'a 'alā Allāh*), prise à la légère de ce qui touche à la prière (*mustahiffan bi-amr as-ṣalāt*). Mais c'est peut-être Abū Sāma, l'auteur du *Ki-tāb ar-rawḍatayn*, strict contemporain d'al-Ḥarīrī, il est mort en 676/1277, qui, dans la mention qu'il fait de ce dernier à l'année de sa mort, 645/1244 dans son *Tarāḡim*, reprise textuellement par Ibn Kaṭīr, traduit bien le sentiment commun, en insistant

plus sur le côté "corrupteur de la jeunesse" d'al-Ḥarīrī que sur son hétérodoxie dogmatique:

"Il (al-Ḥarīrī) fut suivi par un groupe de *fuqarā'* connus sur le nom de Compagnons d'al-Ḥarīrī, partisans de la négation de la *ṣarī'a*; pires dans leur for interne (encore) qu'à l'extérieur, à l'exception de ceux d'entre eux qui revinrent à Dieu. Il y avait chez cet homme un singulier mépris des choses de la *ṣarī'a* dont il faisait peu de cas, et une façon de manifester à l'extérieur tous les signes extérieurs des dépravés et des désobéissants. Ce qui fit se corrompre de nombreux groupes des enfants des bonnes familles de Damas (*awlād kubarā' Dimašq*), qui, prenant son genre de vie, le suivirent parce qu'il avait jeté sa gourme (*li-annahū kāna ḥalī' al-idār*); dans les réunions qu'ils tenaient ensemble, ce n'était que musique et chants perpétuels, danse et beaux adolescents; personne n'y était repris pour faire ce que bon lui semblait: abandon de la prière, dépenses excessives. C'est ainsi que (al-Ḥarīrī) dévoya (*adalla*) et pervertit de très nombreuses gens...".

Ce texte laisse entendre cependant qu'un certain nombre de ces jeunes gens quittèrent les pratiques d'al-Ḥarīrī. On peut se demander si Ibn Isrā'il, disciple d'al-Ḥarīrī dès son jeune âge ne fut pas un de ceux là. Il vécut du reste de longues années après l'exil et la mort d'al-Ḥarīrī, 34 années exactement, pour mourir à un âge avancé pour l'époque, à 74 ans en 677/1278. Une chose est sûre cependant, c'est que le disciple de ce maître controversé n'abandonnera jamais son admiration de jeunesse pour son maître, si l'on en croit le très long éloge funèbre qu'il composa pour lui, en vers, à sa mort, où il ne doute en rien, au moins, de son bonheur éternel:

"Le ciel, au jour de son enterrement, pleure des larmes, comme perles épandues

C'est me semble-t-il, qu'il se réjouit de voir monter son âme, très haut dans la lumière

Les larmes de l'ondée ne sont-elles pas fraîches, et comme elles, celles de qui est en joie?"

Il est bien difficile de nous faire une idée claire de ce qu'ont pensé les damascains d'al-Ḥarīrī et de ses compagnons; les détracteurs que nous avons cités, hormi peut-être Abū Sāma, appartiennent tous au milieu religieux de l'époque, allergique à toute mystique. Nous n'avons pas d'échos négatifs à son encontre, de personnalités damascaines plus rassisées, à an-Nawawī, je pense, son exact contemporain, originaire comme lui du Hawrān. L'attitude franchement louangeuses à sa mort d'Ibn Isrā'il peut être mise sur le compte d'un poème de circonstances, mais aussi, peut-être, d'un certain retour nostalgique aux "folies de jeunesse".

Une chose demeure, c'est la réputation assez unanimement positive de son plus célèbre et fidèle disciple.

Les pouvoirs publics eux s'émurent évidemment de pareille attitude. Si, comme le souligne Abū Sāma à la fin du texte cité plus haut, "un groupe d'*ulamā'* lança plus d'une fois contre lui une *fatwā* le condamnant à mort" celle-ci ne fut jamais mise en

<sup>16</sup> Rapporté d'ad-Dahabī, *Ibar* 53.

<sup>17</sup> Nous renvoyons à notre ouvrage: Pouzet 1988:222 et sq.



application. C'est que cette dernière dépendait des aléas de la politique religieuse des souverains de l'époque. A l'avènement d'al-Ašraf Mūsā, al-Harīrī fut mis en prison pour quelques années (*sinīn*) dans la citadelle de 'Azzatā<sup>18</sup>. Mais son successeur qui avait une autre politique, le relâcha, mais en lui enjoignant de ne plus paraître à Damas; al-Harīrī rejoignit donc son village de Busr où il mourut peu de temps après.

C'est précisément au moment de son emprisonnement à la forteresse (*ḥiṣn*) de 'Azzatā que son disciple Ibn Isrā'il composa un long panégyrique de son ancien maître. Il convient de s'arrêter un peu à ce long poème, car, avec les remarques critiques qu'il suscite chez son rapporteur l'historien Qutb ad-Dīn al-Yūnīnī (m.726/1326), il jette une nouvelle lumière sur la divergence des opinions vis à vis de ce ṣayḥ décidément très controversé, de son vivant même.

Autant en effet on comprend le caractère laudatif de l'éloge funèbre cité plus haut que lui consacre Ibn Isrā'il après sa mort, autant on est frappé par le caractère "excessif", sinon impie de cette longue *nūniyya*, écrite du vivant même d'al-Harīrī. Et comme le souligne al-Yūnīnī, le fait que son ṣayḥ soit emprisonné à l'époque à 'Azzatā, "ne justifie en rien la véracité de ce que dit le poète sur les qualités exceptionnelles" de son maître<sup>19</sup>.

al-Yūnīnī est le seul à avoir rapporté ce poème de 95 vers; il l'a "lui-même copié de l'écriture d'Ibn Isrā'il"<sup>20</sup>. Deux allusions géographiques, l'une à l'origine hauranaise d'al-Harīrī (vers 1), l'autre, vers la moitié du poème, à 'Azzatā (*miṣdāq qawlī an qad širta muḥtaḡiban / fī 'Azzatā wa-kafānī dāka 'unwānā*)<sup>21</sup> nous empêchent de douter de la destination du poème.

Il ne saurait être question ici de faire une analyse approfondie de ce poème, ni de le comparer avec d'autres poèmes d'Ibn Isrā'il, sa *dāliyya* entre autre<sup>22</sup>. Disons

<sup>18</sup> "Proche de la vallée du Barada", cf. al-Yūnīnī, *Dayl* III, 432.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. "wa ḡa'ala d-dalīl 'alā ṣiḥḥa mā dakarahū min aṣ-ṣifāt al-'azīma al-mansūba ilā ḥabṣihī; wa-ḥadā fī ḡāyat at-tanāquḍ wa-l-qubḥ".

<sup>20</sup> Cf. al-Yūnīnī, *Dayl* III, 426-432 "naqaltuhū min ḥaṭṭihī", comme il l'a fait de bien d'autres fragments de ses poèmes. Cf. *id.* 407, 408, 409, 410. Ce qui nous pousse à croire qu'à l'encontre de sa grande *dāliyya* très connue et pour laquelle al-Yūnīnī n'utilise pas cette formule, cet éloge de 'Alī al-Harīrī, ne devait pas être connue du grand public. Ce qui justifie le critique qu'en fait le rapporteur, clôturant ainsi la longue biographie de 27 pages qu'il nous donne d'Ibn Isrā'il (pp. 405-432). Seule la grande *dāliyya* d'Ibn Isrā'il sera légèrement plus longue, 100 vers.

<sup>21</sup> Nous remplaçons ici 'izzinā par 'Azzatā, suivant al-Yūnīnī qui fait allusion expressément, après avoir cité ce vers à part, à l'emprisonnement du ṣayḥ à la forteresse de 'Azzatā; allusion que n'a pas vue l'éditeur, bien que celui-ci corrige le mot en 'Azzatā dans la suite du texte, mais pas dans le vers. (cf. al-Yūnīnī, *Dayl* III, 432, note 3).

<sup>22</sup> Dans sa courte mais très intéressante et relativement flatteuse notice qu'il consacre à Ibn Isrā'il, ad-Dahabī, après avoir qualifié le poète de "faḡīr ṣāḥib al-Harīrī, rūḥ al-mašāḥid wa-rayḥānat al-maḡāmi", *kāna faḡīran zarīfan nazīfan laṭīfan malīḥ an-nazm*, regrette cependant (*lawlā...*) ce "monisme" (*ittūḥā*)

cependant qu'il commence par une première partie où il exalte cette région bénie du Hawrān, patrie du ṣayḥ, où, selon le vieil usage de la *qaṣīda* ancienne, tout un chacun doit venir y faire sa demeure, s'y "sédentariser" (*in ḥalla-hā*) et y trouver ce que son âme désire, qu'il soit amoureux éperdu, criminel en quête de pardon (*kamā yulāqī bihā al-ḡānūna ḡufrānā*), dévôt (*ābid*) ou "gnostique" (*ārif*) à court de connaissance etc... Ce qu'ils y trouveront, chacun avec ses désirs et ses souhaits, dépasse toutes leurs espérance. Le thème du jardin, du vin, de la "sobriété ivresse" et des convives, jeunes et vieux (*ṣayban wa-ṣabāban*), y croise le thème précédent, bien dans la manière du poète et d'Ibn al-Fārid qu'il a connu en Egypte<sup>23</sup>:

"Le compagnon sur qui son vin n'a eu aucun effet va connaître la joie.

Ceux qui le voient, s'étonnant de sa lucidité dans l'ivresse, disent: le vin peut-il enivrer celui qui, déjà, a bu?"

Suit une longue série d'apostrophes répétées à son ṣayḥ (*anta llaḏī, anta llaḏī ...*) qui peut résoudre toute difficulté ou problème, "découvreur de tout ce que contient l'univers" (*anta llaḏī kullu mā fī-l-kawn muḡhiruhū*), "toi dont la seule vue chasse toute crainte et dommage", pour culminer en des vers de ce type: "Toi, mon ange (ou mon maître), seul ṣayḥ que j'ai jamais connu..." et surtout dans les trois derniers vers de la *qaṣīda*: "Toi, tu es le tout, toute la bonté du monde, la coupe de tes dons jamais ne nous quittera ... Tu es la paix..."

A lire quelques passages de cet étonnant poème d'Ibn Isrā'il, à la louange de son ṣayḥ en prison, on comprend les réactions négatives d'al-Yūnīnī auxquelles nous avons fait allusion plus haut. "S'il a conscience de la beauté de sa poésie et de ses connaissances littéraires, (Ibn Isrā'il) s'est laissé aller dans ce poème à ce qu'on ne peut entendre, ce que la *ṣarī'a* rejette et ce qui ne supporte aucun commentaire<sup>24</sup>; c'est incroyable qu'il loue ainsi son ṣayḥ d'une façon qui ne convient pas à une créature, et sous-entendu, à Dieu seul"; et al-Yūnīnī d'ajouter, comme pour excuser Ibn Isrā'il: "En dépit de toute cette exagération à l'égard de son ṣayḥ, on aurait dit que notre ami (Ibn Isrā'il), quand il le mentionnait, ne voulait pas l'appeler *notre* ṣayḥ; et, si on le lui faisait remarquer, il disait: mon ṣayḥ c'est Ṣihāb ad-Dīn as-

qui gâche son oeuvre. Et, ce qui nous intéresse surtout ici, il nous dit que cette dernière tendance, commune à plusieurs poètes/mystiques de l'époque, s'est exprimée chez lui "une fois "sans ambages" (*taṣriḥan*) et une autre fois de façon allusive (*talwiḥan*). Il semble bien qu'on ait ici une allusion pour le "taṣriḥ" à sa *dāliyya* très connue où Ibn Isrā'il ne cache pas son monisme; l'autre (*talwiḥan*) pourrait bien être son poème panégyrique écrit pour al-Harīrī dont il est question ici. Cf. ad-Dahabī, *Iḥar* V, 317.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Isrā'il a connu en Egypte Ibn al-Fārid; ce dernier a même été l'arbitre d'une joute poétique où Ibn Isrā'il a été convaincu du plagiat qu'il commit d'un poème célèbre de l'époque de 'Abdalmun'im b. al-Ḥiyāmī (m. 685/1286); à la suite de cette déception Ibn Isrā'il quitta immédiatement l'Egypte pour rentrer à Damas.

<sup>24</sup> "wa-lā yaḥtamilu t-ta'wil", qui pourrait atténuer l'outrance de ces vers.



Suhrawardī; l'autre *ṣayḥ* (al-Ḥarīrī), je l'ai suivi après cela, un certain temps, jusqu'à sa mort...".

On ne peut se défendre de penser, en entendant les divers échos recueillis dans les sources au sujet de ces deux hommes dont les destins, assez différents, ne se sont pas moins rapprochés, et pas seulement au début de leur vie, qu'il existe, à cette époque à Damas, une secrète admiration, voire une espèce de connivence entre le genre de vie des deux hommes et le milieu damascain traditionnel. Les critiques, même les plus résolus, ne se départissent pas d'une certaine affection pour ce genre de personnage décidément atypique et qui vient rompre en quelque sorte la monotonie d'une vie religieuse très attachée à la seule pratique.

Nous en donnerons, pour terminer deux exemples; le premier, c'est que le très sérieux Ibn Hallikān, grand qādī à Damas et en Egypte, et qui a connu Ibn Isrā'īl en Egypte, assista lui-même à son enterrement<sup>25</sup>.

Quant à al-Ḥarīrī lui-même, en dépit des critiques d'ad-Dahabī qu'on rapporte sur le *ṣayḥ* de la Ḥarīriyya, il semble bien que son jugement sur lui ait été beaucoup plus nuancé qu'il paraît au premier abord. Voici en effet ce qu'il nous rapporte dans la courte *tarğama* qu'il lui consacre dans son *Ibar*:

"Il exagère beaucoup dans ses pratiques "hédonistes" (*tayyiba, rāḥa, samā'āt wa-milāḥ*); mais ceux qui ont envers lui un préjugé favorable (*man yuhsinu bihi az-zann*) disent que, chez lui, tout cela était authentique: il a connu les états mystiques qui l'ont rendu capable d'arriver (très haut). Mais ceux qui ont expérimenté de près ce qu'il faisait, l'accusent d'impiété et d'errance." Et ad-Dahabī d'ajouter: "...il est de ces gens dont on ne peut pas dire de façon catégorique, s'il sont au paradis ou en enfer. Personnellement (*fa-innā*), je ne sais comment il a terminé sa vie". Et ad-Dahabī termine sur cette allusion au jour où il est mort, "jour solennel s'il en fût, (*yawm šarīf*), vendredi 27 *ramadān* peu avant la prière du *ʿaṣr*<sup>26</sup>, il avait près de 90 ans; il est mort subitement".

On peut se demander, comme le laisse penser ici ad-Dahabī de façon implicite, si mourir à un âge si avancé, et durant une des nuits sacrées du Qadr, pouvait être le fait d'un *kāfir*, d'un *dāll* ou d'un véritable *zindīq*...

<sup>25</sup> as-Safadī, *Wāfi*, III, 144: "*ṣayyā'a ġināzatahu qādī l-quḍāt Ibn Hallikān wa-l-ḍ'yan wa-l-fuqarā' wa-l-halq*". Il est difficile de trouver unanimité plus complète de la population de Damas.

<sup>26</sup> al-Kutubī, moins nuancé qu'ad-Dahabī dans son jugement sur al-Ḥarīrī, prend prétexte, au contraire, de sa mort le 27 *ramadān* une des nuits du Qadr (*wa-hiya min layālī l-qadr*), pour évoquer le rite que pratiquèrent, par la suite, ses adeptes en son souvenir: "Il viennent, en cette nuit solennelle, avec tambourins et beaux garçons, danser jusqu'à l'aube" (*Fawāt* II, 55).

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## NASAB: ON THE HISTORY OF A CONCEPT

Zoltán Szombathy

*Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest*

It appears to be an all but indelible *idée fixe* of Islamic scholarship that genealogy has always been somehow an integral, inseparable part of the Arab nomads' culture, and a unique distinguishing feature, as it were, of the Arab or nomadic 'world-view', whatever that may mean<sup>1</sup>. The term *nasab* is usually understood to be the Arabic equivalent of 'genealogy', especially genealogy on the patriline, which may be memorized by generation after generation of tribesmen, or else documented in the form of genealogical trees or chain-like lists enumerating the names of ascending generations of male ancestors<sup>2</sup>. The individual tribes' genealogies, or *nasabs*, can be and are linked together by those concerned to form one national genealogy, tracing origins back to the remotest past of pre-Islamic Arabia.

Thus, what is known as the genealogical paradigm is traditionally seen as the very framework in which Arab nomads have always perceived their world and all social relations therein. Whether we should really give credit to this deeply entrenched notion will be the subject of this paper. To formulate the basic dilemma: whereas early Bedouins were certainly quite preoccupied with something that they called *nasab*, the hackneyed equation of this *nasab* with 'genealogy' throughout Arabian history is by no means so self-evident as later Muslim literati would have us believe. For reasons of space constraints, I shall largely limit my argument here to the linguistic aspects of the issue, which I have analysed at more length elsewhere (Szombathy 1999).

The usual understanding of *nasab* as genealogy rests almost exclusively on the work of mediaeval Muslim scholars, whose model of pre-Islamic *nasab* is strikingly similar to what modern anthropological literature offers to say about segmentary lineage systems. We should entertain few doubts that the description of the Bedouins' *nasab* structure promoted by mediaeval Arab genealogists has profoundly influenced segmentary lineage theory, advocates of which may well have seen it as a historical proof of their own hypotheses<sup>3</sup>. This is especially obvious if we compare the views of Ibn Haldūn on the role of genealogy (*nasab*) in Bedouin society with the descrip-

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Nöldeke 1886:177; Hitti 1970:28; Khalidi 1994:5; al-Wardī 1965:57; Kister & Plessner 1976:50; aš-Šalqāni 1977:32; Bonte et al. 1991:16.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Nöldeke 1886:179; Caskel 1966: 1, 24; Chelhod 1965:129; Hamès 1987:99; Varisco 1995:151.

<sup>3</sup> In this context, noteworthy is the fact that that once-so-popular pet of social anthropologists, segmentary lineage theory, seems to be under ever-growing siege and is less and less tenable in the eyes of many anthropologists. See Kuper 1982:92.



tion of segmentary lineage society and its genealogical basis by, say, Evans-Pritchard or Gellner<sup>4</sup>. That many twentieth-century anthropologists drew heavily upon the *Muqaddima* of Ibn Haldūn in forming their own theories on lineages is undeniable, and indeed some of them have acknowledged this debt in so many words. We ought to be, however, rather more wary of accepting the views of mediaeval Muslim scholars on ancient Bedouin society, never mind basing hypotheses on them, for the Bedouins' culture and society were almost as alien to these urban Muslim intellectuals as they are to us, and their interpretations of many facets of Bedouin folklore and traditions are apparently the product of totally baseless fancies arising from a lack of a solid grasp of Bedouin society and its workings. To this may be added the quite natural tendency among mediaeval Arab scholars to idealize the Arabs' pre-Islamic past, which was instrumental in bringing about such obviously anachronistic yet widely accepted myths like the existence of sciences, inter alia genealogical science (*'ilm an-nasab*), among pre-Islamic Bedouins<sup>5</sup>. Instead of relying on the views of the urban literati of Abbasid-era Iraq, one would perhaps do better to peruse the available early sources and try to figure out what is really meant when *nasab* is being talked about.

To anticipate somewhat, the most important observation to be made after a careful scrutiny of the Arabic nomenclature of kinship and tribal segmentation is that the Arabic terminology of this semantic field is as a rule remarkably vague, with most if not all kinship terms being used in a literal or primary sense as well as in a figurative or extended one<sup>6</sup>. Such terms include *ab* ('father'), *umm* ('mother'), *ġadd* ('grandfather'), *ah* ('brother')<sup>7</sup>, *ibn* and *walad* ('son, offspring'), *bint* ('daughter'), *'amm* ('paternal uncle'), *hāl* ('maternal uncle'), and a host of other words, all of which tend to lack any exactitude of meaning. Thus the term 'father', *ab*, will often refer to a very distant ancestor, as will 'grandfather', *ġadd*. The plural for *ābā'* and *āġdād* (or *ġudūd*) are especially prone to being used in the sense of 'ancestors' (Cuisenier, Miquel 1965:26). Similarly, the terms *a'mām* (or *'umūma*) and *ahwāl* (or *hu'ūla*), properly meaning 'paternal uncles' and 'maternal uncles', respectively, will more

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Evans-Pritchard 1940:192; Gellner 1981:33-34.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ibn Sa'īd, *Naṣwa* I, 80-81; al-Andalusī, *Tabaqāt* 39-42; Ibn Qutayba, *Fadl* 119-120; al-Ġāhiz, *Bayān* I, 137, 384.

<sup>6</sup> A distinction apparently disregarded altogether in Seligman 1923-25.

<sup>7</sup> On the loose use of *ah* (and *ġadd*) in contemporary Yemen, cf. Dresch 1991:9.

<sup>8</sup> A source cites the poet al-Farazdaq addressing Sukayna bt. al-Husayn, the Prophet's granddaughter (through Fātima) as 'daughter of God's Messenger' (*ya bint rasul Allāh*)! See al-Bayhaqī, *Mahāsīn* 246.

often than not refer to one's whole agnatic and uterine kin<sup>9</sup>. The common phrase *awlād/banū al-'amm* is seldom used in its primary sense of 'parallel cousins', being as it is the usual idiomatic equivalent of 'one's own tribe', 'one's own people' (in varying senses) (Chelhod 1965:122; Ashkenazi 1965-69:663)<sup>10</sup>. Literal interpretations of such loose usages are an invitation for misunderstanding, and it is worth noting here that mediaeval genealogists were fond of deliberately taking figurative expressions in a literal sense as a way to create consistent genealogies out of a confused medley of names; although space does not allow me to elaborate on this point here<sup>11</sup>.

The hierarchy of the various levels of tribal segmentation, which is the very backbone of both Arabic *'ilm an-nasab* and modern anthropological theories on segmentary lineages, totally disintegrates under an analysis of the terminology<sup>12</sup>. Arabic has an impressively wide array of original terms for tribal segments (such as *qabila*, *'imāra*, *šā'b*, *batn*, *fahid*, *ašīra*, *fasila*, *hayy*, *zahara*, *bayt*, *usra*, *ahl*, *raht*, *sulāla*, etc.), which may lead one to the false conclusion that Arabs used to have an elaborate genealogi-

<sup>9</sup> Instructive in this respect is the common phrase *karīm al-a'mām*, 'noble through and through', literally, 'noble on the paternal line'. In a story, the caliph Hārūn ar-Rašīd is informed by a man in his entourage of the presence of a visitor who, it is said, belonged to the 'caliph's maternal kin, the *Ansār* (tribes of Medina)' (*min ahwālika l-ansār*); see al-Bayhaqī, *Mahāsīn* 266. Likewise, a man of the *Kalb* tribe relates that, having committed a capital offence, he was forced to leave his kin and seek safety among his maternal relatives, the *Murra* tribe (*ahwālī Bani Murra*); see al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* II, 276.

<sup>10</sup> For examples, mediaeval and modern, cf. al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* I, 326 [a black woman addresses the black poet Naṣīb b. Rabāh, totally unrelated though he is to her, as her 'paternal cousin']; III, 81 [the pre-Islamic poet 'Urwat aṣ-Ṣa'ālik is referred to as the 'paternal cousin' of a scholar of the Abbasid era]; XX, 216 [a poem by Abū l-'Atāhiya calls the caliph al-Amin 'the Prophet's paternal cousin']; al-Ibšīhī, *Mustatraf* 71 [the poet 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a is called the 'paternal cousin' of the Omayyad caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz]; Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif* 129; al-Mas'ūdī, *Muruġ* II, 211; Asad 1986:104; Dickson 1996:101-103; Bonte 1987:54; Miner 1953:144.

<sup>11</sup> On the frequent mistranslation of *awlād*, cf. Mohamed 1980:36. Mediaeval scholars are as a rule rather reticent on the methods that they used to arrive at a certain genealogical construct, other than quoting their immediate authorities if there are any. Rare as they are, the following methodological remarks by two mediaeval authors are therefore particularly illuminating: 1: 'I do not recall seeing the *nasab* of Muṭī' [b. Iyās] transmitted by anyone as an uninterrupted chain up to Kināna, but [there is] one account that I shall cite shortly in which the transmitter (*ra'wī*) says that Abū Qur'a al-Kinānī was a grandfather (*ġadd*) of Muṭī'. Now, I do not know for sure if he is [Muṭī]'s actual grandfather to whose name I should join his *nasab* directly, or else he is a more distant ancestor' (*a-huwa ġadduhu l-adnā fa-asila nasabahu bihi am huwa ba'idun minhu*); see al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* XIII, 301. 2: 'Abū 'Abdarrahmān as-Sulamī claims that Zarqān b. Muhammad was the brother of [Dū n-Nūn al-Misrī]. I, however, think [it more likely] that he was his 'brother' in the sense of being his intimate friend, rather than that of real kinship (*was-azunnu annahu ahuhu mu'āhātan lā uhuwwata nasabīn*), for he was one of [Dū n-Nūn]'s close associates and companions'; see al-Ibšīhī, *Mustatraf* 156.

<sup>12</sup> Incidentally, the same appears to be the case with other societies alleged to be 'segmentary', like the Nuer of Southern Sudan, whose usual term for 'lineage' may actually refer to just any level of segmentation. See Evans-Pritchard 1940:195.



cal system based on different levels of tribal segmentation. This is precisely the idea suggested by mediaeval Muslim intellectuals and keenly accepted by most scholars up to this day, but apparently wrong when we consider the fact that the plethora of terms used for tribal sub-sections of various sizes form no consistent system, and indeed are often quite interchangeable. In the totally chaotic inventory of words, we can distinguish only two basic meanings: 'a tribe' (usually but not exclusively expressed by *qabila*), and 'any subdivision smaller than a tribe'. There are, of course, many shades of meaning attached to certain terms, yet the fact remains that, at the end of the day, these words have never come to compose any semblance of a hierarchical, segmentary system. Significantly, the mediaeval genealogists themselves, drawn as they were towards systematization and precision, could never settle on a final definition of each term for tribal segments<sup>13</sup>.

To proceed to the question of *nasab* itself, one finds an equally palpable vagueness of meaning clinging to it in most early sources on Bedouins, wherein the usual rendering as 'genealogy' or 'chain of male ancestors' will prove to be the result of so apparent misinterpretation as to make it utterly untenable. Such texts abound, and in fact there are precious few passages in which rendering *nasab* as 'genealogy' seems to be contextually possible at all, let alone really plausible. Thus, in many passages the act of 'giving one's *nasab*' (*intisāb*) must obviously have involved little more than mentioning the name of one's parents or the tribe to which one belonged<sup>14</sup>. Just how artificial the habit of using *nasab* chains must have seemed to the Arabs even in Omayyad times is indicated by a story in which the occurrence of a *nasab* consisting of a mere four ascending names in a poem of Durayd b. as-Simma prompted the following sarcastic remark from the caliph 'Abdalmalik: 'This Durayd has traced Du'āb b. Asmā' almost back to Adam!' (Abū 'Ubayda, *Ayyām* 582). True enough that mediaeval dictionaries like the *Lisān al-'Arab* do mention 'tracing someone's descent to his first known ancestor' (*rafā'atā fi nasabihī ilā gaddihī l-akbar*), but this explanation bears the hallmark of the mediaeval scholars' pedantry, and is supplemented anyway by a number of vaguer, and no doubt earlier, meanings like 'kinship' (*qarāba*), 'kinship links' (*qarābāt*), and 'belonging' in a variety of senses (by ancestry, by dwelling-place, by métier, etc.) (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān* VI, 4405). Ibn Sīda, having mentioned 'kinship' (*qarāba*) as the primary meaning of *nasab*, proceeds to add that it might have the more specific meaning of 'agnatic descent' (*wa-qila huwa fi l-ābā'i ḥassatan*) (*Muḥassas* III, 147). However, the fact that *nasab* originally covered uterine relations just as

<sup>13</sup> Cf. al-Qalqaṣandī, *Nihāya* 20-21; as-Sam'ānī, *Ansāb* I, 28; Ibn Qutayba, *Faḍl* 108; Ibn 'Abdalbarī, *Inḥāb* 45; Ibn Durayd, *Istiqāq* 14; Abū 'Ubayda, *Ayyām* 353; as-Sukkarī, *Naqā'id* I, 238. Contemporary Bedouin tribes in the Arab world continue to use a confusing and distinctly unsystematic terminology for tribal subgroups; cf. Cunnison 1966:9; Asad 1986:104; Jaussen 1908:11-13, 111-114; Ingham 1986:34-35; Chelhod 1965:150; Cuisenier 1962:85; Bédoucha 1987:144; Bonte 1987:54.

<sup>14</sup> See the appendix of this article, in which I quote a number of such passages from various works along with tentative translations, which I hope will serve to give substance to my argument here.

much as agnatic ones, and affinal ties just as much as consanguinous ones, is also testified by such expressions like two persons being 'connected by *nasab* through women' (*wa-kāna bayna Ayyūba bni Mahrūfin wa-bayna Awsī bni Qallāmin ḥadā nasabun min qibali n-nisā'i*), or 'marriage [being] one of the two types of *nasab*' (*fa-inna n-nikāha ahadu n-nasabayni*) (al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* II, 90; Ibn Qutayba, *Faḍl* 118). In fact, *nasab* might occasionally cover an even wider area of meaning, as demonstrated by the highly metaphorical adage 'acquaintance is [a sort of] *nasab*' (al-Bayhaqī, *Mahāsin* 189)<sup>15</sup>.

Closely connected with *nasab* is the word used to describe people reputed to be particularly knowledgeable in matters of genealogy, *nassāb* or *nassāba*. Given that *nasab* in the early period seems to have been quite far from designating 'genealogy', neither is *nassāb* to be understood as 'genealogist' when applied to pre-Islamic Bedouin men. First of all, there is nothing to suggest that the faculty of being a *nassāb* ever entailed an institutionalized position within the tribe, like that of a poet (*šā'ir*) or a soothsayer (*kāhin*). Instead, a *nassāb* seems to have been simply, and not surprisingly, anyone who happened to know a lot about his fellow-tribesmen, their relationships, the tribe's legends (*ahbār*), and indeed the gossip current within the group. Gossip is actually a very important element of a Bedouin *nassāb*'s erudition, as attested by a number of texts that leave no uncertainty in this respect. Thus, when the Prophet Muḥammad wanted to retaliate for the poetical lampoons to which the Meccans subjected him, he sent his poet Ḥassān b. Ṭābit to the future caliph Abū Bakr, a famous *nassāb*, who then instructed him as to which Meccan women he should allude to in his poems to cause pain to the *Qurayš*. The kind of information that Abū Bakr furnished to the poet is labelled in a work *ma'āyib al-qawm*, 'the disgraces of the people' (al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* IV, 145-146; al-Maqdisī, *Istibsār* 52-53)<sup>16</sup>. Just how close early concepts of *nasab* must have been to petty gossip is shown by a remark of al-Asmā'i: 'Beware by God of the maleficence of the [tribe's] old women, for they know the ancestors (*istā'idū bi-llāhi min šarri l-'aḡā'izi fa-innahunna ya'rifna l-ābā'a*)!' (as-Sam'ānī, *Ansāb* I, 24). Likewise, it is for good reason that another famous early *nassāb*, Abū Ḡahm b. Ḥudayfa, should be said to have been 'feared for his tongue' (*wa-kāna yuhāfu li-lisānihī*) (Ibn Durayd, *Istiqāq* 139). As I have stated above, however, the knowledge of a pre-Islamic *nassāb* went far beyond the limits of mere news mongering to encompass tribal legends and tales (*ahbār*), recollections of tribal skirmishes (*ayyām*), and even poems. In their capacity as narrators of the past, they

<sup>15</sup> We find a similar figurative usage of *nasab* in a line by a celebrated poet of the Abbasid epoch, al-Attābi: 'But kinship is of no avail after an angry split, for amity is the closest of kinship ties!' (*fa-idā l-qarābatu lā tuqarrību qātī'an wa-idā l-mawaddatu aqrabu l-ansābi*); see al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* XIII, 131.

<sup>16</sup> For a different version, cf. as-Sam'ānī, *Ansāb* I, 22.



are not unlike the early *qussās*, popular story-tellers<sup>17</sup>. The wisdom expected of a Bedouin tribesman regarded as a *nassāb* might apparently include even predictions for the future<sup>18</sup>.

The emergence of Arabic genealogy as a genuine discipline cultivated by learned urban scholars, and, later, its spectacular success in becoming a firm part of Arabic and Muslim popular culture, are topics that I cannot discuss here<sup>19</sup>. A lengthy analysis of the later career of the term *nasab* in various Muslim societies, Arab and non-Arab alike, would be beyond the scope of this paper as well. Let it suffice to say that while the acquired and now all too familiar meaning 'genealogy', 'pedigree' or 'family tree' has never ceased to dominate the popular interpretation of this concept, there seems to have been an ongoing use of the term in a highly varied and ill-defined sense alongside the technical one, which is especially true of non-Arab Islamic communities, in which the meaning of *nasab*, implicitly, often approximates 'kinship', 'origins' or simply 'identity', in spite of the characteristic efforts of many groups to procure prestigious if totally baseless Arabic pedigrees. The continuing use of *nasab* in both an ill-defined and a highly technical sense has remained an abundant source of misconstructions and false theorizing among scholars. Just how confused, and confusing, the use of *nasab* may be even in written scholarly texts is demonstrated by the *Muqaddima* of Ibn Haldūn, who was wont to use the word *nasab* for 'kinship', 'descent', and 'genealogy' alike, and would then draw far-reaching – and, it must be said, thoroughly wrong – conclusions about the origins and social function of genealogy among Arabs on the basis of this indiscriminate linguistic usage<sup>20</sup>.

Having suggested a possible course of the development of *nasab* from being a commonly used and rather vague linguistic item into the position of a full-fledged *terminus technicus* of Islamic scholarship, I feel it important to note that this semantic development is far from unique in Arabic, as we know of a great many terms that, having originally been rather unspecified items of Bedouin vocabulary, ended up in a similar manner as veritable *termini technici*. It must be added that many of these terms gave rise to similar misinterpretations on the part of the mediaeval Muslim scholars who would instinctively project their usual, specialized understanding of the

<sup>17</sup> To get a glimpse into what kind of stories the repertoire of the early *qussās* contained, cf. the stories told by 'Abid b. Šariya to the caliph Mu'āwīya about the ancient Arabian races; see Ibn Hišām, *Tiğān* 325-328.

<sup>18</sup> The renowned Bedouin *nassāb* Dağfal as-Sadūsi was asked by a man concerning the time the latter was going to die. The *nassāb*, however, would not undertake to answer such a query. See Ibn an-Nadīm, *Fihrist* I, 89.

<sup>19</sup> On the issue of the influence of literacy and its attendant cultural patterns on ostensibly non-literate and highly 'traditional' societies (as Bedouins have tended to get portrayed), cf. Goody 1975:1, 4-5; Finnegan 1974:53.

<sup>20</sup> I have discussed this observation at length in my unpublished PhD thesis, titled *Arabic Genealogy Between Muslim Scholarship and Popular Culture*.

term back into the past and make false assumptions accordingly. Instances of such a failure to grasp the realities of semantic change include words like *rāwī*, or *qussās*<sup>21</sup>. To take *qussās* as an example, mediaeval Arabic authors do not seem to be bothered at all to distinguish between a *qāss* of early Islam and another of the Abbasid era, obviously perceiving this métier to have remained essentially the same throughout its career, albeit gradually sinking in esteem for various reasons. The fact that it originally had not been a regular métier at all but a casual activity open to virtually anyone was alien to their mechanical understanding of the term<sup>22</sup>. Interestingly, Ibn Haldūn, whose mistaken views on *nasab* I have already pointed to, was apparently not unaware of historical changes in semantics in some cases, which is well demonstrated by his valuable observations on the modifications in the connotations of words like *qādi* or *mu'allim*. As I have argued, the implications arising from the mechanical mis-translation of early *nasab* as 'genealogy' are absolutely distorted yet have continued to help fuel far-reaching anthropological hypotheses on nomadic lineage societies.

The issue of *nasab*, as I hope to have made clear, is not a matter of merely linguistic significance having no further consequences, because interpreting *nasab* as 'genealogy' has had a profound impact on our understanding of traditional Bedouin society. Genealogy – that is, an elementary tool to link any group to every other one, an 'organizing principle' of society – is traditionally thought, and often expressly stated, to have been a distinguishing feature of nomadic Arab culture, a contribution of the pre-Islamic Arabian society to the sophisticated culture of mediaeval Islam. In other words, we are usually told that in the elaborate science of genealogy ('*ilm an-nasab*') we are to recognize a more refined version of a pre-Islamic nomadic tradition that was already an inherent part of the culture of pre-Islamic Arabs, a 'proto-science' as it were. Whereas no one would seriously consider the use of the term *hadīṭ* in an early Bedouin context as evidence of the germs of *hadīṭ* scholarship amongst Bedouins, a very similar anachronism concerning *nasab* is still given credit by many. As I have argued, the roots of '*ilm an-nasab*' are to be sought anywhere but in pre-Islamic Bedouin society, and the word *nasab* seems to have originally expressed a concept fundamentally different from that it has come to signify.

## APPENDIX

1 (al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* XX, 173):

وحدثني الفتح غلام أبي تمام الطائي {...} فقال سألت مولاي أبا تمام عن نسب دعبل فقال هو دعبل بن علي الذي يقول ضحك المشيب برأسه فيكي...

<sup>21</sup> The issue of *hadīṭ* is by now too well known to need much comment. On the varying implications of *rāwī*, cf. Zwettler 1978:85-88; aš-Šalqānī 1977:72, 90.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the names listed in Ibn al-Ġawzī, *Qussās*.



This was narrated to me by al-Faḥ, the servant-boy of Abū Tammām at-Ta'ī: 'I asked my master Abū Tammām about the *nasab* of Di'bil [al-Ḥuzā'i], and he told me that he had been Di'bil b. 'Alī, the author of [the well-known line of poetry]: "With all the greyness on his head laughing, he could not but weep".'

2 (Ibn Qutayba, *Šīr* 111):

يقول النصف من نسبي في خير عيس وأحصى النصف الآخر وهو نسبه في السودان بالسيف...  
[ʿAntara b. Šaddād] means [by the previously cited line of his poem]: 'half of my *nasab* connects me to the very best of the 'Abs tribe, while I protect the other half of it' – that is his *nasab* among the Black Africans – 'with my sword...'

3 (al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* IV, 4):

كان كيسان جدهم هذا يتيماً صغيراً يكفله قرابة له من عنزة فسياه خالد مع جماعة صبيان من أهلها فوجته بهم إلى أبي بكر فوصلوا إليه [...] فجعل أبو بكر رضي الله عنه يسأل الصبيان عن أسابهم فيخبره كل واحد بمبلغ معرفته حتى سأل كيسان فذكر له أنه من عنزة...  
This Kaysān – their ancestor – had been orphaned as a small child and was brought up by some of his relatives from the 'Anaza tribe. Now, he and a group of children from that area got captured by Ḥālid [b. al-Walid], who sent them to Abū Bakr. On reaching him, [...] the children were interrogated by Abū Bakr about their respective *nasabs*, every child telling him as much as he knew. He finally asked Kaysān, who informed him that he was from the 'Anaza tribe...

4 (Abū 'Ubayda, *Ayyām* 274-275):

ثم إن بني عيس ارتحلوا عن بني عامر فساروا يريدون بني تغلب فأرسلوا اليهم أن أرسلوا اليها فإذ أرسل اليهم بنو تغلب بثمانية عشر راكباً فيهم ابن الخمس التغلبي قاتل الحارث بن ظالم وفرح بهم بنو تغلب وأعجبهم ذلك فلما أتى الوفد بني عيس قال لهم قيس انتسيبوا نعرفكم فانتسيبوا حتى مر بابن الخمس فقال أنا ابن الخمس...

Then the *Banū 'Abs* tribe packed up and left the [territory of] the *Banū 'Amir* for [that of] the *Banū Taglib*, to whom they sent a message requesting that a delegation [from the *Taglib*] be sent to meet them. And the *Taglibites* did send eighteen horsemen, among whom was Ibn al-Ḥims at-Taglibī, the killer of al-Ḥāriṭ b. Zalīm. The *Taglibites* were quite glad [to meet] them; and when the delegation reached the *Banū 'Abs*, Qays asked them: 'Please tell us your *nasabs*, so that we could know you.' Thereupon they gave their respective *nasabs*. When it was Ibn al-Ḥims' turn, he said: 'I am Ibn al-Ḥims.'

5 (al-Maqdisī, *Istibsār* 66-67):

وروي عن الربيع أنها قالت كانت أسماء بنت مخزبة تباع العطر في المدينة {...} فدخلت علي ومعهما عطرهما فسألتنى فانتسبت لها فقالت أنت بنت قاتل سيده تعني أبا جهل فقلت بل أنا ابنة قاتل عميده...

The following is narrated from ar-Rubayya: 'Asmā' bt. Muḥarriba used to peddle perfumes in Medina [...]. One day, she came to my house, carrying her perfumes, and asked me [who I was]. I told her my *nasab*, to which she reacted thus: "You are,

then, the daughter of him who murdered his master", alluding to Abū Ḡahl. I replied: "I would rather say I am the daughter of him who murdered his slave!"

6 (al-Ibšihī, *Mustatraf* 29):

وحكي أن رجلاً تكلم بين يدي المأمون فأحسن فقال ابن من أنت قال ابن الأدب يا أمير المؤمنين قال نعم النسب انتسبت إليه...

There is a story that a man delivered an impeccably composed speech in front of [the caliph] al-Ma'mūn. The latter asked him whose son he was, and he replied: 'I am the son of erudition (*adab*), oh Commander of the Faithful.' [al-Ma'mūn] said: 'What a splendid *nasab* you have given yourself!'

7 (Qurān, 23:101):

فإذا شُفخ في الصور فلا أنساب بينهم يومئذ ولا يتساءلون  
When the trumpet is blown, that day there shall be no *nasabs* [to connect anyone to anyone]; and no one shall ask about anyone else.

8 (al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* I, 353-354):

إنما يهتر إذا عشق من انتسب عذرياً فأما أنت فما لك ولهذا...  
A man who is deeply in love only loses his senses if his *nasab* links him to the 'Uḍra tribe; so what on earth do you have to do with all this!'

9 (al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* I, 308-309):

حدثني اسحاق بن يعقوب العثماني مولى آل عثمان عن أبيه قال [...] كنت جالساً أيام الحج فما إن دريت إلا برجل على راحلة على رجل جميل وأداة حسنة معه صاحب له على راحلة قد جنب إليها فرساً وبغلاً فوقفا علي وسالاني فانتسبت لهما عثمانياً...

This was narrated to me by Ishāq b. Ya'qūb al-'Uṭmānī, a client of the lineage of 'Uṭmān [b. 'Affān], on the authority of his father: '[...] on one of the pilgrimage days, I was sitting somewhere when, all of a sudden, there appeared a man on a riding-camel with a beautiful saddle and nice accessories, accompanied by another man on a riding-camel to which a horse and a mule were tied with a rope. They stopped before me, inquiring [who I was], and I gave my *nasab* as a descendant of 'Uṭmān.'

10 (al-Isfahānī, *Agānī* II, 307):

فبينما ذات يوم أنا وابن ميادة جالسان على قارعة الطريق عشاءاً إذا راكبان يوجفان راكبتين حتى وقفا علينا فإذا أحدهما بحر الريح وهو عثمان بن عمرو بن عثمان بن عفان معه مولى له فتسبنا وانتسب لنا...

Of an evening, when I was sitting on the roadside together with Ibn Mayyāda, suddenly two camel-riders appeared trotting towards us. Reaching us, [I saw that] one of them was 'Windy Sea', which is the nickname of 'Uṭmān b. 'Amr b. 'Uṭmān b. 'Affān; while the other was a client of his. He asked about our *nasabs* and told us his own...



11 (al-Ibšihī, *Mustatraf* 519):

وقال الأصمعي أتاني رجل من قريش يستشيرني في امرأة يتزوجها فقلت يا ابن أخي أقصيرة النسب أم طويلته فلم يفهم علي فقلت يا ابن أخي أما قصيرة النسب فالتفتي إذا ذكرت أياما اكتفت به والطويلة النسب فهي التي لا تعرف الا حتى تطيل في نسبها فإياك أن تقع مع قوم قد أصابوا كثيرا من الدنيا مع دناءة فيهم فتضيع نسبك فيهم...

al-Asma'ī narrates the following: 'A man from the *Qurayš* tribe came to me, inquiring about a certain woman whom he wished to marry. When I asked, "My cousin, does she have a short or a long *nasab*?", he apparently did not understand my meaning. Therefore I clarified: "Oh my cousin, a woman's having a short *nasab* means that if she remembers a mere couple of days [of the past], she is perfectly content with that; whilst one's having a long *nasab* means that you cannot identify her unless you cite a whole long *nasab* for her. Beware, then, of associating yourself with a lot who, albeit possessing all manner of worldly riches, are nevertheless of a despicable kind, for you are in danger of losing your *nasab* among such people..."

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## MUḤAMMAD: LE PREMIER QUI RELÈVERA LA TÊTE

J.M.F. van Reeth

K. U. Leuven

Au début de ce siècle, Paul Casanova a développé en son livre, intitulé *Mohammed la fin du Monde*, une thèse hasardeuse, qui a été vite mise à l'écart par le monde scientifique. Blachère lui accorda encore une certaine valeur; depuis lors, elle est presque tombée dans l'oubli<sup>1</sup>.

La théorie de Casanova se situe dans le prolongement des recherches de Nöldeke, qui avait établi que dans les parties les plus anciennes du Coran (c.-à-d. celles "*der ersten mekkanischen Periode*") une place prépondérante était réservée au thème de la *fin du monde* et de la *parousie* en tant qu'événement imminent<sup>2</sup>. Reprenant le sentiment de l'Eglise chrétienne primitive (Casanova 1911-13:21 sq.): *ὁ καιρὸς ἐγγύς* (Apoc.1:3) – *καιρὸς* dont les signes prémonitoires se révèlent dans la *nécessité* et la *tribulation* (*ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης*, Apoc. 7:14) – le Prophète annonce que "l'heure approche et la lune se fend" (S 54:1). Avec Blachère nous interprétons les prédicats *aqtarabat* et *inšaqqa* comme des parfaits proleptiques<sup>3</sup>, bien que le sens en reste fort discuté, même chez les musulmans d'aujourd'hui<sup>4</sup>.

Bien que l'on ait remarqué à juste titre que le Prophète développa au début de sa mission d'autres thèmes que la parousie, comme celui du Créateur tout puissant, il reste que l'attente eschatologique pénètre toute sa pensée: "es ist keineswegs ausgeschlossen, daß sich sein Sendungs-bewußtsein an ihr überhaupt entzündet hat"<sup>5</sup>.

L'élément provocateur de la thèse de Casanova résidait surtout dans le fait que selon lui, le Prophète aurait cru que la fin du monde adviendrait encore de son vivant ou tout au plus immédiatement après sa mort. Pour cette raison, le Prophète n'aurait jamais ressenti la nécessité de mettre sa prophétie par écrit – de même qu'il ne semble pas avoir réglé le problème de sa succession, puisqu'à ses yeux la destinée de sa

<sup>1</sup> Casanova 1911-13; Blachère 1959:22 sq.; Abel 1951:105 n. 28, parle d'"un livre génial", sans entrer dans les détails. Partant du livre de Casanova – "which has been little appreciated since then" – Cook (1996:66) a récemment développé l'argument, "by illustrating the close connection between apocalyptic and jihad".

<sup>2</sup> Paret 1957:63; cf. Casanova 1911-13:31.

<sup>3</sup> Blachère 1957:564 n.1; Paret 1977: II, 463; de même Casanova 1911-13:81: "passé pour mieux affirmer l'avenir", cf. Brockelmann 1982:§§ 90-91.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Juynboll 1969:145 (à propos de Rašīd Ridā).

<sup>5</sup> Paret 1957:66; Andrae 1945:95; cf. Snouck Hurgronje 1894:149 sqq.; Goldziher 1925:5 sq.



mission et de la révélation qui l'accompagne, ne serait que de courte durée<sup>6</sup>; aussi une même idée aurait animé les premiers musulmans<sup>7</sup>. S'y ajoute le problème de savoir si le Prophète aurait lui-même opéré une remise en ordre des textes épars tels qu'ils lui étaient révélés, pour les conformer à l'*umm al-kitāb*: l'archétype céleste du Coran, la "table bien gardée" (S 85: *lawh mahfūz*) (Blachère 1959:18; Abel 1951:30, 65-67; Gätje 1971:39 sq). Ou a-t-il fallu, après sa mort, procéder au rassemblement (*gama'a*) de ces fragments (Casanova 1911-13:105; Blachère 1959:28-31)?

Il semble en tout cas qu'à la mort du Prophète, une crise profonde est venue troubler les esprits de la jeune communauté, commotion qu'Abū Bakr serait parvenu à apaiser, bien que difficilement et avec peine (Shaban 1971:17-23). Ainsi selon Ibn Hišām dans un épisode bien connu, le futur calife 'Umar refusa de croire que le Prophète était mort; Abū Bakr le rendit à l'évidence<sup>8</sup>. On se trouvait en effet devant une question navrante: comment expliquer que la parousie annoncée n'arrivait pas? La communauté aurait répondu en refoulant le problème, balayant graduellement des recensions successives du Coran toutes les références au thème apocalyptique. Ainsi le Coran primitif a dû révéler le statut, voire l'identité exacte du *mahdī*; or, cette question n'est même pas abordée dans le texte du Coran tel que nous le possédons. Casanova en conclut que la réponse en a été supprimée, tandis que d'autres éléments qui expliquent la mort du Prophète se seraient "glissés dans la révision officielle" (1911-13:41, 69). Néanmoins c'est précisément en la venue du "Paraclet", de ce "Ahmad" (*ibid.* 23, 27), que consiste l'annonce suprême - *an-naba' al-'azīm* - c.-à-d. le noyau de la révélation dont ne *nabī* était chargé (S 78:2; Casanova 1911-13: 71). Ce message s'adressait au début à tous les *ahl al-kitāb* sans exception, car le Prophète se présentait comme celui qui dans les Écritures juives et chrétiennes était annoncé pour préparer ou présider aux derniers événements. Ce ne serait que graduellement, à mesure que la communauté musulmane perdit l'espoir du retour (*rag'a*) prochain de Muḥammad,

<sup>6</sup> Blachère 1959:24; Grunebaum 1966:60, 62 sq.; Shaban 1971:16 ("One can only conclude that Muhammad intended that his followers should settle, on their own, the problem of his succession, if indeed there was to be any successor at all") - Madelung (1997:18), qui pense par ailleurs que 'Alī a dû être le successeur naturel de Muḥammad, cite quatre explications possibles pour cette absence d'une disposition claire de la part du Prophète: (1) la nomination d'un Hāšimite aurait vexé les Qurayš, (2) la réputation controversée de 'Alī, (3) le Prophète espérait vivre assez longtemps pour pouvoir proposer l'un de ses petit-fils et (4) "he himself may also have been unaware of the approaching end until it was too late". Cette dernière suggestion se rattache facilement à la thèse que nous soutenons.

<sup>7</sup> Casanova 1911-13:128 sq. Pour cette raison, il paraît que 'Umar ne s'est jamais posé de questions quant à la succession du Prophète aussi longtemps que celui-ci était encore en vie, Madelung 1997:39 (réfutant ainsi la théorie du "complot", avancée par Lammens 1910).

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Hišām, *Sīra* II (4), 655 sq.; Guillaume 1955:682 sq.; at-Tabarī, *Ta'riḥ* I, 1815 sq.; Friedlaender 1909:24; Casanova 1911-13:19; Madelung 1997:38-39 ("For later Muslims, no longer aware of the intense religious feeling of the approaching end of the world and of the closeness of the Hour created by the Prophet's message, it was naturally difficult to believe that 'Umar had been so 'naive'."), 356.

qu'on aurait commencé à transférer cette attente sur ses descendants (Casanova 1911-13:24, 57, 82, 129).

Il est clair que cette théorie, qui fait du Coran le produit d'un remaniement ultérieur et qui attribue à la rédaction un rôle substantiel, risque de miner toute la théologie "dogmatique" qui s'appuie sur le texte sacré. Casanova exprime quant à la critique textuelle du Coran un sentiment clair et net: bien qu'il juge le texte authentique, celui-ci présente un "caractère artificiel"; "la disposition du texte fut remaniée" (*ibid.* 3), or l'incohérence qui en découle n'est pas imputable à son auteur mais y a été introduite par ses successeurs; "je rejette *a priori* toute théorie tendant à suspecter la sincérité de Mohammed." Pour Casanova, le Prophète avait "un caractère positif, sérieux et loyal".

D'autre part, la critique modérée de Blachère a reproché à Casanova de ne pas assez avoir tenu compte du développement dans la personnalité du Prophète lui-même, qui à Médine n'apparaît plus comme le simple annonciateur de l'Heure ultime (Blachère 1959:24). Cependant, Casanova souligne à plusieurs reprises qu'il transparait dans le texte du Coran "trois phases bien distinctes, quoique mêlées et confondues à plaisir dans la recension officielle", par lesquelles on voit le Prophète évoluer de l'annonciateur au "général en chef et législateur"<sup>9</sup>. En revanche, Casanova néglige en une certaine mesure les autres aspects du Coran, étrangers au thème eschatologique; il accorde à certains *hadīths* une importance excessive, parfois plus grande qu'au texte coranique lui-même. Il faudrait revoir certaines de ses conclusions à la lumière de nos connaissances actuelles concernant les relations entre Coran et *hadīth*. Il est évident que nous ne pouvons, en ces quelques pages, aborder un tel sujet. Il me semble toutefois que trop d'études ne font qu'égratiner la surface du sens réel du Coran et qu'il s'impose encore toujours de retracer le propos originel du message du Prophète en le situant en son contexte, son *Sitz im Leben*, en dépouillant le sens primitif du Coran de la masse des développements ultérieurs dans la tradition musulmane. Des savants musulmans modernes tels que Abū Zaid ont d'ailleurs souligné l'importance qu'aurait une telle entreprise pour la société islamique actuelle.

En notre modeste contribution, nous ne voulons développer qu'un seul thème, auquel Casanova a cependant accordé une grande importance: celui de la résurrection des trépassés, gouvernés et guidés par Muḥammad en tant que *nabī l-malḥama*: celui qui annonce la réincarnation finale des ressuscités<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Casanova 1911-13:4 sq. Pour la sincérité du Prophète, voir en outre Andrae 1945:47, 51 sq., 177-180; Watt 1977:79.

<sup>10</sup> Casanova 1911-13:7, 70 sq. (où se trouve la citation).

<sup>11</sup> Casanova (1911-13:46-50) cite un nombre de traditions, dont une des plus anciennes est celle de Tamim ad-Dārī, ap. al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūğ* IV, 28, qui rapporte des propos du Dağğāl sur les *malāḥim*. Aussi, le lien entre la théorie du *mahdī* et les prédictions politiques (*malāḥim*) apparaît clairement chez Ibn



Mais dès qu'on aborde ce vaste champ de recherche, il se pose dans toute son étendue un problème d'autant plus délicat qu'il a un intérêt capital, problème que Casanova a d'ailleurs lui-même posé: si la notion du *mahdī* aurait en effet occupé une place tellement centrale dans la prédication primordiale du Prophète, on pourrait conclure "que le chiïsme primitif est la véritable orthodoxie musulmane" (Casanova 1911-13:9, 55, 59). Récemment un réexamen minutieux des sources historiques disponibles a mené W. Madelung à une conclusion similaire<sup>12</sup>.

Nombreux sont depuis longtemps les chercheurs qui ont voulu démontrer qu'il a existé dans le judaïsme une tendance proclamant la venue prochaine d'un homme de Dieu afin d'inaugurer la parousie, courant dont Jésus aurait été un représentant éminent; plus tard l'Église officielle aurait remanié et défiguré cette image authentique du Christ<sup>13</sup>, tout comme le fera la communauté sunnite orthodoxe avec Muhammad. Casanova en avait déjà tiré la conclusion: "que Mohammed appartenait ou était affilié à une secte chrétienne qui croyait les temps révolus" (Casanova 1911-13:23); toutefois, il avoue ne pas être parvenu à identifier la secte en question et il se borne donc à renvoyer le lecteur aux études de Friedländer, qui avait proposé un rapprochement avec le docétisme<sup>14</sup>; Casanova cite par ailleurs une série d'éléments docétiques qui caractérisent les débuts de l'Islam<sup>15</sup>.

Or, l'idée que le *nabī l-malhama*, "le prophète de la fin du monde" (Casanova 1911-13:52) n'est autre que "Mohammed se survivant à lui-même" en tant que *mahdī* (*ibid.* 54), voire sous l'aspect des *imams* qui se sont succédés après lui<sup>16</sup>, rappelle la doctrine de l'Imam comme *wasī*: comme dépositaire ou héritier d'une doctrine secrète – ce que Rubin a appelé "the universal wasiyya" – qui est transmise depuis

Haldūn, *Muqaddima* II, 663, 698.

<sup>12</sup> Madelung 1997:1, 5-6, 40-42, 52, 270. La présentation "traditionnelle" se trouve clairement résumée chez Shaban 1971:1, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Qu'il nous suffise de renvoyer à l'ouvrage "classique" de Brandon 1957; la prise de Jérusalem en 70 par les Romains aurait eu un effet sur la communauté (Brandon, p. 186), comparable à celui qu'a provoqué la mort du Prophète sur les musulmans. Ici réside pour Brandon "the theme running through the Markan Gospel: (...) to disentangle Christianity from its Jewish origins by showing (...) that Jesus in no wise associated himself with (...) the political aims of Jewish nationalism" (p. 198). De même, Corbin (1981:123 sq.) parle de "la déseschatologisation" du christianisme".

<sup>14</sup> Et plus spécialement avec le Manichéisme, Friedländer 1909:23, 29 sq.; Casanova 1911-13:29 sq. et n. 1. Voir également Goldziher 1925:217.

<sup>15</sup> Casanova 1911-13:59, cf. Grégoire 1930:113 sq.

<sup>16</sup> Casanova 1911-13:58-59. L'idée paraît être formulée pour la première fois au sujet de 'Alī après la mort de 'Utmān par 'Abdallāh b. Saba', cf. at-Tabarī, *Ta'rih* I, 2941 sq., Hodgson, 1960; Madelung 1997:1 sq.

Adam à chaque prophète ou Imam de chaque génération<sup>17</sup>. Selon Goldziher, suivi par Rubin, les premiers théologiens chiïtes auraient emprunté cette doctrine à une certaine littérature judéo-chrétienne, puisque des éléments en transparaissent dans le *Livre des Jubilés*, dans l'oeuvre de Flavius Josèphe<sup>18</sup>, ainsi que dans les Évangiles<sup>19</sup>. Ailleurs nous avons souligné que cette conception a été développée dans la *Caverne des Trésors*, puis (re)fondée sous une forme théorique par le grand hérésiarque syrien Jean d'Apamée, qui s'inspirait en effet de la tradition des *Jubilés* (van Reeth 1994 & 2000). Il y avait donc certainement une tradition continue depuis Josèphe et les *Jubilés*, et ce jusqu'aux débuts de l'Islam. Elle défendait cette doctrine d'un dépôt secret, d'un «trésor» de connaissances divines, transmises dans la succession des prophètes<sup>20</sup>. À notre avis, la notion se présente dans le Coran sous l'apparence de la *baqiyya* qui est contenue dans l'Arche (*tābūt*)<sup>21</sup>.

Nous comprenons dès lors comment H. Corbin ait pu s'assigner comme tâche pour la vie, de retracer dans ce qu'il considérait être "la gnose ismaélienne", et tout spécialement en son imamologie, les traces du grand mystère de la Croix de Lumière qui est le propre de la Christologie d'Ange et dont il retrouvait en cours de route des épaves chez les Ébionites et les Elkésaites, tandis que selon lui l'Église officielle aurait

<sup>17</sup> Rubin 1979:45 sq.; Kohlberg 1980:55; Kister 1993:115-117; cf. Corbin 1954:175, 178. Madelung 1997: 9-12, a démontré que la notion de la succession des prophètes est déjà très présente dans le Coran lui-même, se référant à S. 3:33-34; 6:84-89; 19:58 (*an'ama llāhu 'alayhim mina n-nabiyyīna min durrīyyati Adama*). L'argument étaye sa thèse sur la légitimité de la succession héréditaire dans la lignée de 'Alī.

<sup>18</sup> Jos., *Ant.* 1:83 δς (...) τῷ παιδὶ τῆν τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιμέλειαν δίδωσι, Goldziher 1925:13 sq., 217, 221; Rubin 1979:56.

<sup>19</sup> Andrae 1945:99. L'idée se retrouve dans les Évangiles mêmes (Mc. 8:27 sq.) et repose sur la représentation populaire, "daß die Gottesmänner der Vergangenheit ihren geschichtlichen Auftrag noch nicht vollendet haben, daß sie vielmehr seit dem Tage ihres Todes, ihrer Entrückung, irgendwo auf ihre zweite und endgültige Epiphanie oder Inkarnation warten" (Stauffer 1956:283).

<sup>20</sup> Sans équivoque à ce sujet est al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūğ* I, 68-70.

<sup>21</sup> S 2:(249) 248, cf. Madelung 1997:11 sq. Selon Paret, la *baqiyya* serait "eine Eigenschaft oder Kraft (...) die irgendwie dem Unheil entgegenwirkt (...) die zusammen mit der *sakīna* der Bundeslade innewohnt" (Paret 1977: II, 53 et 1950:168-171). En ce cas, il est peu clair en quoi la *sakīna* se différencierait de la *baqiyya*, d'autant plus que pour at-Tabarī, *Tafsīr* II 627-629, ainsi que pour Fahr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Mafāṭih* VI, 151, la *baqiyya* indique clairement des restes matériels (le bâton et des vêtements de Moïse, ainsi que des fragments des Tables de la Loi – *raddād al-alwāh*). Ces reliques ne sont autres que les objets sacrés que reçut Adam des mains de Dieu après sa chute et qui seront pour lui et pour toute l'humanité les seuls souvenirs du Paradis: ainsi selon Ibn Sa'd, *Tabaqāt* I, 30, il emporta du myrte (*ās*), la Pierre Noire, le bâton (*asā*) de Moïse, de la myrrhe et de l'encens. Tout ceci se réfère donc plutôt au grand Mystère de Lumière révélé aux Rois Mages par l'Étoile (cf. van Reeth 1992:262 sq.), qui se matérialise dans les trésors paradisiaques et les reliques des saints prophètes, déposés dans l'Arche de l'Alliance (celle-ci fournira d'ailleurs, selon la légende de la *Caverne des Trésors* (Bezold 1883-88:65/259), le bois pour Le nouvel Arbre de Vie qui est la Croix du Christ).



tout fait pour en effacer jusqu'aux derniers vestiges<sup>22</sup>. Cela étant, l'Islam chiïte conserverait des éléments originaux de la doctrine chrétienne pré-paulinienne et qui ont été oblitérés par l'orthodoxie des Églises, en changeant le «mode d'apparition» du *deus absconditus* en le «mode de consociation», c.-à-d. en introduisant le principe de l'*homoousie* (ὁμοούσιος)<sup>23</sup>. Corbin poursuivait donc un but personnel en cette recherche phénoménologique, qui voulait restituer et faire revivre «la situation du judéo-christianisme primitif, celle de la communauté de Jérusalem groupée autour de «Jacques le Juste, le frère du Seigneur», antérieurement à la séparation entre judaïsme et christianisme» (Corbin 1981:69).

Cependant, ne risque-t-on pas de mécomprendre le terme *καιρός*? Il n'est pas établi que Jésus ait été avant tout prophète de la fin du monde («Botschafter der Naherwartung»); précisément l'Évangile selon S. Marc se détourne nettement du message apocalyptique qui était en vogue à cette époque dans le monde judaïque. Jésus ne se présente pas tellement comme «forme épiphaniqne» du *deus absconditus*, mais plutôt il se définit à partir du *Messias incognitus* de la tradition juive, «der unerkannt unter den Menschen lebt, bis er durch den wiederkehrenden Elias erkannt und bekannt gemacht wird» (Stauffer 1956:297; Hamid-Khani 2000:387). Ainsi, ses premiers mots sont: *πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ* – cela veut dire: «nicht die Zukunft ist das entscheidende in Jesu Verkündigung, sondern die Gegenwart. Jesu Botschaft ist vor allem Botschaft vom Heute, Kairosbotschaft. Das Reich Gottes ist mitten unter euch» (Stauffer 1956:293 sq. et 1957:117-118).

Par conséquent, nous doutons qu'il faille rechercher les origines de la conception qu'avait Muḥammad du *nabī l-malḥama* dans la littérature dissidente ou hétérodoxe des communautés judéo-chrétiennes, qu'elles soient ébionites ou autres. Plutôt, nous croyons devoir la retrouver dans une certaine tradition théologique chrétienne, qui était proche de l'Islam et qui s'est développée quelques années avant la venue du Prophète Muḥammad. C'est ce que nous nous proposons de démontrer maintenant, à partir des mêmes traditions anciennes qu'a invoquées Casanova.

Confronté à l'incrédulité de 'Umar, qui était d'avis que Muḥammad n'était pas mort, *wa-lākin nahu dahaba ilā rabbihī kamā dahaba Mūsā b. 'Imrān*<sup>24</sup>, Abū Bakr invoque le Coran: «Mohammed n'est qu'un missionnaire; d'autres missionnaires sont trépassés avant lui» (S 3:(138) 144; Casanova 1911-13:19). Par contre, il semble que

<sup>22</sup> Corbin 1954:148-150 et 1981:52, 113-118, Stauffer 1956:282; Rudolph 1990:331. L'influence de l'Ébionisme et de l'Elkésaïsme sur l'islam est soulignée par Andrae 1945:100-102.

<sup>23</sup> Corbin 1954:245-248 et 1981:120, Corbin établit un rapport avec «le fait que la théosophie islamique a toujours refusé l'idée de l'*homoousios*».

<sup>24</sup> Voir plus haut, note 8; Ibn Hišām, *Sira* IV, 655.

'Umar ait cru que le Prophète avait été temporairement enlevé de la terre, tout comme Jésus l'aurait été au moment de la crucifixion, comme il est dit dans le Coran en une célèbre remarque souvent qualifiée de docétique: «vous ne l'avez pas tué réellement; mais Dieu l'a élevé vers Lui»<sup>25</sup>. Ainsi, il a dû y avoir une tendance qui affirmait que «la mort de Mohammed n'est pas comprise dans la mort universelle» (Casanova 1911-13:31). Or il n'est pas impossible que le Prophète ait lui-même adhéré à cette opinion; certains versets du Coran suggèrent en effet que le Prophète pourrait encore être en vie à la fin du temps, p.ex. S 10: 47, 13: 40 et 40: 77. Dans ces deux derniers versets (qui ne sont que des doublures l'un de l'autre) l'expression *natawaffayannaka* signifierait selon Casanova: «nous te recueillerons», c.-à-d. «l'ange de la mort qui est chargé de vous vous recueillera»; ce qui est exactement la même promesse que celle adressée selon S. 3: 48 à Jésus: «Je te recueillerai et je t'élèverai vers moi» (*Ibid.* 35). On peut en déduire que le Prophète ne serait pas encore mort à la fin des temps. Ainsi il est dit: «[Alors] il sera soufflé dans la Trompe [une première fois] et ceux qui sont dans les cieux et sur la terre seront foudroyés, sauf ceux qu'Allah voudra [épargner]. Ensuite, il sera soufflé dans [la Trompe] une autre fois et voici que [les trépassés] seront dressés, regardant»<sup>26</sup>. Dans la tradition rapportée par al-Buḥārī ce texte reçoit une interprétation singulière. Le prophète aurait lui-même déclaré: «Je serais le premier à relever la tête (*innī min awwal man yarfa'u ra'sahu*) après la seconde sonnerie et je verrai alors Moïse accroché au trône de Dieu. Je ne sais s'il aura été dans cette posture avant la sonnerie ou s'il n'y sera qu'après»<sup>27</sup>. Encore plus clair est at-Tabarī qui rapporte du Prophète la parole suivante: «Un Ange m'est venu du ciel me disant (...) que je serais le premier pour qui la terre sera fendue, le premier intercesseur (*šāfi'*) aussi; je relèverai la tête et alors je trouverai Moïse qui saisit le trône. Dieu seul sait si cela aura lieu avant ou après la première sonnerie» (at-Tabarī, *Tafsīr* XI, 29; Casanova 1911-13:32).

Ce témoignage important nous permet de reformuler comme suit la conception qu'avait le Prophète de l'accomplissement final: il ne lui sera réservé qu'une seule vie; Dieu lui a ouvert la poitrine pour qu'il soit rendue à la vie (Casanova 1911-13:41); à la fin des temps, il sera «foudroyé par l'heure» (*Ibid.*, 33), mais il sera le premier à ressusciter. D'où peut venir cette doctrine?

<sup>25</sup> S 4:(156) 157, Casanova 1911-13:36, avec référence (note 1) au docétisme. De même, Grégoire 1930: 114, a eu l'idée heureuse d'expliquer le verset par cette phrase de l'empereur Jean Cantacuzène: *καὶ κατὰ φαντασίαν ἐδόκει τὸν Χριστὸν σταυρωθῆναι*. Friedlaender 1909:30, cite l'expression: *šaylānun tasawwara ḥsūratihī*.

<sup>26</sup> S 39:68 (tr. Blachère).

<sup>27</sup> al-Buḥārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, trad. anglais. VI, 319; trad. française III, 433 (nous citons cette traduction).



Nous croyons qu'elle repose sur une tradition exégétique, qui s'est développée en un milieu monophysite radical. On y a combiné un verset des *Actes des Apôtres* 13:34, où S. Pierre déclare: ἀνέστησεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν μηκέτι μέλλοντα ὑποστρέφειν εἰς διαφθοράν, avec la prédication de S. Paul sur la résurrection (1Cor. 15), se basant en outre sur le Psaume messianique 110/109, qui décrit le sacerdoce de Melchisédech et dont on trouve une exégèse bien connue dans la lettre aux *Hébreux*, ch. 7. Le Psaume se termine en disant du Messie, qui comme un nouveau Melchisédech va régner sur le peuple: "c'est pourquoi il redressera la tête" – 'el-ken yārīm reš. Voilà textuellement l'expression que nous venons de lire chez al-Buhārī et at-Tabarī! Nous ne pouvons entrer ici dans les détails des questions exégétiques que soulève ce texte<sup>28</sup>. Toutefois, une exégèse originale en a été donnée par Jean Philopon, dont des fragments ont été conservés en version syriaque, édités par notre Professeur A. Van Roey, qui par un grand nombre d'études a tellement fait avancer la connaissance du mouvement trithéiste. Nous tenons ici à lui rendre un hommage respectueux, citant le commentaire de Philopon en sa traduction:

"Si quelqu'un ose dire que le corps du Seigneur ressuscite de nouveau corruptible, cela est la négation de toute la foi. (...) Car tous les autres, tous ceux qui sont ressuscités des morts, prophètes ou apôtres, à part le Seigneur, le Christ, ne sont pas ressuscités à l'incorruptibilité, car ils sont morts de nouveau. Mais Notre-Seigneur le Christ, parce qu'il fut les prémices de ceux qui dorment, est ressuscité à l'incorruptibilité – sans qu'il doive retourner encore à la corruption"<sup>29</sup>.

Philopon s'était basé d'une part sur Origène, de l'autre sur la notion aristotélicienne de l'*atomon*, pour affirmer que l'humanité parfaite est un acte pur qui précède l'humanité imparfaite et concrète, de sorte que l'humanité parfaite qui est divine par nature se crée un *atomon* en s'incarnant<sup>30</sup>: celui-ci se compose d'une âme végétative mortelle, d'un corps matériel et d'une âme irrationnelle; il est actualisé par l'âme rationnelle qui fait partie de l'ordre divin. L'actualisation est opérée par l'intellect même et en sa substance<sup>31</sup>. La seule différence entre l'homme et Dieu réside dans le fait que Dieu est permanent en acte, tandis que l'âme humaine est soumise au processus d'actualisation en se plongeant dans la matière. Y est liée la notion de la réincarna-

<sup>28</sup> Voir van Reeth 2000.

<sup>29</sup> Van Roey 1984:134 sq. La traduction que donne Hermann (1930:262 n.) du même texte n'a pas de sens; en *meneh ddmāryā* la préposition *men* introduit une situation (cf. Brockelmann 1960:111 § 204, Nöldeke 1898:185 6 249 A).

<sup>30</sup> Ainsi, l'Hypostase, qui est substantielle, est identifiée à l'*atomon* aristotélicien, cf. Furlani 1920:676. L'incarnation et la manière dont le Logos anime son corps sont décrites comme un κινουόν tel que l'a défini Aristote, Hermann 1930:236-237.

<sup>31</sup> Verbeke 1985:455-457; Verrycken 1994:220. Cette doctrine se retrouve dans la traduction arabe de Jean Philopon, publiée par Troupeau (1984:83/87 sq.).

tion: tout comme l'avait enseigné Origène<sup>32</sup>, les âmes rationnelles sont éternelles, impassibles, préexistantes; elles sont en nombre limité et s'attachent nécessairement à un corps chaque fois que meurt une âme végétative (Origènes, *De principiis* II, 8.3; Marrou 1985:153; Verbeke 1985:457-459; Verrycken 1994:221-225). Ainsi il n'y a guère de différence entre l'incarnation du Christ et celle d'une âme quelconque: chaque être humain devient pour ainsi dire une hypostase qui aspire au salut. Voilà pourquoi le Christ est pour Philopon "la prémice de ceux qui dorment le sommeil de la mort", bien qu'il soit ressuscité à une incorruptibilité et immortalité définitives et immédiates. La délivrance consiste en ce que l'âme échappe au cercle éternel des renaissances, tandis que la corruption résulte du lien qui lie l'âme au corps périssable.

En cette perspective et dans la tradition syrienne telle qu'elle est représentée par exemple par Jean d'Apamée, le "Melchisédech" du Psaume qui préfigure le Messie désigne le prêtre inengendré et archétypique qui s'incarne successivement en une série d'épiphanies sous forme de prophètes<sup>33</sup>. Pareillement le *mahdī* signifie la "réapparition" du prophète (Casanova 1911-13:24); il est le "reflet vivant de Mahomet", sa réincarnation (*ibid.*, 56 sq.). Sur cette idée repose le concept du prophète comme *nabī l-malḥama* – le prophète de la *malḥama*, de l'époque de l'incarnation (de *lahm*, «chair»), en tant que sixième résurrection (*raḡ'a*) du Christ, produisant la septième génération<sup>34</sup>, c.-à-d. Muḥammad, qui conduira en tant que *mahdī* le peuple élu vers le salut. Tout ce système repose donc sur les élaborations de Philopon.

