

THE ARABIST
BUDAPEST STUDIES IN ARABIC 46

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The publication of this volume was supported by
the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
TTT-3/2023

ISSN 0239-1619

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MÚZEUM BLD. 4/B BUDAPEST, 1088 HUNGARY

The Arabist
Budapest Studies in Arabic 46



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BUDAPEST, 2024

CONTENTS

Hanane Almi (Ghardaia): <i>Islam and Transcendentalism in Theological Convergence</i>	1
Abdelhamid Drira (Nantes) : <i>L'orientalisme en Europe de l'Est : l'aventure du Coran des Philomathes</i>	17
Tamás Iványi (Budapest): <i>On Presupposition in Qur'ānic Conditionals : The Cases of in kāna and in fa'ala</i>	45
Gábor Korvin (Budapest): <i>Muḥammad's Jug: Arabic Motifs in Borges's Texts...</i>	103

ISLAM AND TRANSCENDENTALISM IN THEOLOGICAL CONVERGENCE

Hanane Almi

University of Ghardaia

Abstract:

This paper explores the interrelation between Islam and the ideology of the Transcendentalist movement, as held by prominent Transcendentalists Thomas Carlyle, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. It examines the movement's theological principles that created interconnectedness with Islam's ideals, such as social reforms, the divinity of nature, and self-reliance. The paper then narrows its scope to a case study analyzing a selected piece of Transcendentalist literature, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, written by Thomas Carlyle. The results indicate that there are many points of convergence between Islam and the theological ideals of Transcendentalism, as evidenced by Carlyle's veracity within his work *On Heroes*.

Keywords: Islam, Transcendentalists, Thomas Carlyle, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Résumé :

Cet article explore l'interrelation entre l'islam et l'idéologie du mouvement transcendantaliste, tel que soutenu par les éminents transcendantalistes Thomas Carlyle et Ralph Waldo Emerson. L'ouvrage aborde les principes théologiques du mouvement qui ont créé une interconnexion avec les idéaux de l'islam, tels que les réformes sociales, la divinité de la nature et l'autonomie. Ensuite, l'article réduit sa portée à une étude de cas analysant une pièce sélectionnée de la littérature transcendantaliste, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* écrite par Thomas Carlyle. Les résultats montrent qu'il existe de nombreux points de convergence entre les idéaux théologiques du transcendantalisme et l'islam, comme en témoigne la véracité de Carlyle dans son œuvre *On Heroes*.

Mots-clés : Islam, transcendantalistes, Thomas Carlyle, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Introduction

Islam, as one of the major world religions, has often been a subject of curiosity and intrigue for Western writers throughout history. Western literature has played a significant role in shaping public perceptions of Islam, sometimes perpetuating stereotypes and misconceptions that lead to misunderstandings and adversities. However, it is important to recognize that the views of Western writers on Islam are diverse and multifaceted, reflecting the cultural, historical, and individual perspectives of the authors.

Transcendentalism is a philosophical and literary movement that emerged in 19th-century America (Packer 2007:189). The present work seeks to address how Transcendentalists traced religious interconnectedness with Islam through their principles and beliefs by delving into the writings and works of prominent Transcendentalist thinkers such as Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), and Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881). The study aims to uncover convergence, and interrelatedness between the ideas of Transcendentalism and Islam, unveiling a story of openness and tolerance that stemmed from the ideals of philosophers and the beauty of literature.

1 The Origins of Transcendentalism

In this part, the present researcher stresses the religious formation of the movement to create a basis for comparison with Islam. Our focus in these initial lines extends beyond the literary and artistic aspects to emphasize religious ideas. To begin, the dictionary definition of the word ‘transcend’ means “to rise above or go beyond the limits” (Merriam-Webster). This concept was adopted to reflect Transcendentalist ideas that exist outside of material existence and lie beyond our ordinary sense perception (Packer 2007: 189).

In a world driven by conformity and materialism, Transcendentalism emerged, challenging prevailing philosophical norms, and advocating the power of religion. The beginnings of American Transcendentalism did not arise solely from the minds of a few individuals, “it had its essential roots in earlier European and even in non-Western ways of thinking: German idealists, Swiss educators, British and Continental romantics, Neoplatonists, and Christian Mystics all contributed streams of thought to the philosophy that would shape the Transcendentalist movement” (Nichols 2006:9).

In addition, Transcendentalism was initially a religious movement that evolved from New England Unitarianism in the 1820s and 1830s (Robinson 2018). Equally important, Transcendentalist pioneers like Ralph Waldo Emerson were influenced by Buddhist and Hindu sacred writings and were attracted to idealist philosophies that saw permanent truth as residing somehow beyond the physical world (Nichols

2006:8). These influences fostered a unique theological openness within the minds of Transcendentalists.

In the same religious vein, Transcendentalism was initially an attempt to produce a new philosophy that emerged as antithetical to established terms. In other words, the movement was initially anti-skeptical, opposing the skepticism of empiricists of John Locke (1632–1704) and David Hume (1711–1776), who argued that all knowledge comes through the five senses. According to Locke and Hume, if something could not be seen, touched, tasted, smelled, or felt, it did hold any direct importance as an aspect of knowledge (see Packer 2007:23 ff). Transcendentalists, however, embraced the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), particularly his ideas on how to reach an understanding of God, positing that knowledge is transcendental.

Kant's idea that the material world is a version of reality brought to us by our senses, with something beyond sense perception as the most fundamental form of existence, is a central theme in his philosophy. This concept is most notably explored in his work *Critique of Pure Reason*. In this seminal work, Kant distinguishes between the phenomenal world (the world as it appears to us through our senses) and the noumenal world (the world as it is in itself, beyond our sensory experience). Kant argues that while we can only know phenomena, our understanding is limited by the structure of our minds, and we can never directly perceive the noumenal realm.¹

The accumulation of theological influences within the Transcendentalist movement has led to a universal connection with Islamic principles, which is appealing to the writer and motivates further exploration.

2 Transcendentalism and Islam in Spiritual Connections

Rooted in the belief that individuals possess an inherent connection to nature and the divine, the Transcendentalist movement sought to challenge traditional societal norms and encourage personal growth and self-reliance. Packer (2007:192) confirms: “Led by influential thinkers, the new literary trend sought to inspire individuals to break free from societal constraints and connect with their inner selves and the beauty of nature”. This part of the present research seeks to address the interconnectedness of the movement's theological principles with Islamic ideals.

¹ Kant, *Critique* 338–365, Chapter 3 “On the ground of distinction of all objects in general into *phenomena* and *noumena*”. For a summary of Kant's views on this question, see Guyer and Wood 1998:12–13. See also Thielke 2022, and especially Allais 2022.

2.1 Islam and the Stand of Transcendentalism for Social Reforms

Transcendentalism was primarily concerned with personal spiritual development and aimed to impact other social reform movements of the time. The movement actively supported causes such as abolitionism, women's suffrage, and education reform, all with the goal of making society more just and equitable. As Boller (1974:99) claimed, the movement, acting as a catalyst for social change, was strongly connected to individualism, self-reliance, and the pursuit of truth, all of which led its adherents to actively fight against apartheid, which they viewed as a violation of individual freedom and equality.

The most influential essays of Transcendentalism regarding the issue of slavery were written by Ralph Waldo Emerson (*Self-Reliance*) and Henry David Thoreau (*Civil Disobedience*).² Emerson's essay calls for individuals to trust their own instincts and moral compass, inspiring many to question the morality of slavery and actively support its abolition. Thoreau's essay advocated for nonviolent resistance against unjust laws, inspiring many abolitionists to take a stand against slavery. Transcendentalist communities exemplified how the practical ideals of Transcendentalism translated into concrete actions. The experimental communities of Brook Farm (founded in 1841 in West Roxbury, Massachusetts) and Fruitlands (founded in 1843 in Harvard, Massachusetts) provided platforms for like-minded individuals to discuss and promote abolitionist ideals (Packer 2007:189).

The positive stance of Transcendentalism on the issue of slavery is regarded by the present author as an example of interconnectedness with the principles of Islam, though historical practices in many territories under Muslim rule often reveal the opposite. This article discusses the principles of both Islam and Transcendentalism, not the human practices of either. The principle of racial equality in Islam promotes justice for all individuals, regardless of their race or ethnicity. Islam recognizes that all human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve, emphasizing the inherent equality of all races. The Holy Qur'an states, "O people, We have created you male and female and made you races and tribes that you may know one another. The noblest of you in the sight of God is the most god-fearing." (Q. 49:13).³

² "Self-Reliance" was first published in 1841 in Emerson's collection of essays titled *Essays: [First Series]*. "Civil Disobedience" was first published in 1849 under the title "Resistance to Civil Government" in an anthology called *Aesthetic Papers*. Later, it was reprinted under the title "Civil Disobedience" in 1866 in Thoreau's collection of essays titled *A Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers*. Both essays are considered seminal works in American literature and have had a significant influence on political and philosophical thought. See in detail (Bhagwanani 2013:59–60).

³ Translation by Jones. The Arabic is as follows:
 { يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْتَأَكُمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ }

“This [verse] was revealed about Thabit Ibn Qays Ibn Shammas who said to a man: “You are the son of so-and-so” in reference to his mother. It is also said that it was revealed about Bilal, the muezzin of the Prophet. When Bilal gave the call to prayer in Mecca after its conquest, a group of men from Quraysh, among whom were Sahl Ibn ‘Amr, al-Harth Ibn Hisham and Abu Sufyan Ibn Harb, said: “Did God and His Messenger not find anyone to call to prayer except this raven” (Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tanwīr* 605). This verse highlights the importance of recognizing and appreciating diversity in Islam as a means to foster unity among people.

Islam categorically rejects any form of racial discrimination. The Prophet Muḥammad emphasized the equality of all individuals, regardless of their race or ethnicity. In his final sermon, he stated that all mankind is from Adam and Eve: an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; similarly, a white has no superiority over a black person, nor does a black person have any superiority over a white person, except by piety and good action.⁴

The following *ḥadīth* also serves as a reminder that people’s worth is determined by their character and actions, not by the nobility of their descent: “Mankind! We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you might come to know each other. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you (Q. 49:13). One man says to another man, ‘I am more noble than you are.’ No one is nobler than another person except by piety.”⁵

It is equally important to note that Islam places great emphasis on social justice and the establishment of a just society. The Quran states, “O you who believe, be steadfast in justice, witnesses for God, even if it is against your selves or your parents or your close relatives. Whether the person be rich or poor, God is closer to both. Do not follow whim lest you turn. If you twist or turn away, you will find that God is informed of what you do.” (Q. 4:135).⁶ This verse highlights the obligation of Muslims to stand up for justice, regardless of the race or background of the individuals (Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tanwīr*). Islam historically has involved and always encouraged the establishment of a society where all individuals are treated fairly and equitably, fostering a sense of brotherhood and unity.

The second social reform that Transcendentalists appealed for was women’s suffrage, as they celebrated the individual’s ability to think independently and make moral choices, regardless of societal expectations. Additionally, the defense

⁴ Muḥammad’s final sermon is mentioned by all the major *ḥadīth* collections

⁵ al-Buḥārī, *Adab* 313, Chapter 400, al-Ḥasab, *ḥadīth* No. 3:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ الْمُبَارَكِ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْمَلِكِ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا عَطَاءٌ، عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: لَا أَرَى أَحَدًا يَعْمَلُ بِهَذِهِ الْآيَةِ: {يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى} حَتَّى بَلَغَ: {إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ}، فَيَقُولُ الرَّجُلُ لِلرَّجُلِ: أَنَا أَكْرَمُ مِنْكَ، فَلَيْسَ أَحَدٌ أَكْرَمَ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ.

⁶ Translation by Jones. The Arabic text is as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىَٰ أَنْ تُعَدِلُوا وَإِنْ تَلَّوْا أَوْ تُعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

for women's suffrage was deduced from the main principle of Transcendentalism, that of Self-Reliance (Gura 2007:285). This idea of equality provided a philosophical basis for women's suffrage, challenging the notion that women were inherently inferior to men.

Ultimately, this individualistic stance encouraged women to question their subordinate roles and assert their rights as equal citizens through the embodiment of the ideals of Transcendentalism. The first Transcendentalist woman was Margaret Fuller (1810–1850), who actively participated in discussions and actions related to suffrage and other women's rights. As she writes:

By Man I mean both man and woman: these are the two halves of one thought. I lay no especial stress on the welfare of either. I believe that the development of the one cannot be effected without that of the other. My highest wish is that this truth should be distinctly and rationally apprehended, and the conditions of life and freedom recognized as the same for the daughters and the sons of time; twin exponents of a divine thought. (Fuller, *Woman* vi).

Over time, the new trend encouraged more women to rely on their own instincts and beliefs rather than conforming to societal norms. Emphasizing self-reliance, female Transcendentalists were empowered to challenge traditional gender roles and assert their agency in the fight for suffrage. The principle of self-reliance was adopted by other Transcendentalist women such as Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888), who is also considered a pioneer Transcendentalist. Alcott inspired suffragettes to organize and mobilize, demonstrating their ability to effect change through their own actions.⁷

In Islam, both the Qur'ānic and the prophetic texts insist on the integration of women's role in the societal matters. Beginning with verses recognizing women's inherent worth and spiritual equality, in the first verse of *Sūrat an-Nisā'* (Q. 4:1) we read: "O people, fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul and who created from it its fellow and who spread many men and women from the two of them; and fear God, through whom you seek rights from one another and from the ties of relationship. God is a watcher over you".⁸

This verse depicts that there is no superiority for one sex over the other. Both genders are created from the single soul, with the same human and spiritual nature. Ibn 'Abbās (*Tanwīr ad Q.* 4:1) states that God has created mankind out of one living entity, and out of it created its mate, and out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Islam elevates the demeaned status of women and grants them rights equal to those of men. The wording of aforementioned Qur'ānic

⁷ Reisen 2010. See also Zwarg 1995.

⁸ Translation by Jones. The Arabic text is as follows:

{ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا }^٥

verse indicates that the primary Islamic text does not specify one sex over the other, which is proof of gender non-bias and equality.

The Prophet Muḥammad had a profound impact on women's rights as reflected in the *ḥadīth* literature. During his time, women in Arabia were often treated as unequal to men (Keddie 1990:82). However, the Prophet Muḥammad advocated for the fair treatment of women and granted them rights that were revolutionary for his time. He preached the importance of education for women, gave them property rights, and granted them the right to inherit wealth. For example, in the matter of education, Islam makes no distinction between the rights of men and women in seeking knowledge. The Prophet Muhammad said: "The pursuit of knowledge is a duty of every Muslim"⁹ (Ibn Māḡa, *Sunan* 81, No. 224), that is male and female.

Islamic ethics emphasizes the value of women in society and advocates for their protection and respect. The Prophet Muḥammad improved the status of women in the tribal state of Arabia and set a precedent for the rights of women in Islamic culture. For example, Islamic marriage is a contract which a woman has the full right to accept or refuse. Women's consent is a prerequisite for the validity of the marriage contract according to the Prophet's saying: "A woman without a husband (or divorced or a widow) must not be married until she is consulted, and a virgin must not be married until her permission is sought. They asked the Prophet of Allah: How her (virgin's) consent can be solicited? He (the Holy Prophet) said: That she keeps silence."¹⁰

In another *ḥadīth*, Ibn 'Abbās reported that a young woman complained to the Messenger of God that her father had forced her to marry his brother's son without her consent, solely to elevate his social status. The Prophet Muḥammad gave her the choice between accepting the marriage or having the marriage annulled. The girl said: "O Messenger of Allah! I have accepted what my father has done but I wanted to let women know that parents have no right to force a husband on them"¹¹.

Equally important, the principles of Transcendentalism, celebrating individualism and the pursuit of truth, interrelate with Islam's principle regarding the importance of education. Moreover, Transcendentalism aimed to ignite a critical approach to education, inspiring learners to embrace their unique talents and

⁹ طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم

¹⁰ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* 641, *Kitāb an-Nikāḥ*, Chapter 9, No. 1419. Also mentioned in other sources. The Arabic text is as follows:

حَدَّثَنِي عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ بْنِ مَيْسَرَةَ الْقَوَارِيرِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا خَالِدُ بْنُ الْخَارِثِ، حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامٌ، عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ أَبِي كَثِيرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو سَلَمَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " لَا تَنْكُحُ الْأَيْمَ حَتَّى تُسْتَأْمَرَ وَلَا تُنْكَحُ الْبِكْرُ حَتَّى تُسْتَأْذَنَ ". قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَكَيْفَ إِذْنُهَا قَالَ " أَنْ تُسْكُتَ " .

¹¹ Ibn Māḡa, *Sunan* 602–603, No. 1874. The Arabic text is as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا هَذَا بْنُ السَّرِيِّ، حَدَّثَنَا وَكَيْعٌ، عَنْ كَهْمَسِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ، عَنْ ابْنِ بَرِيْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ جَاءَتْ فَتَاةٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - فَقَالَتْ إِنَّ أَبِي زَوَّجَنِي ابْنَ أُخِيهِ لِيَرْفَعَ بِي حَسْبِسْتَهُ. قَالَ فَجَعَلَ الْأَمْرَ إِلَيْهَا. فَقَالَتْ قَدْ أَجَزْتُ مَا صَنَعَ أَبِي وَلَكِنْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ تَعْلَمَ النِّسَاءُ أَنْ لَيْسَ إِلَى الْأَبَاءِ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ.

perspectives, and encouraging independent thinking (Buell, Cramer, & Marshall, 2016:142). The belief in the inherent goodness of individuals led to a focus on character development, promoting empathy, and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

As Islam emphasizes, critical education extends beyond the mere transmission of information; it encourages individuals to think critically, question assumptions, and engage in meaningful dialogue about one's religion. Islam, by promoting self-reflection and introspection, enabled Muslims to rely on their own instincts and develop a sense of agency. The Qur'ān underscores the importance of critically seeking knowledge in several verses, including Q. 4:162: "But those of them who are firm in knowledge and the believers believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and those performing prayer and paying *zakāt* and believing in God and the Last Day. These – We shall give them a mighty wage."¹²

According to the commentators, this verse prompts readers to contemplate those who are deeply familiar with the genuine teachings of the Scriptures and whose minds are devoid of prejudice, stubbornness, blind adherence to ancestral customs, and enslavement to base desires. Such individuals are inclined to follow those teachings. Such discerning individuals readily recognize, even upon initial examination, that the teachings of the Qur'ān fundamentally align with those of the previous Prophets. Consequently, they encounter no difficulty in affirming it.¹³

2.2 Islam and Transcendentalism: The Divinity of Nature

Transcendentalists view nature as a boundless source of spiritual inspiration and a reflection of the divine, a perspective also shared by Islam. Ralph Waldo Emerson believed that nature holds the key to unlocking our inner wisdom and connecting with the universal spirit. He emphasized the importance of nature in his essay *Nature*, asserting that it provides solace, stimulates creativity, and offers profound insights into the mysteries of existence. By immersing themselves in nature, people can gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Nearly twenty years later, Henry David Thoreau further explored this connection in his masterpiece *Walden*, where he documented his experiences living in harmony with nature (Buell 1995:155).

For both aforementioned Transcendentalists, nature was not merely a physical entity but a spiritual force that could guide individuals towards self-discovery and enlightenment. They believed that by immersing oneself in the beauty of nature,

¹² Translation by Jones. The Arabic text is as follows:

{ لَكِنَّ الرَّاٰسِخُوْنَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِمَا اَنْزَلَ اِلَيْكَ وَمَا اَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۗ وَالْمُقِيمِيْنَ الصَّلَاةَ ۗ وَالْمُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ اُولٰٓئِكَ سَنُوْتِيْهِمْ اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا }

¹³ See, e.g. Maududi 1967–1988:402.

one could transcend the limitations of the material world and connect with a higher power (Buell 1995:156). In his essay, Emerson describes how nature can be a source of knowing God's power, and inspiration:

Nature always wears the colors of the spirit. To a man laboring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population. (Emerson, *Nature* 14).

This spiritual connection fostered a sense of unity with the universe, enabling individuals to access their inner wisdom and intuition. This explanation can be best introduced in Emerson's following lines:

If a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds, will separate between him and vulgar things. One might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. ... The stars awaken a certain reverence, because, though always present, they are always inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence" (Emerson, *Nature* 9–10).

The reverence of nature inherent in Transcendentalist philosophy laid the groundwork for the modern environmental movement. Transcendentalists' belief in the interconnectedness of all living beings and the importance of preserving the natural world resonates with contemporary environmentalist ideals (Buell, Cramer, & Marshall, 2016:145).

In a similar way, many Qur'ānic verses emphasize the beauty and balance of the natural world as evidence of God's power and benevolence. This perspective motivates followers to appreciate and protect the environment while recognizing its sacredness in Islamic beliefs. Such example is Q. 39:5, explained by Ibn 'Abbās (*Tanwīr*) as follows:

(He has created the heavens and the earth with truth) not in vain (wrapping night around day) He reduces the night such that the day is longer than the night, (and day around night) and prolongs the night such that the night is longer than the day, (and He has subjected the sun and the moon to service) and He makes the sun and moon subservient to the Children of Adam, (each one) i.e. the sun and the moon, the day and night (running for a stated term) for an appointed time. (Is not He the Mighty) He Who does this is the Mighty in retribution against those who disbelieve in Him, (the Forgiving) of those who believe in Him? ¹⁴

¹⁴ Translated by Jones. The Arabic text of the verse is as follows:
 { خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ يُكَوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى أَلَا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ }

The origin of the universe is described in the Qur'ānic verse 6:101:¹⁵

(The originator) the Creator (of the heavens and the earth). He created them when they were nothing before such creation. (How can He have a child when He has no consort) no wife, (when He created everything and is Aware of everything) of all created beings?" (Q. 6:101).

The Qur'ān also speaks of creating everything in balance (Q. 87:2) and warns that the transgression of this balance shall have disastrous consequences (Q. 101). An example of this is provided by two readings of Q. 36:38. The generally accepted meaning of this verse – “And the sun: it moves to a resting-place fixed for it – that is the decree of the Mighty and Knowing” – is based on the reading “*li-mustaqarrin lahā*”. However, some readers, primarily ‘Abdallāh ibn Mas‘ūd and Ibn ‘Abbās, read “*lā mustaqarra lahā*,” which would implicate that the sun runs day and night without any resting place, generally explained as a retribution against those who disbelieve in God.¹⁶

2.3 Self-Reliance

At the heart of Transcendentalism lies the principle of self-reliance. (Packer 2007: 83). To comprehend the importance of self-reliance in Transcendentalism, it is crucial to grasp the broader context of this philosophical movement as it sought to establish a deeper connection with the divine through self-exploration and self-reliance. Thus, Transcendentalists emphasize the importance of trusting one’s own instincts and intuition, rather than conforming to societal expectations. Accordingly, they encourage individuals to have the courage to follow their own paths, make their own decisions, and take responsibility for their own lives.

In Transcendentalist thought, the benefits of self-reliance foster personal growth by encouraging individuals to explore their own thoughts, ideas, and values. It allows for the development of a unique identity and the pursuit of individual passions and aspirations. Therefore, by embracing self-reliance, individuals liberate themselves from the pressures of societal norms and expectations (Bhagwanani 2013:9–10).

As such, Transcendentalists are free to think independently, make their own choices, and live according to their own principles. By trusting their own intuition and experiences, they can uncover profound insights and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. Emerson claims: “To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true

¹⁵ Translation by Jones with additional explanation taken from Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tanwīr*. The Arabic text is as follows:

{ بَدِيعَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صُجْبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ }

¹⁶ Translation by Jones with additional explanation taken from Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tanwīr*. The Arabic text is as follows: { وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ }

for all men; that is genius” (Emerson, *Self-Reliance* 37). He also stressed the importance of self-reliance in making decisions and creating uniqueness, claiming:

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till ... God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious in its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself’ (Emerson, *Self-Reliance* 38, 40).

In a parallel way, Islam intersects with Transcendentalism over the value of self-sufficiency, encouraging individuals to meet their needs through personal endeavours and to refrain from begging or idleness. Economically speaking, self-reliance, *i.e.*, economic independence, is expressed by Arab economists in Arabic, the language of Islamic normative teaching, by the term *al-iktifā’ al-dātī al-iqtisādī*, an equivalent of autarchy in English (Rozikan, Rahmanto, and Satyarini 2021: 58). Therefore, Islam encourages avoiding lamenting one’s economic shortages and poverty, emphasizing the importance of cultivating self-reliance by fully harnessing one’s skills

Another aspect of self-sufficiency in Islamic principles is cultivating contentment (*qanā’a*). These principles serve as the foundation for the approach to contentment. *Qanā’a* leads to a “good wholesome life (*ḥayāt ṭayyiba*)” mentioned in Q. 16:97, in other words ‘self-contentment’. The relationship between contentment and self-reliance is built on the concept that God is the only one who owns the power to manipulate the whole. Therefore, the first requirement of self-sufficiency is to have reliance upon God (*tawakkul*) (Ali 2014: 433).

From among the many examples of self-reliance given in the Qur’ān, suffice us to mention the account of the Prophet Yūsuf, which teaches us that he did not fall prey to anxiety during the seven years of drought, but employed his understanding, insight, and self-sufficiency to strategize a workable solution. No matter the place, in jail or out, the Prophet Yūsuf always kept in his mind trustworthiness and integrity as he never fell into treachery and deceit upon seeing wealth. “He said, ‘My Lord, I prefer prison rather than that to which these women call me; but if You do not turn their tricks from me, I shall incline to them in youthful folly and I shall become one of the heedless.’ (Q 12:33).¹⁷

In fact, that was the most important and critical period of the Prophet Joseph’s training, and this hard ordeal helped to bring forth all his latent virtues of which he himself was unaware up to that time. Then he himself realized that God had

¹⁷ Translated by Jones. The Arabic text is as follows:

{ قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا نَصْرَفْتَعَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ وَكُنْ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ }

endowed him with the high and extraordinary qualities of honesty, fidelity, piety, charity, righteousness, self-control, balance of mind, and he made full use of these when he gained power in Egypt.¹⁸

3 Transcendentalists' veracity on Islam: Insights from Carlyle's *On Heroes*

In the final section, the article delves into a chapter entitled "The Hero as Prophet. Mahomet: Islam" from Carlyle's work *On Heroes*, written by Thomas Carlyle, one of the most famous Transcendentalists. The aim is to explore Carlyle perspectives on Islam through his portrayal of the Prophet Muḥammad.

It is imperative to address the work by emphasizing Carlyle's views on spirituality, universalism, the potential for mutual understanding between different faiths, and, most importantly, examining the accuracy of his portrayal of the *Sīra* through his simplest and well-chosen words.

In Carlyle's framework of heroes, individuals who shape history through extraordinary actions, the Prophet Muḥammad stands as no exception. He claims: "The Hero is not now regarded as a God among his fellowmen; but as one God-inspired, as a Prophet. ... The Great Man is not recognized henceforth as a god any more" (Carlyle, *Mahomet* 51).

Carlyle emphasized the importance of personal responsibility and the need for individuals to rise above their circumstances to achieve greatness. Just as heroes in other cultures leave a lasting impact, the Prophet Muḥammad has played a significant role in shaping the religion's development and spreading its message. Carlyle ensures: "The word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred-and-eighty millions of men these twelve-hundred years. These hundred-and-eighty millions were made by God as well as we" (Carlyle, *Mahomet* 52).

Carlyle's concept of heroes joins characters who share courage and leadership in shaping society and leaving a lasting impact on future generations. For him, the Prophet Muḥammad and the heroic characters mentioned by him are rooted in the same source, God. This invites us to reflect on the qualities that define a true hero and how their actions can influence the world around them. "For at bottom the Great Man, as he comes from the hand of Nature, is ever the same kind of thing: Odin, Luther, Johnson, Burns; I hope to make it appear that these are all originally of one stuff; that only by the world's reception of them, and the shapes they assume, are they so immeasurably diverse" (Carlyle, *Mahomet* 51).

In Carlyle's work *Mahomet*, the concept of veracity plays a crucial role when examining the portrayal of the Prophet Muḥammad. Veracity refers to the truthfulness or accuracy of a statement, and in this context, it pertains to the representation of the Prophet's *Sīra*.

¹⁸ See Q. 12:54–56.

It was among this Arab people, so circumstanced, in the year 570 of our Era, that the man Mahomet was born. He was of the family of Hashem, of the Koreish tribe as we said; though poor, connected with the chief persons of his country. Almost at his birth he lost his Father; at the age of six years his Mother too, a woman noted for her beauty, her worth and sense: he fell to the charge of his Grandfather, an old man, a hundred years old. A good old man: Mahomet's Father, Abdallah, had been his youngest favourite son (Carlyle, *Mahomet* 57–58).

Carlyle's veracity is manifested when he described the faithfulness of the Prophet Muḥammad in his early age:

But, from an early age, he had been remarked as a thoughtful man. His companions named him 'Al Amin, The Faithful.' A man of truth and fidelity; true in what he did, in what he spake and thought. They noted that *he* always meant something. A man rather taciturn in speech; silent when there was nothing to be said; but pertinent, wise, sincere, when he did speak; always throwing light on the matter (Carlyle, *Mahomet* 59).

Readers of Carlyle's *Mahomet* can feel veracity exhibited in the description of the story of revelation. He describes:

Mahomet had been wont to retire yearly, during the month Ramadhan, into solitude and silence ... Communing with his own heart, in the silence of the mountains ... Such light had come, as it could, to illuminate the darkness of this wild Arab soul. A confused dazzling splendour as of life and Heaven, in the great darkness which threatened to be death: he called it revelation and the angel Gabriel; — who of us yet can know what to call it? It is the 'inspiration of the Almighty' that giveth us understanding. To *know*; to get into the truth of anything, is ever a mystic act, — of which the best Logics can but babble on the surface. 'Is not Belief the true god-announcing Miracle?' (*Mahomet*, 61, 62).

Carlyle continues telling the story of his hero, Muḥammad. Through his writing, Carlyle challenges the readers to consider the genuine nature of the Prophet Muḥammad's heroic attributes and the accuracy of the accounts surrounding his life and deeds. In the following lines, Carlyle describes the *hiḡra* where the dates and the sequence of events are carefully detailed:

In the thirteenth year of his mission, finding his enemies all banded against him, forty sworn men, one out of every tribe waiting to take his life, and no continuance possible at Mecca for him any longer, Mahomet fled to the place then called Yathreb, where he had gained some adherents; the place they now call Medina, or '*Medinat al Nabi*, the City of the Prophet,' from that circumstance. It lay some 200 miles off, through rocks and deserts; not without great difficulty, in such mood as we may fancy, he escaped thither,

and found welcome. The whole East dates its era from this Flight, *Hegira* as they name it: the Year 1 of this Hegira is 622 of our Era, the fifty-third of Mahomet's life (Carlyle, *Mahomet*, 64).

Carlyle delves into the notion of authenticity when depicting heroism, particularly concerning the Prophet Muḥammad:

The body of the Book is made-up of mere tradition ... He returns forever to the old stories of the Prophets as they went current in the Arab memory: how Prophet after Prophet, the Prophet Abraham, the Prophet Hud, the Prophet Moses, Christian and other real and fabulous Prophets, had come to this Tribe and to that, warning men of their sin; and been received by them even as he Mahomet was, — which is a great solace to him (Carlyle, *Mahomet*, 69).

Conclusion

Despite their apparent differences, Transcendentalism and Islam share common ground in their humanitarian values, as both ideologies advocate for compassion, social justice, and the pursuit of a higher moral purpose. Transcendentalism, a philosophical movement rooted in theological principles and expressed through literary works, emerged in the 19th century. It emphasized the importance of individualism, self-reliance, and the inherent goodness of both nature and humanity. Islam, one of the world's major religions, promotes compassion, justice, and the welfare of all individuals. While these two ideologies may seem distinct, a closer examination reveals intriguing parallels in their shared humanitarian views.

Both Transcendentalism and Islam encourage individuals to seek a higher moral purpose in their lives. Transcendentalists believed in the importance of self-reflection, introspection, and the pursuit of personal growth. They encouraged individuals to connect with nature and find spiritual fulfilment. Islam also emphasizes the need for self-reflection and the pursuit of righteousness. Muslims are encouraged to engage in worship, charity, and self-discipline to attain spiritual enlightenment and a closer connection with God. Ultimately, the interconnectedness of Islam and Transcendentalism is well recognized in Thomas Carlyle's work *Mahomet*, which not only showcases veracity but also presents a positive and appreciative view of Islam, exemplified by the Prophet Muḥammad.

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L'ORIENTALISME EN EUROPE DE L'EST : L'AVENTURE DU KORAN DES PHILOMATHES

Abdelhamid Drira

Université catholique de l'Ouest, Nantes

Abstract:

The Koran of the Philomaths is a fascinating adventure led by brilliant patriotic students, mainly Polish. They spent several years in Lithuania at the beginning of the 19th century, writing the first Polish translation of the Koran using the Latin alphabet. Numerous articles were devoted to this Koran, as well as several books on the Tatars of Northern Europe. However, those papers emphasize the political patriotic goals behind that translation. This long article, based on a doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne, follows another path and demonstrates that the translation of the Philomaths was first a scientific and literary project motivated by the great interest in Orientalism shown by the Philomaths. To support this, the first part of the article is dedicated to demonstrating the importance of the Orientalist movement in Poland and Vilnius in general, and among several members of the Philomaths and the Philarets. The question of rehabilitation of Polish Orientalists who lived in Russia in the 19th century is also included. The second part of this research addresses essential questions about the Koran of the Philomaths, such as who the real authors are, their sources, their level of Arabic and their work methodology. Some of these practical questions have never been addressed. This article also focuses on what happened to the manuscript of the Philomaths after their condemnation in 1823. It is true that the first printed Polish translation of Buczacki in Warsaw in 1858 is linked to that of the Philomaths. Nevertheless, the article firmly rejects the accusations of usurpation, which are very popular today. Finally, this research shows the lesser-known contribution of other important authors, such as Andrzej Potocki and Albert de Biberstein Kazimirski.

Keywords: Philomaths, Philaret, Koran, Quran, Tafsir, Tatar, Orientalism, Vilnius, Polish translation, Domeyko, Kazimirski, Buczacki, Potocki

Résumé :

Le Koran des Philomathes est une aventure fascinante menée par de brillants étudiants patriotes, principalement polonais. Ils consacrèrent plusieurs années en Lituanie au début du XIX^e s. à l'écriture de la première traduction coranique polonaise en alphabet latin. De nombreux articles furent consacrés à ce Koran, ainsi que plusieurs livres et projets ambitieux sur les Tatars de l'Europe du Nord.

Toutefois, la problématique dominante dans ces recherches est la justification par des projets politiques et patriotiques polonais. Ce long article basé sur une thèse de doctorat à la Sorbonne suit une autre voie et démontre que la traduction des Philomathes était avant tout un projet à caractère scientifique et littéraire. Pour appuyer cela, la première partie de la présentation est consacrée à démontrer l'importance du mouvement orientaliste en Pologne et à Vilnius en particulier, et au sein de l'Empire russe en général. Certains Philomathes et Philarètes étaient en réalité de véritables orientalistes. La question de la réhabilitation des orientalistes polonais ayant vécu en Russie au XIX^e siècle est également abordée dans la première partie. La deuxième partie aborde des questions pratiques essentielles sur le Coran des Philomathes, telle l'identité véritables auteurs, leur niveau d'arabe, leurs sources et leur méthodologie de traduction. Certaines de ces questions cruciales n'ont jamais été abordées. Cette recherche s'intéresse également à ce qu'il advint de la traduction des Philomathes après leur condamnation en 1823. Il est démontré qu'effectivement la traduction de Buczacki publiée à Varsovie en 1858 est liée à celle des Philomathes, mais les accusations d'usurpation, qui sont aujourd'hui la théorie en vogue, sont catégoriquement rejetées. Pour finir, l'article revient sur d'autres contributeurs moins connus de cette traduction, dont Andrzej Potocki et Albert de Biberstein Kazimirski.