Il en résulte des conséquences théologiques fondamentales. Puisque chaque être hypostatique a le caractère d'un *atomon* substantiel, les attributs qui caractérisent les diverses hypostases ne peuvent être accidentels, mais appartiennent à la substance, au substrat. On peut en déduire facilement que les "personnes" de la Trinité ne sauraient être *consubstantielles* (Lebon 1909:210 sq.; Chadwick 1987:54; Ebied, Van Roey & Wickham 1981:33, 51 sq./78 sq.); elles sont toutes substantielles et purement en acte sans subir quelque changement. Ainsi la divinité en elle-même est une abstraction qui est idéale: elle n'existe que ἐν φαντασίῳ. On peut l'attribuer aux hypostases divines, mais tout aussi bien aux âmes préexistantes qui s'incarnent. La divinité est donc abstraite, une et indivisible; l'unicité de Dieu est affirmée, mais appliquée à un niveau qui transcende totalement le monde des existences.

Armand Abel a montré comment Jean Philopon, le *Yahyā an-Nahwī* des Arabes, est dépeint dans la tradition islamique comme le champion avant-la-lettre de la doctrine du *tawḥīd*: l'affirmation de l'unicité absolue de Dieu. Nous comprenons

<sup>32</sup> Origènes, *De principiis* II, 11.7; Troupeau, 1984:83/87sq.; Daniélou 1948:279-282. Très instructif est ce que dit Barhébrée au sujet d'Origène (*Chronicon* I,1.51).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. van Reeth 2000:145. On comparera avec Eusèbe, *Hist. Eccl.* I, 3.16-18, qui rend au sacerdoce de Melchisédech et du Christ, sa dimension "atypique", cosmique.

<sup>34</sup> Casanova 1911-13:48 sq., se référant à Casanova 1906:III, 17.



maintenant pourquoi. On a représenté *Yahyā an-Nabwī* comme se survivant à lui-même; selon al-Qiftī il aurait encore pris la parole devant ‘Amr b. al-‘Ās<sup>35</sup>. al-Qiftī cite l’argument de Philopon, réduisant le *tawhīd* à sa forme la plus simple: “qu’il est absurde de faire de l’un trois et de trois un”<sup>36</sup>.

Ainsi, le fait que Muḥammad aurait proféré au début de sa mission que Dieu est un être tout-puissant et absolument transcendant n’est pas en contradiction avec le message apocalyptique de l’ἀποκατάστασις: les deux sont complémentaires dès le début. Un des plus anciens Muʿtazilites, Dirār b. ‘Amr (ob. ± 180/796) enseignait que la *māhiya* de Dieu est inconnaissable, on ne peut affirmer que son existence; ses attributs ne sont point substantiels, ils ne sont connus qu’à Dieu lui-même et ne sont que les formes sous lesquelles Il apparaît et se révèle dans le Coran (van Ess 1992:III, 49).

Toutefois, on pourrait poser maintenant une question méthodique. S’il est vrai qu’il faut plutôt chercher en des élaborations théologiques que dans des traditions gnostiques les antécédents du prophète de la *malḥama* tel que Casanova l’a décrit, il reste possible que nos sources qui représentent Philopon comme le précurseur du *tawhīd*, aient elles aussi développé une image *a posteriori*. Ne risquons-nous pas alors de tomber en un raisonnement circulaire?

Or, il est certain que les spéculations de monophysites radicaux ont influencé le climat intellectuel où vivait Muḥammad<sup>37</sup>. Au temps de sa première enfance, la dispute trithéiste a été menée jusqu’à la cour gassanide, aux confins de l’Arabie du nord, en un lieu dit Gabitha, en 587 (Michael Syr., *Chron*, II. 370, IV. 385; Trimmingham 1979:166 sq., 183 sq.; Ebied, Van Roey & Wickham 1981:21, 40). En effet, et depuis un certain temps déjà, les roitelets gassanides s’étaient illustrés comme les grands protecteurs de l’église monophysite naissante (Barhebraeus, *Chronicon* I, 235-238). Ainsi se propagea en Arabie et surtout à Naḡrān, la doctrine monophysite “extrémiste” des Ḥimyarites qui, à partir de la confusion philoponienne de l’Hypostase et de la Nature en une φύσις σύνθετος, se rapproche de l’aphthartodocétisme, sur lequel est basée la représentation coranique, docétique, de la crucifixion de Jésus (Hermann 1930:244 sq.; Guidi 1881:142; van Rompay 1982:304-308; Ebied, Van Roey & Wickham 1981:108).

*Tawhīd*, la consubstantialité du corps du Christ avec celui de l’espèce humaine, ainsi que la notion du *nabī l-malḥama* font ainsi partie d’un même ordre d’idées. La position théologique du Coran s’y emboîte sans faille.

<sup>35</sup> al-Qiftī, *Iḥbār* 232-234; Abel 1963-1964:256 sqq. De même, Maimonide associe Jean Philopon et Yahyā b. ‘Adī, comme les fondateurs du *kalām* chrétien, Maimonides, *Dalāla* 181; Pines 1963:I, 177 sq. cf. Gardet & Anawati 1970:199 n. 5, 287 n. 3.

<sup>36</sup> al-Qiftī, *Iḥbār* 232, à comparer avec ce que aṣ-Ṣahrastānī (*Milal* I, 226 sq.) dit au sujet des *ashāb at-taḥlīq*; Wolfson 1976:135 sq.

<sup>37</sup> Ainsi que l’a souligné à juste titre Grégoire 1930:114-118.

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## II. POPULAR CULTURE IN ISLAM



## CRITERIO DEL *MADHAB* MALIKI SOBRE ALGUNAS PRÁCTICAS DE CARÁCTER MÁGICO

María Arcas Campoy

*Universidad de La Laguna*

Esta comunicación no presenta un estudio sobre la magia en sí misma sino sobre su tratamiento en el derecho islámico, según el *madhab mālikī*, es decir, el criterio de los juristas de esta doctrina sobre ciertas prácticas de carácter mágico, permitiéndolas, recomendándolas o condenándolas<sup>1</sup>.

Varios tratados jurídicos malikíes incluyen, casi siempre al final, algunos capítulos referentes al tema que nos ocupa. Los elementos y términos que aparecen con relación a la magia son diversos. Además de la magia propiamente dicha, figuran otros como amuleto, talismán, conjuro, encantamiento, invocación, mal augurio, buen augurio, mal de ojo y sueños buenos o malos. Todo ello está presente en la cultura popular árabe islámica, en numerosas actividades de la vida cotidiana porque, en definitiva, lo que busca el que recurre a una práctica mágica es el dominio de la realidad ya sea manteniéndola por ser propicia ya sea cambiándola por ser adversa.

En el *Muwatta'* aparecen varios *hadīts* utilizados por Mālik para dar soporte a sus opiniones o para responder a las cuestiones acerca del tema. Estos dichos del Profeta junto a las respuestas del fundador del *madhab mālikī* y, por supuesto, las varias citas coránicas, constituyen la bases en las que se asienta el criterio de los juristas malikíes a la hora de pronunciarse sobre determinadas prácticas de carácter mágico o que guardan cierta relación con la magia. No todos los tratados jurídicos malikíes abordan el tema que nos ocupa porque sus contenidos y objetivos son diferentes. Entre las obras en las que se hace referencia a la magia y que constituyen la principal fuente documental de este trabajo, figuran, además del *Muwatta'*, la *Risāla* y el *Ġāmi'* de al-Qayrawānī (s. X) y los *Qawānīn* del granadino Ibn Ġuzayy (s. XIV).

En las mencionadas obras se encuentran referencias sobre distintos tipos de prácticas mágicas, en unas se utiliza los encantamientos sin apoyo religioso y, en otras, éstos se unen o basan su fuerza en la fe islámica, pero en cualquier caso tales prácticas, siempre enmarcadas en la magia blanca (*ruqya*)<sup>2</sup> y, por lo tanto permitida, tienen dos objetivos fundamentales, uno preventivo, de protección contra el mal y la enfermedad

<sup>1</sup> Bousquet 1949-50 trata de las normas legales sobre la hechicería.

<sup>2</sup> Es uno de los tipos de magia (*sihr*) y encierra el concepto de curación y encantamiento con fines protectores o curativos. El profeta la utilizó en algunos casos y esto permitió usarla de modo excepcional para dominar los males como el veneno, la fiebre, el mal de ojo, etc. Véase Fahd 1995b y Fahd 1998.



y otro curativo, de recuperación del bien o la salud perdidos. Además mencionan otras prácticas al margen de la *ruqya* que son reprobables o están totalmente prohibidas.

Las fuentes consultadas aluden a las siguientes prácticas de carácter mágico, permitidas unas y, otras, prohibidas completamente o en parte:

### I. Magia (*ruqya*) permitida

#### 1) La magia del mal de ojo (*Ruqya min al-ʿayn*)

El *Muwatta'* dedica un capítulo a la magia del mal de ojo con algunos *hadīts* referidos por Mālik b. Anas sobre este tema. El profeta creía en la existencia del mal de ojo (Marçais 1960) y recomendaba usar la *ruqya*. Según dos *hadīts*, así actuó en una ocasión cuando le fueron mostrados dos niños aquejados de este mal (*Muwatta'-Yahyā* 571-572) y también ante un joven lloroso con el mismo diagnóstico que se hallaba en la casa de Umm Salama (*Muwatta'-Šaybānī* 312; *Muwatta'-Yahyā* 572). En el primer caso dijo: "Hacedles *ruqya*" y, en el segundo, preguntó: "¿No se le ha practicado la *ruqya* del mal de ojo?" En ningún caso indica que debiera combinarse esta práctica con una invocación religiosa, sin embargo, aš-Šaybānī (*Muwatta'-Šaybānī* 312) dice, tras el segundo *hadīt*, que sí debe hacerse y añade: "Por eso nosotros lo admitimos y no encontramos inconveniente [en la práctica de] la magia (*ruqya*) cuando se menciona a Dios, alabado y ensalzado sea".

Posteriormente, los juristas malikíes trataron acerca de la curación del mal de ojo sin el apoyo de fórmula religiosa alguna, tal y como aparece en los *hadīts* antes mencionados ¿Pero en qué consistía exactamente la magia contra el mal de ojo? Mālik (*Muwatta'-Yahyā* 571) indica que para combatir esta dolencia el Profeta estimaba conveniente el lavado (*wudū'*) del cuerpo del afectado: rostro, manos, codos, rodillas, puntas de los pies y parte del cuerpo bajo la ropa (*izār*)<sup>3</sup> en un recipiente y después se verterá sobre él el agua de éste.

Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (*Risāla* 320 ar./322 tr.-321-323 y *Ġāmi'* 265, 268), tomando como punto de referencia la actitud del profeta ante el mal de ojo, indica abiertamente que no existe inconveniente en utilizar encantamientos (*ruqya*) para hacerlo desaparecer y alude a la práctica del lavado. En su *Ġāmi'* ofrece una detallada descripción tomada de Ibn Ḥabīb (m. 238/853)<sup>4</sup>. Dice así: "Dijo az-Zahrī: El exorcista (*ʿā'in*) llevará un recipiente con agua y meterá en él su mano, se enjuagará la boca y luego echará [el agua] en el recipiente, se lavará el rostro en él, después meterá la mano izquierda y echará [el agua] sobre la derecha, y luego echará [el agua] con la derecha sobre la izquierda, después la echará con la izquierda sobre el codo derecho y luego con la mano derecha sobre el codo izquierdo y con su mano izquierda sobre

su pie derecha y con su mano derecha sobre su pie izquierdo y luego con su mano izquierda sobre su rodilla derecha y con su mano derecha sobre su rodilla izquierda. Todo esto [lo hará] dentro del recipiente. Luego lavará la parte que está bajo su *izar* en el recipiente y lo colocará en el suelo y después derramará [el agua] sobre la cabeza del exorcizado (*mu'ayyan*) por detrás de una vez y caerá por su cuerpo".

El jurista granadino Ibn Ġuzayy (*Qawānīn* 485, 486) también alude, aunque con menor detalle, al lavado del afectado de mal de ojo (*ma'hūd bi-l-ʿayn*) realizado por un exorcista (*ʿā'in*) y añade en otro lugar del capítulo que la mayoría de los *ʿulamā'* consideraba lícito el uso de talismanes (*tamā'im*) con aleyas coránicas o con invocaciones a Dios para proteger o curar de este mal.

#### 2) La magia (*ruqya*) contra enfermedades y otros males.

Además del uso de la *ruqya* contra el mal de ojo, los juristas también consideran lícito practicarla para evitar o desechar otro tipo de enfermedades y males, aunque siempre acompañada de la invocación divina o, al menos, de palabras piadosas<sup>5</sup>.

Mālik (*Muwatta'-Yahyā* 573; *Muwatta'-Šaybānī* 312-313) refiere un *hadīt* según el cual el profeta recomendó ungir a un enfermo siete veces con la mano derecha e invocar la protección de Dios contra el mal y también que Abū Bakr en cierta ocasión encontró a ʿĀ'īša, que estaba enferma, con una mujer judía practicándole *ruqya* y dijo: "Hazle *ruqya* con el Corán (*irqī-ha bi-kitāb Allāh*)".

al-Qayrawānī indica claramente la licitud de la *ruqya* combinada o no con fórmulas religiosas para evitar o combatir los males en general: "No hay mal en utilizar la magia (*ruqya*) con [textos] del Corán o con fórmulas piadosas ni en llevar un talismán (*ma'āda*) colgado al cuello con un [un fragmento] del Corán" (*Risāla* 320 ar./321 tr.). En su *Ġāmi'* (264) se encuentran referencias más concretas sobre prácticas mágicas. Estas son algunas de ellas: a) Para el enfermo aquejado de fiebre (*maḥmūm*), Mālik consideraba que no hay inconveniente en escribir textos del Corán ni en hacer encantamientos con palabras piadosas (*al-kalām al-tayyib*) ni en llevar talismanes (*mu'āda*) con fragmentos del Corán o con jaculatorias (*dikr Allāh*), siempre que vayan cosidos a un cuero; b) También Mālik aprobaba el ensalmo (*nušra*)<sup>6</sup> con plantas y ungüentos para curar a los enfermos, especialmente a los afectados de locura y cuenta como ʿĀ'īša quedó libre de un encantamiento al obedecer lo que en sueños se le decía: "Coge agua de tres pozos comunicados entre sí y lávate con ella"; c) Según al-Layṭ, se permite colgar al cuello de las parturientas (*nufasā'*) y de otros enfermos fragmen-

<sup>5</sup> Álvarez de Morales 1995:35-36, trata de los aspectos mágicos supersticiosos de la medicina, basado en Ibn Ḥabīb.

<sup>6</sup> al-Qayrawānī, *Ġāmi'* 266, recoge este relato en el que se aprueba la *nušra*, pero en nota n° 4 el editor advierte, en un *hadīt* recogido en el índice general, que el profeta la considera obra de Satanás (*amal Šayṭān*).

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥtaṣar* 86 ár./113 tr., recoge este relato con más detalle.

<sup>3</sup> El *izar* es toda prenda utilizada para envolverse.

<sup>4</sup> En su *Muḥtaṣar* 85-97 ar./112-125 tr., dedica varios capítulos a la magia y en especial al mal de ojo, enmarcada por los editores (p. 34) en la Medicina del Profeta. El fragmento del lavado del que sufre del mal de ojo recogido en el *Ġāmi'* procede del *Muḥtaṣar* (pp. 89 ar./115-116 tr.).



tos del Corán cosidos sobre cuero o dentro de tubo (*qašaba*) y añade que en cierto *hadīṭ* se recomendaba escribir a la mujer con un parto difícil: “Ana (Hanna) alumbró a María (Maryam), María alumbró a Jesús (‘Īsā) ¡Sal niño, la tierra te llama, sal niño!”

Por último, al-Qayrawānī (*Ġāmi‘* 266) refiere que Ibn Wahb no se oponía, al igual que Mālik, a la *ruqya* practicada por la gente del Libro, basándose en las citadas palabras de Abū Bakr dirigidas a una judía que le hacía un encantamiento a ‘Ā’īša: “Hazle *ruqya* con el Libro de Dios”.

En los Qawānīn (pp. 485-6) las alusiones al tema son más escuetas. Ibn Ġuzayy indica que es lícito colgar talismanes (*tamā‘im*) con textos coránicos o jaculatorias (*dīkr*) al cuello de los enfermos, de los niños e incluso de las personas sanas. Igualmente señala que el uso de talismanes sólo está permitido cuando lo escrito va cosido a un cuero.

Sin embargo, el jurista granadino menciona otros usos de la magia, como la *ruqya* de las picaduras (*ladīg*)<sup>8</sup> que se acompañará de la primera azora del Corán y también refiere que si alguien visita a un enfermo sin peligro de muerte y dice ante él siete veces: “Pido a Dios, el Generoso Señor del Trono que te cure”, recuperará la salud. Asimismo recoge otras fórmulas parecidas empleadas para la curación de los enfermos.

También se sabe por una *fatwā* recogida por al-Waṣārīsī (Lagardère 1995:188, 479) que el sanador o exorcista tenía derecho a cobrar por su trabajo si había sido eficaz y siempre que hubiera utilizado en sus encantamientos y talismanes fragmentos del Corán o una jaculatoria (*dīkr Allāh*).

### 3) Los sueños (*ru‘yā*)<sup>9</sup>

En el *Muwatta‘* (*Muwatta‘-Yahyā* 581-582; *Muwatta‘-Šaybānī* 32) hay varios *hadīṭs* transmitidos por Mālik acerca de los buenos sueños (*ar-ru‘yā al-ḥasana*) del hombre virtuoso y en uno de ellos se explica que tales sueños proceden de Dios, al contrario que el sueño erótico (*bulum*) cuya procedencia es del diablo.

El último capítulo de la *Risāla* (Capítulo 64, pp. 322 ar./323 tr.) del al-Qayrawānī viene encabezado por un *hadīṭ* sobre los sueños, ya recogido en el *Muwatta‘*, en el cual reza que “el enviado de Dios – Dios lo bendiga y lo salve – dijo: «El buen sueño del hombre piadoso es una de las cuarenta y seis partes de la profecía (*nubuwwa*)”<sup>10</sup>. Cuando uno de vosotros sueñe cosas desagradables, que escupa al despertar tres veces

<sup>8</sup> Se trata de las picaduras del escorpión contra las cuales es conveniente practicar *ruqya*. Véase Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥtasar* 93 ar./119-120 tr.

<sup>9</sup> Fahd & Daiber 1995. Hay dos tipos de sueños: el que tiene lugar mientras se duerme y el que tiene sentido filosófico y místico.

<sup>10</sup> Fahd 1995a. Esta profecía que designa en primer grado el conocimiento de la divinidad dado al profeta y la predicción hecha por éste y, en segundo grado, es la revelación.

hacia su izquierda y diga: Dios mío, me refugio en Ti contra el mal de lo que he visto en sueños para que no me dañe ni en mi religión ni en mi vida (*dunyā*)”.

Ibn Ġuzayy (*Qawānīn* 476) también dedica un apartado a los sueños. Entre otras cosas refiere que el buen sueño significa un buen augurio y se contará a otra persona, si así se quiere, pero no se hablará de él cuando el sueño es malo. En tal caso se escupirá tres veces e invocará la protección de Dios, utilizando una fórmula muy parecida a la que aparece en la *Risāla*.

### 4) El buen augurio (*al-fa‘l al-ḥasan*)

El profeta era partidario de los buenos augurios, es decir, de expresar buenos deseos con buenas palabras y, como una excepción, permitía expresiones de mal augurio. Así lo afirma al-Qayrawānī<sup>11</sup> quien recoge este *hadīṭ*: “Dijo el Profeta – sobre él sea la paz – sobre el mal augurio (*šū‘um*): «Si se hace, que sólo sea sobre la casa, la mujer y el caballo».

### 5) Contra las serpientes (*ḥayyāt*)

También para protegerse de las serpientes no sólo es lícito sino recomendable seguir una práctica de carácter mágico. En la *Risāla* (Capítulo XLV, 324 ar./325 tr.) dice al-Qayrawānī que “[al igual que se actuó] con las serpientes aparecidas en Medina, se les advertirá tres veces [de retirarse]. Esta práctica es recomendable también en otros lugares, salvo en el desierto, donde se las matará sin advertencia alguna”.

## II. Magia prohibida

Toda magia que no sea *ruqya*<sup>12</sup> procede del diablo y por lo tanto está tajantemente prohibida por el Islam y por los juristas, observantes rigurosos de la ortodoxia religiosa, que sin ambages la condenan y rechazan. Los textos consultados para este trabajo mencionan varias prácticas de magia (*sihr*) cuya calificación va desde la más absoluta prohibición a una aceptación que encierra contrariedad y repulsa, sin olvidar otros casos de *ruqya* antes mencionados cuya práctica pierde su licitud cuando no se ajustan a las normas establecidas al respecto.

### 1) El mal augurio (*šū‘um, tiyara*)

El mal augurio (*Muwatta‘-Šaybānī* 50), sin llegar a estar prohibido, es reprobable. Así lo consideraba el profeta, aunque lo admitía con poco entusiasmo y únicamente cuando iba dirigido sobre la casa, la mujer y el caballo, como ha quedado expuesto anteriormente.

al-Qayrawānī (*Risāla*, 32 ar./321 tr. y *Ġāmi‘* 267), que recoge esta cuestión, dice que el profeta también reprobaba los nombres malsonantes (*sayyi‘ al-asmā‘*) y que siempre era partidario de los buenos augurios.

<sup>11</sup> *Risāla*, 320 ar./321 tr. También se menciona el buen augurio en *Muwatta‘-Šaybānī* 313.

<sup>12</sup> La *ruqya* es el único procedimiento de magia (*sihr*) admitido en el Islam.



2) La astrología (*'ilm an-nuġūm*)

Es tajante la prohibición de prácticas relacionadas con la astrología, aunque en determinados casos sólo eran merecedoras de rechazo o de un severo correctivo (*adab šadīd*), como se desprende de la opinión de Malik acerca de un hombre que predijo un eclipse de sol para el día siguiente (al-Qayrawānī, *Ġāmi'* 269). Sin embargo al-Qayrawānī (*Risāla* 320 ar./321 tr.), para evitar cualquier tipo de duda al respecto, manifiesta de forma rotunda sobre su prohibición. Dice así: "No se observarán los astros si no es para guiarse en la dirección de la *qibla* y en las divisiones de la noche [con relación a los tiempos de la oración]. Hay que abstenerse de lo que no sea esto".

## 3) Talismanes prohibidos

El uso de talismanes que llevan cosidos a un cuero textos coránicos, jaculatorias o frases piadosas está permitido. Pero no ocurre así cuando se introducen ciertos cambios en los elementos que lo componen o en su elaboración.

Mālik, según refiere el jurista de Qayrawān (*Ġāmi'* 264, 265) rechazaba todo talismán (*mu'āda*) con nudos en el hilo con el que va atado y respondía: "Eso no está bien", sin duda porque la acción de atar nudos está relacionada con la de soplar sobre ellos, práctica ésta condenada en la azora del Alba (Corán 113): «/1/ *Di Me refugio en el Señor del alba* /2/ *del mal que hacen sus criaturas* /3/ *del mal de la oscuridad cuando se extiende* /4/ *del mal de las que soplan en los nudos* /5/ *del mal del envidioso cuando envidia*». Aunque no se sabe con exactitud el significado de los nudos, es seguro su carácter mágico de tipo maléfico<sup>13</sup>.

Igualmente está prohibido el uso de talismanes (*mu'āda*) en el que aparezca el sello de Salomón (*ġatim Sulaymān*) y si contiene palabras desconocidas<sup>14</sup>. Sobre esto dijo Abū Bakr (*Muwatta' Šaybānī* 312): "No conviene hacer *ruqya* con ellas".

El jurista andalusí, Ibn Rušd al-Ġadd (m. 1126) recoge de la *'Utbiyya*<sup>15</sup> una *mas'ala* en la que Ašhab transmite la opinión de Mālik sobre los talismanes prohibidos. Dice así: "Se le dijo [a Mālik]: ¿Qué opinas sobre la embarazada a la que se le escribe un fragmento del Corán para que se lo cuelgue al cuello? Contestó [Mālik]: Considero que no hay ningún problema en ello, siempre que sea algo conocido del Corán o una jaculatoria a Dios (*dīkr al-Allāh*). En cuanto a lo que no se sabe lo que es, como lo escrito en hebreo y lo que no se conoce, lo encuentro reprobable. Se le dijo [a Mālik]: ¿qué opinas respecto a hacer siete nudos con el hilo? Y lo consideró reprobable".

<sup>13</sup> Véanse distintas interpretaciones: *El Corán*; *al-Falak* 94, nota n° 3; *El Sagrado Corán* 1492, nota n° 3472, indica que "parece que se hace referencia a los que murmuran malas sugerencias, que hacen que se rompan los lazos más solemnes y las amistades...".

<sup>14</sup> Es decir las que no se comprenden por estar en otra lengua o por otro motivo.

<sup>15</sup> La referencias proceden de la tesis doctoral de Fernández Félix (1999:429). Agradezco a la autora su gentileza por permitirme utilizar y citar su tesis, inédita.

Igualmente Ibn Ġuzayy (*Qawānīn* 487), haciéndose eco de esta prohibición, se pronuncia con precisión al respecto: "Los talismanes (*hurūz*) que han sido escritos con sellos (*hawātim*) y grafía no árabe no son lícitos ni para el enfermo ni para el sano porque esto es [cosa] de infidelidad y de magia (*sihr*)".

También en el *Mi'yār* de al-Wanšarīsī (Lagardère 1995:465, 467, 472) figuran varias *fatwās* en las que se reitera la prohibición de este tipo de talismanes.

Pese a la general reprobación y, en muchos casos, rotunda prohibición del uso de talismanes de este tipo, la gente recurría a ellos con frecuencia. Entre los moriscos pervivían con fuerza varias prácticas mágicas no siempre lícitas. Así queda patente en el *Libro de los dichos maravillosos* (Labarta 1993), editado por Ana Labarta, y en los artículos de Joaquina Albarracín<sup>16</sup> sobre *El Misceláneo de Salomón*. Entre los tipos de talismanes prohibidos o reprobables utilizados por los mudéjares y moriscos figuran: a) los que tienen la estrella de David como logotipo del sello de Salomón para dominar y controlar a los genios; b) talismanes con caracteres no árabes o con palabras desconocidas o no religiosas.

## 4) Amuletos

El amuleto es un objeto natural que transmite por sí mismo una fuerza sobrenatural que protege de todo mal, mientras que el talismán es algo artificial, elaborado para un fin concreto<sup>17</sup>, si bien en los textos jurídicos consultados se emplean indistintamente los términos *hirz*, *'ūda*, *tamīma* para designar ambos objetos mágicos.

Siguiendo el criterio de Mālik, los juristas de su *madhab* rechazan el uso de amuletos para hacer *ruqya*, ya sea hierro, sal o piedra. El *Ġāmi'* (265-266) recoge lo siguiente: "Se le preguntó [a Malik]: ¿Hará magia (*ruqya*) la exorcista (*rāqiya*) con un hierro en su mano? Dijo: Yo desapruebo eso. Se le dijo: ¿Y con sal? Respondió: Es lo menos [reprobable]. Pero en otra *riwāya* [consta que le preguntaron]: ¿Hará magia con hierro y con sal? Y rechazó todo ello".

Otros amuletos, sin embargo, son admitidos por Mālik, aunque se trata de una tolerancia forzada en la que es patente su desagrado. Respecto al uso de amuletos para curar "se le dijo a Mālik: ¿Se colgará al cuello la piedra (*haraza*) contra el sarampión (*ħumra*)? Dijo: Desearía que fuera lo mínimo. Se le dijo: ¿Y lo que nace bajo el cielo<sup>18</sup> poniéndole un trozo de hierro? Respondió: Desearía que fuera lo mínimo".

## Conclusiones

La magia (*sihr*) es todo aquello que fascina y hace creer real lo que no es. Es la falsificación de la realidad y de modo general se aplica a toda acción del diablo. El profeta, sin embargo, admitía de forma excepcional ciertas prácticas mágicas con fines bené-

<sup>16</sup> Albarracín & Martínez Ruiz 1987; Albarracín 1983; 1988; 1993; 1994. También Cervera 1987.

<sup>17</sup> Labarta 1993:0.32 señala esta diferencia.

<sup>18</sup> Parece indicar cualquier cosa que se encuentra en la tierra.



ficos cuyo poder era reforzado con invocaciones a Dios u otras expresiones religiosas. Esta magia es la denominada *ruqya*, un procedimiento lícito de *sibr*.

Pese a las restricciones impuestas por el Islam, las prácticas mágicas lícitas e ilícitas han estado presentes en la vida de los musulmanes. Por ello, en varios tratados jurídicos aparecen junto a otros temas las normas por la que ha de regirse todo aquello relacionado con la magia que no son sino la confirmación de lo que la ley islámica prescribe.

En este trabajo se ha expuesto el criterio de los juristas malikíes, representados principalmente por el propio Mālik, al-Qayrawānī e Ibn Ġuzayy y también por otros, como Ibn Ḥabīb e Ibn Rušd al-Ġadd. Sus opiniones y las que transmiten de otros señalan una separación, en ocasiones muy frágil, entre lo prohibido y lo permitido respecto a la magia.

En general es considerada lícita toda práctica mágica considerada *ruqya*, es decir, magia usada para beneficiar, apoyada en Dios y en la religión: contra el mal de ojo, contra enfermedades y otros males, contra las picaduras de escorpión, contra las serpientes, buenos sueños y buenos augurios. Por el contrario, se prohíben o, al menos, se reprueban todas las prácticas de magia (*sibr*) que no tengan el carácter de *ruqya* e incluso algunas que perteneciendo a ésta incumplen los requisitos exigidos. Entre éstas figuran: el mal augurio, la astrología, los talismanes prohibidos y los amuletos.

La *ruqya* siempre ha estado muy extendida entre las clases populares y humildes. Los intelectuales la rechazan, pero como dice T. Fahd (1995b: VIII, 620) en ausencia de una definición de concepto de *sibr* en el Corán así como en la jurisprudencia, esta prohibición se atiene al ejemplo del Profeta.

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## MAGIA Y SUPERSTICIÓN EN LOS MANUSCRITOS DE OCAÑA (TOLEDO). SIGLOS XIV-XV

Celia del Moral

Granada

### Introducción

Esta comunicación tiene como fin hacer una revisión, a treinta años de su descubrimiento, de los elementos relacionados con la magia contenidos en los manuscritos descubiertos en Ocaña (Toledo) en 1969, y especialmente poner de relieve las investigaciones sobre este campo llevadas a cabo a lo largo de estos años por dos profesores de la Universidad de Granada: Juan Martínez Ruiz, (fallecido en 1992) y Joaquina Albarracín Navarro, que continúa trabajando y publicando sobre el tema<sup>1</sup>.

Los manuscritos fueron descubiertos, según consta en varios de los trabajos publicados, - cuya relación en orden cronológico ofrecemos al final de este trabajo - durante el invierno de 1969, en la ciudad de Ocaña (Toledo), en unas obras de demolición de una casa muy antigua conocida como "Casa de la Encomienda", la cual, al haber sido seriamente dañada durante la guerra civil, se encontraba en ruinas y fue hecha derribar por sus propietarios, los señores del Aguila. Durante este derribo, tras un muro, apareció una alacena tapiada y dentro de ella, sobre un estante, se hallaban una serie de manuscritos (nueve en total) y un pergamino con una peonza de madera con signos grabados en ella (Martínez Ruiz & Albarracín Navarro 1972).

A partir de su descubrimiento, diversas vicisitudes y gestiones de sus propietarios por tratar de que los manuscritos llegasen a manos autorizadas que los descifrasen y estudiaran, hizo que éstos llegaran, en febrero de 1971, a manos de los dos citados profesores e investigadores de la Universidad de Granada, muy interesados en estos temas por su doble contenido en lengua árabe y aljamiada. Habiendo sido examinados con gran interés por los mismos, fueron autorizados a fotocopiarlos y centraron su atención especialmente en dos de ellos, de los cuales hablaremos más adelante.

Los libros encontrados, como ya hemos dicho, eran nueve, y están escritos en lengua árabe, escritura aljamiada y en castellano medieval. Su contenido es sobre todo de índole religiosa: copias del Corán, libros de ritual religioso, augurios, recetario, abluciones, tratados de farmacopea y medicina, etc. Se desconoce los años exactos en que fueron escritos ya que en algunos de ellos faltan las primeras y últimas páginas, pero uno de ellos está fechado en el 831/1428 por lo que J.M.R. y J.A.N. dedujeron que fueron escritos entre finales del s. XIV y comienzos del XV.

<sup>1</sup> Quiero expresar mi agradecimiento a Joaquina Albarracín por haberme facilitado todos los materiales necesarios para este estudio, así como por haberme animado, con gran generosidad por su parte, a realizarlo y presentarlo.



Del conjunto de manuscritos, como hemos dicho anteriormente, fueron dos los que más llamaron la atención de estos dos investigadores: uno de contenido vario relacionado con la magia y la farmacopea, que ellos denominaron primero: "Misceláneo de Ocaña" y posteriormente: "Misceláneo de Salomón" – y con estos dos nombres aparece a lo largo de los sucesivos trabajos – y otro, también acéfalo, que contiene una serie de "alguacías" (consejos, exhortaciones, advertencias) dirigidas por el profeta Muḥammad a su primo y yerno 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, de temática muy variada (Albarracín Navarro 1985).

En cuanto a los posibles autores de los manuscritos, nada se sabe, ya que, debido a un trágico accidente acontecido poco tiempo después de su descubrimiento, cuando eran trasladados en coche a Granada, fueron a parar a la carretera bajo la lluvia y se perdieron o borraron las primeras páginas de varios de ellos, donde quizás se aclarase algo a este respecto.

Tampoco se sabe mucho más del propietario inicial de los mismos ni de las circunstancias que hizo que fueran ocultados tras una pared. Sin embargo, en uno de ellos aparece una frase, escrita, al parecer, por una mujer llamada Doña Elvira, que dice ser esposa del "faqih de Madrid", de lo cual dedujeron en su día J.M.R. y J.A. que los libros pudieron pertenecer a dicho alfaquí mudéjar que vivió en esta población de Ocaña a finales del siglo XIV o comienzos del XV, ya bajo el dominio cristiano, y que circunstancias políticas y religiosas o quizás viéndose forzado a trasladarse, le llevaron a ocultar los libros tras una pared. Lo cierto es que todo son conjeturas y que nada se sabe hasta ahora a ciencia cierta de los autores de los libros o de sus propietarios iniciales.

Como ha sido descrito en varios de estos trabajos sobre el *Misceláneo de Salomón*, se trata de un manuscrito acéfalo y ápodo, que consta de 71 folios, escrito en tinta color sepia con epígrafes en rojo, en escritura árabe magrebí y el material parece ser papel de algodón grueso (Albarracín Navarro 1977). Su contenido es diverso; los primeros 30 folios tratan de magia, farmacopea y medicina, relacionado todo ello con la figura de Salomón<sup>2</sup>. En un trabajo reciente publicado por Joaquina Albarracín se nos ofrece un índice muy útil del contenido del manuscrito (Albarracín Navarro 1999a): a los primeros 30 folios le siguen otros capítulos sobre los nombres de Dios, predicciones sobre las estaciones del año, formulas para escribir un *alherce*, nuevas predicciones en relación con los planetas, los *alherces* para cada día de la semana, remedios, sortilegios, etc. Entre los folios 45 y 51 viene un capítulo sobre el "hadiz de Salomón", donde se relata la lucha del rey contra Iblīs y sus hijos con la descripción de estos demonios.

Le siguen una serie de capítulos varios referentes a amuletos, talismanes, *alherces*, sortilegios contra los *ginns* y los demonios, remedios para combatir enfermedades, sa-

humerios, etc., y así, alternando la magia con la farmacopea llega hasta el final en el folio 71.

### Elementos de magia en los manuscritos

Los elementos relacionados con la magia a través de estos manuscritos y en particular en el *Misceláneo de Salomón* podemos clasificarlos en dos categorías: los personajes que aparecen a lo largo de las obras junto con los efectos derivados de su actuación y, por otra parte los remedios destinados a paliar los males producidos por los anteriores.

En el capítulo de los personajes hay que diferenciar, por una parte, la figura de Salomón como protagonista indiscutible de la obra, por otra, a toda una serie de seres diabólicos como son los *ṣayātīn*, *ṭawāliq* y *ginns*. En la categoría de remedios contra los males que producen los demonios (las enfermedades) encontramos una amplia gama de elementos relacionados con la magia como son los alherces, adoas, sahumeros, amuletos, talismanes, conjuros, ensalmos, así como recetas y fórmulas de farmacopea.

### La figura de Salomón

Como ya hemos dicho, Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd, el mítico rey Salomón de la Biblia y el Corán, es la figura central del *Misceláneo* y la más importante en el mundo de la magia y el esoterismo, tanto en la tradición judeo-cristiana como en la islámica<sup>3</sup>.

En el Corán aparece citado en siete ocasiones y en casi todas se menciona el ascendiente que gozaba sobre las legiones de demonios y sobre los *ginns*.

En una ocasión se dice que "los demonios buceaban para él (en busca de perlas)" y que "hacían otros trabajos" o que "el ventarrón soplaba a una orden suya" (Q. 21:81-82); en otro lugar dice que "conocía el lenguaje de los pájaros" y que "sus tropas compuestas de genios, hombres y pájaros fueron agrupadas ante él" (Q. 27:16-17) o bien que "los genios (*ḡunūn*) trabajaban a su servicio y hacían todo lo que él quería: palacios, estatuas, calderos, etc. (Q. 34:12-14).

De aquí arranca esta larga tradición de sabiduría y poder de Salomón sobre las fuerzas ocultas, tradición que se remonta a la Biblia y continúa, a través del Corán, a lo largo de la tradición islámica, por lo cual el rey Salomón está presente en la mayoría de los tratados relacionados con la magia blanca como el poder (*mulk*) que controla a los demonios y los *ginns* y que contrarresta la acción maléfica de éstos otorgando los remedios que curan las enfermedades o males producidos por aquellos.

Precisamente en este sentido es como figura en los manuscritos de Ocaña, siendo representado en calidad de juez supremo que preside la asamblea de sabios, demonios y *ginns*, así como en su faceta de sanador o médico que por cada presencia maléfica

<sup>2</sup> Estos 30 folios han sido traducidos y estudiados por Albarracín Navarro & Martínez Ruiz 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Sobre este rey legendario, véase Walker 1998.



de *ṣaytān* o *ṭaylaq*, él ofrece la fórmula mágica o el remedio natural a cada enfermedad.

En el *Misceláneo* aparece en primer lugar presidiendo una gran asamblea de todos los pueblos, después de haberle concedido Allah el *mulk* (poder) en su sello mágico. Se citan a continuación las aleyas coránicas donde se habla de su poder sobre el viento, los *ṣayātīn* y los *ḡinns* y de cómo trabajaban para él albañiles y buceadores, y le prestaban obediencia, algunos con cadenas, otros mediante pactos.

Dice a continuación que reunió a los pueblos del Oriente hasta el Ocaso: los *rūm*, los persas, la gente de las ciudades, los filósofos, para que le dieran cuenta de las maravillas de sus tierras. A continuación aparecen los *ḡinns* y los *ṣayātīn* que, a través de su portavoz, Fayqaytūš, van desfilando ante Salomón de uno en uno.

En otro capítulo del manuscrito aparece de nuevo Salomón en un relato que J.A. llama: "el hadiz de Sulayman" en el que el demonio, Iblīs, y sus seis hijos se presentan ante Salomón, siendo descritos con todo detalle y con toda la imaginación del autor, luego les pregunta el rey donde habitan y cuales son sus acciones contra los hombres. Ellos se lo cuentan y Salomón les promete no castigarles si les revelan el talismán que los prevenga contra él, los demonios se lo dicen con lo cual se presenta el remedio, conjuro o *alherce* contra su mal. El procedimiento narrativo es muy parecido al primer capítulo donde los *tawāliq* se van presentando de uno en uno y se sigue la misma técnica narrativa, la diferencia es que en el primero es Salomón el que da el remedio y en este es el demonio mismo el que da la información a cambio del perdón.

Aspectos detallados sobre Salomón a través del manuscrito de Ocaña han sido estudiados y publicados por J.A. en diferentes trabajos, como son el anillo-sello-talismán otorgado por Dios donde le concede el *mulk* sobre los vientos, genios y demonios (Albarracín Navarro 1983). Dicho anillo es descrito como una especie de talismán, de cobre rojizo, con caracteres y signos ocultos grabados y sería único y especial para él. En el folio 54 aparece el dibujo del sello con las letras y signos grabados en él.

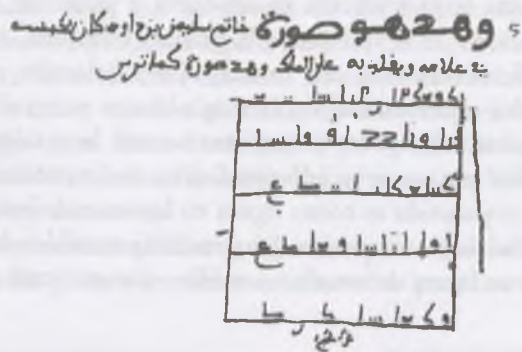


Fig. 1. Sello de Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd. Folio 54v.

Otro aspecto relacionado con esta figura a través del manuscrito sería el relato o descripción de su *qubba* que J.A. identifica con su tienda y trono (Albarracín Navarro 1987). La descripción que aparece en el folio 46 nos habla de una *qubba* cuyas paredes eran de púrpura, iluminada por un combustible incandescente, de 80 codos de altura, revestida de brocados y sedas y un trono de marfil rodeado de animales: pájaros, leones, dragones y una abubilla posada en la parte superior. Según este trabajo, Salomón aquí no aparece como un rey en el salón de su palacio sino como un rey musulmán viajero que necesita una tienda-palacio transportable donde residir en sus desplazamientos.

### Demonios, *tawāliq* y *ḡinns*

Uno de los temas relacionados con la magia que más destacan en el *Misceláneo de Salomón* es la cantidad de figuras demoniacas (*ṣayātīn*, *tawāliq* y *ḡinns*) que aparecen continuamente, relacionados siempre con las enfermedades físicas y psíquicas que es lo que en realidad representan.

Ya desde el principio del manuscrito se presentan, como hemos dicho anteriormente, a la gran asamblea de pueblos y sabios precedidos por su representante Fayqaytūš que es un *ṣaytān* considerado como "uno de los jefes de los *ḡinns*"<sup>4</sup>, que actúa como maestro de ceremonias, haciendo de intermediario y presentador de los demás; a través de él comienzan a desfilar ante Salomón todo un ejército de figuras demoniacas hasta un total de 72, a cada cual más horrible y espeluznante, que es descrita con todo lujo de detalles y que van exponiendo ante el rey dónde habitan y cual es su maldad contra los hombres, lo que le da pie a Salomón para otorgar el remedio.

Los nombres que reciben en el manuscrito estas figuras demoniacas son las de *ḡinn*, *ṣaytān* y *ṭaylaq* (pl. *tawāliq*)<sup>5</sup> - éste último aparece en algunas ocasiones escrito como *ṭaliq* (libre). Además de estos nombres genéricos, cada uno dice su nombre.

De las descripciones que se suceden a lo largo de la presentación de los *tawāliq*, 18 tienen aspecto de hombre, 17 tienen aspecto de mujer, 21 son descritos de una forma ambigua como "persona" o "aspecto humano", sin especificar el sexo, 12 tienen aspecto de animal, 2 tienen aspecto doble, es decir, constituyen en un mismo demonio una pareja de hombre y mujer, 1 tiene un aspecto múltiple (compuesto por 15 figuras) y otro es definido como una enfermedad: "la fiebre".

Además de estas definiciones respecto a su aspecto, las variantes en cuanto a su forma son muchas y la mayoría muy complicadas, algunos tienen una forma mezcla de hombre o mujer y de diversos animales, otros, los menos, describen una apariencia

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Albarracín Navarro & Martínez Ruiz 1987:132, 192.

<sup>5</sup> No hemos encontrado esta palabra en los diccionarios árabes, probablemente sea una deformación dialectal de *ṭaliq* (repudiado, aludiendo al repudio por Dios de los ángeles caídos) pero lo que sí está claro es que en el manuscrito es la palabra que designa a los demonios.



normal: por ejemplo, el nº 42 se describe como “aspecto de hombre honorable, en forma humana”. Es frecuente que en algunos casos se presenten con alguna deformidad: tuertos, cojos, con un sólo pie o brazo, etc. También hay entre ellos monjes, judíos o diversas alusiones a las otras dos religiones, lo que indica la animadversión que existía entre ambas comunidades. Las mujeres que aparecen son en general figuras deformes mezcla de mujer y animal, aunque hay algunas con apariencia normal como el nº 26 que es descrita con “figura de mujer con el cuello del vestido en forma redonda, en sus dos piernas jaljales de oro con colgantes” o la 46 que es descrita como “figura de mujer gruesa, de cabello rojo y cuerpo amarillo”.

Entre las figuras mitad hombre o mujer, mitad animal, aparecen ejemplares tan dispares como “hombre con cabeza de cabra y pelo de mujer” (*taylaq* 1º), figura de mujer con cuerpo de león y hermoso cabello (t. 3º), rostro de león con dos cuernos, figura de toro y manos de gato guarduño y entre sus dientes una cabeza humana (t.14), aspecto de víbora con dos manos y dos pies y cabeza de perro (t.20) o el nº 25 al que se le llama rey de todos los *ginns* y rey de otros reyes, representado en 13 figuras, entre ellas un camello, caballo, perro, toro, mulo, serpiente, mujer con siete cabezas y dos alas, etc. Por último, el *taylaq* nº 64 cuyo nombre es al-As'arī al-Yahūdī es denominado como “la fiebre que ataca un día y se retira al día siguiente” y tiene aspecto de mujer, figura de cabra con cabeza de mujer de cabello lacio” y podría identificarse por una serie de elementos como los lugares donde habita y los efectos que produce con las fiebres tifoideas.

Otro tema muy interesante desde el punto de vista de la medicina son los lugares donde dicen que habitan los demonios y que demuestran claramente dos cosas: la relación que tiene el lugar donde habitan con la enfermedad o mal que producen, y la animadversión que producía para su autor todo lo concerniente a las religiones cristiana y judaica, puesto que uno de los lugares preferidos como vivienda de los demonios es: “a la sombra de las iglesias”, “en las iglesias de los judíos”, las “tumbas enemigas” o “los cementerios” – no hay que olvidar que esta obra fue probablemente compuesta por un mudéjar, en territorio conquistado por los cristianos.

Otros lugares descritos por los demonios como su *habitat* natural son: en la orilla del mar o en sus profundidades, en el desierto, en las ruinas, en las cumbres de las montañas, en la oscuridad, en lugares pavorosos, escondidos o solitarios, en la encrucijada de los caminos, en el terror de la noche, en los baños, letrinas y pozos negros, y otros lugares tan reveladores para la medicina como: en los estercoleros, en la flema, en los pulmones, en las matrices de la mujer, en los medicamentos, en los zocos, en los baños, en el aire, en los lugares de ganado, en lugares inmundos y en la orina, en los pozos y las aguas saladas o en lugares donde están los barberos, veterinarios y sangradores.

Respecto a los males que producen o “la corrupción” característica de cada cual, está claro que cada una de ellas está relacionada con una de las enfermedades mentales o físicas que se conocían en esta época. No sería difícil para un especialista en medici-

na general – sobre todo para un buen conocedor de la medicina medieval –, identificar en los males producidos por cada uno de estos demonios cualquiera de las enfermedades frecuentes en esta época (y también en la actualidad). Aún sin ser especialista en medicina, no es difícil reconocer en las descripciones de los demonios: ataques de epilepsia, difteria, infecciones de todo tipo, hipertensión, parálisis, fiebres, delirios, tumores, reuma y artrosis, así como todo tipo de enfermedades mentales: ataques de locura, depresión, melancolía, amnesia, etc. En lo que se refiere a las mujeres, los males más frecuentes están relacionados con dificultad en los embarazos, abortos, etc.

Otra serie de figuras similares que aparecen en el *Misceláneo de Salomón* son el demonio (Iblīs) y sus hijos, que aparecen entre los folios 45-51 en el capítulo conocido como “*hadiz de Sulaymān*”, al que ya me he referido en el anterior apartado. En él se relata como son convocados Iblīs y sus 6 hijos: Ahmar ibn Iblīs (Albarracín Navarro 1997), Šamhūrūš ibn Damhurūš (Albarracín Navarro 1993a), al-Him ibn al-Him (Albarracín Navarro 1994a), Umm as-Šubyān (Albarracín Navarro 1991), Zawba'a ibn Dawba'a y Maymūn ibn Kalkaybūn al-Ġawwāl.

### Remedios y magia para combatir el mal

En donde mejor se puede ver la relación existente entre la magia blanca y la medicina y farmacopea, dentro de la tradición arabo-islámica que, a través de la cultura hispano-árabe se proyecta en la tradición de los mudéjares y de los moriscos, es en el conjunto de recetas, talismanes, ensalmos, sahumeros y *alherces* que aparecen en los manuscritos de Ocaña, especialmente en el *Misceláneo de Salomón*: los remedios a los males provocados por los demonios parecen ser el motivo principal y finalidad de la obra. Todos siguen la misma estructura que hemos dicho que es la presentación del demonio, su descripción, el mal que produce y por último Fayqaytus pregunta a Salomón por la medicina y el remedio y el rey hace honor a su sabiduría proverbial exponiendo el remedio contra el mismo.

Dichos remedios varían de uno a otro pero siempre encontramos una fuerte conexión entre la farmacopea y la magia: encontramos sahumeros – humos aromáticos producidos al quemar hierbas medicinales o maderas perfumadas como el aloe, incienso, almizcle, resina, etc., que el enfermo debe inhalar, mientras se recita la correspondiente oración o conjuro –, *alherces* (de los que nos ocuparemos más adelante), coccionnes y emplastos curativos, muchos de los cuales deben aplicarse mediante instilaciones por la nariz, otras veces en forma de cataplasma o ingerido por vía oral.

En cuanto a los elementos de farmacopea, aparecen en el manuscrito, al margen del texto, una serie de notas o aclaraciones en castellano aljamiado que sirven de notas o traducción de una serie de términos de botánica que figuran en las recetas y que no debían estar muy claro su significado en árabe para alguno de los lectores o el dueño del manuscrito. Estas notas, con la denominación de “glosas aljamiadas” han sido objeto de estudio lingüístico e identificación por parte de J.M.R. y J.A.N. en varios de sus trabajos (Albarracín Navarro & Martínez Ruiz 1985; 1987).



Todo este conjunto de recetas y *alherces* ha llevado a pensar a sus investigadores que el libro debió servir como obra de consulta para curanderos, herboristas y prácticas de magia entre los mudéjares castellanos. En el libro *Medicina, Farmacopea y Magia...* Incluyen un extenso glosario de Farmacopea con un estudio detallado de cada elemento que aparece en el manuscrito.

Los ensalmos curativos fueron objeto de estudio por J.M.R. en 1985 (Martínez Ruiz 1985) y en este trabajo señala la persistencia de ritos antiguos y profanos entre las gentes del campo y las aldeas de la España medieval, ritos que probablemente se remontan a muchos siglos atrás y que a través de la cultura islámica pasan al cristianismo y fueron condenados en sucesivos concilios, antes y después de la dominación árabe en la Península.

Señala también el gran influjo de las artes mágicas de árabes y judíos en el Toledo de los siglos XII y XIII, cuya fama se extendió por toda Europa a través de los viajeros y científicos extranjeros que acudían a esta ciudad en busca del saber.

Al final del manuscrito, aparecen unas páginas en escritura aljamiada con una serie de recetas para elaborar sahumeros que han sido transcritas a caracteres latinos por J.M.R., acompañadas de un estudio lingüístico (Martínez Ruiz 1974). Otras recetas médicas para curar diferentes enfermedades tales como el dolor de muelas o el flato han sido también objeto de estudio y traducción por J.A.N. (Albarracín Navarro 1988b) (Albarracín Navarro 1993b). Asimismo, estos dos investigadores han señalado en otros dos trabajos las semejanzas entre los nombres de plantas y remedios utilizados en el *Misceláneo* con los que son descritos en la casa de *La Celestina*, de Fernando de Rojas (Martínez Ruiz & Albarracín Navarro 1983): ámbar, algalia, almizcle, agua de rosas, agua de lluvia, diferentes tipos de hieles, manteca de vaca, laurel, etc. También en relación con esta obra han señalado la magia de la palabra producida a través de la aliteración, que es frecuente en la literatura aljamiada y que coincide igualmente en las fórmulas usadas por la *Celestina* y en numerosos ensalmos del *Misceláneo de Salomón* (Martínez Ruiz 1989).

Los *alherces* (en árabe *hirz*) son amuletos o talismanes que lleva la persona colgada del cuello o en cualquier otra parte de su cuerpo para protegerse de los demonios y *ginn*s así como contra el mal de ojo. Está muy extendida esta costumbre en la cultura islámica y persiste hasta nuestros días. Generalmente se trata de un papel de algodón o un pergamino fino donde se escriben una serie de letras y signos mágicos, se dobla cuidadosamente y se introduce en una bolsita que se cuelga del cuello. En el *Misceláneo* aparecen constantemente el uso de estos amuletos conteniendo formulas mágicas como remedio junto a los ensalmos y sahumeros (Albarracín Navarro 1998).

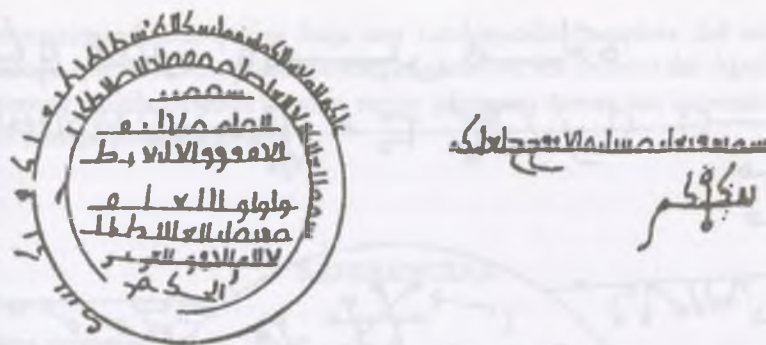


Fig. 2. Sello mágico con anagramas que forma parte de un *alherce* contra el *taylaq* n° 15 Folio 8 v. Estos *alherces* están escritos normalmente con tintas de colores naturales, como azafrán disuelto en agua de rosas, pero a veces, para lograr mayor efectividad, se escriben con sangre de animal, como pollo o paloma. Una curiosa muestra de ellos con estas características aparecen en el *Misceláneo* y han sido objeto de estudio por J.A.N.: uno de ellos es para conseguir que un hombre y una mujer celebren matrimonio, otro para encontrar un tesoro escondido y otro para librarse de una enfermedad (Albarracín Navarro 1994b).

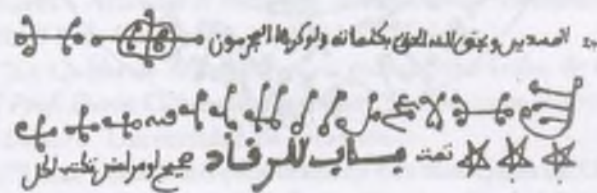


Fig. 3. *Alherce* compuesto de signos cabalísticos, para ser escritos con sangre de paloma, para librar a alguien de una enfermedad. Folios 52v-53r.

La superstición está presente junto con la magia a lo largo de todos los manuscritos de Ocaña. Entre las variantes del *gadwal* y del *alherce* está el empleo de la palma de la mano (el *kaff*) como soporte para escribir un *alherce*. Este, según los entendidos, produce una fuerza mágica superior a las otras materias (Martínez Ruiz & Albarracín Navarro 1999).

En el *Misceláneo de Salomón* aparecen varias fórmulas mágicas para ser escritas en la palma de la mano: para detener la nube, para saber si un enfermo vivirá o no... Estas supersticiones se encuentran, no sólo en la tradición árabe y mudejar sino también en la tradición morisca<sup>6</sup> y llegan hasta nuestros días con el uso de amuletos y talismanes como “la mano de Fátima” (*humaysa*), “la mano de David” (*kaff ad-Dāwud*).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Labarta 1982-83.



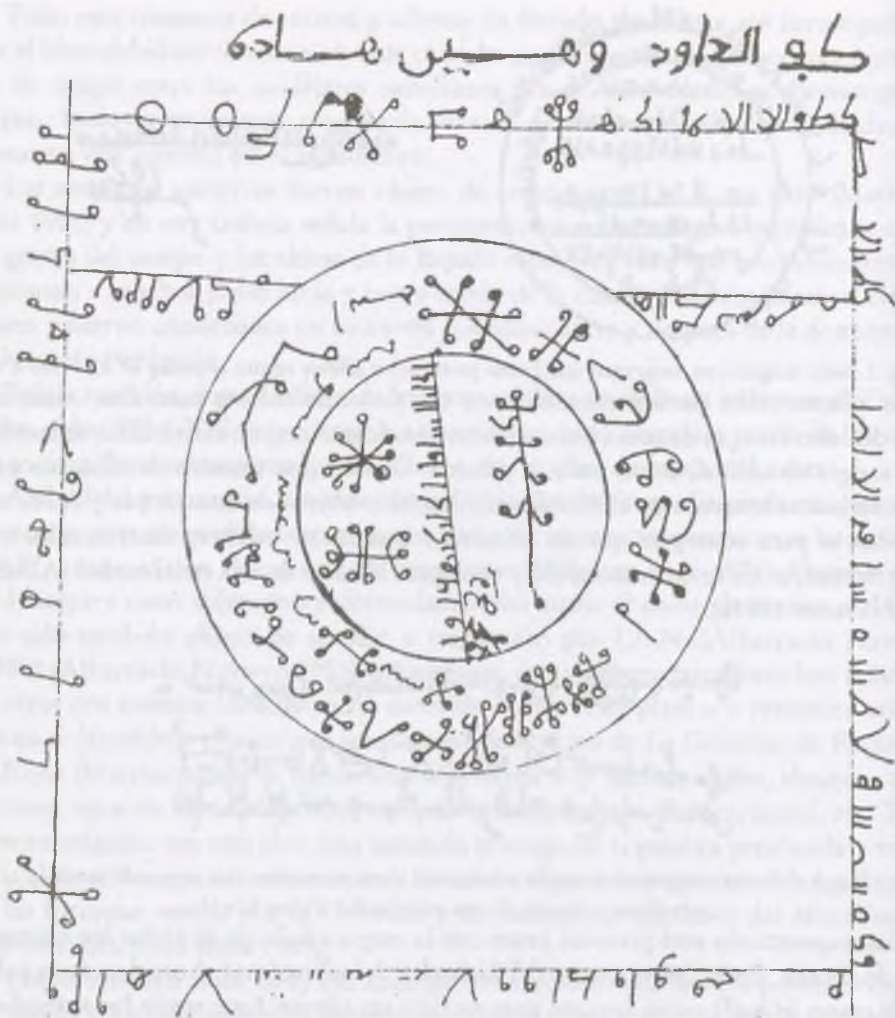


Fig. 4. Kaff de David. Folio 31r.

El *Misceláneo de Salomón* está aún inédito y sin terminar su estudio completo, a pesar de que ya se han hecho una treintena de trabajos sobre su contenido. Actualmente, Joaquina Albarracín Navarro continúa trabajando en el mismo y tiene el proyecto de realizar una edición completa del texto acompañada de su traducción, la cual está ya casi terminada. Es de desear que podamos ver pronto esa edición completa y traducción del *Misceláneo*. El resto de los manuscritos de Ocaña están también aún inéditos y apenas sin estudiar, a excepción de los dos trabajos sobre “las alguacías” y tenemos noticia de que se está realizando una tesis doctoral sobre uno de ellos relacionado con el hadiz (Hofman Vannus 2001).

Es necesario también que se haga una catalogación completa del resto de los manuscritos – que obran en poder de sus propietarios, los señores del Aguila Goicoechea – porque quizás de ellos puedan surgir páginas y temas tan interesantes como éstos que hemos presentado aquí.

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OMANICA IN OMANI PROVERBS AND SAYINGS  
THE MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:  
(1) POTTERIES AND KITCHEN UTENSILS

Kinga Dévényi

Budapest

بوفلتدر ينطبعه الملاس / الميفراف

(Omani proverb / al-Humaydī 1986-94: I, 155, No. 176)

Oman is country which places special emphasis on the preservation of her heritage. Different local crafts are being continued and preserved. Pottery making is one of these crafts. The town of Bahla in central Oman has been the main centre of pottery in the area. Bahla wares occur on almost all the Islamic archaeological sites of the region and on many of the pre-Islamic sites. Though the date of the beginnings of the Bahla industry is still to be determined, it has been established that the forms of the Bahla wares are directly inspired by south-east Asian pottery. Today Bahla is known as the 'pottery capital of Oman'. Its fine white dust is ideally suited to pot-making. Potters still create a variety of earthenware for practical purposes, like storing dates, cooling water, cooking or burning incense<sup>1</sup>.

This continuing industry permeates people's everyday life, so it is little wonder that earthenware products are mentioned in a wide variety of proverbs. The present article is the continuation of our previous investigations (Dévényi 1996, 2001) where the representation of the living environment - fauna and flora - in Omani proverbs was treated. The material environment, however, is also well attested in proverbs. In the analysis of Omani proverbs the following broad groups of objects can be defined:

- (a) potteries and kitchen utensils;
- (b) baskets, mats etc. made of palm leaf and other material;
- (c) food;
- (d) clothing;
- (e) the house and its surroundings;
- (f) fishing & sailing;
- (g) tools of agriculture & animal husbandry;
- (h) the well;
- (i) other utensils and miscellaneous objects.

<sup>1</sup> For the significance of the Bahla wares for the history of Oman, see Whitcomb 1975:129. For a vivid description of the potters of Bahla at work, see St Albans 1980:128-129.



The following proverbs show the infiltration into the proverbs of objects belonging to group (a) from among the material environment, *i.e.* potteries and kitchen utensils. These proverbs – which reflect people's awareness of the objects that surround them – are, naturally, interpreted in a way which is relevant to the people's behaviour. Reading them, however, we get a glimpse of everyday life and we get to know how these utensils should be used<sup>2</sup>.

i.

**برمة / برمة** an earthen cooking vessel, a medium-size pottery, smaller than **جحلة**<sup>3</sup>, used for water, honey and boiling coffee<sup>4</sup>

No. 131 (I, 125)<sup>5</sup>; J 38<sup>6</sup>

(١) برمة الشريك ما تنور

"A pot in partnership does not boil". 'A pot that belongs to many is ill stirred and worse boiled'. It is so because everybody considers it someone else's duty to attend to the pot. Similar in content to (13) and (28).

<sup>2</sup> A highly interesting volume combining potteries and proverbs had been published by N. H. Henein in 1992. In 1979, on the occasion of the 2nd International Congress of Egyptologists, Henein was asked to exhibit present day potteries he had collected all over Egypt. Nine years later he came across a collection of 20,000 Egyptian proverbs and sayings. This corpus gave him an impetus to look for proverbs that mention names of potteries. His investigation resulted in a study which presents the objects of the exhibition together with a collection of 149 'pottery proverbs'. From this number 112 are contained in the manuscript collection of 20,000 proverbs. This proportion may become significant if compared to other collections. The corpus of 1,200 proverbs collected by Al Sudais in the Nağd contains only five 'pottery proverbs'. The collection of 2749 Omani proverbs contain 22 pottery proverbs (not counting other kitchen utensils). The proportion of pottery proverbs in these three collections are as follows: Nağd 0.416%, Egypt 0.56% and Oman 0.8%.

<sup>3</sup> See proverbs 9 and 10 below.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Henein 1992:34, 40, 41, potteries Nos 40, 48, 51: *borma* "marmite, récipient pour la cuisson (au four / sur réchaud)". The potteries presented by Henein are not similar to those used in Oman. Proverbs are not connected to this word by Henein. It is worth noting that Völlers (1895:512) saw in the simultaneous existence of this word in Oman and Egypt a proof for the early appearance of south Arabian population in the Nile valley. According to Landberg (1901-13: II, 597) "la *burmah* est, chez les Bédouins, une grande marmite en marbre vert, tandis qu'à Aden et dans le Yéman, c'est une petite marmite en terre cuite".

<sup>5</sup> The 'Nos.' followed by volume and page numbers refer to al-Ḥumaydi 1986-94. The following abbreviations are used throughout the article: B = Brockett 1985; J = Jayakar 1904; and R = Reinhardt 1894. When proverbs are quoted, the numerals after these abbreviations refer to the number of the proverb in the given collection. When words are quoted from Brockett 1985, the numeral after B refers to the number of the lexical entry.

<sup>6</sup> A different version of this proverb is: *qador šūrke mā tūr brāha* (Reinhardt 1894:400, No. 35), where another pottery is mentioned making no difference to the purport of the proverb. Another variant of this proverb has been collected by al-Akwa' in the Tihāma (1984: I, 276, No. 913): *birnat aš-šarāka mā tihmad*, and by al-ʿUbūdi in the Nağd (1959:215, No. 546): *qidr aš-širki mā yufūb*.

No. 1392 (I, 125); J 232

(٢) لنعمة .. ولا برمة

"Better a morsel [ready cooked] than an [empty] pot". 'A bird in a hand is worth two in the bush'.

برام (the plural of *burma*)<sup>7</sup>

No. 1429 (III, 78)

(٣) لولا الحرام .. ما شترسبت لبرام

"If there was no sin, the pots would not fill<sup>8</sup>". Refers to the behaviour of those who – out of greediness – use unlawful ways to gain wealth.

ii.

**ثانية (تواثي)** a stone or sg. else on which the cauldron (قدر، مرجل) is put; B 170 *tawāṭi* "fireplace-stones" for cooking on

No. 968 (II, 246)

(٤) القدر ما يركب إلا على تائيتين / ثلاث تواثي

"A cauldron can only be put on two/three stones". Used to express indispensability.

Same as (33), cf. also (42).

iii.

تنور baking oven<sup>9</sup>No. 392 (I, 281)<sup>10</sup>

(٥) خاف ميثور ولو راسه فيتثور

"Be afraid of a bull even if its head be in the oven".

No. 1235 (III, 18); J: 227<sup>11</sup>

(٦) لا تامن الثور ولو راسه في الثنور

"Do not trust a bull even if its head be in the oven".

No. 655 (II, 74)

(٧) شئ فيتثور ... وشئ فلجتثور

"Something in the oven and something on the threshing floor". Weakness caused by the scattering of efforts.

iv.

**تاوه**<sup>12</sup> bread baking tin plate — B 189 *tēwa* 'a vessel' for cooking over a fire; cf. Persian *tāwā* frying pan, skillet

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the singular form *beram* as attested by Henein 1992:27, pottery No. 33 "marmite: plat pour la cuisson au four", and 46, pottery No. 59 "jarre: récipient pour le lait, les poivrons, les navets salés, etc". The shape of this latter slightly resembles the shape of the Omani pottery. Proverbs are not cited by Henein.

<sup>8</sup> For the meaning and variants of the root *t-r-s*, see Rhodokanakis 1908-11: II, 5 and Reinhardt 1894:151.

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed description of the *tannur*, see e.g. Landberg 1883:14 and Abela 1981-85: I, 465.

<sup>10</sup> This proverb and its variant (6) are animal proverbs mentioned here only because of the reference to utensils.

<sup>11</sup> This proverb has also been collected by Reinhardt (1894:400, No. 31) in the following variant: *mā te-əmmin mittor ulau raso fittennör*.

<sup>12</sup> A Turkish word of Persian origin, meaning (a) a frying pan, (b) a pan or a sheet of iron on which bread or cakes are baked (cf. Redhouse 1884-90:482).



No. 256 (I, 200)<sup>13</sup>

"The tin plate blames the cauldron". 'The devil rebuking sin.'

The bread baking plate is usually black because of its constant use on the fire, so it is generally in worse condition than the cauldron.

Same as (32).

v.

جَحْلَه earthenware container for cooling water in it — B 217 *gahle* 'an unglazed, spheroid water-pot' suspended from its neck, allowing some water to seep through and evaporate and so cool the remainder inside

No. 304 (I, 231)

" [It is] a broken pot but it can still cool [the water]". Success in surmounting difficulties.

No. 506 (I, 354)<sup>14</sup>

"He increased the sea by a pot[-ful]". Like flogging a dead horse. The sea is already "full", so the effort will make no difference.

vi.

جدوية small earthenware jug for cooling water, B 225 *gadwiyya*, *gdārwi* a small *gahle*, Reinhardt (1894:74 § 127) drinking jug

No. 1366 (III, 54)<sup>15</sup>

"The sister in law is a scorpion in the water cooling jug". This proverb reflects the general tendency to stigmatize in-laws.

vii.

جرّة<sup>16</sup> jar

(أ) التّأوّه تعيبٌ عليّ قدرٌ

(أ) جَحْلَه مشرومه وتبرّد!!

(ب) زاد البحر جَحْلَه

(أ) لخصيه ... معترب فجدويه

<sup>13</sup> A more elaborate version – with different utensils – has been collected by (a) Feghali (1938: No. 1185) and (b) Abela (1981-85: I, 285, No. 1119):

(أ) حات القدرة تعير المرغمة ونقلًا يا سودا يا مقرفة قالتلا انت تا تنظفي.

(ب) اجت القدرة تعير العفرقة وتقول لها: يا سودا يا مقرفة.

Cf. also al-'Ubūdi (1959:131, No. 355): الشبكه تعير العنخل.

<sup>14</sup> Brockett (1985:36, No. 15) has collected the following version of this proverb: *lē tziḍ il-bahr gahle* 'Don't increase the sea by a pot[-ful]'.  
 العمارة حمئة وبتت

<sup>15</sup> A proverb with the same purport is listed by Abela (1981-85: I, 353, No. 1398): *al-aqārib hum al-'aqārib* which is listed under the heading 'the mutual envy of relatives' by Ibn 'Abdrabbih (*Iqd* III, 43). This last proverb is found in a number of modern collections as well (e.g. 'Aṭā Allāh 1984:135).

<sup>16</sup> Henein lists six proverbs that contain the word *garra* (Henein 1992:53-54, potteries Nos. 70-71, proverbs nos. 103-108). From among these proverbs no. 106 is identical with our proverb. It is also contained in Taymūr's collection (1949: no. 2636).

No. 1763 (III, 186); J 258<sup>17</sup>

"Not every time is the jar saved". 'A pitcher goes often to the well but is broken at last'.

No. 2005 (III, 259)

See (28) below.

viii.

جوة<sup>18</sup> half of a coconut used for drinking water

No. 1798 (III, 199)

See (44) below.

ix.

خرس big earthenware jar; B 410 *bars* (*brūs*) an earthenware pot for storing *subh*, smaller than a *hill*; Reinhardt (1894:184 § 308) big water-jar

No. 1025 (II, 274)

"The [date-]jar is broken [only] if the [folden] mat is spread out".

No. 2324 (IV, 31)<sup>19</sup>

"A handful of pressed dates is missing from the jar". Disapproval of greed and envy. "That puts the lid on it!"

x.

دبة tin container, tank — B 463 *debbe* a plastic water-container holding at least a gallon

No. 231 (I, 183)<sup>20</sup>"Who can go down into /jump into/<sup>21</sup> a tank would not be stupefied by a grain".

xi.

دست a copper bowl, three to four feet in diameter, for preparing and serving *halwa*; B 499 *dest*<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Abela (1981-85: I, 261, No. 823) lists the following variant: *مض كل مرة يتسام الجرة*, and explains it as: 'Il ne faut pas trop tôt applaudir quelqu'un à qui les choses réussissent.' In a version given by Feghali (1938: No. 1184) we find: *الجرة ما يتزلش هالبيور كل ساعة ويتطالع سالمة*.

<sup>18</sup> In CA it means a jar, especially when black and coated with pitch.

<sup>19</sup> A proverb similar in content but different in wording has been collected by Abela (1981-85: I, 373, No. 1479): *ناقص الدست كرمونة*: 'Il ne manquait plus à la marmite qu'un pied de mouton'.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Reinhardt 1894:400, no. 26: *keme bū jorqot l habbe u jukfyh bi debbe* 'Wie derjenige, der ein Korn aufhebt und (dabei) ein Blechgefäß umstößt.'

<sup>21</sup> For the meaning of the root *q-h-m*, see Brockett 1985:176, No. 1277.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Henein 1992:59, No. 80 a vessel also made of copper, but quite different in use and shape: 'marmite: récipient destiné à la cuisson des aliments sur le réchaud; généralement en cuivre'. Nine proverbs contain this word according to Henein (1992:59-61).



No. 1170 (II, 338)

(١٨) كَمَا حَلَوَاهُ فَدَسْتُ

"Like [hot] *halwa* in the *dest*". Said of a person who moves or talks too much.

xii.

hand mill رحي

No. 1456 (III, 86)<sup>23</sup>

(١٩) اللّٰي تَحْتِ الرّٰحِي يُعْتَبِرُ عَلٰى تَجْرِ جَارِهَا

"What is under the mill has to bear patiently its work".

xiii.

knife سكين

No. 560 (II, 29)

(٢٠) السّٰكِنُ مَا تَاكَلُ إِلَّا مِنْ قُوَّةِ صَابِئِهَا

"A knife can only cut if its handle is strong".

Same as (60).

No. 723 (II, 111); J:169<sup>24</sup>

(٢١) ضِرْسِي سِكْنِي وَبَطْنِي مَخْضِي

"My tooth is my knife and my stomach is my store basket". Though this proverb is usually applied to one who possesses nothing, it also expresses the capability of a person to rely exclusively upon himself.

No. 1464 (III, 89)

(٢٢) اللّٰي تَخْمَعُ الْخَوْصَةَ مَا يَبْتَغَاكَ سِكْنِي

"What can be cut by a palm leaf does not need a knife". There is no need to exaggerate the difficulties when there are none.

xiv.

palm-leaf lid (diminutive from شت) شتيت B 808 *sett* "a conical, woven palm-leaf date-cover"

No. 614 (II, 57)

(٢٣) شَتِيْتُ أَخُو مَنِيَّتِرْ

"Š. is the brother of M.<sup>25</sup> / The date cover is just like the censer". 'Six of one and half a dozen of the other'.

Same as (42).

xv.

plate(s) صحن (صحنون)

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the Yemeni proverb من يده تحت الرحي ما جرهما (as-Saqqaf 1997:125, No. 403). This proverb, however, connecting the person to the utensil, expresses that if somebody feels himself/herself in danger, he/she would not further expose himself/herself.

On the *masdar* form *(i)gīrār*, common in Omani Arabic, see Rhodokanakis 1908-11: II, 154, § 54 (d) and Reinhardt 1894:256, § 400.

<sup>24</sup> The version given by Jayakar is somewhat different: ظرأه خصونه ويطنه محصونه. A proverb with the same meaning but different wording has been collected by Al Sudaīs (1993:59, No. 379): *sāhati rāhali*, *baṅni grābi*.

<sup>25</sup> Š. and M. can be interpreted as proper names.

No. 678 (II, 88)<sup>26</sup>

(٢٤) صَحُونُ فِلَيْبِيَّتْ وَتَبْتَقْرَطَعْ

"Plates in the [same] house and make noise by knocking against one another". This proverb entices people to live in harmony and mutual understanding, without quarrelling constantly.

No. 2243 (III, 330)

(٢٥) مِنَ الْهَرِيْسِ نَبِيغِي الصَّحْنِ

"From the *haris*<sup>27</sup> we [only] want the plate". Expresses resignation and the capability of renunciation.

xvi.

bread baking tool طوبنج

No. 766 (II, 132)<sup>29</sup>

(٢٦) الطُّوبَنْجُ إِذَا مَدَحْتَهُ حَرَقَ وَالسَّنُورُ إِذَا مَدَحْتَهُ سَرَقَ

"If you praise the *tūbağ* it will burn, and if you praise the cat it will steal". To blame somebody for not living up to expectations. An interesting feature of the Omani proverb is that in contrast to the other variants, it suggests that an inanimate object can 'behave' and that its behaviour can be affected by what is said to it. Other similar proverbs limit the observation to an animal, be it the cat or the dog.

xvii.

earthenware milk jug عيانة

No. 243 (I, 191)

(٢٧) الْبَيْتُ الَّذِي فِيهِ عَيَانَةٌ مَا تَلْحَقُهُ هَيَانَةٌ

"The house in which there is a milk jug will not be overtaken by contempt". The importance of keeping cattle.

xviii.

earthenware lid — B 1276 *qahf* "antique shards"; Reinhardt (1894:75 § 131)*qahf* (*qhāfe*) "fragments"; Harsūsī "coconut-shell", etc.No. 2005 (III, 259)<sup>31</sup>

(٢٨) الْمِشَارِكَةُ مَضْرُوءَةٌ .. وَلَوْ كَانَتْ قَعْفًا جَرَّةً

"The co-wife can be harmful even if she were as the lid of a jar", i.e. even if there is harmony between her and her husband.

<sup>26</sup> On the formation of a four-radical verb with *r*, i.e. *qarta'* from *qata'*, see Reinhardt 1894:254, § 396.

<sup>27</sup> Cooked meat and wheat pounded together.

<sup>28</sup> A word of Turkish origin, where *topaj* means, among others, 'round, globose' as an adjective, and 'a top' as a noun (cf. Redhouse 1884-90:1249).

<sup>29</sup> A proverb similar in meaning has been collected by Abela (1981-85: I, 12, No. 43): مدحنا القط حرقى. The same proverb has been collected by Al Sudaīs in the wording: *lā mdeh al-bess zagg hat-tehin* (1993:119, No. 782) where other corresponding proverbs are also cited.

<sup>30</sup> A variant of this word (*awn*) appears in the same meaning in J 278: من بغيت عونها برق في لونها. "If you want the milk a pot full, examine her [the cow's] state".

<sup>31</sup> Cf. in Abela's collection (1981-85: I, 393, No. 1564): الضرة ضرة ولو كانت دينة جرة, where *dayna* is the handle of a jar.



No. 2042 (III, 270)<sup>32</sup>

(٢٩) البتغبرة غطاما قحفا

"The date-fodder pot's cover is a crock". 'Like cup like cover'. This proverb on the one hand expresses harmony and congruity between things and implies that a person has found his/her equal. On the other hand, however, when referring to couples, this proverb most often has a pejorative undertone.

Same as (48).

This proverb and its variants seem to be the colloquial equivalents of the well-known and well-attested classical proverb: *wāfaqa šann tabaqa* (e.g. Maydāni, *Amṭāl* No. 4340). This proverb has been interpreted in different ways, since the original meaning of *šann* and *tabaqa* had already become obscure by the time of the explanations which are now extant. According to one interpretation to which a long story is connected (Maydāni, *Amṭāl* II, 423-424), Šann was a person famous for his wit who was looking for an equally intelligent bride until he found Tabaqa who won his heart by her wisdom. Irrespective of the given explanation, however, the classical proverb was always used in a positive sense, to describe harmony and congruity. It is, therefore, interesting to observe how the negative, pejorative sense has infiltrated into the meaning.

No. 2047 (III, 272)

(٣٠) منقطة الكوز .. قحفا

"The ewer's cover is a crock". Same as (35). It has the same meaning as (29) and can be considered its variant.

xix.

قِدْر pot

No. 176 (I, 155)<sup>33</sup>

(٣١) بو فلتقير ينطاعه الميغراف / الميغراف

"[Only] what is in the pot can be taken out by the spoon".

On the one hand, the above saying recommends the use of proper utensils in order not to leave anything in the pot, thereby implying the necessity to choose the most appropriate means in solving problems. On the other hand, it also implies that one can only express his own thoughts and feelings.

Same as (49, 54).

No. 256 (I, 200)

(٣٢) الثاوه ثعيب علقير

See (8) above.

No. 968 (II, 246)

(٣٣) القيدر ما يتركب إلا على تاشيتين / ثلاث ثواي

See (4) above, and cf. also (14) above.

<sup>32</sup> A similar proverb to this and the next one has been collected by Feghali (1938: No. 1200) and Abela (1981-85: I, 22, No. 82): قدرة ولعت/ولغت غطاما. The version collected by Al Sudaīs (1993:39, No. 264) is: *heggen wāfaq tbuguh*, where *heqq* (*huqq*) means 'a little tin'.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. in Abela's collection (1981-85: I, 45, No. 178): ما يطلع بالمغرفة إلا من الحلة/القدرة. The different grammatical construction of the proverb, especially the use of the exceptive particle *illā*, resulted in a shift in the meaning, which led Abela to evoke the somewhat similar Biblical passage: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Mt. 12.34). Cf. also: *mā bal-bir yaddih al-megrāf* (Al Sudaīs 1993:123, No. 819). And cf. also the classical proverb: *kull inā' yarsāh bimā fihī* (al-Maydāni, *Amṭāl* No. 3159).

xx.

(٣٤) أنا شاييف منسقط وكيتاشها ما مستتقرب من دار سبت وكيرانها  
earthen ewer, an earthenware container to store and cool water in it for domestic use<sup>34</sup>

No. 95 (I, 102); J 25

(٣٤) أنا شاييف منسقط وكيتاشها ما مستتقرب من دار سبت وكيرانها

"I have seen Muscat and its forts, so I am not amazed by (the village of) Dar Sayt and its earthen ewers"<sup>35</sup>.

No. 2047 (III, 272)

(٣٥) منقطة الكوز .. قحفا

See (30) above.

No. 2348 (IV, 44)

(٣٦) نستيقك من كوز بارد

"We give you a drink from a cold earthen ewer".

No. 2349 (IV, 44)

(٣٧) نستيقك من كوز خلي

"We give you a drink from an empty (!) earthen ewer".

No. 2630 (IV, 172)

(٣٨) يستيقك من كوز بارد

"He gives you a drink from a cold earthen ewer".

No. 2631 (IV, 172)

(٣٩) يستيقك من كوز خلي

"He gives you a drink from an empty (!) earthen ewer".

The above four proverbs express disapproval of postponement and delay.

xxi.

ماعون utensil; vessel<sup>36</sup>

No. 1860 (III, 218)

(٤٠) ما يفتي عنثره من الماعون

"He does not give a drink from the vessel". The description of a miser.

No. 2523 (IV, 123)<sup>37</sup>

(٤١) ياكل في الماعون ويخري فيه

"He eats in the vessel and fouls it". 'It's an ill bird that fouls its own nest.'

xxii.

مجيمر<sup>38</sup> (earthenware) censer

No. 614 (II, 57)

(٤٢) شتيت أخو مجيمر

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Landberg (1901-13: I, 706): *kūz*, pl. *kuwāz* 'gargoulette'. For the explanation of the word and a Yemeni proverb in which it is used, see al-Akwa' (1984: II, 1054, No. 4480): *mā fi ḡahannam kūz bārd*.

<sup>35</sup> In Jayakar's version: أنا شاييف عنثك وكيتاشها ما استعجب من دار سبت وكيرانها

<sup>36</sup> Henein (1992:66, Nos. 141-144) cites other proverbs containing this word.

<sup>37</sup> A similar proverb is attested by Landberg (1883:50, No. xxix): أكل الهدية وخري في الزبدية. Though it is said to be generally applied to an ungrateful person, Landberg (1883:51) mentions that he knows of incidents when the action to which the proverb refers to was carried out literally. A proverb – less rude, but similar in meaning – has been collected by Abela (1981-85: I, 262, No. 1016): ياكل الهدية وينكسر الزبدية. Other dialectal variants are also known. Cf. also the saying attributed to 'Abdallāh ibn az-Zubayr: *akaltum lamri wa'asaytum amri* (Maydāni, *Amṭāl* I, 115, No. 399).

<sup>38</sup> A diminutive from *miḡmar(a)*.



See (23) above.

xxiii.

big cooking kettle, cauldron made of copper

No. 968 (II, 246)

Variant of (4).

No. 1797 (III, 198)

"He does not put his cauldron on a *sdis*<sup>39</sup> bowl".

No. 1798 (III, 199)

"We do not put our cauldron on a coconut cup."

These last two proverbs describe, on the one hand, the impossibility of securing something if its foundation is unstable. While on the other hand, they assert that no such foolishness has been committed.

No. 2663 (IV, 182)

"It boils like the cauldron".

xxiv.

baking/frying place<sup>40</sup>

No. 2544 (IV, 134)

"The baking place is being prepared but the billy goat is still in the mountains". Expresses disapproval of unthoughtful behaviour.

xxv.

fodder and the earthenware vessel in which it is made<sup>41</sup>

No. 2042 (III, 270)

See (29) above.

xxvi.

ladle<sup>42</sup>

No. 176 (I, 155)

See (31) above.

<sup>39</sup> *Sdis* (*suds*) is an Omani unit of capacity for measuring dry commodities. It is a subdivision of the *mikyāl*, and is equivalent approximately to one litre. According to Donaldson (1993:90) "the *mikyāl* of al-Khābūrah and the *mikyāl* of 'Ibrī, and also their subdivisions, took the physical form of carved wooden bowls". For further explanation on this appellation, see Donaldson 1993:107, fn 27. Reinhardt (1894:406; No. 90) has also collected a proverb containing this unit of capacity.

<sup>40</sup> A fireplace made of a few stones where the slaughtered animals are fried.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. B 1150 *gubār* "a fodder" given to livestock on the coast, mainly composed of banana-leaves, date-stones, burnt *kereb*, etc.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Landberg 1901-13: I, 670 'recueillir un liquide avec une cuiller ou un ustensile creux': *mugraf* 'gobelet'; *magrafa* 'pelle'.

No. 2043 (III, 370)

"My ladle ... and that of G." Expresses disapproval of greed.

No. 2446 (IV, 92)

"The face is the ladle of the heart".

Somewhat similar in meaning to (48).

xxvii.

measure<sup>44</sup>

No. 2633 (IV, 173)

"He measures /makes a measure for/ the dates of inferior quality". Exaggeration; mockery of those who devote special attention to trivial things.

No. 1812 (III, 202)

"We are not making a sieve for the straw, nor a measure for barley". Used to express indifference or even contempt.

Same as (58).

xxviii.

flat spoon, used especially for rice

No. 176 (I, 155)

See (31, 49) above.

xxix.

sieve — B 1679 *mohal* [*sic!*]; Reinhardt (1894:50, § 61) and Jayakar (1889:867) *mōhal*

No. 167 (I, 148); J 58<sup>45</sup>

"A she-camel which carries a whole load is not overcome by [the weight of a] sieve". A person accustomed to great responsibilities will not be overburdened by a little more.

No. 363 (I, 264)<sup>46</sup>

"The truth cannot be hidden with a sieve". It is also similar in meaning to the next proverb.

<sup>43</sup> Diminutive of *Gubša*, a woman's name.

<sup>44</sup> According to Donaldson (1993:89-91), *mikyāl* is the name of a wooden bowl by which grains and other dry commodities are measured out. It has been used in Oman with at least two standards, that of al-*Hābūra* and 'Ibrī.

<sup>45</sup> Proverbs similar in meaning but not in wording have been collected e.g. by Al Sudai's (1993:16, No. 103) and Feghali (1938: No. 540).

<sup>46</sup> A proverb similar in meaning but different in form has been collected by Landberg (1883:199, No. cviii): 'النبي ما يشوف من طارة الغريمال يكون أعمى'.



No. 641 (II, 68)<sup>47</sup>

“The sun cannot be covered (hidden) with a sieve”. Expresses inappropriateness of things and impossibility of action.

No. 1812 (III, 202)

See (53) above.

xxx.

میزان balance

No. 2590 (IV, 155)<sup>48</sup>

“The hand of a free” [i.e. free to attend to his business, not preoccupied by something else] man is a balance”. A good merchant – who pays attention to what he is doing – can give you the weight you wanted by measuring the goods only with his hand.

xxxii.

نصاب handle of knife

No. 560 (II, 29)

See (20) above.

xxxiii.

وعاء (وعيان) container, household effects, things — B 1712 wa‘ā<sup>50</sup>

No. 1975 (III, 251)

“The woman is a container”. Referring to the essential feminine roles of being pregnant and giving birth.

No. 142 (I, 133)<sup>51</sup>

“Iblis does not break his containers”. A man, whatever damage he makes, would not harm himself or his own property.

<sup>47</sup> The same proverb has also been collected in the Nağd by Al Sudāis (1993:65, No. 420): *aš-šams ma yğatryha al-menħul*. The word ‘sieve’ has also been collected in the form *minħal* in Oman (B 1679 *minħal*); cf. also Landberg (1901-13: I, 721): *munħul, manħala*. An Omani variant of this proverb is J 133: *السما السما*. “The sky cannot be hidden with a sieve”. A Syrian variant, with no reference to an utensil, is: *عين الشمس ما بتختطى* (Feghali 1938: No. 1327).

<sup>48</sup> Exactly the same proverb has been collected by Landberg (1883:57, No. xxxiv) in Syria. An Egyptian variant according to Spitta (1880:513, No. 260) is: *‘en el-burra myzan*. A Yemeni variant of this proverb in al-Akwa’s collection (1984: II, 1377, No. 6154) is: *بيدك ميزانك*.

<sup>49</sup> For the use *hurr* in this sense, cf. e.g. the Libyan proverb: *الحرة أول ما تزرع حوشها* which has the following variant (Mugniya 1994:93): *الفالحة أول ما تزرع بيتها*.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Henein 1992:15, pottery No. 9: *wa‘āya* ‘plat de cuisson’ where two proverbs are cited, but neither of them is similar to our proverbs.

<sup>51</sup> This proverb seems to be a variant of the post-classical Arabic proverb: *aš-šaytan la yuħarrību kar-mahu* (Maydāni, *Amtāl* I, 492, also listed by Ya‘qub 1995: IV, 250). A Yemeni variant collected by al-Akwa‘ (1984: I, 38, No. 41) is: *ابليس ما يخرّب ديشته*, where *dayma* means ‘kitchen’. Tāhā (1999: No. 49) has collected variants from Syria, Egypt and Iraq: *ابليس ما يخرّب بيته؛ ابليس ما يخرّب بيتها؛ ابليس ما يخرّب بيتك*.

Summing up, it can be established that a wide variety of information can be gathered from the proverbs that refer to potteries and kitchen utensils. We get to know these utensils, their appellations, what they are used for (e.g. 34-39) and how they should be used (e.g. 4).

The concrete observation of the use or misuse of these artefacts gave birth to the proverbs, which, on their turn, often became used in a more general sense. As can be seen from the above proverbs, whatever be the observation, the proverb is used to assess people’s good or bad traits, and their behaviour. On the level of family life and relatives, we get a glimpse, for example, of the complications arising from the existence of co-wives (28), of the general pejorative view concerning in-laws (11). We also get to know some of the values within Omani society (e.g. 27). The everyday life of Omani people becomes apparent from these proverbs which absorbed the utensils. The proverbs, naturally, are also relevant from the point of view of the study of the Omani Arabic dialect. Apart from a few notes, however, the linguistic analysis of the proverbs should be the object of future research. The rapid disappearance of traditional crafts also highlights the importance of the preservation and study of these proverbs which preserve the names and functions of utensils that might soon fall into disuse.

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# سيدي الأربعين - أبو كل أولياء الله الصالحين - أوزوريس

صابر العادلي

بويايست

دراسة في التوفيق الديني العقائدي، فرضيتها الرئيسية أن "سيدي الأربعين" الولي الذي تنتشر أضرحة ومزاراته في كل ربوع مصر والذي خرج من عيائه سائر الأولياء المنتشرين في كل ممالك الإسلام، ما هو إلا المعبود المصري "أوزوريس" الإله الذي كان رمزاً لكل ما هو خير وطيب. والمتوحد في النيل ومن علم المصريين الزراعة والحصاد وقادهم من الهمجية إلى التمدن وعلّمهم الموسيقى والغناء ومن وهب وهو ميت إيزيس ابنهما "حورس" الإله المنتقم من عمه إله الشر "سخت" لاغتiale أبيه. وهو "رب الخلود" و"سيد الآخرة" و"كبير القضاة" في قاعة العدالة "معات". يعد أن خصب أرض مصر بأشلاء جسده الإلهي. وتسمى الدراسة في أثر أوزوريس محاولة تقصي التحولات التي طرأت على الأسطورة لتصبح ممارسات. وكيف توسلت بالفولكلور لتأمين سيرورتها ولتصبح في النهاية جزءاً من التركيب "الجيني" الذهني والروحي للمصريين.

من ظاهر اللقب يبدو تفرد صاحبه. فهو ليس باسم علم "أحمد البندوي" مثلاً. وليس منسوباً إلى كرامة: "الطيار". وليس بولي فئة بعينها ولا راعيها "أبو الحجاج" وليس صفة "العريان" ولي مصر المثيقة، والذي أصبح "سيدي محمد العريان" بتأثير إسلامي. وإذا أخذنا بظاهر التسمية فإن ولينا، ولابد يحتل مكاناً في جماعة لا يقل عدد أفرادها عن أربعين. ولكننا نود هنا أن نؤكد على أهمية أن تبقى في الذاكرة أن التسمية الأصلية - حسب افتراضنا هي "سيد الأربعين" أي مضاف ومضاف إليه. وأنها - التسمية - كانت تدل على رئيس جماعة أو هيئة أو مجلس مكون من أربعين عضواً. وإنها حرفت مع الزمان إلى "سيدي الأربعين". إن هذا التحريف ولابد قد وقع تكريجاً عندما بدت اللغة العربية تزيج اللغة القبطية من دوائر الخطاب اليومي والإداري إلى ساحات الكنائس في القرن الثامن عشر. ومهما يكن الأمر فإننا إزاء قضية معقدة من محورين يرتبطان برقم "أربعين". وأنه لابد لنا من تقصي مغزى الرقم ودلالاته. وبون الخوض في مفازة الأرقام، فما من رقم إلا وأضفى عليه العامة والخاصة الكثير، على أن رقم "أربعين" يحظى بمكانة عظيمة حقاً فأحمد أمين يرى أن "الأربعين: كناية عن الكثرة" وليس المقصود بها العدد المحصور. وأنهم يدعون أنه "أربعين" لأن له أربعين مقبرة. وهو بذلك يعني الأضرحة المنتشرة في الوجه البحري من مصر خاصة والمنسوبة لـ"سيدي الأربعين". ويضيف "أنه إذا وجد صادف البيت أن الناس يتول في الركن أو في حارته ادعى أن في هذا المكان "سيدي" وبني حوانط" (أمين: القاموس 241).

وهذا يدل على أن هناك توجه جمعي لدى الناس لتوقير واحترام كل ما له صلة بالولي "الأربعين"، فضلاً عن السهولة المدهشة التي يظهر بها ولي - ضريح ولي - على وجه الدقة. وهذا ما يدفع إلى الظن في وجود تقاليد سائلة، تستند الممارسة عليها. أي تشييد بناء والقول بأنه مدفون لولي.

ولمنا بحاجة هنا للتوكيد على الدور البالغ الذي يلعبه رقم "أربعين" في مفاهيم المصريين عامة، ولن نورد هنا ثبثاً بالمراسيم والطقوس المرتبطة بانقضاء أربعين يوماً على وقوع حادث ذي مغزى في حياة الفرد. كتصعيد الأطفال، وذهاب الزوجة لزيارة أهلها لأول مرة، وانقضاء فترة النفاس، "وكمل له أربعين يوماً لأنه هكذا تكمل أيام المحنطين وبكى عليه المصريون سبعين يوماً" (سفر التكوين 50-3 الخ).

على أن أهم المراسيم حقاً هي: انقضاء أربعين يوماً على الوفاة، تحديداً حول "جمعة الأربعين". وهي الممارسة التي لا يهملها مصري أيا كان وصفحة الوفيات في أية جريدة مصرية، "الأهرام" خاصة، فهي برهان ووثيقة. حيث تحتل أخبار الاحتمال بـ"الأربعين" حيزاً قد يفوق أخبار "التمني" مساحة واهتماماً ويثور السؤال لماذا؟ وإذا صح جوابنا، أخذين بعين الاعتبار كل ما أوردناه، فإن فرضيتنا تصبح مسلمة.



إن المدخل إلى فهم ظاهرة الأولياء - برأينا - مرتبط أشد الارتباط بفهم الديانة المصرية القديمة. ولابد من الأخذ في الاعتبار بأمرين على قدر كبير من الخطورة، أولهما كيفية نشأة الإله وسطوح نجمه في المصور قبل التاريخية، وثانيهما: ضرورة مقتل الفرعون - الإله ودفن بعض أشلائه في الأرض تأميناً لخصوبتها.

في البداية كانت مصر عبارة عن ولايات صغيرة منفصلة، وكان لكل ولاية زعيم وإله معبود في صورة حيوان وكان نفوذ هذا المعبود أو المعبودة مطلقاً ولكنه لا يتجاوز نطاق ولايته قط. وقد كان هذا هو توحيد هذا الزمان. وكان النصر أو الهزيمة في الصراع مع الولايات المجاورة ينسحب على المعبود وحده. وإذا انتمجت الولايات - بمرور الزمان - سلمياً اندمجت الآلهة هي الأخرى مكونة عائلات، حسب جنسها ونسبها. وإذا انهزم الإله بانتهزام شعبه، صار مخوفاً وانحط شأنه (مري 208-209). ومن ناحية أخرى كان الملك - الفرعون يضطلع بأجل المهام خطورة: أمن قومه وعيبتهم، لذا ولا عجب، وحده بالإله، وتمتع بسلطان إلهي بعقيدة حلول روح الإله به وبصبح هو القوة الواهية للحياة. وبالطبع تنطوي هذه العقيدة على ازدواجية، فالملك رجل يتحرك ولكنه يحوز الروح الإلهية المانحة للخصوبة. والروح هي الأخرى، مثلها مثل الجسد يعترتها الوهن والشيوخة. وما دام الملك - الإله شاباً وكذا روحه فهو قادر على الوفاء باحتياجات قومه والروح رهينة بما يعترى الجسد، فإن هلك هلكت معه، وبهلاكتها يهلك العالم، ومن ثم كان لا بد من تجنب ذلك المصير بتأمين سلامة الروح الإلهية ونقلها إلى جسد شاب موفور العافية والصحة. ولا يكون ذلك إلا باستيقاق موت الملك الواهن بقتله وقبل أن تشيخ الروح أو تموت. ولابد أن يجري قتل الإله بكل مظاهر الاحترام والتقدير. ولسنا بحاجة إلى القول بأنه ومع مرور الزمان جرى خرق هذه المراسم بقتل بديل يتولى قبل مقتله بزمان قصير السلطة ويلقى هو الآخر مصيره بكل مظاهر الإجلال المرعية عند مقتل ملك إلهي. وتشير كل التقارير المتاحة إلى أن كل الأطراف المعنية قد اضطلعت بدورها دون تملص. وكان مقتل الإله - الملك يتم بطرق ثلاثة: بالنذح إذا كان إهراق الدم على الأرض هو سبيل الخصوبة. ثانياً بالحرق إذا كان نثر الرماد على الحقول هو السبيل إلى ذلك. ثالثاً بالخنق شقاً أو إغراقاً ويقطع الجسد وينثر أشلاءه في أنحاء البلاد (فريزر 349، مري 228-225). وهذا هو بيت القصيد، ويرهان صحة فرضيتنا.

مقتل أوزوريس (خنقاً) ونثر أشلائه في أرض مصر (دفنها): كما سبق في استهلالنا، فإن مكانة أوزوريس تكمن في كونه الإله الخير المتوحد بالنيل، والذي يدين له المصريون بكل ما أحرزوا من رخاء ورفاهية. وهو من علمهم استزراع الحنطة فأخرجهم من البربرية ومنعهم من أكل لحوم البشر وابتكر لهم الأبجدية وسن لهم الشرائع وقهر الأعداء. وأسس المدنية، علمهم الفنون والرقص والغناء. وحسب الفلسفة "الأهورية" نسبة إلى بوهميروس - والتي تصور الأساطير القديمة على أنها أحداث تاريخية قديمة، وأن الآلهة كانت أصلاً بشراً تفوقوا بأعمالهم على العاديين من الناس فأهوبهم بعد موتهم وعبدوهم. وبهذه الطريقة أمكن إنفاذ عدد كبير من الآلهة الوثنية الأولى الذين تحولوا إلى أولياء وأبطال وقديسين. ومن هنا كان التصور أن أوزوريس كان إليها وفرعون في نفس الوقت. وحسب ثوتارخوس - مرجعنا الرئيسي - فإن "ست" الشرير، شقيق أوزوريس لما رأى من منزلة أخيه في قلوب الناس ومنغوعاً بحقه، يقوم بتدبير المكيدة الشهيرة، بإعداد سحارة نفيسة "تابوت" ويطن في حفل إلهي أنها - السحارة - من نصيب من تتفق وقده - وكان قد فصلها على مفاص أوزوريس - الذي عندما جاء دوره لتجريب السحارة قام المتآمرون بإغلاقها عليه وإحكام سدها بالرصاص وإلقائها في النيل [إنه موت الإله خنقاً] وحسب الأصول. إن المتوحد بالنيل يعود إليه. ولا يبقى إلا تقطيع جثمان الإله ثم دفن أشلائه في أرض مصر. وحسب الأسطورة فإن ذلك لا يجري فوراً، فالسحارة تأخذ طريقها إلى البحر عبر أحد أفرع النيل وتستقر على شاطئ "بيبولس" مرتكنة إلى جنر شجرة هائلة من الأكل أو السرخس وتتوحد السحارة بالشجرة. ويعجب ملك المدينة بالشجرة فيأمر بقطعها لتصبح عمود قصره. إن هذا الجزء من الأسطورة يبدو غريباً ولكنه ليس - برأينا - حشواً وربما أضيف ليؤكد على ذبوع عبادة أوزوريس في المنطقة كلها وليفسح المجال لدور إيزيس الشقيقة المحبة والزوجة المخلصة، إعلاء قيم جديدة كانت ولابد قد بدأت تتأصل في المجتمع المصري وقتها، حب الأخت ووفاء الزوجة. ومن المثير حقاً أنه وبعد تمييز المصريين لمقائدهم الدينية وتحولهم إلى الإسلام وأكثر من ألف عام فإن المصريات يدعين المقربين من الرجال "يا ميبسي يا خويا" ولم يكن هذا يثير امتعاض أحد ولا دهشته. ويبدو وكأن المصريات بهذا النداء كن يستدعين - غير واعيات - ذكرى إيزيس المتلذذة وهي تقتش عن جثمان شقيقها. كما وتهتف المصريات عند الشدة "يا خويا". وإن كن

محرومات من الأخ. وفي الستينات من القرن الماضي كانت الأغنية الأشهر في مصر والعالم العربي هي "يا حبيبي يا خويا يا ابن أمي وأبوي" - "فايزة أحمد" ورغم مضي أربعين عاماً على وفاة المغنية فما زالت الأغنية تثير عواطف الناس. إن الأسطورة الأوزوريسية وحداد إيزيس قد ضمتا بقاء وسيرورة لا نظير لهما في حداد الأخت المصرية لأخيها، والذي لا مثيل له عند أي من الشعوب عتوانا وحدة، والوصف الذي أوردته (بلاكمان 101-103) عن حداد فتاة قبطية - الأمر الذي يفرض له القلب حقاً - ليصور وبعين حق - (أوزوريس) أحر اليكاه حتى قيل أن النيل قد فاض بدمعها. وتحولت "عت" (اسم إيزيس في المصرية) أخاها "أوسير" (أوزوريس) أحر اليكاه حتى قيل أن النيل قد فاض بدمعها. وتحولت "عت" ومعها أختها "كتيس" إلى ندابتين وهكذا ظهر تقليد استخدام الندابات عند الحداد (مهران 412) وإذا كنا بصدد الندابات المحترفات، فإننا لا نعلم المرثي التي - برأينا - تحتفظ من ذكريات الأسطورة الأوزوريسية الكثير.

يا خويا يا ابن أمي وأبوي يا زرار توبي يا قمع سكر أحلي به ريقى (جمع المؤلف 1960) وجمال النص يكمن في إيجازه البليغ ومجازه المعبر، فزر الثوب رمز للأمن والحماية والعصمة وأخيراً الستر وقمع السكر رمز لكل ما هو عذب وحلو ناهيك عن تشخيص العلاقة: يا ابن أبي وأمي. ثم حالفني الحظ فسجلت في 1970 من محافظة البحيرة أغنية العمل الآتية:

يا ملاجيني يا خويا الا الحر كاويني كوى وكاوى

وخلى دمعتي شجه وحتى الحزام الذهب ميل على الشجه

والنص أبلغ من أي تعليق، وكانت الموديت صبايا يقمن بجمع لطع دود القطن. أنه التوسل بالأخ (الأسطوري أوزوريس) وهو رب الحصاد أن يهل فقد دمعته العين وارتنى الحزام (رمز المكابدة) رمز مناعتها ودلالها في أن ثم ما لبثت الموديت أن تحولن إلى النص التالي:

أسمر عليلي أه لو أطوله أه لو أطوله أسأل على تربته اتمد أنا في طوله

يجي الملايكة يسألوه أرد أنا مسؤلوه

والعليل هنا هو أوزوريس الميت مجهول القبر (السحارة التي اتخذت طريقها إلى شاطئ فيزيقا) ثم في الأخير تتوحد الأخت في جثمان أخيها الميت وهو الواقعة الأسطورية في المشهد الثاني من أسطورة أوزوريس وإيزيس والتي لم يدونها بلوتارخ فحسب بل وجسدها الذبح المصري الفرعوني في التمثال الفريد الذي يمثل أوزوريس ممثلاً على محفة (ميتاً) وإيزيس تعانقه وهي في شكل طائر (من أبيدوس) (مهران 412).

والمشهد الثاني من الأسطورة هو رحلة الأخت الوفية، الزوجة المخلصة باحثة عن زوجها وهي لا تتي تلحف السؤال عن وجهة السحارة. عبثاً ولا يأتيها جواب إلا من أطفال يلعبون. وتلقى هذه الواقعة مكانها وتقع في الوجدان المصري. وتصبح قدرة الأطفال على التنبؤ مضرباً للأمثال "خدوا فالكم من عيالكم" (تيمور 1145) بل أن بلوتارخ نفسه قد أورد ما لاحظته من إيمان المصريين بقدرة الأطفال هذه.

وتحتال إيزيس لتحصل على العمود الذي يضم جثمان أوزوريس - لقاء عنايتها باين الملك - وتعود به إلى مصر ولقد أصبح هذا العمود وما زال حتى يومنا هذا المعادل الموضوعي للخصوبة "الذكر" فحسب إحدى التوثيحات فإن العمود إياه إنما ضم "قصب" أوزوريس" وهو نفسه ما يطلق عليه اليوم "عمود السواري" الذي ينتصب قائماً عند الاحتفال بمولد الولي (نظير 159). ومن العجيب اعتقاد العامة أن ساري السيد البدوي يخفي للنبى عند زيارته لمقام السيد بمناسبة مولده (عبده 1995).

العمود: هناك طقس سحري يجري بعد إغلاق الباب على العروس والعريس - كنت بنفسى شاهداً - وحل الصمت المتوتر، وأقلعت النسوة عن الزغاريد والأطفال عن الزياط، وساد الترقب المتوجس. إنها لحظة تأمين الخصوبة. وأفسح الطريق لكوكبة من لدات العريس، حاملة على أعناقها عمود خشب هائل عتيق، أقرب إلى عمود التلفون. وانتصب العمود على صدور الفتية قائماً. وراح هؤلاء يدقون به عتية المنظرة في إيقاع منتظم لا تحوز العاطفة المتأججة، ولا الاستفراق (هيا هوب يا عريسا دب) ولم يلبث شبك المنظرة اليتيم أن انفرج عن رقعة من شاش أبيض مخضبة بآيات عفة العروس وتلفقتها أيدي أخوتها ليطلقوا بها في مظاهرة صغيرة في القرية صانحين شرفنا عالي شرفنا مصور شرفنا هلال منور". ثم أودع العمود الجرن من جديد حتى كان مولد "سیدی الأربعين"



وثمة إفادة على قدر كبير من الخطورة لم تلق بعد القدر الكافي من اهتمام علماء المصريات أي كانت جنسيتهم، وقد أوردتها "المقريري" في الخطط: "ويزعمون أن النيل بمصر لا يزيد في كل سنة حتى يلقي فيه النصارى تابوتا من خشب فيه إصبع من أصابع أسلافهم الموتى. ويكون ذلك اليوم عيداً ترحل إليه النصارى من جميع القرى، ويركبون فيه الخيل، ويلعبون عليها. ويخرج عامة أهل القاهرة ومصر على اختلاف طبقاتهم وينصبون الخيم على شطوط النيل وفي الجزائر ولا يبقى مغن ولا مغنية ولا صاحب لهو ولا رب ملعوب ولا بغي ولا مخنت ولا ماجن ولا خليع ولا فاتك ولا فاسق إلا ويخرج لهذا العي" (المقريري الخطط 69).

والنص وثيقة خطيرة الشأن حقا في مجال الأنثروبولوجيا (الدينية) وعلم الأساطير. فما نحن نرى كيف تحولت الأسطورة الأوزورية إلى ممارسات وشعائر. وهام المصربون وحتى بعد سبعينات وخمسين سنة من دخول الإسلام كانوا يحيون ذكرى معبودهم الخير بإعادة تمثيل الأسطورة (مقتل الإله خنفا) بوضع رفات قبطي، ربما مومياء (رمزا لجسد أوزير) في تابوت (سحارة) وإلقائه في النيل. وكان ذلك في عيدتهم شرط استمرار جريانه أي تأمين خصوبة الوادي وكل مصر. وأن إعادة تمثيل هذا المشهد واكبه احتفالات خصوبة، ما كان للمقريري ابن زمانه أن يتفهم كتبها فأدانها من منظور أخلاقي. ولنا في إفادة "لين" (260) عن طقس الخصوبة عند "مغسل السلطان" بالقلعة شاهدا. ذلك أن المحكوم عليهم بضرب أعناقهم كانوا يغسلون علي منضدة حجرية هناك، إلى الجنوب من ساحة الرميطة. وكان ماء غسلهم الملوث بدمائهم يتجمع في حوض تحت المنضدة. وكان على الراعبات في الحمل، المحرومات منه أن يخطون جثة المدمم سبع مرات صامعات ليصبحن حبالى. والمثير حقا أنه بعد التحول إلى الإعدام بالشق فإن عنبر التشريح في مستشفى القصر العيني العنيد في القاهرة تحول إلى مسرح لطقس الخصوبة هذا. وانتهى الأمر الآن بالراعبات في الحمل والمحرومات منه إلى الاكتفاء بتعليق عقلة إصبع من رفات قبطي في الرقبة (قارن بلاكمان 87). وقصارى القول أن بقايا ذكرى مقتل الإله أوسير - رمز الخصوبة - ونثر أشلائه ونقنها تأمينا للخصوبة جعل المصربون يقاربون بين ذكرى ميتة أوزوريس العنيفة، وميتة هؤلاء المضروبة أعناقهم ذلك أن المضروبة أعناقهم قد أصبوا أوزوروسيين وأن موتهم البشع هذا كان يستدعي في أنفس المصربين ذكرى مقتل المعبود الطيب (سحر تشاكلي). وأصبح أي جزء من رفات قبطي مصري علما عليه، أي أوزوريس - معادلا موضوعيا.

ولا نتعد أن هناك قالبا أنسب من المرثي (العديد) للتعبير عن المأساة الإلهية - البشرية التي نحن بمشهدها. ونماذجي الواردة هنا لا أزعم بخلوها من المثالب في ظل ظروف المادة المتاحة والتي لا تعدو كونها عينة فحسب (أرشيف المركز التابع لأكاديمية الفنون - مصر) أو النذر اليسير في شتات المنشورات. ولا يخامرني أدنى شك في أن النص التالي هو أجمل ما خلد فولكلورنا من ذكرى أوسير. فيما لا يربو على الثلاثين كلمة يجسد النص في بلاغة نادرة الأصل الإلهي لأوسير ثم تبوئه العرش إله زرع وضرع وخصوبة فنديه من قبيل شقيقته ايزه (إيزيس) أو عست ونفتيس أحدهما تعنيه شفاهة والأخرى بالمرثي المدونة. وأول من جمع هذا النص هو المرحوم عدلي إبراهيم الباحث بمركز الفنون الشعبية.

يا شيخ يا ابن الشيخ	على الكرسي أعد	(يا ذا الأصل الإلهي على العرش استوى) قعد
يا داود الدهشان	ما بعدك ولد	(ليس هناك من يضاهيك مكانة)
يا أيله أولي	عليه بالحلا	(يا قائلة - المعدة. في حلقة العزاء) - قولني انديبه
يا آرية خط القام	بالورقة	(يا قارئة ما خط القلم على الورق) القدر
مات والمنشآت	في ايده	(صولجان أوسير عادة الوجهاء من حمل المنشآت)
والبقر يتعمي	عليه	(حتى الأبقار نعته - إله الخصوبة - الضرع)
يا ما كربل	يا ما غربل	(لكم ندف القطن وضربه وغربل - إله زرع)
يا هال التتن	عليه	(لكم انهالت عليه أكوام التتن - إله حصاد)

ولا حاجة بشرح أو تأويل فالنص أفصح وما هو إلا توصيف للصورة التي يظهر بها أوسير على عرشه في قاعة العدالة (معات). ويكتمل نصنا هذا حقا بالنص التالي  
خلوا الكبير في مقعده نايم لحن يتم الشور عليه دايم (دعوه على عرشه فلا غنى لنا عن مشورته)

فانتصّب، العمود من جديد لأسبوع كامل في الساحة التي يطل عليها المسجد الذي يحمل نفس الاسم. والعمود في حالتنا الأولى كان العنصر الرئيسي في ممارسة سحرية تشاكلية مؤمنة للخصوبة تقوم على محاكاة الفعل الجنسي العمود فيها تمزيق أوزوريس" وحلق باب المنظرة هو فرج العروس ومن أسماء القضيب في العربية جدر، نقاق. وهذا ما لم يظن إليه فريرز (500-501) عند تنفيذ فرضيته عن أوزوريس كروح شجر وإله خصوبة وموتى. فالعمود يلعب دورا بارزا في مرثي أرباب العائلات وشيوخها. واعين بأنه قد يكون مجرد كناية عن دعامة البيت:

يا عمود بيتي والعمود هدوه يا هل ترى في بيت مين نصيوة

يا عمود بيتي والعمود رخام يا هل ترى في بيت مين انقام

(مرسي 73) من المنيد المصري الذائع مرثي رب العائلة.

المشهد الثالث: تمود ايزيس بجثمان أخيها - زوجها - وتتركه في أحراش الدلتا وتذهب لإرضاع ابنهما "حورس". فيما يطارد "ست" إله الشز خنزيرا برياً في ليلة قمرية، فيعثر على التابوت الذي يضم رفات أخيه فيمزقه إربا (أشلاء) اثنين وأربعين شولا (بعدد مقاطعات مصر وقتها) أو أربعين تسهلا وتقريباً. وفي تنويعه أخرى أربعة عشر شولا. ويفرقها على أرض مصر. وهنا تتفرع الأسطورة فرعين، يؤدي كل منهما وظيفة لا غنى عنها. الأولى إخصاب الأرض بدفن أجزاء من جسد الإله - الفرعون فيها (الأرض) ومراجعتها بهذا الخصوص جد كافية وقاطعة. فبردية اللوفر رقم (3079) تضم سجلا بأماكن دفن رفات أوزوريس (الرأس والعمود الفقري والساقين الخ). وطبقا لنقش معبد دندره فإن العمود الفقري مدفون في بوسير، والرأس في ممفيس، والقلب في أتريس، والرقبة في سينو ومن ناحية أخرى تعرف قلعة أفاريس في نصوص أحسن بن "أبانا" تحت اسم "جت وعرت" (بيت الساق) وقد أشتق اسمها كما يقول مانيتون من [فكرة دينية] قد تكون محراباً دينياً عبدت فيه إحدى مخلقات أوزوريس وكانت تقع في المكان المعروف حالياً باسم "تل اليهودية" (مري 74). وبرأينا أن هذا هو أصل ظهور المدافن المزعومة والأضرحة المنسوبة إلى ولي بعينها المتواجدة في أماكن شتى. ومن حقا أن نفترض أنه في إيان العهد القبطي كان من ألقاب أوزوريس "تو الأربعين محراباً" أو ضريحاً أو مدفناً. ومع التحول إلى الإسلام جرى على اللقب تحريف وقصور ليصبح "سيدي الأربعين" تسترا على أوزوريس في ظل الإسلام التوحيدي. ونكون بذلك قد أجبننا أيضا على السؤال عن سر كراهية المصربين البالغة - وغير المبررة تماما - للخنزير والتي كانت تدفع بالمصري إلى إلقاء نفسه وهو بملابسه في النيل إذا لمس خنزيراً فيما أورده أبو التاريخ (هيرودوت، الكتاب الثاني 47) وقيل التحريم الإسلامي بالالف السنين. إنه الخنزير الذي قاد سخت (ست) إلى أوزوريس الثاوي في تابوته في أحراش الدلتا فيمزقه إربا.

إن تقاليد دفن أشلاء الزعماء والملوك والآلهة (الأسطورية) بعد مقتلهم - تحديدا أوزوريس - ما زالت تذكرها حية في أذهان الناس، فالشيخ "حسان" من قرية "أكوا" محافظة الشرقية ظهر لأحد الميسورين في القرية وقال له: أنا مدفون في الحتة دي، ذراعي مدفون في الحتة دي، قالوا إحنا حنحفر، لو ما لقناش مش حنحفر لك ضريح، وبعدين حفروا لقوا ذراعه، قالوا دا كان بيحارب وبعدين طار زي سيدنا الحسين كده جاء هنا في مصر وعملوا له ضريح" (السعيد 417) والفرق بين نص أحسن ابن أبانا ونصنا هذا يتمثل في البعد التاريخي وامتزاج التقاليد.

والمشهد الثاني للأسطورة الأوزورية هو بعث الإله (القيامة). فيعد قيام "سخت" ست بتمزيق جثمان أوزوريس تقوم ايزيس (سيدة السحر) بلم أشلاء أخيها بمساعدة أختها نفتيس وتجبر بسحرها الإله آمون على الإصصاج بالكلمة المقدسة (اللوجوس) فتنطقها. وتنب الحياة في الجسد الإلهي (القيامة) ويتحول أوزوريس إلى إله للموتى ويتصدر محكمة "العدالة" معات ومعها هيئة من المحلفين يمثلون أقاليم مصر الأربعين. ويلقب بـ"سيدي الأربعين" [بالإضافة] التي تتحول مع الزمان إلى سيدي الأربعين في ترجمة المصربين لإرثهم الديني إلى العربية. وحيث يتراوح الميت عن نفسه أمام محكمة أوزوريس: انظر إلي في حضرتك "يا سيد الغرب". ليس في جسمي شر ولم أكذب متعمدا وقناعتي الشخصية أن هذا اللقب وراء التسمية "سيدي المغربي" وأن اللقب لا يعني القادم من الغرب، المغرب بل هو أوزوريس نفسه سيد الغرب، العالم الآخر. وقد يكون ظهور هذه التسميات من قبيل إيمان المصربين في التستر على آلهتهم وإتقادها لها. في ظل وصول الإسلام التوحيدي الذي لم يلبث أن راح هو الآخر يفرز أبطاله وأوليائه. كما سبق وأوضحنا أعلاه.



خلوا الكبير في مقعده محتال لجن يتم الثور عليه دولم (لجن أي من أجل أن تصل الأخذ بحكمه) والنص يدعو إلى ترك "الكبير" على عرشه نائما. إنه أوسير الإله المحنط سيد "معات". أما النص التالي فهو يرسم قاعة معات ودخول الميت بين يدي الإله ابتسم الليل للحجرة وهو داخل اتمنى لقي بنات الحور وهو داخل لقي الملوك مقابلينه وهو داخل تراها أي حجرة هذه إلا "معات" ومن تراهم الملوك إلا الأريعون ملكا في معية أوزير. وكما قد سبق وأن بينا فإن هذه الورقة ما هي إلا مدخل إلى نبش وغرابة تراكم ثقافي لا نظير له في ثقافة أخرى ونحن أدري أكثر من غيرنا بجوانب القصور فيها. وهذا لا يمنعنا - حتى وإن وصفنا - بضم الواو - بالتعسف والتعصب، من الزعم من أن العامية المصرية ما هي إلا البوتقة العظيمة التي صهر المصريون إرثهم الفرعوني باعتبارها السدة لتسيح ثقافتهم بلحمة كل ما حملت إليهم سفن الغزاة وجحافل الباحثين عن الماء والمرعي: هكسوس وإغريق وفرس وروميون حتى الفتح العربي.

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## LA PÉRIODE DE HASÛM À DJERBA LA FÊTE DES ÊTRES DE L'AU-DELÀ SUR TERRE

Edina Földessy

Musée d'Ethnographie, Budapest

Dans le monde musulman, comme ailleurs, des phénomènes surnaturels sont associés à des particularités météorologiques caractérisant le temps à certaines périodes de l'année. A Djerba, les êtres de l'au-delà viennent sur terre pendant la période de *hasûm* pour faire la fête<sup>1</sup>. Cette période s'inscrit en fait dans une série de jours marqués pendant l'hiver et à la marge de l'hiver et du printemps. Elle s'étale sur sept jours entre la fin du mois de février et le début de mois de mars, d'après le calendrier romain ou julien.

En effet, dans la perception et la division du temps chez les Musulmans, d'origine arabe ou berbère, divers éléments se conjuguent. Ces éléments calendaires, mobiles ou fixes, proviennent de trois traditions différentes: le calendrier musulman, le calendrier romain ou julien et le calendrier grégorien. Au comput en mois lunaires s'attache aujourd'hui une fonction essentiellement religieuse et rituelle: c'est d'après celui-ci que les fêtes musulmanes sont suivies d'une année à l'autre, dans un cycle mouvant. Le calendrier julien sert à percevoir les saisons et, à l'intérieur de celles-ci, à distinguer des périodes ou des jours qui sont considérés comme spécifiques de certains points de vue. Ces périodes ou ces jours sont nommés d'après les faits saillants d'ordre météorologique qui les marquent ou caractérisent. Ainsi, ce calendrier est l'outil essentiel des agriculteurs et des éleveurs. Enfin, le calendrier grégorien, la méthode la plus récente de calcul du temps, sert aux desseins de l'Etat moderne: c'est par celui-ci qu'il s'accorde au système de comput mondial, qu'il gère son administration et la vie publique et qu'il fixe ses fêtes nationales. Ces trois méthodes de calcul se superposent l'une sur l'autre, prêtant parfois à des confusions, surtout dans le cas des deux dernières.

La période de *hasûm* se situe à la limite des saisons hivernale et printanière<sup>2</sup>. Dans la perception des Guellaliens, il s'agit d'un temps très mouvementé: froid et chaleur peuvent se succéder très rapidement, le vent peut souffler très fort. Dans le Maghreb, cette période est perçue un peu différemment; elle est marquée en général par un froid très vif, avec de la pluie et du vent; parfois de la neige et de la grêle. Ce temps est considéré comme dangereux pour les hommes, les animaux et les plantes; ce qui

<sup>1</sup> Sur le vécu et la mémoire de cette période, j'ai mené une enquête à Guellala; village berbérophone de l'île de Djerba (Sud-tunisien).

<sup>2</sup> Elle est la première période de printemps qui commence le 11<sup>e</sup> jour de printemps et finit le 18<sup>e</sup> jour.



a pour conséquence de provoquer chez les humains des sentiments d'incertitude, des inquiétudes, des craintes. La renaissance ou le renouvellement de la nature à la fin de cette période lorsque le temps devient printanier est illustré par un dicton de Guellala: après *hasūm*, toute la terre change de vêtements<sup>3</sup>.

Cette période de sept jours est évoquée par les villageois comme une période-limite entre deux mois, février et mars. Même si les villageois ne la situent pas tous à la même période – certains la désignent, en effet, pour fin mars et début avril –, son caractère liminaire domine dans le discours local. Cependant, certaines personnes éprouvaient de l'embarras lorsqu'ils regardaient le calendrier grégorien pour me donner la date exacte de cette période. En effet, la date officielle du *hasūm* est le 10 mars (en 1997), date qui ne confirmait pas leur conviction concernant la situation liminaire de la période. En même temps, ils ne cherchaient pas à convertir cette date dans le calendrier julien. Par ailleurs, celui-ci indique que le *hasūm* commence le 25 février<sup>4</sup>. Ce fait semble révéler une certaine confusion des deux calendriers (julien et grégorien), et peut-être une nouvelle perception du temps dans laquelle le calendrier grégorien devient de plus en plus dominant au détriment du calendrier julien.

La littérature consultée à la division du temps au Maghreb rapportait peu de données sur la période qui nous intéresse ici. Elle porte essentiellement sur le Maroc avec les travaux de E. Destaing (1905, 1906), de E. Westermarck (1926), de J. Lethiel-leux (1948) et de P. Galand-Pernet (1958), et sur l'Algérie avec les travaux de R. Basset (1890) et de M. Serradj (1952). D'après ceux-ci, le début de l'année, une période de froid située à la fin du mois de janvier ou à la fin du mois de février, et le passage entre l'hiver et le printemps ne sont pas perçus d'une façon univoque au Maghreb. Bien au contraire, leur perception montre des variations d'une région à l'autre, d'une communauté à l'autre, de même que les croyances, les rites et les fêtes qui les accompagnent. Evoquons-les brièvement.

Le début de l'année (*ra's al-'ām*), qui correspond au premier janvier julien (14 janvier grégorien) est souvent marqué par le passage d'une figure féminine, la Vieille d'Ennaïr<sup>5</sup>. Ce personnage est parfois décrit comme un démon ou une ogresse. Cette période, qui peut durer plusieurs jours, est localement marquée par certains rites alimentaires, l'évitement de certains travaux et une sorte de carnaval masqué.

Plusieurs éléments légendaires parcourent les traditions orales maghrébines concernant la période de froid mentionnée ci-dessus: le ou les jours d'emprunt combinés ou non avec les jours de la Vieille ou la figure de la Vieille ou encore avec le jour de

<sup>3</sup> *Ba'd al-ḥasūm nabhi aḥwāyigak wa-'ūm*, littéralement, "après *hasūm*, enlève tes vêtements et nage". Ceci se réfère à un changement radical du temps.

<sup>4</sup> En 1997, le mois de février comptait 28 jours, donc on retrouve une différence de 14 jours entre les calendriers julien et grégorien.

<sup>5</sup> Nom provenant de *Januarius* d'origine latine, signifiant janvier.

la chèvre. Tous ceux-ci sont liés au mois de février, expliquant ainsi pourquoi ce mois est plus court que les autres: il a prêté des jours au mois de janvier ou au mois de mars qu'il n'a jamais pu récupérer par la suite.

Cette période de froid montre aussi des variantes quant au nombre de ses jours (1, 5, 7 et 10) et quant à son emplacement. Si elle est placée à la fin du mois de janvier, l'élément légendaire suivant, lié, lui aussi, à une figure de la Vieille, est évoqué: une vieille femme protégeant son unique animal ou son troupeau à l'abri pendant tout l'hiver le fait sortir à la fin de janvier, en s'étant réjoui trop tôt de la fin de l'hiver. Janvier, fâché, emprunte alors un jour à Février et envoie un froid ou fait lever une tempête qui tue ou fait souffrir la Vieille et son troupeau. La nature de cheptel varie ainsi que le jour emprunté, et le 31 janvier peut donc prendre le nom du "jour de la chèvre". D'après Galand-Pernet (1958:78), les représentations possibles – restant cependant hypothétiques – de la figure de la Vieille des deux cas (être surnaturel redoutable, sorcière, ogresse, démon, vieille femme qui a des contacts avec l'au-delà où elle est venue) et celles de la vieille dans la société elle-même (qui est capable de chasser les démons, femme qui assume des rites de magie sympathique), ne reflètent qu'une image floue de ce personnage. Cependant, il faut distinguer les deux figures, celle de la Vieille d'Ennaïr qui est liée uniquement à la période du début de l'année et celle de la Vieille avec son troupeau qu'on retrouve comme protagoniste des deux périodes de froid placées alternativement à la fin de janvier ou à la fin de février. Notons que les Guellaliens ne connaissent pas cette Vieille de la fête du premier jour de l'an, et ne distinguent ces jours de froid au cours du janvier.

Si cette période de froid est placée à la fin du mois de février – et c'est ce qui nous concerne ici –, elle marque le passage entre l'hiver et le printemps. Elle donne lieu à des perceptions plus variées que les deux moments précédents de l'année. Certains récits gardent l'élément de la Vieille et du jour emprunté à Février, cette fois-ci par Mars. D'autres font intervenir un nouvel élément: le vent comme châtiment divin qui a détruit le peuple de 'Ād parce qu'il avait refusé l'envoyé de Dieu, Hūd. Cette période est connue en arabe sous le nom de *ḥsūm ḥusūm* ou *ḥasūm* d'après les variantes locales. Elle peut être aussi appelée *as-sanābir*, les vents froids, ou *lyāli ar-rā'i*, les nuits du berger, ou *lyāli al-'aḡūz*, les nuits (froides) de la vieille (Serradj 1952:73). Dans certaines régions, le mot *as-sab'a* est en usage qui se réfère aux sept nuits de la période. Les Berbères du Maroc et les Kabyles de l'Algérie utilisent une appellation particulière: *hayan*, *aheyyan*, *ihayyan* qui indique le nombre 8. En effet, cette période dure sept nuits et huit jours; elle débute et se termine le jour.

Si les croyances concernant la figure de la Vieille trouvent leur racine dans le folklore, le vent comme châtiment divin provient du Coran où plusieurs passages font mention du peuple de 'Ād, de Hūd et du vent destructeur, et où, l'on trouve fixée



la durée exacte de la période<sup>6</sup>. L'expression "les jours de *husūm*" (*ayyām husūm*) dans le Coran a le sens "les jours consécutifs", sous entendu, malheureux ou accompagnés du Mal. Comme Galand-Pernet l'indique, cette période "évoque aussi dans des esprits moins instruits en science sacrée d'autres traditions comme celle du Jugement dernier, châtement divin dont la tempête de 'Ād n'est qu'un préalable, et celle de l'autre catastrophe notoire, le Déluge, qui est aussi une punition céleste" (1958:36). D'autres appellations soulignent également ce caractère macabre: "nuits noires", "jours de mauvais augure", "époque néfaste" (*idem*:69).

### Le *hasūm* à Djerba

La croyance répandue à Djerba veut que pendant cette période, des êtres appartenant à un autre monde apparaissent sur terre. Ils se distinguent des *djinn*s par leur nom, leur taille, leurs activités et leur origine. En conséquence, l'attitude des humains vis-à-vis d'eux montre également des particularités.

Cette période est appelée *ahsūm* ou *hasūm* dans le dialecte arabe local ce qui rejoint une des appellations répandues au Maghreb. La racine *HSM* a diverses significations: "couper, déduire, défalquer, escompter, retrancher, trancher" en arabe littéraire et "couper, retrancher" en dialecte (Beaussier 1958:203). Toutes ces significations ne semblent pas être révélatrices pour notre sujet. L'appellation en berbère est *imbarken*, de l'arabe *baraka*, qui signifie bénédiction divine. Dans la littérature consultée en la matière sur le Maghreb, je n'ai trouvé aucune indication à ce nom berbère à l'exception de l'ouvrage de Combès, Combès et Louis sur le travail de la laine à Djerba (1946). Les auteurs rapportent que les femmes djerbiennes appellent cette période, par antiphrase, *el-mbārkin* signifiant les "(jours) bénis" (1946:59). Ils évoquent également l'appellation *l'mebrūkāt* (1946:59, note 20). Or, d'après mes observations, c'est le mot *imbarken* qui est d'usage unique et répandu, au moins à Guellala.

Les deux appellations en arabe et en berbère sont utilisées pour désigner non seulement la période de sept jours, mais aussi les êtres d'un autre monde qui apparaissent pendant cette période. Ces mots sont donc en même temps le nom propre de ces êtres au collectif. Les villageois les utilisent en fonction de leur usage préférentiel de l'une ou de l'autre langue. Combès, Combès et Louis ne mentionnent aucunement ce deuxième sens du nom.

Quant à leur apparence, les *imbarken* sont semblables aux humains: ils appartiennent aux deux sexes et à tous les âges. Un de leurs caractères spécifiques réside dans leur taille: ils sont tout petits, ce sont des êtres nains. Les adultes ne dépassent pas vingt centimètres, tandis que les enfants atteignent la moitié des précédents.

D'après la plupart des Guellaliens, les *imbarken* apparaissent sur terre essentiellement pour faire la fête: en premier lieu, ils célèbrent des mariages, puis accomplissent

<sup>6</sup> Voir récapitulatif de l'Encyclopédie de l'Islam sous le titre de 'Ād.

la circoncision de leurs enfants. D'après un rapport plus nuancé fourni par un interlocuteur masculin, les *imbarken* vivent leur vie entière pendant sept jours, chaque jour correspondant à un événement ou à une phase de la vie humaine. 1<sup>er</sup> jour: naissance; 2<sup>e</sup> jour: circoncision; 3<sup>e</sup> jour: jeune âge (puberté?); 4<sup>e</sup> jour: mariage; 5<sup>e</sup> jour: devenir père; 6<sup>e</sup> jour: âge avancé; 7<sup>e</sup> jour: mort. On constate que ces cycles de vie sont propres aux hommes (circoncision, statut de père). Dans ce discours, les *imbarken* sont donc masculinisés, ce qui peut refléter non seulement une interprétation personnelle, mais aussi la valeur sexuée de la société musulmane (patrilinéarité, patrilocalité, autorité masculine). Ces cycles de vie de sept jours continuent tout au long de l'année, mais, les *imbarken* reviennent sur terre pendant cette période précise. On ne sait pas où ils demeurent le reste du temps, sous la terre ou dans les cieux.

Si les Guellaliens ne donnent pas de nom propre à chacun des sept jours des *imbarken*, on en trouve l'exemple dans la tradition musulmane: *Sinn*, *Sinnabar*, *Wabr*, *Āmir*, *Mu'tamir*, *Mu'allil*, *Mutfi' al-ġamr*<sup>7</sup>. R. Basset (1890) indique que certains de ces noms se réfèrent, sans doute, à des légendes, mais il n'en cite aucune.

La tradition orale guellalienne se montre incertaine quant au partage de ces sept jours entre les deux mois: trois ou quatre jours à la fin du mois de février et quatre ou trois au début du mois de mars. D'après la littérature, la même incertitude peut être attestée à une échelle plus large ce qui implique également les glissements de la date du commencement de la période<sup>8</sup>. Des variantes s'ajoutent à la croyance générale guellalienne, notamment que les *imbarken* passent trois jours dans la mer et quatre jours sur terre, ou sept jours entiers dans la mer et autant sur terre.

Quant à l'origine des *imbarken*, aucun récit commun ne m'est parvenu. Cependant, j'ai retrouvé le récit-modèle de *hasūm* se référant à un vent destructeur. Ce récit fut rapporté par un vieux potier, renommé localement pour ses connaissances dans les affaires de religion. "Autrefois, il y avait un roi, Šeddeda Ibn 'Ād qui régnait à l'Orient, il y a très longtemps. Il dit au peuple: "Si vous m'obéissez, on vous construira le Paradis sur terre." Son peuple y consentit. Ensuite, il leur construisit 'Ād, un grand château. On ne sait pas combien de pièces il y avait là-dedans et combien de couloirs, Dieu seul le sait ... Le jour où la construction fut terminée, Šeddeda Ibn 'Ād y entra, et avec lui ses soldats. Il fit deux ou trois tours là-dedans, lorsqu'un vent occidental vint, on dit un vent impétueux. Ce vent s'éleva sur eux, il les enterra, les soldats et le roi. Ils moururent tous ensemble. ... Qui vit une fois cette place dit qu'il n'en a pas été créé de semblable en aucun pays, ni en Europe ni chez les Arabes, ni

<sup>7</sup> Les significations sont "panier de couvercle"; "intensité du froid"; "sorte de petit quadrupède, à poils gris, sans queue"; "qui commande"; "qui est commandé"; "qui boit coup sur coup"; "qui éteint la braise" (R. Basset 1890:152).

<sup>8</sup> Voir Galand-Pernet 1958:60, notes 3 et 4.



ailleurs. Voici l'histoire entière, chez les Arabes, des sept jours dans l'année lorsqu'il y a un vent tempétueux. Ça s'est passé comme cela."

Ce récit évoque la figure d'un roi puissant promettant à son peuple un Paradis sur terre. Implicitement, c'est l'orgueil du roi qui provoque une réponse céleste sous forme d'une punition destructive par un élément naturel. Nous trouvons une allusion au peuple de 'Ād dans le nom du château, mais pas à l'envoyé de Dieu, Hūd. Bien que l'informateur évoque ce récit en tant qu'explication des *imbarken*, la question de l'origine des petits êtres de l'au-delà, comme celle du lien direct entre eux et le contenu du récit, nous semble rester ouverte.

Deux autres récits guellaliens concernent les *imbarken*. Dans le premier, on trouve un *imbarken* a pris la forme d'une grenouille enceinte. Une femme qui lave son linge près d'un puits l'aperçoit et se demande quand elle enfantera. La grenouille vient chez elle la nuit et met au monde ses petits en compagnie de la femme. En même temps, une autre grenouille apparaît et demande à la femme de lui apporter trois choses: un peu de laine sans poids, un peu de *khol*<sup>9</sup> sans le sceau de Suleymān et un peu de *zummita* (nourriture locale traditionnelle) sans sel. Elles font une fête la nuit, mangent et boivent bien. Le lendemain matin, la femme se rend de nouveau au puits pour laver son linge et y retrouve la grenouille qui, elle aussi, lave ses affaires. La femme lui fait remarquer que les sept jours après l'accouchement [pendant lesquels il ne faut pas travailler] ne se sont pas encore passés. La grenouille lui demande comment elle est au courant de son accouchement. La femme précise qu'elle l'a vu de son œil droit. La grenouille la rend alors aveugle de cet œil.

Cette histoire nous révèle un contact entre deux mondes par lequel l'acteur humain et l'être de l'au-delà peuvent partager des moments de leur vie (accomplir des tâches domestiques, vivre et fêter ensemble l'enfantement), et cela, sans aucune crainte. L'histoire révèle aussi, que malgré ces moments de rencontre et d'entente entre les deux mondes, cette relation présente un danger pour l'humain du fait que les intentions de l'au-delà lui sont insaisissables. La grenouille, en plus de se doter de la capacité de parler et de se comporter comme les humains, donne des signes évidents de son appartenance. En effet, les choses qu'elle demande à la femme, en sont révélatrices. Suleymān dont le sceau ne doit pas être figuré sur un objet, est en quelque sorte le roi des djinns. La grenouille refuse ce signe. Notons qu'un noyau de datte par exemple sur le dos duquel on voit un petit cercle est porteur du signe de le sceau de Suleymān – comme on me l'a montré à Guellala. On peut se demander si c'est la crainte de son "maître" ou la non-reconnaissance de celui-ci qui est derrière ce refus de la grenouille. Est-ce une façon de marquer sa différence par rapport aux djinns qui sont soumis à Suleymān? La *zummita* sans sel est plus révélatrice encore: la nourriture sans sel est par excellence la nourriture des djinns. La *zummita* est un mélange

<sup>9</sup> Poudre noire pour le maquillage des yeux.

d'orge grillé et broyé avec des ingrédients divers (épices, peau d'orange, sel) auquel les Guellaliens ajoutent de l'eau et de l'huile d'olive. C'est le repas traditionnel consommé essentiellement le matin, mais aussi en d'autres moments de la journée, en tant que coupe-faim. Il est souvent offert aux visiteurs qui arrivent entre les heures de repas. Quant à la laine sans poids, je n'ai pas trouvé d'explication valable, ni de rapprochement symbolique avec le monde de l'au-delà.

Il est à remarquer que les choses demandées par la grenouille-*imbarken* à la femme relèvent toutes de l'univers féminin par leur usage ou par leur préparation. C'est la femme qui travaille la laine, c'est elle qui utilise le *khol* et c'est encore elle qui prépare la *zummita*. Notons encore que la femme de l'histoire est considérée comme un personnage réel mais décédé, originaire d'un quartier de Guellala. Le puits est localisé dans un autre quartier du village.

Dans le deuxième récit, les *imbarken* se transforment en sept scorpions qui marchent l'un après l'autre, en suivant le plus gros. Ils sont aperçus au milieu de la journée par une femme qui en est effrayée. Les scorpions la tranquillisent en lui disant que, si elle ne leur font pas de mal et les laisse s'en aller, ils ne lui feront pas de mal non plus. Dans cette histoire, le danger mutuel de contact entre les *imbarken*-scorpions et la femme est verbalisé, mais aussi le respect mutuel par lequel on peut éviter ce danger.

Rappelons que dans la partie sud de Djerba, dans la mer, on voit jusqu'à aujourd'hui les ruines d'un fort nommé Borg al-'aqārib, "Fort des scorpions", à propos duquel on raconte l'histoire de sept enfants piqués et tués par ces insectes. Le sens de cette histoire est que le destin est inéluctable.

#### La vie commune des humains et des *imbarken* sur terre: l'évitement

Comme tous les êtres de l'au-delà (*nās oħra* en arabe et *midden izzan* en berbère), les *imbarken* sont redoutables. Si quelqu'un les dérange, ils peuvent l'attaquer et lui causer des maladies, des accidents, des perturbations mentales. Pour ne pas s'exposer à ces dangers, il faut prendre des mesures de protection ou savoir comment éviter leur contact.

Les maladies que les *imbarken* peuvent causer aux humains sont semblables à celles qu'entraînent généralement les actes surnaturels, c'est-à-dire les opérations des djinns: folie, troubles mentaux, changement brusque de comportement. Les *imbarken* agissent en répondant à une erreur des humains, si ces derniers négligent de se protéger, ou à un acte qui les dérange directement. En effet, on rapporte que lorsqu'un homme croise le cortège des *imbarken* sans faire attention, ceux-ci le punissent en le frappant sur la tête. Ces maladies (surtout la folie) peuvent durer toute une vie ou peuvent se guérir avec le temps (en particulier un changement d'attitude). Nous n'avons pas d'information sur les remèdes à une maladie causée par les petits êtres.

Mais ce qui distingue les *imbarken* des djinns, c'est qu'ils se déplacent surtout la nuit tandis que les djinns peuvent apparaître à n'importe quel moment de la journée.



Le mouvement des *imbarken* correspond au temps de rite qu'ils pratiquent le plus généralement: le mariage. Celui-ci se déroule à Djerba le soir et pendant la nuit jusqu'à l'aube. Les humains respectent le temps d'apparition des petits êtres en se retirant dans leurs maisons à la tombée de la nuit. Ils craignent de les rencontrer lors d'une sortie. On dit qu'on dort beaucoup pendant cette période.

Les témoignages que nous avons pu recueillir portent essentiellement sur le mariage des *imbarken*. Les humains ne sont pas censés voir les petits êtres, mais ils entendent la musique – le battement de tambour (*derbuka*) et le son de cornemuse (*mez-wad*) – qui accompagne le cortège de la mariée vers la maison de son mari. Il est intéressant de remarquer à ce propos qu'actuellement, on n'utilise pas cet instrument de musique dans le cortège nuptial à Guellala. Les humains peuvent aussi sentir l'odeur de l'encens (*bhūr*) brûlé à cette occasion. Le don de voir les êtres de l'au-delà est réservé à certains animaux. L'âne, par exemple, tout comme le cheval ou le mulet, les voit, même lorsqu'ils sont sous la terre: s'il s'arrête brusquement au milieu de la route sans raison apparente, son maître ne doit pas le forcer à continuer puisqu'il devrait croiser alors le cortège des *imbarken*. Il faut donc contourner cet endroit ou attendre patiemment jusqu'à ce que les petits êtres s'éloignent et que l'âne, leur ayant laissé le passage, reprenne sa route. Quant à la capacité visuelle du chameau, les avis sont partagés. D'après les uns, il voit les *imbarken* aussi bien que les ânes, les chevaux ou les mulets; d'après les autres, il ne fait que les entendre. Si les hommes, en général, ne perçoivent leur présence que par l'ouïe et par l'odorat, quelques témoignages rapportent la visibilité des *imbarken*. D'où l'image répandue selon laquelle leur physique, leurs vêtements, leur cortège nuptial avec chameau et baldaquin (*ǧahfa*) correspondent exactement aux caractéristiques du monde humain, à une exception près, leur petite taille.

Les *imbarken* peuvent mener leur cortège non seulement dans les rues, sur les routes ou à l'extérieur du village, mais aussi à l'intérieur d'une maison ou d'un atelier de poterie. Si, effectivement, on les voit ou on les croise quelque part, la plupart des gens choqués de faire face à un phénomène surnaturel, s'enfuient. On entend encore dire que si l'on croise le cortège des *imbarken*, il vaut mieux se coucher par terre et même leur offrir la surface de son corps comme lieu de passage. Cependant, cela constitue l'opinion personnelle d'un seul individu. Il peut aussi arriver qu'un humain croise accidentellement le cortège des *imbarken* à l'extérieur du village. A ce moment, il peut entrer dans un autre monde comme s'il rêvait, et lorsqu'il se réveille, se retrouve au bord d'un puits dans lequel il risque de tomber.

Du fait que les *imbarken* font la fête, ils se présentent toujours en groupe à l'ouïe ou au regard des hommes. Ainsi, ils sont perçus non pas comme des "individus" mais en tant que groupe, communauté ou société. D'ailleurs, leur nom en berbère est une forme collective qui n'existe pas au singulier. On peut s'interroger sur cet élément par lequel les *imbarken* semblent se rattacher en quelque sorte à une autre communauté ou à une "civilisation" ou à un peuple du passé, peut-être au peuple légendaire d'Ad.

Les humains respectent cette période de fête des *imbarken* en ne célébrant aucun mariage. En effet, dans les rares cas que les mariages humains ont été fêtés parallèlement à celui des *imbarken*, les unions se sont mal terminées. La transgression d'une règle provoquant, une fois de plus, la punition.

Les cris d'enfants que l'on peut entendre pendant cette période témoignent de ce que les *imbarken* font aussi la circoncision de leurs enfants. Les humains s'abstiennent alors de circoncire les leurs. La circoncision des gens de l'au-delà est une opération particulière qu'ils peuvent pratiquer occasionnellement aux enfants humains. Ainsi, les mères savent que lorsque leurs enfants pleurent la nuit pendant cette période, il leur est déconseillé d'y entrer dans la chambre et de les consoler, car il se peut que les *imbarken* soient en train de les circonscrire et l'apparition d'une personne provoquerait l'interruption de l'opération avec les dangers qui en découlent. A Guellala, plusieurs hommes, sans pour autant être nommés, sont réputés avoir été circoncis par les *imbarken*.

D'ailleurs, aucun signe de fête humaine n'est donné à ce moment de l'année. Habituellement, les femmes dont le mari rentre après un long voyage ou un séjour à l'étranger font le henné. Pendant la période d'*imbarken*, elles s'y renoncent car les petits êtres n'aiment pas le henné. Comme si c'était une période de deuil où l'on s'abstient de se parer et d'exprimer un sentiment de joie quelconque.

On raconte qu'autrefois les gens ne travaillaient pas pendant cette période. Les poitiers n'allumaient pas les fours et les femmes ne filaient pas la laine. Combès, Combès et Louis (1946:59) évoquent la crainte que les fileuses et les cardeuses ne deviennent folles. Cependant, ils n'expliquent pas pourquoi. Certains de mes interlocuteurs préfèrent jusqu'à aujourd'hui s'abstenir de toute activité pendant ces sept jours.

La tradition veut qu'on n'allume pas de bougies pendant la nuit. Cette interdiction, qui avait sûrement un sens dans le passé sans électricité, rappelle la fonction magique du feu dans l'invocation des "génies". Il est par ailleurs considéré dangereux, au Maghreb, de faire des achats ou d'entreprendre un voyage pendant *hasūm*.

### La protection des enfants

Ceux que l'on doit le mieux protéger dans une famille sont les premiers-nés des deux sexes. D'après la croyance, ils sont les plus exposés aux dangers causés par les *imbarken*. La tradition veut que les mères attachent une clef en métal au cou de leurs enfants ou en mettent une sous leur coussin pour écarter les êtres de l'au-delà qui la craignent. Sinon, l'enfant peut devenir fou pour toute sa vie. Contre les *imbarken*, on n'utilise pas n'importe quelle clef mais une clef mâle. A Djerba, on distingue une clef mâle (*miftāh mdakkar*) d'une clef femelle (*miftāh unta*). Une clef mâle est une clef dont la tige est fermée; la tige d'une clef femelle est ouverte. On connaît en matière de magie l'importance que l'on donne aux sexes qu'il s'agisse d'un être humain ou



d'un objet<sup>10</sup>. On connaît également l'efficacité de la clef et du métal en général pour chasser les djinns<sup>11</sup>. Aujourd'hui, les mères se contentent de suspendre au cou de leur premier-né une petite clef en or ou une plaquette en argent avec un motif de clef. D'ailleurs, les enfants peuvent porter au cou d'autres objets attachés à une chaîne comme la main de *Fatma*, une représentation d'un œil, d'un poisson, d'une paire de ciseaux, une petite corne d'antilope, une dent de lion, des perles en corail, des coquillages à rayures et de *fessüh*<sup>12</sup>. Tous ces objets sont censés protéger l'enfant contre la malveillance humaine ou surnaturelle. Par ailleurs, dans certaines tribus marocaines, on considère que l'enfant conçu ou venu au monde pendant *hasûm* sera malheureux toute sa vie (Galand-Pernet 1958:69).