Mots-clés : Philomathes, Philarettes, Koran, Quran, Tafsir, Tatar, Orientalisme, Vilnius, traduction polonaise, Domeyko, Kazimirski, Buczacki, Potocki

Introduction

La Société des Philomathes est une des organisations secrètes politiques et scientifiques les plus fascinantes d'Europe de l'Est. Son histoire fut courte mais hautement symbolique et percutante avec des répercussions sur le déroulement de l'histoire contemporaine en Pologne, en Lituanie, mais aussi en Russie et Biélorussie. Elle suscite toujours l'intérêt des historiens, comme en témoignent les nombreux colloques internationaux à leur égard, le dernier datant de novembre 2023 à Lublin, à l'occasion de la commémoration du bicentenaire de leur condamnation par le Tsar Alexandre I^{er} en 1813. Pendant de longues années les historiens polonais se sont accaparés la possession et l'héritage de cette prestigieuse société (Kulwicka-Kamińska et Czesław 2018–2022). En effet, les Philomathes ont permis de perpétuer et même de régénérer le patriotisme polonais au début du XIX^e s. après le dépeçage douloureux de la Pologne à la fin du XVIII^e s. Cette contribution au nationalisme polonais est très appréciée dans l'historiographie polonaise et l'image des Philomathes est sans équivoque positive parmi les historiens polonais. Cependant, il y a une tendance palpable à politiser tous les projets des Philomathes et à négliger certaines de leurs contributions scientifiques ou littéraires pour s'adapter à un récit

exclusivement patriotique. Pourtant, la majorité de leurs œuvres étaient littéraires et scientifiques. N'oublions pas que la philomathique est un terme du XVIII^e s. composé du grec ancien « philéō » (φιλέω), aimer, et « mathēma » (μάθημα), les sciences, qui a donné mathématiques. Ainsi, Philomathes signifie les amoureux de la science au-dessus de tout, y compris de la politique et du nationalisme. Plusieurs sociétés philomathiques ont précédé celle de Vilnius, notamment la Société philomathique de Paris en 1788. Il est vrai que les Philomathes de Vilnius se distinguent par leur impact politique maintes fois mis en avant. Néanmoins, cela ne doit pas éclipser leur créativité débordante dans leur domaine initial : « la science ». Or, le plus iconique signe de leur vitalité, par lequel ils se différencient de toutes les autres sociétés philomathiques, est leur traduction du Coran. Le simple fait de citer qu'une société patriotique polonaise du début du XIX^e s. consacra de longues années à traduire le Coran suscite la stupéfaction et soulève plusieurs questions. Pourquoi un tel projet ? Qui sont les véritables auteurs ? Comment ont-ils procédé ? Quelles furent leurs sources ? Parlaient-ils arabe ? Qu'est-il advenu de leurs manuscrits ?

Officiellement, plusieurs auteurs, principalement polonais et lituaniens, ont répondu à toutes ces questions dans de nombreux articles. Cependant, lors de recherches sur la traduction du Coran au XIX^e s., dans le cadre d'une maîtrise, puis d'une thèse de doctorat à La Sorbonne sur le plus important traducteur polonais du Coran, Albert de Biberstein Kazimirski (1808–1887), l'analyse de ces réponses ne s'est pas avérée concluante (Drira 2022 et 2024). Pour un arabisant, possédant une bonne connaissance du Coran, polonophile, mais non polonais, certaines explications avancées par ces auteurs comme allant de soi, semblent hautement discutables. Par ailleurs, certains détails passés inaperçus devraient au contraire être une priorité. Cet article a pour but de présenter les dernières recherches sur le Coran des Philomathes, telle la découverte des liens de Kazimirski avec cette traduction, ainsi qu'une remise en question de plusieurs théories officielles. La synthèse de ces travaux fut présentée récemment en novembre 2023 dans une conférence en anglais lors du colloque international de Lublin sur les Philomathes réunissant les plus grands spécialistes polonais et lituaniens sur cette société. La réception encourageante de la part de ces spécialistes démontre qu'il est temps de présenter ces nouvelles théories à un public plus large s'intéressant à l'orientalisme.

Ainsi, quelle est l'importance de l'orientalisme de l'Europe de l'Est, et quelle est la véritable histoire du Coran du Philomathes et des Tatars au-delà des mythes et des légendes à leur égard ? Pour cela il sera intéressant de consacrer une longue première partie à la véritable raison de l'intérêt pour le Coran de la part des Philomathes, puis les sources et la méthode des traducteurs, et enfin les liens de Kazimirski avec cette première traduction polonaise.

1 Pourquoi un tel intérêt pour le Coran de la part des Philomathes

1.1 Un projet non politique

Dans l'historiographie polonaise et française, il est de coutume de faire débiter les événements déclencheurs de l'Insurrection polonaise de 1831 à Vilnius. En effet, dans les années 1820 la Pologne était divisée entre la Prusse, l'Autriche et la Russie, en plus de la ville libre de Cracovie. À l'intérieur du royaume du Congrès sous tutelle russe, la situation politique et économique était plutôt stable. On peut même considérer que la culture polonaise connaissait une ère de prospérité. Le poète national Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1758–1841) avait un poste de secrétaire d'État, et ses *Chants Historiques* écrits entre 1808 et 1810 qui exaltaient le patriotisme polonais, étaient extrêmement populaires en Pologne, malgré la censure (Illouz 2021).

L'Université de Varsovie fut fondée le 19 novembre 1816 par décret du Tsar (1801–1825) et Roi de Pologne (1815–1825) Alexandre I^{er}. Néanmoins, c'est à Vilnius, qui contrairement au royaume du Congrès était totalement annexée à l'Empire russe depuis 1795, que le dynamisme littéraire, scientifique et patriotique polonais était le plus impressionnant. C'est là-bas que le professeur Joachim Lelewel (1786–1861) fonda en 1815 l'*Hebdomadaire de Vilnius* (Serejski 1961) dans lequel son élève Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855), prophète dans l'historiographie polonaise, fit ses débuts¹. Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (1770–1861), qui avait un poste important aux Affaires étrangères russes depuis 1801, fut curateur de l'Université de 1803 à 1823. Le meilleur exemple de cette vigueur de l'esprit à Vilnius est la Société des Philomathes fondée en 1817 justement par Mickiewicz et ses camarades, tels Józef Jeżowski (1793–1855), Franciszek Malewski (1800–1870), Tomasz Zan (1796–1855) et Józef Szczepan Kowalewski (1801–1878). Le professeur Joachim Lelewel était très proche ou peut-être même un membre discret de la société secrète des Philomathes. C'est d'ailleurs ce lien qui lui fit perdre son poste de professeur (Więckowska 1980).

Les Philomathes étaient des étudiants brillants, patriotes passionnés de poésie, avec un philhellénisme bien documenté, surtout après la guerre d'indépendance grecque (1821–1829) (Kalinowska 1995, Borowska 2012). De la Grèce à l'Orient, il n'y a qu'un pas, mais leurs biographes n'ont pas mis cette attirance orientale en avant. Sachant que quasiment tous ceux qui ont déclenché l'Insurrection polonaise étaient liés d'une manière ou d'une autre à Vilnius et à Lelewel, le raisonnement ancré dans l'historiographie polonaise est que toutes leurs activités convergeaient vers l'indépendance polonaise. C'est le piège évident, surtout pour un non-Polonais,

¹ Archives de la Bibliothèque de Vilnius : VUB RS, F2-KC138, qui contient un *curriculum vitae* des personnes ayant travaillé à l'Université (*Opisy służbowe uniwersyteckie*) de 1819 à 1823, avec comme preuve de Mickiewicz élève de Lelewel les pages 629–631.

de l'histoire rétrospective. De ce fait, le projet incroyable et unique en son genre de traduction du Coran des Philomathes fut simplement traité avec le prisme réducteur de la politique. Personne ne remet en cause que le patriotisme était au cœur de la Société des Philomathes, cela est indéniable, mais en faire leur motivation première pour chacune de leurs œuvres conduit inévitablement à un raisonnement fallacieux. C'est pourquoi il faut d'emblée aborder la question de l'intérêt des Philomathes pour le Coran sans la prémisse erronée que tous les travaux des Philomathes avaient pour objectif final l'indépendance de la Pologne.

Bien sûr, tous les chercheurs n'ont pas succombé à ce paralogisme, mais il est surprenant que la raison la plus évidente du projet, l'intérêt en soi pour le Coran et l'orientalisme, fusse à ce point esquivée. Dans un article de Czesław Łapicz sur la première traduction imprimée du Coran en polonais, leur motivation est présentée ainsi (Łapicz 2013 :1) :

« La première traduction du Coran, imprimée et publiée en 1858, a été signée par Jan Musza Tarak Buczacki, Tatar et musulman de Podlasie en Pologne. On sait aujourd'hui que les véritables traducteurs étaient deux Philomathes de Wilno, le prêtre Dionizy Chlewiński et Ignacy Domeyko. Ils ont accompli cette tâche dans les années 1820 pour les Tatars musulmans du Grand-Duché de Lituanie, qui, au fil des générations, avaient perdu non seulement la connaissance de la langue liturgique (arabe), mais aussi de leurs langues et dialectes ethniques (turciques). »

Nous verrons que ce que Czesław Łapicz présente comme un fait connu de tous, à savoir que Buczacki n'en est pas l'auteur, est fort discutable, mais concentrons-nous sur l'explication présentée ici. Selon Łapicz, les Philomathes n'auraient pas créé cette traduction pour eux-mêmes, mais par altruisme envers les Tatars afin de les aider à mieux comprendre le Coran. La question des difficultés des Tatars pour comprendre le Coran en arabe ou en tatar et leur préférence pour le polonais est un sujet intéressant à part. Mais concernant l'action précise des Philomathes de traduire le Coran pour aider les Tatars, y a-t-il la moindre preuve de cette explication ? Telle une demande officielle des Tatars envers cette société secrète, ou au moins quelques visites mutuelles entre des notables tatars et des Philomathes ? À l'évidence non. Le péché originel est que « Polonais » et « orientalisme » semblent pour certains peu compatibles, surtout pour des patriotes tels que les Philomathes, et par conséquent, la raison est recherchée ailleurs.

Czesław Łapicz évoque la volonté d'aider les Tatars tandis que d'autres évoquent un mélange de politique et de patriotisme. La raison serait le souhait d'obtenir le soutien de la communauté tatare envers les Polonais face aux Russes, voire aussi face aux Lituanais. En effet, les Tatars baltiques s'étaient progressivement installés dans la région depuis le XIV^e s. en recevant des terres du Grand-Duc de Lituanie Vytautas le Grand (1392–1430). Or, les Philomathes, en traduisant le Coran pour les Tatars en polonais et non en lituanien, biélorusse ou russe, auraient démontré une

légitimité des Polonais sur les terres du Kresy, la région située aux frontières nord-oriental de l'ancien royaume médiéval des Deux-Nations. Si la caricature ironique est permise, ce genre d'explications, sans preuve tangible, ferait de la traduction du Coran un simple pot-de-vin politique.

Premièrement, tous les Philomathes, les Philarètes, et encore moins tous les intellectuels de l'Université de Vilnius, n'étaient pas exclusivement polonais, ni par leur lieu de naissance, ni par leurs attachements. Un exemple est Michał Bobrowski (Michaïl Bobrovsky) (1784–1848). Né à Wólka en Podlasie, tout près de la frontière de l'actuelle Biélorussie, il fut diplômé en théologie et en philosophie par l'Université de Vilnius en 1814. Il suivit l'exemple de son père Cyril (Kirill) Bobrowski qui était un prêtre unitariste, puis chanoine du chapitre de Brest en 1817. Il fut repéré par Adam Czartoryski qui finança une partie de ses études pendant cinq années de voyage à travers l'Europe, de septembre 1817 à août 1822, en Italie, en France, notamment à la Sorbonne, en Dalmatie et en Allemagne. Il obtint son doctorat de théologie en juillet 1823 à Vilnius et reçut un poste de professeur de théologie. Passionné d'histoire slave et d'orientalisme, chercheur d'anciens manuscrits slaves et des premières publications cyrilliques imprimées, il est présenté à juste titre comme un orientaliste dans toutes les notices à son sujet (Charkiewicz 1936). Il était membre de la Société asiatique de Paris et de Londres, ainsi que de la Société d'histoire et d'antiquité de l'Université de Moscou. Sa passion le mena à prendre l'initiative d'enseigner l'arabe dans ses cours sur la Bible antique alors qu'il n'était pas arabisant. Son frère Michał devint lui aussi docteur de philosophie à Vilnius en 1830, et ensemble avec un groupe de Polonais biélorusses tels Antoni Sosnowski, Ignacy Daniłowicz, Józef Onacewicz, et Józef Jaroszewicz, ils initièrent une nouvelle vague de recherche sur l'histoire de la Lituanie et de la Biélorussie. À tel point qu'on considère Bobrowski comme l'un des pères de la Renaissance nationale biélorusse (Siedlecka-Siwuda 2008). Il était proche ou bien membre à part entière des Philomathes.

Ainsi, il faut être clair, les Philomathes s'intéressaient à l'orientalisme en tant que discipline littéraire et scientifique. Peut-être avaient-ils également des pensées politiques, mais ce n'est, au meilleur des cas, que la face émergée de l'iceberg.

1.2 L'orientalisme à Vilnius au début du XIX^e s.

Vilnius est une ville multiculturelle unique en Europe. La Lituanie fut le dernier pays christianisé en Europe. La majorité des habitants du pays était de confession orthodoxe. À Vilnius vivait la majorité des catholiques du pays, ainsi que beaucoup de protestants luthériens, surtout allemands. Il y avait aussi une communauté juive importante, d'où le surnom de Jérusalem du Nord (Minczeles 2000), avec des tendances religieuses diverses tels les juifs Karaïtes. Pour ajouter une touche orientale, des Tatars musulmans vivaient dans la région de Vilnius. Une diversité exceptionnelle. Tous ces éléments unis ont façonné une ville cosmopolite unique en

Europe. À cela s'ajoute la question délicate de l'appartenance nationale de Vilnius : lituanienne ou polonaise, voire en partie russe à cette époque ? Sans rentrer dans une polémique sur les pourcentages ethnique, il est reconnu que Vilnius était jusqu'au début du XIX^e s. une ville fortement polonisée. On pourrait dresser un parallèle avec Bruxelles, capitale de la Flandre mais francophone. Pour le cas plus précis de l'Université de Vilnius, la polonité fut progressivement atteinte avec en 1816 la reconnaissance du polonais comme langue officielle. Effectivement, Vilnius fut à la fin du XVIII^e et au début du XIX^e s. un foyer important du nationalisme polonais. Beaucoup de personnalités polonaises emblématiques comme Adam Czartoryski, Joachim Lelewel, Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki et Alexandre Chodźko furent façonnés par cette ville. Cette influence est bien connue mais comme dit auparavant, elle ne doit pas conduire à des excès d'interprétation politique sur la traduction coranique des Philomathes.

Un autre démon ensorceleur fauteur de trouble est la vision paternelle dénigrante selon laquelle l'orientalisme commença en Europe occidentale, en France, en Allemagne, en Angleterre et que des pays comme la Pologne ou la Russie n'ont fait que suivre un peu de loin le mouvement. Cela est faux. L'orientalisme polonais est l'un des plus anciens d'Europe, et c'est précisément à Vilnius que cet orientalisme polonais est devenu scientifique (Siwiec 2016). Avant cela, aux XVII^e–XVIII^e s., il y avait en Pologne une époque de « proto-orientalistes ». Les principaux acteurs de ce mouvement étaient des diplomates, des voyageurs ou des missionnaires catholiques polonais qui s'intéressaient aux langues et aux cultures des pays orientaux musulmans, mais pour des raisons diverses, pas forcément scientifiques. Beaucoup d'entre eux étaient autodidactes. Le XVIII^e s. fut l'âge d'or des drogman polonais (Reychman 1947 et 1964). L'apothéose fut la création en 1766 par le Roi Stanisław Auguste Poniatowski de l'École polonaise des langues orientales à Istanbul, une des premières écoles orientalistes dans le monde. Les résultats ne furent pas ceux escomptés (Siemieniec-Gołaś 2017), mais le projet, par la volonté du Roi polonais en personne de donner à l'orientalisme polonais une attache académique, était lancé.

Or, la première université liée à la Pologne, qui prit le relais orientaliste après l'épopée des drogman fut celle de Vilnius, qui rappelons-le était la plus grande et la plus ancienne université de tout l'Empire russe, ayant été fondée en 1579 (Beauvois 1977 et 2019). Dès la nomination du Comte Adam Czartoryski en tant que curateur de l'Université de Vilnius en 1803, il se montra favorable à un projet de chaire orientale suggéré par le célèbre explorateur, le Comte Jan Potocki (1761–1815) dans plusieurs lettres envoyées de Vienne et de Troitsk (Russie) en 1804 et 1805 (Mejor 2009:15–28). En 1810 un poste de professeur de langues orientales fut proposé en 1810 au linguiste et ethnographe berlinois Heinrich Julius Klaproth (1783–1835), avec la garantie de Czartoryski de payer une partie supplémentaire de son salaire de sa poche. Klaproth déclina le poste et préféra rester à l'académie de Saint-Pétersbourg, puis, lorsque la guerre éclata avec Napoléon, il retourna à Berlin

en 1812, puis à Paris en 1815. Toutefois, l'intérêt pour l'Orient grec et musulman était si fort que des professeurs, pourtant ni arabisants, ni iranologues, ont brisé la glace dès 1810. Les premiers cours d'arabe furent donnés par Szymon (Sebastian) Feliks Żukowski (1782–1834), professeur d'hébreu et de grec en 1810 (Bumblauskas 2016 et 2020). L'imprimeur impérial à Vilnius, Józef Zawadzki (1781–1838), plaida sans succès pour que Żukowski obtienne le poste vacant de la chaire orientale ou un nouveau poste, notamment pour enseigner le tatar et les langues Criméennes. Żukowski eut une longue correspondance avec Lelewel, publiée à Varsovie (Żukowska 2008). Lelewel l'encourageait à approfondir ses connaissances de l'arabe et du tatar.