Autrefois, on ne baignait pas le premier-né et on ne lavait pas ses vêtements. La raison de cette interdiction ne nous est pas connue. On sait par contre, la double fonction de l'eau dans le domaine surnaturel. D'une part, l'eau attire les djinns. Ils ont comme lieux préférés les endroits humides: les salles d'eau dans une maison, les puits, les sources ou la mer. Et de l'autre, l'usage de l'eau peut, au contraire, effrayer les djinns. En effet, il était habituel à Djerba de poser un récipient rempli d'eau pure à côté de l'enfant lorsqu'on le laissait seul dans sa chambre. On pouvait aussi laisser de l'eau dans chaque pièce lorsqu'on sortait de la maison, pour écarter les djinns du lieu d'habitation des humains. On raconte encore que si la mère oubliait de protéger son enfant avec de l'eau posée près sa tête pendant la nuit, elle risquait de le retrouver malade, se comportant bizarrement le lendemain matin. Si c'était le cas, il fallait mettre l'enfant dans un couffin en vannerie, le descendre dans un puits, le secouer et prononcer alors les paroles suivantes: "Prends ton enfant et rends le nôtre". Il s'agirait dans ce cas-là d'un échange entre enfant humain et enfant de l'au-delà. La pratique auprès d'un puits rejoint les croyances générales en ce que les endroits humides sont les lieux préférés ou les lieux d'habitation des *djinns*.

On raconte aussi que les *imbarken* aiment les pièces donnant vers le Sud où ils entrent volontiers. Pour les protéger, les enfants étaient installés dans d'autres pièces pendant cette période de sept jours. Notons que les ateliers de poterie à Djerba sont

<sup>10</sup> A Djerba, on utilise par exemple les épines d'un palmier mâle pour piquer des morceaux de vêtement pris à une personne sur qui on veut effectuer une certaine influence. On dit que les épines d'un palmier mâle sont plus pointues et plus fortes, donc plus efficaces que celles d'un palmier femelle.

<sup>11</sup> On pose par exemple une clef en métal sur le ventre d'un défunt pour qu'elle en écarte les djinns qui viendraient prendre ou frapper le corps. Cette clef empêchera aussi le gonflement du ventre.

<sup>12</sup> Mélange de matières odoriférantes provenant de l'étranger (Arabie Saoudite ou France) réputé efficace contre toutes sortes de danger (contre les djinns, le mauvais œil). Son usage est varié: les gens peuvent en porter dans leur poche dans une feuille plastique; les potiers peuvent en brûler dans la chambre du feu avant la cuisson de leurs poteries; les mères peuvent en coller une pincée à une touffe de cheveux de leurs enfants de bas âge; et on peut aussi en attacher dans un morceau de tissu rouge ou orange au cou des animaux (mouton, chèvre).

tous orientés vers le Sud ou vers la Qibla qui est à quelques minutes d'écart de ce point cardinal. Un certain nombre d'apparitions des *imbarken* se révèle aux hommes justement dans ces ateliers. Cependant, les *imbarken* ne cherchent pas le contact avec les humains; au contraire, ils préfèrent les endroits délaissés ou inhabités.

### La nature et les *imbarken*

Parmi les prohibitions ou actes déconseillés pendant cette période, on trouve certains travaux agricoles. En effet, il n'est pas dans les habitudes de planter pendant ces sept jours. Même si cette période coïncide avec la plantation des melons et des pastèques, on attendra la fin de *hasûm*. D'après l'expérience personnelle d'un Guellalien qui, ne croyant pas à cette prohibition, planta alors des pastèques, rien ne sortit de la terre. Nous ne savons rien de plus précis sur la cause de cet interdit et sur la nature de son rapport à la terre.

Le peu d'information que l'on trouve dans la littérature sur les interdictions pendant *hasûm* concerne cependant le domaine agricole. En effet, on plante les arbres et on les greffe à la fin de cette période (Galand-Pernet 1958:62). D'après certaines traditions, la période est dépeinte plutôt positivement: la sève monte alors dans les bois, tout ce qui vit sort en tout lieu, tout ce qui avait froid se réchauffe (*idem*:83). C'est pourquoi la pluie qui tombe pendant cette période est funeste à l'agriculture, parce que toutes les plantes sont en fleurs (Anonyme 1910:3). Westermarck (1926:176) ajoute, qu'au Maroc, cette pluie salée attaque les plantes. Mais une pluie à la fin de cette période peut remédier à tout le mal. En même temps, l'irrigation des figuiers peut être propice à une bonne récolte (Destaing 1906:246). Toujours au Maroc, une certaine heure pendant cette période est considérée comme très dangereuse: comme on ne sait pas la situer, les agriculteurs préfèrent renoncer aux travaux de jardinage et, dans certaines tribus, à tous les travaux agricoles (Westermarck 1926:176).

Par rapport à la pluie de *hasûm*, les Tlemceniens disent que les portes du ciel sont ouvertes pour donner passage à l'eau (Destaing 1906:244). En effet, il est ancré dans leur mémoire que le Déluge survint pendant cette période. On évite alors de partir en voyage, surtout de faire une traversée maritime puisque la mer est alors extrêmement agitée (*idem*:246). On attache à cette période le jour de la Destruction, lorsque tout l'univers ne sera qu'une vaste mer.

### Résumé

Dans cet article, je décris une croyance répandue dans l'île de Djerba (Tunisie) qui ne conserve que quelques grandes lignes de sa force et de sa cohérence au passé. Toutefois, les variantes issues d'une interprétation ou d'une expérience individuelles sont relativement nombreuses, et contribuent, sans aucune doute, à sa revivification et à sa survie. D'après cette croyance, le monde semble se renverser pendant une période de sept jours (*hasûm* en arabe), située au tournant de l'hiver et du printemps: des petits êtres surnaturels, appelés *imbarken* en berbère local, apparaissent sur terre



à cette période, et s'approprient des espaces des humains, tandis que ces derniers leur cèdent la place. Les humains et des petits êtres alternent donc leurs activités.

Les données réunies ne permettent pas de définir l'origine des *imbarken* et leur place dans l'univers, mais dans l'image s'y rapportant, plusieurs niveaux de la perception se conjuguent: universel, local, humain et surnaturel. D'une part, les *imbarken* sont le miroir d'une société musulmane avec les fêtes religieuses et sociales, propres à cette société (circoncision et mariage). En même temps, ces fêtes se déroulent conformément aux traditions locales, reflétant ainsi les caractéristiques de la société et de la culture djerbienne. Les *imbarken* fournissent en plus le miroir d'une vie humaine avec les différentes phases de la vie, condensées en sept jours. Ils se dotent également de la capacité surnaturelle de se transformer en animal, gardant cependant certaines particularités humaines: la parole et les activités. C'est à ce moment-là et sous cette forme animalière que le contact des femmes humaines avec les *imbarken* devient possible dans l'imaginaire populaire. Comme faisant partie du monde surnaturel d'où provient leur caractère insaisissable et le danger de leur contact, les *imbarken* provoquent chez les humains une crainte ou au moins un sentiment d'incertitude. Pour vaincre ceci, ces derniers recourent à des pratiques de prévention et de protection relevant d'une stratégie d'évitement ou de la magie.

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#### السياحة في سيوة

شوقي عبد القوي عثمان حبيب

القاهرة

تقع سيوة على بعد حوالي ثلاثمائة كيلومتر من ساحل البحر المتوسط وعلى بعد أربعمئة وخمسين كيلومتر من وادي النيل، وعلى مقربة من الحدود الليبية وهي إحدى الواحات الخمس الكبرى بالصحراء الغربية. وتشغل واحة سيوة إحدى منخفضات الصحراء الغربية، وتتصل من الغرب بواحة جفبوب الليبية - مركز الطريق صحراوي طوله نحو مائة وعشرين كيلومتر (صبيح ١٩٦٥: ١٠٤-١٠٢).

ولم تمنع الحدود السياسية بين مصر وليبيا من زهاب السيويين إلى ليبيا العكس أيضا، كما كانوا يتصلون ببو الشاطي ومحافظه الغيوم والقاهرة (فخري ١٩٦٥: ١١٢). ويعتمد اقتصاد الواحة على الزيتون والنخيل، فهي بقعة خضراء وسط صحراء متسعة جرداء. وعندما نتناول موضوع السياحة في سيوة، فلا بد وأن يتبادر إلى الذهن بعد هذا الوصف الجذاب، بأنها الذهاب إلى سيوة للسياحة ومشاهدتها والتمتع بها ولكن موضوعنا بعيد عن هذا المفهوم فليس لها علاقة بالسياحة بمعنى الـ Tourism.

فالسياحة لدى أهل سيوة تعني الذهاب إلى منطقة جبل الدكرور التي تبعد عن سيوة مسافة خمسة كيلومترات وقضاء ثلاثة أيام للتعبد وذكر الله، فهي الاسم الذي يطلق على مجموع العمارات التي تتم خلال أيامها. ومن خلال معابشتي لهذه المناسبة أرى أنها سياحة في سبيل الله لأن أهل سيوة تركوا ديارهم وخرجوا إلى الخلاء بعيدا عنها تاركين متع الدنيا واجتمعوا على ذكر الله وحب الله ونسيان الأمور الدنيوية، كما أنها تهدف إلى التصالح والتسامح بين أهل سيوة.

وكما ذكر الحاج مدني علي معرف شيخ الطريقة المدنية بسيوة والقُدوة أن السياحة لها هدفين الأول: أذكار وسياحة إلى الله في مدة ثلاثة أيام يتخللها أذكار فقط، وخلال الثلاثة أيام يتفرغ الجميع للعبادة وينزل عن العالم، والثاني: التصافي والتصالح بين الناس، وكل ما يتم في السياحة يأتي من خلال مدين الهدفين، ويشارك في السياحة الكبار والصغار بناتا وأولادا عدا النساء. ولكن من الذي ابتدع هذه المناسبة ولماذا؟ ومن الذي يقوم بتنظيمها واحياءها منذ بدايتها وحتى الآن. كما كنا نلاحظ في القرى المصرية أن هناك نوع من الذي التحالف والتماسك بين أبناء الناحية الواحدة في القرية ضد ناحية أخرى من القرية، وجميع نواحي القرية ضد قرية أخرى، تأكيدا للمثل «أنا وأخويا على ابن عمي وأنا وابن عمي على الغريب»، ولم تسلم سيوة البعيدة في قلب الصحراء من هذا فهناك عائلات الشرقيين الذين يقطنون في الناحية الشرقية من القرية ومنها الطنانيين والمعادسة والحدادين، وعائلات الغربيين ومنهم أولاد موسى والعراقة والشمايم واليعاونة (فخري ١٩٩٣: ٥٠). وتذخر الروايات الشفاهية بقصص النزاع بين الناحيتين والحروب بينهم ومن يطلع على مخطوطة سيوة للمشيخ الطيب مسلم سيجد بعض أخبار الحروب والنزاع بينهم.

كان هذا الوضع حين قدوم الشيخ محمد حسن ظافر المدني أحد مشايخ الطريقة المدنية وهي إحدى فروع الطريقة الشاذلية إلى سيوة. وجاء في أحد الكتب أن مبدأ ظهور الطريقة المدنية كان سنة ١٢٤٠هـ/١٨٢٤م وكان أستاذها الشيخ محمد حسن ظافر المدني الذي خرج من المدينة المنورة سنة ١٢٢٢هـ/١٨٠٧م وساح حتى وصل إلى المغرب الأقصى وأخذ عن مشايخ عديدة ومنهم أستاذه حامل لواء الطريقة الشاذلية سيدي مولاي العربي ابن أحمد، الدرقاوي ومن أهم مبادئ الطريقة بأنه يلزم للمريد التوبة، طاعة المحبوب (الله) - التواضع (المدني د.ت: ٣٤-٣٢).



ويذكر الشيخ الطيب مسام في مخطوطه، إن الشيخ محمد ظافر، جاء إلى سيوة سنة ١٢٨٥هـ/١٨٦٨م<sup>١</sup> ووجد النزاع بين الشرقيين والغربيين فاختار مكانا بعيدا عن القرية وهو جبل الذكور وطلب منهم التوجه إليه لتناول الطعام وبعد ذلك أقاموا حلقة ذكر، وسافحهم بعد حلقة الذكر<sup>٢</sup> وطلبهم ونصحهم بأن لا يقطعوا السياحة في كل عام (عمر: ورقة ٢٠١). ويتفق هذا المكان الهدف الذي يصبو إليه، فهو مكان فسيح يبعد عن القرية بحيث يمكن التفرغ للعبادة فيه، ويجب أن ينظر إلى البعد المكاني في الزمن الذي تم فيه الاختيار، كما أن هذه المنطقة ليس لها مالك فهي منطقة محايدة.

وفي بادئ الأمر كان كل فرد يأخذ غذائه على أن يحتوي على فول وعدس ويسمى الأول ايعارين (البصارة) والثاني ايمالان (العدس) وكلاهما يسمى (ارغيت يشولا) أي خبز مملوء ثم يجتمعون حلقة واحدة ويفتتحون الذكر. بعد الذكر يعملون حلقة ويجتمعون الأكل من الجميع ثم يأكلون سويا وقبل الغروب يرجعون إلى البلدة ذاكرين حتى زاوية السبوخة<sup>٣</sup>، ولا يخضر السياحة إلا من وجبت عليه الصلاة (عمر: ورقة ٢٥١).

هذا ما كان من أمر السياحة<sup>٤</sup> في بادئ الأمر، فلم تعد يوما واحدا بل أصبح عدد أيام السياحة ثلاثة أيام كاملة غير يوم التجهيز ويوم الانصراف وأصبحت أيام السياحة إجازة رسمية لجميع المصالح الحكومية بسيووة. ولكن كيف أصبحت الآن ومن هم المسئولون عنها والمشاركين فيها وكيف تنظم فلا بد لهذا من إعداد وتنظيم دقيق.

بداية فإن الطريقة المسئولة عن السياحة هي الطريقة المدنية وهي طريقة صوفية وتعتبر إحدى فروع الطريقة الشاذلية ولا بد لأعضاء الطريقة من الالتزام بالإنكار، كما عليهم التوبة والتواضع فالكل سواسية. والتواضع صفة تلاحظ في أثناء السياحة ومن علامات التواضع أنه عندما ينادي على أحد لا بد وأن يقول سيدي فلان، وهو يرد عليه نعم سيدي، مهما كانت مكانة المنادي أو المنادى عليه وإذا خالف ذلك يخرم أو «ينصفوه» وهو الاسم الذي يطلق على العقاب، فيأخذ إلى مجمع المقاديم ويقبل رؤوسهم أو يتأسف لهم. ويمكن بالطبع أن يتفاضى عن ذلك إذا كان الأمر غير مقصود.

وليس معنى أن الطريقة المدنية هي المسئولة عن السياحة أن الاحتفال بالسياحة قاصر عليها، ولكن الجميع يشارك في الاحتفال بها كاستوسية والعروسية فهي ليست قاصرة على أحد بل يأتي إليها الناس من نواحي مصر المختلفة وهناك بيوت بحارة السبوخة - مركز الطريقة - يقم فيه المشايخ الذين يأتون من مناطق مختلفة ويسمى بيت المشايخ. وقد شاهدت في عام ١٩٩٩ بعض الأخوة من ليبيا يشاركون في الاحتفال وفرنسيا يواطب، على حضور السياحة منذ أربعة أعوام، بل ويشارك في تقديم الطعام، إذا هي تتلقى بصدر مفتوح كل راغب في المشاركة، فهي سياحة في سبيل الله ومحبة لخلق الله أساسها التواضع وإنكار الذات وخدمة الآخرين.

<sup>١</sup> هناك فرق في التواريخ، ولكن ليس فرق كبير.

<sup>٢</sup> الذكر هو غاية المتصوفة من أجل إفراغ محتوى العقل والغلب من كل شيء عدا الله، وأستحضار عظمة الله في القلوب العائسة الملحصة ولا بد وأن تسير على كل كيان المتصوف فيتملكه الإحساس بأن كل ما حوله يشاركه التسبيح والعبادة (عنده ١٩٩٧: ٤٨). والذكر من أهم خصائص الطرق الصوفية، وآيات القرآن الكريم تبين فضل الذكر «فانكروني أذكركم» آية ١٥٢ من سورة البقرة، «ألا يذكر الله تلمنن القلوب» آية ٢٨ من سورة الرعد. وأول أذكار الصوفية لفظ الجلالة (الله) (ولا إله إلا الله) (النجار ١٩٩٠: ٣٣).

<sup>٣</sup> زاوية السبوخة هي المعتر الرئيسي للطريقة المدنية.

<sup>٤</sup> يذكر الحاج محمد، علي معرف وهو في الخمسين من العمر أن السياحة استمرت سنويا منذ بدأت ولم تنقطع إلا في أواخر الخمسينيات من القرن الماضي على حسب ما يتذكر وقد مدتها لعدة سنوات مأمور سيوة عندما لم تهه. هناك أوقاف أهلية لسنوات قابلة ثم عادت مرة أخرى.

وتتكون الطريقة المدنية من القاعدة إلى القمة، فكل منطقة تسمى حارة، والمركز الرئيسي للحارة الجامع الموجود في المنطقة وبه يتم تنظيم كل شيء فرح أو مناسبة، ويختار له ممثلين عن الطريقة، وهم شاويش أو أكثر وذلك على حسب عدد أفراد الطريقة في الحارة، والاختيار دائما للشخص الأكثر تدينا والأكثر قدرة ونشاطا في العمل والاتصالات وأفضلهم خدمة للناس فعلى حد قولهم «خادم القوم سيدهم» ودائما ما يكون مثل هذا الشخص موزعا للاختيار ولا توجد انتخابات أو ترشيحات أو تربيطات فليس لأحد مصلحة في أن يكون في هذا الموضع، سوى أن يكون محبا لخدمة الناس.

والذين لهم حق الاختيار هم أعضاء الطريقة في كل جامع على حدة. ويختار مقدمي الجوامع القدوة والذي يصبح شيخا للطريقة والسياحة، وعادة ما يكون أكثرهم خبرة وفهما للدين. هذا التقسيم يدل على أن لكل درجة مهام يؤديها. فالشاويش وجمعا الشواش كما ينطقونها وظيفته في السياحة جمع النقود والأرغفة (المجردق)<sup>٥</sup> والحطب اللازم للطهي من المشاركين بالاسم والكمية والمبلغ، كما أنه مسئول عن أخذ أواني الطهي من الجامع وتسليمها للطباخين في السياحة واستلامها بعد انتهاء السياحة. والجدير بالذكر أن كل جامع به أدوات الطهي الخاصة به والذي يشترها هم أهل الحارة، وإذا ظهرت الحاجة لأدوات جديدة يجتمعون بعد صلاة العشاء، ويجتمعون النقود ويشترون المطلوب، وتفرض النقود على كل فرد وجب عليه الصيام أي عمره حوالي اثني عشر عاما. ولا تشتري تلك الأدوات من وقف الجامع. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك لو تفيب أحد المشاركين لديه في الجامع عن السياحة فعليه تسلم اللحم الموضوع في سلّة الجريد والخاص بهذا الغائب وتسليمه له.

أما المقدم وجمعه المقاديم كما ينطقونها فهم الذين يختارون القدوة وهم أيضا حلقة الوصل بين مجمع المقاديم - وهو المجمع الذي يخطط ويجهز للسياحة ولجميع أمور الطريقة المدنية - وبين الجامع الذي يمثلته فينقل توصيات القدوة والمقاديم وطلباتهم كل في جامع، وربما يكون للجامع أكثر من قدوة على حسب عدد المشاركين. ومجمع المقاديم الذي يرأسه القدوة هو المسئول عن تحديد موعد السياحة والذي عادة ما يكون في منتصف الشهر العربي الذي يقع في شهر أكتوبر، وتحديد هذا الموعد يتم لأن المناخ في تلك الفترة مناخ معتدل فيمكن للجميع أن يمكث في الخلاء دون أن يضار.

ويمكن أن نضيف بأن هذا الموعد مناسب من حيث أن هذه الفترة هي فترة الرواج حيث يكونون قد انتهوا من جمع المحصولين الرئيسيين بالواحة وهما البلج والزيتون، وأصبح معهم المال ووقت الفراغ للمساهمة والمشاركة في السياحة. والمقاديم مسؤولون عن تسلم النقود من شاويشية الجوامع والكشوف وشراء مستلزمات السياحة من مواشي وخضروات وملح وسكر وما إلى ذلك. وهم أيضا الذين يضعون ترتيبات السياحة وتنظيمها والإشراف على كل الخطوات. ويأتي على قمة هذا التنظيم القدوة وهو في نفس الوقت شيخ الطريقة المدنية ويرأس مجمع المقاديم في الاجتماعات التي تحدد خطة العمل وتنفيذها.

هذا هو التنظيم أو الهيكل الأساسي للطريقة المدنية يبقى بعد ذلك المتطوعون الذين يشاركون في السياحة فقط وهم الطباخون والمندوبون وهم أعضاء في الطريقة. أما الطباخون فلهم رئيس هو الذي يشرف على إعداد كل شيء فيقدر الكميات ويلاحظ الطهي وتوزيع الطعام ويمكن أن يكلف من ينوب عنه في خطوة من هذه الخطوات ويكون له نفس صلاحيات الرئيس، وعادة ما يكون

<sup>٥</sup> الأرغفة (المجردق) هو الخبز الذي يستخدم في عمل الفنة ويصنع من دقيق القمح أو الذرة وطره حوالي ٢٥ سنتيمتر وبشبه الرقاق.



الرئيس قد شارك في السياحة لسنوات طويلة اكتسب خلالها الطبرات فضلا عن الصفات التي تؤهله لهذا العمل وهو مسئولية إطعام ما يزيد عن خمسة آلاف فرد.

أما الطباخون فمسئوليتهم هي إعداد وتجهيز الطعام ويختص كل فريق بعمل، فهناك فريق يقطع اللحوم وفريق آخر يضعها في سلال الجريد، وآخرين يطهون، والبعض يجهز الفتة وهكذا، والأقل خبرة يقوم بتوزيع أطباق الطعام، وبعد انتهاء الأكل يقبلون الأواني، وعدد الطباخين يقارب المائة، وهم يؤدون عملهم تطوعا، وليس شرطا أن يكونوا أعضاء في الطريقة. أما العندوبون وهؤلاء تنتدبهم الجوامع من بين أعضاء الطريقة وذلك إذا ثقلت المهمة على الشاويش أو تقيب، فيمكن أن ينتدب الجامع أحدا بصفة مؤقتة لمهمة محددة، ويتم هذا وقت الاحتياج إلى أحد للمساعدة فقط فليس من المحتم أن يكون هناك مندوب، وبعد أن عرضنا لتنظيمات السياحة ودور كل فرد فيها وآليات العمل بها فلنصاحبهم منذ البدء أو منذ الإعداد لها والذي يتم قبل شهر أو أكثر من موعدا إلى نهاية الاحتفال لنرى كيف تسير الأمور بهذا النظام الرائع والتنظيم الإداري المحكم.

يجتمع القدوة والمقاديم في شهر سبتمبر لتحديد يوم البداية للسياحة ويراعي في اختيار أيام السياحة أن لا يتخللها يوم جمعه، وكما سبق القول تحدد في حوالي منتصف الشهر العربي الذي يقع في شهر أكتوبر، وذلك حتى يكون القمر منيرا للمكان فلا اعتماد على الإضاءة الصناعية خاصة في ساحة تناول الطعام والذكر. وتحدد الأيام وتوزع المهام والاختصاصات، والمبلغ المقرر على كل فرد والحطب المقرر على كل جامع، وكيفية العمل. وما يحدث في السطور السابقة يسمونه المذاكرة ولا يطلق عليه اجتماع، لأن مفهوم الاجتماعات يرتبط بالعمل السياسي في الأغلب الأعم.

وتبدأ مرحلة إعداد الكشوف وجمع النقود - و ذلك قبل السياحة بأكثر من خمسة عشر يوما ممن يرغب في المشاركة وفي عام 1999م كان المبلغ المقرر على كل فرد جنيتها ونصف، وذلك مقابل سلة الجريد التي بها اللحم، وتعتبر هذه السلة بركة لمن يأكل منها، ويلاحظ حرص الجميع على المشاركة في هذا سواء من الطريقة المدنية أو من خارجها. ويقدم كل فرد خمسة أرغفة من المجردق ويوضع في أجولة ويخزن في الجامع وعددها ستة عشر جامعا. وأيضا الحطب المقرر على الجامع فيتطوع أهل الحارة بجمع الحطب المطلوب فهناك من يقدم حزمة أو أكثر حتى يتم جمع الحطب المقرر على الجامع، والجامع الذي لا يحضر الحزم المطلوبة يمكن أن تفرض عليه غرامة نقدية حسب الحزم الناقصة ويقفها القدوة.

يستلم المقاديم النقود قبل موعد السياحة بيومين أو ثلاثة ويشترطون بها مستلزمات الطعام والذي يقوم بعملية الشراء لجنة تختار من بين المقاديم. وجدير بالذكر أن هناك من يقدم تبرعات عينية من أرز وزيت وماشية وغير ذلك. ترسل كل المستويات والتبرعات والنذور والمجردق والحطب الذي غالبا ما يكون من الجريد وأواني الطهي والغرف إلى جبل الذكور بصحبة الشواش (الشاوشية) قبل موعد السياحة بيوم ويستلمها الطباخون. وقيل أن نشارك في المظاهر الاحتفالية للسياحة، تقدم وصفا تقريبا لمكان السياحة حتى يستطيع القارئ أن يتخيل الأحداث التي تتم. منطقة جبل الذكور عبارة عن ثلاث مستويات في الارتفاع. الأول واد متسع بجوار تل والثاني مستح من التل تبلغ مساحته حوالي ثلاثة آلاف متر ويرتفع عن الوادي بحوالي خمسة عشر مترا وبه انحدار تجاه الوادي والمستوى الثالث يرتفع بحوالي خمسة عشر مترا ويصعد إلى هذا المستوى بسلاسل. وخلف كل ذلك باقي التل. فهل تمثل تلك المستويات تدرج العمل أو تعبير عن مستويات الأدوار في السياحة.

وقبل الوصول إلى ساحة الاحتفال، وعلى جانبي الطريق الواصل من سيوة إلى هذا المكان توجد خيام وأكشاك وعربات لبيع الحلوى والطعام وأماكن لتناول الشيشة والشاي وبعض الألعاب. كالمراجيح والأراجوز - التي يلعب بها الأطفال وغير مسموح لهؤلاء بالدخول إلى ساحة الاحتفال بأدواتهم، فهناك حاجز وهمي، لا يتجاوز، وجدير بالذكر أنه مسموح للجميع كبارا وصغارا عدا النساء المتزوجات فقط بالمشاركة في السياحة.

كل مستوى من المستويات السابقة مخصص لمهمة معينة في الاحتفال فالمستوى الأول هو مكان تناول وجبتي الغذاء والعشاء. وأيضا مكان الصلاة وحلقة الذكر الخاصة بالشحاذين، وحلقة الذكر الرئيسية تقام بعد صلاة العشاء.

والمستوى الثاني يعتبر مكان العمل الرئيسي، فيوجد به مكان مسقوف يجهز فيه الطعام، ويجلس فيه الطباخون، وبه الميكروفون الذي ينقل التعليمات ويجوار هذا المكان مباشرة مكان غير مسقوف توضع به أواني الطهي وفي جانب منه توجد مواقد الطهي وهي عبارة عن كواتين عددها حوالي ثلاثين كاتونا، وأيضا توضع الأطباق بعد. وضع الفتة فيها في هذا المكان استعدادا للتوزيع. المستوى الثالث، هو المكان الذي يجلس به القدوة والمقاديم، وينامون به ويباشرون أعمالهم في السياحة كما يستقبلون فيه الزائرين فهو مركز القيادة وهو عبارة عن غرفتين كبيرتين وبعض الغرف الصغيرة ومفروش بالحصر والوسائد. ويتناثر حول هذه الأماكن في المستويين الأول والثاني الخيام والاختصاص وهي مبنية بالكركشيم<sup>٦</sup>، وقليل منه له أبواب وهذه الاختصاص يستخدمها أصحابها طوال الثلاثة أيام للنوم والأكل واستقبال الزائرين ثم يتركها للعام القادم.

في اليوم السابق لبدء السياحة وبعد الإفطار حيث يقطر المقاديم في أماكنهم والطباخين في مكان الطهي، يصعد بعض الطباخين إلى حيث القدوة المشايخ فيصبحون عليهم ويقراون الفاتحة ويأخذون الإذن ببدء العمل حيث يبدأ تجهيز الطعام للغذاء وفي تلك الأثناء يتناول الطباخون الضحويه وهي عبارة عن تمر وقول سوداني وأي شيتي خفيف. والطعام في السياحة عبارة عن فتة سواء في وجبة الغذاء أو العشاء. ولا بد وأن تكون الفتة في أول يوم من المجردق حتى لو كان هناك قدر كاف من الأرز للفتة في الثلاثة أيام، وذلك للمعتقد بأن من أكل من عيش الآخر لو كان هناك خصام لا بد وأن يزول.

هذه هي الفلسفة الكامنة وراء الفتة لأن المجردق يخبر في المنزل ولا يشتري ويسكر ويختلط المجردق فلا يعرف الفرد من أي عيش كانت الفتة التي أمامه فذلك يعم الصلح والوثام بين الجميع. ويلاحظ أن هذا المعتقد منتشر في مصر فهناك المثل الذي يقول «من أكل من عيش الكافر يحارب بسيفه» «العيش والملح»<sup>٧</sup> والقول الشائع عندما يراد مصالحة فرد على آخر «وأنتم وأكلين عيش سواء».

ويبدأ التوزيع هكذا، ينادي في المكروفون أحد الأشخاص المخصصين لذلك ويطلق عليه اسم «البواب» فأتالا وأعلم ويكررها مرتين أو أكثر وذلك لكي يبدأ العمل. تملأ الأطباق<sup>٨</sup> بالمجردق المكسر ويقف بعض الطباخين والمتطوعين صفا واحدا ويتم تناول الأطباق التي بها الفتة الجافة من فرد إلى آخر حتى آخر الصف، وترص في صفوف وكان عددها في هذا العام أكثر من خمسمائة طبق كبير من الصاج أو الألومنيوم، وتتم تلك العملية مع أداء الذكر، ويكون ذلك بعد صلاة الظهر. تؤخذ الأطباق التي بها الفتة الجافة ويوضع عليها المرق واللحم وترص في صفوف بجوار بعضها البعض. ويؤدي ذلك العمل صفين من المشاركين - ويناح لأي فرد المشاركة - حيث يأخذ صف الأطباق التي بها الفتة الجافة وصفا آخر يأخذها بعد وضع المرق واللحم ويرصها ويقف الصفين متقابلين.

تتم كل هذه الخطوات مع الذكر حيث يقف خمس أو ستة مندوبين وبينما يقوم الباقي بدور المردين إلى أن ينتهي غرف الطعام ويبدأ التوزيع الذي يتسابق الأفراد للمساعدة فيه، فيأخذون الأطباق من مكان الطهي ويضعوها في الساحة والمسافة بينهما حوالي مائة متر، ويجلسون على

<sup>٦</sup> الكركشيم هو الطبقة السطحية من الأرض الزراعية وهي طبقة ملحبة متماسكة وتستخدم في البناء.

<sup>٧</sup> العيش هو الحنيز.

<sup>٨</sup> حتى سنوات قليلة كانت الفتنة توضع في قصعة من الخشب.



كل مجموعة في جانب مقابلة للأخرى، فتشد مجموعة وتتلوها المجموعة الأخرى والباقي يذكرون الله.

وفي داخل حلقة الذكر يوجد واحد أو أكثر ينظم الإيقاع والأداء ويسمى المشير ويختاره القدوة ويتم الذكر والحضور وقوف بتمايلون مع إيقاع الكلمات ثم يجلسون وينشدون بعض الأناشيد الدينية، ثم يقفون مرة أخرى، فالذكر يتنوع من لحظة الأخرى ويختلف مع اختلاف الكلمات، ويتناسب الذكر مع الحركة، فكل إنشاد له الحركة والإيقاع الذي يناسبه، وإنشاد الوقوف يختلف عن إنشاد السير عن إنشاد الافتتاح فكل حالة لها الإنشاد والحركة والإيقاع الذي يناسبها. ويؤدي الطباخون الذكر في أوقات الفراغ لديهم حيث يقومون بعمل حافة ذكر في المكان الذي يعملون به ولا يستمر الذكر لفترة طويلة فلا يتجاوز خمس عشر دقيقة، وهذا حتى لا يتحدثون في الأمور الدنيوية، فيشغلون أنفسهم بذكر الله الذي يمتلئ روحية لهم تسرى عناء العمل. وما حدث في اليوم الأول يحدث مثله في اليومين الثاني والثالث ولكن توجد بعض الاختلاف سواء في نوعية الطعام أو بعض الممارسات.

بالنسبة لطعام الغذاء الثاني يوم فيكون فته بالمجردق أيضا إلا إذا كان هناك من تبرع بالأرز فتعمل الفته من الأرز وأيضا إذا كان هناك من تبرع باللحم فيوضع على الفته، أما إذا لم يوجد اللحم فتعمل الفته بالدهن المتبقى من أول يوم وبالصلصة. ومثل هذا في ثالث يوم. والتبرع في هذه الحالة غالبا ما يكون ندرا والندر هو أن ينذر أحد الأفراد جملا مثلا للسياحة إذا رينا حقق له مطلبه، وكما يذكرون «هذه النفحة باروكية» «أنت وبنيتك وقصدك وضميرك، قلت حناكل دي باروكية، عيان حتشقى أصلها نفحة ربانية».

وفي ثالث يوم يسمى يوم النفحة أو الوداع في صباح ذلك اليوم يدعو الطباخين القدوة والمقاديم للإفطار معهم فيعيد وجبة الغذاء يرتدي اثنين أو ثلاثة من لاطباخين اجولة ويضعون نقونا وشوارب من فرو الخراف، ويسمك كل منهم بعصاة في يده حتى يبدون في هيئة الشحادين ويبدأ عملهم بقراءة الفاتحة ثم الصعود إلى حيث يوجد القدوة فيأخذون الإذن بالمرور على الخيام والأخصاص لجمع النفحة، ويتفرقون على الأخصاص ويصاحب كل منهم ثلاث أو أربع من الطباخين، يحمل أحدهم قفة كبيرة، ويسير خافهم كثير من الأولاد ويقفون أمام الأخصاص من منشدين.

يا عظم الجود يا مولانا  
بلغ الزوار يا مولانا  
ويرد الجميع يا مولانا

و يوجد عليهم الناس بتمر وكعك وفول سوداني وهكذا ويوضع كل هذا في الفته، وبعد الانتهاء من هذه الجولة يوضع كل ذلك في قفة كبيرة، بجوار علم الطريقة في ساحة الطعام. ويعمل حلقة ذكر يشارك فيها الشحادون تستمر لمدة حوالي عشر دقائق، ثم يقوم بعض الطباخين بتوزيع النفحة، وهو الاسم الذي يطلق على ما تم جمعه، ويحرص الجميع على الحصول على قدر من هذه النفحة لأن بها البركة بل يحرصون على إعطاء ذويهم الذين لم يحضروا السياحة. بعد النفحة يجلس المقاديم بالمصاحف ويقرأ كل مقدم جزءا من القرآن الكريم لكي يحنوا القرآن وبعد ذلك تلقى دروس دينية حتى صلاة المغرب.

الأرض حول تلك الأطباق في حلقات يتراوح عدد أفرادها بين ستة أفراد وثمانية، وكل فرد يأتي ويجلس في أول مكان خال فلا يسير بين الأطباق حتى لا يثير الفبار.

ينظم رئيس الطباخين أو من ينيبه وضع الأطباق ولا توضع الأطباق إلا في المكان الذي يشير إليه، رئيس الطباخين. ولا بد أن يكون له من قوة الملاحظة والإدراك ما يمكنه من تقدير الأطباق المطلوبة، مع العلم بأن عدد الأفراد التي تحمل الأطباق ربما يزيد عن العشرين فردا.

وعندما يتم وضع الأطباق يبلغ رئيس الطباخين أحد المقدمين الذي يبلغ بدوره القدوة بأن الطعام قد تم وضعه فيعطى الإذن للمقدم الذي يعطي بدوره إشارة للبوابة بجوار الميكرفون فينادي قائلا «بسم الله» فيبدأ الجميع في تناول الطعام - الممتاح للجميع - دون التقيد. بأن يكون عضوا في الطريقة المدنية أو مشاركا بالمال. ويحرص الجميع على تناول ولو لقيمات منه لأنه بركة.

ولا يستطيع أي فرد أن يمد يده للطعام - وقد لاحظت ذلك - إلا بعد سماع «بسم الله» وإذا حدث ومد فرد يده إلى الطعام قبل النداء فينصف أن يصطحبه اثنين شاونيشية ويمر على جميع الحلقات قائلا أنا غلطان. أو يؤخذ إلى مجمع المقاديم لكي يعتذر. والهدف من أكل الفته رمزي فمن أكل لقمة واحدة أدرك التسامح وتحل عليه البركة «فهم يقولون يأكل باروكية»، وهناك من يأكل قليلا ويذهب بعد ذلك إلى خصه ليستكمل طعامه من أكل خاص به. وكان هذا ممنوعا قبل الآن بسنوات قليلة، فكان ولا بد وأن تأكل وتشبع من الفته، حيث كان ممنوعا احضار الأكل لأنها سياحة بدنية وروحية واختلف الوضع الآن من حيث الشكل ولكن الجوهر باق وهو الأهم.

بعد ذلك تلم الأطباق الفارغة وتغسل جميع الأوعية ويتناول الطباخون غذاءهم ثم تجري القرعة، والخاصة بعمل كشوف تسليم انصبة اللحم المقفوز في سلة الجريد والتي تغسل قبل غرز قطعتين صغيرتين أو ثلاث قطع صغيرة من اللحم، ويبلغ عدد سلات الجريد حوالي خمسة آلاف سلة. وتتم القرعة بأن يكتب اسم كل حادة في ورقة وتوضع جميع الأوراق معا ويسحب أحد المقاديم والأوراق، وعلى هذا الأساس يرتب توزيع انصبة اللحوم على الحارات ويعلق كشوف بهذا الترتيب على الحائط. وأحيانا يكون هناك أكثر من فريق لتوزيع سلات الجريد، ويبدأ أحد المقدمين أو الشاونيشية في قراءة الأسماء فلان الفلاني خمسة أو أربعة على قدر مساهمته». ويتناول أحد الطباخين تلك الأنصبة.

بعد الانتهاء من التوزيع يبدأ في اجراء مزاد على رؤوس المذبوحات وأرجلها وجلودها بأن ينادي من يتولى أمر المزاد وهو عادة من الطباخين، فيعطيه أي قائلا «المزاد يا أولاد الحلال اللي يحب يبجي يبجي» وتبدأ المزايدة ومن يرسى عليه المزاد يدق قيمته ويترك الشيء الذي زايد عليه للطباخين، فيقتسمون النقود ويأكلون الرؤوس.

وإذا تبرع أحد بشاة أو بأي شيء للطباخين -يجرون عليه المزاد في نفس يوم التبرع، ولا بأخذ المتبرع النقود ولا من رسي عليه المزاد الشيء الذي زايد عليه ويترك للطباخين - لأن الذي تبرع عادة ما يكون قد نذر الشيء المبرع به للطباخين، لو أن الله حقق له ما طلبه كان شفاه مثلا، حيث أن هناك اعتقاد بأن هؤلاء الطباخين دعواتهم مستجابة فلذلك ينذر لهم ويطلب منهم الدعاء ولذلك يقال «الندر للطباخين والباروكية للناس» أي أن البركة تحل على من نذر.

وبعد توزيع اللحم يمكن لمن يريد الإنصراف أن ينصرف وهناك من ينصرف ويعود على حسب وقت فراغه، ويتضح من ذلك أن الارتباط الأساسي والاعتقادي في السياحة هو أكل الفته، وأخذ سلة الجريد باللحم التي فيها البركة. وينتشر الناس خاصة الصغار في الساحة التي قبل مكان الاحتفال يلعبون ويركبون الدراجات والمراجيح ويشاهدون الأراجوز، ويتناولون الأطعمة والمشروبات.

بعد صلاة المغرب يتم تناول العشاء ثم صلاة العشاء، وبعد ذلك حضرة الذكر الرئيسية في ساحة الطعام وينتظم فيها المقاديم والشاونيشية والطباخين ومن يرغب من الحاضرين، حيث يقفون على شكل مربع، ويبدأ الذكر ويستمر قرابة الساعة ثم ينصرفون، وهناك مجموعتان من المنشدتين تغف



الأرض حول تلك الأطباق في حلقات يتراوح عدد أفرادها بين ستة أفراد وثمانية، وكل فرد يأتي ويجلس في أول مكان خال فلا يسير بين الأطباق حتى لا يثير الفبار.

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كل مجموعة في جانب مقابلة للأخرى، فتشد مجموعة وتشلوها المجموعة الأخرى والباقي يذكرون الله.

وفي داخل حلقة الذكر يوجد واحد أو أكثر ينظم الإيقاع والأداء ويسمى المشير ويختره القدوة ويتم الذكر والحضور وقوف يتمايلون مع إيقاع الكلمات ثم يجلسون وينشدون بعض الأناشيد الدينية، ثم يقفون مرة أخرى، فالذكر يتنوع من لحظة الأخرى ويختلف مع اختلاف الكلمات، ويناسب الذكر مع الحركة، فكل إنشاد له الحركة والإيقاع الذي يناسبه، وإنشاد الوقوف يختار، عن إنشاد السور عن إنشاد الافتتاح فكل حالة لها الإنشاد والحركة والإيقاع الذي يناسبها.

ويؤدي الطباخون الذكر في أوقات الفراغ لديهم حيث يقومون بعمل حلقة ذكر في المكان الذي يعملون به ولا يستمر الذكر لفترة طويلة فلا يتجاوز خمس عشر دقيقة، وهذا حتى لا يتحدثون في الأمور الدنيوية، فيشغلون أنفسهم بذكر الله الذي يعتبر تسليية روحية لهم تسرى عناء العمل، وما حدث في اليوم الأول يحدث مثله في اليومين الثاني والثاني ولكن توجد بعض الاختلاف سواء في نوعية الطعام أو بعض الممارسات.

بالنسبة لطعام الغذاء ثاني يوم فيكون فتة بالمجردق أيضاً إلا إذا كان هناك من تبرع بالأرز فتعمل الفتة من الأرز وأيضاً إذا كان هناك من تبرع باللحم فيوضع على الفتة، أما إذا لم يوجد اللحم فتعمل الفتة بالدهن المتبقى من أول يوم وبالصلصة. ومثل هذا في ثالث يوم. والتبرع في هذه الحالة غالباً ما يكون ندراً والندر هو أن ينذر أحد الأفراد جملاً مثلاً للسياحة إذا ربنا حقق له مطلبه، وكما يذكرون «هذه النفحة باروكية» «أنت ونيك وقصدك وضميرك، قلت حناكل دي باروكية، عيان حتشفى أصلها نفحة ربانية».

وفي ثالث يوم يسمى يوم النفحة أو الوداع في صباح ذلك اليوم يدعو الطباخين القدوة والمقاديم للإفطار معهم فبعد وجبة الغذاء يرتدي اثنين أو ثلاثة من لاطباخين اجولة ويضعون ذقونا وشوارب من فرو الخراف، ويسمك كل منهم بعصاة في يده حتى يبدون في هيئة الشحاذين، ويبدأ عملهم بقراءة الفاتحة ثم الصعود إلى حيث يوجد القدوة فيأخذون الإذن بالمرور على الخيام والأخصاص لجمع النفحة، ويتفرقون على الأخصاص ويصاحب كل منهم ثلاث أو أربع من الطباخين، يحمل أحدهم قفة كبيرة، ويسير خلفهم كثير من الأولاد ويقفون أمام الأخصاص من مشددين.

يا عظم الجود يا مولانا	يلغ المقصود يا مولانا
بلغ الزوار يا مولانا	قبر الهاشمي المختار يا مولانا
ويرد الجميع يا مولانا	

و يوجد عليهم الناس بتمر وكعك وفول سوداني وهكذا ويوضع كل هذا في الفتة، وبعد الانتهاء من هذه الجولة يوضع كل ذلك في قفة كبيرة، بجوار علم الطريقة في ساحة الطعام. ويعمل حلقة نكر يشارك فيها الشحاذون تستمر لمدة حوالي عشر دقائق، ثم يقوم بعض الطباخين بتوزيع النفحة، وهو الاسم الذي يطلق على ما تم جمعه، ويحرص الجميع على الحصول على قدر من هذه النفحة لأن بها البركة بل يحرصون على إعطاء ذويهم الذين لم يحضروا السياحة.

بعد النفحة يجلس المقاديم بالمصاحف ويقرأ كل مقدم جزءاً من القرآن الكريم لكي يختتموا القرآن ويعد ذلك تلقى دروس دينية حتى صلاة المغرب.



قبل صلاة العصر يحضر مشايخ الطريقة بسبوة السلام والتهنئة لأعضاء الطريقة المعدنية بالسباحة، وفي أثناء صعودهم متشددين حيث القدوة والمقاديم يسلمون على الطباخين، ثم ينزل الجميع لصلاة العصر في الساحة.

بعد الصلاة يتوجه بعض المقدمين في سيارات لزيارة مقام سيدي علي بن هلال الذي يبعد حوالي عشرة كيلومتر من مكان السباحة، وهو رجل من أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وقد مات في المنطقة أثناء الفتوحات الإسلامية لبلاد المغرب، وهذه الزيارة للتبرك وإحياء ذكره. بعد صلاة العشاء تقام حضرة الوداع وتستمر فترة أطول من اليومين السابقين ثم يسلم الجميع على القدوة الذي يقول لهم «عودا إن شاء الله العام القادم» ومن يسلم لا ينصرف بل يقف وهكذا حتى يشكلون دائرة وينتهون من السلام ثم يأذن لهم القدوة بالإنصراف. توزع الأغذية المتبقية من مجردق وأرز وغير ذلك على الجوامع لكي يقيموا عليها مولدا في يوم الجمعة.

صباح اليوم الرابع يتوجه الشاويشية لاستلام أدوات الطهي الخاصة بهم حيث يكون لكل جامع علامة خاصة به على أدواته ويرفع علم الطريقة ذو اللون الأخضر ويسير خلفه بعض من تبقى من المقاديم والشاويشية والحضور ممن لهم قدرة على السير، وينشدون ويلاحظ تزايد أعداد السائرين لأن هناك من ينضم منشدا معهم أثناء مرورهم عليه، ويستمر الموكب حتى يصل إلى جامع سيدي سليمان<sup>١</sup>، حيث يكون هناك القدوة وباقي المقاديم في انتظارهم، ويقف الجميع على هيئة مربع وينشدون بعض الأناكث ثم ينصرفون بعد أن يأذن لهم القدوة بالإنصراف، حيث يتوجهون إلى جامع السبوخة وهو الجامع الرئيسي للطريقة فيقيمون حلقة ذكر تستغرق حوالي عشر دقائق ويكون عد التذاكرين أقل لانصراف عدد كبير من الحاضرين. وبعد ذلك ينصرف كل إلى حال سبيله منتظرين إلى عام قادم إن شاء الله.

ومن يشاهد ويراقب ما يتم خلال السباحة يدهش لدقة التنظيم، فكل الأمور أو الممارسات تتم دون الإحساس بأن هناك من يرتب لتلك الخطوات، فلا يلاحظ أن هناك أشخاصا تصدر أوامر ما كما أنه لا يسمع صوت يدل على خلاف في الرأي. فالأمور تسير بهدوء من صباح اليوم الأول إلى آخر يوم. أيضا دقة التقدير لكمية الطعام المناسبة لهذه الأعداد الكبيرة، رغم عدم معرفة المسئول عن الطعام ما هو عدد الأكلين والذي تجاوز الخمسة آلاف في عام ١٩٩٩.

يلاحظ أيضا التعاطف والود المتبادل بين الناس والبشر الذي يعطو وجوههم ومسارعتهم في التطوع لأداء بعض الأعمال وسعادتهم بها دون مقابل. تخرج من هذا إن هناك خيوطا غير مرئية من القيم الجميلة تربط بين الجميع كالحب والود والاحترام يلف كل ذلك اعتقاد راسخ ببركة السباحة. ذلك الذي جعلها تستمر أكثر من مائة وخمسين عاما ولا زالت.

ورغم أن أيام السباحة عمل مستمر منذ الصباح الباكر حتى حوالي الساعة العاشرة مساء بالإضافة إلى كثرة العاملين وتنوع الأعمال، إلا أنه لا يوجد عمل من هذه الأعمال يتم هكذا دون إذن، فهناك تسلسل في القيادة، والإذن هنا إشارة أو إيماءة لا يلحظها أحد. كل هذا ترسيخ لقيمة احترام الكبير وطاعته.

انصياع المذنب - وهو عادة ما يكون قد مد يده للطعام قبل الإذن بذلك - «للتخفيف العقاب المقرر لهذا وهو الاعتذار أو قول أنا غلطان دون أن تكون هناك قوة جبرية تلزمه بذلك.

<sup>١٠</sup> يعتبر سيدي سليمان أبو الأولياء عند أهل سبوة وهم يعتقدون في حرمة والمعجزات التي يمكن أن يقوم بها ويروون كثيرا من الحكايات التي تدل على كراماته. لمزيد من التفاصيل (فخري ١٩٩٣: ٩٠-٩٤).

العطف على من يعمل دون مقابل لخدمة السباحة والاعتقاد بأن الله يحب هذا العبد ويستجيب لدعااته، نلمسه في تبرع البعض للطباخين بأشياء عينية، وأيضا تبرع من رسي عليه المزاد، بدفع قيمة الشيء الذي زايد عايمه وتركه للطباخين.

ومن المعروف أن المعتقد دفين في صدور الناس، وأرى أنه يترسب في العقل الباطن لا شعوريا وتدرجيا، كما أنه لا يوجد بشر لا يلعب المعتقد دورا في أفكاره، ولكن هناك من المعتقدات ما يتصف بالعمومية والعلانية، حيث نجد فيه جماعية الفعل، وعلانيته حيث يحاولون إبرازه. وربما تكون السباحة هي الحالة الفريدة التي تتسم بجماعية الفعل وعلانيته.

وما سبق قوله يتفق مع السباحة، فوجبة الغذاء في اليوم الأول، لا بد وأن تعمل الفتة من الخبز، لما يجعله الخبز من معتقد قوي وراسخ، ليس لدى أهل سبوة، ولكن لدى جميع المصريين. حيث أنه لكي يحل الوثام أو يتم الصلح بين أطراف متخاصمة لا بد من أكل «العيش والملح». فإذا تناول أحد طعام الآخر فيجب عليه عدم خيانتته «بخون العيش والملح».

بدل ذلك على قوة مردود العيش «الخبز» في المعتقد الشعبي وهو النوع الوحيد من الطعام الذي يقبل ويوضع على الرأس إذا وجده أحد الأشخاص على الأرض ثم يضعه بعيدا عن خطي المارة، تناول الفتة في اليوم الأول به جانب معتقدي آخر وهو البركة التي ستحل على الأكلين ونلمس هنا ما أشرنا إليه سابقا من عمومية المعتقد وعلانيته وجماعية الفعل في وقت معين لتحقيق غاية المعتقد.

الاعتقاد في بركة اللحم الموضوع في سلة الجريد وبركة النفحة وبركة النذور، وبركة دعاء الطباخين. كل هذه الأمور راجعة إلى معتقد ترسب في الصدور وكان هذا وراء استمرار الظاهرة. هذا الجانب المعتقد هو الجانب الأبرز والمؤكد على استمرار السباحة ولكن هناك جانب خفي أيضا ساعد على ذلك، فكما نعرف فسبوة عبارة عن مجتمع يكاد يكون منعزلا في وسط الصحراء بل ويعيش داخل قرية تشبه الحصن فكان لا بد لهم من أيام ياتقون فيها سويا خارج القرية.

ففي الاحتفال بمولد سيدي سليمان يخرج معظم أهل سبوة من الرجال فقط بعد المولد إلى سفوح التلال القريبة من القرية لمدة ثلاثة أيام يقضونها في الأكل والرقص والغناء (فخري ١٩٩٣: ٩٣) وفي الربيع كانت الأسر تخرج إلى الجنابين لمدة ثلاثة أيام يتسامرون ويلتقون سويا، ولا بد من أكل الثوم وبكثرة في هذه الأيام لأنه مفيد وقد قل ذلك الآن.

هذه الممارسات الاحتفالية التي تتسم بجماعية الفعل تشي بأن عذلة الواحة تدعو إلى تلاحم وتضافر أهلها في مناسبات جماعية لما تؤديه من تسرية للنفس وفرصة للشباب المقبل على الزواج لاختيار شريكة حياته، حيث أن أغلب هذه الاحتفالات تحضرها الفتيات الصغيرات وكذلك السباحة فهي فرصة للشباب لكي يختار شريكة حياته، وقد تضاعفت تلك المظاهر الاحتفالية نتيجة لأن الواحة لم تعد في عزلة، كما تعددت وسائل التسلية، ولكن الذي يجذب الانتباه في ذلك هو السباحة، فبعد أن كانت يوما واحدا زادت إلى ثلاثة ويبدو أن ذلك راجع إلى قوة المعتقد.

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شحاذ يرتدي جوالا ويضع ذقنا وشاربا من فرو الخروف



إعداد الفتة



توزيع أطباق الفتة قبل وضع المرق واللحم



## الأصول التاريخية للفجر في مصر والأقطار العربية

### عبادة كحيلة

كلية الآداب، جامعة القاهرة

يعيش في مصر والأقطار العربية المجاورة نحو من مليونين من الفجر، لا يعرف غالبنا من هم؟ ومن أين أتوا؟ وإلى أين يذهبون؟ الأهم لماذا هم فجر، ومع ما وصلت إليه الكتابات الحديثة في علم الفجريات Gypsology، فما تزال هناك أسئلة أو بالأحرى مشكلات في حاجة إلى إجابات، أو إلى مزيد من الإجابات.

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وأول ما يجبه الباحث في هذا الموضوع هو المعلومات، فنحن لا نستطيع أن نكتب في موضوع ما، إذا لم تتوافر لدينا معلومات عن هذا الموضوع. والحق يقال إن هذه المعلومات على نزارتها أوفر في الغرب منها في الشرق، بحكم أن الهوة بين الفجر والأوربيين كانت - ولا تزال - أوسع من الهوة بين الفجر والشرقيين، فظاهرة التمايز كانت أوضح في الحالة الأولى، وشكلت بالتالي حافزا للكتابة عنهم.

على أية حال فلدينا في الأقطار العربية مسمى عام هو الفجر، وهو المقابل العربي للمسمى الإنجليزي Gypsies، كما إن لدينا مسميات فرعية، منها كاولية وقرج (العراق) نور (بلاد الشام ومصر) حلب (صعيد مصر وشمال السودان) زطوط (وواحدتها زطي) سلطنة عمان). هناك مسميات أخرى أصغر، وإذا تناولنا مصر كعينة، فلدينا قوم من النور يدعون بالهنجرانية، يدعون الانتساب إلى الفجر، وهذا غير صحيح فأصل الكلمة أهنكر الفارسية وتعني حدادا، وتجمع أهنكران أي حدادون (شتا ١٩٩٢/١: ٢١٦، تغرى بردي ١٩٦٤ - ١٩٧٢/٢: ٢٧٠)، والحدادة مهنة أم عند الفجر. وفي مصر وفي غيرها من الأقطار العربية لا يطلق الفجر على أنفسهم مسمى يرتبط بلغتهم، لكنهم يطلقون على غيرهم مسمى خشانة أو (أخشان) وواحدتها خشنى، وهو المقابل العربي للكلمة الرومانية Gadze وواحدتها Gadzo.

جدبر بالذكر أن الفجر أدعوا لدى مقدمهم إلى أوروبا أنهم مصريون، وهو زعم - يتضح بعد - غير صحيح، وربما انتحلوا هذه النسبة لارتباط مصر القوي بأسفار الكتاب المقدس قديمها وجديدها على سواء. ولم تتضح الحقيقة إلا في أخريات القرن الثامن عشر. بفضل شاب مجري يدعى إشتفان فايي Istvan Valyi كان يدرس اللاهوت في جامعة لايدن بهولاندا، وكان هذا الشاب قد التقى بثلاثة طلاب هنود يدرسون معه في الجامعة نفسها، ولا حظ أنهم يتحدثون بلغة تشبه لغة مواطنة من الفجر المجرين، فدون حوالى ألف كلمة من كلامهم، ولدى عودته إلى وطنه، عارضها على هؤلاء الفجر، واكتشف أنهم عرفوا بغير كبير صعوبة تفسير هذه الكلمات The New Hungarian Quarterly 1970:150

قبل أن ينتهي القرن الثامن عشر صار الأصل الهندي للفجر حقيقة يتفق عليها علماء الفجريات كافة، لكنهم - بعد ذلك - يختلفون في تحديد ذلك الشعب، الذي ينتمي إليه الفجر. هناك عدة نظريات، أشهرها إنهم ينتمون إلى شعب الجت Jats، وهو شعب لا يزال له حضوره الواضح في دولتي الهند وباكستان، وعرفه العرب في فترة ما قبل الإسلام، وعربوا الاسم إلى زط. أهم من روج لهذه النظرية هو المستشرق الهولندي الكبير دي خويه De Goeje في كتاب صغير أصدره في سنة ١٩٠٣ بعنوان «هجرات الفجر عبر القارة الآسيوية Les Migrations des Tsiganes à



وضع العرق واللحم على الفتة استعدادا لتوزيعها



حفلة الذكر عند جامع سيدي سليمان



travers l'Asie واعتمد فيه على مصادر عربية وفارسية. أهمها الشاهنامه للفردوسي شاعر الفارسية الأكبر (ت ١٠٢٠ م).

وجدت هذه النظرية معارضة قوية من بعض العلماء، على أساس أن لغة الفجر المعاصرين في أوروبا - لغة الروماني Romani وإن كانت ذات قرابة بلغة الجت، إلا أنها أقرب إلى المجموعة الوسطى من اللغات الهندية، وتمثلها في العصر الحاضر اللغة الهندية Hindi (Fraser 1995:20, 22, 36).

يترجح لدينا أن المهاجرين من أسلاف الفجر كانوا ينتمون إلى خليط من شعوب هندية أممها الزط الذين صاروا علما على هؤلاء المهاجرين (Wedek 1973: 274-276)، وقد استقرت الحال بهؤلاء الهنود الذين تدعوهم منذ الآن بالفجر في الهضبة الإيرانية، ولا سيما الجهات المصاحبة لبحر فارس (الخليج العربي)، وذلك في زمان بهرام جور (٤٢٨-٤٢٠) من ملوك الأسرة الساسانية (الفردوسي ١٩٢٢: ٢١٠٥، الأستهباني ١٩٢٢-١٩٢١: ٣٨).

في أعقاب الفتوح الإسلامية لدولة الفرس دخل هؤلاء الفجر في الإسلام، وشاركوا في بعض الأحداث الهامة التي مرت بها الدولة الإسلامية الناشئة، كما أن بعضهم هاجر إلى بلاد الشام.

في عهد الخليفة العباسي المأمون (٨١٣-٨٢٣م) قام بعض هؤلاء الفجر بالبعث في إقليم البطيحة الواقع لدى المجري الأدنى لنهر الفرات، الأمر الذي دفعه - دون جدوى - إلى حربهم، لكن أخاه المعتصم (٨٢٣-٨٤٢م) نجح فيما لم ينجح فيه سلفه، وأمر بتبقي منهم إلى الثغور (أي الحدود مع دولة الروم)، حيث أمضوا عشرين سنة إلى أن اغار الروم على الثغر في العام ٨٥٥ م فأسروهم، ولم يعودوا بعد سنوات مسلمين (الطبري ١٩٧٩: ٥٨٠/٨، ٥٨١، ٥٩٩، ٩٠/٩، ٢١١، ١١-٨).

عاش الفجر داخل العالم البيزنطي في أرمينية، ما يزيد على المائتي سنة، وهذا يتسق مع التأثير الأرمني القوي في لغتهم، ولدى تقدم الأتراك السلاجقة على حساب الروم في هذا الإقليم، عبرت أعداد كبيرة منهم إلى الأقسام الغربية من الإمبراطورية ومنها إلى بلاد اليونان، وبدأ التأثير اليوناني يجد طريقه إلى لغتهم، بحيث غدت اليونانية هي أكثر اللغات الأجنبية تأثيرا في الرومانية - لغة الفجر - تاليها الأرمينية. ثم بدأوا يتسربون من بلاد اليونان إلى سائر أنحاء البلقان، وفي عام ١٤١٧ بدأ اجتياحهم لأواسط أوروبا وغربيها.

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لم يكن ما حدث في العام ٢٤١هـ/٨٥٥م نهاية للوجود الفجري في تاريخنا، لأن هؤلاء المنفيين ثم المسيبيين كانوا فريقا من الزط، ولم يكونوا الزط كافة، فلا تزال لدينا ثلاثة تجمعات لهم في بلاد الشام وبلاد الأهواز (خوزستان) وبلاد البحرين، فضلا عن زط كانوا يتوافدون بين حين وآخر من بلاد الستد، ويشاركون في أحداث سياسية بفارس وكرمان وغيرهما من أقطار إيران. هؤلاء الزط في تجمعاتهم المختلفة، ثم انتشارهم في مجتمعات أخرى بعد ذلك، هم أسلاف الفجر المعاصرين لنا في المشرق.

إذا نحن تتبعنا أخبارهم، نجد الدولة تواصل الإفادة منهم في أمنها، فولى بعضهم منصب صاحب الشرطة في مدينة بغداد في بعض سنوات القرن الرابع الهجري / العاشر الميلادي (الصولي ١٩٧٥: ٢٤٩-٢٤٨)، لكننا لا نلاحظ أنها أفادت منهم في مناصب أخرى.

فيما عدا ذلك تتواتر الإشارة إلى أدوار لعبها الزط، أو فريق من الزط في أزمة الفتنة، مثل فتنة القرامطة الذين زرعو الفوضى في كل مكان حلوا به (الدواداري ١٩٦١: ٩٠/٦)، كما شاركوا في

١ راجع هذه التفصيلات في كتابنا «الزط والأصول الأولى لتاريخ الفجر» ١٩٩٤: ٤٩-٦٠

٢ راجع في هذا الشأن ما ورد في كتابنا «الزط»: ٧٥-٨٤، اعتمادا على مصادر متعددة.

بعض الغلاقل التي ترتبط بنزاعات على السلطة، داخل الأسرة البويهية الحاكمة في العراق وإيران (ابن مسكويه ١٩٠٤: ٣٧٨-٣٧٥، ٣٤٨/٤).

ومن جملة ما عرف عن الزط في هذه المرحلة وما تلاها من مراحل، براعتهم في الموسيقى والغناء، حتى أن الخليفة الراضي (٣٢٢هـ/٩٣٤م-٣٢٩هـ/٩٤٠م) كان من المعجبين بفناء «ذوذة الزطي الطنبوري» (الصولي ١٩٧٥: ١٥٠) كما اشتهروا أيضا بأن كلامهم غير مفهوم، وهذا مؤشر مهم على لغتهم، فيعيب الصحاح بن عباد (ت ٢٨٥هـ/٩٩٥م) على المتنبي (ت ٣٥٤هـ/٩٦٠م) قبح مطالعته في بعض الأحيان، ويأتي بنماذج من شعره، ويعلق فيقول: «وهذا كلام الحكل ووطانة الزط» (الثعالبي ١٩٨٣: ١٨٣).

الأهم هو نفور المجتمع منهم، ونظرته إليهم بازدراء، ورميهم بكل تقيصة. وعندما كانت تتردد في بعض مسابرها أخبار عن أعراب، يهاجمون قوافل الحاج إلى بيت الله الحرام، بوصفون بأنهم زط وأوباش (ابن القلانسي ١٩٠٨: ٣١٠).

وقد تسربت هذه السمعة السيئة إلى كتب الأمثال، فيأتي الميداني (ت ٥١٨هـ) (مجمع الأمثال ١٩٧٨: ٢٣/٢٣٥) بمثل يقول: «لا تعلم الشرطي التخص ولا الزطي التخص»، وبعده بسنوات طويلة يأتي شرف بن أسد المصري (ت ٧٢٨هـ) (أمثاله ١٩٨٩: ١٧٧) بمثل آخر يقول: «من كلم الزطي على نفسه يخطي».

في فترة بصعب تحديدها، بدأ هذا المصطلح «زط» تختفي تدريجيا من حياتنا، فلا نشاهده فيما توافر لدينا من موسوعات العصر المملوكي، وبدأت تحل محله مصطلحات أخرى، ولا نجد في عصرنا هذا استخداما واضحا لهذا المصطلح بمعناه العرقي - أي فجر - سوى في سلطنة عمان، فيقال زطي، وتجمع زطوطا.

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في غضون القرن الثالث الهجري (التاسع الميلادي)، بدأت تظهر في أقطار المشرق جماعات تعرف ببني ساسان أو الساسانيين، ولدينا مادة طيبة عنهم في كتب الأدب، واختصهم كل من بدیع الزمان الهمداني (ت ٣٩٨هـ) (مقامات الهمداني ١٩٢٣: ١٠٠-١٠٤) والحريزي (ت ٥١٧هـ) (شرح المقامات الحريزية ١٣٠٦هـ: ٢٣٢٧/٢-٢٤٣) بمقامة مستقلة. كما اختصهم ابن دانيال الموصلي (ت ٧١١هـ) (خيال الظل وتمثيلات ابن دانيال ١٩٧٣) ببابية (أي تمثيلية) من باباته الثلاث، ولمضي الدين الحلبي قصيدة تدعى بالقاصيدة الساسانية.

ادعى الساسانيون انتماءهم إلى الطبقة الأولى من ملوك فارس، وأن الزمان انحدر بهم، وصاروا في عداد السؤال، ثم إنهم في سؤالهم كانوا يلجئون إلى مختلف الحيل، حتى أن صاحب كشف الظنون (ت ١٠٦٧هـ) (٤٥٦-٤٥٥/١) يتحدث عن علم بذاته، يدعوه «علم الحيل الساسانية».

يتضح لدينا أن بني ساسان هؤلاء مسمى جديد للزط، وفي كتابه عن الفتوة (١٩٥٨: ١٧٧) يعرف ابن المعمار (ت ٦٤٢هـ) الزطي فيقول: «هو المتلصص والقطوي الساساني». إذ كان الساسانيون أخلاقا للزط، فهل هم أسلاف للفجر؟

نستطيع أن نتوصل إلى هذه النتيجة بتحليل القصيدة الساسانية لأبي دلف، وأبو دلف، هو مسعر بن مهلهل الخزرجي اليميني (ت حوالي ٣٩٠هـ). رحالة مشهور وكاتب وشاعر ظريف، وواضح أنه لا ينتمي إلى بني ساسان، لكنه خالطهم ووصف أحوالهم، واقتبس مفردات من كلامهم، لا نجدنا في معجماتنا العربية. والقصيدة الساسانية قصيدة طويلة، انتخب الثعالبي (ت ٤٢٩هـ) منها مائة وخمسة وتسعين بيتا، ضمنها كتابه «بتيمة الدهر» (٤١٣/٣-٤٢٦) أولها:

جفون دمعها يجري لطول الصد والهجر

تتناول القصيدة الحيل التي كان يلجأ إليها هؤلاء الساسانيون، من أجل أن يحصلوا على العطايا والأموال، فهم يسبرون في الطرقات والأسواق يعلوهم التراب، وقد ارتدوا أسملا بالية، وحملوا



تعاونية في أعناقهم، أو وضعوا عصايات على وجوههم، وهم يتعامون أو يدعون المرض أو الجنون، أو أنهم من الزهاد، أو حتى من المجاهدين، وربما ادعوا تعاطي الطب ومداواة المرضى، ومنهم من يعقر نفسه بموسى، أو يزعم أن الروم قطعوا لسانه، أو أنه قطع عليه الطريق وغصب ماله، وقد يقيد نفسه بالسلاسل ثم يفككها، وربما سحب الواحد نساء وصبية يكدي عليهم (أي يتسول عليهم) أو يقرد أو يديب، أو يطحن النوى والحديد بيديه وأضراره.

هذه الحيل جميعها قريبة مما يمارسه الفجر في عصرنا في أقطارنا كافة. وإذا حللنا هذه القصيدة تحليلًا لغويًا، وضاهينا بين ما ورد فيها من ألفاظ غريبة، وبين ما نجده في لغة الفجر في مصر الآن، راعنا التشابه وأحيانًا التماثل بين الالتهتون. من هذه الألفاظ المشتركة: كيدًا: أير. خشني: غير الفجري. جزارة: عين. سقمون: صبي. كده: امرأة. مشمول: خبز<sup>٤</sup> نصل إذن إلى نتيجة هي: الرظ ← الساسانيون ← الفجر.

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ولكن متى بدأ استخدام مسمى «عجر» مسمى حديث نسبيًا، لأن الفين والجيم لا يجتمعان متتاليين في كلمة عربية واحدة، كما إن هذه الكلمة - وإن صارت دارجة اليوم - لا نشاهدها في الكتب التي تعود إلى العصرين المملوكي والعثماني، وربما كان أحمد فارس الشدياق (ت ١٣٠٤هـ/١٨٨٧م) (الشدياق ١٢٨٤هـ: ٤٥١/١) هو أول من ورد هذا التعبير من علماء اللغة العرب.

ينذهب الأب أنستاس ماري الكرملّي (ت ١٣٦٦هـ/١٩٤٧م) (مجلة المشرق ١٩٠٢: ٨٦٧) وهو عالم لغوي عراقي كبير إلى أن هذه الكلمة، تصحيف للكلمة التركية كوجر، وتعني الرجل أو المهاجرين، ويبدو أن تخريجه صحيح، ويتسق مع ما يذكر من أن إحدى جماعات الفجر، وفدت إلى مصر من إقليم اليفدان Moldavia، بعد انتصار حقه العثمانيون في هذا الإقليم في أواخر القرن السابع عشر (Sampson 1928:88-90).

نستطيع أن نقرر أنه بعد أن وفدت هذه الكلمة مع وفود هؤلاء المهاجرين، صار لها حضورها على المستوى الشعبي، إلى أن تحقق لها الانتشار، فبدأت تتخذ طريقها إلى الكتب، أما عن النور (وواحدها نوري)، فهي مشتقة من لوريين (وواحدها لوري) أو لوليين (وواحدها لولي)، وتطلق على عجر إيران (شتا ٣/١٣٢٧). وأول ذكر لهؤلاء النور، ورد في مسالك الأبحار لابن فضل الله العمري (ت ٧٢٩هـ) ونقله عنه القلقشندي (ت ٨٢١هـ) في كتابه «صبح الأعشى» (القلقشندي ١٩٨٥: ٣٤٣/١٤).

إذا انتقلنا إلى الحلب، فلا تعلم على وجه التحقيق أصل هذه التسمية، ولا نجد في معاجم اللغة ما يشي بها، وربما دعى هؤلاء الفجر بهذه التسمية، لأنهم انتقلوا إلى مصر من مدينة حلب. جدير بالذكر أن الجماعات الثلاث: الفجر، النور، الحلب، تعرف جميعها بمسمى عام يجمعها هو «عجر»، واشتهرت كل واحدة منها - حقا أو باطلا - بنشاط معين تمارسه إلى جانب سائر الأنشطة، فاشتهر الفجر بالرقص، والنور بالسرقة، والحلب بالتسول، وجميعها مهن - إذا جاز التعبير - تدر عائدا ماديا مجزيا.

وإذا كان الفجر في أقطار العالم كافة، مارسوا نسقا معينًا من المهن، فإنهم كانوا يكيفون أنفسهم طبقًا لظروف كل قطر على حدة؛ فبينما اشتهروا في البلقان بترقيص الدببة، فإنهم

<sup>٤</sup> أفدنا في معرفة معاني هذه الألفاظ من المصدر الوارد بمقال الكابتن نوبولد في مجلة الجمعية الآسيوية الملكية The Gypsies of Egypt. JRAS 16.285-299.

اشتهروا في مصر بترقيص القروء، كما إن من جملة المهن التي تفردت بها الفجريات في مصر كودية الزار وختان البنات.

وثمة مهنة زاولها الفجر في مصر لعدة مئات من السنين إلى أن اختفت في غضون القرن التاسع عشر، هي مهنة المشاعلية أو حملة المشاعل، وترد تفصيلات عنها في بابات ابن دانيال، كما ترد تفصيلات عنها في كتب التاريخ ابتداءً بالنجوم الزاهرة لابن تغرى بردي (ت ٨٧٤هـ) (ابن تغرى بردي ٤٦٨) وانتهاءً بعجائب الآثار لعبد الرحمن الجبرتي (ت ١٢٣٧هـ/١٨٢٢م) (الجبرتي ٣/٣٢٦). تحدد عمل المشاعلي في حراسة الوالي وهداية التائهين في الليل، والتسول وكسح الأقبية، وتجريس المذنبين وضربهم على أقبعتهم، والنداء بأوامر الحاكم ونواهيته، وسلخ جدود الحيوانات، وتنفيذ الحدود في اللصوص وصلبهم أحيانًا، وتجارة الحشيش والنهله<sup>٥</sup>.

وعلى ذكر المشاعلي ووظيفته، فقد درجت الحال في الريف المصري، حتى عهد قريب، على أن يعهد بمهمة الخفارة إلى خفير من النور، باعتبار أنهم أعرف باللصوص - ومنهم نور - من غيرهم.

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وإذا كنا نشاهد في الغرب صدامًا عنيفًا بين عالم الفجر والعالم حولهم، فإننا لا نشاهد مثل هذا الصدام عندنا، والسبب - نذهب - هو أن الهوة لم تكن واسعة بين العالمين في المشرق، حيث توافر قدر من الحراك الاجتماعي المرن، وهو ما لم يتوافر في أوروبا قبل عصر الثورة الصناعية، فضلًا عن أن الفجر في خصائصهم الفيزيومية الظاهرة لا يختلفون كثيرًا عن جيرانهم من أهل المشرق، وقد حاول بعض الدارسين أن يحددوا هذه الخصائص في مصر، لكنهم لم يصلوا إلى نتيجة حاسمة.

نضيف إلى ذلك أن أسلوب الترحل وسكنى الخيام الذي عرفه الفجر، وظل يصاحبهم عبر أحقاب الزمن، عرفته جماعات أخرى غير الفجر أخصها العربان، مما هبها الفرصة للفجر أو بعضهم، لأن يدعوا الانتساب إلى العروبة، مما كان يقضي في أحيان كثيرة إلى حجب الصفة الفجرية عنهم. عند انعكاس هذا كله على الفجر تأثر كلامهم - الذي نعرفه باسم السهم - على نحو واضح - وإن كان متفاوتًا - باللغة العربية، مما أدى إلى التباعد بين لغة الفجر (أو لغاتهم) في مصر وبين لغة الفجر (أو لغاتهم) في أوروبا. واللغة التي تتحدث بها جماعة الفجر، هي وحدها - دون لغة النور أو لغة الحلب - أقرب لغات الفجر المصريين إلى الرومنية، وهي لغة الفجر الأوربيين<sup>٥</sup>.

<sup>٥</sup> خيال الظل ٢٢٥-٢٢٩ وانظر ما ورد عند باول كاله في مقال له بالمجلة الآسيوية

Paul Kahle, The Arabic Shadow-Play in Egypt. JRAS 1940:27.

<sup>٥</sup> Sampson: Op.cit., 85-88 & Newbold: Op.cit., 296-299.



# THE CULTURE OF SOUTH RED SEA ŠALĀTĪN - ABŪ RAMĀD

Souzann El Saed Yousef

*Academy of Arts, Cairo*

## Introduction

The desert plays an important role in Egyptian life. The Western and Eastern Deserts constitute the majority of the area of Egypt. The importance of the Eastern Desert springs from its strategic importance as well as its economic one. The Eastern Desert is a rocky mound stretching along the Red Sea chain of mountains (Bayoumy 1999:30).

The area of Šalātīn - Abū Ramād - Halāyib is 1200 km from Cairo in the south east of Egypt. It occupies an area of 1800 km representing what looks like an isopod triangle with a base of 300 km. The length of the eastern side overlooking the Red Sea and the western side overlooking the Western Desert is about 200 km. The head of the triangle starts at a point situated on the seacoast near what is known as the Well of Šalātīn. The area stretches until it reaches the line of the boundaries with Sudan that was demarcated by an agreement in the year 1899 (Mostafa 1998).

The environment in this area is characterized by its relative isolation and its hard terrain and a rain system that is highly changeable with periods of drought and limited natural resources, especially water (Al-Kassas 1999:173). The processes of human adaptation are based on grazing and trade. Thus, leading herds in search of food and water in the rainy season is the basis of the traditional way of life.

This study tries to discuss some theoretical issues closely related to the subject. It enumerates the special concepts which are related to surviving problems and the cultural and social operations and it tries to define the assumptions concerning the relationships that guarantee a direct connection between the natural environment and human adaptation. The concept of adaptation means the relationship between certain inhabitants and their environment. In biology, the concept refers to operations through which an animal or a plant can adapt to the environment through a wide variety in their structures, physiological and hereditary formation and in their way of breeding and their ways of defending and attacking (Abd El-Ghaffar 1980).

We find this perspective in the framework of human society. Social and cultural organizations are considered functional and adaptive mechanisms that enable inhabitants to exploit their environments without neglecting their powers in providing food. Interaction between inhabitants and other creatures in a certain environment affects the ability of survival for certain inhabitants. Adaptation is an integral process that includes how to form individual adaptive strategies within the frame of different depressants. The natural environment constitutes only one of these



depressants beside the other depressant patterns within the economic, political and social system.

This study focuses mainly on the traditional culture as one of the adaptive means with the environment.

Three main tribes inhabit the area. They are al-<sup>c</sup>Abābida, ar-Rašāyida and al-Bašāriya. Each of these tribes differs in its ethnic origin, indigenous origin and way of living.

al-<sup>c</sup>Abābida: They are related to their grandfather <sup>c</sup>Abād. This name was the name of the valley facing what is now called the town of Edfo. The al-<sup>c</sup>Abābida is divided into 5 groups. They are al-<sup>c</sup>Ašbāb, al-Faqrāb, al-Malikāt, al-<sup>c</sup>Abūdiyyīn, and aš-Šanātīr. They are concentrated in Qena, Luxor, Edfo and Aswan (Abd El-Hameed 1981).

The al-<sup>c</sup>Abābida in Abū Ramād is divided into two main branches. They are al-Ġam<sup>c</sup>āb and al-Hamdāb. They work in fishing in spring and summer seasons. But in fall and winter seasons they work in grazing cattle and sheep or they go back to their home towns in Upper Egypt until the drought time is over. They speak Arabic and are closely related to men of religion specially al-Ḥasan aš-Šādilī whom they consider their grandfather. They mix with al-Bašāriya tribes through marriage.

ar-Rašāyida: They are related to Rašīd ibn Sa<sup>c</sup>ūd. Their grandfather is King <sup>c</sup>Abdal<sup>c</sup>azīz. They are related to Ḥārūn ar-Rašīd from Zubayda. They fled to Egypt in 1806. They have branches in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Eritrea and Ethiopia. They live in the desert away from the city. They live in tents made of cloth and hair. They work in the trade of cattle, rocks and traditional clothes. They have their own culture that is different from the culture of al-Bašāriya. They do not mix with other tribes through marriage. They do not have Egyptian nationality. This causes a lot of trouble for them in travels. They speak Arabic with *rašīdī* dialect. They have an extensive knowledge of Arabic.

#### al-Bašāriya Culture

The majority of population is related to al-Bašāriya Tribe. They are believed to be the oldest group that inhabited this area. Their population is about 8 thousand people who live in Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea. They are considered a branch of al-Baḡā tribes<sup>1</sup>. They speak Baḡāwiyya which is one of the Tabdāwiyya dialects mixed with the dialect of Upper Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> The name al-Baḡā refers to Inhabitant Group Union that dominates different parts of the province. The name is considered one of the common errors as it is the name that Arabs gave them. al-Baḡā call themselves (Badwāniya), g does not exist in their language.

Their complexion is black and they are very thin in most cases. Their hair is curly. They are divided into four groups: al-<sup>c</sup>Alyāb, al-<sup>c</sup>Umūrāb, aš-Šantīrāb, al-Humdārāb.

Some of them live in towns and the others still live in the mountains. Their relation system is based on relating to the father from joint ancestry and on a tribal system that is highly divided. The division and melting process are still very active within the system. This leads to continuous modifications to the tribe's borders.

The tribe is divided into several sub-divisions that are called ad-Dawābb or al-Badna. ad-Dawābb or al-Badna consists of a group of relatives related through the father line that established al-Badna. Concerning the relation depth of ad-Dawābb, it varies between four to five generations.

As for the tribe that is called al-Ādāt, it represents the highest level of ad-Dawābb. They go back to 16 generations. At the bottom of ad-Dawābb level, there are centred groups represented by al-Maḡārib. That means existing groups which are referred to as Masā or Dawā. These groups may represent a section of al-Badna. They are constituted from extended families or primary families (parents and their children). ad-Dawābb is a unit that has its group rights in land, grass and water (Enuar 1999:134).

For hundreds of years, al-Bašāriya has been moving between the Egyptian-Sudanese borders seeking grazing. Tribal trade that has been developed between the coasts of the Red Sea played a role in supporting their pastoral economy. They participated in this trade as being the main transporters for the trade, as being camels' owners, guides to travellers, water suppliers and owners of firewood.

Their animals are more beneficial than land not only because of their economic value but because they represent the main beneficial source in social life and ritual occasions. Such animals bring the cash income through selling animals, milk and fertilizers. They also provide them with essential food. Milk mixed with polenta is their main food. The value of animals extends to ritual occasions. Parents give their male and female children cattle in different occasions in their lives such as marriage, birth, and circumcision<sup>2</sup>.

There are mechanisms to overcome poverty. Man can get animals from his relatives and friends. He borrows animals but does not have the right to use anything but their milk. When his crisis is over, he is to return the animals to their owner. Animals such as goats and camels prevail. Goats prevail because of their speedy procreation and camels because of their ability to stand thirst and their ability to adapt with the harsh environmental conditions. Camels play an important role in al-Bašāriya culture. In addition to the economic importance of camels, they are linked

<sup>2</sup> *at-tahniq*: After birth the new born is given a mouthful of milk in a cup provided that the baby tastes the milk after one of the tribe's members who is known of his generosity, courage and devotion drinks from it. Thus, these characteristics are transferred to the baby.



to man's honour. al-Baḡā refers to the woman's womb as *ūkam* which is the same word that refers to the camel. There is a symbolic language for al-Bašāriya which they understand very well. If a man finds his camel slaughtered and thrown in the desert, this is a message from society that "his wife has an affair with another man". The Bašāri's relation with his camel is the relation between close friends. He understands what the camel feels and wants through its body's movement. If a man is obliged to slaughter his camel while travelling for certain reasons such as being infected, he becomes very sad. In this case, the tribe's individuals do not eat the camel's meat unless the owner of the camel gives them permission to eat. For them, eating the slaughtered camel's meat without its owner's permission means that they are happy because of what happened to the owner of the camel (Abd El-Kawy 2001). They believe that camels are a good omen. Genuine camels are those of blue blood.

Women are forbidden from milking goats. This job is considered completely manly. They are accustomed to what is called *simlāyit al-mubāraka* or *laqūq*. This means that when a man milks a goat, he never drinks the milk unless another man from outside the tribe tastes it.

Trade and especially the animals' trade plays an important part in al-Bašāriya's life. The market is the main meeting place for traders where deals are concluded with Sudanese and Egyptian currency. Many traders come to this market from Sudan. During the recent years, a lot of Upper Egyptian traders emerged to the area where they stay without their families in the market. But their trade is limited to clothes and tools.

Tribes' members meet in a special place where they exchange information. Meanwhile they have their own way of sitting. They sit leaning on their sticks so that they not touch the land. They talk while the Sheikh of the tribe holds a stick that is called *al-ḥadāta* in his hand. He points with the stick to the sand. This meeting is called *as-saknāb* which is a Baḡāwī word meaning news. It refers to the transmission and exchange of news orally concerning the issues of economic, political and social importance. *as-Saknāb* is represented as a social practice in the greeting rituals that they perform and transfer into an organization to transfer and exchange information in a detailed and prolonged description of the current environmental status and the amount of rain and the distribution of grazing resources. It extends to include other information about economic life such as information about markets and products' prices.

Hunting still represents the main activity for the mountain inhabitants who hunt wild animals and use their leather especially the leather of the fox and the leather of an animal called *taytl*. They have their own traditional way of hunting these animals. They hunt this animal with the help of dogs and guides who know the places where this animal exists because it cuts rocks in places where it goes. In hunting this animal, they use a trap that consists of an ampulla that is woven from strong robes. At the end of the robe, there is a strong and flexible wood with a clutch to catch the animal.

They have their way of catching foxes that hide in the holes. They know that foxes cannot stand smoke so they make smoke at the entrance of the hole and when the fox runs out they throw their spears. But they avoid the head area because its leather is very strong and is not easily cut.

The hunter is afraid of *al-'usayla* which is a big snake that comes in summer to the open wells or to the rain water to drink. But the hedgehog (*abū qunfud*) as soon as it sees *al-'usayla*, it waits and holds it with its body that is full of thorns. Thus, *al-'usayla* would die (Abd El-Ghaffar & Enuar 1998:57).

Wild hunting has its own laws that protect wild animals, if any one hunts in another tribe's territory, he is subjected to a special trial especially if the hunted animal was pregnant. Any one who wants to hunt in another tribe's territory is to get permission from the Sheikh of the tribe in the area that he wants to hunt in. If he is allowed to hunt, he should compensate the tribe's Sheikh. This compensation is called *al-wadb*, which is the chest of the hunted animal<sup>1</sup>.

The cultural norm puts a special political framework that is called the Sheikh's Council. Such councils settle disputes and are responsible for arbitration. Settlement of disputes is related to the political environment of the tribe; i.e. it is related to the chief marshal and the sheikh. The chief interferes in certain cases. Often sheikhs and marshals settle the entire local cases that take place. In these cases, a council called *al-ḡallād* is held. This council is administered according to the *šari'a*. Besides the previously mentioned leaders of the tribes, the council consists of intellectuals (*sirkīnāb - al-'uqalā'*) and some of the neutral members from neighbouring tribes. The task of settlement of disputes is not only limited to cases related to economic problems but also it covers problems of honour among disputing parties such as murder and injuries.

In murder cases an *al-ḡallād* council is held and relatives of both parties are called. The family of the murderer and the family of the murdered attend and the victim's sons and relatives are given the choice to either officially prosecuting the defendant before state courts or accept ransom. If ransom is accepted, it will be the responsibility of the tribe's members to divide it among the victim's relatives. But in murders even when ransom is accepted, the murderer is considered to have personally insulted the victim's family. Therefore, he is advised, in most cases, to leave the place (Hjort & Dohl 1991).

Such trials are held in a special place designed for the men's meeting with the tribe's Sheikh. They gather in the open air at moonlit nights. They sit in an open circle. Each tribe sits beside its Sheikh. The chief sits in the middle. Mediators sit

<sup>1</sup> Every part of the carcass has its symbol. The chest is given to the chief of the tribe. The back legs are given to the midwife after the delivery. Some cultures prohibit eating certain parts of the carcass. The Jewish culture prohibits eating the right thigh of the carcass.



between the disputing parties. In the beginning of the session, they start praying for Prophet Muḥammad, then they start presenting their case. Each takes his turn in presenting his case. If they do not reach a verdict, the case is to be postponed for several months in order that parties may reconcile. The tribe's Sheikh listens while holding his stick in his hands. The stick is called *al-ḥadāta* and is used to refer to or draw signs on sand. If we move to the economic side we find that al-Bašāriya have chosen for themselves a social system that is completely appropriate with the circumstances of their poor environment they live in. Since their early childhood, they are raised to be courageous and they hate lying. They do not know hypocrisy. Theft is very limited among them. Being generous to guests is a part of a man's honour. Although they carry swords and daggers while walking, they are very shy and modest, especially with their women. They hate hearing bad or swearwords and they run when they hear them.

al-Bašāriya were able to reach a system in their clothes and appearance that completely suits the environment, their inherited culture and their beliefs about the world around them. Men grow their hair in a shape that resembles the tree that exists in the area which is the *ḡānīt* tree. A *ḡānīt* is a tree of average height and it has many branches that interlace with each other to form one unit at the top of the tree. They leave their hair in a round shape around the head and they paint it with a paint called *al-wadāk* which is made of the cattle fat. They think that this fat protects the head from the heat of the sun and strengthens eyesight. They also rub their bodies with this paint to decrease the amount of sweat that the body excretes and minimise their need for water. For them, the paint and its smell affect sexual attraction.

They comb their hair with a wooden comb that is called *al-ḥalāl*. The head of this comb is engraved with drawings that symbolize courage such as the picture of Abū Zayd al-Hilālī while riding his camel or a picture of a knight holding a sword or geometric drawings. These drawings are painted with coal and then burnt by a hot metal rod. They look black. The position of the comb on the head symbolizes manliness and youth. So neither young children nor the elderly wear it.

Men wear a white dress *gallābiyya* which is made of cotton and under the *gallābiyya* they wear panties. Over the *gallābiyya*, they wear a black jacket made of wool. Men in the mountains wear the same clothes, but they prefer the beige colour because it is made of a kind of cloth that is called *ad-damūr* and the jacket is made of animal leather. Every Bašārī carries on his neck a kink that is tied to a piece of *siwāk* that is used for cleaning teeth. Sometimes it is a permanent habit for a Bašārī to clean his teeth.

The *tašlīḥ* of the face is one of the signs of make up for men and women. The face is cut with a razor. Three wounds are made on each cheek in the area over the ear. The wound is covered with alcohol. If the direction of all the lines is downward, then they are for the protection and treatment from ghosts (Barjiebl 1997:31).

Swords, shields, daggers, sticks, mantles are accessories of their clothes. Swords are put in leather ampullae. They are ornamented with trappings made of coloured silk. They are straight swords that differ from the embowed Arabian swords. They come from Sudan.

There are different kinds of swords. *Ma'add* means divider. It is a straight sword with a wooden handgrip that is covered with leather. It is ornamented with silk and silver. *Ūkār*: There are signs on this sword and it is heavier and sharper. *Salmān*: There is Solomon's bulla on it. *Ibrāb afif*: There are two drawings on it in the shape of half moons. Inside them, there are two stars. It is a bit shorter. *Manqūr*: There is a drawing of a lion on it. *Mamsā* is more like the Arabic sword.

Daggers are carried by the youth and the elderly. They are put on the left side so they are grabbed by the right hand or vice versa if the person was left-handed. There are many kinds of daggers. *Hust* is semi straight. *Tūlīt* is used for slaughtering. *Šūt'al* is used by the elderly shields. They are used while playing with swords during celebrations. They are round. They are made of leather with bumps in the middle that are covered with iron.

There are three kinds of sheaths (*kiryābī*, *iškālib*, *abatāy*) made of different kinds of leather. *Kiryābī* is thick, *iškālib* is made of crocodile leather, while *abatāy* is bigger and covered with hair.

Sticks are called *tūkūlī*. They are used for self-defense or to defend the honour of the tribe. They are also used as a bag to carry things or to hunt small animals such as rats or deer. They are carried in way between the arms while walking to strengthen the back while walking. It is also used to lean on while sitting in the market. It is also the main tool for the shepherd in his work. The elderly carry light sticks with pointed heads to point to or draw signs on the sand while talking. There are four main types of sticks. *Ūkūlī* is big, long with a curved head. It is made of the *salm* tree or from *dalw* or *ḡada'* wood. *Dalāw* is made of the *šamm* trees which are in the mountains. It is a sword proof stick. *Bulbul* (*dūḡrār*) is embowed and small. The edge is very sharp. *al-Ḥadāta* is for the elderly. In order to embow the sticks, they are put in a damp place or they are soaked in water to be easy to embow. Then they are tied in this form and buried in the sand till they dry. Some kinds of sticks such as *ad-dūḡrār* are dried in fire.

Amulets: They are of the basics in the Bašāriya culture. Men, women and children put them on inside houses. They are put on the necks of animals and they are put on arms and legs for treatment. If they are used for protection from the devil, they are put on the neck. They are also used as protection from nightmares or as protection from snakebite. Women put them on their waists to treat infertility. *aš-Šarīf* who is a man that memorizes the Holy Qur'an and who lives in an isolated place that is called *al-ḥulūw* treats people and teaches children how to read and write by making such amulets by writing verses from the Holy Qur'an on paper. A man



living in the market is specialized in making leather covers for these amulets. First they are padded with stepped-up paper.

Beside aš-Šarīf, there is another man called al-Faqīr or 'the poor' who makes the amulets. But he uses magic formulae instead of the Holy Qur'an. He makes his amulets for good and evil. He is a man that can neither read nor write and has no specific residence and looks crazy, amulets for children are made from cowries and seaweed, black sticks and from the black bugles. al-Bašāriya have a lot of beliefs about unseen creatures that inhabit the desert, mountains, trees, animals and birds and which cause magic and sickness to people.

As for women, they wear the Sudanese dress with its bright colours such as red, yellow, green and blue. Elderly women wear figured or blue colours. All women use *kuhl* to protect their eyes from dust, light and to increase their beauty. Women comb their hair in several tresses where the hair is divided into three sections. The middle part is turned forward and made into six tresses that are turned over the forehead and tied together with a round gold accessory that is called *al-mirwād*. The rest of the hair is left in small tresses on both sides. Other accessories such as *šayāl* and *gumayda* are used for the hair. Women put a gold earring *talāl* and a gold necklace (*habašiyya*) and they put a *hizām* (nose ring) in the nose, a sign that refers to their tribe. The lower lip is tattooed so that its colour looks deeper than the upper lip.

They follow eating habits that protect them from a lot of stomach diseases. Their habits also suit the hot environment and the available resources. The main food is burgool, which is made from milk and cornmeal. Some people live on dates and milk because they think that eating dates and milk makes them live longer and strengthen the neurological power of the body.

They make many kinds of meat such as *at-tawā* which is spicy meat that is cooked with cattle fat. They think that cooking meat in this way strengthens the body. There are other kinds of food such as *hakā* which is bread or rice with meat. There is another food which is called *kammūniya* in which meat is boiled in cumin. There is a meal that is called *al-ḡūzāsa* in which meat is mixed with *mulūḥiyya*. *as-Salāt* is another meal in which meat is cut into slices sprinkled with salt and put on a circle made of stone and coal is put in the middle.

They keep ghee in bags made of goat leather that has its hair so that the ghee will be preserved for a long time. As for water, it is put in bags made of the leather of the tittle animal or from the leather of the goats after taking their hair. The leather is tanned with tar acacia seeds (*al-qarab*). Women over fifty make these bags because they have plenty of spare time. When the animal is skinned, the leather is turned upside down so that hair becomes downward then it is put in the sun so that hair falls. Then the leather is washed in the sea and a hole is dug with one meter width and one meter length that is filled with water. After a while they take out the leather. By then its colour would have turned into red because the acacia seeds rebels

mould. Then women sew the leather with the sheep hair in order to make its neck thin.

They think that the tar absorbs salt from water. They prefer drinking rainwater that is kept in bags. They think that it is better than any other water even the water of the Nile because it grants health and youth.

Their favourite drink is *al-ḡabana* which is coffee made from green coffee that is ground with spices by a very long stick. The mixture is then put in a small pot made of clay that resembles the ewer. The mouth of the ewer is covered with a piece of the palm fibre. It is cooked on coal then it is poured in small cups.

They use a kind of antithesis that is called *as-sū'ūd* that is dried and added to ashed tar with little water. Men put it under the upper and lower lip. As for women they put it on cheeks for fear of the beauty of the lip. Concerning eating habits, al-Bašāriya man does not eat with his wife or with his mother-in-law but he can eat with his mother. Some cultures forbid man to eat with the woman that he wants to marry because such deed will deprive the man of his natural feeling of possession. This may also refer to the desire of the woman to gain strength or because they feel shy when eating in front of men. They are to serve food without eating with men<sup>4</sup>, the Bašāriya community is a male dominated one. Men fill senior positions and are the family leaders. Women live under men's protection.

The Bašāriya have not known houses until recently. They were roaming seeking grazing and they lived in houses made of palm sticks that are easy to carry. After al-Bašāriya settled, they lived in houses made of wood that are in the shape of boxes.

This box turned into a mere symbolic house that is used for holding marriage parties. The married couple stays in this house for forty days after their marriage as an evidence of fertility.

### Conclusion

al-Bašāriya reached a kind of soft adaptation with their environment. This adaptation enabled them to stay within this marginal environment. The traditional culture played the role of the main depressants that kept this balance between man and environment. Among these factors are the proper local practices for the uses of land, plants and wild animals. Cultures vary according to the diversity of peoples and ethnic groups.

<sup>4</sup> Food may be a symbol or a language. In every culture, there is a way for preparing food which constitutes a system of symbols and a language that has its own structure. Food is not mere substances produced and consumed. But at the same time, it is an interactive system that forms the shape of the body. Taste, smell, related rituals and the function of the food constitute a system of integration or a symbol of love as is shown in some folkloric tales such as the desire of a child to eat his mother. Eating may symbolizes sexual union and it may represent tribes' union. Both the eating process and sexual union are symbols of social union. This may turn into a dangerous act in case of hatred. Carole M. Counihan 1999.



It is considered a language that can be translated into meanings and things. Man learns a specific way to live with the society that he was born in and from what he has learnt from his personal experiences. The aim and function of culture is to make life safer and more tolerable. Man exploits his body in a way that enables him to survive. But he employs traditions that are beyond the body which we call culture and civilization in order to immortalize his existence. He depends upon the symbolic characteristics that appear in his beliefs and social, political, economic and ritual organizations and the principles of etiquette.

The traditional culture in the southern Red Sea area is subjected to severe and destructive pressures not only because of the direct effects of drought that forces a lot of people to quit grazing but also because of the cultural influences coming to the area and which forced many people to seek what they considered a better living opportunity, especially after the border dispute between Egypt and Sudan that erupted in 1990.

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The stick every one of the tribe carries for self-defence and to defend the honour of the tribe.



One of the Bašariya tribe walks carrying the stick between his shoulders to stretch it. He wears a comb in his hair; it is an accessory that signifies manhood and youth. Older people do not wear it.





One of the Bašariya with her marked face (cut and painted with *kuhl*) and tattoo on her lower lip. Her hair is done in plaits and accessorised by a golden piece called *al-mirwad*.



The camels of al-Bašariya tribe are marked by an H-shape. The circle is the sign of the al-ʿAlyāb branch of the tribe.



### III. ISLAMIC ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The architectural style of the Tardi Rajas Museum is a blend of traditional Islamic architecture and modern design. The building features a prominent dome and minaret, characteristic of Islamic architecture. The interior is a masterpiece of Islamic art, with intricate geometric patterns and calligraphy. The architecture is a blend of traditional Islamic architecture and modern design. The building features a prominent dome and minaret, characteristic of Islamic architecture. The interior is a masterpiece of Islamic art, with intricate geometric patterns and calligraphy.

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are a ewer (fig. 3) and a jug (fig. 4)<sup>6</sup>. In both instances the lions are shown in prancing position. In this role the representation of the animals is rather simple and frequently they may also be interpreted as showing a serpent. Certainly that is the case in the ewer's handle. The depiction of the lion on the jug is more elaborate. There are engraved lines and grooves on its body and thighs indicating muscles (fig. 5). Here there is no doubt that the artist intended to depict a lion.

An extremely interesting and well detailed lion handle was in the Kabul Museum, the vessel of which unfortunately was missing. It was attributed to the *Hurāsān* school and dated to the *Ġaznawid* period, i.e. 11<sup>th</sup> – early 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>.

The third type of three-dimensional representation is when only the fore-parts or protomes of lions were cast. Almost every museum and collection holding Islamic metalwork possesses such lion protomes. There are several of these in the Museum's collection. Most of them are uniform both in size and in details. The majority of them are simple figurines, without any additional decoration (fig. 6)<sup>8</sup>. However, among them there are a few which reveal engraved, incised or even copper or bronze inlaid decoration on their breasts. Among the museum's pieces there is an example which first of all is depicted in a stepping position, since its right foot is further ahead than the left one (fig. 7)<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, the decoration on the breast seem to depict a human figure with a peaked helmet on its head and holding an animal in his arms. The third specimen is again different. The lion is shown with an open mouth and on its breast there is something which may look like an eagle with spread wings (fig. 8)<sup>10</sup>.

The question of course arises, what was the original function of these lion protomes? Fortunately the answer is given by several surviving objects which are resting on such lion figurines. Among them is a bronze support, made-up of three lion protomes in the Louvre. It was exhibited in Paris some twenty-five years ago, attributed to Iran and dated to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>11</sup>. A second example, a large incense burner is in the Tareq Rajab Museum which is again supported by three lion protomes (fig. 9)<sup>12</sup>. In this case, however, the protomes appear to be even more decorative since their breasts have openwork designs but, at the same time, it

<sup>6</sup> Inv. nos. MET808TSR and MET2193TSR.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Rice & Rowland 1971: plates 202-203.

<sup>8</sup> Inv. no. MET955TSR.

<sup>9</sup> Inv. no. MET967TSR.

<sup>10</sup> Inv. no. MET953TSR.

<sup>11</sup> *L'Islam dans les collections nationales*, Grand Palais, Paris, 2 mai – 22 août, 1977, no. 379, pp. 174-177, inv. no. MAO357.

<sup>12</sup> Inv. no. MET212TSR.

has to be remarked that neither their noses, nor their ears of the figures are typically lion-shaped (fig. 10). Nevertheless several other objects are known and published, all supported by the conventional lion-headed protomes.

Another interesting and comparatively early application of lion-heads are on water-taps. In these instances they appear as the head of the tap while the actual handle on top may have the figure of a sitting bird, like e.g. on the water-tap in the museum's collection (figs. 11-12)<sup>13</sup>. Such lion-headed water-taps are known from two areas of the Islamic world: from India and, such a water-tap was sold at Christie's a few years ago and dated to the Sultanate period, ca. 15<sup>th</sup> century<sup>14</sup>. Nevertheless there are also examples from *Salġuq* and early Ottoman Anatolia. One Anatolian water-tap was published by Bodur (1987:103, no. 40). Another Anatolian lion-headed water-tap was sold at Sotheby's in 1986 and dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup>. The museum's water-tap seems to be much closer to the known Anatolian examples, the suggested date, however, is questionable. They could be somewhat later, probably of the late 14<sup>th</sup> or early 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Perhaps more interesting and aesthetically more attractive are the three-dimensional lions which vary greatly both in size and decoration. They were all cast in bronze, frequently in separate parts and their bodies were decorated with openwork, engraved and incised patterns, some with beautifully written *Kūfic* inscriptions. The inscriptions may include the signature of the artist, while others are simply benedictory. A large standing lion is in the Tareq Rajab Museum (fig. 13)<sup>16</sup>. This lion has a large widely open mouth, while the head is attached to the body by a hinge, thus it serves as a lid through which the incense could be placed inside the body. The head has engraved, i.e. *champlevé* decoration, while its body reveals extensive and finely executed scrolls in openwork. Around the neck there is an engraved inscription, written in foliated *Kūfic* script, reading:

*al-ʿizz wa-l-karāma wa-s-salāma wa-l-ʿināya wa-l-yumn li-llāh*

"Glory, honour, peace, care and blessing belong to God Allah"<sup>17</sup>

The lion has a long and up-turned tail which terminates in a trefoil and it distinguishes this figurine from several others. There is an almost identical lion in the Louvre. It was several times published and illustrated and was, from the very

<sup>13</sup> Inv. no. MET937TSR.

<sup>14</sup> *Christie's sale catalogue*, 18 October, 1994, lot 402.

<sup>15</sup> *Sotheby's sale catalogue*, 16 April, 1986, lot 156.

<sup>16</sup> Inv. no. MET76TSR. Its length is 19 cm, height 22 cm and width 7 cm.

<sup>17</sup> This lion is now exhibited in Singapore, cf. *The Harmony of Letters, Catalogue of an Exhibition*, Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore, 1997:105. At that time it was attributed by this writer to Egypt and dated to the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century.



beginning, attributed to Spain and dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>18</sup>. The similarity between the Tareq Rajab Museum and the Louvre lions are remarkable. This close similarity may suggest not only identical provenance and date, but perhaps even the same workshop or, the hand of the same artist(s). However, it has to be pointed out that there is one important difference between these two lions. Namely the head of the Louvre's lion cannot be opened. Thus, it could not have served as an incense burner. Therefore it was suggested that it was used as a fountain head. This indeed could have been the case.

There are of course a few lion-shaped fountains known. The most famous and well publicised example is in the Museum of Kassel in Germany. This lion still holds the end of a pipe in its mouth. It was first published by Sarre in the famous 1910 München exhibition catalogue<sup>19</sup>. Another closely related lion, which was also used as a fountain-head, is in the Islamic Art Museum, Cairo<sup>20</sup>, while a third example is in the Keir Collection, Richmond, Surrey (Fehérvári 1976: no. 28, plate 9/b). Both lions hold a pipe in their mouths. The Cairo example is attributed to Fātimid Egypt while the Keir collection lion was considered to be of Andalusian origin. Such lions became also popular in Europe, where they were used as aquamanilae.

Other lion figurines may have been used as incense burners. According to Eva Baer (1983:58), only seven lion-shaped incense burners were known at the time of publication of her book. All these seven known pieces were attributed to Eastern Iran, i.e. to *Hurāsān* or to Afghanistan. One of them, which is the largest and the only dated one, is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It was found in Iran and bears the date of 577/1181-82 and names the artist and the owner<sup>21</sup>. A second example and, perhaps the best known of the seven, is in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. It has no date, but is considered to be of the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century. It carries a name, but is not known whether it is the artist's or that of the owner<sup>22</sup>. A third lion is in the Cleveland Museum of Art, dated to the second quarter of the

<sup>18</sup> Inv. no.7883. It was first published by Migeon (1907:228, fig. 189). At that time it was in the Mme Louis Stern Collection in Paris. Migeon 1927:382-383, fig. 191. More recently by Dodds (1992:270) cat. no. 54, illustrated on p. 271.

<sup>19</sup> Sarre & Martin 1912: II, Tafel 154. It also appears in Mayer 1959:20. This lion has an engraved foliated Kūfic inscription, reading: 'amal 'Abdallah al-mattāl - "Made by Abdallah, the Sculptor". This lion is attributed to Fātimid Egypt.

<sup>20</sup> Inv. no. 4305, cf. *Exhibition in Islamic Art in Egypt, 969-1517*, Cairo, April, 1969:57, no. 47. Baer 1983:157-158, fig. 133.

<sup>21</sup> Baer 1983:58, n. 114; MMA inv. no. 51.56. It was first published by Dimand 1952.

<sup>22</sup> Orbeli 1938:293-300, plates 53-54; more recently in *Masterpieces* 1990, no. 18, pp. 40-41 (in Arabic) and pp. 13-14 (in English).

12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>23</sup>. A further lion-shaped incense burner is in the Louvre, once more attributed to Iran/*Hurāsān* and dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>24</sup>. The fifth and sixth examples are respectively in the Archaeological Museum (Islamic section), Teheran and the William Rockhill Nelson Art Gallery in Kansas City. The seventh specimen is in the David Collection in Copenhagen, attributed to Eastern Iran, obviously to *Hurāsān* or Afghanistan, dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century (*Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal* 177, no. 136).

Meanwhile an eighth example turned up recently in the London Antique Market. It came up for sale at Bonhams. It has an extensive openwork decoration with a band of five-lobed palmettes around its body and more on its neck. The head is attached to the body by a hinge, thus it was clearly used as an incense burner. The long tail is turned back and has an openwork cable pattern, terminating in a three-lobed semi-palmette. It was attributed to Iran and dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>25</sup>.

To this impressive list of lion-shaped incense burners now three more East Iranian or Central Asian examples can be added. All three are in the possession of the Tareq Rajab Museum and all three reveal extensive openwork and engraved decoration. The first of these three is a comparatively large object, measuring 28 cm in length and 25 cm in height (fig. 14)<sup>26</sup>. The head tilts and hence it was used for putting in the incense. Extensive and continuous scrollwork decorate the back of the body, the breast and the neck, executed in openwork. As Eva Baer remarked, plant ornaments but in particular continuous scrollwork were characteristic of Islamic metalwork. On the museum's incense burner the stalks are not only undulating and branching off to right and left, but they form nearly complete circles enclosing three-lobed palmettes (figs. 15-16). Somewhat similar, but perhaps simplified scrollwork can be observed on a 12<sup>th</sup> century globular lamp-stand link which is in the Seattle Art Museum (Baer 1983: fig. 116). The design of undulating scrolls enclosing three- or five-petalled palmettes of course can be traced back to style 'A' of *Sāmarrā'* where, among other places, it decorated the walls of the *Ġawšaq al-Ḥāqānī* palace (Herzfeld 1923:215, abb. 304/a-b, 305; 216, abb. 306; Creswell 1942: fig. 183, plate 52/a, d-e).

The engraved decoration on the thighs are even more impressive. They depict three- and five-petalled palmettes within heart-shaped motives. The palmettes below are flanked by pairs of small leaves. This attractive and complex design may be rare, but not entirely unknown. A closely related border ornament decorates a bronze

<sup>23</sup> Cleveland Museum of Art, inv.no.48.308. Published by Shepherd 1957:115-118, no.23; Baer 1983:57-58, fig. 41.

<sup>24</sup> Pope 1939: plate 1297; Paris exhibition, 1977:165, no. 348.

<sup>25</sup> *Sale catalogue of Bonhams & Brooks*, 17 October, 2001, lot 349, illustrated in colour on p. 127 and on the cover.

<sup>26</sup> Inv. no. MET1341TSR.



mortar in the Metropolitan Museum, attributed to Hurāsān and dated to the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>27</sup>. On the mortar, however, there are only three-lobed palmettes. Furthermore, on the mortar this design is presented as a horizontal band, while on the incense burner they are shown as irregular circles, actually radiating from a small rectangle. The engraved decoration of a bronze plate in the British Museum reveals even closer similarity to those on the thighs of the museum's bronze lion. The central part of the plate is decorated with engraved interlaced circles which then form a small hexagon in the centre and several irregular triangles and near heart-shaped spaces around all filled by three-lobed palmettes and below flanked by pair of spirals. The plate is dated to the late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century (Barrett 1949: plate 2/a; Baer 1983:126; Baer 1998: fig. 52).

On the museum's lion on both sides of the body the scrolls below are framed by horizontal epigraphic bands, written in foliated Kūfic style (figs. 15-16). The inscriptions so far are undeciphered, but the words *baraka*, "blessing" or "Divine grace" and *yumn*, "happiness" or "felicity" may be read. It appears that the artist may have been illiterate and committed mistakes, hence the difficulty in reading it.

The treatment of the tail is also interesting. It makes a complete loop and is turned backwards on the body and it touches the back of the animal and terminates in a trefoil. Most of the known lion figurines have their tails up-turned and slightly bent, but they are almost vertical and end in a simple three-lobed pattern, like the previously examined lion from Spain (fig. 13). The Museum possesses, however, another lion figurine with its tail completely turned backwards and touching the back of the body and ending in a kind of grooved hoof-shaped pattern (fig. 17)<sup>28</sup>.

While this second lion is closely related to the previous example, its body, thighs and neck reveal even more refined decoration. The head once more is attached to the neck by a hinge and therefore it tilts. At a close examination the head, strictly speaking, may not be that of a lion, but rather of a griffon. The lower part of the neck has an undulating scroll partly in openwork and partly engraved. The spaces among the loops are filled by three-lobed palmettes. Nevertheless it is the decoration of the body which deserves special attention. On both sides there are two intertwined scrolls starting from the back of the body and progressing forward and forming elongated ovals which are filled by three-lobed palmettes and at the back are flanked by pairs of small leaves (figs. 18-19). The pattern in the central ovals on both sides looks almost like five-petalled palmettes. They recall similar designs on a number of Hurāsānī metalwork. Melikian-Chirvani, referring to a lamp-stand base which was at that time in the Kabul Museum suggested, that "such details as the five-lobed palmettes (are) typical of the Sāmānid period" (Melikian-Chirvani 1982:39, n. 64).

<sup>27</sup> Inv. no. 43.87. Cf. Baer 1983: fig. 137.

<sup>28</sup> Inv. no. MET2187TSR. Length 19 cm, height 18.5 cm, width 5.5 cm.

By an interesting coincidence, the Tareq Rajab Museum also possesses a similar lamp-stand base decorated with series of five-lobed palmettes with geometrical interlace above and below (fig. 20)<sup>29</sup>. Another pattern which perhaps also indicates a Sāmānid date is the presence of 'Solomon's knots' on top of the hoof-shaped legs. A second object in the museum with identical five-lobed palmettes and geometrical interlace is on the cylindrical shaft of another lamp-stand which has two globular links, one on top and one below. The palmettes decorate the lower link (fig. 21)<sup>30</sup>. Here we should also recall the lion-shaped incense burner which came up for sale at Bonhams to which reference has already been made above<sup>31</sup>. The main decorative feature of this lion is the openwork five-lobed palmette scroll running around its body and the neck. The scrollwork is well executed and the details are engraved. They come very close to the scrollwork of the Tareq Rajab Museum's lions.

The scrollwork on both sides of the museum's second lion, just like on the previous object, is bordered by an epigraphic band, written in floriated Kūfic. On one side it reads (fig. 18):

*baraka wa-yumn wa-l-karāma*  
"blessing and felicity and plenitude"

On the other side (fig. 19):

*al-ḥamdu li-llāhi wa-ṣukr[ā]*  
"thanks to God and gratitude"

The style of the inscription is very similar to that of an Iranian bowl in the St. Louis Art Museum, dated to the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century (Baer 1983:176, fig. 152; 178, n. 122). Although this writer is not familiar with the St. Louis bowl, but by judging from the style of script proposes, that it must be considerably earlier, probably late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century. Another closely related Kūfic inscription is an artist's signature on a cauldron in the Victoria and Albert Museum, attributed by Melikian to Hurāsān and dated to the late 10<sup>th</sup> – early 11<sup>th</sup> century (Melikian-Chirvani 1982:48-49, no. 10, fig. 10A). One more interesting feature that should not be overlooked: the little birds placed in roundels on the animal's thighs. All four roundels depict a standing peacock. It was a much favoured and frequently applied decorative pattern on early Islamic metalwork of the Hurāsān school.

The Museum's third lion, which may appear similar to the previous two examples, nevertheless is quite distinct and its decorative scheme betrays some influence of Buddhist art. Hence its provenance is considered to be more of a Central Asian,

<sup>29</sup> Inv. no. MET1713TSR.

<sup>30</sup> Inv. no. MET1036TSR.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. n. 25.



i.e. Afghanistan, rather than Eastern Iran (fig. 22)<sup>32</sup>. The body of this lion is decorated only with engraved designs, which include the so-called 'Solomon's seal' or 'the Buddhist eternal knot' which decorate the thighs. The tail, like those of the previous two lions, is turned back and touches the body but, instead of a trefoil it ends with a small knob on top. The neck and head opens up and therefore it suggests that again it was used as an incense burner, despite the fact that the body has no openings.

When we try to establish the provenance and the date of these three lion-shaped incense burners, the seven published comparative objects which were enlisted by Eva Baer, offer us considerable assistance. All those seven examples have their provenance either in East Iran, i.e. *Hurāsān* or, in the case of the Copenhagen lion, perhaps Afghanistan. According to Melikian-Chirvani, the scrollwork of three- and five-lobed palmettes are typical of the late Sāmānid period and of the '*Hurāsān* school'. Leaving aside the similarity of the museum's lions to those seven objects, the style and contexts of the inscriptions on two of these provide us further assistance. The style of the foliated and floriated Kūfic scripts indicate similar late Sāmānid dates. Perhaps more important, are the contents of these short inscriptions and here I wish to refer once more to Melikian-Chirvani who wrote (1982:34), that these inscriptions should be interpreted as *du'ā's*, i.e. prayers calling God's blessings on the owner.

All the above observations seem to indicate a provenance for these three lions somewhere within the Sāmānid or, if somewhat later, within the realm of the Ġaznawid empire. What is most interesting that lion figurines played such an important role at that period and, although as has been shown above, they were also present in Fātimid Egypt and Muslim Spain, in that remote area of the Islamic World. To find the answer to this enigma, we should examine the archaeological material of earlier periods in that Central Asian region. The objects which may come to our attention and deserve closer examination, are the treasures that were discovered at Begram by the French excavations in the 1930s. Among the numerous finds from Begram were large number of ivory carvings. Those included the fragments of a coffer, among them a plaque depicting a therianthrope creature with an S-shaped tail. Another plaque showed a lion with a similarly treated tail. All these fragments are of course from the Buddhist period of Afghanistan and accordingly dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>33</sup>. These examples are too early for our incense burners, but the interest and preference to illustrate lions have survived right up to the Sāmānid and particularly to the Ġaznawid period, as can be seen on the numerous wall and pavement tiles and the carved marble and stone plaques which were discovered at Ġazni. One of the most remarkable examples is a marble plaque from Ġazni, which was in the National Museum of Kabul, showing a prancing lion with a long tail turned completely back

<sup>32</sup> Inv. no. MET1340TSR. Length 14.5 cm, height 16.8 cm and width 5.5 cm.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Rice & Rowland 1971: figs. 25-26.

on its body and terminating, as it does on several bronze lion figurines, in a two-lobed semi-palmette<sup>34</sup>.

From the above we may conclude that these three lion-shaped incense burners were most likely made by the 'eastern branch' of the *Hurāsān* school, perhaps at Marw or more likely at Ġazni. Although some of the decorative details would suggest a late Sāmānid date; there is also a possibility that in fact they were made during the early Ġaznawid period. Hence it is suggested that their date could be the late 10<sup>th</sup> or first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

A related, but somewhat distinct group of these lion figurines are formed by objects which were used as oil-lamps. The second group is composed by lamps which have bird-shapes and, lion-heads. Of the first groups there is only one example in the Tareq Rajab Museum (fig. 23)<sup>35</sup>. The body, it appears was cast in two parts, the lower and the upper parts separately. The lower part which serves as the holder for the oil, is closed below and on the sides. It looks that the hind legs were cast together with the lower part, but the front legs, together with the wick holes, were made separately. All together there are four wick holes in front: two pointing forward and two pointing sideways. There is a fifth wick hole at the back where the short up-turned tail serves this purpose.

There is extensive decoration on both the lower and upper part of the body. The four thighs have the frequently applied pattern of 'Solomon's knot', or 'the Buddhist eternal knot' that we have already found on one of the incense burners (figs. 24-25). There is an epigraphic band running around the edges of the lower part of the body. It is written in a beautiful floriated Kūfic. Unfortunately in places it is much worn and hence difficult, or impossible to decipher. On one side it reads (fig. 24):

*baraka wa-yumn ... s-salāma ...*

"blessing and felicity ... and peace ..."

On the other side the inscript is much worn (fig. 25).

The upper part of the body has extensive openwork design of geometrical interlace. The head is attached to this upper part and tilts, thus allowing the oil to be poured inside. Around the edges of the neck there is a geometrical scrollwork, typical of the late Sāmānid period. The eyes are hollowed in an oval form and the mouth is open. The geometrical design, the 'Solomon's knot' and the style of the inscription indicate an East Iranian or even East Afghanistan provenance for this lamp and a late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century date.

<sup>34</sup> Bombaci 1959:12, Fig. 10. Also Rice & Rowland 1971: fig. 170.

<sup>35</sup> Inv. no. MET2208TSR. Length 31.5 cm, height 25.7 cm, width 6 cm, with the holes 19 cm.



Such lion-shaped oil-lamps are, albeit not frequent, but not unknown either. A somewhat similar bronze lamp came up for sale at Bonhams<sup>36</sup>. It is in the shape of a standing feline with four wick-holes in front, arranged the same way as it is on the museum's piece. However, the decoration of the object is more restricted. There are only incised palmette designs on the back of the animal. This lamp was attributed to Iran and dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> century.

As to the second group of vessels with bird-shapes and lion-heads, there are three such vessels in the Tareq Rajab Museum. The first one of these three is an oil-lamp, while the other two are incense burners. First we shall examine the lamp (fig. 26)<sup>37</sup>. It was purchased at Sotheby's and in the catalogue was dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>38</sup>. The lamp was cast in several parts. The lower part of the body, which serves for holding the oil and to which the wick holes are attached, is closed, except on the top behind the back where the oil was poured in. In front there are three wick holes, all angular with a large rectangular opening on top. One of them points forward the other two sideways. There is a fourth wick hole at the back embedded in the triangular tail. It stands on three tapering feet. The neck and the head were most likely cast in one piece. The neck is tall, tapering and is bent terminating in a lion's head.

The vessel is decorated with incised scrolls and lines on the body, the neck and the head. The back of the body, the tail and the top of the wick holes have incised lines, while at the lower edge of the neck there is a geometric scrollwork, identical to that on the neck of the previous object (figs. 23-24). Melikian-Chirvani illustrates a rose-water sprinkler which is in the Iran bastan Museum, Teheran, decorated with an identical geometrical scrollwork on the upper part of the body. It is attributed to *Hurāsān* and dated to the late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century (Melikian-Chirvani 1982:36, fig. 12). The shape of the vessel, its incised decoration, but particularly the aforementioned geometrical scrollwork, suggest a considerably earlier date than it was given by Sotheby's. It dates most likely from the late *Sāmānid* period, i.e. late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century.

A second bird-shaped and lion-headed object appears to be an incense burner, since its neck and head opens up, so that the incense can be placed into the body (fig. 27)<sup>39</sup>. The neck, breast and the back have openwork decoration showing inter-twined scrollwork, while the front parts of the wings carry 'Solomon's seal', or the

<sup>36</sup> *Bonhams & Brooks sale catalogue*, 17 October, 2001, lot 332, p. 118. A similar piece was also sold at Bonhams in 13 October, 1999, lot 223.

<sup>37</sup> Inv. no. MET392TSR. Length 24 cm, height 19 cm.

<sup>38</sup> *Sotheby's sale catalogue*, 28 April 1994, lot 93.

<sup>39</sup> Inv. no. MET2188TSR. Length 14 cm, height 14.7 cm, width 6.5 cm.

Buddhist 'eternal knot'. This piece can clearly be attributed to eastern workshops of the *Hurāsān* school and dated to the late 10<sup>th</sup> – early 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The second bird-shaped and lion-headed incense burner is a comparatively large example. It is cast in bronze, has an extensive openwork decoration with a wide and short neck, terminating in a large lion's head (figs. 28-29)<sup>40</sup>. The openwork decoration was lavishly applied on the breast, the front of the wings, neck and the head. On the breast there is a strapwork forming a large circle and four smaller ones around while the spaces in between are filled by scrollwork. Similar scrollwork can be seen on the wings and the lower part of the neck. The openwork on the head appears on the sides, showing clusters of seven circular holes, arranged as a kind of a flower, surrounded by incised lines. The mouth and the nostrils are open and are outlined with incised lines, while the almond-shaped eyes are engraved. The bird stands on two solid feet.

This writer has not seen any similar example. However, the shape and the decoration of this vessel is quite distinct from those of Eastern Iran or Central Asia. While the origin of zoomorphic vessels and objects may be traced back to the pre-Islamic period of the Near and Middle East, nevertheless they were soon imitated in other areas of Asia and later on in Europe. It was particularly in India, where such zoomorphic vessels, either as jugs, ewers, incense burners or aquamanilae became very popular. Several such objects have survived from the Sultanate period. They remained much favoured in Mughal times as well and numerous such examples have survived and are preserved in private or public collections. The Indian examples stand out from their Near Eastern counterparts, first of all by their size. They are considerably larger than the Near Eastern pieces. Furthermore, they are distinguishable because of the quality of their material and by the refined casting and the more delicate and extensive surface decoration. The most comprehensive and up-to-date publication of Indian zoomorphic objects is by Mark Zebrowski, who carried out extensive study on Indian metalwork, whether bronze, silver or gold (Zebrowski 1997). While there is no immediate comparative object illustrated in his monograph, the style and quality of the Tareq Rajab Museum's object indicates an Indian provenance and, as for its possible date, probably between the late Sultanate and early Mughal period, i.e. 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The Museum also possesses a few lions depicting them in movement or standing on their own. There is no indication that they were ever attached to any larger objects. Thus, they were not supports, nor decorative elements of a large vessel or furniture. Most likely they were just simply decorative three-dimensional figurines placed on some furniture. Alternatively, some of them could have been intended for small children as toys.

<sup>40</sup> Inv. no. MET1333TSR. Length 18 cm, height 24.3 cm, width 9.5 cm.



One of these lions in the Museum's collection presents a walking lion (fig. 30)<sup>41</sup>. It is also made of cast bronze, the tail is attached to one of the hind legs. There is a small opening at the back, the function of which is difficult to explain. It is certainly not due to any breakage. It is a comparatively small object, measuring 6.7 cm in length and 4.7 cm in height. Its provenance is not known, but most likely comes either from Central Asia or from India. As to its date, it is even more difficult to determine, but cannot be much earlier than the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The next examples depict two rampant lions (fig. 31-32). They look almost identical, although they differ both in size and in decoration<sup>42</sup>. There is only a slight difference in size. The first example (fig. 31) measures 6.5 cm in length and 5.2 cm in height, while the second one (fig. 32) is 6.3 cm in length and 5 cm in height. The cast bronze bodies of both animals are decorated with engraved details, particularly on their heads and manes. The tails are curved, on the first lion almost in an S-shaped form, that of the other one, while also curved, it is more open. Zebrowski illustrates similar rampant lions, but they are considerably large and were used as incense burners (Zebrowski 1997:103, fig. 109). The museum's lions are solid cast bronze and in any case are too small to have any practical function.

For closer comparative material for these two rampant lions we have to turn to Central Asia, or more precisely once more to Afghanistan. Reference has already been made above to the ivory carved lion figurines that came to light at Begram and to the much later Ġaznawid lions which were found, but not excavated at Ġazni<sup>43</sup>. The similarity to these Ġaznawid lions are so striking that one is inclined to suggest that they may have been made at Ġazni during the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> or early part of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Finally among this group, there is a standing lion in an upright posture showing realistic features (fig. 33)<sup>44</sup>. The tail is slung back behind the left hind legs. When this piece was acquired by the museum it was identified as Indian and dated to the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>41</sup> Inv. no. MET1309TSR.

<sup>42</sup> Inv. nos. MET1313TSR and MET1336TSR.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Rice & Rowland 1971: figs. 25-26, 170; Bombaci 1959:12, fig. 10. Also Scerrato 1962. Scerrato refers to a Fātimid linen fabric with stamped decoration in brown and gold showing lions with similar S-shaped tails and suggests that the idea of such lions may have come from Fātimid Egypt. Cf. fig. 69. Furthermore, he adds that all the glazed tiles were found in the layers above Mas'ūd III's palace and are most likely post-Ġaznawid (p. 265).

<sup>44</sup> Inv. no. MET1559TSR. Length 9.3 cm, height 10.3 cm.

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

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 Fig. 2. Ewer, brass, with *repoussé* and incised decoration. Iran, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET166TSR.  
 Fig. 3. Ewer, cast and hammered bronze with engraved decoration. Iran, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET808TSR.  
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 Fig. 6. Protome of a lion, cast bronze. Iran, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET955TSR.  
 Fig. 7. Protome of a lion, cast bronze with decoration on its breast. Iran, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET953TSR.  
 Fig. 8. Protome of a lion, cast bronze with decoration on its breast. Iran, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET953TSR.  
 Fig. 9. Incense burner, cast bronze with incised and openwork decoration. Iran, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET212TSR.  
 Fig.10. Detail of fig.9, showing the lion protome support.  
 Fig.11. Water-tap head, cast bronze. Anatolia, 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET937TSR.  
 Fig.12. Detail of fig.11.  
 Fig.13. Large standing lion, cast bronze with openwork and engraved decoration. Spain, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET76TSR.  
 Fig.14. Lion-shaped incense burner, cast bronze with openwork and decoration. Eastern Iran or Afghanistan, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET1341TSR.  
 Fig.15. Detail of fig.14, showing the left side of the body with the Kūfic inscription.  
 Fig.16. Detail of fig.14, showing the right side of the body with the Kūfic inscription.  
 Fig.17. Lion-shaped incense burner, cast bronze with openwork and engraved decoration. Eastern Iran or Afghanistan, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET2187TSR.  
 Fig.18. Detail of fig.17, showing the right side of the body with the Kūfic inscription.  
 Fig.19. Detail of fig.17, showing the left side of the body with the Kūfic inscription.  
 Fig.20. Base of a lamp-stand, cast bronze with openwork and engraved decoration. Eastern Iran, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET1713TSR.  
 Fig.21. Lower globular link of a lamp-stand shaft, cast bronze with openwork decoration. Eastern Iran, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET1036TSR.  
 Fig.22. Lion-shaped incense burner, cast bronze with engraved decoration. Eastern Iran, or Afghanistan, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET1340TSR.  
 Fig.23. Lion-shaped oil-lamp, cast bronze with openwork and engraved decoration. Eastern Iran or Afghanistan, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET2208TSR.  
 Fig.24. Detail of fig.23, showing the left side of the body with the Kūfic inscription.  
 Fig.25. Detail of fig.23, showing the right side of the body with the Kūfic inscription.  
 Fig.26. Bird-shaped, lion-headed oil-lamp, cast bronze with incised decoration. Eastern Iran, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET392TSR.  
 Fig.27. Bird-shaped, lion-headed oil-lamp, cast bronze with openwork and engraved decoration. Eastern Iran or Afghanistan, 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET2188TSR.  
 Fig.28. Bird-shaped, lion-headed incense burner, cast bronze with openwork and engraved decoration. India, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET1333TSR.  
 Fig.29. Detail of fig.28, showing the front part of the object.  
 Fig.30. Walking lion, cast bronze. Central Asia or India, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET309TSR.  
 Fig.31. Rampant lion, cast bronze with engraved decoration. Afghanistan, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. 1313TSR.  
 Fig.32. Rampant lion, cast bronze with engraved decoration. Afghanistan, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET1336TSR.  
 Fig.33. Standing lion, cast bronze. India? 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> c. Inv. no. MET1559TSR.



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.





Fig. 19.



Fig. 20.



Fig. 21.



Fig. 22.



Fig. 23.



Fig. 24.



Fig. 25.



Fig. 26.



Fig. 27.



Fig. 28.



Fig. 29.





Fig. 30.



Fig. 31.



Fig. 32.



Fig. 33.

## MAGIC BOWLS, COSMOLOGY AND DIVINATION

Alexander Fodor

*Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest*

The Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait possesses a number of magic bowls which can be dated to different periods. From this collection the description of one object (Photos 1 a,b,c,d) will be presented in the following. Its interest lies in the fact that its structure betrays a definitely cosmologically oriented composition – a rather neglected aspect in studies dealing with magic bowls.

On the other hand, this artefact offers scriptural evidence for its use in divination because its inscription contains a direct request for a dream vision. This is particularly worth of attention since related studies – even if they refer to divination among the different uses of the bowls – do not elaborate on this particular point. On the basis of the lack of textual proof for the use of magic bowls in divinatory practices, Savage-Smith rightly doubts the soundness of opinions which take this self-evident<sup>1</sup>.

A third element to be stressed is the manifest Sufi and the partly concealed Shiite background which is noticeable both in the inscriptions and in the decoration of the bowl. Putting it in another way, the bowl can be considered to be the product of Sufi scholarship and craftsmanship.

A further aim of the study is to shed light on a possible connection between Islamic and Jewish cosmological-magical mysticism which may offer a new perspective for research on magical bowls.

## DESCRIPTION OF MET2178TSR

Dimensions:

Diameter: 184mm

Height: 50mm

The brass, cast and engraved bowl with curving sides has an everted rim, a central boss and rests on a low foot-ring.

The rim and the band below it are covered by a continuous *nashī* inscription. In the cavetto, enclosed between two framing bands a strapwork of interlacing twin fillets forms roundels alternating with lobed quatrefoils. The roundels end in half

<sup>1</sup> Savage-Smith 1997:76. Oman 1981:217f mentions divination among the possible uses of the magic bowls as self-evident. For a magical recipe, however, how to inscribe a copper bowl to be used in a divinatory procedure, see Fodor 1994:77-82.



roundels above and below, the quatrefoils are topped by cusped arches. The half roundels and every second cusped arch are filled with leaf and bud motifs. The rest of the cusped arches with the cloud like compartments on their right are inscribed with magical signs. The arrangement of the inscription gives the impression of a meandering line which can be divided into six sections. Each of them is composed of four differently shaped elements the schematic appearance of which may evoke the figure of the letter *rā'* repeated six times. The writing of the text starts in an upper compartment, continues to the left, at first downwards then upwards. The symbolically composed figures of the letter *rā'* may stand for the divine attributes *rahmān*, 'Merciful' and *rahīm*, "Compassionate", each of them repeated three times. It is certainly worth mentioning that these attributes occur in the inscription around the boss in the same arrangement.

This epigraphic frieze in the well around the boss is divided into six trilobed cartouches with a *nashī* inscription following the direction from right to left.

The boss is topped by a cusped lobed quatrefoil composed of split half palmettes. The cusped arches end in small trefoils, carry similar trefoils in between and enclose lotus blossoms. The rest of the boss is decorated by foliate motifs.

On the exterior, under the rim a *nashī* inscription frieze divided into twelve cartouches with trilobed ends is enclosed between two border lines made of twin fillets. The layout of the rest of the exterior is dominated by six roundels inscribed in *nashī* and joined together by a horizontal band of *nashī* inscription written between two plain border bands. The six roundels intersect two friezes below and above which are covered by the motifs of the magical signs.

The footing surrounds a circular band divided into six sections by three roundels. The latter are filled with the magical motifs, the concave, rhomboidal cartouches between them are decorated with the leaf and bud motifs. The underside of the boss is left plain.

### Inscriptions

#### ARABIC TEXT

MET2178TSR

#### RIM

اللهم يا حنان يا ديان يا سبحان يا سلطان يا ذو الجلال والاکرام أشهد أن کا (انک) معبود من دون عرشک إلى منتهی قرار الأرضین (السن صل عبا طلايم؟) غير وجهک الکریم امنت بک رب يا غياث المستغيثین قدير وأزر في حفظ العلم والقران وخلصني بربي (يا ربي؟) ويحمي (واحميني؟) ولا تكلني الا (إلى) نفسي طرفته (طرفة) عين انک على ما تشاء قدير ولا حول ولا قوة) الا بالله العلی والعظيم

#### UNDER RIM

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم بسم الله باسمه المبتدي رب الأخرة والأولى لا غاية له ولا منتهى له ما في السموات العلى (Q 20,4) الرحمن على العرش استوى (Q 20,5) له ما في السموات وما في الأرض وما بينهما وما تحت الثرى (Q 20,6) وان تجهر بالقول فإنه يعلم السر واخفى (Q 20,7) الله لا اله الا هو له الاسماء الحسنی (Q 20,8) الله العظيم عظيم الاله دائم البقاء القاهر على الاعداء على خلقه حافظ الرحمن عاطف قادر على اهنزال القاهر

#### CAVETTO

١ هو الاول والآخر والظاهر والباطن الفاتح  
الدائم رازق الخلاق (مر)بي البهائم صاحب العطايا ومانع البلايا ويشفي السقيم  
ويغفر الذنوب [sic!] الخاطئين ويعفوا عن الهاربين ويحب ا  
لصالحين ويبرك النادمين المتنبئين ويؤمن الخائفين ويهلك  
٢ الخائنين هو الرحمن الرحيم سبحانه  
يا لا اله الا انت (Q 21,87) الکریم المعبود غافر الخطايا وسائر العيوب مذهب الهموم انت  
الذ  
ي سجد لك سواد الليل ونور النهار وضئ القمر وشعاع الشمس  
وخفيف السحر ودوى الماء اللهم انت الذي كل شيء خلقته (شطر؟) واليك با  
٣ لنشور اللهم اغفر لي خطيئي وذنوبي يا رب افض  
حاجتي كما قلت ادعوني استجب لكم (Q 40,60) وانت بوعدك مصدق نجني من الكرب والغم  
والهم والدين والضيق والشدة والمرض انت غياث كل  
مكروب ومظلوم ومضروب اللهم انت الذي قلت لا تقنطوا من الرحمن (Q 49,53) وا  
٤ نت بقولك صادق لست بمكذوب احفظني مو  
لاي من افات الدنيا والاخرة ولا تفضحني سري على رؤوس الخلاق خا  
صة في يوم الموعود الله اكبر الله اكبر كبيرا والحمد  
لله كثيرا سبحان الله بكرة واصيلا (Q 48,9) لا ضد له ولا ند له ولا كفو  
٥ ذه معروف بلطفه عادل في حكمه عالم في  
ملكه الرحمن الرحيم رحيم الرحماء علمم العلماء حكيم الحكماء نصير النصراء غفور  
الغفراء  
صاحب الانبياء سبحانه قادر على (ما) يشاء سبحان الله الملك  
القدير الحميد ذي العرش المجيد (Q 85,15) فعال لما يريد (Q 85,16) رب الارياب صاحب  
الاحزاب مسبب  
٦ الاسباب وسابق الاسباق ورازق الارزاق وخا  
لق الاخلاق ومفتح الابواب قادر المقدمور وقاهر المقهور وعادل يوم الو  
اقعة والحشر والنشور الا له الخلق والامر (Q 7,54) لا اله الا هو (Q 2,255) جامع  
الناس (Q 3,9) اله الالهة يوم القيمة رب رحيم غفور حلیم شكور والحمد لله العظيم

#### WELL

١ يا رحمن يا رحمن يا رحيم يا رحيم يا رحيم ان تر  
٢ ينني في منامي ما رجوت منك يا ستار واكر



٢ مني يمغفرة من خطيئتي انك على كل شيء (قديراً؟) (Q 42,9) (ولا ند؟)  
 ٤ له ولا حد له ولا حدود له ولا مثل له ولا  
 ٥ سنة له ولا شريك له ولا وزير له اسئلك يا عز  
 ٦ يز يا عزيز يا عزيز يا الله يا الله يا رحمن

#### EXTERIOR UNDER RIM

١ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
 ٢ الله لا اله الا هو الحي  
 ٣ القيوم لا تأخذه سنة  
 ٤ ولا نوم له ما في السموات  
 ٥ وات وما في الارض من  
 ٦ ذي الذي يشفع عنده  
 ٧ (لا كلرد على مني يا رحمن ما بين؟)  
 ٨ (ايديهم وما خلفهم و  
 ٩ لا يحيطون بشيء (على اسمي؟)  
 ١٠ علمه الا بما شاء وسع  
 ١١ كرسية السموات و  
 ١٢ الارض قيوده [sic?] حفظهما وهو الكريم [sic?] العظيم (Q 2,255)

#### MAIN BAND

١ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم قل يا ايها الكا  
 ٢ فرون لا اعبد ما تعبدون ولا انتم عابدون ما اعبد. ولا انا عا  
 ٣ بد ما عبدتم ولا انتم عابدون ما اعبد  
 ٤ لكم دينكم ولي دين (Q 109) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم قل هو  
 ٥ الله احد الله الصمد لم يلد ولم يولد  
 ٦ ولم يكن له كفوا احد (Q 112) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم قل ا  
 ٧ عوذ برب الفلق من شر ما خلق ومن شر  
 ٨ غاسق غدا وقب (ومن شر النفتث في العقد) ومن شر حاسد اذا حسد. (Q 113) بسم  
 ٩ الله الرحمن الرحيم قل اعوذ برب النا  
 ١٠ س ملك الناس من شر الوسواس الخناس  
 ١١ الذي يوسوس في صدور الناس من  
 ١٢ الجنة والناس (Q 114) لا فتا الا على لا سيف الا ذو الفقار على

#### Translation<sup>2</sup>

##### RIM

O God, O Affectionate, O Judge, O Praised, O Ruler, O Possessor of Glory and Generosity! I testify that You are adored from beneath Your Throne to the innermost depth of the earthes (...) except Your generous face. I beleive in You, Lord, O Relief of those who call for relief, All-powerful and help (me) in memorizing the science and the Koran! And save me O Lord and protect me and do not entrust me to myself for a moment! Whatever You wish You are powerful (to do it). And there is no power and no (strength) save in God, the Most High, the Exalted!

##### UNDER RIM

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, in the Name of God, in His Name, the Originator, Lord of the hereafter and this world! He has no end and no furthest limit. "To Him belongs all that is in" (Q 20,6) "the high heavens, the All-compassionate sat Himself upon the Throne, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and all that is underneath the soil. Be thou loud in thy speech, yet surely He knows the secret and that yet more hidden. God - there is no God but He. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful" (Q 20,4-8). God, the Exalted, the Possessor of Exalted Blessings, of Everlasting Existence, the Victorious over the enemies, Guardian of His creatures, the Merciful, Benevolent, Powerful to emaciate the victorious!

##### CAVETTO

- 1 He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, the Conqueror, the Everlasting, the Maintainer of creatures, the Breeder of livestock, the Originator of gifts, the Protector against misfortunes and He heals the sick and He forgives the sins of the offenders, He relieves the fugitives and He likes the pious and He blesses the guilty repentants and He safeguards the frightened and he destroys the traitors. He is the Merciful, the Compassionate! Praise be to You! O there is no god but You, the Generous, the Adored, the Forgiver of sins and other vices, the Remover of griefs! You are the One to Whom prostrated the blackness of the night and the light of the day and the shining of the Moon and the rays of the Sun and the growing light of the dawn and the sound of the water! O God! You are the One Who created everything (...) and to You is
- 3 the resurrection! O God! Forgive me my faults and sins! O Lord fulfill my request as You said: "Call upon Me and I will answer you" (Q 40,6). And You are

<sup>2</sup> In the numbering of the Koranic verses I followed the standard Egyptian edition, for their translation I used Arberry 1983.



confirming Your promise! Save me from distress and grief and sorrow and debt and poverty and misfortune and sickness! You are the Relief of every distressed and tyrannized and afflicted! O God! You are the One Who said: "do not despair of the Merciful (correctly: God's mercy)" (Q 39,53). And

- 4 You are trustworthy in Your word and cannot be untrue! Save me, O Lord from the evils of this world and the hereafter and do not divulge my secret to the heads of the creatures particularly on the Promised Day! God is the Greatest! God is the Greatest absolutely! Praise be to God abundantly! Praise be to God "at the dawn and in the evening" (Q 48,9). There is no adversary to Him and there is no rival to Him and there is no equal to
- 5 Him! Well-known by His kindness, Just in His judgement, Wise in His kingship, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Compassionate of the Compassionate Ones, the Omniscient of the Omniscient Ones, the Wise of the Wise Ones, the Victorious of the Victorious Ones, the Much-forgiving of the Forgiving Ones, the Master of Prophets, Praise be to Him! Powerful (to do what) He wants, Praise be to God, the King, the Omnipotent, the Praiseworthy, "the Possessor of the Throne, the All-glorious, Performer of what He desires" (Q 85,15-16), the Lord of Lords, the Master of troops, the Causer
- 6 of causes, the Preceder of the preceding ones, the Provider of daily bread, the Creator of creatures, the Opener of doors, the Powerful over fate, the Defeater of the defeated, Just on the Day of the Event, the Congregation and the Resurrection! "Verily, His are the creation and the command" (Q 7,54). "There is no god but He" (Q 2,255). He "shall gather mankind" (Q 3.9), the God of gods on the Day of Resurrection, Lord, Compassionate, Much-forgiving, Gentle, Praiseworthy and Praise be to God, the All-glorious!

#### WELL

- 1 O Merciful, O Merciful, O Compassionate, O Compassionate, O Compassionate, to show
- 2 me in my dream what I have requested from You, O Coverer and confer
- 3 upon me the forgiveness of my offenses! You are (powerful) (to do) everything! (And there is no rival?)
- 4 to Him and there is no boundary for Him and there are no borders for Him and there is no similar to Him and there is no
- 5 slumber for Him and there is no partner for Him and there is no vizier for Him! I ask You, O All-
- 6 mighty, O All-mighty, o All-mighty, O God, O God, O God, O Merciful,

#### EXTERIOR UNDER RIM

- 1 "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

- 2 God, there is no god but He, the Living,
- 3 the Everlasting. Slumber seizes Him not,
- 4 neither sleep, to Him belongs all that is in the hea/  
5 vens and the earth. Who is there
- 6 that shall intercede with Him"
- 7 (... on wine?. O Merciful "what lies before?)
- 8 them and what is after them, and
- 9 they comprehend not anything" ('Ali is my name?)
- 10 "of His knowledge save such He wills.
- 11 His Throne comprises the heavens and
- 12 the earth, the preserving of them oppresses Him (not?), He is the Generous(?) (instead of "the All-high), the All-glorious" (Q 2,255).

#### MAIN BAND

- 1 "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Say: O un/  
2 believers, I serve not what you serve and you are not serving what I serve, nor  
am I ser/  
3 ving what you have served, neither are you serving what I serve.
- 4 To you your religion, and to me my religion" (Q 109). "In the name of God, the  
Merciful, the Compassionate. Say: He is
- 5 God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been  
begotten,
- 6 and equal to Him is not any one" (Q 112). "In the name of God, the Merciful,  
the Compassionate. Say: I
- 7 take refuge with the Lord of Daybreak from the evil of what He has created,  
from the evil
- 8 of darkness when it gathers, (from the evil of the women who blow on knots),  
from the evil of an envier when he envies" (Q 113). "In the name
- 9 of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Say: I take refuge with the Lord of  
men,
- 10 the King of men, from the evil of the slinking whisperer
- 11 who whispers in the breasts of men
- 12 of jinn and men" (Q 114) There is no hero like 'Ali and there is no sword like  
Dū l-Faqār! 'Ali

#### Commentary

1. As we shall see in the following, the bowl can be attributed to the Safavid period. Savage-Smith divided Safavid magic bowls into three groups: one with astrological figures, another with magic squares and a third with magical inscriptions (Savage-Smith 2003:241).



Accordingly, our bowl belongs to the last group. In spite of the lack of overt astrological motifs, the structure betrays the same cosmologically conceived pattern which is reflected in the case of the bowls which carry the figures or names of the zodiacal signs and the planets.

The division of the upper bands in the interior and on the exterior into 12 sections and of the lower bands into 6 compartments surrounding a central rosette corresponds to the numerical equivalents of the 12 zodiacal signs and of the 7 planets and their structural arrangement in similar bowls<sup>3</sup>. In the row of the 7 planets (Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn) the Sun takes a central position, consequently it is logical that in a construction imposed by geometrical considerations it is placed in the centre of a circular band. The other evident solution sets Saturn, the last planet in the centre (Savage-Smith 2003:244).

The circular bands of these celestial bodies reflect the germ of the basic idea of Islamic cosmology. As al-Būnī, the author of the most famous Islamic encyclopaedia on magic put it *al-‘alam kulluhu dawā‘ir* “the whole world is (composed of) circles” (al-Būnī, *Sams* IV, 78). This notion goes back to the cosmological doctrines of the Late Antiquity and is based on the idea of concentrically arranged spheres or circles<sup>4</sup>.

The central boss of the bowl with its fourfold division may symbolize the four cardinal points, so, it makes part of the whole cosmological structure. Understandably, the bowls due to their circular shape are perfectly destined to represent this spherical universe.

Practically, such bowls are the products of the same ‘scientific’ world view which invented the astrolabes, the horoscopes or the so called talismanic plaques. The only difference is that these pieces represent the cosmos in a two dimensional way while the bowls may offer the effect of a three dimensional world. If we project the astrologically conceived bowls on a flat surface we get the geometrical structures of the rounded horoscopes or talismanic plaques. For this world view the main exponents of which became the Sufis, cosmology became almost an obsession.

To cite but a few examples of this attitude from the period preceding the Safavids, we may refer to the representation of the Zodiac and the planets in the observatory of Ulugh begh or to the famous horoscope of Iskandar Sultan from the year 1411 (Lentz & Lowry 1989:145-147, 151). Its circular bands show the zodiacal signs and several planets surrounding a flowerhead-like composition which is very similar to the decoration of the boss of our bowl. A similar geometric arrangement is shown by a 15th century Persian manuscript illumination, a *Weltspiegel* which places the Sun in the central roundel surrounded by the six roundels of the six other planets

<sup>3</sup> Canaan 1936:98 was of the same opinion.