L'orientalisme savant polonais était donc lancé à Vilnius, mais la chaire orientale était toujours vide. En 1822 elle devait être attribuée à Józef Julian Sękowski (1800–1858), un orientaliste polonais spécialiste de l'arabe, le turc et le persan, considérés comme les « langues musulmanes » (Versteegh 2020). Polonais né en Lituanie, il était membre de la Société Szubrawcy (les scélérats). On sait aujourd'hui qu'il a écrit sous le pseudonyme d'un « sage indien » plusieurs articles dans le journal satirique de la Société, *Wiadomości Brukowe (Actualité des rues)* paru de 1816 à 1822 (Sayaka 2011). Il y critiquait sous forme de métaphores orientales la noblesse lituanienne. Très peu de personnes étaient au courant. Au contraire, il était perçu comme un étudiant studieux et détaché de la politique. Il était apprécié par ses professeurs et a beaucoup appris du philologue allemand Gottfried Ernst Groddeck (1762–1825), professeur de grec, chez qui étudia aussi Mickiewicz. Il sortit en 1819 diplômé de plusieurs départements, physiques, mathématiques, politiques et philologies. Il reçut la flamme orientale des cours de Lelewel qu'il considéra comme son mentor pendant de longues années. Décidément, le « Vilnius nastavnik » avait fait des émules. D'ailleurs, un des premiers travaux de Sękowski (1818) fut la traduction des *Amsal Lokman El-Hakim*, de l'arabe au polonais, publié à Vilnius. Ce n'est pas un hasard si le premier livre d'Albert de Biberstein Kazimirski (1808–1887) fut également une traduction polonaise d'*Amṯāl Lūqmān al-ḥakīm, Przypowieści Lokmana mądrogo*², et que son mentor était aussi l'incontournable Lelewel.

En 1821, Sękowski reçut le poste d'interprète des langues orientales pour le Collège des Affaires étrangères à Saint-Petersbourg. Sa notoriété dans le domaine orientaliste grandissait et une belle carrière scientifique l'attendait. Il n'est pas clair s'il postula officiellement le poste vacant à Vilnius, mais son nom circulait. Le journaliste et secrétaire de l'Université, Kazimierz Kontrym (1776–1836), écrivit à son sujet une lettre à Czartoryski pour appuyer sa candidature, en précisant qu'il serait d'abord professeur d'arabe, « langue de savoir, utile pour la médecine, les sciences, la littérature, la diplomatie, les activités militaires » (Mejor 2009 :21). Czartoryski était partant et lui apporta son soutien. Le 28 avril 1822, le recteur de l'Université, Szymon Malewski, approuva sa nomination avec un salaire de 1 000

² Bibliothèque de Kórnik, BK : 482.

roubles. Mais le Tsar le voulait pour lui et lui offrit le poste de professeur des langues orientales à l'Université de Saint-Petersbourg. Il fallut à Sękowski quelques mois pour prendre sa décision, puis il informa Czartoryski le 20 août 1822 qu'il déclinait le poste à Vilnius (Serikoff 2009). En même temps, pouvait-il sereinement refuser l'offre du Tsar ? Il lui offrait un meilleur salaire et de grandes opportunités scientifiques. Dès lors il devint Osip Ivanovich Senkovsky. La Russie l'honora. Il fut au cœur de l'effervescence de l'orientalisme russe (Śliwa 2018).

Car contrairement à l'Europe occidentale, la Russie était bien consciente du potentiel des orientalistes polonais et sut en tirer grand profit dans plusieurs domaines. Le fait que des orientalistes polonais ont servi la Russie au XIX^e s. avant l'indépendance de la Pologne, ne devrait pas être une raison de les couvrir de *damnatio memoriae*. Du moins, pas plus que ceux ayant vécu en Prusse ou en Autriche, qui rappelons-le, occupaient aussi une partie de la Pologne. Surtout que plusieurs de ces orientalistes et diplomates polonais de l'Empire russe restèrent fidèles à la Pologne jusqu'à leur dernier soupir. Certains ont même publié des livres en polonais depuis la Russie, ou sont revenus à la fin de leur vie dans leurs natale en Pologne.

L'orientalisme était en vogue à Vilnius au début du XIX^e s. Tel est le contexte dans lequel les Philomathes ont fait leurs études. Pour répondre à la question de la raison de l'intérêt des Philomathes pour le Coran, la réponse devrait être la plus simple et la plus évidente : ils étaient attirés par l'orientalisme. Pour être plus précis, ils souhaitaient par ce projet rendre l'orientalisme polonais plus scientifique et académique. La traduction du Coran et des livres sacrés est un fait récurrent chez les orientalistes polonais en général. Quant aux Philomathes, contrairement à l'image que l'on donne trop souvent d'eux, il ne s'agit pas d'un regroupement exclusivement formé de poètes, historiens et hommes politiques, il ne faut pas oublier que plusieurs d'entre eux étaient des orientalistes certifiés.

1.3 Le cœur orientaliste des Philomathes

Il est surprenant que même les spécialistes n'aient pas donné grande importance au fait que plusieurs membres de cette société patriotique secrète ont soit écrit directement sur l'Islam ou traduit des livres orientaux. Prenons quatre exemples appartenant à l'élite des Philomathes. D'abord Józef Szczepan Kowalewski (1801–1878), l'un des fondateurs de la société. Peu de gens savent qu'il a écrit vers les années 1820 une biographie du Prophète Muhammad, faisant une centaine de pages en polonais, *Apie Mahomet*. Elle ne fut pas publiée, sûrement à cause de la condamnation des Philomathes en 1823, ce qui explique son oubli chez ses biographes. Elle est conservée en excellent état à Vilnius, et ne demande qu'à être mise en avant par des recherches futures³. Kowalewski, tout en restant fidèle à la Pologne, fit carrière dans

³ VUB RS, F11–7.

l'empire russe en tant qu'Ossip Mikhaïlovitch Kovalevsky. Après un passage par Saint-Pétersbourg, il étudia le mongol, le tibétain et le bouddhisme à Kazan. Il devint en 1833 professeur des langues mongoles à l'Université de Kazan, la première chaire du genre en Europe, le rêve qu'avait Jan Potocki pour Vilnius. Kowalewski publia en russe sur la grammaire mongole en 1835, puis un *Dictionnaire mongol-russe-français* en trois volumes (1844–1849). Il retourna à Varsovie en 1862 et devint directeur du département de philologie et d'histoire de l'École principale de Varsovie (1857–1869) puis de l'Université impériale de Varsovie (1870–1915).

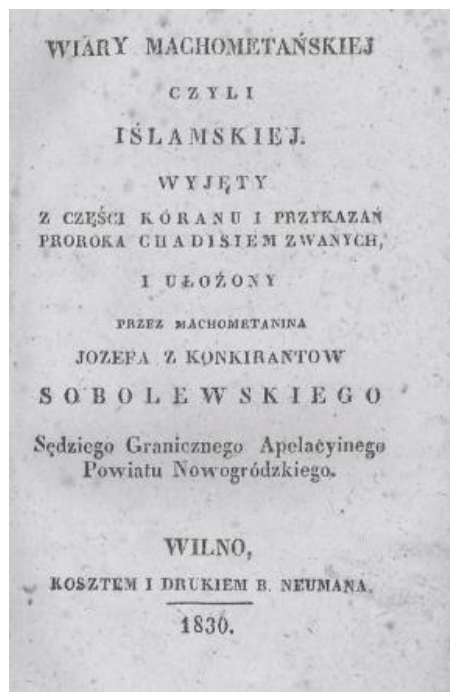


Illustration 1 : deuxième et troisième de couverture du livre sur l'Islam et le Coran de Józef Sobolewski de Konkirantow imprimé à Vilnius en 1830 : *Wykład wiary machometañskiej czyli iślamskiej wyjęty z części Kóranu i przykazań proroka Chadisiem zwanych, i ułożony przez mahometanina*. La deuxième de couverture est décorée avec la Louve capitoline, et les fondateurs Rome : Romulus et Rémus.

Un autre exemple prouvant que l'aventure du Coran n'est pas un cas isolé est celui de Józef Sobolewski de Konkirantow, dont on ne connaît pas bien la biographie. Toutefois, il est certain qu'il a publié à Vilnius en 1830 un livre en polonais sur l'Islam et le Coran, *Wykład wiary machometañskiej czyli iślamskiej wyjęty z części Kóranu i przykazań proroka Chadisiem zwanych, i ułożony przez machometanina* [La foi des Mahométans, c'est-à-dire l'Islam, d'après des extraits du Coran et des commandements du Prophète]. La bibliothèque de Kórnik, fondée

par le Comte Tytus Adam Działyński (1796–1861) qui fut le mécène de nombreux orientalistes dont Kazimirski, possède une copie du livre de Sobolewski⁴. Un fait intrigant est la décoration de la deuxième de couverture de ce livre, illustrée à la page précédente, avec la Louve capitoline et les fondateurs légendaires de Rome : Romulus et Rémus. Cela semble hors-sujet, mais il y avait un lien, dans la conception de ces étudiants, entre l'Orient et le monde antique classique. En France également, beaucoup de savants prirent ce chemin. Victor Hugo (1829 :4) résume parfaitement cela en 1829 dans *Les Orientales* : « Au siècle de Louis XIV, on était helléniste, maintenant on est orientaliste. Il y a un pas de fait. Jamais tant d'intelligences n'ont fouillé à la fois ce grand abîme de l'Asie. »

Le poète Józef Jeżowski (1793–1855), l'un des fondateurs des Philomathes, illustrerait parfaitement cette citation. Après des études à Saint-Pétersbourg, il donna des cours à l'Université de Moscou, puis fut nommé professeur de philologie à l'Université de Kazan. C'était sa vocation depuis Vilnius, où il avait publié plusieurs livres sur Homère. Il y a d'ailleurs une comparaison pertinente à faire entre l'influence du Coran dans la littérature arabe et celle de *l'Iliade* et de *l'Odyssee* pour la littérature occidentale.

Enfin, il est impératif de mentionner le cas de Jan (Ivan) Nepomucen Wiernikowski (1800–1877) (Zagoskin 1904). Membre certifié des Philarètes, il publia en 1823 une traduction polonaise d'un poème grec de Pindare (518 av. J.-C. – 438 av. J.-C). Il étudia les langues musulmanes à Saint-Pétersbourg puis enseigna l'arabe et l'hébreu au Lycée (« Gymnasium ») de Kazan en 1827. Il fut promu professeur d'histoire à l'Université de Kazan en 1832. C'est sûrement à cette époque qu'il traduisit en polonais les *gazel* de Ḥāfīz, faisant de lui un des trois premiers traducteurs de Ḥāfīz, avec Sękowski et Chodźko, tous trois formés à l'orientalisme à Vilnius puis en Russie. Le manuscrit de Wiernikowski fut publié tardivement à Varsovie (Majewska 1960). Ses travaux en polonais confirment qu'on ne peut « dépoloniser » ces savants et diplomates polonais ayant vécu en Russie. Wiernikowski fut en effet exclu de son poste à Kazan pour avoir propagé des idées considérées anti-Russes. Il fut déporté à Simbirsk (Ulyanovsk), ville connue par la naissance de Vladimir Lénine. Wiernikowski se débrouilla bien puisqu'il dénicha un poste de professeur d'allemand et de français et finit directeur du Lycée (« Gymnasium ») de Simbirsk (Zieliński 1933 :590). Il publia une traduction polonaise d'un poème islandais *de la Saga de Frithiof*. L'écrivain russe Alexandre Ivanovitch Herzen (1812–1870), considéré comme le « père du socialisme populiste russe », dans ses mémoires *Passé et Méditation (My Past and Thoughts)*, mentionne son passage à Simbirsk, et fait l'éloge d'Ivan Vernikovsky (Wiernikowski) (Herzen 1968 :788–793). De même le ministre de l'Agriculture russe Leonid Lebedev, né en 1840 et ayant fait ses études secondaires au *gymnasium* de Simbirsk, décrit Vernikovsky (Wiernikowski) comme un professeur orientaliste consciencieux

⁴ BK : 117 984.

érudit, proche de ses élèves, connaissant l'histoire de la Russie et les langues latines et slaves (Lebedev 1909). Wiernikowski termina sa vie à Kharkiv où il donna des cours à l'Université qui, fondée en 1804, était alors la plus ancienne université ukrainienne de l'Empire russe, Lviv étant à l'époque autrichienne.

Les orientalistes de l'Université de Vilnius ont joué un rôle clé dans le développement de l'orientalisme en Russie, avec d'abord Sękowski comme mentionné précédemment, puis d'autres érudits des Philomathes, puis leur sorte de successeurs, les Philarètes. Le meilleur exemple de ce dernier groupe est Aleksander Borejko Chodźko (1803–1891). Grand orientaliste spécialiste de l'Iran. Il fit une belle carrière diplomatique et scientifique, ce qui était possible simultanément dans l'Empire russe. Né en 1804 à Krzywicze, dans l'actuelle Biélorussie, il arriva à Vilnius en 1820 et obtint un diplôme de philologie en 1823. Il noua une amitié avec Mickiewicz et adhéra à la Société des Philarètes, qui succéda aux Philomathes. Il étudia en 1824 à l'École des langues orientales du ministère des Affaires étrangères de Russie. Il fut envoyé le 1^{er} janvier 1830 en tant que drogman de la légation russe à Bakou, alors dans l'Azerbaïdjan persan⁵. Il resta dans la région et gravit les échelons pour devenir consul général de la province du Gilan le 20 août 1841. Malgré la distance, il était resté proche de son ami Mickiewicz. Prétextant un voyage médical, il le rejoignit à Paris en 1843. La Russie le promut en son absence consul général de Russie en Iran le 19 mars 1843. Dans les faits il n'exerça jamais ce poste car il resta à Paris, où il devint professeur de la chaire slave au Collège de France en automne 1857.

Au cours du XIX^e s. l'importance des orientalistes polonais issus de Vilnius diminua considérablement en Russie. Toutefois, celui qui guida pendant de longues années la faculté orientale de Saint-Pétersbourg en tant que doyen de l'Université était Antoni Muchliński (Anton Osipovich Muchlinsky) (1808–1877), un Polonais né en Biélorussie, diplômé de l'Université de Vilnius en 1826, et ancien élève de Lelewel. Il avait émigré de son gré à Saint-Pétersbourg et travailla à l'Académie impériale des sciences. Il fut envoyé en 1832 en mission à Constantinople et en profita pour étudier pendant deux ans le turc et l'arabe. Il voyagea en Syrie et résida une année en Égypte. Il retourna à Saint-Pétersbourg en 1835 avec des manuscrits de la mosquée al-Azhar du Caire. Il donna des cours à l'Université de Saint-Pétersbourg en tant que professeur d'arabe suppléant de Sękowski. En 1839 il fut nommé professeur de littérature turque. Il donnait aussi des cours à l'Université de Kazan. En 1846 il reçut la direction de la Bibliothèque gouvernementale de Varsovie, et aussi la charge d'inspecteur des écoles juives de la région de Kaunas en Lituanie. Il aurait pu finir sa vie en Pologne, mais il retourna à son poste de professeur de turc à l'École orientale de Saint-Pétersbourg en 1853. À l'ouverture de la faculté orientale en 1854, il reçut le poste de professeur principal de turc, auquel

⁵ Archives de la politique étrangère de la Fédération de Russie AVPRI (АВПРИ) : dossier de Chodzko : fond 461/1, d. 870, n° 206, L. 2v., Op. 464/3, année 1846.

il ajouta en 1855 l'enseignement de l'histoire turque. Il publia en 1857 et 1858 en polonais et en russe à Vilnius *Le Sultan Suleiman*, un livre de 1558, qu'il avait traduit du tatar et fait précéder d'une introduction sur l'histoire des Tatars de Lituanie. Il rédigea également en polonais et en russe en 1858 un livre sur l'Égypte. Il composa en 1858 un manuel d'apprentissage du turc à l'usage des étudiants, faisant de lui peut-être le premier professeur orientaliste à présenter un manuel d'apprentissage pratique pour ses cours. Il eut aussi la brillante idée d'écrire un *Dictionnaire des expressions dans notre langue (russe) prise des langues orientales*. L'alliance de l'orientalisme à l'éducation militaire dans les années 1850–1860 joua en sa faveur car le turc était la langue du moment en Russie après la guerre d'Orient perdue. C'est en reconnaissance de ses travaux et sacrifices qu'il fut élu doyen de la faculté orientale de Saint-Pétersbourg de 1859 à 1866. Il retourna en 1869 à Varsovie, où il finit ses jours. Il illustre parfaitement le possible attachement simultanée des orientalistes polonais à la Pologne et à la Russie.

2 L'épopée coranique des Philomathes

Déconstruire le discours politique est en soi une étape importante. Reste à présenter avec précision les véritables auteurs et leurs méthodes. Là encore, le chercheur est en droit de s'étonner : comment a-t-on abordé avec autant de légèreté la possibilité pour de non-arabisants de traduire le Coran à Vilnius au début du XIX^e s ?

2.1 Les *Tefsirs* tatars

Le cas unique des Tatars musulmans arrivés au XV^e s. au Duché de Lituanie, d'origine mongole, parlant une langue turque, écrivant avec des lettres arabes, ayant adopté le polonais et le biélorusse comme langue de communication avec leurs voisins slaves, est une aubaine pour un historien. La découverte d'un manuscrit de *Tefsir* tatar daté de 1686 à la Bibliothèque de l'Académie nationale des sciences de Biélorussie à Mińsk suscita un regain d'intérêt en Pologne, en Lituanie, en Russie et en Biélorussie sur la littérature tatare européenne. Un autre manuscrit crucial est celui d'Alytus en Lituanie (*Tefsir z Olity*). Daté de 1723, il est également appelé *Tefsir de Jabłoński*, car son copiste a été identifié comme étant Izmael Jabłoński, fils de Mustafa. Ce manuscrit était en 1836 la possession d'un imam polonais, Ibrahim Januszewski qui développa et modernisa le texte (Starczewska 2023). Apparemment, ces *Tefsirs* tatars circulaient dans le cercle musulman du Nord de l'Europe sans attention des Polonais. Ils ne se doutaient pas qu'ils contenaient une traduction interlinéaire en polonais, écrite avec l'alphabet arabe. En effet le titre *Tefsir* (en turc) ou *Tafsir* (*Tafsīr*), du mot arabe signifiant approximativement clarification ou explication, et l'utilisation exclusive de l'alphabet arabe ne facilitaient pas à un non-arabisant l'accès au contenu. On supposait une exégèse.