<sup>4</sup> For the cosmological ideas of the Antiquity, see e.g. Simek 1992:16-32, Leisegang 1939:163f and *passim*. For their reception in Islam, see *EP* s.v. “*falak*”, Nasr 1968:92-97.

encircled by the band of the zodiacal signs. The outermost bands on both representations are surrounded by four angels. Another Persian manuscript illustration presents the four angels holding a circular band which symbolizes God’s Throne encircling the Universe (Kühnel 1923:Abb. 41, 55, Sotheby’s 2000:Lot 59, 80).

The presence of the Throne Verse (Q 2,255) on the outermost band of the bowl visualizes perfectly its literal content and serves to islamize the ancient concept of the spherical cosmos. The ardent wish to represent visually the unity of this spherical universe which suggests the supposed interrelationship and mutual influence between the celestial bodies and the earthly world fits in well with the basic idea of Islamic *tawhid* (‘the unity of God’).

In addition to the Throne Verse, another passage of the inscription with Q 20,4-6 speaking about God as He sits on the all-encompassing Throne and to Whom everything in this universe belongs also contributes to the islamization of this cosmological world-view. The unity of the world is further emphasized by certain divine names. When God is addressed as *al-Awwal*, *al-Āhir* (‘the First’, ‘the Last’), the appellations may refer to the unity of the world in time while the names *az-Zāhir*, *al-Bātin* (‘the Manifest’, ‘the Hidden’) may reflect its unity in space (Nasr 1968:93).

Naturally, the question arises why this cosmological structure was so fundamental for the magic bowls. Canaan and Reich thought that there was a relationship between the astrological figures and the instructions which prescribed the observance of certain constellations before using the bowls. Spoer supposed that this cosmological structure was meant to assure the protection for the practitioner from every possible direction (Canaan 1936:98, 116, Reich 1938:169, Spoer 1938:377).

The answer in our view, however, must be looked for in other factors. If we start from the text of the invocation it becomes evident that it is centered upon the emphasis on the exclusiveness of God’s power, His omnipotence in governing the universe because, as the Koran expresses it, He is *‘Alim al-ġayb wa-š-šahāda* (‘the Knower of the Hidden and the Manifest’) (Q 6,73) and He has *mafātih al-ġayb* (‘the keys of the hidden’) (Q 6,59). So, even from the most orthodox Islamic point of view it is evident that the petitioner wants to reach this God who abides over the spheres as if journeying to Him symbolically through the spheres. The bowl with its structure and texts offers the practitioner the idea of the presence of the whole universe at his disposal. Apart from this, a divinatory procedure in itself necessitates the symbolic representation of the universe since its totality guarantees that any possible future happening that may have a potential bearing on the response to the supplicant’s question is taken into consideration.

On the other hand, we may refer to Ibn Sinā’s view according to which the invocation is in fact directed to the cosmic spheres because there is a mutual relationship between the *du‘ā’* and the spheres which are thought to assure the fulfilment of the request (*EP* s.v. “*du‘ā’*” 618). In contrast, however, to Ibn Sinā’s somewhat too philosophical contemplations about the mechanism of the *du‘ā’*, a more current and more



comprehensible opinion is expressed by a 16th century work of Shiite colouring, the *Kitāb al-ġawāhir al-ḥams* [sic!] by Ibn Ḥaṭīr ad-Dīn. The author who lived in Gujarat in India exposed the idea that the different angels who acted as the agents of the spheres were expected to appear at the petitioner to listen to his wish (Ibn Ḥaṭīr ad-Dīn, *Ġawāhir* 330ff)<sup>5</sup>.

Summing up the different aspects of the particular group of magical bowls to which our bowl also belongs we may rightly state that form, text, structure and representations are in a perfect harmony in their case.

If we disregard the religious colouring in the case of the Islamic bowls, we may also refer to earlier and non-Islamic divinatory practices in which bowls as the symbols of the universe played an important role. The *phiale* of Classical Antiquity with an *omphalos* in the centre were regarded as representing the cosmos (Leisegang 1939:227, Barb 1953: 233, n.235). A plate from the 3rd-4th century attributed to Šāpūr II carries the picture of Paradise and contains cosmological symbols (Ringbom 1951:Abb. 110, 111, 382ff). Legends have it that the bowls of Ġamsīd, Kai Hosrow and Alexander hid all the secrets of the world and all future events could be foretold with the help of these bowls (Melikian-Chirvani 1982:332, 1992:42, 47f, 53, Thackston 1982:13).

2. Proceeding in time and to show the wide currency of this general cosmological scheme it is worth presenting here the description of a talismanic plaque which clearly demonstrates that the 12 fold and 6 fold geometrical design is closely connected to the representation of the zodiacal signs and the planets. The plaque in question (Photos 2 a,b) was bought by me in the London Antique Market. The circular, cast, incised and punched brass plaque is 97mm in diameter and is inscribed and decorated on both sides.

The obverse is divided into three main sections. A border band containing magical numbers and letters encircles a second band enclosed between twin fillets. This shows 12 trilobed cartouches separated by lozenge-like motifs with a punched ground between the cartouches. The cartouches carry the Arabic names of the zodiacal signs written in *nashī*. The central field presents 6 roundels formed by twin fillets surrounding a seventh in the centre. Each of these is divided by twin fillets into six bands which are inscribed by magical numbers and letters. None of the roundels or the bands is identical with another one. Between the roundels the Arabic names of the planets are incised in *nashī*. The names of Jupiter and Saturn share the same compartment. Under the names of the planets six small arrows point to the centre. As we have seen, both the Sun and Saturn could have been placed in the central

<sup>5</sup> According to *GALS* II, 616 the work was published in Fez in 1318 AH. About the author, see *Et s.v.* "Muhammad Ġawṭ Ġwāliyārī".

position but in this case, I think, it was meant for the Sun. Namely, there are six decorative elements looking like beams of rays protruding from this roundel which may indicate that it stands for the Sun.

The reverse shows a circular band between incised fillets which contains 12 roundels made by twin fillets. Every second is divided into six bands inscribed with magical numbers and letters. The other roundels are decorated by what seems to be six zodiacal signs in a rather peculiar arrangement. The sign of Gemini stands in opposition to Aries (its name is written in Persian as *Gusfand*), Leo (?) is in opposition to Sagittarius (the figure is obliterated but its name is written as *Qarws*) while Capricorn (?) is opposed to Taurus (designated as *Baqar*). Gemini are represented by a couple flanking a tree topped by a 2x2 magical square. Interestingly, the figure on the left could be a female since her head with the raised hair (?) is different from the male figure wearing a turban. Curiously, the selection of the other zodiacal signs was seemingly determined by the fact that each of them is related to a quadruped. Among these, however, only three are named and all of them are placed in a clockwise direction starting to the right from Gemini.

In the spaces between the 12 roundels the Shiite invocation asking God to bless the 'Fourteen Innocents' (Muḥammad, Fāṭīma and the 12 Imams) which frequently appears on Safavid metalwork is inscribed. The text starts to the left of Aries in the upper section and continuing in an anti-clockwise direction ends with the name of al-Mahdi to the right of Aries in the lower section.

The central circular field is divided by twin fillets into eight bands inscribed with the *Basmala* and the Throne Verse (Q 2,255) to complete the cosmological construction.

We cannot say with certainty for what purpose this particular plaque was used but it probably comes from Mughal India where these plaques were very popular (Savage-Smith 1997:124f) and it can be dated to the 16th-17th century. Its resemblance, however, to an astrolabic disc may point to its use in divinatory practices as the *Ġawāhir* seems to confirm this assumption. An interesting passage (Ibn Ḥaṭīr ad-Dīn, *Ġawāhir* 233) describes the procedure which must be performed by a practitioner (*ʿāmil*) who wants to be admitted to the divine presence and wants to have the revelation of the realities of things. After the necessary preparations he is supposed to visit nine *ḥānqās*, Sufi monasteries (here symbols of the nine spheres) in the company of the spirits of the prophets who interrogate the sheikhs of the *ḥānqās* about the acceptability of the practitioner. The sheikh of the first building is a one-eyed figure with an astrolabe placed in front of him. Upon the question of the prophets he answers that he found in the *ʿilm al-ġayb* ('the science of the hidden') that the practitioner would be given the admission. It seems to be logical to suppose that he must have arrived at this conclusion through the help of the astrolabe, his 'scientific' instrument which could practically have been a talismanic plaque.



3. The structure and contents of the texts on the bowl show the characteristics of a typical Sufi *du'ā'*. The predominant part of the invocation shows a bustling zeal in the glorification of God and finally closes by asking blessings on the Prophet. The reason for this scheme is offered by a tradition which says that the Prophet himself encouraged his followers to start their invocations with a prayer on him and to ask something from God only after this because He will definitely not refuse the first wish and so He will be more inclined to fulfil the more personal requests (al-Makkī, *Qūt* I, 10).

Accordingly, on the rim, that is on the outermost part of the bowl comes the wish – a most laudable one from the orthodox point of view – expressing the petitioner's desire to be helped by God in memorizing the Koran. This must have been a permanent wish of the pious Sufi since the *Qūt al-qulūb* mentions that the recitation of a Koranic verse before sleeping will help in the memorization of the Koran. It also says that he who loves the Koran, loves God and loving God is the sign of belief while loving the Koran means loving the Prophet. At the same time, the Koran comprises thousands of the sciences, consequently anybody versed in the Koran will be imbued by these sciences (al-Makkī, *Qūt* I, 13, 41, 69).

The text in the cavetto contains such personal supplications as the plea for deliverance from everyday misfortunes and the forgiveness of sins. Proceeding towards the innermost part of the bowl, the inscription in the well around the boss contains the final goal of the *du'ā'*, the request for a dream vision in which the practitioner receives a response to the question posed by him. This procedure can belong to the practices which are grouped under the term *istihāra*, a favourite form of Islamic divination<sup>6</sup>. The structural arrangement of these goals suggesting a movement directed towards the inner centre of the bowl implies the conscious intent of the engraver to place the main request in the central position. The direction of this movement from the outermost to the innermost is in perfect harmony with the view of the cosmos composed of concentric spheres around a central point.

This evident effort is further emphasized by the form of the composition. The text is inscribed in a circular band made up of cartouches in which nothing marks off the beginning from the end. On the other hand, this structure highlights the idea of whirling which may lead to the loss of senses or consciousness, a most natural disposition to receive a dream vision. The magical character of the procedure is completed by the triple repetition of God's names, a well-known characteristic of both pre-Islamic and Islamic magic<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> For the *istihāra*, see Fadlallah 1996:91-137, *EP*, s.v. "*istihāra*".

<sup>7</sup> The Prophet invoked God three times during the procedure of the *istisqā'*: al-Buhārī, *Sahih* II, 344 (*Kitāb al-ḡum'a, Bāb al-istisqā'*).

Although the text on the bowl does not give instructions as to the preparations to be made before the sleeping position, we may have an idea about them on the basis of other written sources. The *Qūt al-qulūb* prescribes for the petitioner to sleep on the right side with the face turned to the direction of the *qibla*. It is not incidental that this is the position of the corpse in the tomb since this source itself says that sleeping is practically equal to death (al-Makkī, *Qūt* I, 37, 42f). This may suggest that the expected answer to the question also comes from a sphere outside this world.

4. Looking for possible manuscript sources or parallels for this *du'ā'*, I have succeeded in tracing down a text which shows a surprising similarity with at least the general part of our invocation. Two Sunni Arabic-Turkish prayer books in the Tareq Rajab Museum (not yet catalogued, one is dated to AH 1164/AD 1750, the other can also be dated to the 18th-19th century) contain a prayer called *Du'ā' qadah* ('Invocation of the Bowl') which, as we shall see in the following, turned out to be a more or less literal version or occasionally a paraphrase of the text on our bowl.

#### هذا دعاء قدح

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم بسم الله وباسم المبتدأ رب الآخرة والاولى لا غاية له ولا منتهى \*  
 له ما في السموات وما في الارض وما بينهما وما تحت الثرى (Q 20,6) \* وان تجهر بالقول  
 فانه يعلم السر واخفى (Q 20,7) الله لا اله الا هو له الاسماء الحسنى (Q 20,8) \* الرحمن على  
 العرش استوى (Q 20,5) \* له ما في السموات وما في الارض وما بينهما وما تحت الثرى (20,6)  
 (Q) \* الله عظيم الالاء دائم النعماء \* قاهر الاعداء \* الرحمن عاطف بلطفه عادل معروف بعزته  
 \* عزيز برزقه \* معروف بلطفه \* عادل في حكمه عالم في خلقه \* رحيم الرحماء \* عليم  
 العلماء \* غفور الغفراء صاحب الانبياء قادر على ما يشاء \* سبحان الله الملك الحميد \* ذي  
 العرش المجيد (Q 85,15) \* فعال لما يريد (Q 85,16) رب الارباب \* ومسبب الاسباب \* ورازق  
 الارزاق \* وخالق الاخلاق \* قادر المقدر \* وقاهر المقهور \* عادل يوم النشور \* اله الالهة  
 يوم الواقعة \* رحيم حلیم ودود غفور شكور الحمد لله الملك الحميد الرحيم القديم \* خالق  
 عرش السموات وهو السميع العليم \* قابل التوب الشكور الحلیم \* الاول الاخر الظاهر الباطن  
 الدائم \* الرازق التواب \* صاحب العطايا ويعفو ويثيب النادمين \* ويؤمن الخائفين \* سبحانك  
 يا لا اله الا انت (Q 21,87) ذو العطايا يا شكور يا حلیم يا عالم يا رحيم \* ليس كمثلك شئ  
 (Q 42,11) في الارض ولا في السماء وهو السميع العليم \* وهو على كل شئ قدير (Q 42,9) يا  
 شاهد انت تعلم سرا وعلائية وما تخفى القلوب انت قلت وانت اصدق السائلين \* ادعوني  
 استجب لكم (Q 40,60) لا تقنطوا من رحمة الله (Q 39,53) \* احفظني من افات الزمان والنضيجة  
 ولا تقضني في الموعود الله اكبر الله اكبر لا اله الا الله حقا حقا \* لا اله الا الله ايمانا  
 وصدقا \* لا اله الا الله \* تعيدا ورقا \* لا اله الا الله \* محمد رسول الله اعين نفسي بالله الذي  
 لا اله الا هو خالق عالم قادر وشعري وبشري وديني وديناي واهلي ومالي \* ولدي ودينتي  
 من كل ذي شر يؤذيني \* واعين نفسي وجميع ما رزقني من نعمة واحسان من المؤمنين  
 والمؤمنات \* بالله العلى العظيم \* وفضل كتابه عز وجل وبلا اله الا الله \* وعزة الله وقدره



الله وعظمة الله \* وقوة الله \* وسعة الله \* وسلطان الله \* وغفران الله \* وانبياء الله \*  
 وكتب الله \* ورسول الله \* واعوذ بالله \* من غضب الله \* وعقاب الله \* وسخط الله \* ونكال  
 الله \* وكتاب الله \* وبما قد سبق من زوال نعمة وموجبات الهلكة والفضيحة في الدنيا  
 والاخرة \* واعوذ بالله العظيم ومن شر الاتس والجن ومن الشياطين ومن شر فسقة العرب  
 والعجم \* ومن شر ابليس وجنوده ومن شر السلاطين ومن شر ما ينزل من السماء وما يعرج  
 منها ومن شر كل دابة انت اخذ بناصيتها ان ربي على صراط مستقيم (Q 11,56) \* اللهم اني  
 احتجبت بك من كل شئ خلقتة واحترز بك منهم واعوذ بالله العظيم \* من الغرق والحرق  
 والهدم والخسف والحجارة والزلازل والصيحة والقهقهة والصواعق والجنون \* وجميع انواع  
 البلايا في الدنيا والاخرة يا عياذي من كل كربتي ويا صاحبي في كل شدتي ويا الهي واله  
 ابائي ابراهيم واسماعيل واسحق ويعقوب والاسباط وموسى وهرون ويا شاهد كل نجوي الله  
 ربي لا شريك له (Q 6,163) له الملك واليه ترجعون (Q 28,70) \* ولا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلي  
 العظيم \* وصلى الله على سيدنا ونبينا وشفيعنا محمد. واله وصحبه اجمعين برحمتك يا ارحم  
 الراحمين والحمد لله رب العالمين (Q 10,10) \*

### TRANSLATION

#### "THIS IS THE INVOCATION OF THE BOWL

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!

In the Name of God, in the Name of the Origin, Lord of the hereafter and this world! He has no end and no furthest limit. "To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and all that is underneath the soil. Be thou loud in thy speech, yet surely He knows the secret and yet more hidden. God - there is no God but He. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful" (Q 20,6-8). "The All-compassionate sat Himself upon the Throne, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and all that is underneath the soil" (Q 20,5-6). God is the Possessor of Glorious Blessings, of Everlasting Grace, the Victorious over the enemies, the Merciful, Benevolent by His kindness, Just, Well-known by His glory, All-mighty by His providing the daily bread, Well-known by His kindness, Just in His judgement, Wise in His creation, the Compassionate of the Compassionate Ones, the Omniscient of the Omniscient Ones, the Much-forgiving of the Much-forgiving Ones, the Master of the Prophets, Powerful (to do) what He wants. Praise be to God, the King, the Praiseworthy, "the Possessor of the Throne, the All-glorious, Performer of what He desires" (Q 85,15-16), the Lord of Lords, the Causer of Causes, the Provider of daily bread, the Creator of creatures, the Powerful over fate, the Defeater of the defeated, Just on the Day of the Resurrection, the God of gods on the Day of the Event, Compassionate, Gentle, All-loving, All-forgiving, All-thankful! Praise be to God, the King, the Praiseworthy, the Compassionate, the Eternal, the Creator of the Throne of the heavens and He is the

All-hearing, the All-knowing, the Acceptor of repentance, the All-thankful, the Gentle, the First, the Last, the Manifest, the Hidden, the Everlasting, the Provider, the Forgiving, the Master of gifts, He forgives and relieves and strengthens the repentant and He secures the frightened! Praise be to You! O "there is no god but Thou" (Q 21,87), Owner of the gifts, O All-thankful, O Gentle, O Omniscient O Compassionate! "Like Him there is naught" (Q 42,11) on the earth or in the heaven and He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing and "He is Powerful over everything" (Q 42,9). O Witness You know (what is done) in secret and (what is done) in public and what the hearts conceal. You have said and You are the Most Sincere of those who speak, "Call upon Me and I will answer you" (Q 40,60). "Do not despair of God's mercy" (Q 39,53). Protect me against the plagues of the time and the disgrace and do not judge (me) on the Promised (Day)! God is the Greatest! God is the Greatest! There is no god but God, verily, verily! There is no god but God, in faith and in truth! There is no god but God, in worship and in compassion(?)! There is no god but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God! I seek refuge for myself with God - who there is no god but He, Creator, Omniscient, Powerful - and for my hair and my skin and my religion and my world(ly life) and my family and my wealth and my son and my descendants against every evil that may harm me. And I seek refuge for myself and for every favor and beneficence He offered me through the faithful men and women with God, the Most-high, the Exalted and with the superiority of His Book, the Most High, the All-glorious and with 'There is no god but God!' and with the Glory of God and with the Omnipotence of God and with the Majesty of God and with the Strength of God and with the Power of God and with the Might of God and with the Forgiveness of God and with the Prophets of God and with the Books of God and with the Messengers of God and I seek refuge with God against the anger of God and the punishment of God and the wrath of God and the warning of God and with the Book of God against what has happened (in the form of) the cessation of favor and (against) the causes of destruction and disgrace in this world and in the hereafter. And I seek refuge with God, the All-glorious against the evil of men and jinn and against the devils and against the evil of the offenders from among the Arabs and non-Arabs and against the evil of Iblis and his armies and against the evil of the sultans and against the evil of what descends from the sky and what ascends from it and against the evil of every "creature that crawls and You (instead of 'He') take it by the forelock. Surely my Lord is on a straight path" (Q 11,56). O God I hid myself by You against everything You have created and I protect myself by You against them and I seek refuge with God, the All-glorious against sinking and burning and destruction and eclipse and detention and earthquakes and crying and guffowing and thunderbolts and madness and every kind of misfortunes in this world and in the hereafter. O my Refuge against every grief and O my Master in every affliction, O my God and God of my Fathers, Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac and Jacob and of the Tribes and Moses and Aron, O Witness of every secret! God is my Lord! "No



associate has He" (Q 6,163). "His is the kingdom (instead of 'Judgement'), and unto Him you shall be returned" (Q 28,70). And there is no power and no strength save in God, the Most-high, the All-glorious! And may God bless our Master and Prophet and Intercessor, Muhammad and His Family and all His Companions by Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful Ones and "Praise belongs to God, the Lord of all Being" (Q 10,10).

Evidently, due to lack of space only a part of this text is inscribed on the bowl. On the other hand, it is also understandable that the reference to the request for a dream vision is missing in the manuscript sources since the bowl was supposed to play a basic role in the procedure. A commentary (*šarh*) on this *du'ā* written in Turkish<sup>8</sup> in both manuscripts reveal the special connection between the title of the invocation and the occurrence of this particular text on a bowl. This commentary relates that during the *Mi'rāğ*, the Nocturnal Journey, the Prophet saw a green bowl<sup>9</sup> inscribed with this invocation in green letters. The commentator enumerates the miraculous properties of this bowl claiming that it was instrumental in preserving the universe while the invocation was useful for a number of purposes like healing, protection in war, etc.

5. Examining some divine attributes occurring in the invocation inscribed on our bowl we find that they belong to a special group called *al-asmā' al-'izām*, 'The Great Names' the uses of which are amply treated by Ibn Ḥaṭīr ad-Dīn (*Ġawāhir* 130-152, 202-284)<sup>10</sup>. These are *subhānak lā ilāha illā anta*, 'Praise be to You, there is no god but You' (Name 1 among the 'Great Names'), *ilāh al-āliha*, 'God of Gods' (Name 2), *mannān*, 'Benefactor' (Name 16), *hannān*, 'Affectionate' (Name 17), *dayyān*, 'Judge' (Name 18). The notion of these 'Great Names' can further be traced back to an earlier source entitled *Hawāss al-arba'ina isman*, 'Uses of the Fourty Names' attributed to as-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl<sup>11</sup> who is frequently mentioned in the *Ġawāhir*. Seemingly, these names are different from the well-known *al-asmā' al-husnā*, 'The Most Beautiful Names'. The *Qūt al-qulūb* states upon the authority of al-Hasan al-Baṣrī that God revealed these 40 names to Idrīs when He sent him to his people and instructed him to recite the names in secret. Later the names were disclosed to Moses and then to Muhammad (al-Makkī, *Qūt* I, 85f).

There are also some other formulae which must have enjoyed a wide acceptance among the pious. So, the *Ġawāhir* contains *mufattiḥ al-abwāb*, *musabbib al-asbāb*, *giyāt*

<sup>8</sup> For its interpretation I am obliged to Prof. Géza Dávid.

<sup>9</sup> In modern Arabic usage *aḥdar* 'green' in connection with a bowl means 'new', 'not used'.

<sup>10</sup> The work mentions 41 and 42 names respectively.

<sup>11</sup> For a popular edition of this work, see as-Suhrawardī, *Hawāss*.

*al-mustagiṭīn*, *fa-lā šay' kufu'uhu*, *lā wazīra laka* (Ibn Ḥaṭīr ad-Dīn, *Ġawāhir* 70, 86, 114, 219, 293). Other phrases like *wa-lā takilnī ilā nafsī tarfata 'ayn*, *allāhu akbar kabīran wa-l-hamdu li-l-lāhi kaṭīran wa-subhāna l-lāh bukratan wa-asīlan* also occur in the *Qūt al-qulūb* (al-Makkī, *Qūt* I, 12, 18, 44).

Among the 'Great Names' the phrase *ilāh al-āliha*, 'God of gods' may look the strangest or even abhorring from the Islamic point of view. In spite of this, it must have reflected a deeply rooted tradition as the bowl published by Spoer shows this since it is inscribed with this attribute together with other names chosen from *al-asmā' al-'izām* (Spoer 1938:368). Another example is offered by a jade pendant dated to the 16th-17th century engraved with the first names of the 'Fourty' including the 2nd, *ilāh al-āliha* (Spink 1986:No. 28, 42).

Devotional zeal could have easily accepted this expression or other similar compounds like *rabb al-arbāb*, 'Lord of the Lords' or *arham ar-rāhimīn*, 'Most Compassionate of the Compassionate Ones' etc because these expressions of religious piety are in conformity with everyday linguistic usage manifested in such titles as *ḥalīfat al-ḥulafā'*, 'Caliph of the Caliphs' by which the heads of the Sufis were called during the early Safavids (Savory 1965:497ff), *šayḥ aš-šuyūḥ*, 'the sheikh of sheikhs' by which the *Ġawāhir* referred frequently to as-Suhrawardī or even *šāhanšāh*, 'king of the kings', a favorite attribute of Persian rulers in different periods (*EL*<sup>2</sup> s.v. "*shāhanshāh*"). So at the first sight, within this framework we seem to have a case of rhetoric.

There is, however, a more specific religious aspect concealed behind this linguistic explanation. Namely, a cosmological treatise of Jewish mysticism which forms part of the famous magical work, *Sefer Raziel* but can be traced back to the 2th-5th centuries AD contains a prayer addressing God in the following way: *elohenu elohe abotenu elohe ha-elohim wa-adone ha-adonim elohe Abraham elohe Yitzḥaq w-elohē Ya'aqob ha-el ha-gadol.....melek melake ha-melakim*, "Our God, the God of our fathers, God of gods and Lord of Lords, God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob, the Great God...King of the Kings of Kings" (Séd 1965:91). There is of course a Biblical background behind these attributes: *elohe ha-elohim wa-adone ha-adonim* goes back to Deut. 10,17 while *elohe Abraham elohe Yitzḥaq elohe Ya'aqob* can be found in Ex. 3,6. After this long glorification of God the prayer ends with a personal request asking God to send a certain person to the petitioner.

The parallel between these phrases and the expressions used in the invocation of our bowl and particularly in its longer version as it appears in the *Du'ā' qadah* cannot be a mere coincidence. Besides, the structure of both pieces reveal the same attitude on the part of the practitioner: only after a long prelude composed of something like a divine liturgy comes the expression of the personal wish.

The very same formulae can be found in other pieces of Jewish mystical literature of cosmological character, the *Hekhalot* (Schäfer 1988:144, 146). These works also reveal that the main concern for the Jewish petitioner was the mastering of the Torah



(Schäfer 1988:30, 282f). As we have seen, one of the first requests of our invocation was the memorization of the Koran and with this the picture becomes complete.

A further proof pointing to the Jewish connection is offered by another motif occurring in the text of one of the magical bowls published by Reich. Written in Arabic but in Hebrew characters the passage in question asks for protection against the evil acts of people belonging to different religions (Muslims, Jews, Christians) (Reich 1937-38:164, 166). The same preoccupation characterizes the author of the *Du'ā' qadah* when he seeks refuge with God against the evil of the Arabs and non-Arabs.

6. In the text of the Throne Verse the otherwise continuous and intelligible inscription shows some strange and not explicable mistakes which deserve a closer look. At first, there is a lacuna after the words *yašfa'u 'indahu* which seems to contain *yā rahmān*, "O Merciful" and the letters *my*. These could be read as *mey*, the Persian word for "wine". If this interpretation is correct the word could be taken as a kind of instruction concerning the liquid with which the bowl was supposed to be filled for the request of the dream vision. Wine had a long tradition in Sufi practice and symbolism and it was looked upon as a means of illumination, a key to true revelation or to the perception of God (Melikian-Chirvani 1992: 32, 53).

The second lacuna after *lā yuhitūna bi-šay'* presents two words which could be deciphered as *'Alī ismī*, "my name is 'Alī", referring perhaps to the engraver's name. The last word in the text, "Alī" may also contain this allusion to the engraver's person.

The third alteration concerns the omission of the negative from the expression *fa-lā ya'uduhu* and the replacement of *fa-* by *wa-*.

It is highly difficult to accept these mistakes as simple signs of negligence on the part of the engraver. On the other hand, if he did these alterations on purpose he probably wanted to desecralize the holy text the use of which in connection with wine and during the course of a divinatory procedure could have been abhorring for the pious.

7. Summing up all that has been expounded previously we may conclude that the bowl can be related to the Safavid period. The layout of the bowl based on a 12 fold and 6 fold division reveals the key number system which was a characteristic of Safavid metalwork (Melikian-Chirvani 1982:No. 167a, 354). Other decorative elements like the quatrefoil on the boss also appear on Safavid objects (Melikian-Chirvani 1982: 166, 288, 349). This particular motif can also be found on Timurid pieces as we have seen in the case of Iskandar Sultan's horoscope. For the sake of further comparison another object, a jug dated to AD 1467 is worth mentioning because it shows the same, similarly composed, four petalled arabesque and an interlacing strapwork

(Lentz & Lowry 1989:161). All these would point to the early Safavid period as a possible date for our bowl.

There is another aspect which seems to support this dating. Namely, it is striking that the only textual reference to a Shiite background occurs at the end of the inscription which mentions 'Alī and his famous sword by name. A certain Shiite connection can be discerned in the use of some particular divine attributes chosen ultimately from as-Suhrawardī's 'Fourty Names' and which, as we have seen, were one of the major subjects treated by the Shiite *Ġawāhir*. The grouping of the four Koranic suras starting with the word *qul (al-qawāqil)* at the end of the invocation may also indicate a Shiite colouring (Ibn Ḥaṭir ad-Dīn, *Ġawāhir* 306).

The absence of the overt reference to a Shiite background may be explained by the fact that the bowl could have been produced in a region which lay outside the direct Safavid political rule but within its artistic influence that is to the East of the Safavid political centre.

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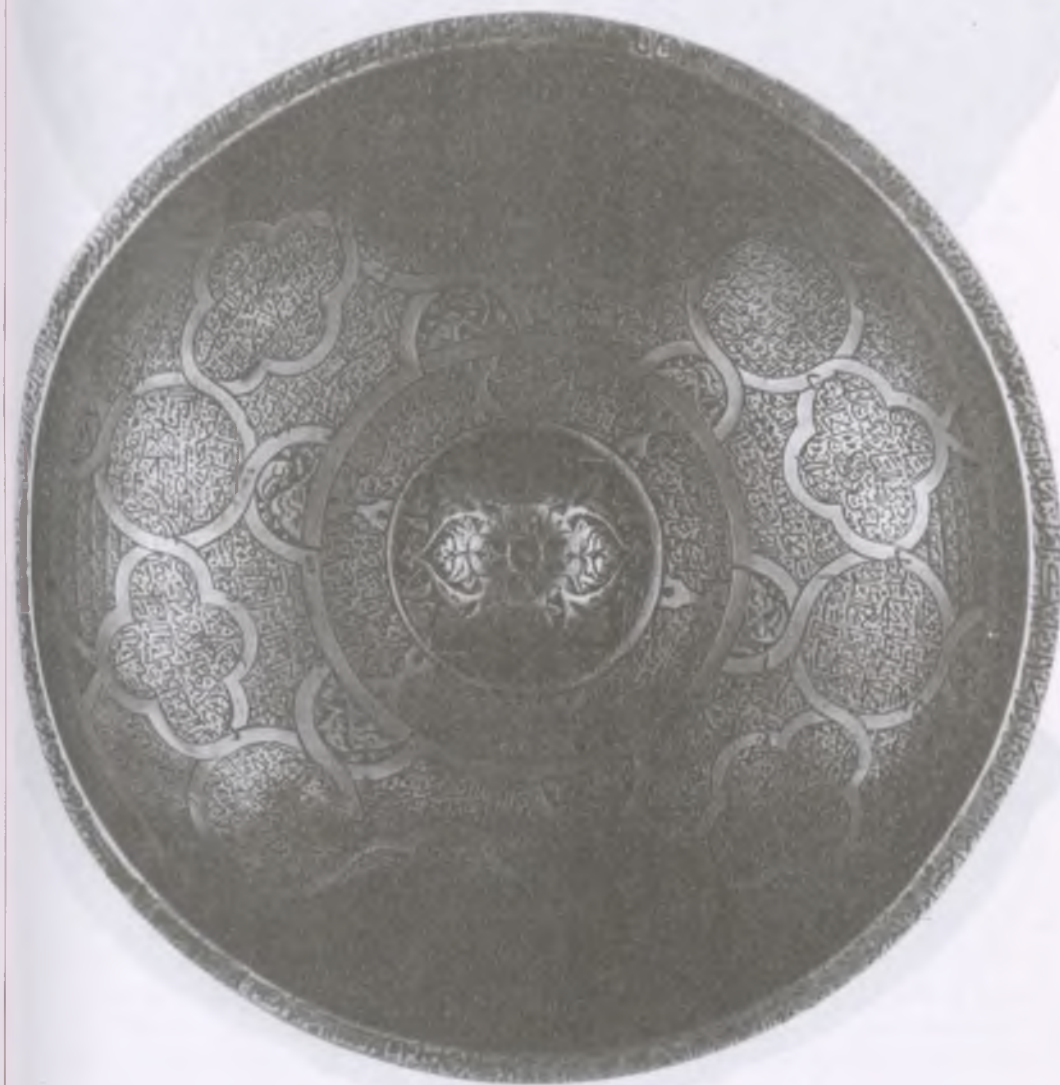


Photo 1a



A HUNGARIAN COLLECTION OF ISLAMIC ART  
MIXIDY ENKŐS... FROM FUSTAY



Photo 1b



Photo 1c



Photo 1d





Photo 2a



Photo 2b

## A HUNGARIAN COLLECTOR OF ISLAMIC ART MIKLÓS ZSOLNAY'S CERAMICS COLLECTION FROM FUSTÁT

Ibolya Gerelyes

*Hungarian National Museum, Budapest*

### The History of the Collection

The Janus Pannonius Museum of Pécs has been in possession of a remarkable collection of Islamic ceramics for more than fifty years, a collection which has rightly aroused the interest of researchers in the field. The collection, hitherto completely unknown, was purchased during a trip to the Near East in 1887-1888 by Miklós Zsolnay, son of Vilmos Zsolnay, the founder in Pécs of a ceramics factory of European renown (Hárs 1996:37). After being stored in the Zsolnay family's private museum for over sixty years, the material was moved to its current location following the factory's nationalisation in 1948 (Hárs 1996:53; Gerelyes & Kovács 1999:15).

The fashionable practices of the period and certain business considerations may all have induced Vilmos Zsolnay to send his son on a study trip of several-months duration. We can reconstruct Miklós Zsolnay's trip quite accurately on the basis of his diary, kept in German and held in the family archive, as well as from his letters to the family, also written in German. When Zsolnay returned from his journey, he did not come empty-handed. During his trip he had purchased a large and extremely valuable collection of ceramics. The collection can be divided into two completely separate units, one consisting of wall tiles, and the other comprising ceramics from Fustât; it is the latter collection that forms the subject of the present paper (Gerelyes & Kovács 1999:15). Both in his choice of route and in his selection of items, Zsolnay followed in the wake of the artists and art collectors, consuls and army officers roaming the "fabulous East". He used almost exactly the same route that the English painter Lord Frederic Leighton had completed twenty years earlier. Lord Leighton visited Rhodes, Bursa and Smyrna (Izmir) in 1867, then travelled to Egypt in 1868 and to Damascus five years later (Simon 1996:16). Zsolnay, and many others, followed the same itinerary. In one of his letters from Cairo, he himself made the comment that he encountered the very same people here that he had bumped into in Istanbul. Nor could it be mere coincidence that Major Myers, who took part in a farewell party held in Sephards Hotel in Cairo on December 27, 1887, was probably the same person who years later purchased large quantities of Near-Eastern, primarily Syrian and Egyptian, ceramics for the Victoria and Albert Museum of London. We can reconstruct Zsolnay's journey as follows: He set out early in November, 1887. His first letter was dated October 18 while still on Hungarian territory, from Mohács. He arrived in Constantinople on October 24. During the month he spent in the Turkish capital, he mostly visited architectural monuments, the mosques. He



procured permission to make copies of the tiles covering the inside walls with the help of transparent paper. In all probability he bought the collection's Iznik pieces, dated from about the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in Istanbul. Early in November he made a brief, two-day-long excursion to Bursa, where he studied the tile covering of the Yeshil mosque and its *türbe* (mausoleum). His last letter from Constantinople was dated November 21. His next correspondence was sent during a boat journey in the Aegean Sea. In late November he visited Izmir, Larnaca, and Cyprus. During the next three weeks or so, he completed the journey from Beirut through Baalbek, Damascus, Jerusalem and Port Said to Cairo. According to his diary, he made his most important purchases in Damascus, where he bought over a hundred pieces of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-century Damascene tiles, that still form part of the collection today<sup>1</sup>.

From the standpoint of the Fustāt collection of ceramics, Zsolnay's stay in Egypt is a great deal more important. Zsolnay arrived in Cairo on December 19. Here he made the acquaintance of the Egyptian government's Minister of Finance, the Hungarian-born Blum Pasha<sup>2</sup>. Blum Pasha introduced Zsolnay to Max (Miksa) Herz, the architect who was also of Hungarian ancestry. We shall return to Herz later, because he – apparently – came to play an important role in shipping the Fustāt collection to Hungary. After spending Christmas in Cairo, Zsolnay went on a two-week trip on the Nile on December 28. In the letters he sent from here he mostly wrote about the art of ancient Egypt. He returned to Cairo on January 10, 1888, and then left the Egyptian capital a few days later. His next message was sent from Athens on January 28. Here he met the German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann. Following a brief stay in Athens, he returned to Hungary via Rome in February 1888.

We have very little information about Zsolnay's purchases in Egypt. During the first days of his stay in Cairo, he mentioned that he was not likely to buy much here, because, as he put it: "valuable Arab items are hard to come by, and Egyptian rarities interest me very little." Despite his earlier plans, however, he did purchase some carpets and Qur'ān holders in the Cairo bazaars, according to his diary. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find any information as to when and under what circumstances he had bought the rather large collection of Fustāt ceramics (approximately 4,000 fragments). I presume, without being able to prove it, that he bought them on the advice of the previously mentioned Miksa Herz. Miksa Herz went to stay in Egypt in October 1880. In early 1881, he joined the Technical Bureau of the *Waqf* Office, where he worked in the architect team until 1890s. The head of the Bureau, Pasha Julius Franz, retired in 1887 and recommended Miksa Herz as his replacement.

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed description of the journey, see Gerelyes & Kovács 1999:15-21.

<sup>2</sup> Gyula Blum was born in 1843 in Pest. He worked as Director of the Austro-Egyptian Bank after 1869. He became under-secretary of the Treasury in 1877, and was made Pasha and Minister two years later.

Miksa Herz, subsequently had quite a remarkable career, donating more than 300 articles to the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest in 1891<sup>3</sup>. The Herz donation included a small collection of Fustāt ceramics, approximately 200 pieces. This collection later on grew through the pieces that the Zsolnay family either donated or sold to the Museum of Applied Arts<sup>4</sup>. Unlike the collection of tiles, the collection of Fustāt ceramics had no influence on the Zsolnay factory's designers<sup>5</sup>. Save for one unique piece, we could discover no traces of experiments or re-firing from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The wide variety of patterns associated with the Fustāt collection apparently failed to influence the Zsolnay factory's products after 1888. The composition of the collection suggests that Zsolnay did not apply any clear-cut criteria in his selection. There are hundreds of Syrian bowls of the same type, with an underglaze painted in blue or black. The fact that he brought home approximately one thousand fragments of Mamlūk sgraffito ceramics that did not fit the factory's profile, while the number of lustre painted fragments that did fit its profile were much smaller, although not insignificant, also contradicts the idea of deliberate selection.

Miklós Zsolnay purchased the collection either in December 1887 or in early 1888. Therefore, he bought it eight years before Fredrik R. Martin concluded what could rightly be termed the first planned research, and decades before 'Alī Bahğat started his research work (Vernoit 1997:5). The area was a favourite site for treasure hunters. Zsolnay's collection precisely matched the Fustāt material acquired for other European collections at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The circumstances under which he obtained them can explain why, despite of having thousands of fragments, we are able to reconstruct only a few vessels.

The restoration and cataloguing of the collection have still not been completed. The aim of the present article is to present this previously unpublished collection to the world by listing the main types, thus opening the way for further research.

Both the site and the history of excavations are well known from the literature (Scanlon 1965:7-9). During the earliest Islamic conquests, the Arab armies established military bases over all the occupied territory. Conquered in AD 641, one such base was al-Fustāt, which later grew into a town of substance. More than three hundred years later, in AD 969, Ġawhar, the military commander of the Fātimid Dynasty

<sup>3</sup> Miksa Herz was appointed to head the Arab Museum (today the Museum of Islamic Art) in 1892. In 1901 he was officially named as Director of the Institute. On his eventful and successful life, see Ormos (in press). I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to István Ormos for the information he made available to me.

<sup>4</sup> Iparművészeti Múzeum, Budapest. Éva Csenkey called my attention to the collection of Fustāt ceramics owned by the Museum of Applied Arts. I would like to express my gratitude for the help she has given me in my work.

<sup>5</sup> The collection of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>-century tiles exerted a serious influence on the work of the factory's designers after 1888. See: Hárs 1996:71.; Gerelyes & Kovács 1999:37-40, plates 53-76.



(969-1171) that conquered North Africa, marked the site for the new capital, Cairo, north of Fustāt. Caliph al-Mu'izz moved to the new centre, developed specifically for him, four years later. Nevertheless, Fustāt's significance was preserved during subsequent centuries. Right up to circa 1075 the most important ceramics workshops of the Islamic world were to be found in this district. Sometime after 1168, when the area of pottery workshops burnt down and there was a mass exodus of skilled potters Fustāt district started to lose its importance. In subsequent centuries one part of Fustāt became a dumping ground for Cairo's rubbish, which made it into a treasure house for collectors of later periods. The huge quantities of ceramics, mostly fragments or rejects, that were uncovered in excavations in Fustāt not only testify to the skills of local workshops, but also bear witness to the craftsmanship of Iranian, Chinese, Spanish and Italian potters whose works were exported here in large volumes.

## THE COLLECTION

### The Fātimid (969-1171) and Ayyūbid (1171-1250) periods

#### Water bottle filters

The water bottle filters constitute a characteristic group among the Fustāt collection's ceramics from the early Fātimid period. With their pierced filters of geometrical designs arranged in radial, triangular, and concentric circles, the pieces in the Zsolnay collection belong to the simplest type. They dated to between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries inclusively. (Fig. 1.)

#### Oil lamps

The Fustāt material contains oil lamps in vast quantities – over several thousand –, which were uncovered either during regular excavations led by archaeologists or in the course of earlier "treasure hunts" (Kubiak 1970:1). As a result, Islamic collections all over the world contain lamps from Fustāt in large numbers. The Zsolnay pieces fit the range of the known types well, dating back to the Fātimid period, i.e. the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Lustre painted ceramics

The Zsolnay collection of lustre painted ceramics is extremely rich and quite complex. The time range for the collection are set by the 9<sup>th</sup>-century polychrome fragments from the period of the 'Abbāsīd-dynasty<sup>6</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>-century pieces from Valencia. A considerable part of the collection is made up of fragments golden painted against a light background from the Fātimid period (Fig.2.) and, to a lesser

<sup>6</sup> Gerelyes & Kovács 1999:Fig. 30/a. See: Philon 1980:77-78. Plate VIIA.

extent, by fragments with a turquoise glaze lustre-painted in gold (Fig.3.). The rest of the fragments are small, mostly coming from flat bowls set on a low foot.

## The Mamlūk Age

### The Bahrī (1250-1390) and the Burġī Periods (1382-1517)

#### Underglaze painted Vessels

The most common type of vessels during the Bahrī period was painted under a colourless glaze in blue or black. These vessels were produced in large quantities both in Syria and in Egypt. As a result of the free movement of the masters, it is practically impossible nowadays to distinguish between the products of workshops in the two areas (Atil 1981:146). The Zsolnay collection has a large number of pieces representing this type of vessel. Together with the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese version of the same type, approximately one-third of the collection consists of fragments belonging to this category. These fragments once formed part of some surprisingly coarse vessels with rather thick wall made of white or yellowish-white gritted clay, mostly of flat or deep bowls and larger jugs. The paint, mostly blue or black, and less commonly turquoise or green, was applied on a thin layer of slip which covered the clay body. The painted surface was covered with a transparent, or sometimes greenish, glaze, which allowed the pattern underneath to show. Quite often this layer of glaze turned out to be thicker than intended, accumulating either at the inside bottom or at the outside base. The Zsolnay collection has an especially large number of vessels rejected because of faulty glazing. The wasters are especially important, because they prove the items' Egyptian origin. Despite such technical deficiencies and smaller faults, this type of vessel was attractive and decorative, at the same time being very handy for everyday use. Among the favourite motifs used to decorate the inside of the dishes were the triangular panels separated by blue lines and arranged radially, which were alternately filled with floral and geometrical elements (Fig.4.). In the latter case, the pattern left white stood out sharply from the hatched black background'. In another favourite type of design, one of the alternate panels was filled with inscriptions, actual or imitation. Similarly popular were the floral, Arabesque or simplified geometrical elements arranged in concentric circles.

Related to this type, but emerging somewhat later and continuing to survive well into the Burġī period, are some vessels painted in black under the blue, turquoise or green glaze (Fig.5.). The Zsolnay collection has a large number of similar, 15<sup>th</sup>-century

<sup>7</sup> This type of 14<sup>th</sup>-century vessel, underglaze painted in blue and black and decorated with panels arranged radially, is copiously represented in numerous collections. Lane 1957:Plate 12, Atil 1981:Figs. 66-67, Soustiel 1985:Figs. 260, 261, 262. Jenkins 1984:95-14, links this type unequivocally, not only with Syria, but also with a single workshop.



fragments, painted in black under the turquoise glaze<sup>8</sup>. Substantially smaller is the number of fragments painted black under a green glaze. At this point, we should mention an almost completely preserved vessel. Made of fine, light brown clay, it is a deep bowl standing on a small foot. The pattern is underglaze painted in black: the inside of the bowl is decorated with radially arranged leafed tendrils, the outside is completely covered in tendrils with lotus flowers, trefoils and rosettes. The latter display shows close resemblances with the early Iznik ware, suggesting a late-15<sup>th</sup>-century date of origin. In the inside the cockspur marks are still visible. Stuck to the outside during the firing process, there is a fragment from the rim of another vessel. This is, therefore a waster, and provided it actually did form part of the Zsolnay collection bought in Egypt, it must have been made in Egypt. This is, however, contradicted by the use of the turquoise glaze. According to the generally accepted view, vessels with turquoise or blue glaze were made in Syria and Iran, while those with green glaze were produced in Egypt<sup>9</sup>.

The 15<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the emergence of a new type of vessel with an underglaze painted in blue. The 14<sup>th</sup>-century Ming porcelain vessels began to exert an increasingly strong influence after the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Carswell 1985:31). In part, this was reflected in the accurate copying of the Chinese archetypes, as shown by the pieces in Fig. 6. The shallow plates set on a low foot, were made of coarse white clay. The details of the graphic work in the pattern painted on the inside in blue are very fine and elaborate. Some of the items deserves special attention on account of the multiple tones of the lotus flower, which evokes archetypes from graphic works, rather than from porcelain decoration. The colouring of this items is also unusual, insofar as it comes close to cobalt. The vessels shown on Figure 6 were also made of a coarse white clay composition, and were underglaze painted in blue. Unlike the examples discussed earlier, these fragments are decorated with a somewhat simplified and rudimentary version of the motifs familiar from Chinese porcelain ware made in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, such as the lotus flowers, elongated leafs and foliated tendrils. They belong, therefore to the second group of blue-and white Chinoiseries. In the case of several items in the Zsolnay collection, the precise analogies are known from other collections. Partly on the basis of these precise analogies, and partly from the masters' signatures found on items in the

<sup>8</sup> The vessels painted in black under the transparent turquoise glaze emerged as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Iran. Grube 1994:Cat.no. 201-202; then, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, they also appeared in Syria, most notably in Rakka. Soustiel 1985: 115. On their survival into the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century see Atil 1981:149-150.

<sup>9</sup> Atil 1981:150.; The vessel has recently been published. Cf. Gerelyes 2001: Fig. 11.

collection, this group of exhibits can quite safely be linked to the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Egyptian workshop of Gaybī<sup>10</sup>.

In the category of underglaze painted vessels, a smaller group composed of only a few items, deserves special attention (Fig.7). Fragments of basis, bottoms and rims belonging to flat dishes constitute this group. The coarse and quite often rather thick material of the vessels, made of white or greyish-white clay mixed with gravel, is in sharp contrast with the fine graphics of the decoration. First, a thin layer of slip was applied, on which the decoration was executed in three colours, black, blue and brownish-red. This was then covered with a transparent glaze of very high quality. Evoking the world of miniatures, the finely drawn pictures had the following characteristics: human or animal representation, such as the figure holding a cup (Fig.7) or the partial figure of a bird; actual inscriptions or imitation Kūfī inscriptions; and the Arabesque (Fig.7). Although the fragment of geometric decoration in Fig. 7 do not fit the thematic character of the group, they undoubtedly belong here on technical grounds. Researchers date this group of ceramics either to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Although opinions vary as to the actual workshops associated with the various towns, the Syrian origin of the ceramics is generally accepted. Therefore, this type of ceramics was imported to Egypt<sup>11</sup>.

#### Mamlūk incised pottery

Approximately one third of the complete collection belongs to this type, which was produced over a period of roughly a hundred years beginning in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. This means that with its several hundreds of Mamlūk incised pieces, the Zsolnay collection has an outstanding significance.

The coat of arms referring to the owners' title, or more precisely to their office, the emirate, was placed in a circle in the interior of the vessels. The most common signs are the cup, the napkin, the sword, the target, and the polo stick (Fig. 8), in other words, the sign of the cup bearer, the master of the robes, the sword-bearer, and the master of the polo game (Mayer 1933:4-5). There are a large number of pieces

<sup>10</sup> Peterson (1980), for example, Plate 4, XIII, shows a remarkable resemblance to fragments Nos. 1 and 2 in Fig. 14. Several pieces in the Zsolnay collection, not published in the present paper, are identical to the items published by Peterson (1980) in Plate 3,6 and by Abel (1930) in Plate V-VI-IX-X. The fragment published by Abel (1930) in Plate XII/59 bears a close resemblance to the item marked no. 2 in Fig. 13 in the present paper, while Plate XXII/104 shows a striking similarity with article no. 1 Fig. 13.

<sup>11</sup> The figure holding a cup on the fragment marked 3 in Fig. 15 resembles No. 212 in Grube (1976). The two fragments display such similarity that it is almost as if they belonged to the same piece. The rim fragment decorated with an Arabesque, marked 2 in Fig. 15, is also very close to the bowl marked Cat. No. 332. in Grube (1994), while the rim fragment imitating Kūfī writing published also in Fig. 15, resembles the decoration of the bowl marked in the said publication as Cat. No. 287. We can read about the Syrian towns identified as possible places of origin in the description of this item.



in the collection which feature the symbol of the five or six-petal rosette, originally symbolising the ruling power but eventually becoming a simple decorative element as well as the lily (Mayer 1933:22-24). Less frequently, we can find examples where two different types were combined, for example the lily and the sword. In some cases, the interior of the circle is divided into three parts with lines coloured differently from the background, with the coat of arms placed in this inner band. Researchers associated this latter type with the period beginning with the second quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and lasting throughout the Bahrī period (1390) (Atil 1981: items 94 and 95). The animal representations form a separate group. The eagle, a relatively rarely used symbol, and the lion represented the Sultan's power, while the rather numerous fish representations only served decorative purposes (Atil 1981:20). The collection preserved a very large number of mass produced items with geometric-al decorations. The ceramics made for emirs and decorated with heraldic signs disappeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. They were replaced by single colour glazed pottery with slip painted ornamental decoration, made of identical material and of identical quality. Two examples of this type are shown in Fig. 9, with the tripods stuck into it during firing still visible.

### Ceramics imported from China

#### Celadon

As early as the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, Egypt was flooded with Lung-Ch'üan ceramics of Chinese origin that were already copied by Egyptian potters in the Ayyübid period (Scanlon 1971:88-89). The import of Celadon ceramics from China continued throughout the Mamlük period, and definitely lasted until 1400 (Scanlon 1971:90). The pieces that were uncovered in largest numbers during the Fustāt archaeological excavations were green glazed articles dated from the Mongol Yüan dynasty (1279-1368), either decorated with incised or relief-motifs of fish, chrysanthemums, pointed leaves, or left completely undecorated. The Zsolnay collection displays a similar composition. The number of Celadon vessels is relatively small, and not a single vessel could be put together from the fragments. The two fragments in Fig. 10 represent four different types. The fourth fragment chipped off from the foot and bottom of a large bowl. Under the water green glaze on both in its interior and its side, there is an incised decoration: a lotus flower in the middle, surrounded by lotuses and pointed leaves all strung on a stalk. The other item published here is the ribbed yet smooth fragment of a large, light green bowl with an everted rim. (Fig. 10)

During the Mamlük period, and most notably in the Bahrī period, Egyptian potters copied Celadon ceramics in large quantities. A familiarity with the composition of other Fustāt collections or with the archaeological material of the Fustāt excavations will find it less surprising to find a large number of Mamlük copies of Chinese Celadon ceramics (Scanlon 1984:116-118). The items presented here are fragments from the foot and the bottom of footed bowls (Fig.11.). The fourth fragment in Fig.

10. is made from gritted red clay. This piece displays the marks left behind by the tripod in the interior, as well as visible signs of having been stuck to another vessel at two points. Both the inside and the outside of the vessel are glazed in dark green, and its interior is decorated in a lighter tone: pointed leaves in a radial arrangement set in the relief-like frame depicting a string of pearls. An other piece is made of light brown clay and covered both inside and outside in a light green glaze and featuring an impressed rose in the interior and details from an incomprehensible pattern on the side. The second piece in Figure 10 has a considerably finer execution, finely thrown and made of a light yellow clay. This is the fragment of a bowl set on a higher foot. It is covered in a light yellowish-green glaze both inside and outside, and has an incised pattern in the interior: darker brown Arabesques and circles. There is a drop of dark green glaze in the centre. The Zsolnay collection contains a large number of similarly executed bowl fragments with incised decoration, glazed in a single colour. However, unlike the Celadon ceramics, their glazing might also come in yellowish-brown, light brown, turquoise or even deep lilac colours.

#### Porcelain

The other extremely important group of ceramics imported from China consists of blue-and-white porcelain from the period of the Ming Dynasty<sup>12</sup>. Researchers put the date of the appearance of blue-and-white porcelain in Egypt at a very early date, 1326. The surviving archaeological finds have confirmed beyond doubt that some articles made in the second quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century had already reached Fustāt. Chinese porcelain production of the 15<sup>th</sup> century failed to reach Syria and Egypt, due to Timür Lenk's invasion in 1400-1401 and the subsequent decline. This is precisely the factor that motivated local potters to produce underglaze-painted ceramics in blue with imitation Chinese motifs as described above (Figs. 6). The import of Chinese porcelain started to gather momentum again only after the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. We have evidence to show that this process continued throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and lasted well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The Zsolnay collection has only a small number of Chinese porcelain fragments. In our selection for Figures 12 we tried to include different types. The second fragment illustrates one of the characteristic types of Chinese porcelain made around the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The motif of birds floating on lotus-pond is also well known from intact pieces (Carswell 1985: Fig. 13/a; Carswell 1999: Fig. 15).

<sup>12</sup> The majority of the blue-and-white Chinese porcelain ware produced in the 14<sup>th</sup> century was intended for Islamic countries. See: Medley 1976:178.



### Summary

In terms of its size, Miklós Zsolnay's collection of ceramics from Fustât ranks among the finest European collections of its kind. In its composition, the collection faithfully follows that of other known collections of Fustât ceramics. By reviewing the main ceramic types in the collection, this paper only provided a cross-section of the wealth of material in it. In terms of numbers it only covers perhaps a couple of thousand of the actual volume of vessels. Since the work of research and analysis has still not been completed, this paper should be seen as a preliminary report.

I am greatly indebted to the Max van Berchem Foundation. The Max van Berchem Foundation is a scientific foundation established in Geneva, Switzerland, in memory of Max van Berchem (1863-1921), the founder of Arabic epigraphy. Its aim is to promote the study of Islamic and Arabic archaeology, history, geography, art, epigraphy, religion and literature. It has been subsidising the cataloguing of the Miklós Zsolnay collection since 1997.

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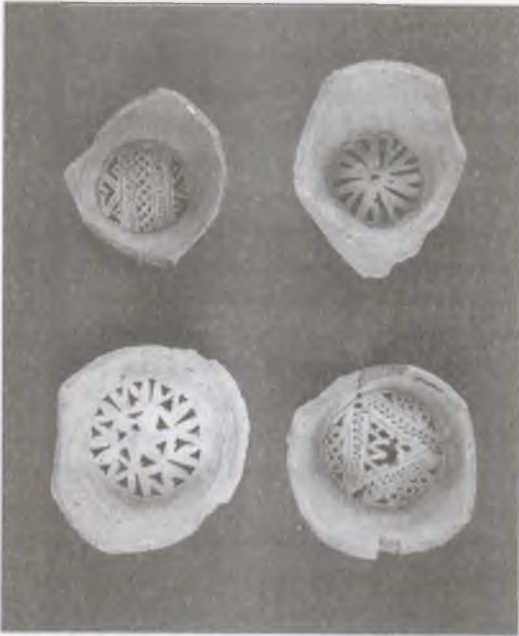


Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.





Fig. 9.



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.

## REMAINS OF THE 12TH AND 13TH CENTURY RURAL SETTLEMENT IN THE SOUTHERN LITTORAL OF SYRIA (FIRST REPORT ON THE FIELDWORK)

Balázs Major

*Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Piliscsaba*

*"Planities ista multa habet casalia et pulchra nemora olivarum  
et ficuum et arborum aliarum diversi generis et multa ligna.  
Preterea habundat fluminibus et pascuis supra modicum."  
(Burchard of Mount Sion)*

### The area of research

The lines above were written by the Crusader pilgrim Burchard of Mount Sion praising the richness of the Terre de Calife a sub-region of the northern part of the Crusader County of Tripoli (Burchardus, *Descriptio* 29). The County has varied topographical features. It consists of a rather narrow coastal strip which gives way to a hilly region that finally ends in the high ranges of Mount Lebanon, and to the north, the Anṣāriyya Mountains. The two mountains are divided by the Gap of Homs, a natural passage between the ancient cities of Homs and Tripoli, dotted with hills and cut through by deep riverbeds, the most important one being the Nahr al-Kabīr that forms the boundary between present-day Syria and Lebanon<sup>1</sup>. The fertile area not only offered favourable settlement conditions through the millennia, but, being the only easily accessible natural highway between the interior of Syria and the coast, also possessed great strategical value. This latter role acquired additional importance with the establishment of the County of Tripoli, which was confined to the western side of the mountains. The Muslim armies would always approach Tripoli and Tortosa (today Tartūs), the main Crusader centres on the coast through the Gap. The increased menace to the area in Crusader times initiated a strategy which generated a strong architectural manifestation as well. A series of fortifications were built, the finest of them being Chastel Blanc (today Šāfītā) and the world-famous Crac des Chevaliers.

The above-mentioned area is still amongst the richest agricultural areas of the Levant and has preserved a good deal of those monuments which testify to its flowering in the 12th and 13th centuries too. The fieldwork of the summer of 2000 concentrated on sites of the region to the north of the Nahr al-Kabīr, that is present-day Syria. The work was done with the kind permission of the Directorate of

<sup>1</sup> For the detailed geo-ecological description of the area of the Gap see: Maqdissi 1989 and Sapin 1989.



Antiquities and Museums of the Syrian Arab Republic and with the financial support of the Faludi Ferenc Academy of the Hungarian Jesuits.

### The subject of the research

The remains of the monuments concerned in this study owe their existence to the Crusader movement, or rather to the efforts of those Europeans drifted to the Levant by this movement who tried to settle outside the Crusader port towns. The starting point of the process was the taking of the city of Tripoli in 1109 and the rapid conquest of the area of the Gap of Homs. The counts of Tripoli, trying to introduce a feudal system similar to that of their homeland, enfeoffed large proportions of their newly acquired lands either to knights fighting in their retinue or to ecclesiastical organisations. Both of these groups tried to improve the infrastructure of their properties. In the heyday of the Crusader power, that is the first half of the 12th century, it was common practice for the European knights to settle in the center of their estates, where they built small donjons as their residence. We know that the ecclesiastical landowners also maintained some kind of presence, mostly by their lay representatives. Both the secular and the ecclesiastical powers were busy encouraging the settlement of European peasants. This commitment is well documented on the territories of the former Kingdom of Jerusalem (Prawer 1972 and Ellenblum 1998), but some scanty clues of Latin settlers in the rural areas of the County of Tripoli can be traced as well<sup>2</sup>.

It is widely accepted, that by the second half of the 12th century the settlement process gradually slowed down, and as a consequence of the growing Muslim pressure, collapsed in most areas, which meant that the overwhelming majority of the Latin population left the countryside and moved to the better defended coastal cities<sup>3</sup>. The defence of the lands left behind was taken over by the military orders – in this territory, by the Templars and the Hospitallers. Their presence at the vulnerable northern border of the County already started in the 1140's and by the end of the century all the strategic places of the region were in their hands. The area was devastated several times by raiding Muslim armies: however, the systematic Muslim recon-

<sup>2</sup> The most obvious proof is in the village of 'Asiba approximately 3,5 kms to the southeast of the Hospitaller castle of Margat (today Qal'at Marqab). The mosque here incorporates the remains of a 12th century church, its architectural details and the existence of masonry marks on its walls indicating Crusader origin. The village was identified by Dussaud with Soebe of the Latin documents (Dussaud 1927:131). A survey of the site will be made in another season.

<sup>3</sup> The examination of the extent of this process in the northern Crusader states is still an important task for future research. However, there are clear indication of its existence. The exposed border areas of the County, including the Crac des Chevaliers and its surroundings, began to revert to Hospitaller hands in the 1140s, soon followed by the city of Tortosa, whose bishop entrusted its defence to the Templars as early as 1152, after the devastating raid of Nūr ad-Dīn (Riley-Smith 1969:278-282). Most places mentioned in the charters, either castles or simple villages, were in the hands of the military orders by the 1180s.

quest started only in the middle of the 1260's and took more than two decades to complete<sup>4</sup>.

### The fieldwork (importance, aims and methods)

The archaeology of the European population that lived in the Levant for almost two centuries still concentrates on the large monuments, mainly on castles. In the past few decades an important progress was made in the research of lesser sites, but almost exclusively on sites of the former Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem (eg. Pringle 1994 & 1997, Ellenblum 1998). Practically no work was done on the remains of the medieval rural settlement in the Gap of Homs.

This neglect is all the more regrettable as written sources on the extent of the 12th- and 13th-century pattern of settlement, or about the presence of the European population are almost nonexistent, save some scanty details preserved in a few medieval documents. As opposed to the lack of written sources, the few old scholarly descriptions<sup>5</sup> and the recent field survey prove that both the concentration of the remains of the medieval settlement pattern and their state of preservation are quite unique in the Levant. These practically undocumented remains are our almost sole information on the subject and they are quite endangered<sup>6</sup>.

The nature of the subject implies that the research is going to be a long one, in which the processing of the well hidden sources (medieval, contemporary and cartographical) must be combined with an extensive fieldwork. Owing to the extent of the area, my two preliminary visits and a 7 day long first fieldwork can only be regarded as an introductory step.

The fieldwork was planned to complete several aims. Amongst the most important tasks is the basic documentation of the medieval remains and their immediate surroundings. It consists of a detailed written description, basic measurements (with a measuring tape and compass) accompanied by drawings of architectural details and photographic documentation. Besides completing the documentation of sites mentioned but never described in former works, the fieldwork aims to trace hitherto unknown remains of medieval infrastructure either in the vicinity of known sites or in new locations<sup>7</sup>. In both fields special use was made of the information derived from the inhabitants of the region. If handled with caution, it proved to be very

<sup>4</sup> For the Muslim military activities see: Major 1998:212-214. Some of the observations made in 1998 are further elaborated and if necessary corrected in this summary.

<sup>5</sup> Foremost the works of Rey 1871, Renan 1874, Dussaud 1927 and Deschamps 1973.

<sup>6</sup> The need of the rapidly growing population of the area for cheap building material, the great building projects in the area (eg. the dams), and the natural factors, all threaten the sites considerably.

<sup>7</sup> Special attention is given to remains of possible medieval storage structures, dams, wells, cisterns, mills, etc.



useful not only in reconstructing missing parts of buildings destroyed in the past decades, but also in finding new sites. Important aspects of the work are the mapping of the visibility between the different sites and the collection of masonry marks found on the ashlar of the buildings. Both can produce valuable additional information, the former on the defensive role of the sites and the latter on their building history.

The work of the famous scholar Paul Deschamps, who did the most valuable research on the Crusader remains of Syria and Lebanon in the 30's and 40's, proved to be a good point of departure (Deschamps 1973). Though the work, like the former ones, concentrates on the main sites, and the data on the lesser monuments of the Gap hardly exceeds a few sentences, it contains a map on which the majority of the known Crusader sites are indicated. After correcting a few inaccuracies<sup>8</sup>, the surveying of the sites (some never visited at all by Deschamps) and their surroundings was started. Parallel to checking the sites mentioned by Deschamps new sources and sites are already drawn in.

The following report is a brief summary on four important sites of the numerous ones visited, Burğ Mi'ār Šākir, Qal'at Umm Hūš, Burğ Zārā and Burğ Maksūr<sup>9</sup>, supplemented with some preliminary remarks on other aspects of the fieldwork.

### Burğ Mi'ār Šākir

The most characteristic remains of the Crusader settlement pattern in the rural areas of the region are the small donjons, just like the one in the village of Mi'ār Šākir 14.5 kms to the southeast of Tartūs as the crow flies. It is situated on the top of a hill 139 m high above sea level with commanding views over the surrounding countryside.

The tower is amongst the few lesser sites mentioned only in the medieval Arab sources. Mi'ār was listed among the Muslim possessions in three texts of the treaties between Sultan Qalāwūn and the leadership of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the County of Tripoli after the 1270's (ʿAbdazzāhir, *Tasrif* 21, 38, 210; Gabrieli, *Arab Historians* 324).

Even the most detailed former scholarly works confined themselves to merely mentioning the existence of the ruins of a tower (Rey 1871:70, Renan 1874:126, van Berchem 1914:97, Dussaud 1924:119, Deschamps 1973:323) and the confused sentences of a recent Syrian guide book (Hannā: 62-63) are not more informative either.

<sup>8</sup> Crusader Felicium is in fact to the south of the Nahr al-Kabīr, not to the north of the river on the Syrian side as the map of Deschamps indicated. Qal'at Yahmūr, present day name of Crusader Castrum Rubrum was put on the map beside "Bordj Milan", in fact Burğ Mi'ār or Mi'ār Šākir.

<sup>9</sup> A detailed description of the well preserved Crusader tower in the village of Burğ ʿArab was published separately (Major 2001).

The only part that survived from the Crusader tower is the big hall of the ground floor with its slightly pointed barrel vault. The outer perimeter of the tower of Mi'ār is approximately 11.5 x 15 meters, the thickness of the surviving walls varies around 2 meters. The dimensions of the remains, specially the thickness data exclude the existence of more than one storey above the ground floor. The northern and western walls of the ground floor stand to full height. The upper sections of the eastern wall have disappeared from behind the vault having a north-south axis, and the southern wall has partly collapsed. Its standing parts are totally covered by the debris of the fallen parts and recent waste.

The walls of the tower are constructed by the solid Crusader method; the core made of rubble stone bounded by thick mortar, with a well executed ashlar facing. Most of the stones are of the so-called *hağar ramlī* (the sandstone consisting of sea-sand), but a few ashlar, especially those on the corners were carved of the much harder limestone. Some of these are bossed. Though there are blocks around the scale of the one with 68x81 cm facade, the majority are smaller and their dimension decreases at the higher ranges. The walls were strengthened with basalt and limestone column drums and basalt stone slabs, spolia from a former building of possibly antique origin.

According to the villagers there was a ground floor entrance opening on the southern wall of the tower, but, though it seems quite probable, the verification needs some clearing works to be done. Otherwise the partly filled up ground floor hall had two openings, one slit-window on the western and one on the northern facade, rather for ventilation than for defensive purposes.

The interior walls are built of the *ramlī* stone, and some scanty remains of plastering can still be seen on them. A row of putlog holes are preserved in the eastern and western walls. They might have been used for the wooden centering.

The old villager living beside the tower gave some useful details on the vanished elements of the tower. According to him the vicinity of the two-storey tower was deserted before 1935, the year people from the overpopulated village of Bayt Nūr ad-Dīn began to settle it. The new inhabitants started to use the monument as a quarry around the year 1948 for the construction of their houses. At this time a still functioning cistern could also be seen under the ground floor, which was filled up later. Nobody in the village knew about subsidiary buildings or inscriptions on the tower<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> What they added was that according to the local legend the original lord of the tower was a certain Qadnūs al-Ġubbār, who was of foreign origin and possessed several other castles in the neighborhood. He was succeeded at a later point by a person called ʿAr ibn Šākir whose name became the name of the place Mi'ār Šākir. Nobody knew when.



### Qal'at Umm Hūš

The village of Umm Hūš is 6 kms to the south of Šāfitā as the crow flies. Its Crusader remains stand at the edge of a ridge 162 m high, overlooking the valley of the Nahr al-Abraš from the south.

It is not mentioned in the historical sources, and until a brief description by Hugh Kennedy (1994:77-78)<sup>11</sup>, only its existence and its Crusader origin were noted (Renan 1874:126, Lammens 1900:284, van Berchem 1914:97, Dussaud 1924:119, Deschamps 1973:323).

The site consists of a ruined tower and the remains of some subsidiary buildings heavily built over in some parts. The survey could verify the existence of an enclosure (already presumed by Kennedy) with a vaulted range attached to it in the interior on at least three sides. The survey verified that in the research area this is the most extensive building complex besides the much better known Qal'at Yahmūr (thoroughly described in Pringle 1986:16-18) in the category of lesser-scale rural fortifications.

#### The tower

The central element of the complex is the tower, which stands only partially. While its eastern facade is preserved to its full height with only the crenellation missing, the rest of the walls collapsed, save a short section of the northern and southern sides clinging to the eastern one. The tower consisted of two levels. The ground floor with a heavy barrel-vault which ran north-south might have fulfilled repository functions, while the much better executed first floor hall could have served as the living quarters of the owner. The surviving last section of a putlog hole for a wooden bolt in the fragment of the northern wall indicates that the ground floor had a separate entrance. The eastern wall of the ground floor preserved the putlog holes of the wooden centering and considerable remains of the plastering.

The entrance of the first floor hall opened on the southern facade<sup>12</sup> and was defended by a stone machiculis, one corbel of which is still hanging out from the roof. The door could be reached by a wooden stairway of some kind, and was connected to it by a drawbridge, as indicated by the remains of the two hollow corbels under the line of the door once holding the axle of the bridge. The eastern wall of the first floor was pierced by an arrow slit.

<sup>11</sup> The remains dealt with appear in his book under the name Burġ 'Arab, but both the text and the two photographs accompanying it, make evident that it is the site of Umm Hūš. The village of Burġ 'Arab lies 4,5 kms to the southeast and contains an almost totally intact Crusader tower.

<sup>12</sup> Kennedy took it for a large window (Kennedy 1994:78), but its dimensions, positioning and the corbels underneath clearly prove that it was a door.

The walls of the tower are mainly constructed of limestone, but in the upper parts smaller basalt ashlar become more common. The size of the ashlar diminishes as they approach the top. While most of the external walls were constructed of roughly cut local stones held together by large quantities of cement, the majority of the well cut cornerstones were marginally drafted. This was typical of twelfth century Crusader buildings (Ellenblum 1992:171-172). The walls contain some spolia, the most beautiful being the basalt stone slab over the interior of the first floor entrance, with grape and wineleaf motives of possibly Byzantine origin. The basalt stone architrave of the same door on the facade preserves a simple equal armed cross in a circle-shaped depression probably of Crusader origin<sup>13</sup>. Close observation of the ashlar of the exterior produced two Crusader masonry marks. There might have been more, but were wiped off from the quickly deteriorating surfaces of the limestone.

#### The enclosure

The rectangular enclosure surrounding the tower seems to have been a substantial structure. Its best preserved western side measures 45 meters and the remains of the northern section of the walls can be traced down to the length of 41,5 meters. Even the preserved walls are badly effaced in most parts, but enough can be seen to conclude that their facades were constructed of very crudely cut or uncut stones bonded together with thick mortar. The blocks employed are mainly limestone with a few basalt insertions. Their size varies, the largest ashlar being employed at the base-ments and the corners. Some scanty remains indicate that the gate of the enclosure opened in at the northern end of the western wall. This section preserved the remains of a putlog hole for a bolt. Both this and the unusual concentration of six arrow slits on the western wall guarding the line of approach seem to be convincing enough. The southern perimeter of the wall has only one arrow slit in its first section, but more might be found if the obstacles hindering the approach can be overcome in the next season.

There are substantial and well preserved remains of vaulted halls on the inner side of the enclosure wall. The southern section of the 6,6 m wide hall is partially blocked and hard to approach, but enough could be seen to confirm that the vault continued behind the eastern wall. A long stretch of the vault is preserved at the western side as well. No trace of vaulted structures remains on the northern side of the enclosure, which had become filled in with houses at a later time.

The existence of the old village inside the enclosure is both confirmed by the name of the settlement and the local tradition. The name Umm Hūš derives from this fact, as *hūš* means enclosed area. It raises the possibility that the original name of the place might have been something else unlike in the case of Mī'ār, which still

<sup>13</sup> Similar crosses were detected at the nearby tower of Burġ 'Arab (Major 2001:173).



preserves the name by which it is mentioned in the medieval Arab sources. This settlement was left only about 15 years ago (one helpful villager was still born in the vaulted structures) and only the vaulted ranges were kept in use as sheds and storage facility, which neither helps the precise documentation nor the preservation of the monument. The tower has been in its ruined condition so far as the memories could recount.

### Burğ Zārā

Burğ Zārā is a lonely tower on a 338 m high hill 16 kms to the southeast of Šafītā as the crow flies. There is no considerable perennial watercourse in its vicinity. The nearest village az-Zārā is about a kilometre to the east of the tower, which prevented its becoming a cheap quarry for the villagers. In spite of its relatively good condition, barely more was mentioned in former works than its existence and origin (Rey 1871: 102, Renan 1874:126, Dussaud 1924:93, Deschamps 1973:327).

The external dimensions of the tower measure approximately 11.5 x 11.4 m. From the two floors of the tower the ground floor is almost totally intact while the measurements in the first floor were greatly hindered by the missing facings. Therefore some parts of the plan of the first floor had to be postulated relying on existing details.