La traduction du Coran fut traitée avec beaucoup de précautions par les musulmans. Comme développé dans un article de cette revue sur l'histoire de la traduction du Coran (Drira 2019), quelques savants musulmans ont au départ bien accueilli le projet pour aider les nouveaux convertis. Abū Ḥanīfa (699–767) leur autorisait même l'usage de ces traductions lors de la prière en attendant leur apprentissage possible de l'arabe. Mais au VIII^e s. l'usage de traductions pour la prière et la « liturgie » musulmane en général fit débat. Un consensus émergea au XI^e s. sur le fait que la traduction n'était en aucun cas égale à l'original arabe, ne pouvait donc pas être considérée comme la parole divine elle-même et était par conséquent inutilisable dans la prière. De plus, toutes les langues n'étaient pas vues comme égales. Le persan bénéficiait par exemple d'un statut privilégié. Globalement, les traductions n'étaient pas encouragées et uniquement acceptées pour fournir des explications, dans le cadre d'un *tafsīr*.

Certains *tafsīr* étaient extrêmement longs, avec des dizaines de volumes, expliquant en détail chaque verset d'un point de vue historique, juridique, linguistique et autre. D'autres *tafsīr* en revanche étaient très courts et se rapprochaient en réalité d'une traduction. Les *tafsīr* des Tatars d'Europe du Nord étaient de ce genre. Ils ont fait l'objet de recherches sérieuses. L'Université Nicolas Copernic de Toruń est pionnière dans ce domaine. En 2017, après une analyse minutieuse de plus de vingt manuscrits tatars polonais de Lituanie, Biélorussie et Russie des XVII^e et XVIII^e s., l'Université a conclu qu'il existait bien une traduction polonaise datant de la seconde moitié du XVI^e s., faisant ainsi du polonais l'une des plus anciennes langues de traduction coranique, la troisième en Europe après le latin et l'italien. Il existe également une autre hypothèse, ancienne, selon laquelle la traduction aurait été d'abord écrite en biélorusse, puis traduite en polonais en 1686, mais il n'existe aucun manuscrit biélorusse pour le confirmer.

Mais qui est l'auteur de cette traduction polonaise ancienne ? D'après Andrzej Drozd dans un article de 2004 : « l'affaire est sans ambiguïté : l'auteur de la traduction et en même temps le copiste est Urjasz ibn Ismaïl, imam de Minsk qui termina son travail dans cette ville [Mińsk] en automne 1686 » (Drozd 2004 :241). Une zone de flou subsiste tout de même aux yeux d'Andrzej Drozd puisqu'il explique quelques pages plus loin qu'il existe un autre manuscrit de *Tefsīr* plus ancien, de 1682, moins complet mais avec des notes dans les marges, découvert en 1924 à Pskov en Russie près de la Lituanie. Urjasz ibn Ismaïl ne serait pas le premier traducteur. Cependant, ce qui compte ici est de savoir que l'auteur de ce *tafsīr* était un musulman tatar, *a priori* un imam. Il s'agissait donc d'un ouvrage collectif avec des ajouts d'un imam à l'autre.

2.2 Les traducteurs du Coran chez les Philomathes

L'historiographie de cette traduction et la manière dont les auteurs connus ont agi supposent que ce projet fut entrepris dès le départ collectivement au nom du groupe.

Il a dû y avoir au début des années 1820 une décision collective des Philomathes, peut-être après des débats, avec une répartition des tâches pour la publication d'une traduction anonyme, produit collectivement avec la « marque déposée » des Philomathes. Les historiens présentent trois personnes ayant participé au projet sans que l'on ne sache ni l'étendue, ni les dates exactes de leur contribution.

Il y avait au départ le prêtre Dionizy Chlewiński, puis surtout Ignacy Domeyko (1802–1889) qui est celui dont le nom revient le plus souvent, ce qui en ferait l'auteur principal. Diplômé de philosophie à Vilnius en 1822, il s'exila à Paris en 1832, puis suivit un chemin atypique en émigrant en Amérique latine, où il fit une brillante carrière scientifique en tant que géologue et minéralogiste (Zbigniew 1995). Il fut de 1867 à 1883 recteur de l'Université du Chili à Santiago et modernisa l'enseignement universitaire moderne au Chili en s'inspirant du modèle de l'Université de Vilnius. Domeyko était donc sans aucun doute un personnage talentueux depuis sa jeunesse. Mais cela n'empêche qu'il n'était pas arabisant et n'avait apparemment jamais suivi de cours d'arabe. Il fut pourtant le protagoniste du projet. Il continua à travailler sur le Coran même après la condamnation des Philomathes en 1823, durant son « temps libre » dans sa ferme où il était assigné à la résidence surveillée. Pour l'anecdote, il acheta durant cette « retraite orientale » des chevaux arabes du célèbre orientaliste polonais Waław Seweryn Rzewuski (1784–1831), un véritable arabisant, surnommé par des émirs du Hedjaz, *Tāğ al-fahr* (Couronne de la fierté). Qui sait, si Domeyko lui fit part de son travail sur le Coran ? D'après certaines sources, Domeyko aurait aussi reçu l'aide de Sobolewski, peut-être tardivement vers 1830 (Kulwicka-Kamińska 2016). Globalement les articles sur les Philomathes ne sont pas précis sur la répartition des tâches, aucune date exacte, ni preuves d'archives ne sont données, mais trois auteurs sont identifiés : Domeyko, le principal, Chlewiński et Sobolewski. Ce qui saute aux yeux n'est qu'aucun d'eux n'étaient arabisants. Peut-être que Sobolewski connaissait un peu la langue, mais ni lui, ni ses deux camarades n'avait la connaissance de Sībawayhi (c. 760 – c. 796). Mais alors comment ces étudiants non-arabisants s'essayèrent-ils à une tâche aussi ardue que la première traduction du Coran en polonais ? Il est difficile de comprendre pourquoi une question aussi essentielle n'ait pas été abordée dans de nombreux articles sur le Coran des Philomathes.

Bien sûr, du XVII^e et XIX^e s. certains auteurs ont traduit le Coran en s'appuyant sur d'autres traductions, surtout en langue latine ou française (Drira 2019). Mais dans ce cas-là, leurs sources étaient connues. Or, quel Coran les Philomathes avaient-ils en leur possession à Vilnius ? Pour l'original en arabe, la tâche était compliquée pour un non musulman. En 1820, il n'était pas possible d'aller dans la librairie de son quartier pour y commander un Coran. Les manuscrits étaient rares et onéreux avant le Coran arabe imprimé à Leipzig en 1834 par Gustav Flügel (1802–1870). De même, rien n'indique que les Philomathes avaient à leur disposition une traduction latine ou dans une autre langue. C'est un sujet qui reste à approfondir par une analyse plus poussée du catalogue de la Bibliothèque de Vilnius, mais apparemment

l'Université ne possédait aucune traduction coranique au début du XIX^e s. En revanche, on trouve dans les archives de la Bibliothèque un magnifique *tafsīr* complet de 956 pages, daté de 1788 et conservé dans un excellent état à la Bibliothèque de Vilnius. Ce manuscrit est la clé de l'énigme. En effet, comme on peut l'observer à la page suivante avec un extrait de la sourate (*sūrat*) *al-Muṭaffifīn* (83, versets 6–9), le manuscrit est parfaitement lisible, comportant une ligne en lettres polonaises pour chaque ligne de versets arabes. Les talentueux Philomathes se sont sûrement rendu compte qu'ils avaient entre les mains non pas un *Tefsir* classique, avec une explication, mais une véritable traduction polonaise écrite en lettres arabes. Leur intention devait être la transcription en lettres latines polonaises, avec une révision du style et de la langue pour la rendre adaptée à un public plus large. Voilà un projet utile et réalisable.

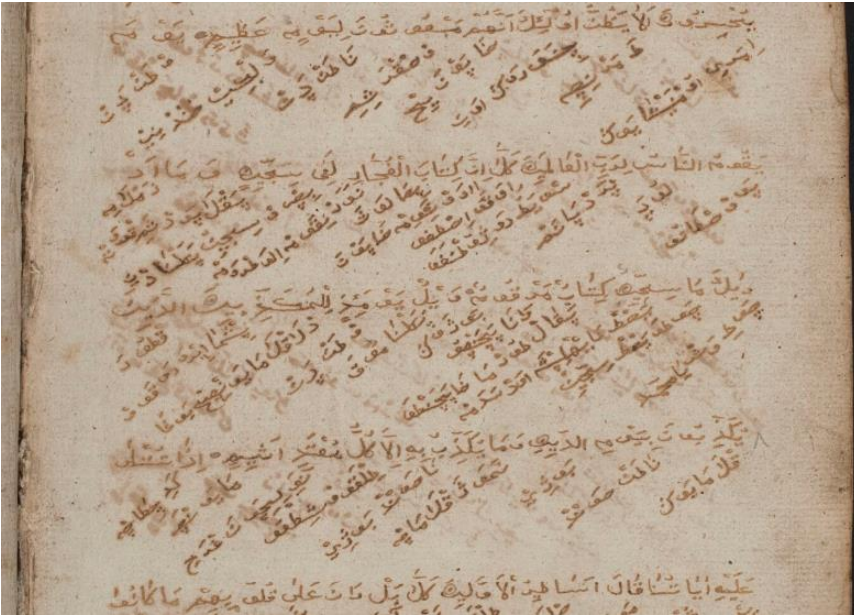


Illustration 2 : page 33 (d'après la classification de la bibliothèque) du *Tefsir* de 1788 conservée à Bibliothèque de Vilnius VUB RS, F3–392.

Ajoutons également que ce type de projet de traduction, basé sur la transcription et la révision du style, peut inciter ses auteurs à ne pas considérer leur travail comme une véritable création, et de ce fait ne pas créer d'attachement fort à l'ouvrage. Ceci expliquerait, sans dénigrer l'importance du projet, le fait qu'aucun des trois auteurs de Philomathes, n'ait achevé la traduction plus tard dans leur vie, ni n'ait clairement proclamé ses droits d'auteur. Le cœur de leur projet de traduction coranique était plutôt de mettre en valeur l'œuvre pionnière du genre en langue polonaise, faite par des Tatars. Le paradoxe est qu'aujourd'hui, comme nous l'avons vu dans la citation précédente de Czesław Łapicz, la théorie officielle affirme exactement le contraire !

Au lieu de Philomathes suivant les Tatars, ce sont des Tatars polonais, la famille Buczacki, qui sont accusés d'avoir usurpé la traduction des Philomathes. C'est le monde à l'envers ou comme dirait le proverbe français, cela revient à mettre la charrue avant les bœufs !

2.3 La traduction de la famille Buczacki

La toute première traduction du Coran en polonais moderne fut imprimée à Varsovie en 1858. En soi, cette publication démontre d'une part que la censure russe était parfois plus souple que la censure prussienne, qui, comme nous le verrons, a longtemps combattu la publication d'un Coran en polonais. D'autre part, cela prouve l'intérêt à l'échelle nationale car le livre n'était pas destiné aux musulmans en particulier. C'est une observation historiographique à relever. À titre de comparaison, la Grèce n'eut une traduction moderne qu'en 1880 et la Serbie en 1875. Un autre exemple est le *Perska księga* en polonais par Samuel Otwinowski (c. 1575 – c. 1650), soit la toute première traduction européenne de *Gulistan* de Sa'dī aš-Šīrāzī (c. 1210 – c. 1292). Elle fut publiée à Varsovie en 1879 au détriment de la traduction polonaise *Gulistan, to jest Ogród różany Sa'dego z Szyrazu* de Kazimirski, qui paya très cher le fait d'avoir oublié Otwinowski. En effet prenant l'orientalisme d'Europe orientale de haut depuis la France, Kazimirski n'a pas soupçonné en publiant sa liste exhaustive de toutes les traductions européennes de *Gulistan*, qu'un autre Polonais les avait tous devancés (Drira 2021).

Ce n'est pas un secret, mais certains Polonais, même parmi les historiens, ont tendance à toujours comparer la Pologne à la France et aux pays occidentaux, d'où le manque d'estime parfois pour leurs contributions. En effet, ce sentiment d'appartenance uniquement à la sphère occidentale, pousse à juger la qualité de la production littéraire d'un pays d'Europe centrale ou orientale, principalement en vertu de la similitude de leurs œuvres avec celles en Occident. De même cette idée préconçue de supériorité occidentale depuis la Renaissance, engendre un classement entre pays développés, ou non développés ou en voie de le faire. De ce fait, dans la conception de plusieurs auteurs et penseurs de l'époque contemporaine, il va de soi qu'un progrès scientifique ou littéraire procède de l'Occident vers l'Orient. Un piège dans lequel Kazimirski tomba tête baissée en 1876 avec sa traduction du *Gulistan* et son oubli d'Otwinowski. La comparaison excessive de la Pologne avec l'Europe occidentale plutôt que la partie orientale est un sujet soulevé depuis de nombreuses années par l'historien Dariusz Kołodziejczyk dans de multiples livres, articles et conférences, suivant la réflexion initiée par ses professeurs Marian Malowist (1909–1988) et Antoni Maczak (1928–2003) (Kołodziejczyk 2011 et 2018).⁶

⁶ De manière plus générale pour la perception de supériorité occidentale et son influence dans les ouvrages, certains livres anciens sont toujours d'actualité tels ceux de Lévi Strauss en 1952 dans *Race et Histoire* ou même *Orientalism*, d'Edward Said en 1978, traduit en 1980

Quoi qu'il en soit, la première traduction polonaise en lettre latine fut publiée en 1858 et attribuée à titre posthume au Tatar polonais Jan Murza Tarak Buczacki (1830–1857) originaire de Podlasie, près de la Lituanie et de la Biélorussie. La traduction fut révisée par l'orientaliste Władysław Kościuszko (1817–1862). Elle se constitue de deux volumes uniquement en polonais, le premier contenant une introduction et une vie du Prophète, ainsi qu'une présentation de l'Islam et des relations polonaises avec les Turcs et les Tatars. L'éditeur Aleksander Nowolecki suggère dans son introduction que le véritable auteur serait le père de Buczacki, Jan Selim, mort en 1834, ou peut-être son grand-père, Jakub Buczacki. Au départ cela ne suscita pas de polémiques. Mais au XX^e s., on commença à douter de l'affiliation à la famille Buczacki, puis avec la chute du communisme et la remise en question de tout ce qui fut supervisé par la Russie, le doute se transforma en certitude. En 1995, l'historien de l'Université de Varsovie, Zbigniew Wójcik (1922–2014), affirma qu'elle était en réalité la traduction de Dionizy Chlewiński et Ignacy Domeyko, mais que publier en Pologne russe un livre des Philomathes n'aurait pas été permis, d'où son attribution à un Polonais Tatar (Wójcik 1995). Cet avis fait aujourd'hui l'unanimité en Pologne. Pourtant, cette théorie est synonyme d'une sérieuse série d'accusations d'usurpations et de mensonges. Or, si on se fie à la théorie de cet article que Domeyko, Chlewiński ou Sobolewski n'ont eux-mêmes fait que retranscrire une traduction polonaise ancienne, cela expliquerait l'attribution d'Aleksander Nowolecki et de Władysław Kościuszko à la traduction à des Tatars polonais. Peut-être que la famille Buczacki a comparé la retranscription des Philomathes sur l'original tatar. Pourquoi pas ? Mais il est difficile d'imaginer l'invention de toute pièce d'un traducteur tatar sans que lui ou sa famille n'aient ajouté un peu d'encre au manuscrit des Philomathes. En réalité, la traduction de 1858 est un travail de groupe et il reste encore quelques protagonistes à présenter.

3 Une œuvre collective, les contributions de Działyński, Potocki et Kazimirski

La première traduction polonaise débuta dans les terres biélorusses et lituaniennes au XVII^e s., puis elle fut transformée en version moderne à Vilnius au début du XIX^e s. pour enfin voir le jour à Varsovie en 1858. Une autre ville complète ce tableau, Kórnik, la ville du Comte Działyński et de sa grande bibliothèque dans son château au style unique : gothique et orientale.

L'Orientalisme : L'Orient créé par l'Occident, complété en 2000 par *Culture et Impérialisme (Culture and Imperialism)*, 1993).



Illustration 3 : salle mauresque du château de Kórnik inspirée de la cour des Lions de l'Alhambra.

3.1 La rencontre de Domeyko avec Potocki et Kazimirski

Domeyko vécut à Paris de 1832 à 1838. Il rencontra certainement Kazimirski puisque Domeyko fonda avec Mickiewicz la Société des Frères unis en 1834, soit la même année où Kazimirski créa avec Mickiewicz la Société slave. Il se peut que ce soit en réalité la même société. Rafał Berger pense qu'ils auraient travaillé ensemble sur la traduction du Coran (Berger 2016). Ceci est inexacte car, comme nous le verrons, Kazimirski voulait être traducteur à part entière et certainement pas un simple membre d'un groupe de traducteurs coraniques polonais. Il est vrai que Kazimirski avait déjà lu le Coran à Berlin en 1830. Il le mentionne souvent dans ses correspondances avec son mentor Lelewel. Il lui écrit le 23 novembre 1830 :

« Je ne voudrais pas que vous tiriez comme conclusion de mon silence concernant la langue arabe que je m'en occupe moins. Bien au contraire, je consacre la moitié de mon temps à la lecture d'Alcoran, d'*al-Mu'allaqāt* et d'al-Mutanabbī. Et je pense très sérieusement à publier une édition intégrale d'*al-Mu'allaqāt* d'une façon que si vous me le permettez, Monsieur, j'expliquerai ultérieurement. Cela dépend de plusieurs conditions. إن شاء الله دواهم (*in šā' Allāh dawāhim*) [sic!].

Veillez mesurer, Monsieur, toutes mes entreprises uniquement par ma diligence et mon assiduité. C'est pourquoi, ne me fiant pas à mes seules capacités,

je cherche des assistants et je fais du prosélytisme pour le brahmanisme et pour l'islam⁷. »

L'intérêt de Kazimirski existait donc dès 1830 mais il ne débuta pas de traduction coranique avant 1839. Toutefois, sans aller aussi loin que Rafał Berger, rien n'empêche que Kazimirski ait abordé le sujet avec Domeyko. En tout cas, c'est en chemin pour Paris que l'ancien Philomathe trouva une oreille attentive à sa traduction du Coran.

En effet, Domeyko rencontra à Dresde en mai 1832 Andrzej Bernard Potocki (1800–1874) le fils du grand voyageur Jan Potocki. Ils visitèrent ensemble le joli parc national de Bastei, dans la région de la Suisse saxonne en Allemagne. C'est sûrement à ce moment qu'il laissa son manuscrit à Potocki, qui était un véritable passionné d'orientalisme (Drira et Kubacki 2021). Il s'avère qu'il avait envoyé en 1830 plusieurs fois de l'argent à Kazimirski pour lui payer des cours particuliers chez le professeur Franz Bopp (1791–1867). Andrzej Potocki était seulement âgé de quelques années de plus que Kazimirski, mais il était riche et marié depuis 1825 à Claudine Potocka (1801–1836), née Działyńska, la sœur du Comte Tytus Adam Działyński (1796–1861). Les liens entre Kazimirski, Potocki, Działyński sont donc anciens, et tous trois avaient une flamme orientaliste. Alors que pour Domeyko ce n'était qu'une mode de jeunesse dont il s'éloigna bien loin au Chili. Dans les différentes lettres conservées à Moscou entre Domeyko et Chodźko durant la période de 1830 à 1849, pas une seule fois il n'est fait mention de la traduction du Coran ou même d'orientalisme⁸. Dommage car ils étaient tous deux anciens Philomathes de Vilnius et connaissaient mieux que quiconque l'histoire de cette traduction polonaise. Heureusement, Lelewel en parla un peu avec Domeyko.

Il lui écrit le 28 octobre 1836 : « J'ai vu récemment Bernard Potocki. Il a commencé l'impression du Coran sous sa rédaction à Poznań, puis il l'a brûlé » (Więckowska 1949 : II, 85). Cela prouve que le manuscrit de Domeyko, révisé par Potocki, fut imprimé à un très faible tirage, mais que la censure prussienne ordonna sa destruction. En 1841 Lelewel écrit au Comte Działyński :

« Mr Bernard Potocki m'a posé maintes fois la question concernant la suite de la traduction polonaise d'*Alkoran*. Les recherches de traducteurs étant sans suite. Pourtant, son ancienne traduction pourrait être facilement terminée par quelqu'un de plus doué. Si vous pouviez demander à Kazimirski un tel service, il ne pourrait vous le refuser. Cela serait d'ailleurs facile pour lui, car il a déjà traduit le Coran en Français et sa traduction est en cours de réédition. D'autant plus qu'actuellement, il est rentré de la Perse et il ne fait rien. » (Więckowska 1949 : II, 382).

⁷ Bibliothèque de l'Université Jagellonne (BJ) 4435 III, lettre du 23 novembre 1830.

⁸ Archives d'État de la littérature et de l'art en Russie : RGALI (РГАЛИ) : fonds 2845, pièce 1, n° 91, liste 9.

Lelewel avait raison, si le Comte Działyński avait demandé à son ancien protégé Kazimirski, il ne l'aurait pas refusé, surtout en 1841 alors qu'il était sans emploi. Malheureusement, le Comte était en froid avec Kazimirski de 1830 à 1850, en raison de son activité révolutionnaire lors du soulèvement polonais de 1830. En septembre 1842 Lelewel essaya de convaincre directement Kazimirski de terminer le manuscrit polonais. Il refusa catégoriquement ! Il n'avait nullement envie de se lancer dans un projet qui risquait de finir sous les flammes prussiennes. Et sans le soutien du Comte, qui d'autre l'aurait financé et publié en Pologne ? Il répondit à Lelewel le 12 septembre 1842.

« Le Coran traduit en polonais sans notice multiplierait davantage la confusion et les malentendus [...] qui sont déjà malheureusement assez nombreux dans les têtes polonaises tant au pays que chez les émigrés. Il me semble qu'à l'époque actuelle de l'émigration il vaudrait mieux éditer un petit ouvrage intitulé : *La flagellation des imposteurs et des charlatans et les sangsues sur les têtes des illuminés mystiques et conventionnaires.* » (Turowska-Barowa 1938 :113)

L'ouvrage satirique proposée est une petite pique contre Andrzej Towiański (1799–1878) et Mickiewicz. En réalité ce n'est pas que Kazimirski était contre la traduction du Coran en polonais mais il n'avait aucune envie qu'on attribue son travail aux Philomathes. Quand on voit aujourd'hui le sort réservé à Buczacki, peut-être que Kazimirski eut une vision prémonitoire. Qui sait s'il avait pris ce projet, si on n'aurait non seulement minimisé son travail, voire si on ne l'aurait pas accusé de s'en être inspiré pour sa traduction en français.

Quoi qu'il en soit, Potocki ne baissa pas les bras et tenta d'imprimer le Coran en polonais en 1848 et il fut à nouveau détruit. Le seul vestige de cette édition est un manuscrit de 352 pages conservé à Kórnik, débutant par *al-Fātiḥa* jusqu'à la *sūrat Hūd*, soit l'équivalent du quart du Coran⁹. C'est un tirage d'essai non daté¹⁰. Il est fort probable que Potocki, qui ne connaissait pas l'arabe, ait utilisé la traduction de Kazimirski de 1840–1842 pour compléter le manuscrit des Philomathes. Ainsi, le Coran de Potocki hérité du manuscrit des Philomathes fut imprimé deux fois à Poznań en 1836 et 1848 pour finir en combustible selon la volonté des Prussiens.

⁹ BK : 117 196.

¹⁰ Lelewel dans une lettre adressée à Domeyko le 28 octobre 1836 (Więckowska 1949 : II, 85–86), lui demande d'envoyer le reste de son manuscrit du Coran, afin que Potocki puisse terminer l'impression de la traduction. On peut en déduire qu'il fait référence à la traduction partielle qui aurait dû être imprimée la même année que cette correspondance. Or, toutes les sources polonaises consultées, y compris l'éditeur de la correspondance Lelewel (*Listy emigracyjne Joachima Lelewela*, Polską Akademię Umiejętności) mentionnent que le Coran polonais de Potocki ne fut imprimé qu'en 1848, puis détruit par la censure allemande. Y a-t-il eu deux éditions, en 1836 et en 1848 ? Si oui, furent-elles complètes ? Il n'y a pas encore de réponse certaine.

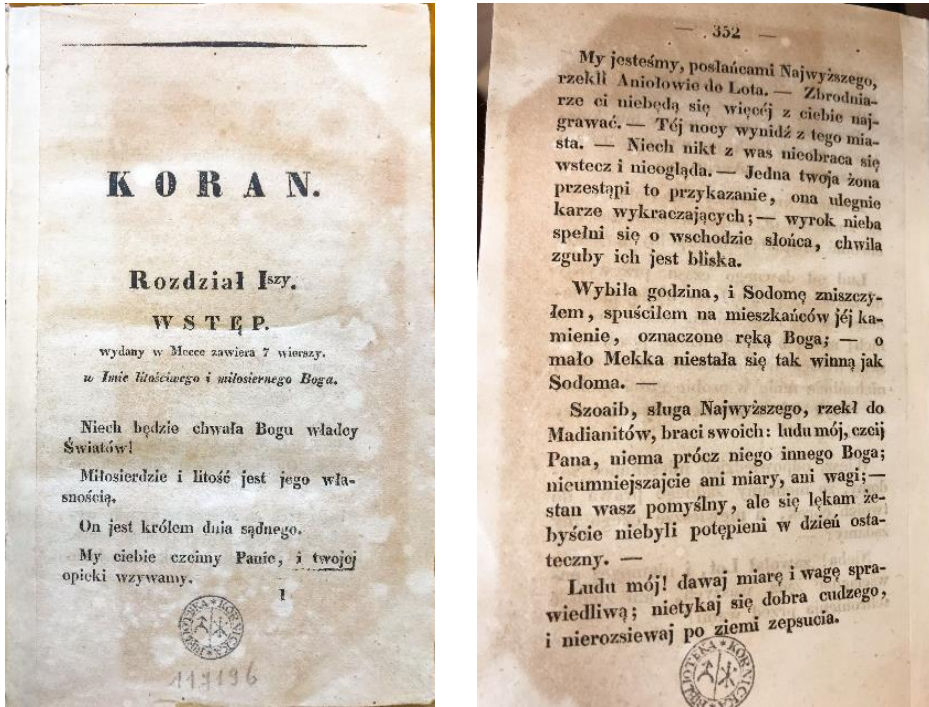


Illustration 4 : première et dernière page du manuscrit du Coran imprimé par Potocki, BK : 117 196.

3.2 La contribution de Kazimirski

En 1887 le *Kurjer polski w paryżu* (*Courrier polonais de Paris*) mentionna que la première traduction du coran en polonais attribuée à Buczacki en 1858 fut écrite sous l'œil attentif de Kazimirski (Anonyme 1887). Effectivement il fut cité parmi les sources de la traduction dans la préface. Le philologue lituanien Mikołaj Akielewicz (1829–1887) mentionne également dans son excellente nécrologie de Kazimirski, non publiée mais conservée dans les archives de Varsovie, que l'orientaliste franco-polonais aurait supervisé la traduction de 1858¹¹. Akielewicz est extrêmement fiable et sa nécrologie contient des détails d'une précision impressionnante confirmés par des sources croisées. Toutefois, pour la contribution de Kazimirski qu'il cite, il reste prudent et recommande une comparaison des deux traductions pour évaluer s'il était la source principale. Enfin la troisième personne est Rafał Berger (2016) qui fait lui remonter le lien avec Kazimirski jusqu'à Domeyko. Aucun de ces auteurs ne cite de sources, et comme nous l'avons vu dans la correspondance de Lelewel, Kazimirski refusa catégoriquement à deux reprises en 1841 et 1842. Mais la lecture de la

¹¹ BN : 7300 (microfilm : 51411) p. 39–40 pour les lettres et p. 41–43 pour la nécrologie.

correspondance de Kazimirski avec la famille Działyński révèle qu'il changea sa position dans les années 1850, une fois redevenu l'homme de confiance de la famille Działyński.

Le projet de la traduction du Coran fut relancé par Jan Działyński. Dans une lettre du 31 juillet 1856 Kazimirski écrit à Tytus Działyński : « Monsieur Jan m'a commandé, pour lui-même, une traduction du Koran en polonais pour cet automne. Mais s'il a changé de projet, qu'il ne s'en soucie point¹². » Étrange, car c'est un projet de grande envergure, qu'il aurait apparemment accepté, tout en étant prêt à renoncer si le fils du Comte changeait d'avis. Puis il n'en reparla plus. La date aussi intrigue, 1856, soit deux ans seulement avant la publication en 1858 à Varsovie de la première traduction polonaise. Les dates sont trop proches pour être une pure coïncidence. Aussi, il ne faut pas oublier le lien familial de Potocki avec les Działyński et la Bibliothèque de Kórnik, et donc le manuscrit des Philomathes.

Très probablement, et ce n'est qu'une théorie sans preuve, Kazimirski contribua au projet en 1856 mais sans fournir un travail conséquent, sinon cela aurait laissé des traces. Il est quasi certain qu'il ait au moins autorisé l'utilisation de sa traduction française dans sa version finale de 1852. Kazimirski est donc l'incontournable traducteur du Coran en français et même en polonais.

Conclusion

Les Philomathes ont encore beaucoup à nous apprendre. L'aventure de leur traduction polonaise du Coran est différente de celle présentée dans les nombreux articles à leur sujet. Tout n'est pas encore élucidé et de nouvelles recherches devraient être entreprises. Toutefois, il est déjà certain que cet ambitieux projet n'était pas motivé par un obscur programme politique. Les Philomathes, ou du moins une partie d'entre eux, s'intéressaient au monde oriental, comme le prouvent les travaux des fondateurs : Józef Kowalewski, Józef Sobolewski, Józef Jeżowski et Jan Wiernikowski. L'orientalisme polonais est un des plus anciens du monde et c'est à Vilnius, en partie grâce aux Philomathes, que cet orientalisme devint scientifique. Un personnage clé de cette transformation est Józef Julian Sękowski. La traduction du Coran des Philomathes s'inscrit dans la voie de la transformation de l'orientalisme polonais ancien, en un orientalisme savant moderne. L'Université de Vilnius était une source de savoir dans l'Empire russe et une partie de l'Europe. Le procès des Philomathes fut une période sombre pour l'Université de Vilnius. Toutefois, l'Empire russe sut tirer profit durant le XIX^e s. du grand potentiel des étudiants de Vilnius, parmi lesquels les Philomathes. Les Philomathes et les chercheurs polonais de Vilnius ont joué un rôle clé dans l'essor de l'orientalisme dans l'empire russe.

La traduction des Philomathes est une œuvre collective où chacun apporta une pierre à l'édifice. Tout d'abord, l'ancienne traduction polonaise du XVII^e s. des

¹² BK 7439–2, lettre du 31 juillet 1856.

Tatars du duché de Vilnius. Cette traduction, sous forme de *tafsīr*, était l'œuvre d'imams et de savants musulmans, dont l'imam de Minsk Urjasz ibn Ismail en 1686. La Bibliothèque de Vilnius possédait un manuscrit complet de *Tafsīr* tatar daté de 1788 contenant une traduction polonaise en lettres arabes. Ce fut vraisemblablement la source des Philomathes. Leur traduction était le plus probablement, non pas une traduction *ex nihilo*, mais la retranscription en lettres latines polonaises en révisant le style et la langue pour qu'ils soient adaptés à un plus grand public. Le travail fut confié au nom du groupe au début des années 1820, principalement à Ignacy Domeyko, avec l'aide de Dionizy Chlewiński et de Józef Sobolewski. Domeyko continua le travail après la condamnation des Philomathes en 1823 et il transmit son manuscrit à Andrzej Potocki en 1832. Potocki l'imprima à deux reprises à tirage limité à Poznań en 1836 et 1848 mais fut contraint par les autorités prussiennes de les brûler. En 1856 Kazimirski accepta de traduire le Coran en polonais pour le Comte Działyński. Deux ans plus tard, la première traduction polonaise fut publiée à Varsovie en 1858 attribué à titre posthume Jan Murza Buczacki. Personne n'a usurpé le travail d'autrui et sûrement pas les Tatars. Cette traduction est une œuvre collective continue avec plusieurs protagonistes : les Philomathes, Domeyko, Chlewiński, et Sobolewski, puis Potacki, ainsi que Jakub et Jan Murza Buczacki, et enfin Władysław Kościuszko, Aleksander Nowolecki et Albert Kazimirski.

L'orientalisme d'Europe orientale a lui aussi ses lettres de noblesse. Les orientalistes polonais ont démontré au cours de l'histoire un intérêt particulier pour les livres sacrés orientaux. Ce n'est pas un hasard si le seul traducteur du Coran en France au siècle d'or de l'orientalisme était un Polonais, Albert de Biberstein Kazimirski.

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ON PRESUPPOSITION IN QUR'ĀNIC CONDITIONALS: THE CASES OF *IN KĀNA* AND *IN FA'ALA*

Tamás Iványi

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

Abstract:

The paper examines the possibilities of the fulfilment of the condition in some *āyas* of the Qur'ān, whether it is a matter of the future, or the result of the conditional sentence is already decided, either by refusing what the protasis of the conditional sentence claims or by affirming it. These sentences may be called 'conditionals with a presupposition'. The presupposition may be true or not true, but the outcome of the sentence does not depend on a future event. These conditional sentences are mainly defective, with no apodosis, and are generally of the type in *kāna fā'ilan* or *in kāna min al-fā'ilīna*. Forty-five *āyas* are analysed in this respect and additional *āyas* are listed which could be similarly dealt with. The results of the examinations always depend on the opinions of the Muslim Qur'ān commentators. In each case the opinions of at least three or four *tafsīrs* have been examined. The *tafsīrs* are from the 7th to the 21st centuries. Altogether forty-seven *tafsīrs* have been taken into consideration.

Keywords: *al-Qur'ān*, Arabic conditional sentences, defective conditionals, presupposition, *tafsīr*

0 Introduction

In recent decades, numerous studies have examined the conditional sentences found in the *Qur'ān*.¹ These studies primarily focused on analysing these sentences from a strictly formal perspective, considering factors such as the conditional particles used, the presence of *māḍī* or *muḍāri'* *mağzūm* in both the protasis and the apodosis, the

¹ From the secondary sources, I mainly used the works of 'Alī 2003, 'Awdāt 2016, Ayyāš 2010, Būzaq 2020, Dévényi 1988, al-Ġamal 2014, Maṭar 2017, Peled 1992, Zahrā' and Maylūda 2017, and Zaydān 2005.

use of *fa*- sentences instead of apodosis, incomplete conditional sentences, and other related elements.

The present approach diverges significantly from these analyses, aiming to explore the potential fulfilment of conditions, whether they pertain to future events, as in the case of real conditionals, or if the outcome of the condition is already predetermined, either through negating or affirming the assertion made in the protasis of the conditional sentence. These sentences could be termed ‘conditionals with a *presupposition*’. This presupposition may assume the truth or falsehood of the protasis, but regardless, the sentence’s outcome remains independent of any future event.² These conditional sentences are mainly defective ones, lacking an apodosis (*ğawāb maḥdūf*), and the majority of them have the forms *in kāna fā’ilan* or *in kāna min al-fā’ilīna*, appearing at the end of the *āya*.

In this respect, forty-five *āyas* were examined and listed at the end of the paper in *Appendix 2*. *Appendix 3* contains a list of eighty-nine additional *āyas* which could be analysed as having a presupposed outcome of the conditional sentence.

In this study I relied solely on the opinions of Muslim *Qur’ān* commentators (*mufassirs*), and in each case, I consulted at least three or four *tafsīrs* to shape my own opinion. I quoted them in the order of the death of the authors. The number of commentators whose opinions I considered altogether is forty-seven. Their names are listed in *Appendix 1*, in the order of the dates of their death. My aim was to select commentaries from different ages spanning the entirety of Muslim history, beginning from the 7th century Ibn ‘Abbās to the 21st century az-Zuhaylī. These commentators heavily relied on the so-called commentary traditions (*aḥādīṭ at-tafsīr*), which consist of the opinions and explications of the early Muslims, the companions (*aṣḥāb*) of the Prophet, and their followers (*tābi’ūn*). I hold these traditions in high esteem, unlike many Western *Qur’ān* translators and scholarly commentators.