The ground floor of the tower can be approached through the door on the northern facade of the tower. The door could be blocked by a wooden bolt, its 2 m long hole from which the wooden beam of the bolt could be pulled out is still intact in the western side of the entrance passage. The defences of the door were further strengthened by a slot machiculis opening on the inner side of the vault of the passageway. The 30 x 30 cm channel of the slot machiculis could be operated from the first floor room. The ground floor hall of the tower is covered by a slightly pointed barrel-vault with a north-south axis. It has collapsed partially at the northern end. The debris of the vault makes further speculations on the inner structure of the tower quite risky yet. The only opening giving light and ventilation for the ground floor is the small slit window at the top of the southern wall just below the vault.

The first floor hall of the tower can be reached through a stairway that starts at the eastern end of the door-passage and cuts through the vault. The stairway makes a right angle turn in the southern direction before reaching the level of the first floor and is lit by a slit window cut into the eastern wall of the stairway.

The first floor hall was once covered by a neatly executed groin-vault, the springings of which still cling to the corners. Though the walls of the first floor room still stand to the original height in several places, with special regard to the northern part, the inner facings are much worn away. This is especially true for the arrow slits. Formerly there was a pair of them on every side of the hall, but now only one on the northern wall stands relatively intact, the rest missing partially, or entirely. Their existence could be verified from the details, except the southern one on the eastern

wall. Its case is further complicated by the fact that no trace of the former stairway to the roof was found during the first survey. If there was any (and there must have been), then it had to be in the southeastern corner, where nothing remains of the original masonry. The existence of a stairway could have contributed well to the total collapse of this corner section, because it would have run in the thickness of the wall weakening its structure. As we do not know anything yet about the stairway, we cannot be sure whether it ran in the western or the southern wall, and if it ran in the latter, whether the southern loophole was built at all, further weakening the already hollowed fabric of the eastern wall<sup>14</sup>.

The walls of the tower follow the usual Crusader practice described at the former sites, with the exception that here the outer facings of the wall are made of the local basalt stone. The lower parts are of rudely cut or uncut stones, the facades of the first floor level are made of neatly cut basalt ashlar of much smaller size. The corner stones of the tower are huge and well dressed limestone ashlar, and many similar but smaller ones are employed around the long arrow slits as well. None of them is marginally drafted and all seem to be spolia of the antique temple the scattered remains of which can still be seen beside the southern side of the tower<sup>15</sup>.

### Burğ Maksūr

The small village of Burğ Maksūr lies on a western extension of the Ġabal al-Halw 14,5 kms to the southeast from Šafītā (*Mu'ğam 2*). The remains of a Crusader tower stand on the western edge of the village on a small rising ground in the valley of a stream.

Rey mentioned the existence of a tower in his list at a place called "Bordj-Maksour" but Lammens just noted having passed by this place without giving any details on the ruins (Rey 1871:102, Lammens 1900:284). Deschamps (1973:327) found the tower to be almost totally ruined, but could trace the remains of a fosse around.

The remains are scanty indeed, but the surviving section of the tower (practically the northwestern corner) can still give a fair amount of information regarding its former structure. Similarly to the rest of the towers of the region, this one also consisted of two levels, but had a quite unique vaulting system. Instead of being barrel-vaulted on the ground floor and groin-vaulted on the first, or barrel-vaulted on both floors but the axes of the barrel-vaults standing at right angles to each other, both floors of this tower were barrel-vaulted and both running north-south. This arrangement posed a serious weakening factor, and no doubt it greatly contributed to the present ruined state of the tower. What remains of the ground floor is choked by the

<sup>14</sup> The plan drawn during the survey shows both loopholes on the eastern wall.

<sup>15</sup> Already noted by Deschamps (1973:327).



collapsed vaults and other debris, except the upper section with a slit window cut through the wall approximately 2,8 m thick.

The first floor of the tower seems to have been better lit. The surviving section of the northern wall preserved two casemates from which the outer faces and embrasures have been robbed, and the short stretch of the western wall has another one almost intact. Here the embrasure cuts through the curve of the vault and ends in a long arrow slit, with a steeply sloping base. There was at least another similar loop-hole cutting through the western wall, which is now several meters from its original position in a fallen piece of the wall.

The walls of the tower were built of the local basalt stone, the majority of the facings being neatly cut, small sized ashlar. However, in the upper section of the western facade there is a wide section of rubble stones employed with some galleting of stone chips between them, possible remains of a construction season. The corners were constructed with elongated ashlar, some of it crudely rusticated, especially the bigger ones in the lower section. The cone of the wall was made of rubble stone bonded together by great quantities of mortar.

The weakening effects of the special vaulting, the numerous openings in the walls and the now tracelessly disappeared doorways and stairways proved too much for the tower and it literally crumbled to pieces. Large sections of the thick walls lie scattered, sometimes upside down in the immediate vicinity of the surviving north western corner. According to the local children, this happened about a century ago due to a thunderstroke. The original name of the tower was Burg az-Zuhūr (the Tower of the Flowers), but its collapse resulted in its renaming Burg al-Maksūr (the Broken Tower). Whatever happened, the place was already mentioned by Rey as "Bordj-Maksour" and the original name of the place must have been something else, just as in the case of Qal'at Umm Hūṣ, which will make future identification with possible historical data much harder.

It were also the children of this little village who drew attention to the source of the small stream that flows beside the tower. The area in the vicinity of the source that is called 'Ayn at-Tīna (the Spring of the Fig) contained some curious remains. The lower courses of the rectangular basin constructed around the main source – still used by the villagers as the main water source – were executed in a similar way as the tower. 17 meters to the southeast of this source, beside another stream, were the clear remains of a channel, made of ceramic pipes laid between rubble stones in mortar bed. The short stretch of the channel makes a 90-degree turn in a round basin, which also served as the place of deposition for the waste in the water. The precise direction and length of the channel is still unclear, but some additional information was provided by a peasant, who told that while digging a deep trench in his garden halfway to the tower, he has found pieces of a similar channel. Inspecting the given place, a short stretch of an almost completely buried vault was found. All that

is sure in this early phase of the survey is that the valley of the springs and its entire vicinity need more work to solve some of the questions its remains pose.

### Some other aspects of the fieldwork

As it was partly mentioned in the first pages of this summary, the fieldwork conducted in the Crusader monuments in the southern littoral of Syria can be divided into several different areas, most of it still in its initial state, but which, elaborated, will need separate studies, and will be published separately. This contains such areas as the comparative analysis of the structural peculiarities of the monuments, ranging from vaulting techniques to the arrow slit types, or the question of the stone quarrying and the origin of the spolia. There are two important fields that should be mentioned here briefly. The first is the study of the masonry marks, the second, the mapping of the visibility lines between the different sites.

The Crusader buildings in this area, especially the large castles abound in the marks of the medieval masons. Only the marks in the famous castle of the Crac des Chevaliers were collected in an exemplary way by Deschamps (1934:241-250). The collecting of these marks is a very slow process, partly because of the quantity and the often bad visual conditions, and partly as a consequence of the fragmentary nature of the material. The analysis of the material can be done only in case everything that can be collected is collected, from the walls and vaults of the gigantic castles to the reused ashlar of small rural sites. During the fieldwork, effort was made to have all the masonry marks of the following sites to be collected: the cathedral of Tartūs, the Templar castle of Tartūs, the Templar chapel of Tartūs, the inner enclosure of the castle of 'Arīma, the templar donjon of Sāfītā. Hitherto unknown masonry marks were recorded at Qal'at Yaḥmūr, which make clear that the stairway together with the western vaulted range was built in the Crusader period; and the recording work was begun in Qal'at Marqab. The survey could detect 113 clearly distinguishable masonry mark types, from which only 29 occurred on the walls of more than one site. Comparing them with the material collected on Crusader monuments of Palestine (Pringle 1981:187), one finds that more than 80% of the masonry marks collected in the above-mentioned Syrian sites have no clear parallels with those employed in Palestine. However, the more than representative quantity collected at the Syrian sites still needs completion and a thorough analysis before a detailed study with remarkable conclusions.

The precise mapping of the visibility between the Crusader sites of the region is not a rapid process either, due to the often unfavourable weather conditions. The proximity of the sea results in the high humidity of the air, and the weather is often misty or foggy even in the middle of summer. This also means that one has to be rather cautious with fabricating far-reaching theories relying on the visibility lines only. Though the visibility map is still not complete, it already indicates, that the



visual center of the Gap of Homs was the Templar fortress of Šāfītā, which can be seen from the majority of the sites even in unfavourable weather conditions.

I hope that this brief enumeration of a section of the work done in the southern littoral of Syria testified convincingly to the potential richness of the area, and that it is truly worthy for further research and surveys.

*The last words of this report must be the words of gratefulness to all those helping in the years preceding the research and in the course of it. To Dr. Tamás Iványi, Dr. József Laszlovszky, Dr. László Tüske, and Gergely Buzás, my teachers in Hungary, and Dr. ‘Abdarrazzāq Mu‘ād, my professor at the University of Damascus, Department of Archaeology, since director of the General Directorate of Antiquities. To the General Directorate of Antiquities of the Syrian Arab Republic for providing all the necessary permissions for the fieldwork, and Haytam Hasan a faithful supporter and friend. I am also indebted to the director of antiquities in the Tartūs Governorate and to the director of the Museum in Tartūs, Dr. Rāmiz Hūš and his colleague Dāwūd Ġimāl. Someone has to hold the other end of the measuring tape; if it was not Dr. ‘Alī Muhammad, gynaecologist in the hospital of Tartūs and a faithful friend of the Hungarians, then the ever interested village boys did the job. I am greatly indebted to the Hungarian Embassy in Damascus, especially to former ambassador Zoltán Pereszlényi. Magnanimous financial support for the work was provided by the Faludi Ferenc Academy of the Hungarian Jesuits.*

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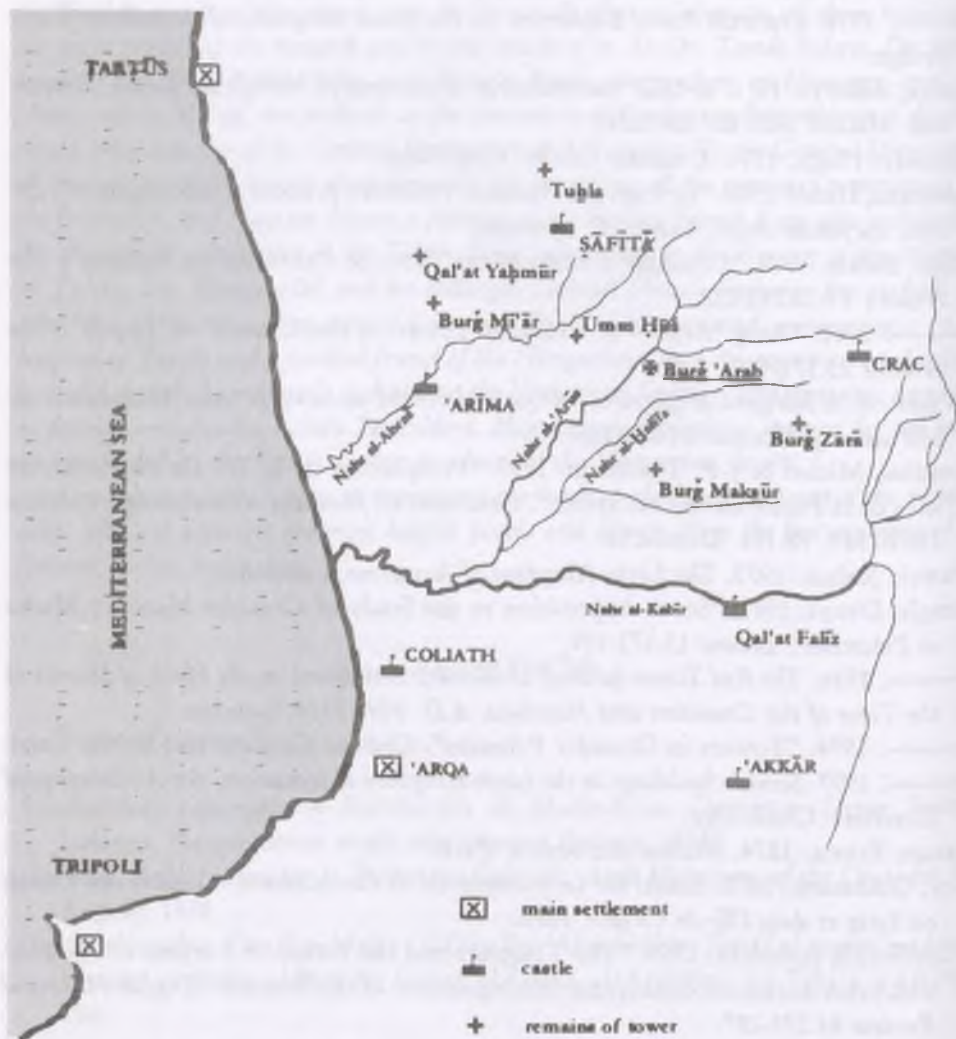
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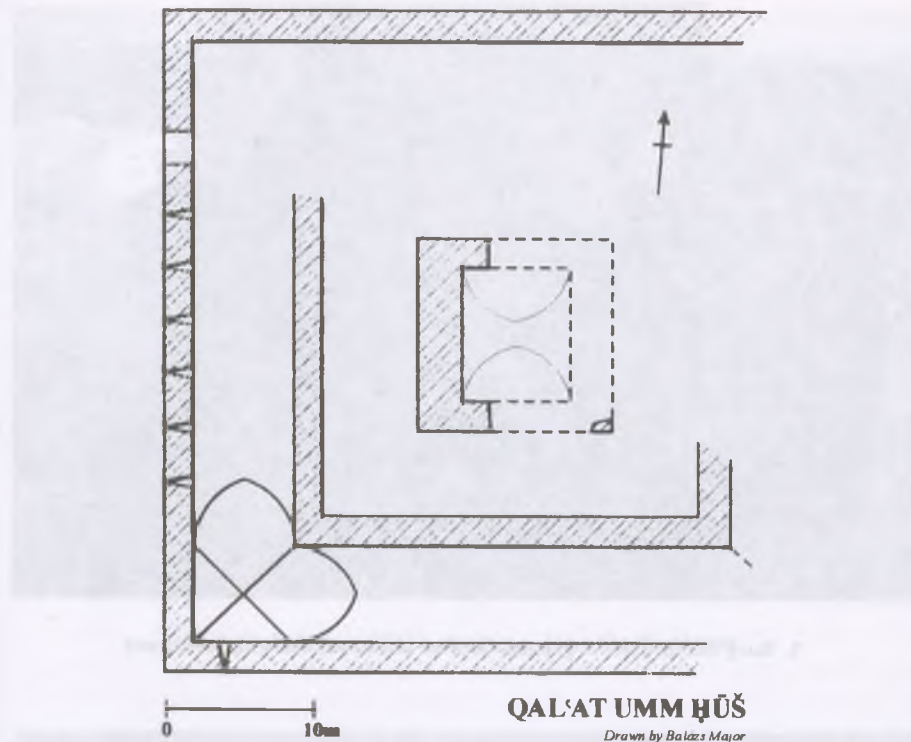


The Northern Part of the County of Tripoli



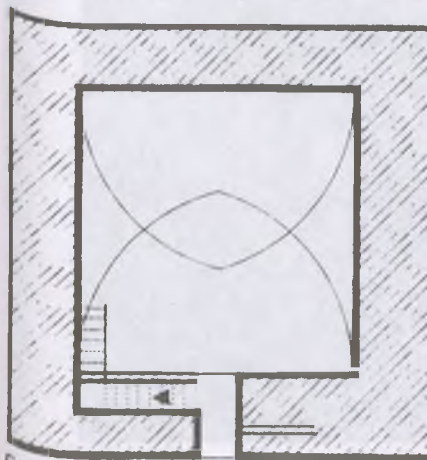
- ☒ main settlement
- ⊕ castle
- + remains of tower

*drawn by Balázs Major*

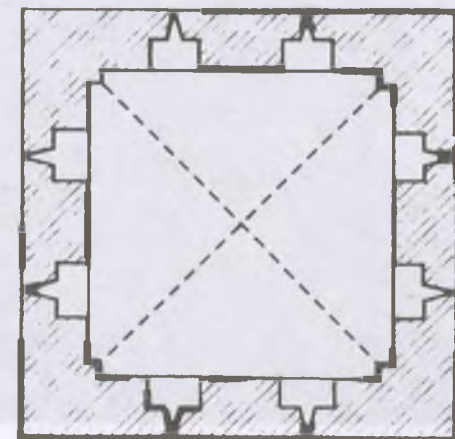


**QAL'AT UMM ḤŪŠ**  
*Drawn by Balázs Major*

**BURĜ ZĀRĀ** 0 5m



Ground floor



First floor (reconstruction - existing facings indicated by thick line)

*Drawn by Balázs Major*





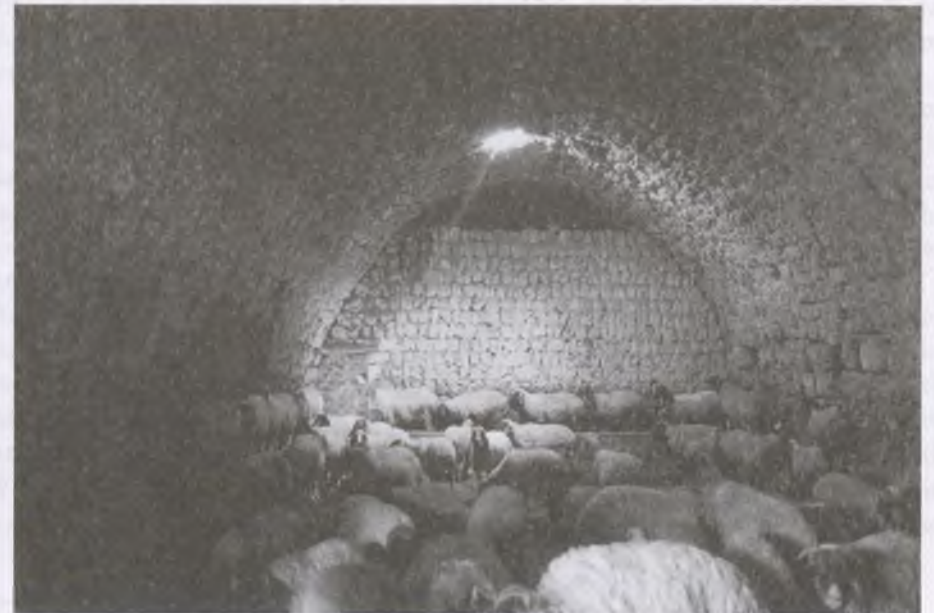
1. Burġ Mi'ār Šakir – ground floor of the tower from the southeast



2. Burġ Maksūr – remains of the tower from the southeast with embrasures of the first floor



3. Qal'at Umm Hūš – the tower from the southeast



4. Qal'at Umm Hūš – the western vault of the enclosure





5. Burğ Zārā – the tower from the northwest



6. Burğ Zārā – interior of the first floor hall with remains of embrasures

## MAKING ART POPULAR THE USE OF FOLKLORIC ELEMENTS IN MODERN ARAB PAINTING (1950-1990)

Silvia Naef

*University of Geneva*

This paper will try to give an overview on how elements inspired by popular arts and life were used until a decade ago in modern Arab painting and point out some main trends which can be detected in spite of important local differences between single countries. Painting, like literature, although being the product of a specific context, participates in broader intellectual debates affecting the whole cultural area in which Arabic is the main vehicle of exchanges.

### A brief historical survey

In most countries of the Arab Middle East a local version of easel painting in Western style began to appear between 1880 and 1930; in the Maghreb - with the exception of Tunisia - this happened later. By then, the traditional art forms, i.e. what we usually call "Islamic art" were replaced by an academic painting of typical scenes and landscapes which was quite conservative compared to contemporary Western standards. The painters of this first generation, called "pioneers" (*rurwād*), had either been taught by European teachers - mostly Orientalists - installed in their countries, or had studied in Europe, mainly in Paris and Rome.

This way of painting was overthrown after the Second World War, when most countries of the region reached independence. Different factors concurred in this change: first, the newly created states needed to build a new identity. This identity had to be "Arab", i.e. rooted in tradition and at the same time modern, compatible with international cultural standards. Secondly, for what fine arts were concerned, Arab artists became now conscious of the important changes that had happened in Western art since the beginning of the century, where linear perspective and imitation of nature had been replaced by less naturalistic styles and trends. Another important element of 20<sup>th</sup> century art was the reevaluation of non-European art and the reference to it. When European styles and techniques had first been adopted in the Arab world, Islamic art had been relegated to the category of "non art" following the Western definition<sup>1</sup>. The fact that since the beginning of the century European artists were referring to extra-European works of art led Arabs to look at their local tradi-

<sup>1</sup> Some authors today criticize this term. Cf. Irwin 1997:12-13.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Strauss forthcoming, as well as Naef forthcoming.



tions in a different and positive way. These traditions were now perceived as a main element allowing to create an Arab modernity. As the manifesto of one of the first groups of modern artists in Iraq, the Baghdad Group for Modern Art, expressed it:

"Iraqi artists do not ignore the spiritual and stylistic bond that ties them to the dominant artistic evolution in the world; however, they want to create forms which give to Iraqi art a specific character and a distinct personality."

Since the late forties, modernity (*hadāṭa*) became, thus, deeply tied to the "local character" (*aṭ-ṭābi' al-mahallī*) as it was first called; it would later on be known as "authenticity", *aṣāla*. *Aṣāla* was to be found in local heritage, *turāṭ*. *Hadāṭa* and *aṣāla*, modernity and authenticity, became the two terms around which most of the discussion about art turned around between 1950 and the end of the eighties, in spite of relevant changes in their definition and use.

What did "heritage" exactly mean? It is quite hard to find a somehow precise definition, but what can be deducted from most writings and statements is that it includes any type of art existing in the Arab world before the beginning of Western influence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This means that from Preislamic forms (for instance Pharaonic or Mesopotamian) to Islamic art everything could be considered to belong to heritage<sup>3</sup>.

The whole realm of popular art was another important element used by this movement, especially when it started in the late forties/early fifties. This had two reasons: first of all, art was figurative at that time, which meant that the use of the more abstract elements characterizing Islamic art was not yet conceivable. The second reason was the wide success socialist and communist ideals had then among intellectuals in many Arab and Middle Eastern countries. The use of elements taken from the "low arts" and despised by "high culture" was a way to take part for the disadvantaged. In addition to that, since the lower classes had been less westernized, it was a means of re-discovering the "real" essence of Arabness which in the view of many intellectuals had been lost in the more affluent parts of the population, too eager to adopt Western habits.

#### The multiple use of popular art and folkloric elements: the first generation

If elements of popular art could sometimes be found in previous decades, the first painters to make an affirmed use of it were the members of the Modern Art Group (*Ġamā'at al-fann al-ḥadīṭ*), founded in 1946 in Cairo. Since the foundation of the School of Fine Arts in 1908 and the successive development of an institutionalized art, exemplified by the yearly Salon du Caire since 1922, an appreciated and strong local academic tradition had established itself in Egypt. This tradition had already

been challenged by the Surrealist Group<sup>4</sup>, which had been active in the forties. But the Modern Art Group introduced a concept that would become one of the priorities for many Egyptian painters: the reference to heritage.

The most prominent members of the Modern Art Group, 'Abd al-ḥādī al-Ġazzār (1925-1966) and Ḥāmid Nadā (1924-1990), who both came from poor neighborhoods in Cairo, made a large use of symbols and elements from popular art like wall paintings, tattoos, symbols used for magic rituals. In contrast with academic painting where popular elements were romanticized, these painters referred to folklore in order to denounce the hardships of the living conditions of the underprivileged. Under their brush, it became as violent and brutal as real life could be. As an Egyptian art critic had put it in 1951:

"The public is confronted with an original work of art, a work expressing the truth about the people's feelings, about evil afflicting it, about its desires. For the first time the public applauds an Egyptian artist who regards art as an expression of the people's consciousness" (Roussillon 1990:75).

However, if social criticism was in the foreground, one should not forget the important anti-academic momentum in the work of these artists. This appears clearly when we look at some portraits, like the one that shows Ġazzār's wife, painted in 1960 (ill. 1). Here the artist represents a person who does not belong to the popular classes, but he portrays her in traditional dress, in contrast with the whole bourgeois and academic portrait tradition in the Middle East, where the members of the upper classes were shown in European dress in order to mark their difference. The break with academic painting was therefore double: in content and in form.

Only a few years later and some thousand kilometers eastwards, the already quoted Baghdad Group for Modern Art adopted the same principles without having a direct contact to the Cairo artists. In the eyes of its founder Ġawād Salīm (1919-1961), an aristocrat with a cosmopolitan education who had studied art in Paris, Rome and London<sup>5</sup>, Iraqi artists had to rediscover themselves in order to attain international recognition: "First of all", he said on the opening of the group's first exhibition in 1951, "we have to improve our understanding of foreign styles, secondly, the one we have of the local character. This character, that most of us ignore today, will allow us to obtain a place within universal thought" (ill. 2).

Many painters of the fifties and early sixties followed this lesson and folkloric elements were largely used at that time (ill. 3). In the first half of the sixties however, abstraction became popular, especially in the younger generation. To many of these painters, the experiences of the previous decade seemed "old fashioned" and were rejected.

<sup>3</sup> For the discussion of this question, cf. Naef 1996:352-369.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ġarīb 1986.

<sup>5</sup> On this artist, cf. Āl Sa'īd 1991 and Ġabrā 1974.



### Folklore and political commitment

The shock of the Arab defeat against Israel in 1967 re-actualized the search for "Arabness". Arab identity, that many considered to be threatened, had to be strongly affirmed, as did the Baghdadi group "The New Vision" (*ar-Ru'ya al-ġadīda*) in 1969. In a manifesto published the same year, the artists of this group expressed their will to produce a kind of art which should be modern and express at the same time the will of resisting the threads they thought were challenging the Arab nation. Heritage had to play a role for them; however, they did not want to follow blindly the experiences of their predecessors, they wanted to explore new paths<sup>6</sup>.

For other artists, using popular elements, representing popular scenes became an act of resistance. Thus it is not astonishing that they are to be found very often in Palestinian exile painting of that period. There are two means employed to affirm the identity of a people having had to leave its country and to perpetuate the memory of what Palestine was or was thought to be<sup>7</sup>. The omnipresence of Palestinian handicrafted products in the background, or of traditional fabrics, is striking. Even in paintings doubtlessly presenting an incitement to revolt and revolution, handicrafted products or embroideries on napkins and dresses are there to give a strong local touch, as we can see in a painting by Burhān Karkutlī (b. 1932), with the title "A Palestinian family" (1979) (ill. 4). Together with this goes the representation of women in traditional dress. Having been less touched by social changes, they are thought to have remained closer to traditions and to the real "essence" of land and people<sup>8</sup>. While in the seventies some Palestinian artists represented women as fighters, most of them preferred to paint them as "Mother Earth" or "Mother Palestine", dressed in the traditional, long, black dress with embroideries, sometimes going as far as showing them giving birth to the whole nation. This is patent in a highly symbolic painting (1988) by Sulaymān Mansūr (b. 1947), where a mass of people comes out of the belly of a sitting woman in traditional dress<sup>9</sup>. A similar message is given by a 1979 composition of ʿAbdarrahmān al-Muzayyin (b. 1934): in this case, a peasant's couple rises from the head of a woman wearing the typical black robe with embroideries; around her neck, she has a chain representing the Dome of the Rock. The background shows an Arab town. There is no doubt that she represents "Mother Palestine" perpetuating her people (ill. 5).

<sup>6</sup> For the Arabic text of the manifesto cf. Āl Saʿīd 1973:31-35; for a French translation, Naef 1996: 375-380.

<sup>7</sup> On arts in Palestine, cf. Šammūt 1989.

<sup>8</sup> On the representation of women in Arabic painting, cf. Naef 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Reproduced in Šammūt 1989:179, ill. no. 5.

Very different was the situation in North Africa, and in Tunisia especially. In this last mentioned country, where easel painting did go back to the beginning of the century<sup>10</sup>, the representation of folkloristic elements and scenes from traditional life was used in the sixties and seventies to reassert the importance of traditional culture in a country which was changing with extreme rapidity. However, traditional elements were idealized, glorified and gave an image of a peaceful and harmonic life which had disappeared, in total contrast for instance to the Egyptian representations due to ʿAbd alhādī al-Ġazzār and Hāmīd Nadā (ill. 6).

An original experience was attempted by the Iraqi painter Šakir Hasan Āl Saʿīd (b. 1926). Āl Saʿīd had been one of the founders and promoters of the calligraphic abstraction movement (*hurūfiyya*), a very widespread and authentically Panarab trend during the seventies and eighties<sup>11</sup>. In his paintings he referred to the walls of the popular quarters of Baghdad, where words were scribbled down spontaneously and in great disorder. His purpose was not the representation of old traditions and crafts, but to give an impression of the expression of popular life in our times (ill. 7).

In the eighties, authenticity became again a big issue in art critique. However, calligraphic abstraction and some kind of "Arab realism" being dominant, folkloric elements tended to become secondary, though not absent. Since the nineties, the affirmation of a distinct Arab identity has lost its priority, younger artists being less concerned by the question. Art has become less specific, more global. The opening of Western markets to experiences from outside also helped to reinforce this trend: since one decade, the awareness for the existence of non-Western modern art has increased, as proves the multiplication of exhibitions on this topic<sup>12</sup>.

### Final remarks

What precedes leads me to think that the use of folkloric elements in the Arab world is a phenomenon that can be situated between 1950 and 1990. It was an attempt to give a response to different questions:

1) the search of a new identity. This term can have more than one meaning:

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Anthologie* 1998.

<sup>11</sup> On the *hurūfiyya* movement, cf. Dāġir 1990; *Croisement* 1989 and Naef 1992:33-65.

<sup>12</sup> See for instance *Total Global, Umgang mit nicht-westlicher Kunst*, Basel, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, May-November 2000 (with catalogues on Turkey, Cuba, Senegal and South Africa, China, South Korea); *Kunst-Welten im Dialog: von Gauguin zur globalen Gegenwart*, Museum Ludwig Köln, 5 November 1999 - 15 mars 2000 (catalogue: M. Scheps et al. (eds.), Cologne, 1999); *Inklusion, Exklusion: Versuch einer neuen Kartografie der Kunst im Zeitalter von Postkolonialismus und globaler Migration*, Graz, Künstlerhaus, 22 September - 26 October 1996 (catalogue: P. Weibel (ed.), Cologne, 1997); *Il Sud del mondo: l'altra arte contemporanea*, Marsala, Galleria civica d'arte contemporanea, 14 February - 14 April 1991 (catalogue: Milan, 1991).



a) it means the identity of Arab art in general, and underlines its specificity compared to Western art.

b) Folkloric elements can be used to affirm a specific identity, as the Palestinian one for instance.

2) It can also be a means of expressing a nostalgic and idealized view of the past in societies where changes were rapid.

3) By referring to people's art, some artists wanted to express their solidarity with the classes that produce this kind of art and, secondly, make art, generally reserved to an elite, more accessible to them. However, like in similar experiences elsewhere, it is doubtful that this latter purpose was reached.

More generally, the use of folkloric elements was a part of a much broader movement, which wanted to give a more authentic touch to art, to confer it a new identity and a place in the international movement. It marks a problem Arab culture in general, and artistic production in particular, had had to face in the second part of the twentieth century, i.e. the attempt to create an identity which would be modern but less alienated from its origins than it had become through the adoption of important panels of Western culture.

However, if introducing non-Western elements might have given a specific character to Arab art, the danger of folklorization was strong. Thus, the considerations the French scholar Alain Roussillon made about the Egyptian painter 'Abd al-Hādī al-Ġazzār could easily be extended to this whole trend:

"This poses the question of the fundamental ambivalence of the identity approach. While identifying the ways and means of a possible re-energizing, the 'promotion' of identity entails the risk of perpetuating the backwardness to which the unaltered Egyptian society is confined" (Roussillon 1990:77).

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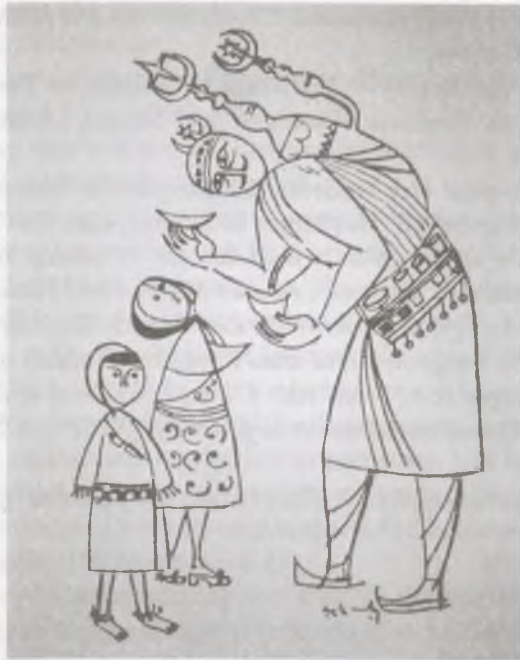
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1. 'Abd al-Hādī al-Ġazzār (Egypt), *Contemplation* (Portrait of the artist's wife), 1960





2. Ğawād Salīm (Iraq),  
*The water seller, n.d.*



3. Sayyid ‘Abdarrasūl (Egypt), *Composition, 1961*



4. Burhān Karkutli (Syria),  
*Palestinian family, 1979*



5. ‘Abdarrahmān al-Muzayyin (Palestine),  
*No title, 1979*





6. Ġalāl Ben 'Abdallāh (Tunisia), *Dying with henna*, 1969



7. Šākīr Ḥasan Al Sa'īd (Iraq),  
*Writings on a wall*, 1978

## MAX HERZ PASHA AND HIS ACTIVITIES ON THE COMITÉ DE CONSERVATION DES MONUMENTS DE L'ART ARABE\*

István Ormos

*Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest*

This conference is dedicated to the memory of Ignaz Goldziher, who was born 150 years ago in 1850. The present paper will deal with certain aspects of the activity of a close friend of his, Max Herz Pasha, with whom he shared a common scholarly interest and a warm friendship. An important source for the study of Herz Pasha's life and activities are his letters addressed to Goldziher, approximately 65, which are kept in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest<sup>1</sup>. To our great regret, the counterparts of these letters, Goldziher's answers to Herz, have not survived.

Max Herz was born in Ottlaka, Hungary, in 1856 and died in Zurich in 1919 (fig. 1). He was an architect and spent his whole active life, thirty-five years altogether, in Egypt, working on the preservation and restoration of monuments of Arab-Islamic art. For a quarter of a century, from 1890 until his expulsion from Egypt in 1914, in his capacity of chief architect to the Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe, he was in charge of monuments of Arab-Islamic, and later also of Coptic architecture. In addition to this, he was also director of the Arab Museum (present-day Museum of Islamic Art). Herz Pasha was also a prolific private architect, and is said to have built more than 150 buildings in various styles in Cairo, a field of activity in which his contribution to the development and spread of the Mamlūk Revival style is perhaps most noteworthy<sup>2</sup>.

The present paper aims at highlighting certain aspects of his work as chief architect of the Comité. The first part will deal with the organizational and structural aspects of his post while the second part will offer details of his work on certain important monuments.

Work on the biography and activities of Herz Pasha requires a clear view of the organizational and structural aspects of his post, and I think a summary of the conclusions I have reached may be not unwelcome here. At the same time I am fully aware that the exact structure of the Comité will be depicted and a clear picture of

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<sup>1</sup> I am greatly obliged to the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for having put the letters at my disposal.

<sup>2</sup> On him see now Ormos 2001. See also the forthcoming detailed monograph on Herz by the author of these lines, in which all the relevant details of documentation will be found which the reader might wish to consult.



its working methods and principles will be offered in two works which are due to be available soon. Philipp Speiser (Fribourg, Switzerland) finished a work on the history of the Comité in connection with the restoration of two important monuments in Cairo a few years ago and it is reported to be at the press now<sup>3</sup>. The author is an architect himself who has done practical preservation and restoration work in the mediaeval part of Cairo. A Ph.D. thesis is due soon to be finished, focusing on the methods followed by the Comité, and of course it is likely to offer important insights into questions relevant to us too. Its author, 'Alā' al-Habašī, is attached to the American Research Center in Egypt in Cairo (ARCE) and has also been involved in practical restoration and preservation work in Egypt.

The Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe was founded at the end of 1881 by Khedive Tawfiq, ostensibly with the aim of halting the rapid deterioration of the monuments of Arab-Islamic architecture, although political motives may have also played a part in its foundation. The Comité – as it is usually referred to by its French name – was founded within the Waqf Administration but was not under its direction. This situation subsisted until 1936, when the Comité was transferred to the authority of the Ministry of Public Education, a step that was to have serious budgetary consequences. In 1939 the Comité was renamed Conseil Supérieur pour le Service de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe. In 1953 it lost its independence its tasks being taken over by the Egyptian Antiquities Organization – the Supreme Council of Antiquities at present – which now looks after all monuments of architecture in Egypt: Pharaonic, Graeco-Roman, Coptic and Arab-Islamic alike.

The members of the Comité held their posts on an honorary basis, that is they were not paid for it. The President of the Comité was always the head of the Waqf Administration. In its first session on February 1st 1882, the Comité formed two commissions, the Première Commission and the Deuxième Commission. The task of the Première Commission was to prepare a list of all the monuments of Arab-Islamic art of any artistic or historical interest all over the country. This task done, the Première Commission seems to have dissolved itself fairly soon; in any case there is no mention of its activities in the printed bulletins of the Comité. The Deuxième Commission, on the other hand, played a key role in the activities of the Comité, being in charge of the technical aspects of the Comité's work, its task being the continuous control and supervision of monuments, the planning and organization of projects and also the strict supervision of the works under execution. The Première Commission having long been dissolved, the Deuxième Commission was renamed Section Technique in 1898 and again Comité Permanent in 1939. The works prescribed by the Comité on its own initiative, and its Deuxième Commission

<sup>3</sup> Speiser 2001. It was published in mid-October 2001.

respectively, were carried out by the Bureau Technique of the Waqf Administration (Qalam Handasat al-Awqāf, or simply Handasat al-Awqāf). Also, when the Bureau Technique of the Waqf Administration intended to undertake any work on a listed monument, it was obliged by law to submit its plans to the Comité for comments, suggestions and final approval. The Bureau Technique of the Waqf Administration was as a rule overburdened by its own tasks, and these new tasks arising from the activities of the Comité constituted additional work for its staff. The situation was rendered even more complicated by the fact that these new tasks were not in line with the skills of the members of its staff; they even ran contrary to their regular routine: where before they would demolish something and replace it with something new, they now had to embark on preservation; where before they would plaster or paint in accordance with tradition, they were now expected to remove the paint or the plaster. Moreover, the staff of the Waqf Administration was not at all convinced of the importance of the work done by the Comité. – Private persons were also required by law to submit to the Comité's approval plans of projects affecting listed monuments in their possession in any way. A not too numerous but important group of monuments belonging to the Ministry of Public Works was also within the scope of the Comité's attention – this group contained such monuments as the city walls of Cairo with the gates, Saladin's aqueduct, the mosque of az-Zāhir Baybars, the Fadāwiyya dome and approximately twenty mosques in the Northern cemetery<sup>4</sup>. In 1896 the Comité's mandate was extended to monuments of Coptic architecture. These complicated circumstances of ownership, as well as the not wholly clear spheres of competence and authority of the Comité, were duly reflected in the budgetary circumstances. The Comité had its own budget provided by the Waqf Administration and the Ministry of Finance, but its full-time employees were on the pay roll of the Waqf Administration just like its own employees, and from 1896 onwards one part of them received its salary from the Waqf Administration while the other drew salary from the government. It only became possible to unify the Comité's budget in 1910. Projects were financed as a rule from various sources: from the budgets of the Comité, of the Bureau Technique of the Waqf Administration, sometimes from that of the Ministry of Public Works, and in the case of Coptic monuments also from that of the Patriarchate. And of course, as we have seen, usually the works carried out on a building in accordance with the instructions of the Comité were simply financed by the respective owners of the monuments in question.

<sup>4</sup> See the Bulletin of the Comité: Comité de conservation des monuments de l'art arabe. Exercices 1896. Fascicule XIII. Procès-verbaux des Séances. – Rapports de la deuxième Commission. Cairo. 111-112. (Cited henceforth as BC [= Bulletin du Comité] with the indication of the volume number and the fiscal year, which may differ from the year of publication).



This situation where spheres of authority were not always clearly defined resulted in a considerable amount of unnecessary bureaucratic paper work and also clashes of competence and powers, and it explains also the fact that at times the Waqf Administration spent large amounts of the independent budget of the Comité.

This was approximately the situation when, upon the invitation and offer of Julius Franz Pasha, head of the Bureau Technique of the Waqf Administration, Max Herz joined the Bureau at the beginning of 1881 in the capacity of architect attached directly to Franz Pasha. At the beginning of the following year work started in the Comité only to be interrupted for a while by the 'Urābī revolt when, among others, Herz and three other European engineers in the Waqf Administration had to flee from Egypt (Herz 1912:253). This was only a brief intermezzo, however, and the Comité soon resumed its work. Right from the beginning Herz seems to have been involved, as a junior architect, mainly with works of preservation and restoration. Upon Franz Pasha's retirement in 1887 Herz inherited his place in the Comité and soon afterwards he was put in charge of the Arab Museum. In 1890 the Comité received an independent technical department of its own, called the Bureau Spécial. The creation of this Bureau was of the utmost importance and improved the state of preservation and restoration considerably because, no matter how small it was, the Comité did not now have to rely on the Bureau Technique of the Waqf Administration. Though on a modest scale, the number of the staff at the Bureau Spécial grew steadily right up until the outbreak of World War I. Its head was the chief architect to the Comité, a post newly created personally for Herz, who by this time has become the incontestable head of this field of activity. This important post was occupied by Herz for a quarter of a century until the end of 1914, when he was expelled from Egypt as an enemy alien – he was Hungarian citizen – by the British authorities following the outbreak of World War I.

For the sake of clarity it must be emphasized that Herz was not the director of the Bureau Technique of the Waqf Administration – in this post Franz Pasha was succeeded by Muṣṭafā bey Ṣādiq, and we know for instance that around 1894 the head of the Bureau Technique was Ṣābir bey Ṣabrī, and that around 1907 the chief architect of the Waqf Administration was Maḥmūd Fahmī Bey (BC 1914. XXXI.IX).

Although Herz was not the official head of the Comité – its president being *ex officio* always the head of the Waqf Administration – yet from an organizational point of view and also in practice the most important post on the Comité was of course that of chief architect. In Herz Pasha's case his love of his work, his deep interest, seriousness and indefatigable industry lent considerable additional weight to this post, which was already of central importance on account of organizational aspects. Thus for twenty-five years Herz was in absolute charge of monuments of Arab-Islamic and later also of Coptic architecture in Egypt.

Herz was a rather conservative-minded preserver and restorer: he preferred preservation to restoration, and when he did resort to restoration he strove to be as

meticulous as possible in restoring only elements and items which could be proven beyond doubt to have existed. This latter statement, which can be read in an important source, is valid only with certain restrictions (Iskārūs 1919:926). It is true that Herz restrained himself considerably in the restoration of monuments which came from periods the architecture of which little was known, e.g. the era of the Fātimids. However, in the case of monuments coming from periods such as the Mamlūk era, which were abundantly represented by monuments of architecture, Herz did resort to the analogous completion of missing and unattested parts when compelled by circumstances. In this he was acting in accordance with the practice of his age: we must not forget that he lived and worked in the age of purism, when the supreme goal of many an architect was to restore a monument to a stylistically pure state, which was usually, though not always, its original state. This attitude was gradually losing ground, though, and under the impact of the growing criticism directed against the *vandalisme restaurateur* of purists, restorers began to pay more and more attention to the meticulous investigation of all available data and to rely on them exclusively.

It must also be borne in mind that most of the monuments Herz was dealing with were of a functional significance: he was, after all, working on mosques, public fountains, houses etc., which were, as a rule, to be used again, and consequently an extremely conservative attitude which limited itself to conservation, only eventually conserving a monument in a partly dilapidated state, was out of the question. Thus under his guidance and authority the Comité chose to undertake minor interventions on a considerable number of monuments in need of urgent repair and only carried out complete restorations in relatively few instances. This attitude can be regarded as most felicitous because – although results were not so spectacular – in this way the Comité nevertheless managed to save a great number of monuments for posterity. Without the care shown by the Comité these would by now have disappeared without trace (figs. 3-6). It should be noted, however, that in making this choice the Comité was also influenced by its chronic lack of funds: we know that Herz Pasha would have carried out complete restoration in considerably more cases had his budget allowed him to do so.

Let us consider some examples when Herz Pasha resorted to the completion of parts of monuments on the basis of analogy.

The Mosque of Barqūq in the Sūq al-Nahhāsīn. There are two fine watercolours by Herz Pasha in the Barqūq portfolio in the Archives of the Supreme Council of Antiquities<sup>5</sup>. The first is *Masḡid as-Sultān Barqūq [mabnī min sanat 784 li-sanat 801 hiḡriyya] / ṭanī taṣmīm 'an ad-dikka bi-ḡasab waḡ dikkat ḡāmi' as-Sultān Mu'ayyad [mabnī sanat 814 li-sanat 842 hiḡriyya]*. It is dated October 1890 and signed "Herz."

<sup>5</sup> Archives of the Supreme Council of Antiquities. I am greatly indebted to the Supreme Council of Antiquities for the permission to do research work in their archives.



the second is *Ġāmi' Barqūq / taṣmīm 'an fisqiyya li-s-ṣahn hasab waḍ' fisqiyyat Ġāmi' as-Sultān Hasan*. It is dated November 1890 and signed "Herz". Now it is recorded in the Centième Rapport de la Deuxième Commission that the *dikka* of the Barqūqiyya and the basin in its *ṣahn* were removed shortly before because they had been recently constructed and were ugly and devoid of any value. Their reconstruction however in a good style appropriate to the importance of the monument itself was deemed necessary<sup>6</sup>. Herz Pasha submitted two designs for the *dikka* and one for the domed fountain. The first design for the *dikka* was based on that of Sultān Hasan, while the second one on that of the Mu'ayyad mosque. Having examined them the Deuxième Commission opted for the latter. They were carried out in due course and can be admired even today. Not everybody liked them, however. They have been criticized by Julius Franz Pasha for looking brand new – he found that the *dikka* especially was too bright (fig. 7) (Franz Pascha 1903:85-86).

In connection with the Barqūqiyya another interesting subject is worth mentioning. An important local, Egyptian authority on monuments of Arab-Islamic art in Cairo, Hasan 'Abdalwahhāb, the late photographer of the Comité, had a very high opinion of the work done on the Barqūqiyya in general expressly mentioning also the ceiling:

*La-qad qāmat Laġnat hiḏf al-ātār al-'arabiyya bi-a'māl ġalīla fī hādihī l-madrasa; fa-aṣlahat ruḥāmahā wa-niġāratahā wa-qawwamat mabāniyahā wa-aṣlahat as-suqūf wa-dahhabathā kamā anṣa'at al-qubba al-kabīra [sanat 1311h – 1893m] tibqan li-šūra qadīma wa-qubbat aṣ-ṣahn [sanat 1318h – 1896m]. Wa-l-ḥaqq annahū 'amal ġalīl yu'add min mafāhir hādihī l-Laġna wa-burhān sāti' 'alā miqdār diqqatihā wa-'ināyatihā bi-l-ātār al-islāmiyya ('Abdalwahhāb 1994:197).*

On the other hand, Europeans, notably Julius Franz Pasha, Creswell, and to a lesser extent Stanley Lane-Poole, criticized Herz Pasha for the harshness of new colours on the ceiling of the sanctuary, that is the south-eastern – *qiblī* – *īwān*. In the portfolio of the Barqūqiyya we find a vast correspondence concerning the painting of this ceiling, with Herz Pasha requesting detailed descriptions of painting methods, the paints used etc., but a report of how exactly the decision was made is missing. Ludwig Borchardt, the noted German Egyptologist, who linked to his education as an Egyptologist that of an architect and who seems to have known Herz quite well, informs us of the details of this procedure in his obituary of Herz Pasha. At the same time he sets the whole affair in a broader, historical context<sup>7</sup>. He says, when the ceilings of mosques were newly painted – for which Herz was to be criticized later on – Herz Pasha took great pains

<sup>6</sup> 100<sup>th</sup> Rapport de la deuxième Commission (13 novembre 1890). BC 1890. VII. 121.

<sup>7</sup> On him see Dawson, Uphill & Bierbrier 1995:54-55.

to have large size samples prepared in order to find out whether the colours would be more effective in the shades in which they can be seen now, centuries after their original appliance, or the way they looked when they were freshly applied. Finally the members of the Comité took a joint decision to apply the fresh, harsh colours and left it to the passage of time to mellow them and to be reconciled with each other just as it had happened formerly. Perhaps this was the right decision and the criticisms and reproaches will disappear after one or more decades (Borchardt 1919:368).

To our regret, there is no document relating to this decision nor are the large size samples Borchardt refers to extant among the documents at present. It can be assumed that Herz relied on similar models and his own exquisite taste in re-painting the central part of the ceiling of the *qiblī īwān* because there were not sufficient traces of the original upon which the restoration could have been based. It was different in the side-aisles of the same *īwān* where it was possible to complete the remains of the originals (BC 1890. VII. 127-128).

For the painting of the fountain in the *ṣahn* Herz gave the following instructions in 1895:

The fountain will be painted on the interior of the roof of the fountain. The fountain of the Sultān Hasan-mosque is indicated as the model for the style and the size of the work to be carried out. The motifs of the designs can be taken from the mosque of Barqūq itself<sup>8</sup>.

Herz Pasha regarded the mosque of Sultān Hasan as the most beautiful and most perfect monument of Arab-Islamic art in existence in the whole Arab-Islamic world. It was in a very bad condition when he took up his post and it was clear that the mosque needed substantial and exhaustive preservation and restoration. The extent of the costs required for these works was such that for a while there could be absolutely no question of such an undertaking. The means at the Comité's disposal allowed merely for the carrying out of the most urgent, absolutely indispensable, works. The estimated budget for the whole project amounted to L.Eg. 40,000, an exorbitantly high sum in those days. With the aim of raising this sum Herz Pasha published a lavishly produced folio monograph on the mosque in order to draw attention to it. Soon afterwards work was begun and by the time of Herz's expulsion in 1914 he had almost finished the project. Only minor details were left for his successor, Achille Patricolo, to complete. Now while most sources maintain that Herz managed to raise the required sum of L.Eg. 40,000 and thus to carry out the planned project, some important authorities flatly deny this. Ignaz Goldziher, who was a close friend of Herz's and who was deeply interested in everything connected with Egypt, wrote in his obituary of Herz Pasha that Herz had *not* succeeded in raising this sum and

<sup>8</sup> Dated 24 October 1895. Archives of the Supreme Council of Antiquities.



thus had to restrict himself to certain superficial measures only (Goldziher 1919:230). Ludwig Borchardt also wrote that Herz Pasha was only able to accomplish his most ambitious project, that of the restoration of the mosque of Sulṭān Ḥasan, under considerable, heavy restrictions because the necessary funds were lacking, and thus he was confined to the execution of the most important and absolutely indispensable measures in order to halt further deterioration and dilapidation (Borchardt 1919:368). We are now nearer to the solution of this puzzle. In the Sulṭān Ḥasan portfolio in the Comité's archives there is a detailed report of the exact amounts spent in the course of the whole project beginning from the fiscal year 1902 up to the date of the report. This detailed report was written by Achille Patricolo on the order of Herz Pasha and is dated January 29th, 1914. The sum total appearing in the report amounts to L.Eg. 32.623. This means that most of the required sum was at Herz Pasha's disposal and that he was able to accomplish more or less what he had planned to do.

In conformity with a decision of the Deuxième Commission, on April 15th, 1903 Herz ordered that the smaller domed fountain, which was in fact a *ḥanafīyya*<sup>9</sup>, in the *ṣahn* of the mosque of Sulṭān Ḥasan dating from Ottoman times (fig. 8), should be transferred to the Māridānī mosque, which had been erected roughly at the same period and lacked an authentic fountain; Herz had already suggested this measure in his monograph on the Sulṭān Ḥasan mosque (Herz 1899:28, note 2). It was done although it met with some opposition, and indignant protests were voiced, such as that by Somers Clarke:

I have observed with regret that the small fountain in the court-yard of the Mosque of Sultan Hassan has been removed. As an Hon. Memb. of the Comité I should much like to have been able to plead for the retention and should have done so had I known that the removal was contemplated. The Mosque has a worldwide reputation. How many artists have not made studies of its stately and picturesque interior? They will find that now one of the objects of interest is gone and may reasonably ask "Why" ? A question it seems to me most difficult to answer. I fear that presently some unpleasant criticism may be made which would have been avoided by adhering to the very simple rule of conservation and of respect for historic continuity. To preserve rigorously is to maintain an unassailable position which will certainly secure the respect of the most cultivated archaeologists of all nationalities<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. BC 1889. VI. 102. BC 1892. IX. 112. The word 'hanafīyya' usually designated a water-tank with taps. On the word *ḥanafīyya* see Herz 1896:50-51. Cf. also Herz 1900:164. Lane 1978:73. Amin & Ibrahim 1990:37-38 (s.v. *ḥanafī*, *ḥanafīyya*).

<sup>10</sup> Letter dated Continental Hotel, Cairo, April 23rd, 1904. Archives of the Supreme Council of Antiquities.

This letter was read in the session of the Comité on May 9th, 1904. One of its members, Ya'qūb Artīn Pasha, Under-secretary of State in the Ministry of Public Instruction, declared that the removal of the fountain had been totally justified and expressed his astonishment that objections should be raised in this respect at all<sup>11</sup>. The public discussion of this matter continued for some time and under the impact of the criticisms and protests even the restitution of the fountain to its original place was considered, but in the end the Comité decided that it should remain where it was (fig. 9)<sup>12</sup>.

In connection with the Sulṭān Ḥasan mosque a project with which Herz Pasha was greatly involved is worth mentioning. In the Sulṭān Ḥasan portfolio there are some documents relating to the remarkable effort launched by the Comité on the suggestion of Lord Kitchener to force builders to adopt the Arab-Islamic [≈ Mamlūk revival] style for their buildings – for the façades at least – in the vicinity of the Sulṭān Ḥasan and the Rifā'ī mosques that would be in stylistic harmony with these two fine monuments. After various enquiries and consultations it appeared that there were no legal possibilities of enforcing the adoption of a certain style in general but there were other possibilities of encouraging this and even enforcing it provided that this had been made the condition of certain donations made from public property. It is stated explicitly that it was Lord Kitchener's idea, who seems to have been involved with city-planning in the area: "To the South of the Sultan Ḥasan Mosque extends Saladin Square, the finest in the city, formed at Lord Kitchener's instigation in 1913, out of the Rumeila Square and by the demolition of several small streets and buildings," – runs an interesting passage in the 1929 edition of Baedeker's guide (Baedeker 1929:73). It may be mentioned in passing that similar efforts of enforcing a uniform style in a certain area were also made in Constantinople at about the same time (Godoli 1997:81a, note No. 29). In the neighbourhood of these two mosques there seems to be extant only one building now that corresponds to these requirements. There is a Mamlūk revival private house facing the North-Eastern wall of the Rifā'ī mosque (fig. 10). In the neighbourhood it is known as the house of an Egyptian officer, Liwā' Ḥasan bāšā Rašīd, while rumour has it that Achille Patricolo also lived in it for a while. In one place Patricolo makes a slightly vague statement which can be interpreted – though this interpretation is not binding – that he himself designed it<sup>13</sup>. Who was responsible for this building is not wholly clear because some sources mention a Mamlūk revival building in this neighbourhood which is said

<sup>11</sup> Procès-Verbal N° 130 (9 mai 1904). VI. BC 1904. XXI. 51.

<sup>12</sup> Extrait du proc. verb. No. 197 du 10.10.12 Rapp. 454, §5, A. – Restitution à la mosquée du sultan Hassan du petit bassin transféré à la mosquée d'el-Mardāni. *Le Comité n'est pas d'avis de modifier l'état actuel des choses*. Archives of the Supreme Council of Antiquities.

<sup>13</sup> Patricolo 1922. See also Volait 1987:90.



to have been designed by Herz Pasha for Gayer Anderson Bey, the Oriental Secretary of the British Residency<sup>14</sup>. It is not clear whether our source is reliable or not, or whether the building allegedly designed for Gayer Anderson Bey is identical with the building still in existence behind the Rifā'i mosque. In any case there is only one Mamlūk revival building existing at present in this neighbourhood. It is not known either where Gayer Anderson Bey lived at this time but this can perhaps be found out. Since an assassination attempt was made on Gayer Anderson Bey, the Oriental Secretary of the Residency, while he was living in the Arab-style house in question at the beginning of the nineteen twenties, several persons were executed. Therefore, as a consequence of this assassination attempt, there might be some pertinent documentary material still in existence in archives which might offer some clues for the identification of Gayer Anderson's house. In the end we might clarify who was responsible for a remarkable building, eventually discover a building perhaps designed by Herz Pasha, and have a better picture of the result of the effort to enforce the application of the Arab-Islamic style in a certain neighbourhood<sup>15</sup>.

Finally, I would like to mention one more interesting subject the understanding of which is facilitated by documentary material preserved in the archives of the Comité. It is the question of the foundation of the Coptic Museum. In recent publications Morqos Simayka Pasha is regarded as the founder and first director of the Coptic Museum and the year of its foundation is indicated variously as 1903, 1906 or 1908. In addition, important sources consider the placing of Coptic monuments under the Comité's authority as one of the most important results of Morqos Simayka's activities in the Comité. All this is, however, contradicted by the bulletins of the Comité. First, Morqos Simayka did not become a member of the Comité until 1906 while the Coptic monuments had already been placed under the Comité's authority at the beginning of 1896. As far as the Coptic Museum is concerned, the bulletins inform us that the idea for its foundation was first brought up by Herz Pasha in an official letter addressed to the President of the Comité in 1897. Thereupon the President intervened with the Patriarch and in 1899 the latter designed an annexe of the Mu'allāqa church as a repository for endangered objects of Coptic art. This annexe can be regarded as the germ of the Coptic Museum. Later on the Comité commissioned Herz Pasha to prepare the designs for an independent building of the Coptic Museum and in 1913 they were in fact prepared by his Bureau under his guidance

<sup>14</sup> On Gayer Anderson see Dawson, Uphill & Bierbrier 1995:165. On the building and the event in question see Harris 1925:28 and Gayer-Anderson Pasha 1948:12. The introduction with the biography was written by Gayer Anderson's younger brother. For this piece of information I am indebted to Gayer Anderson's grandson, Theo Gayer-Anderson, and to Nicholas Warner in Cairo.

<sup>15</sup> Mercedes Volait, who perhaps knows best the architecture of the period in question, thinks that the building behind the Rifā'i mosque is not Herz's work. Oral communication.

and submitted by Herz Pasha to the Comité (fig. 11). Subsequently alterations were made on these designs and consequently what is so well-known today to visitors of Cairo as the Coptic Museum does not bear any resemblance to those first designs. This we are in a position to state now because those designs are preserved in the Mu'allāqa portfolio in the Archives of the Comité. There is actually a whole series of designs dating from 1913 onwards showing that the Bureau Spécial of the Comité did not cease working on this project, constantly changing their ideas. None of the designs, however, corresponds to the present façade, which resembles that of the Aqmar mosque. Certainly, the complete story of the birth of the Coptic Museum cannot be written on the basis of these documents alone because significant items of information are still lacking. Yet there can be no doubt that its birth – both as an institution and as a building – will remain connected to Herz Pasha's name forever. This of course does not mean that one would want to belittle Morqos Simayka Pasha's great merits in connection with the Coptic Museum and his services to Coptic art in general. It was due to his indefatigable zeal, his boundless energy and enthusiasm that the Coptic Museum in fact became the important institution which it is now. Simply the beginning was different. In this context the testimony of an important state official of Coptic origin, Gallini Fahmi Pasha [Qallīnī Fahmī Bāšā] may now be introduced. He was born in 1860 and served the state in different posts during an exceptionally long career under Ismā'il, Tawfīq, 'Abbās II. Hilmī, Husayn Kāmil and Fu'ād. He died around 1953<sup>16</sup>. Gallini Fahmi Pasha, who, as a Copt, must have been interested in the affairs of his own community and at the same time must have possessed reliable pieces of information, in his memoirs regards Herz Pasha as the founder of the Coptic Museum in agreement with what was said above<sup>17</sup>.

When one goes through the documents preserved in the Archives of the Supreme Council of Antiquities of the period in question two impressions predominate. First, the Comité and its Bureau Spécial were a very serious institution with a strict working discipline in which the chief architect, Herz Pasha, played a key role. A considerable part of the documents are in his hand and in the rest of the cases it clearly appears that everything happened under his strict control and supervision and according to his intentions. From the exemplary detailed documentary material extant in certain cases it may be inferred that working methods and principles were identical in other cases also where the documentary material is defective or simply missing. Second, having examined all this material one really begins to appreciate the bulletins; one discovers how excellent those brief summaries are, especially the

<sup>16</sup> On him see Fahmī 1926:300-323.

<sup>17</sup> Qallīnī Fahmī bāšā 1934: I, 123-125 (French transl. 129-131). I am indebted to Donald M. Reid (Atlanta, Georgia) for the Arabic version of this work.



reports of the Deuxième Commission; and one is deeply impressed by the amount of work that must have gone into their preparation. We have Herz Pasha's express statement that the reports of the Deuxième Commission were written by himself beginning from No. 48 dated 29th of November, 1888 until No. 485 dated 25th of June, 1914<sup>18</sup>.

Posterity is indebted to Max Herz Pasha for the survival of many monuments of Arab-Islamic and Coptic architecture in Egypt. It is hoped that the details highlighted in this paper will help us to form a correct idea of his achievements in the protection of monuments in Egypt and of his place in the history of the Comité.

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<sup>18</sup> Szinnyei 1891-1914:813a. On the basis of the autograph draft of this entry, which can be found among his papers in the possession of his grandson, Paolo Sereni in Naples, the report in question was the Quarante-huitième rapport de la deuxième Commission (29 novembre 1888). *BC* 1887-1888. V. 57-58. The last session of the Section Technique attended by Herz and of which he may have written the report was on 25 June 1914: 485<sup>e</sup> Rapport de la Section technique. *BC* 1914. XXXI. 138-143. The last session of the Comité attended by him was session No. 214. on 12th June, 1914. *Ibid.* 123-126. This volume is certainly not edited by him anymore, because it seems to have gone to the press after his departure.

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Max Herz Pasha. Stresa, Italy, 1898. Detail of a photo in the possession of Mr. Paolo Sereni, Naples.
2. Window-frame in the fountain of Sultan al-Gūrī. Drawing of Max Herz (Herz 1887:199).
3. The palace of al-Amīr Yuṣbak. Main entrance. Drawing of Max Herz. *BC* 1894. XI. Second edition. Plate VI.
4. The mansion of Ġamāladdīn ad-Dahabī. The *maqʿad* (Herz 1907:175, ill. 192).
5. The mansion of Ġamāladdīn ad-Dahabī. Detail of the pillar supporting the arch of the *maqʿad*. Drawing of Max Herz (Herz 1890:158).
6. The mansion of Ġamāladdīn ad-Dahabī. Detail of the façade of the *maqʿad*. Drawing of Max Herz (Herz 1890:159).
7. The *dikka* in the Barqūqiyya (Franz Pascha 1903:86).
8. The *ṣahn* of the mosque of Sulṭān Ḥasan with the two fountains. Drawing by David Roberts, 1839.
9. The *ṣahn* of the mosque of al-Māridānī with the fountain after restoration (Herz 1907:154, ill. 169).
10. Mamlūk revival mansion behind the Rifāʿī mosque. Modern photo.
11. The façade of the future Coptic Museum. Design by Steyrer. Signed by Herz. 30 March 1913. Archives of the Supreme Council of Antiquities.



Fig. 1.

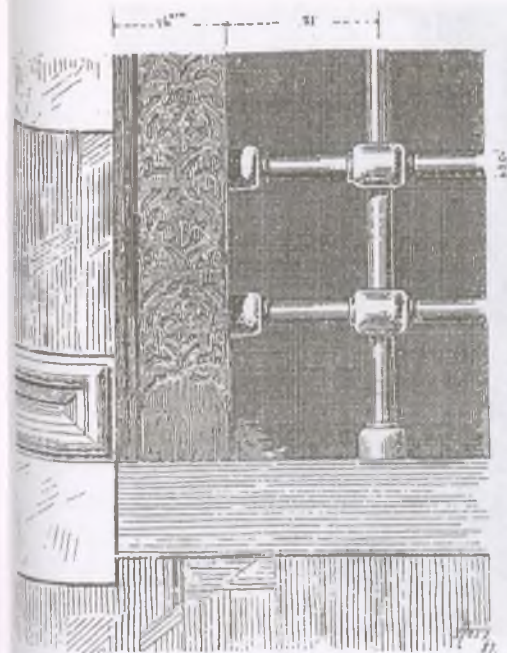


Fig. 2.

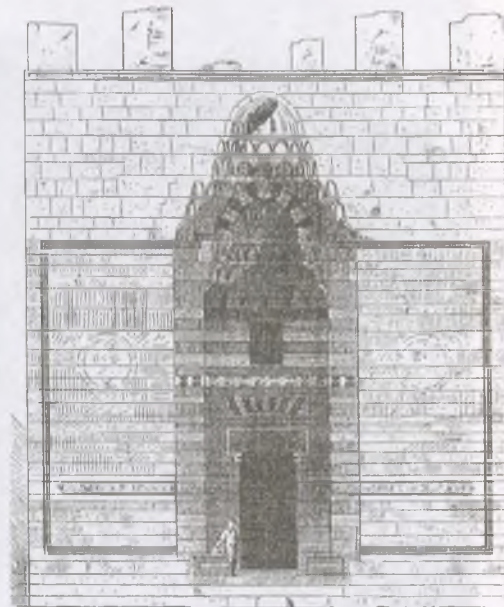


Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

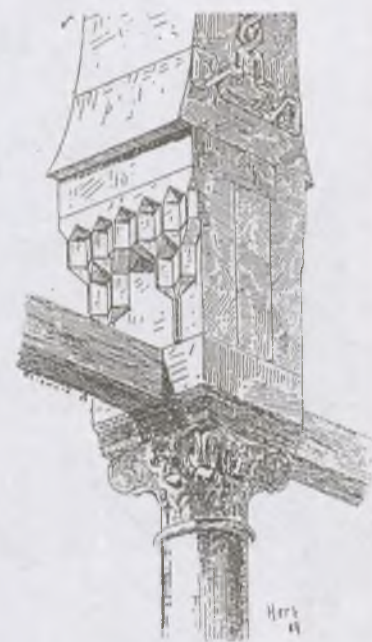


Fig. 5.



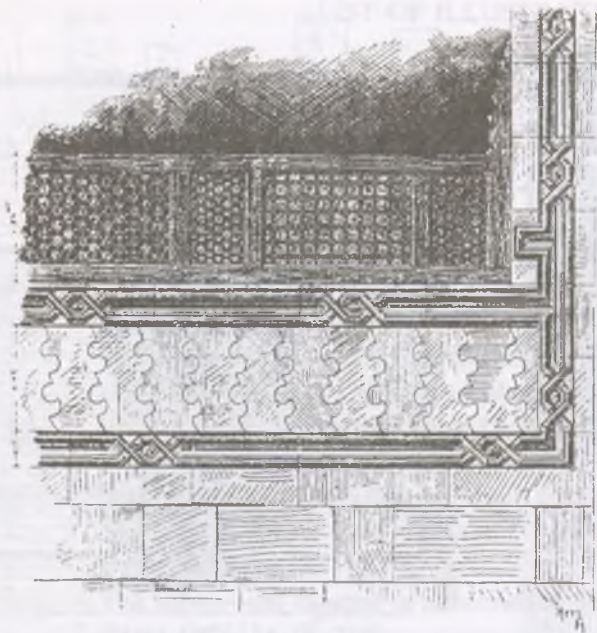


Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.





Fig. 10.

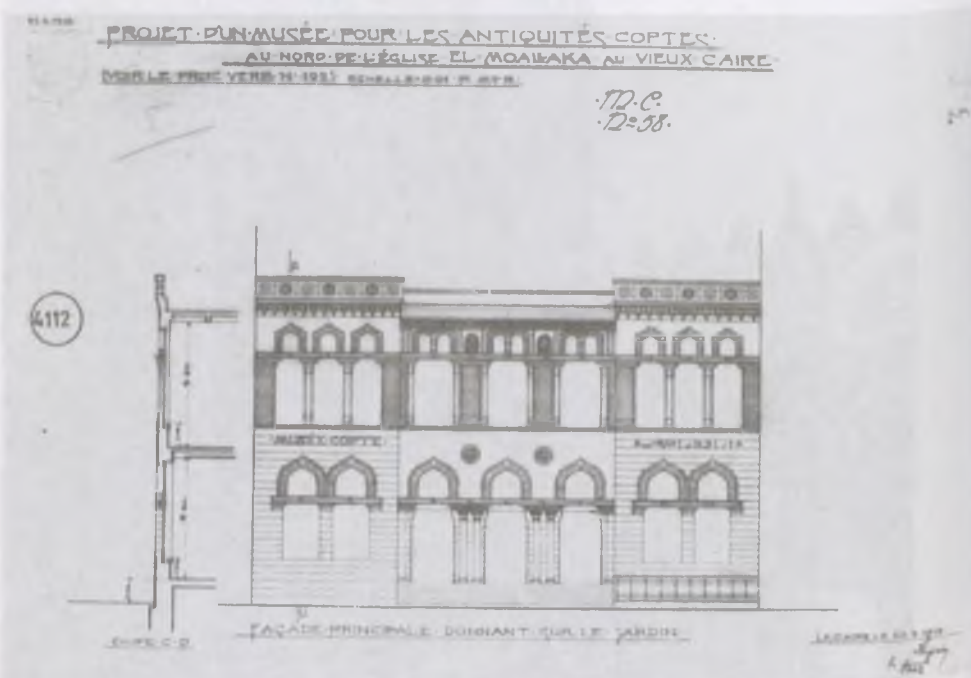


Fig. 11.

IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER:  
THE AESTHETIC (IN)SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECTURE  
IN ARABIC GEOGRAPHY, AH 250-400

Lutz Richter-Bernburg

University of Tübingen

*Floscula in amoris  
naticium, AD 2002*

During the past fifty years, geographical literature in 'classical' Arabic has been repeatedly investigated and deeply probed from diverse points of view, not least from those of cultural studies and the study of *mentalités*<sup>1</sup>. However, to the best of my knowledge, the examined authors' narrative representation of architecture, or differently put, their appropriation of the built environment, has not been a focus of scholarly attention; only in passing has al-Muqaddasī's family background been cited as having imbued him with architectural sensibility (A. Miquel, "al-Muqaddasī", *EI* VII, 492b-493b). In particular, the question of whether or not geographers of the caliphal and medieval periods shared a culturally mediated common vision of architecture *qua* architecture still awaits discussion. This paper, intended as a brief first introduction to the subject, will concentrate on Arabic authors from the third and fourth centuries A.H. who were, whether as travellers or on the basis of textual information only, concerned with 'human geography' in a broad sense<sup>2</sup>. Their testimony on architecture – pre-Islamic as well as Islamic – will be measured against the following scales: credulity vs. realism; dependence on literary tradition and authorities vs. autopsy; 'poetic' evocation vs. detailed description; committed value judgment vs. disinterested observation. Perhaps not surprisingly, it will emerge that the examined writers' appreciation of architecture was primarily informed by concern for symbolic values, rather than for artistic merit.

As may not be out of place to repeat, the focus of the present study is on representations of architecture in geographical writing of a limited period; other contemporaneous sources on attitudes to architecture, such as ephrastic poetry, will not be considered. While realizing that the impact of literary conventions was not limited

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., the following: S. Maqbul Ahmad, "Djughrāfiyā," *EI* II, 575b-587b (cf. *q.v.* in *EI* Suppl. [1936], 62a-75a [J.H. Kramers]); Khalidi 1975; Miquel 1967-88; Shboul 1979; no special reference will here be made to the respective entries in *EI* and *EI*.

<sup>2</sup> Since the scope of the present paper is restricted to the two mentioned centuries, later sources, such as Yāqūt, will, save for a few exceptions, not be quoted. It is hoped that pertinent sources of the fifth and later centuries will be treated separately in future.



to poetic genres, but extended to prose as well, I submit that a distinction between poetic evocation and expository prose, especially prose as a vehicle of the physical reality of 'geography', does have a certain heuristic value. Thus it would appear feasible to concentrate (initially) on a selection of texts which in a first approximation can be classed as geographical, without, by ignoring their diversity, identifying them as a coherent genre. Moreover, it will instantly become clear that the literary tradition in (for short) 'geography' was not substantially shaped by poetry's stock images of architecture.

Not to be ignored as a formative influence on collective mentality is the ascetic trend in early Islam as expressed, *à propos* of architecture, in the form of *hadīṭ*: "The most unprofitable thing that eateth up the wealth of a believer is building" (Ibn Sa'īd, *Ṭabaqāt* I, 181<sub>71</sub> / = VIII 120<sub>1</sub>), or even more reprovably: "A man does not incur expenses unless he is reimbursed for them with a surety with God, except for what is spent on building and impiety"<sup>3</sup>. The Koranic censure of the 'Ād's frivolous building spree was adduced in support (XXVI [aš-Šu'arā'] 128f), and the Muslims' decreasing frugality in the construction of mosques was equated with moral decline. An entire *adab* tradition elaborated on the foolishness of vainglorious building when life's transitoriness was the only permanence on earth<sup>4</sup>. It stands to reason that such an attitude easily fed into anti-Umayyad opposition – or at least could later be construed in this way – and did not necessarily disappear with the Abbasid seizure of power. However, the exigencies of sedentary civilization proved stronger; as will be seen below, the cultural and literary traditions of the pre-Islamic past, a – real or perceived – situation of architectural competition with Christianity in Bilād aš-Šām, and simply a certain naïve pride in "one's own" architectural achievements all in time contributed to the emergence of more complex attitudes. Possibly, though, an underlying pious rejection of sumptuous building delayed the 'Islamization', by including Islamic monuments, of the notion of 'wonders of architecture' so prominent in the authors to be examined; conversely, the very same notion highlights, once again, the multifariousness of the warp and weft of Abbasid civilization.

Ibn al-Faqīh, who obviously is one of the essential sources of this study anyway, also highlights, perhaps in a Ḡaḥīzian vein, Abbasid *adab* as such<sup>5</sup>. Between the sections on the Rūm and al-'Irāq he inserts, by way of digression, two dialectically

<sup>3</sup> Here quoted from Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 156<sub>21</sub> (cf. Wensinck, 1936-88: II [1943], 69b, s.v. *ḥalaf* [al-Buḥārī, *Sahīḥ*, "kitāb az-zakāt" 27 / ed. Krehl, I 364).