In Part 1 of the paper, an example is presented to illustrate the various categories of *āyas* containing conditional sentences, which are presumably explicable with presuppositions: 1.1 conditionals with negative presupposition, 1.2 conditionals with positive presupposition, 1.3 conditionals which may have double interpretation, 1.4 when the apodosis has a negative presupposition, 1.5 conditional phrase interpreted

² Information regarding the meanings of various Qur’ānic *āyāt* initially derived from renowned *Qur’ānic* exegeses such as the *Tafsīr* of at-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi’ al-bayān*, the *Kaššāf* of az-Zamaḥšarī, the *Maḥāṭib* of Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, the *Ġāmi’* of al-Qurtubī, the *Mağma’ al-bayān* of at-Ṭabarsī, the *Ma’ālim* of al-Bağawī, and the *Tafsīr* of al-Bayḍāwī. However, a significant source was the less-known interpretation of the *Qur’ān*: the *Muḥarrar* of Ibn Aṭīyya (d. 1147) and the *Tahrīr* of the 20th century Tunisian scholar Ibn ‘Āšūr. When a relevant explanation for a conditional sentence was located, additional sources were used as well, including further exegeses and the early interpretations of grammarians such as Abū ‘Ubayda, al-Farrā’, al-Aḥfaš al-Awsaṭ, az-Zağğāğ, and others. A reliance on three or four commentaries was attempted in each instance.

by the next *āya*, 1.6 *āyas* which have more than one conditional in them. In Part 2 further examples are cited for each category. The *āyas* interpreted in this paper have continuous numbering, 1–45.³

1 Presentation of the different types of conditionals with presupposition

1.1 Negative presupposition

1. An example for the *negative presupposition* is *Qur'ān* II. *al-Baqara* 31:

*wa-'allama Ādama l-asmā'a kullahā tumma 'araḍahum 'alā l-malā'ikati fa-qāla
anbi'ūnī bi-asmā'i hā'ulā'i in kuntum ṣādiqīna*⁴

Muqātil b. Sulaymān's *Tafsīr*, the oldest complete commentary, associates the concept of appointing a viceroy on earth with Adam's knowledge of the names of things, suggesting that the angels may not have been entirely truthful.⁵

aṭ-Ṭabarī writes among others:⁶ “Some of the Baṣran grammarians believed that this (order) did not imply that the angels claimed something. Instead, it only indicated that God informed (us) about their ignorance of the divine secrets (*'ilm al-ḡayb*), and He knows (their ignorance) and that He prefers Adam to them. That is why He said: ‘Tell me (these) if what you say is the truth.’ It is similar to when a man says to another man: ‘Tell me this if you know it, but he knows that the other man does not know it, that is, he is ignorant.’ But aṭ-Ṭabarī continues, *ṣidq* (truth) in the language of the Arabs means only truth in communication not in knowledge, thus when God says to the angels, what the *āya* contains, He knows that what they said⁷ is not the truth (*ṣidq*), but it is untruth (*kiḍb*). That means that the conditional

³ The conditional sentence in the *āya* was denoted without the use of italics

⁴ English translation by Dawood: “He taught Adam the names of all things and then set them before the angels, saying: Tell me the names of these, *if what you say be true*.” I chose this translation because of this last line, since it is the nearest to my interpretation. All the other English translations are: *if you are truthful*, *if you speak truly*, which cannot cover the right meaning.

⁵ Muqātil, *Tafsīr* I, 98. Interestingly enough he, quoting a *ḥadīṭ*, considers here only the names of the riding animals (*dawābb*).

⁶ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* I, 525: *fa-qāla anbi'ūnī in kuntum ṣādiqīna kamā yaqūlu r-raḡulu anbi'nī bi-hādā in kunta ta'lamu wa-huwa ya'lamu annahu lā ya'lamu yurīdu annahu ḡāhīlun. ... li-anna ṣ-ṣidqa fī kalāmi l-'arabi innamā huwa ṣidqun fī l-ḥabari lā fī l-'ilmi*.

⁷ In *al-Qur'ān* II. 30. Jones: ‘Will You put in it someone who will wreak mischief in it and will shed blood, while we glorify You with praise and declare You holy?’, meaning that they would be more appropriate than men for being viceroys of God in the earth.

sentence at the end of the *āya* did not contain a real condition, as the answer (*ġawāb*) had already been determined by the *presupposition* of the speaker, i.e., God.⁸

In one of his explanations of the meaning of this conditional, Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī even asserts that not only God, but the angels themselves presuppose the negative outcome of the conditional.⁹ az-Zamaḥṣarī complements his interpretation with another presupposition: God has already known that they are unable to tell the names of the things which were put before them when He ordered them to do this.¹⁰

aṭ-Ṭabarsī cites Ibn ʿAbbās who stated that the angels did not tell the truth when claiming that they knew why God would appoint a viceroy (*ḥalīfa*) on the earth, as well as they could not have knowledge of all the names that had been taught Adam, as both of these two matters, i.e., the viceroy and the names, form part of the knowledge of the unseen world (*ġayb*) which God had not taught them.¹¹

The concluding part of the preceding *āya* (II. 30 ‘I know what you do not know’) further reinforces the view that the presupposition is that God knows they cannot fulfil His command (*anbiʿūnī*), hence they did not tell the truth (asserting they were more deserving of being appointed as God’s viceroy on the earth).¹² It is important to emphasise that in these conditional sentences, the verb *ṣadaqa* does not mean “to be truthful”, but rather “to tell the truth”, signifying that what one says is indeed the

⁸ It may have been al-Aḥṣaf al-Awsaṭ to whom aṭ-Ṭabarsī refers here as ‘*zaʿama baʿḍu nahawīyyī l-Baṣraʿ*. See, *Maʿānī l-Qurʿān*, vol. I, 63–64.

⁹ See Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Maḥāṭib* I, 194: “Tell me (the names of these things), but do not say except the truth (*ḥaqqan wa-ṣidqan*). The purpose of this (sentence) is to affirm what He informed them (earlier) about their inability (*quṣūr wa-l-ʿaġz*). When the knowledge had become deeply established (*tamakkana*) in them that if they try to tell these names they do not tell the truth, since it is not possible for them, they knew that this unfeasible for them (*mutaʿaddir ʿalayhim*).”

¹⁰ az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaššāf* I, 253: *wa-qad ʿalima ʿaġzahum*. See also aṭ-Ṭabarsī, *Maġmaʿ al-bayān* I, 100, where he compares God’s words to the words of a teacher who asks from his pupil what he thinks about something, although he knows that his pupil cannot give the right answer. al-Baġawī, *Maʿālim* I, 80 only says in relation to the conditional: ‘The angels admitted their inability to answer.’

¹¹ aṭ-Ṭabarsī, *Maġmaʿ al-bayān* I, 103. *al-murād in kuntum ṣādiqīna fī annakum taʿlamūna lima aġʿalu fī l-arḍ ḥalīfatan anbiʿūnī bi-asmāʾi ḥāʾulāʾi in kuntum ṣādiqīna li-anna kulla wāḥidin mina l-amrayni min ʿilmī l-ġaybi fa-kamā lam taʿlamū ḥadahumā lā taʿlamūna l-āḥara ʿan Ibn ʿAbbāsīn*. This quotation cannot be found in the exegetical reports of Ibn ʿAbbās (*Tafsīr Ibn ʿAbbās wa-marwīyyātuḥu fī t-tafsīr min kutubi s-sunna*), since they were collected only from the Sunnite exegeses, excluding the Shiʿite ones.

¹² Cf. Ibn ʿĀšūr, *Tahrīr* I, 741. See also Ibn ʿAṭīyya, *Muḥarrar* I, 121: ‘If it is true what you claimed about your knowledge – but God knew that they did not know.’

truth".¹³ Many conditional sentences with *kāna fā'ilīna* and *kāna yaf'alu*, placed at the end of the *āyas*, contain presupposition of this nature.¹⁴

an-Nīsābūrī also establishes a connection between the two *āyas*, II. 30 and 31, by stating that the angels confess their sin and acknowledge that they were not speaking the truth.¹⁵ Ibn Qayyim al-Ġawziyya further emphasises that the angels had not been acquainted with the knowledge of the names, thus what they said cannot be deemed true.¹⁶ al-Īğī¹⁷ confirms that despite the angels claiming superior knowledge compared to any other future creatures of God, they acknowledged their incapacity, thereby admitting that they did not tell the truth. The modern commentator, az-Zuḥaylī,¹⁸ succinctly summarises his explanation with one word: They were incapable of doing what they claimed (*'ağazū*).

1.2 Positive presupposition

2. In many cases, the presupposition stems from the belief that what the conditional phrase contains is *unconditionally true and real*. An example for this is *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 139:

wa-lā tahinū wa-lā taḥzanū wa-antum l-'awlawna in kuntum mu'minīna

aṭ-Ṭabarī only says that it means: 'If you consider true what My Prophet has brought to you from Me'.¹⁹ Since they were true Muslims who had fought in the battle of

¹³ It is to be noted here, that the phrase *ṣadaqa Allāhu l-'aẓīm* does not mean that 'the Almighty God is truthful', but that 'what the Almighty God has said is the truth'.

¹⁴ aṭ-Ṭabarī (I, 526) quotes another opinion, too, according to which *in* here means *iqd*. It would alter the presupposition from negative to positive: 'Since you said the truth', but he refuses this view. This opinion is repeated, among others, in Ibn 'Aṭiyya, *Muḥarrar* I, 121.

¹⁵ an-Nīsābūrī, *Tafsīr* I, 216: *ayḍan qawluhum lā 'ilma lanā illā mā 'allamtanā 'tidārūn wa-l-'uḍru dalīlun 'alā ḍanbin wa-ayḍan qawluhu ta 'ālā in kuntum ṣādiqīna dalla annahum kānū kāḍibīna fīmā qālūhu*.

¹⁶ Ibn Qayyim al-Ġawziyya, *Badā'i* I, 117: *Subḥānahu ... 'arrafahum (al-malā'ikata) faḍla Ādama bi-l-'ilmi wa-'ağzihim 'an ma'rifati mā 'allamahu*. The modern commentator az-Zuḥaylī, *Ağīz* 7, expresses the same opinion: *fa-qāla (Allāh) aḥbirūnī 'anhā in kuntum ṣādiqīna ft ddi 'ā'ikum annakum aḥaqqu bi-l-ḥilāfati min ḡayrikum fa-'ağzū*.

¹⁷ al-Īğī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* I, 39: *in kuntum ṣādiqīna annakum aḥiqqā' bi-l-ḥilāfa aw lan yaḥluqa Allāhu ta 'ālā ḥalqan a'lamu minkum wa-l-malā'katu qālū ... iqrāran bi-l-'ağzi ...* According to Ibn 'Abbās, the meaning of this *āya* and the previous one is: Since you (the angels) do not know the names of what were presented to you and you even testified (your ignorance), then from where is your knowledge that you are the most deserving to be God's vicegerents on the Earth? (See *ibid.*, fn. 6).

¹⁸ az-Zuḥaylī, *Wağīz* 7.

¹⁹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* VI, 79.

Uḥud, it implies that they were believers. al-Bayḍāwī states²⁰ that the conditional sentence (*in kuntum mu'minīna*) is connected (*muta'alliq*) with the previous prohibition (*lā tahinū*). Ibn 'Āšūr also asserts that the prohibition (*nahy*) has a connection (*ta'līq*) with the conditional sentence (*šarṭ*), but he adds, that '(God) intended with this condition to stir up the zeal of the Muslims in their belief, knowing that they were believers.'²¹

The conditional sentence at the end of the *āya* acknowledges that the Muslims of Medina, who suffered a painful defeat in the battle of Uḥud, are indeed true believers. Simultaneously, it serves as an exhortation and a call not to allow their grievance to lead them away from belief in God and His Prophet. az-Zamaḥṣarī remarks about this *āya*: 'The conditional serves as a supplement to the prohibition, meaning: Do not lose your courage if your belief is authentic. So, you are true believers; the only doubt may arise regarding whether this belief is firm enough or not.'²²

al-Qurṭubī briefly interprets this conditional: "If you were true believers" means "if you believe in the truth of my promise (of the final victory)". It is suggested that "if" (*in*) here carries the meaning of "as" (*id*).²³ al-Baḡawī also provides this interpretation: "If you are true believers", that means, "as (*id*) you are true believers", or, "because (*li-annakum*) you are true believers".²⁴ Ibn Qayyim al-Ġawziyya²⁵ considers the words of God in this *āya* to connect the reassurance and encouragement of the believers with their consolation.

Ibn 'Āšūr articulates this twofold reference, mentioned above, in the following manner: 'God intended by supplementing the conditional sentence *in kuntum mu'minīna* to urge their zeal and fervour for the belief, since God had already known that they had been true believers. However, when weakness and sorrow from the defeat appeared on them, their belief weakened. So, they were told: If you know from your souls that you are true believers, then the conditional (*in aš-šarṭiyya*) was introduced (to you), which, by its nature (*min ša'niḥā*), may also imply the non-realisation of its condition. This fulfils the aforementioned intention (of God). In

²⁰ al-Bayḍāwī, *Tafsīr* II, 39. He may have taken the first half of az-Zamaḥṣarī's interpretation, see az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaššāf* I, 631: '*in kuntum mu'minīna*' *muta'alliqun bin-nahyi bi-ma'nā lā tahinū in šaḥḥa imānukum*.

²¹ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* IV, 99: *qaṣada tahyīḡa ḡayratihim fī l-īmāni id qad 'alima annahum mu'minūna*.

²² az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaššāf* I, 631.

²³ al-Qurṭubī, *al-Ġāmi'* V, 333.

²⁴ al-Baḡawī, *Ma'ālim* II, 110

²⁵ Ibn Qayyim al-Ġawziyya, *Badā'i'* I, 242: *fa-ḡama'a lahum fī hādā l-ḥiṭābi bayna tašḡī'ihim wa-taqwiyyati nufūsihim wa-iḥyā'i 'azā'imihim wa-himamihim wa-bayna ḡusni-tasliyyati*.

summary, the author emphasises that the conditional is not genuine, as the answer, that you are really true believers, is affirmative and God already knew it.²⁶

1.3 Double interpretation of the conditional phrase

3. There is a third group of conditional sentences of the *in kuntum* type that can also be interpreted as having positive or negative presuppositions. This is exemplified in the case of *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 49:

*wa-unabbi'ukum bimā ta'kulūna wa-mā taddahirūna fī buyūtikum inna fī dālika la-āyatan lakum in kuntum mu'minīna*²⁷

These are the words of Jesus in the *Qur'ān*, and he cannot be certain of the impact of his preaching, which includes various miracles as evidence supporting his truthfulness and confirming his status as a prophet and messenger sent by God.²⁸

That is, says aṭ-Ṭabarī, you can only be considered believers if you accept (*muṣaddiqūna*) these signs of God. However, Ibn 'Āšūr²⁹ contends that this speech was directed towards the sons of Israel, but they responded to this call for belief with denial and abuse – thus, they were not believers. This suggests that the conditional sentence can be regarded as having a negative presupposition and is not a real conditional. He suggests that the true meaning of the *āya* is: If you were to believe (in the preaching of Jesus) contrary to your previous custom of stubbornness – but they reacted to his call (to true belief) with denial and abuse. Based on his analysis of the Qur'ānic text, one may infer that the author refers to a negative presupposition, indicating that they will not be believers.

So the outcome of the conditional can be positive or negative depending on the reaction of the listeners.

²⁶ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* IV, 99.

²⁷ In Jones's translation: 'and I shall tell you what you should eat and what you should store up in your houses. In that there is a sign for you, if you are believers.'

²⁸ See aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* V, 425–430, and especially 430.

²⁹ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* III, 252: *ay in kuntum turīdīna l-īmāna bi-ḥilāfi mā idā kāna da'bukum l-mukābarata wa-l-ḥiṭābu muwaḡḡahun ilā banī Isrā'īla fa-innahum bādarū da'watahu bi-t-takḍībi wa-š-šatmi.*

1.4 The apodosis has a negative presupposition

4. *al-Qur'ān* VI. *al-An'ām* 109.

*wa-aqṣamū bi-Allāhi ġahda īmānihim la-in ġā'athum āyatun la-yu'minunna bihā
qul innamā l-āyātu 'inda Allāhi wa-mā yuṣ'irukum annahā idā ġā'at lā
yu'minūna*³⁰

aṭ-Ṭabarī³¹: “The polytheists who swore to God will not believe in His signs when they appear.” al-Māturīdī³² quotes the reading of al-Ḥasan³³ based on al-Ḥafḍ, according to which the final part of the *āya* unanimously states that they would not believe even if signs were sent to them from God. al-Ālūsī³⁴ mentions that they did not regard the signs they were presented with as wonders of God, as they only sought to dominate over the Prophet by demanding miracles from him and claiming that he was incapable of performing them.

The protasis of the conditional has a positive presupposition (God had sent signs to them), but the apodosis is negative, since they did not become believers.

1.5 Conditional phrase interpreted by the next *āya*

5. The presupposition is usually provided by the context, which can be found either in the same *āya*, a previous one, or sometimes even in the following *āya*. In addition to the *Qur'ānic* context, the so called *aḥādīṭ at-tafsīr*, which reveal the circumstances of the revelation, also provide clues for interpreting the conditional sentences. An example of this can be seen in *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 93:

³⁰ Jones: They have sworn their most solemn oaths by God that if a sign comes to them, they will believe in it. Say, ‘The signs are with God.’ What will make you aware that when [the sign] comes they will not believe?

³¹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* IX, 486: *al-muṣṣrikūna al-muqsimūna bi-Allāhi ... lā yu'minūna 'inda maġṭ'ihā*.

³² al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt* IV, 215: *hākaḍā yaqra'uhu al-Ḥasan bi-l-Ḥafḍ innahā idā ġā'at lā yu'minūna*.

³³ al-Ḥasan b. Sa'īd al-Maṭū'ī, d. 981, one of the acknowledge readers (*qurrā'*) of the *Qur'ān*, who read, together with many other readers *innahā* instead of *annahā*, which changed the meaning of the final part of the *āya* from possibility to certainty, that is, they would not believe. See also *Mu'ġam al-qirā'āt* II, 308.

³⁴ al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī* VIII, 369: *la-in ġā'akum bi-āyatīn min muqtarahātihim aw min ġinsi l-āyātī ... kānū lā ya'iddūna mā yuṣāhidūnahu mina l-mu'ġizātī l-qāhirātī min ġinsi l-āyātī ... wa-mā kāna marmā ġaraḍihim illā t-taḥakkuma 'alā Rasūli Allāhi fī ṭalabi l-mu'ġizātī wa-'adami l-i'tidādi bimā ṣāhadū minhu 'alayhi mina l-bayyinātī*.