<sup>4</sup> See Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 156-161.

<sup>5</sup> See H. Massé, *El'* III, 760b-761b, s.v. Ibn al-Faqīh; Anas B. Khalidov, *Elr* VIII, 23b-25b, s.v. *Ebn al-Faqīh*.

opposed sections on 'praise' and 'blame' of building, resp.<sup>6</sup>. Even though the very order of the pleas and the weight of the quoted evidence appear to stack the argument against ambitious building, Ibn al-Faqīh in numerous passages throughout his book evinces such a positive attitude to monuments that he may have intended the debate on the merits and demerits of building as a concession to pious scruples, apart from its expressing pleasure in verbal sparring.

If in the examined sources the mere use of the term 'aḡā'ib in 'aḡā'ib al-bunyān suggests the notional locus of attention to architectural sights, hyperbolic utterances of bedazzlement are almost from the beginning supplemented by attempts at reducing, in soberly descriptive terms, those miraculous phenomena to intelligible reality. In the present paper I will focus on such, in a modern sense, more 'realistic' descriptions and in a further narrowing down of the subject, on the representation of one particular, identifiable set of monuments.

One of the earliest witnesses, if not the very first, to be called upon here is Ibn Ḥurradādbih who completed a revised edition of his *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik* in 272/885; however, although he may, along with the title of his geographical handbook, also have pioneered the scope of its contents, he cannot have been the first writer to comment on notable monuments. In fact, Ibn Ḥurradādbih's presentation of 'wonders of architecture' ('aḡā'ib al-bunyān) as a topic unmistakably reflects commonplace notions<sup>7</sup>, above all, the fundamental notion of *mirabilia*, which has a much wider compass than just buildings<sup>8</sup>. As for Ibn Ḥurradādbih's more specific literary background, his follower Ibn Rusta expressly attributes the passage here to be discussed to Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Ḥuwārizmī<sup>9</sup>, even though it can unfortunately not be traced to one of al-Ḥuwārizmī's extant writings.

Ibn Ḥurradādbih's section on architectural marvels is a collection of all manner of more or less imaginary information on a variety of – actually existing – pre-Islamic

<sup>6</sup> Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 151-155 and 156-161, resp.; it bears mention that Ibn al-Faqīh quotes criticism of building from the Abbasid as well as from the Umayyad period.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Ḥurradādbih, *Masālik* 159<sub>1</sub>-161<sub>11</sub>, and here esp. 161<sub>12</sub> – 162<sub>12</sub>; Ibn Ḥurradādbih was freely excerpted by later authors, such as Ibn al-Faqīh, Ibn Rusta, etc., which will not normally be noted here; however, cf. *ad locum* Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 176<sub>4,8</sub>, 134<sub>1,4</sub>; Ibn Rusta, *A'lāq* 80<sub>2,13</sub>, 83<sub>6,13</sub>.

<sup>8</sup> Cf., e.g., a set of four 'wonders of the world' on authority of 'Abdallāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Ās, Ibn Ḥurradādbih, *Masālik* 115<sub>17</sub>-116<sub>11</sub>, and immediately preceding it, 113<sub>16</sub> – 115<sub>16</sub>, the fantastic account of 'Rome' (rather Constantinople as New Rome); also, quite instructively, Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 50<sub>20</sub>-51<sub>3</sub>, 255<sub>4,16</sub>. For general reference see Meisami & Starkey 1998, I 65b-66b, s.v. 'ajā'ib literature [L. Richter-Bernburg].

<sup>9</sup> His renown as a mathematical scientist notwithstanding, it might come as a surprise to find him called upon as a reference in the present context; cf. *El'* IV, 1070a-b, s.v. al-Kh<sup>w</sup>ārazmī, Muḥammad b. Mūsā [J. Vernet].



monuments of Egypt, Syria, Byzantium, Iran<sup>10</sup> and leads up to the much-discussed report by one interpreter Sallām ('Sallām at-Tarḡumān') of his expedition, on al-Wāṭiq's order, to the Dam of Ya'ḡūḡ and Ma'ḡūḡ in the further reaches of northern Eurasia<sup>11</sup>. Following upon the opening, much embroidered-upon, list of 'wonders' and preceding the lengthy (complete?) quotation of Sallām's report, Ibn Hurradādbih, as it were, changes registers with the following quotation, from al-Huwārizmī, of an alternative, and much more down-to-earth, set of splendid monuments, remarkably again in tetradic form:

The Rūm say: "Nothing built with stone is more magnificent than the church of ar-Ruhā; nothing built with wood is more magnificent than the church of Manbiḡ since it has arches of jujube wood; nothing built with marble is more magnificent than the Qusyān of Antākya, and nothing built with arches of stone is more magnificent than the church of Hims"<sup>12</sup>.

In form, that of a finite enumeration, this alleged quotation would seem to echo older traditions such as that of the seven wonders of the world, but given the popular character of such notions and the lack of any *material* continuity with the classical heptad, this remains mere speculation. Actually, the identity of works chosen points to a Levantine Christian origin – more on that instantly – and moreover to a somewhat forced attempt to fit them into a preestablished tetradic mould, considering their inconsistent categorization either by material or by structural features. Ibn Hurradādbih, or rather his source, is quick to challenge the "Rūm's" list with his own, rival, choice of just as manifestly, albeit implicitly, pro-Sasanian slant, emphasizing material over form or function:

I say, nothing built with gypsum and baked brick is more magnificent than the Aywān Kisrā in al-Mada'in – al-Buḥturī says [3 vv.] – and the Hawarnaq of Bahrām Ġūr in al-Kūfa – the poet says [2 vv]; nothing built with stone is more accomplished and more magnificent than the Šadurwān of Tustar since it is in rock, iron columns and joints of molten lead; the grotto of Šibdāz, graven in the mountain; and the barrage of Ya'ḡūḡ and Ma'ḡūḡ.

<sup>10</sup> To wit (and here with minimal comment): the two great pyramids 'in Egypt'; the city of 'Rome' [Constantinople]; the city of Alexandria and its lighthouse; Memphis; the theatre of Apamea; Tadmur [Palmyra]; Baalbek; Lydda; Bāb Ġayrūn [the East propylaea of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus]; the 'two columns' of 'Ayn Šams [Heliopolis], 'built by Hūšang'; the citadels of Sūsa and of as-Sūs al-Aqṣā [in Southern Morocco, here of uncertain referent], both also 'built by Hūšang'.

<sup>11</sup> Koran XVIII (*al-Kahf*): 94, XXI (*al-Anbiyā*): 96; on Sallām's 'eye-witness report' see Minorsky, *Hudūd* 225.

<sup>12</sup> *Taqat*, occurring twice in the foregoing sentence, has been translated as 'arches' although conceivably it was intended to refer to arched, or vaulted, ceilings, not merely to 'arches' springing from columns or piers (cf. *tāq Kisrā* and *ḥabār tāq* for two apparently different uses of the term); jujube wood renders 'unnāb.

The wording suggests, though, that no pre-existent fixed set is rehearsed here, but that from a ready stock of remarkable monuments a certain number, of more or less 'wondrous' quality, are cited in casual sequence; not altogether surprisingly, its present form owes something to *adab* and religious education, as witness the verse quotations on the first two sights and the Koranic associations of the last in his enumeration<sup>13</sup>. The group comprises two quasi-proverbial palatial constructions of baked brick and mortar, the great *ēvān* of Ctesiphon<sup>14</sup> and another one in al-Kūfa, which was attributed to Bahrām Ġūr; the Šadurwān of Tustar, a famed hydraulic construction<sup>15</sup>; the relief-decorated *ēvān* of Tāq-e Būstān, for being cut out of live rock<sup>16</sup>; finally, the immensely strong wall which Alexander the Great reputedly had had erected against the hordes of Ya'ḡūḡ and Ma'ḡūḡ<sup>17</sup>.

By Ibn Hurradādbih's time, this barrage had receded immeasurably<sup>18</sup> from its

<sup>13</sup> Provided Ibn Rusta can be relied upon, it was Ibn Hurradādbih who added the verses to the quotation from al-Huwārizmī.

<sup>14</sup> See *Elr* III, 153a-155b, s.v. Ayvān [O. Grabar; cf. *id.*, "Iwān," *Elr* IV, 287a-289a], *ibid.*, 155b-159a, s.v. Ayvān-e Kesrā [E.J. Keall; ill.]; *ibid.* VI 446a-448b, s.v. Ctesiphon [J. Kröger].

<sup>15</sup> Cf. al-Muqaddasī, *Taqāsīm* 411<sup>14-16</sup> ('relocating' it from Tustar to al-Ahwāz, cf. 409!) and *Elr* IX, 512a-b, s.v. *Shushtar* [J.H. Kramers (C.E. Bosworth)], *Elr* III, 679a-680b (esp. 679b-680a), s.v. *Band* [X. de Planhol]. The Arabic authors cited here do not attribute the dam to the Roman emperor Valerian who was at times said to have laboured there as Šāpūr's prisoner after his notorious defeat (cf. at-Tabarī I, 827; refs. in *Elr*, *ibid.*, and Le Strange 1905:235f); rather, they credit Šāpūr II (309-379) with it.

The term *šadurwān* denotes the entire reservoir and particularly its stone facing, not the dam alone (cf. MacKenzie 1971:78, s.v. *šadurwān*; al-Huwārizmī, *Mafatih* 70; *Lugāt-nāma-yi Dihbudā* LXXII 55c-56c, s.v. *šadurwān*, and *ibid.* 56c-57b, s.v. *šadurwān-i Šāpūr*). Regrettably, Nasser Rabbat (s.v. *Šhadirwān*, *Elr* IX, 175a-176a) completely neglects this earlier usage of *šadurwān* in Arabic in favour of later secondary meanings which all relate to a type of indoor fountain; it typically includes a wall spout, from which water ripples across the carved surface of an inclined marble slab into a channel in the floor and then flows into a larger basin.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 214<sup>14</sup>-216<sup>20</sup>; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūḡ* I, 314, no. 635, and Abū Dulaf Miṣ'ar b. Muḥalhil (as well as Ibn al-Faqīh *apud* Yāqūt, *Buldān* III, 250<sup>17</sup>-253<sup>20</sup> s.v. Šibdāz. Here the scholarly discussion of the original date(s) of the reliefs and structures on site cannot be engaged; for a fairly recent survey, which again dates the *ēvān* and its decoration to Hosrow II, see Vanden Berghe & Overlaet 1993: esp. 78 (with fig. 63), 87 (with figs. 73-74), 91-94 (with figs. 78, 80), 114f (with figs. 99-101).

<sup>17</sup> See *Elr* VII 13a-19b, s.v. Darband [E. Kettenhofen], esp. 15b-16b, and cf. *Elr* IV, 127a, s.v. al-Iskan-dar [W. Montgomery Watt] and *ibid.* 341b-349b, s.v. al-Kabk [C.E. Bosworth], esp. 342a. See also *Elr* XI, 231a-234a, s.v. Yādjudj wa-Mādjudj [E. van Donzel and C. Ott], and *Elr* IV, 1236a-1237a, q.v. [A. J. Wensinck].

<sup>18</sup> See also al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih* 26<sup>3,7</sup>, and esp. Ibn Hawqal, *Arḡ* 14<sup>20</sup>-15<sup>4</sup>, who localizes them concretely 'in the north, when you have crossed what is between Kīmāk and Saqaliba', with additional first-hand reports on transport and (Hwārezmian) trade in their difficult mountain terrain by Ibrāhīm b. Albteḡīn (see *Elr* I, 272b-273a, s.v. Abū Eshāq Ebrāhīm [C.E. Bosworth]); cf. Ibn Hawqal, *Arḡ* 392<sup>151</sup>, 482<sup>27</sup>, on their trade with Rūs and Hwārezm, their lack of facial hair, etc. (cf. further *Elr* IV, 1236a-1237a, s.v.



earlier localization in the Caucasus, where it had been identified as the Sasanian fortification – often in turn attributed to Hosrow Anūšīrvān – of the Caspian Gates at Darband (and possibly of the Alan Gates too) against incursions from the northern steppe<sup>19</sup>.

Considering that the ideal common denominator of the monuments on al-Huwārizmī's list is artisanal accomplishment on the one hand and their patrons' power and wealth on the other, the underlying notion of aesthetic value appears limited – namely to technical command of the given materials – and vague enough to encompass such highly diverse works. Indeed it would appear that often the qualification of the mentioned structures as '*aḡā'ib*' was suggestive enough for the author to dispense with descriptive detail. It will emerge that factual description, beyond merely declarative utterances developed considerably during the fourth – and subsequent – centuries.

As regards the age of Ibn Hurradābih's favoured monuments, it is worth noting that however loyally he served the Abbasid dynasty he limited himself to the pre-Islamic period, but then again, not in any politically ambiguous manner. To the extent of his quotation from al-Buhturī, the palace of Ctesiphon is extolled as a quasi-mythical accomplishment without any reference to its Sasanian builders<sup>20</sup>:

And as though the Aywān were, by wondrous work-  
manship, an open hollow in the side of a tall, hard mountain  
Proud, surmounted by merlons  
which were raised on the tops of Raḏwā and Quds  
It is not known whether it is the work of men for *ḡinn*,  
who inhabited it, or the work of *ḡinn* for men.

Ibn Hurradābih does not elaborate either on sentiments of kindred spirit between pre-Islamic Iranians and self-styled South Arabs as expressed in his anonymous verse quotation à propos of Bahrām Ḡūr's palace in al-Kūfa:

Yādjudj wa-Mādjudj [A.J. Wensinck]. Whichever tribes were identified as Ya'ḡuḡ wa-Ma'ḡuḡ and wherever their barrier was localized, it is clear that during the third and fourth centuries these Koranic names were given referents in physical reality; their omission from *Hudūd al-'alam* raises the tempting question of whether increased knowledge about the inhabitants of northern central Asia had made them redundant.

<sup>19</sup> See *Elr*, as in n. 18 above, and cf. *El<sup>2</sup>* I, 835b, s.v. Bāb al-Abwab [J.M. Dunlop]; al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih* 64, only knows of an impressive arched bridge across a river there (his comparison of this structure with the bridge of Saḡa [v. infra] confirms the translation of *qanṭara* as 'bridge').

<sup>20</sup> *Dīwān* II, 1152-62, no. 470, esp. 1159f, vv. 35, 41, 43 (*matla'*: *suntu nafsi 'ammā yudannisu nafsi* ... *ḡihsi* /); Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 212, 213, is much less reticent about the Sasanian origin of the Ctesiphon palace; first he anonymously quotes Ibn Hurradābih (i.e., al-Huwārizmī) on its glorious construction of burnt brick and mortar ('gypsum'), then the same three verses by al-Buhturī, and finally 13 vv. of a frank eulogy which he heard directly from its author, Ibn al-Hāḡib.

The tribes of Qahtān built its glory,  
and their loyalty is to Bahrām Ḡūr,  
And by his Aywān al-Hawarnaq among them they learnt  
the way of their kingship, and by as-Sadīr<sup>21</sup>.

In geographical authors following upon Ibn Hurradābih, a quartet of notable buildings as he cited it from the Rūm's usage continues to be mentioned, even if in fluctuating identity. However, none of the Sasanian structures which he was not alone in promoting ever came, notwithstanding their wide renown and quality of '*aḡā'ib*', to be included in that or an alternative list of 'classics', nor was, for that matter, any other Sasanian or even Abbasid monument. 'Husraw's palace' at Ctesiphon was mentioned, in some quarters lauded, as the ancient Persians' supreme architectural achievement<sup>22</sup>. The Šādurwān of Tustar attracted only inconsequential, if general, admiration, which is all the more remarkable in view of its eminently practical usefulness<sup>23</sup>. Finally, the rock reliefs of Tāq-e Būstān may have been classed as one of the wonders of the world by some authors and even given rise to discussions of theological import about their authorship, but again, did not achieve 'canonical' status.

Admittedly, the term 'canonical' would seem inappropriate in a discussion of the period here under review, the late third and early fourth Hijra centuries. The examined texts, especially Ibn al-Faqīh, demonstrate that there simply was no canon, whether for reasons of authorial indifference<sup>24</sup> or the given groups' and writers' variant regional and other partisan allegiances, but that there existed diverse sets or simply loose enumerations of monuments. al-Huwārizmī's and Ibn Hurradābih's 'Rūm' and the two authors' rejoinder exemplify this as do the contexts in which these and other lists of notable monuments are quoted.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. verses by 'Iṣāba al-Ḡarḡarā'i (apud Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 315, 316; apud al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūḡ* I, 190, no. 397), where a similar analogy of South Arab and Sasanian glory is expressed by pairing the two palaces of al-Aywān and al-Ḡumdān and the two 'kingships' of Qahtān and Sasān. Remarkably, this memory of the pre-Islamic relations between South Arabians – either in the Yemen itself or in al-Ḥīra – and Sasanian Iran failed to have an impact on the tradition of architectural wonders in geographical writing. Here is not the place to trace the origin and dissemination of this piece of Mesopotamian Arab lore, nor its propagandistic uses, whether pro-Abbasid, Arab-regionalist (Hišām b. al-Kalbī) or *šū'ubī* (cf. *El<sup>2</sup>* II, 1096a, s.v. al-Ḡumdān [O. Löfgren], and IV, 287a-288a, s.v. Īwān [O. Grabar]).

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Rusta, *A'lāq* 86; al-Ya'qūbī, *Buldān* 321, 322; al-Istahrī, *Masālik* 86, 10; Ibn Ḥawqal *Arḡ* 244, 245; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūḡ* I, 118, no. 231; 190, no. 397; 301, nos. 609-610; 306, no. 620; al-Muqaddasī, *Taqasīm* 122, (there without any qualifiers listed by name only).

<sup>23</sup> Strangely enough, Ibn al-Faqīh does not include it in his list of marvels.

<sup>24</sup> See above, n. 8, on Ibn Hurradābih, and Ibn Rusta, *A'lāq* 80-83.



Even if Ibn al-Faqīh himself clearly holds to the notion of a, however loosely defined, standard set of man-made as well as natural ‘wonders’<sup>25</sup>, he adduces diverse particular lists which reflect regional or tribal allegiances; al-Huwārizmī–Ibn Hurradābīh’s Rhomaic quartet figures in the section on al-Ġazīra (notwithstanding the fact that three of the four structures are in aš-Šām) (*Buldān* 134<sub>1,4</sub>); in the section on Syria, however, he cites a tetrad, of two natural (Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea) and two architectural sights (‘the stones of Baalbek’ and the lighthouse of Alexandria), one of which certainly does not belong (even if Alexandria may, following classical tradition, not have been considered part of Egypt proper). Similarly, Yemenite regional pride expresses itself in a quote from Hišām b. al-Kalbī (34<sub>12,16</sub>); dismissing the architectural rivalry of Rūm and Fārs, he extols the famed constructions of Yemen, Ġumdān, Ma’rib, Ḥadramawt, etc. *A propos* of al-Kūfa, in introducing the famed palace al-Hawarnaq, Ibn al-Faqīh is again reminded of noteworthy architecture in general and cites a corresponding list, which is at least partially derived from Ibn Hurradābīh (176<sub>4,8</sub>). In the context of Qarmīsīn, and before getting to Šabdīz, he recalls (without attribution) the same writer’s praise of Ḥosrow’s palace in Ctesiphon (as above) (Ibn al-Faqīh, *Buldān* 212<sub>19</sub>).

Thus it is in the context of the account of Damascus, or more precisely upon introducing its great mosque, that Ibn al-Faqīh first presents, by way of anonymous quotation (‘they say’), a tetrad of ‘wonders of the world’ which subsequently came to overshadow alternative or rival sets – to wit: the bridge of Saḡa, the lighthouse of Alexandria, the church of ar-Ruhā, and the mosque of Damascus (*Buldān* 106<sub>31</sub>). A Levantine outlook is still very much in evidence here although the North Syrian-Mesopotamian ecclesiastical bias of the ‘Rhomaic’ list has receded; actually, at this point the question of a link between the two sets will have to be left unanswered. In any case, though, and as observed above, neither Ibn Hurradābīh’s Sasanian ‘standards’ nor his follower Ibn al-Faqīh’s plethora of monuments achieved literary recognition on a par with the Levantine-Egyptian quartet as first introduced by the latter. It solidified into a set tradition, passed on by al-Mas‘ūdī in *Tanbīh* (144<sub>1</sub>) and again by al-Muqaddasī (*Taqāsīm* 147<sub>2,7</sub>).

<sup>25</sup> See above, n. 8; on p. 50<sub>3,etc.</sub>, he praises curiosity and inquisitiveness for having provided otherwise inaccessible information on the existence of such unique wonders in the Maḡrib and in Egypt as the lighthouse of Alexandria, the ‘column’ of ‘Ayn Šams, the two pyramids, the bridge of Saḡa, the church of ar-Ruhā, the walls of Antākiya, al-Ablaq al-Fard, the Barhūt and Hārūt and ‘the horse which is in the farthest west’; this passage illustrates the heterogeneity of the author’s sources and calls for comment which will here be restricted to the monuments of the quartet below.

In al-Muqaddasī it is the regional – upper Mesopotamian – context<sup>26</sup>, as it was for the above-mentioned writers, which triggers the mention of a set of wonders, whereas in al-Mas‘ūdī’s *Tanbīh*, which is not geographically, but chronologically organized, it is the dominant and somewhat mythicized figure of Constantine’s mother Helena which lead the author on to attribute ‘the church of Hims’ and ‘the church of ar-Ruhā’ to her<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, it has to be admitted that at times, the quartet is abridged to a triad or even dyad; al-Muqaddasī or his source cannot have brooked the continued inclusion in the set of the ‘church of ar-Ruhā’ as a Christian building, claiming that it was replaced by al-Aqṣā mosque upon its construction and after its ruin by earthquake, by the mosque of Damascus – this in spite of the same al-Muqaddasī qualifying it as one of the wonders of the world elsewhere<sup>28</sup>. Regional pride, on the other hand, may have reduced the tetrad to a dyad in the quote by Ibn Hawqal *a propos* of the bridge of Saḡa that “the wonders of the world are the church of ar-Ruhā and the bridge of Saḡa”<sup>29</sup>.

As for the churches of Antioch<sup>30</sup>, Hims<sup>31</sup>, and Manbiḡ as recorded by Ibn Hur-

<sup>26</sup> al-Muqaddasī here confuses the bridge of Saḡa with another outstanding bridge which spanned the river Ḥābūr al-Hasaniyya (see note *in locum*).

<sup>27</sup> Interestingly enough, in *Muruḡ*, he still (correctly) identifies Justinian, the builder of many churches, as the patron at Edessa (II, 51, no. 753), whereas in *Tanbīh* Helena of Holy Sepulchre fame outshines everybody else (144<sub>4,7</sub>); since in either place, Helena is credited with founding the church of Emesa, the question remains open of whether al-Mas‘ūdī’s *Edessene* attribution to her is simply an oversight or the reflection of a local tradition and which may also be echoed in Ibn al-Faqīh’s report about a miraculously beautiful statue of Helena there (*Buldān* 134<sub>4,8</sub>); cf. Segal 1970:41, 51, 68; Drijvers 1992: Index, 214b, s.v. Edessa; van Esbroeck 1999.

<sup>28</sup> al-Muqaddasī, *Taqāsīm* 141<sub>171</sub>, in a passage listing the cities of Diyār Mudar.

<sup>29</sup> *Ard’* 181<sub>5,7</sub>; cf. Ibn Hawqal’s *Vorlage* al-Istahri, *Masālik* 62<sub>111</sub>, who does not have the quotation of the proverbial saying, and the following authors: al-Mas‘ūdī, *Tanbīh* 144<sub>9</sub>; al-Muqaddasī, *Taqāsīm* 147<sub>2m</sub>.

<sup>30</sup> al-Mas‘ūdī, *Muruḡ* II, 339, no. 1292, praises the church of St. Mary, a circular structure, as one of the wonders of the world for its construction and elevation and specifically mentions its marble columns, but omits its ancient name; in particular it is uncertain, or rather, implausible that it was identical with the afore-mentioned “Qusyān” (unless a tradition originally adhering to a separate location had been transferred to a different, similarly holy place after the loss of its original locale, e.g., to destruction of the building in question). Under the form *Qusyān*, ultimately derived from the Roman name *Cassianus*, the Syriac-Arabic tradition referred to an Antiochene citizen of that name whose son had, according to legend, been resuscitated by St. Peter and in whose residence St. Peter had built the first church of the city (cf. Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* II, col. 3678, s.v. *qsyn*).

At an unknown date in the decade of 440/1048 Ibn Butlān visited Antioch and described the city to his friend Hilāl b. al-Muhassin aš-Šābī, including the church of Qusyān in the city center; in Ibn Butlān’s telling, Qusyān had been a king whose house was turned into a sanctuary (*ḥaykal*) of 100 by 80 paces. In it was a hypostyle church; the porticoes which surrounded it accommodated judges sitting in court as well as study groups in grammar and vocabulary. At one of its gates was a water clock which indicated, without interruption, the twelve diurnal and twelve nocturnal hours, resp.; it is this clepsydra (*fiḡān li-s-sā’āt*)



radābīh, their subsequent destiny in the sources underlines the fact of the fluidity of sets of architectural monuments; the former two structures continued to be mentioned as 'wonders' although no longer included in the tetrad, whereas 'the church of Manbiḡ' either was passed in silence or may have been subsumed under unnamed 'impressive' monuments of the Rūm in that city<sup>32</sup>. As regards all these Christian buildings, the question of textual tradition vs. authorial autopsy is particularly apposite; even al-Mas'ūdī, who appears to write about Antioch from experience – as does Ibn Ḥawqal about Manbiḡ –, draws on extant texts for his summary reference to Edessa<sup>33</sup>. Yet as seen above, it was the 'church of ar-Ruhā' which alone survived as part of the modified quartet of architectural wonders – possibly more in tribute to its enraptured ecphrasis in the Syriac tradition than to actual experiences of its beauty<sup>34</sup>. Towards the last quarter of the fourth/tenth century, though, al-Muqaddasī may again have visited the place, provided his concrete reference to mosaic-encrusted arches permits of such a conclusion<sup>35</sup>.

*Aggiornamento* of al-Ḥuwārizmī-Ibn Ḥurradābīh's Rhomaic quartet had a structure of practical utility included, as Ibn Ḥurradābīh had done in his 'Sasanian set', and in addition a prominent Muslim building. Yet, the persisting regional focus on the south-eastern Mediterranean, excluding even the holy cities of the Ḥiḡāz, not to mention the heartland of the Abbasid caliphate or formerly Sasanian provinces further East, highlights the *literary* superiority of a commonplace to information not thus established but instead based on first-hand experience either by widely travelled informants or the authors themselves.

which Ibn Butlān qualifies as a wonder of the world (Yāqūt, *Buldān* I, 267<sup>166c</sup>).

Unless al-Mas'ūdī's church of St. Mary had fallen into ruin by the time of Ibn Butlān's visit – provided al-Mas'ūdī can claim credence here at all – it would appear difficult to explain Ibn Butlān's silence on such a prominent structure; the question will have to remain open for now (cf. Downey 1961: 481, 531 on the church of Cassianus [based on John Malalas], and Index, 742a, on the Justinianic church of St. Mary, which would seem to be intended by al-Mas'ūdī's comments here; cf. Whitby 2000:283f, n. 76).

<sup>31</sup> al-Iṣṭahrī, *Masālik* 61<sup>7ff</sup>; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ard*<sup>2</sup> 176<sup>15f</sup>; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūḡ* II, 41, no. 735; id., *Tanbih* 144<sup>4ff</sup> (noting its 'four pillars').

<sup>32</sup> al-Iṣṭahrī, *Masālik* 62<sup>11f</sup>, barely mentions Manbiḡ by name, whereas Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ard*<sup>2</sup> 180<sup>21nc</sup>, writing from autopsy, appears largely uninterested in its non-Islamic monuments. It would seem tempting to infer from the prominence given to Manbiḡ in Ibn Ḥurradābīh's 'Rhomaic quartet' its provenance, i.e., to attribute it to an author with local ties. Sources on its ecclesiastical buildings are scant and extremely vague (see *RAC*, s.v. Hierapolis [H.J.W. Drijvers]).

<sup>33</sup> al-Iṣṭahrī's wording suggests textual dependence, while Ibn Ḥawqal's addition of another qualifier, 'of wonderful craftsmanship', to his *Vorlage*'s 'impressive' may simply derive from one-upmanship.

<sup>34</sup> Segal 1970:189, and *RAC* IV, s.v. Edessa, esp. cols. 578-80 (refs.!) [Kirsten].

<sup>35</sup> Leaving open the question of whether *āzāḡ* means 'arches' as here translated or 'vaulting'.

Before, however, passing on to descriptions, or representations, of architecture outside the received quartet, a few remarks on the four component structures would not seem out of place. As noted above with respect to Ibn Ḥurradābīh's version of al-Ḥuwārizmī's list, they were prized, rather than for their aesthetic quality in imparting form to solid and spatial volumes, for the tangible, material beauty of superior craftsmanship and for the power and wealth of their patrons.

The bridge of Saḡa (Gk. Σίγγα), spanning a western tributary of the upper Euphrates (between Sumaysāt and Qal'at ar-Rūm) and thus called for the river as well as for a nearby town<sup>36</sup>, must have become known during the Muslim-Byzantine frontier wars of the third and fourth/ninth and tenth centuries<sup>37</sup>. Its single arch of dressed stone, of a span of (c.) 31 m, acquired, as seen above, proverbial fame in the Arabic tradition. The position of the 'church of ar-Ruhā' on the set, commented on before, became ever more tenuous and 'nominal', although its fame had originally also derived from a recorded technical feature, namely its lapidary work. As noted above, with the exception of al-Muqaddasī neither al-Mas'ūdī nor any other author after Ibn Ḥurradābīh provide descriptive details; the conclusion is hard to resist that their information had long since become divorced from a physical referent<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> In Greek, the hydronym Σίγγα was derived from the toponym Σίγγα (Tischler 1977:136, q.v.).

<sup>37</sup> *Ep*<sup>2</sup> I, 761b [1957], s.v. 'awāṣim [M. Canard]; ibid. IX, 11b, s.v. Sandja [C. E. Bosworth]; Yāqūt's witness (by no means the earliest, cf., besides Ibn al-Faqīh, al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih* 64<sup>26</sup>, al-Iṣṭahrī, *Masālik* 62<sup>11f</sup>, and Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ard*<sup>2</sup> 181.) apparently dates from the border warfare between Byzantines and Hamdānids during the fourth/tenth century since it relates to the mention of Saḡa and Dulūk *à propos* of a campaign (in 342/953) by Sayf ad-Dawla in a verse (no. 19) by al-Mutanabbī (*matla*: *layālīya ba'da z-zā'inīna šukulū \* ... ṭawilū /*). The modern name of the river, Gök Su, plausibly is reflected by *an-nahr al-azraq* in Abū l-Fidā' (here quoted after Reinaud's trl., 1848, I, xvi). The identification of this from among several Euphratian tributaries in the area with the classical Singas is based on the *Tabula Peutingeriana* (XI, 3; cf. Wagner 1984: B S 1,2) and the localization of the famed single-arch bridge in Yāqūt's source al-Adībī between Kaysūm and Ḥiṣn Mansūr (here, the question presents itself of the precise textual relationship between the Arabic tradition of the bridge of Saḡa and the attribution of a magnificent single-arch (*μονοκέρατον*) bridge to the Byzantine frontier hero Digenes Akrites in his epic (see Grégoire 1931: esp. 504f; Trapp 1971:66f, 326, vv. E 1660, 1649; 390a); for a modern map including the Roman road system see Wagner 2000:12, fig. 14, and for illustrations of the bridge see Wagner 1985:31, fig. 50, and 54ff, also Dörner & Naumann 1939:74f, pls. 7, 21-22 (cf. Honigmann, *RE* III A,1 [1927], 231-234, s.vv. Σίγγα and Σίγγα, resp.; Sinclair 1990:172ff, 176f). Le Strange 1905:123f [n.!] wrongly identified the Severan bridge over the Chabinas (Cendere/Bölam Suyu) as 'the bridge of Saḡa' (cf. Grégoire, as above); on this bridge see Kissel & Stoll 2000: esp. 116f, 124f (refs.), 118 (fig. 13); Sinclair 1990:58f, 61, pl. 28.

<sup>38</sup> The contested position of ar-Ruhā between a newly expansionist (or 'revisionist') Byzantine empire and the increasingly fragmented caliphate during the fourth/tenth century has to be kept in mind here too (*Ep*<sup>2</sup> VIII, 589a-591a, s.v. al-Ruhā [E. Honigmann (C.E. Bosworth)]).



The third pre-Islamic monument on the quadruple set is the lighthouse of Alexandria, incidently the only one of the classical wonders of the world to be included<sup>39</sup>; not even the pyramids of Gizah, for all their overpowering presence on the ground and in collective memory, were given the same recognition. Both sites attracted, as befitted their status as 'wonders' (*aḡā'ib*), all manner of legendary reports on their origin and purpose<sup>40</sup>. On the other hand, the progression of authors from Ibn Hurradāḡbih to al-Muqaddasī shows a substantial, although by no means linear, increase in factual information on the Alexandrian Pharos (*manāra*) as well; remarkably, though, most of it was still not based on autopsy.

According to legends first represented in the Arabic geographical tradition by Ibn Hurradāḡbih, the foundation of the lighthouse rested on a glass crab under water<sup>41</sup> – variants name a crab of marble or four glass crabs<sup>42</sup> – and the top had carried a magical mirror which permitted of a view clear across the sea to Constantinople and thus provided security against any seaborne attack<sup>43</sup>.

While the imaginary mirror may, so to speak, dimly reflect the actual lighting devices originally installed atop the Pharos, the assertion of its foundations resting on one or several glass crabs appears quite fantastic at first sight. However, it may have been a contamination, imaginary indeed, of vague and possibly misunderstood evocations of the structure's deep-reaching foundations (down to below sea level), its figurative comparison to a 'column', and the factual observation that some of Alexandria's obelisks rested on copper 'crabs'<sup>44</sup>. Yāqūt, following his predecessor Ibn Haw-

<sup>39</sup> For recent accounts of the pharos see Grimm 1998:43-46, figs. 43-44, 163, n. 36 [refs.], Pfrommer 1999:11-13, figs. 1<sub>8,11</sub>; cf. Bernand 1997 [including an implicit critique of Empereur & Grimal 1997]; Ekschmitt 1991:188-97, figs. 52-55 and pls. 46-49, and p. 275 (refs.); Daumas & Mathieu 1987. Still to be consulted: Thiersch 1909.

<sup>40</sup> See here and for the following Ibn Hurradāḡbih, *Masālik* 159f (on the pyramids), 114<sub>131c</sub>, 115<sub>131</sub>, 160<sub>131</sub> (on the lighthouse) and Ibn Rusta, *A'laq* 80<sub>6</sub>, who quotes Ibn Hurradāḡbih selectively on the lighthouse only (cf. *ibid.*, 118<sub>7,11</sub>).

<sup>41</sup> 'Crab' here made to represent *saratān*; for a detailed discussion of these 'crabs' on the basis of archeological as well as late classical and medieval Latin textual evidence (beginning with Gregory of Tours) see Thiersch 1909, esp. 35, 54 [ill's.], 65/68 and 247.

<sup>42</sup> In addition to Ibn Hurradāḡbih and Ibn Rusta, as in note 41, see al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūḡ* II, 104-8, nos. 836-41; in contrast, neither does al-Ya'qūbī mention a crab (*al-Buldān* 338<sub>101</sub>), nor do al-Mas'ūdī in *Tanbih* 47<sub>6</sub>-48, Ibn Hawqal, *Ard* 215<sub>1021</sub>, and al-Muqaddasī, *Taqāsīm* 211<sub>7,17</sub>.

<sup>43</sup> Other stories, which need not concern us here, narrate various ruses employed by the evil Rūm against the defensive appliances of the lighthouse; see al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūḡ* II, 105f, no. 838; al-Muqaddasī (as in preceding note), Yāqūt, *Buldān* I, 261<sub>131c</sub>.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Hawqal, *Ard* 215<sub>8f</sub> (cf. Wiet's trl., 1965:150f); implausibly, Thiersch attempted a rebuttal of Butler's (1902:376-78) similar hypothesis on the origin of the account of the Pharos's 'crabs', siding with

qal in criticizing the tall stories in circulation about Alexandria and the lighthouse, mentions a – *post factum* – rationalization of the glass foundation: supposedly glass had been the only material to have passed a year-long test of resistance to the corrosive effect of saltwater (*Buldān* I, 261<sub>7</sub>-264<sub>10</sub>).

A feature which attracted attention and fired the imagination was the interior ramp which could be ascended on horseback, even two abreast; to Ibn Hurradāḡbih's two informants, this recalled the 'minaret of Sāmarrā'. Plausibly the same feature led to the assertion of the existence of 366 (Ibn Hurradāḡbih) or 300 rooms (al-Muqaddasī) in it. Ibn Rusta, while deriving the 'crab' from Ibn Hurradāḡbih, also offers possibly realistic details. Even in relating the suspiciously round figure of 300 to the number of 'steps', each with a window to look out over the sea, he may have hinted at a spirally ascending row of windows, unlike the horizontally arranged windows of the lighthouse of La Coruña<sup>45</sup> or those, admittedly a formulaic abbreviation, on the vase of Begram (Bernand 1966:pl. XXX). Ibn Rusta in turn undermines the credibility of his own account by repeating the figure of 300 cubits for the height of the building, royal cubits at that, which he adds, equals 450 handy cubits<sup>46</sup>. Ibn Hawqal, while assessing the original elevation at more than 300 – unspecified – cubits, mentions the collapse of a large canopy (*qubba 'azīma*) from its top, thus somewhat relativizing the quoted figure. al-Ya'qūbī had earlier, and as the first author to do so, proffered the figure of 175 – unspecified – cubits; in either of the two most probable cases, the 'handy' or the 'royal' cubit, the figure is not inherently impossible (*Buldān* 338<sub>10</sub>).

al-Mas'ūdī's two works, separated by roughly a dozen years (332/944 – 344/956), mark an interesting transition from a collection of legends to a largely realistic account. In *Murūḡ*, he follows the tradition which had Alexander erect the pharos as an enormous watchtower of an original elevation of 1000 cubits; it bore three likenesses of copper, one turning with the sun to indicate its position, the second sounding alarm against naval invaders, and the third striking the hours<sup>47</sup>. He also retails that in order to incapacitate the alarm system of the pharos, the Byzantine emperor had garnered al-Walīd's permission to have the structure demolished in search of a gold

the tradition instead and relating it to actual structural features of the lighthouse (see above, n. 42).

<sup>45</sup> Ekschmitt 1991:pl. 48; here and *infra* see Thiersch 1902: esp. 52-56, 65-67, for a more 'optimistic' analysis of the sources' diverse figures and measurements.

<sup>46</sup> The proportion here indicated does not agree with what W. Hinz derived from his sources, viz. 3:4 instead of Ibn Rusta's 2:3; Hinz bases the royal cubit, of around 66.5cm, on the handy cubit which he identifies as the legal cubit of 49.8cm, while recognizing, at the same time, the fundamental importance of the 'black cubit' of 54.4cm as determined by the Nilometer (*EP* II, 231b-232b, s.v. *dhirā'*).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Thiersch 1902: esp. 55, and 70, no. 12.



treasure supposedly hidden in its foundations; it was only the Alexandrians' protest which stopped the destruction at half the original height.

In *Tanbih*, al-Mas'ūdī omits much of the fantastic material from his earlier book while still rehearsing the story of the magical mirror and fixing the original elevation at the symbolic figure of 400 cubits; even his measure of 230 cubits for the extant portion may not be above suspicion, considering that al-Ya'qūbī, whose account is otherwise filled with legendary detail, has the more modest figure of 175 cubits<sup>48</sup>. Other than that, al-Mas'ūdī's account in *Tanbih* provides substantive realistic detail, beginning with the attribution of the pharos' construction to one of the Ptolemies. His observation on the structural divisions of the pharos is of concrete value; the bottom, square, section, of white stone, is said to amount to between one third and one half of the entire elevation, around 110 cubits, whereas the following, octagonal, section is described as consisting of baked brick and gypsum and measuring about sixty cubits up; the open terrace surrounding it attracts al-Mas'ūdī's, or his source's, attention<sup>49</sup>. The third, cylindrical, section was crowned by a domed canopy of wood which al-Mas'ūdī reports, Ahmad Ibn Ṭulūn had, together with the upper part of this section, erected in repair of previous damage. Ascent to the lighthouse was by way of an internal stairless ramp; in all likelihood it could be mounted on horseback, as witness the above-mentioned Roman lighthouse of La Coruña and the minaret of the Almohad mosque of Seville, the so-called Giralda, whose internal ascent is also by an inclined ramp<sup>50</sup>.

al-Mas'ūdī further records, on the East front of the structure, a Greek inscription, inlaid with lead and the letters of which measured – height by width – one cubit by one span. At ground level, the structure measured roughly 100 cubits along one side; earthquake damage at the western corner had been repaired on the order of Humārawayh Ibn Ahmad Ibn Ṭulūn. Writing in al-Fustāṭ, al-Mas'ūdī concludes his account of the pharos with the report of an earthquake on Saturday, 18 Ramaḍān 344 / 5 January 956, which caused the collapse of thirty cubits from the top.

al-Mas'ūdī's description of the Alexandrian lighthouse in *Tanbih* deserves close examination for a variety of reasons. As indicated above, it represents a marked increase in realism and factual detail as compared with his earlier evocation of this wondrous structure. His wording, though, does not irrefutably imply autopsy on his part.

<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, considering that 'Abdallāṭif al-Baghdādī quotes a figure of 233 cubits (*Ifāda* fol. 33r-1 / pp. 133, 135), the question may bear further examination, especially allowing for the possibility of a difference of unit between 175 royal and 230 handy cubits and the collapse of the top as recorded in *Tanbih*.

<sup>49</sup> (*wa*)*hawālīhi fadā'un yadūru fīhi l-insān* (p. 48): it is surrounded by open space on which one can walk around (the tower?).

<sup>50</sup> See Thiersch 1902: esp. 54b and 259c (ind.), s.v. Sevilla, Giralda.

Apart from the conventional qualification of the structure as a wonder, or as one of the four known wonders of the world, he does not overtly express admiration or fascination; his positive attitude can only be inferred from the circumstantiality of his description<sup>51</sup>.

Concerning the Umayyad mosque of Damascus<sup>52</sup>, a modern reader's expectation of particular interest in it *qua* Muslim architecture among geographical authors might be disappointed at first sight, given the wide variation in coverage. However, such expectations would miss an essential point, touched on above, namely the symbolic complexity of Muslim architecture, religious and secular, in the eyes of a Muslim beholder; his perceptions of it were limited by various constraints, not least among them his religio-political attitude towards the original patrons. The Umayyad mosque of Damascus is an obvious case in point; its status as one of the recognized wonders of the world did not automatically earn it detailed descriptions, as witness, once again, al-Mas'ūdī. In *Murūğ* (II 406f, no. 1417, and III 365f, nos. 2115-16), he mostly reproduces some legendary traditions about the site's pre-Islamic history, including the discovery of a Greek foundation inscription of, fittingly, Solomonic origin<sup>53</sup>, although he does credit al-Walīd with skilful work<sup>54</sup> and records that his inscription in gold on lapis lazuli was still extant at the time of writing in 332/943; he also mentions the four corner towers (*sawāmi'*) of the Roman temenos as being left unchanged by al-Walīd and continuing to serve as the mosque's minarets to his own day. In spite of his overall appreciation of the building, it does not seem to have fired his imagination in the same way as some other monuments did<sup>55</sup>.

In Ibn al-Faqīh's treatment of the Damascus mosque, the tradition of pious scruples against sumptuous building, combined with a certain anti-Umayyad trend, is reflected along with his fascination with its quality as a 'wonder' (*Buldān* 106-108<sub>23</sub>); according to a saying he quotes, one of its marvels is that for an entire year, a visitor would every day discover something new to admire. After paying tribute also to its patron al-Walīd as a great builder and enlarger of mosques – not neglecting the massive sums involved – he extensively quotes Ka'b al-Aḥbār on the, more or less legendary, history of the building. In a similar vein, he next dwells on an anecdote which features Abbasid society's favourite 'anti-Umayyad' Umayyad, 'Umar b. 'Abd-

<sup>51</sup> For a collection, with translation, of Arabic evocations and descriptions of the pharos see Asín Palacios 1933.

<sup>52</sup> For a recent monographic treatment of the much-discussed monument see Flood 2000.

<sup>53</sup> On Solomon in Islamic lore see *EP* IX, 822b-824b, s.v. Sulaymān b. Dāwūd [J. Walker (P. Fenton)].

<sup>54</sup> *ahkama binā'abu* (II 406<sub>10</sub> - 407<sub>1</sub>).

<sup>55</sup> To be discussed in a continuation of the present study.



al'azīz. Predictably he is represented as opposed to the mosque's lavish decoration of marble and mosaic and appointments, such as candelabra chains, and set on stripping them and selling them off to the treasury's profit. What finally sways him, is not so much the Damascenes' opposition as the awe of Muslim power it strikes in the hearts of visiting Byzantine envoys. Regardless of the historical authenticity of this report in the strict sense, it does reflect an apparently widespread perception of architecture as an effective means of propaganda, temporal and spiritual; al-Muqaddasī will be seen to share this view.

It is only in the concluding few lines of his long account of the mosque that Ibn al-Faqīh returns to artistic features; he summarily mentions marble and mosaic, teakwood roofing, lapis lazuli and gold, and the incrustation of the *mihrab* with gemstones and other precious lapidary work. Thus it is surface values which attract his attention, not the disposition of solids and voids, volumes and spaces, i.e., architecture as such.

Other writers, such as al-Ya'qūbī and Ibn Hawqal, give the Damascus mosque notes of approval, both lauding its unsurpassed beauty in Muslim architecture (al-Ya'qūbī, *Buldān* 326<sub>2,4</sub>; Ibn Hawqal, *Ard*<sup>2</sup> 174<sub>18</sub>-175<sub>11</sub>). However, the former does not add any concrete description, and the latter attributes its walls and dome to pre-Islamic pagans whose temple it had been. It would appear possible to read this – partially erroneous – observation as a compliment of sorts as it implies a favourable comparison of the dome with the outer, Roman, walls. What Ibn Hawqal credits al-Walīd with and what catches his fancy is the visual attraction of its rich and colourful decoration; in particular he names the variegated marble of its wall revetment, the particoloured marble of its columns, its marble pavement, the gilt and jewel-incrusted *mihrab* and the gilt inscription running around the four sides of the prayer hall. Clearly, and by now, not surprisingly, Ibn Hawqal's attention is primarily drawn to the surface properties of the edifice rather than to its spatial qualities. al-Muqaddasī's description of the Umayyad mosque, which will be examined instantly, also emphasizes decorative features, thus giving rise to the question of the existence of an a-tectonic perception of architecture at the time.

At this point, however, it may not be useless to trace the interplay of religious and aesthetic considerations as it affected representations of sacred architecture as such in geographical literature. Ibn Rusta's account of the *ḥaramayn* in the Ḥiǧāz by its very detail attests his veneration of them, although on the one hand, he heavily relies on al-Azraqī, whose text he must have considered more authoritative than what he himself could have produced, and on the other, the tone of his description is notably sober (29<sub>16</sub>-53<sub>13</sub> and 64<sub>14</sub>-78<sub>6</sub>, resp.). Emphasis derives from content, from the sacredness of the locations and from Ibn Rusta's as the eyewitness and final redactor's meticulous recording of detail; he duly notes the successive stages of a given building's construction, its layout, measurements, elevation, structural components, and materi-

als. Especially the latter, which, of course, decisively affect the visual and tactile impression of architecture, capture his imagination; teakwood, multicoloured marble, gilding, the Ka'ba's windows of translucent Yemenī marble, etc., are all duly mentioned in their proper place, i.e., in the context of the spatial and solid elements they constitute and decorate, respectively. Nor does Ibn Rusta neglect the inscriptions which evidently impart particular meaning to the structures thus distinguished. In sum, he takes his reader on a virtual tour of the two sanctuaries, as it were, into a verbal motion picture.

A comparison of Ibn Rusta's reverent and detail-conscious account of the Ḥiǧāzī *ḥaramayn* – even if he substantially lifted it from al-Azraqī and possibly Ibn Zabāla – with the summary and superficial remarks he has to spare for other prominent sights such as Baghdad or his own home town, Isfahan, demonstrates that the primary focus of his interest was not architecture as such, but its symbolic, preferably religious significance. His presentation of Isfahan (pp. 160-163), albeit informed by a native inhabitant's pride, is short on concrete architectural data and includes, of individual structures, merely the city walls and a semi-mythical stronghold of antediluvial age by the name of as-Sārūq; he does not even deem the Friday mosque worthy of mention. What elicits his interest are the glories and wonders – *'aǧā'ib* – of Isfahan's past and of architecture, measurements and figures, such as the extent of the city's walled area, the length of its walls and the zodiacal alignment of its gates. Evidently, such data reflected a city's importance and defensive strength, not least from the point of view of astrology. As for Baghdad, Ibn Rusta, while giving the city as such short shrift, acknowledges the existence of a Friday mosque<sup>56</sup>. His comments focus on materials – burnt brick and gypsum, with teakwood columns and roofing – and on a costly feature of decoration, lapis lazuli paint, rather than on specifically architectural features, such as layout and dimensions, which are passed in silence. Ibn Rusta's point of view appears basically to agree with the, so-to-speak two-dimensional, perception of architecture commented on above.

al-Muqaddasī's account of the Umayyad mosque of Damascus challenges the conclusions intimated above; even though he predictably evinces enthusiasm for decorative detail, he by no means neglects structural features (157<sub>8</sub>-159<sub>10</sub>). He readily admires the mosque's sumptuous beauty, which in his view surpasses all other Muslim architecture, but records that as a young man, he had reservations about al-Walīd's enormous expenditure on this ostentatious building; in his opinion, he should rather have spent those revenues on utilitarian constructions such as roads, water reservoirs and fortifications. It was his paternal uncle who enlightened him on the propaganda effect of magnificent religious architecture, pointing out the potentially seductive effect on

<sup>56</sup> *A'lāq* 108, 109, the last three lines referring to the Friday mosque.



Muslims of such Christian monuments as the Holy Sepulchre and the churches of Ludd and ar-Ruhā (*sic*, actually in al-Ġazīra!)<sup>57</sup>.

al-Muqaddasī's outline of the ground plan and elevation of the mosque indicates its overall disposition, but without measurements or anything approaching the rich detail and methodical progression in Ibn Rusta's account of the *Haramayn*; an ash-lared enclosure wall with four gateways in specified locations surrounds a porticoed courtyard and a prayer hall in three wide aisles. The prayerhall is surmounted by a dome in front of the *mihṛāb* and supported by colonnades; colonnades, which are surmounted by 'windows', support the porticoes of the courtyard and of the two major gateways; a recent minaret adjoins the north gate. In spite of the attention al-Muqaddasī pays to the two major gateways, noting, e.g., the arrangement of their colonnades in, respectively, longitudinal and transversal axes, he is much more taken with valuable and polychrome materials and correspondingly lavish decoration, such as smooth black columns in the prayer hall, white marble columns in the courtyard, marble pavement, marble revetment, gold mosaic, gilt capitals, cornelian and turquoise incrustations of the major *mihṛāb*, the precious metal sheathing of door leaves and the lead sheets on the roofs. However, he waxes positively enthusiastic about the intricacy and well-nigh inexhaustible variety of patterns produced by an artful display of veined marble in the wall revetment. Clearly, such play of geometry fascinates him even more than the depiction of diverse species of trees and, in his words, 'metropolitan cities', in the mosaics of coloured glass, including gold, although their subtleness and fine craftsmanship do elicit his praise. On the other hand, his utilitarian sense, as noted above in his criticism of al-Walīd, also expresses itself in the approving comments he makes on the ample water supply and the marble appointments of the mosque lavatories.

As alluded to above, al-Muqaddasī's descent from a family of master builders has been identified as the initial impulse for him to develop the remarkable architectural sensibility evinced in his work. However, textual evidence would seem to caution against sweeping generalizations. His interest in architecture *qua* architecture, as giving shape and proportion to spaces and volumes, definitely cedes it to a focus on craftsmanship and technique, such as lapidary work or the heating systems of baths; on materials, from mudbrick to marble; and on the visual and tactile qualities of surfaces (e.g., 162<sub>11</sub>-163<sub>13</sub>, 165<sub>4-11</sub>, 356<sub>9ff</sub>, 440<sub>3-13, 13-18</sub>, 444<sub>11f</sub>). Measurements are treated in

<sup>57</sup> In his brief mention of Ludd (*Taqāsīm* 176<sub>19f</sub>, at the appropriate place in the section on Palestine), he simply qualifies the church as 'wondrous', but *à propos* of the Friday mosque at ar-Ramla, he specifically refers to the columns of the church of Ludd as desirable for the new mosque (165<sub>7-11</sub>; for al-Muqaddasī's comments on ar-Ruhā see above). In the present context, the historical correctness of the interpretation here attributed by al-Muqaddasī to his uncles is not at issue, in particular his view of the competition between the Holy Sepulchre and the Dome of the Rock.

a cavalier fashion, as witness those of the Jerusalem mosque esplanade, later known as *haram*. Moreover, the number of outstanding structures he deems worthy of closer examination is quite limited. The lighthouse of Alexandria is fixed in its literarily mediated status as a 'wonder' and thus exempt from inspection; the ruins of Persepolis, albeit by their very name, 'Solomon's playing field' (444<sub>6-11</sub>), also classed as a 'wonder', are more concretely anchored in experience. The author positively, if summarily, takes note of their stairways, sculptures and halls and compares them to the ruins of Syria; of more import, though, are a miraculous spring, which is said to cure the aftereffects of wine, and the panoramic view from the palace terrace, of nothing within eyeshot but farms and fields.

The emergence of a quartet of architectural wonders of the world in fourth/tenth century Arabic geographical writing illustrates the mutual integration of the pre-Islamic and Islamic civilizations of the Levant in the cultural self-image of a certain class of *literati* and their audiences; the wide variation in function, period, style of the privileged structures – whether comprising the tetrad or elsewhere mentioned – documents a correspondingly broad and vague perception of aesthetic values in architecture. As far as the texts here examined evince a descriptive interest in ambitious building at all – lingering pious reservations as well as hazy wonderment have to be accounted for – it tends to be directed to feats of engineering, value of materials, and the properties of decorated surfaces. al-Muqaddasī's accounts of the Umayyad mosque of Damascus as well as of the Friday mosque at Jerusalem (i.e., the *Haram*) (168<sub>5</sub>-171<sub>7</sub>) do provide more detail than, e.g., al-Mas'ūdī does; it would appear that they occupy an intermediate position between his predecessors on the one hand<sup>58</sup> and on the other, later authors, beginning with Nāṣer-e Hōsrow and, e.g., his description of the Jerusalem 'mosque', the *Haram* (*Safarnāmeḥ* 25<sub>16</sub>-40<sub>17</sub>). Writers of the sixth/twelfth century and as diverse as al-Balawī<sup>59</sup>, Ibn Ġubayr<sup>60</sup> and 'Abdallāṭif al-Baġdādī<sup>61</sup> betray a substantially different interest in and heightened sense of, architectural monuments than the earlier authors here introduced. It is hoped to discuss the last-named writers in a future continuation of the present study, along with some fourth/tenth century representations, omitted here, of buildings outside the quartet of wonders.

<sup>58</sup> With the notable exception of Ibn Rusta's near-filmic survey of the *Haramayn* (see above).

<sup>59</sup> *Alif-bā* II, 537f: description of Pharos (cf. Asín Palacios 1933).

<sup>60</sup> *Rihla*, see esp. 261<sub>7</sub>-271<sub>15</sub>, on Damascus mosque.

<sup>61</sup> *Ifāda*, esp. fols. 26l-40r/pp. 107-59, on monuments in Egypt.



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*Wörterbuch zu den griechisch-arabischen Übersetzungen des 9. Jahrhunderts*. By MANFRED ULLMANN. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002. 904 pp. ISBN 3 447 04584 1.

The title of the work under review is somewhat misleading: it is a rich collection of relevant and useful material but it is not a *comprehensive* dictionary of the Greek-Arabic translations of the 9th century, as the title would lead unsuspecting readers to believe. In the preface (pp. 15-63), Ullmann gives a detailed account of the genesis of the work, which also explains its contents. Initially, he collated a microfilm of the inedited Arabic translation of Galen's *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus* with other manuscripts of the same work and discovered that – for certain parts at least – he had two different translations before him, one by Hunayn ibn Ishāq and one by al-Bitriq. In order to clarify the relationship of the two versions he had recourse to a number of Greek works in Arabic translation – both edited and inedited – and in time came to amass a rich collection of Greek words together with their Arabic equivalents. Of course, he concentrated on translations by Hunayn and al-Bitriq, but also consulted translations of related works by others. Eventually, Ullmann published the fruits of his efforts in the present work. Thus we have at hand a corpus of Greek words with their Arabic equivalents drawn primarily, but not exclusively, from Galen's *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus* – it also contains numerous entries from related translations of the same period. Each entry consists of the Greek word, its German translation, a Greek passage containing the word in question and the whole corresponding passage in Arabic translation with exact references to places of occurrence. Sometimes references to scholarly literature are also added. An Arabic-Greek Index (pp. 801-904) completes the work. The preface (pp. 15-63) is rich in important observations and plausible conclusions concerning the history of the translations of Galen's *De simplicium ...* and the translations contained in the other manuscripts consulted. The author's analysis of the characteristics of Hunayn's and al-Bitriq's translations is accompanied by a list of illuminating examples (pp. 41-48). Under the subtitle *Results (Ergebnisse)*; pp. 59-61) Ullmann draws important conclusions. He emphasizes the importance of the vocabulary of these texts from the viewpoint of Arabic lexicography: it represents a rich collection of words – also concerning everyday life – which are sought for in vain elsewhere. They are often considered too specialized to be incorporated into works of "general" Arabic lexicography; instead, such materials are regarded as fit for narrowly specialized works only. On the basis of his research the author stresses the untenability of this position – there simply is no clearcut division. The vocabulary of medical literature forms an inalienable part of the Arabic lexicon and should be treated accordingly. The presentation of the book is somewhat unusual. Amazingly, more than 500 years after the invention of printing, in the age of computers, one of the major publishing houses in the country which can justly be proud of being the cradle of bookprinting seems to have reversed course, leading back to the pre-Gutenberg era and producing *de facto* manuscripts. The author's otherwise excellent and very useful *Adminiculum zur Grammatik des klassischen Arabisch* (also published by Otto Harrassowitz in 1989) was the first manifestation of this strange new tendency, and now it seems that the publisher intends to proceed on this course. The handwriting – probably the author's<sup>1</sup> – is clear and beautiful, still it would be much easier for the reader to read a printed text. After all, the texts treated here make by themselves for difficult reading. In addition, we have to deal with three different scripts, one of which runs in the opposite direction of that of the two

<sup>1</sup> It seems to be the same as in *Adminiculum*.



others. Under such circumstances it would be a considerable relief for the reader if the publishers could in the future be persuaded to avail themselves of state-of-the-art technology. The present work is a significant contribution to the study of *Graeco-Arabica*, the scientific translations of the Abbasid era. Without doubt it is going to remain a most important work of reference in the field of lexicography for decades to come, especially in view of the fact that *A Greek and Arabic Lexicon*, edited by Gerhard Endress and Dimitri Gutas, to date has only completed the first letter of the alphabet.

István Ormos

Galen: "Über die Anatomie der Nerven". Originalschrift und alexandrinisches Kompendium in arabischer Überlieferung. By AHMAD M. AL-DUBAYAN. (*Islamkundliche Untersuchungen*, begr. von Klaus Schwarz, hrsg. von Gerd Winkelhane, 228.) Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2000. 294 pp. ISSN 0939-1940. ISBN 3-87997-280-X.

The work under review, which was submitted as a thesis to the University of Bochum in 1998-1999, contains critical editions of the Arabic translation of Galen's "The Anatomy of Nerves" (*De nervorum dissectione*) and of the Arabic version as extant among the *Summaria Alexandrinorum*, the abridgements of Galen's works which had been prepared for teaching purposes in the schools of Alexandria. An English translation of the latter work, a full Arabic-Greek glossary of the vocabulary of the former work, a Greek-Arabic index to the glossary, and extensive analyses of philological nature – concerning the manuscript transmission, style etc. – complete the publication. There are, however, no comments on the contents of Galen's work or of its Alexandrian abridgement: the editor does not seem to have been interested in the works themselves. Since there are but few modern scholarly editions of Galen's works, whether in the Greek original or in Arabic translation, even though constituting essential prerequisites of acutely missed in-depth studies of the Greek-Arabic translation movement in the Abbasid era, every new publication is most welcome. Thus generally speaking, the present work can be regarded as an important contribution.

Al-Dubayan knows of seven manuscripts of *De nervorum dissectione* in various libraries (pp. 26-32). However, with a little effort two more manuscripts can be easily traced: in his additions to vol. III of his *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums (GAS)*, *ibid.* vol. V, p. 406, Sezgin reports one in Teheran and another one in New Delhi. This means that altogether nine manuscripts of the work are known to exist, out of which the editor only used two. Of course, it is possible that the other seven are inferior descendants of the two consulted copies but that should have been stated clearly; in fact there is no hint that the editor has seen any of them. It must also be admitted that because of restrictive library practices, it is not always easy to have access to or acquire microfilms of manuscripts. Still, persistent efforts seldom remain without positive results. In this reviewer's opinion, considerably more manuscripts should have been consulted, since it cannot be ruled out that at some future time a scholar with access to the remaining manuscripts will have to redo the entire work; in this way, the present editor's undoubtedly great efforts would lose much of their relevance and validity. The same goes for his treatment of the Alexandrian abridgement: the editor consulted but five out of eleven manuscripts. It would also have been advisable to compare the Arabic with the Latin translation.

It is strange that while the language of the thesis is German, the second work is supplied with an English translation, while the first one is left untranslated. This reviewer thinks that either work

should have been accompanied by a translation, namely in the language of the thesis, i.e., in German. However, if the editor feels that English is understood more widely then he should have opted for that language throughout.

The study under review contains useful discussions of the Arabic transmission of the two texts, the translators' identity, their respective diction and use of technical terms, and of the consulted manuscripts. The editor also deals briefly with the relationship of the Arabic translation of Galen's *De nervorum dissectione* and its Greek original as extant in Kühn's edition of Galen's works. An exhaustive Arabic-Greek glossary in the style of *A Greek and Arabic Lexicon* (edited by Gerhard Endress and Dimitri Gutas) is appended to the publication (pp. 153-273), and a Greek-Arabic index of words (pp. 274-290) completes it.

While undoubtedly, considerable erudition and ingenuity were invested into the preparation of the present work, some strange inaccuracies and deficient details – although not of utmost importance – disturb the general impression and raise questions about the genesis of the publication and its overall reliability. Right at the beginning, in the list of abbreviations (p. 1), Garofalo's edition of a part of *De anatomicis administrationibus* is listed twice, as 'Amal.Gar. and as Anat.Gar., just as is Simon's edition: 'Amal.Simon and Anat.Simon. Garofalo's edition appears in the bibliography (p. 292) without Galen's name, as if Garofalo were the author. In the list of Galen's works on anatomy, the editor erroneously remarks (p. 8, no. 12), concerning *De partium homoeomerium differentia*, that this work is not mentioned in Sezgin's *GAS* or in Fichtner's *Corpus Galenicum (CG)*. Not only is it mentioned in both (*GAS III*, p. 101. no. 25; *CG* no. 247), but what is more, it was also edited by Gotthard Strohmaier in 1970. Here I must admit that according to the bibliography (p. 291), al-Dubayan seems to have used a 1990 printout of *CG*, while I have the 1997 printout before me. Certain numbers which al-Dubayan quotes suggest differences between the two printouts; still I cannot imagine that this work should have been omitted from the 1990 printout. The editor also refers to *CG* concerning a Latin translation of *De anatomia mortuorum* (p. 7, no. 4), but my printout of *CG* at least does not have any data on it, nor is it known to exist at all. The present publication can justly be considered an important contribution in the field of *Graeco-Arabica*. Its real value – or deficiency – will only be discovered by continuous perusal in studying *Galenus Arabus*.

István Ormos

*Der arabische Dialekt der Khawētna*. I: Grammatik. II: Texte und Glossar. By SHABO TALAY. (*Semitica Viva*, Hrsg. von Otto Jastrow, 21,1-2.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Vol. I: 1999. xx, 204 pp. ISBN 3-447-04136-6, Vol. II: 2003. xiii, 403 pp. ISBN 3-447-04734-8.

Shabo Talay's dissertation at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität of Heidelberg has deserved to be published in a revised form in the *Semitica Viva* series. The dialect described therein is a Mesopotamian *qeltu* dialect, the so-called *hātūnī*, the existence of which had first been signalled by Peter Behnstedt (*ZAL* 1992). With about 30 000 people living in more than 30 villages, this is considered to be one of the biggest *qeltu* dialects spoken in Syria, Iraq and Turkey. The extensive fieldwork resulted in two excellent volumes. Vol. I. not only defines the place of this dialectal subgroup within the *qeltu* dialects (pp. 1-23), but also provides a detailed description of its phonology (pp. 25-51), morphology (pp. 53-164) and syntax (pp. 165-196), followed by an exhaustive bibliography (pp. 197-204). One would only have wished to read a more detailed syntactic description, the texts contained in Vol. II, however, compensate us for this lack. The texts have



been collected from 15 informants: 14 men and only one woman. The two tales collected from her provide only meagre opportunity to observe the special features of the women's usage. The men are of different age groups and talk about a wide variety of subjects. The work is supplemented by an Arabic-German vocabulary containing all the words that appear in the texts (pp. 285-403). The texts together with their German translations may be recommended as an excellent starting point for further research about the beliefs, legends, tales etc. of the region.

K. D.

*Die arabischen Dialekte der Çukurova (Südtürkei)*. By STEPHAN PROCHÁZKA. (*Semitica Viva*, Hrsg. von Otto Jastrow, 27.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002. xxii, 329 pp. ISBN 3-447-04525-6.

The Arabic dialect described and presented in this book is nearing extinction since although it is the mother tongue of nearly 70.000 people, the majority of people under 25 no longer speak it (p. 12). Thus, the author renders a great service to Arabic dialectology as well as to general linguistics. The dialect is spoken by members of three denominations: Christians, Sunni Muslims and Alawite Muslims, the adherents to this religion being the greatest in number. Procházka describes the phonology (pp. 15-63), morphology (pp. 64-151) and syntax (pp. 152-162) of this latter variant, provides a short glossary (pp. 163-182), and analyses the ways the Turkish language influences this dialect (pp. 183-203). It is only to be regretted that the author did not feel like committing to ink and paper the syntax of the dialect of Çukurova, but only presented a random selection of a few salient features. One would rather have a complete description of the Alawite dialect in this book and in another a complete description of the Sunni dialect. Instead, the book follows with an outline of the Sunni dialect of Mersin (pp. 204-211) and a selection of texts in the Alawite dialect. Stephan Procházka has recorded about 45 hours of material during seven months in the period between 1995 and 1999 from a wide variety of informants. The texts chosen to be included in this volume give a glimpse of the different themes: religion, local history, tales, etc. A special flavour is given to the texts by the inclusion of fourteen recipes. One can only hope that the collected material would encourage the author to write those parts that have been omitted from the otherwise excellent present book.

K. D.

*Arabische Texte aus Kinderib*. By OTTO JASTROW. (*Semitica Viva*, Hrsg. von Otto Jastrow, 30.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003. xii, 493 pp. ISBN 3-447-04714-3.

The author's long dream has been realized with the publication of this impressive volume of texts selected from what he collected during two months in 1969. The circumstances of the collection might not be considered ideal, since all the texts have been collected from one informant whom the author met in Beirut. These circumstances, however, should only be taken into account in the course of linguistic analysis and not in the case of collected texts.

The dialect of the corpus is one of the Mesopotamian *qaltū* dialects. These dialects had been thoroughly described in numerous books and articles by Otto Jastrow. In the present work only the special characteristics of the dialect of the village of Kinderib are touched upon briefly in the introduction to the texts (pp. 1-22). The 118 texts have been grouped around fifteen topics. They are as follows: the house; people and customs; the village and its surroundings; domestic animals;

hunting and wild animals; the bread; typical dishes; different kitchen utensils. The volume ends with tales and fables.

A welcome addition to the printed material is that the texts can be listened to at the website of Heidelberg University.

K. D.

*Hassaniya Arabic (Mali): Poetic and Ethnographic Texts*. By JEFFREY HEATH. (*Semitica Viva*, Hrsg. von Otto Jastrow, 31.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003. 207 pp. ISBN 3-447-04792-5.

Hassaniya Arabic is spoken in Mauritania, northern Mali, the Western Sahara and in an around the southern Moroccan oases. The sparse bibliography of this Arabic dialect has gained an important contribution by the present collection of 45 poetic and ethnographic texts collected by the author in 1986 and 1989 in Timbuktu and Gao respectively. The texts are presented in phonemic transcription where morpheme boundaries are marked. Besides their linguistic significance, the texts have ethnographic and poetic value, and being translated into English, can be of interest to a wider public. Next to the collection of oral poetry, we find animal tales, legends, narratives about traditional life and scenes from everyday life. Both the Arabic text and its side-by-side English translation are supplemented by various notes touching not only on some specific linguistic points, but also on the cultural, ethnographical etc. background of the texts which are necessary for their correct understanding. One can hardly wait to see the author's Hassaniya-English-French dictionary that would excellently supplement this useful volume of collected texts.

K. D.

*Neue Beiträge zur Semitistik. Erstes Arbeitstreffen der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Semitistik in der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft vom 11. bis 13. September 2000 an der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena*. Edited by NORBERT NEBES. (*Jenaer Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient*, 5.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002. viii, 298 pp. ISBN 3-447-04606-6.

The publication of the 16 papers presented to the first meeting of the Semitistic panel of the German Oriental Society may well mark a cornerstone in the latest history of Semitic studies not only in Germany but in Europe as a whole. One may even say that this event means the revivification of Semitistic, using the expression in an up-to-date way to refer to the linguistic sciences of the Semitic languages. Every reader of this volume, we think, is looking forward to the appearance of further similar volumes as fruits of later meetings. The 16 articles divides into 7 groups according to the language(s) involved: general Semitistic 1, Akkadian 2, Ethiopic 3, South Arabian 3, Ancient North Arabian 2, Aramaic 3, Arabic 2. Lutz Edzard's paper deals with the adjectival compounds (simple adjectives and nominalised relative clauses) in different Semitic languages – e.g., Arabic, Akkadian, Ethiopian, Hebrew), in only seven and a half pages, from which the first and last contain seemingly superfluous general linguistic summaries on the category of adjectives and on the theory of grammaticalisation. Markus Hilgert gives a detailed list, analysis and typology of the Akkadian name giving practice in the Ur III-time, while Michael P. Streck records an exhausting catalogue of the noun forms *maPRaS(t)*, *maPRäs*, *maPRiS(t)* in Akkadian, grouping them according to their areas of reference: verbal contents, the object of verbal contents, means of expressing the verbal contents, place, time, and agent of the verbal contents. This is followed by



special statistics concerning the semantic classes of the occurrences. The three papers considering the Ethiopic field of research are: Bogdan Burtea's ethnolinguistic study on Ethiopic magic rolls; Michael Waltisberg's (perhaps too) brief report on the Ancient Ethiopic reflexive verbal stems; and Stefan Weninger's short article on the Ancient Ethiopic reflex of Proto-Semitic \*g. The papers handling the South Arabian field are: Norbert Nebes's very significant paper on a newly found votive inscription from Mārib ("Šā'irum 'Aṭar und das widerspenstige Kamel. Eine neue Widmungsinschrift für dū Samāwī aus der Oase von Mārib"); Peter Stein's treatise on the possibility of case endings in Sabaic; Esther-Miriam Wagner's paper on the numbers and their syntax in Sabaic. The Ancient North Arabian inscriptions are treated in: Walter F. Müller's and Said F. Al-Said's paper on an inscription in Taymā'; and Alexander Sima's paper on the inscriptions from al-Hasā. One of the most interesting articles in the volume is that of Barbara Jändl on the highly frequent Syriac conjunctions and particles *kad, w, den, ger*. First she deals with the structure of Syriac narrative texts, then with the grammar of the four particles one by one, strictly on textual basis. Werner Arnold's paper focuses on Arabic loan words in the modern West Aramaic dialects, differentiating between loans of various ages. The trouble is that we know little of the phonetic values of some old Arabic sounds, thus they cannot surely serve as a basis for defining the age of the borrowing, because they are highly hypothetical and not generally accepted forms (e.g., g for *gīm*, d for *dād*). In other cases the original Arabic word does not seem accurately chosen for the Aramaic loan word, as is with Arabic *ḥādīt* (accident) for Aramaic *ḥēdis*, since it is a Classical loan in the modern Arabic dialects as well, i.e., *ḥādis*. There are two papers connected in one way or another to Arabic: that of Jan Retsö, the subject of which is the Arabic at classical and oriental authors; and Tilman Seidensticker's paper, which purports to be an outline of the so called 'native' (einheimisch) Arabic lexicography, itself a dubious category today, and even more doubtful is the place of this lexicon item in the present volume containing primary research material. All in all, the *Neue Beiträge zur Semitistik* treads into the trace of the great predecessors of the German Semitic studies and provides precious reading for many.

T. I.

*Rak'atāni fī l-'iṣq. Dirāsa fī šīr 'Abdalwahhāb al-Bayātī.* By Reuven Snir. London: Saqi Books, 2002. viii, 338 pp. ISBN 1-85516-518-X.

The death in 1999 of the Iraqi poet-in-exile, 'Abdalwahhāb al-Bayātī aroused the attention in his poetic oeuvre. Amongst others, the *Journal of Arabic Literature* has dedicated one of its issues in 2001 to al-Bayātī and different colloquia were organised to commemorate the event. The erudite study of Reuven Snir stands out from the long list of publications. He analyses al-Bayātī's poetic output not only with regard to its place within contemporary Arabic literature, but also in the wider perspective of contemporary poetic currents in Europe and the United States. He also always tries to unveil the cultural backgrounds of the poems in their entirety. He does this in taking into consideration practically everything that has been written by or about al-Bayātī. One may or may not agree with his analyses of individual poems, but one can feel that the book has been written by a real connoisseur of the subject which makes it worth perusing. An impressive bibliography (pp. 273-314) and useful indices (pp. 315-338) accompany the work.

K. D.