*kullu ṭ-ṭa'āmi kāna ḥillan li-banī Isrā'īla illā mā ḥarrama Isrā'īlu 'alā nafsihi min qabli an tunazzala t-Tawrātu qul fa'tū bi-t-Tawrāti fa-tlūhā in kuntum ṣādiqīna*³⁵

The next *āya* (III. 94) sheds light on the interpretation of the final conditional sentence:

*fa-mani ftarā 'alā Allāhi l-kaḍība min ba'di ḍālika fa-ūlā'ika humu z-zālimūna*³⁶

The expression *iftarā ... min ba'di ḍālika* (to invent lies, or simply not to tell the truth ... after that) may be interpreted as referring to the *in kuntum ṣādiqīna* of the previous *āya*, indicating that they were not telling the truth even at that time.

Furthermore, there are proofs from the *ḥadīṭs* as well. For instance, the text of the *āya qul fa'tū bi-t-Tawrāti fa-tlūhā* is completed with the words: 'in order that we can decide whether this (prohibition) is in it or not? Then their lie (what they said was not true) became evident even to those who were ignorant of their affairs.'³⁷ According to another *ḥadīṭ*: 'The Prophet of God asked the Jews: What is that Israel prohibited for himself? They said: The Torah had been revealed with the prohibition of what Israel prohibited. Then God revealed to Muḥammad the *āya* 93 till the end of the following *āya*. So, (it became clear that) they did not speak the truth and invented lies, since the Torah did not reveal this (prohibition).'³⁸

az-Zaḡḡāḡ quotes a *ḥadīṭ*, which provides evidence for the negative presupposition of the conditional: 'He (Muḥammad), however, requested from them (the Jews) to bring their Book (the Torah), so that they can read it aloud, (in order) to demonstrate that they were not telling the truth. However, they refused to bring it.'³⁹

Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī quotes another *ḥadīṭ*:⁴⁰ 'The Messenger of God ordered them to bring the Torah and demanded that they extract from it an *āya* proving that the

³⁵ Dawood: "All food was lawful to the Israelites except what Israel forbade himself before the Torah was revealed. Say: 'Bring the Torah and read it, if what you say be true.'"

³⁶ Jones: "Those who invent lies against God after that – those are the wrong-doers."

³⁷ at-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* V, 579: *ḥattā nanẓura hal ḍālika fihā am lā fa-tabayyana kaḍibuhum liman yaḡhalu amrahum.*

³⁸ at-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān*, *ibid.*: *sa'ala Nabīyyu Allāhi l-yahūda: mā hādā llaḍī ḥarrama Isrā'īlu 'alā nafsihi fa-qālū nazalati t-Tawrātu bi-taḥrīmi llaḍī ḥarrama Isrā'īlu fa-qāla Allāhu li-Muḥammadin al-āya 93 ilā nihāyat al-āya 94. wa-kaḍībū wa-ftaraw lam tunazzali t-Tawrātu bi-ḍālika.*

³⁹ az-Zaḡḡāḡ, *Ma'ānī*, I, 444: *wa-da'āhum ma'a ḍālika ilā an ya'tū bi-kitābihim fa-yatlūhu li-yubayyina lahum kaḍibuhum fa-abaw fa-kāna ibā'uhum dalīlan 'alā 'ilmihim anna n-Nabīyya qad ṣadaqa fimā anba'uhum bihi.*

⁴⁰ Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Maḡāīṭh* VIII, 150: *fa-amarahumu r-Rasūlu 'alayhi s-salāmu bi-iḥḍāri t-Tawrāti wa-ṭālabahum bi-an yastahriḡū minhā āyatan tadullu 'alā anna luḥūma l-ibīli wa-albānahā kānat muḥarramatan 'alā lbrāhīma 'alayhi s-salāmu fa-'aḡazū 'an ḍālika*

meat and the milk of the camel had been prohibited to Abraham. However, they were unable to do so. Thus, their shame was exposed, revealing that they had not told the truth when claiming that these things had been forbidden for Abraham.’

1.6 More than one conditional phrase in one āya

6. There are some more complicated āyas that contain a set of conditional sentences each connected with the others. One of these is: *al-Qur’ān* VI. *al-An’ām* 35:

wa-in kāna kabura ‘alayka i’rāḍuhum fa-ini staṭa’ta an tabtaḡiya nafaqan fī l-arḡi aw sullaman fī s-samā’i fa-ta’tiyahum bi-āyatin wa-law šā’a Allāhu la-ḡama’ahum ‘alā l-hudā fa-lā takūnanna min al-ḡāhilīna⁴¹

Ibn ‘Āšūr begins his explanation⁴² by establishing a connection between the beginning of āya 33 of the same *sūra* and the first conditional sentence (C1) in āya 35 (*in kāna kabura*): It is an attachment to the sentence ‘We know too well that what they say grieves you’.⁴³ The consequence of this attachment is that the construction

fa-ftadaḡū fa-zahara ‘inda hādā annahum kānū kāḡibīna fī ddi’ā’i ḡurmati hādīhi l-ašyā’i ‘alā Ibrāhīma ‘alayhi s-salāmu.

⁴¹ Arberry’s translation puts an explanatory ‘why’ before the second conditional: “And if their turning away is distressful for thee, *why*, if thou canst seek out a hole in the earth or a ladder in heaven, to bring them some sign, but had God willed He would have gathered them to the guidance, so be not thou one of the ignorant.”

Jones translates the *āya* word by word except for the interjection of ‘do so’ in brackets which conforms to the hidden (*muḡmar*) or elliptic (*maḡḡūf*) protasis of the conditional: “If their aversion lies heavy on you, if you can seek a hole into the earth or a ladder into the sky and bring them a sign, [*do so*] – Had God willed, He would have brought them together to the guidance. Do not be one of the ignorant.”

Dawood’s translation differs in some points by which he explains the text, but he does not put in the elliptic protasis: “If you find their aversion hard to bear, *seek* if you can a chasm in the earth or a ladder to the sky by which you may bring them a sign. Had God pleased He would have given them guidance, one and all. Do not be foolish, *then*.”

The Holy Qur’ān puts in three explanatory additions, ‘yet’, ‘what good’, ‘and impatience’: “If their spurning is hard on thee, *yet* if you wert able to seek a tunnel in the ground or a ladder to the skies and bring them a sign, (*What good?*). If it were Allah’s will, he could gather them together unto true guidance: S be not thou amongst those who are swayed by ignorance (*and impatience*)!”

⁴² Ibn ‘Āšūr, *Taḡrīr* VII, 203–204: ‘*uṭīfa ‘alā l-ḡumlati qad na’lamu innahu la-yuḡzinuka llaḡī yaqūlūna fa-inna Rasūla Allāhi kāna yaḡzunuhu mā yaqūlūnahu fīhi mina t-takḡībi bihi wa-bi-l-Qur’āni ḡazanan ... fa-ḡī’a fī hādā š-šarṭi bi-ḡarfi in allaḡī yakṭuru wurūduhu fī š-šarṭi llaḡī lā yuḡzannu ḡuṣūluhu li-l-išārati ilā anna r-Rasūla laysa bi-maḡzannati ḡālika walāḡinnahu ‘alā sabīli l-farḡi.*

⁴³ It is Dawood’s translation of the first sentence of āya 33: *qad na’lamu annahu la-yuḡzunuka llaḡī yaqūlūna.*

of the first conditional in *āya* 35 is *in kāna fa'ala*. The insertion of *kāna* between the conditional particle *in* and the perfect verb (*māḍī*) of the conditional sentence, *kabura*, indicates that the conditional sentence cannot refer to the future (*istiqbāl*), as is generally the case with this conditional particle, but only to the past (*muḍī*).⁴⁴ In other words, it implies: 'What they say really grieves you'. Strangely enough, this inserted *kāna* is not taken into consideration by translators of the *Qur'ān*, as they translate the *in kāna kabura* construction into English using the present tense ('if lies heavy on you', 'if you find it heavy', 'if is distressful for thee', or 'if their spurning is hard on thee'), although we know quite well from a previous *āya* (VI. 33) that it is a fact, not just a future possibility. Thus, this conditional sentence has a positive presupposition.

The second conditional sentence (C2) in the *āya* serves as the apodosis (*ḡawāb*) of the first one.⁴⁵ The apodosis of this second conditional is a covert sentence, 'then do it' (*fa-f'al*), but it is understood from the context that it has a negative presupposition: 'you *cannot* do it'.⁴⁶ This context is provided by the third conditional sentence (C3), which naturally carries a negative presupposition, as it is an irreal conditional introduced by *law*. *az-Zamaḥṣarī* explains⁴⁷ the second conditional by changing the conditional particle *in* to *law*: 'The purpose (of the *āya*) is: The obviousness of his (Muḥammad's) endeavour to convert his tribe (the Qurayš) to Islam, and his fervor for it. Had he (*law*) been able to perform miracles (*āyāt*) from beneath the earth or from above the heavens, he would have done so, hoping for their belief.' What hindered the fulfilment of his aim was that 'God did not wish to give them (the Qurayš) a sign that could save them.'⁴⁸

Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī⁴⁹ states: 'The aim of this divine discourse is to prohibit the Messenger from striving for their belief in him.' Then he refers to the end of the *āya*:⁵⁰ You ought not to be worried about their aversion from you, since if you were (worried), your state of mind would resemble that of the ignorant. 'That is, even if you were able to perform these miracles – which you are not – the unbelievers would not accept them as signs (*āyāt*), as they did not believe in your previous signs. You must be aware of this, otherwise you are ignorant.'

To conclude the analysis of *al-Qur'ān* VI. 35, we observe the following three presuppositions: C1 has a positive presupposition, C2 has a negative presupposition

⁴⁴ Cf. Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* VII, 204.

⁴⁵ See Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* VII, 204. It is clearly expressed in Dawood's translation by putting the main verb in front of the auxiliary: 'seek if you can.'

⁴⁶ Cf. *az-Zamaḥṣarī*, *Kaššāf* II, 341: *fa-f'al ya 'nī innaka lā tastaṭī'u ḍālika*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: *fa-lā yaf'alu*. Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ḡayb* XII, 218: *lam yaša'*.

⁴⁹ Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ḡayb* XII, 217ff.

⁵⁰ *fa-lā takūnanna min al-ḡāhilīna*.

(as it were an irreal conditional sentence) and C3 (an irreal conditional sentence) also has a negative presupposition. In other words, if it is the case that you find their aversion hard to bear (which is known to be true), then if you can perform miracles, do (but you cannot, because) God did not wish it.

2 Further examples

2.1 Negative presupposition

7. al-Qur'ān II. *al-Baqara* 217.

*wa-lā yazālūna yuqātilūnakum ḥattā yaruddūkum 'an dīnikum ini staṭā'ū wa-man yartadid minkum 'an dīnihi fa-yamut wa-huwa kāfirun fa-ulā'ika ḥabiṭat a'māluhum fī d-dunyā wa-l-āḥirati wa-ulā'ika aṣḥābu n-nāri hum fīhā ḥālidūna*⁵¹

az-Zamaḥṣarī⁵² says: The conditional 'if they are able' (*ini staṭā'ū*) refers to the unlikeliness of their ability to do so. It is similar (in the common language) when a man says to his enemy: '(Even) if you overcome me, you could not remain over me (long)'. This indicates his confidence that his enemy will not overcome him. Abū Ḥayyān⁵³ quotes az-Zamaḥṣarī, al-Bayḍāwī⁵⁴ and an-Nīsābūrī⁵⁵ essentially repeat az-Zamaḥṣarī's interpretation of the conditional phrase without mentioning his name. Ibn 'Āšūr⁵⁶ also states that they (the pagans) could not make the Muslims turn away from their religion. Hence, the particle *in* is used to convey that its protasis (*ṣarṭ*) is desired without its occurrence.

⁵¹ Jones: ... They will continue to fight you until they turn you away from your religion if they are able. Those of you who turn away from their religion and die as unbelievers – their works fail in this world and in the next; these are the companions of the Fire, in which they will remain for ever.

⁵² az-Zamaḥṣarī, *al-Kaššāf* I, 425: *ini staṭā'ū wa-huwa stib'ādun li-stiṭā'atihim ka-qawli r-rağuli li-'aduwwihi in zaḥarta bī fa-lā tabqa 'alayya wa-huwa wāṭiqun bi-annahū lā yazfaru bihi.*

⁵³ Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ* II, 391.

⁵⁴ al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār at-tanzīl* I, 137: *ini staṭā'ū wa-huwa stib'ādun li-stiṭā'atihim ka-qawli l-wāṭiqi bi-quwwatihi 'alā qarṇihi: in zaḥarta bī fa-lā tabqa 'alayya wa-īḍānūn bi-annahum lā yaruddūnahum.*

⁵⁵ an-Nīsābūrī, *Tafsīr* I, 597: *wa-qawluhu ini-staṭā'ū istib'ādun li-qtidārihim ka-qawlu r-rağulu li-'aduwwihi wa-huwa wāṭiqun bi-annahū lā yazfaru bihi in zaḥarta bī fa-lā tabqa 'alayya.*

⁵⁶ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* II, 331: *wa-qawluhu ini staṭā'ū ta 'rīḍ bi-annahum lā yasaṭī'ūna radda l-muslimīna min dīnihim fa-mawqī'u ḥāḍā ṣ-ṣarṭi mawqī'u l-iḥtirāsi mimma qad tūhimuhu l-ğāyata fī qawlihi ḥattā yaruddūkum 'an dīnikum wa-li-ḥāḍā ḡā'a ṣ-ṣarṭu bi-ḥarfi in al-muṣ'iri bi-anna ṣarṭahu marğuwun 'adama wuqū'ihī.*

All these commentaries concur on the presupposition that the event addressed in the conditional cannot occur and did not occur.

8. *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 31.

*qul in kuntum tuḥibbūna Allāha fa-ttabi 'unī yuḥbibkumu Allāhu wa-yaḡfiru lakum ḍunūbakum wa-Allāhu ḡafūrun raḥīmūn.*⁵⁷

According to aṭ-Ṭabarī,⁵⁸ their claim (that they love God) is untrue. The verb *za'ama* refers to the falsehood of their claim. az-Zamaḡṣarī⁵⁹ reinforces this viewpoint, adding that anyone who claims to love God but is opposed to the *Sunna* of His Prophet is a liar, as accused by His book. This indicates that the presupposition of the conditional is negative.

9. *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 64.

*qul yā 'ahla l-kitābi ta'ālāw ilā kalimatin sawā'in baynanā wa-baynakum allā na'buda illā Allāha wa-lā nuṣrika bihi ṣay'an wa-lā yattaḥida ba'ḍunā ba'ḍan arbāban min dūni Allāhi fa-in tawallaw fa-qūlū ṣhadū bi-annā muslimūna*⁶⁰

aṭ-Ṭabarī interprets the conditional sentence in the *āya*, stating that it is a fact that those hypocrites had turned away from God and become unbelievers.⁶¹

According to Ibn 'Āṣūr: 'In the phrase *in tawallaw* the conditional particle *in* is used, since turning away (*at-tawallī*) after presenting the aforementioned proofs would be unlikely to occur. Thus, the realisation of this conditional can be considered almost improbable (*iqtilā'u ḥuṣūli hādā ṣ-ṣartu*). This is generally the case with the particle *in*, even if it happened that they (the hypocrites of Medina), having previously been delighted by their Islam (surrendering themselves to God), turned

⁵⁷ Jones: Say, 'If you love God, follow me and God will love you and forgive you your sins. God is Forgiving and Merciful.

⁵⁸ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* V, 325–326: *inna aqwāman kānū 'alā 'ahdi Rasūli Allāhi yaz'amūna annahum yuḥibbūna Allāha fa-arāda Allāhu an yaḡ'ala li-qawlihim taṣḍīqan min 'amalin fa-qāla in kuntum tuḥibbūna Allāha (al-āya) kāna ttibā'u Muḥammadin taṣḍīqan li-qawlihim.*

⁵⁹ az-Zamaḡṣarī, *Kaṣṣāf* I, 537: *fa-mani dda'ā maḡabbatahu wa-ḡālafa sunnata Rasūlihi fa-huwa kaḡḍābun wa-kitābu Allāhi yukaḡḍibuhu.*

⁶⁰ Jones: Say, 'O people of the Scripture, come to a word that is common between you and us, "We serve only God, and we associate nothing with Him and we do not take one another as lords to the exclusion of God".' If they turn away, say, 'Bear witness that we surrender.' (Bowing to God's will.)

⁶¹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* V, 474, 480: *fa-in tawallaw yaqūlu fa-in a'raḍū 'ammā da'awtahum ilayhi min al-kalimati s-sawā'i ... wa-kaḡarū fa-qūlū antum ayyuhā l-mu'minūna (li-l-mutawallīna 'an ḡālika) ṣhadū 'alaynā bi-annā bimā tawallaytum 'anhu min tawḡīdi Allāhi wa-iḡlāṣi l-'ubūdāti lahu ... muslimūna ya'nī ḡāḍi'ūna li-Allāhi bihi mutaḡḍāllilūna lahu.*

away from them (the true believers).’ That means, according to the commentator, that it may have been expected that they would not turn away, but they had not been affected by Muḥammad’s arguments and the proofs of God and left the true religion.⁶²

10. *al-Qur’ān* III. *Āl ‘Imrān* 125.

balā in taṣbirū *wa-tattaqū wa-ya’ūkum min fawrihim hādā yumdidkum rabbukum bi-ḥamsati ālāfin mina l-malā’ikati musawwisīna*⁶³

The antecedent of this *āya* can be found in *al-Qur’ān* III *Āl ‘Imrān* 23, where reference is made to the battle of Badr, while the *āya* in question refers to the battle of Uḥud. aṭ-Ṭabarī⁶⁴ quotes some unnamed companions of the Prophet: ‘Others said that God only promised them on the day of (the battle of) Badr that He would support them if they persisted in obedience to Him and in the fight (*ḡihād*) against His enemies ... but they did not fear God only on the day of the parties (*yawma l-aḥzāb*). Then He supported them when they besieged the (Jewish tribe of) Qurayza. Others said that the Muslims did not persist and so they were not supported on the day (of the battle of) Uḥud. ... Had they been supported (by God), they would not have been defeated on that day.’ aṭ-Ṭabarī⁶⁵ states that the *in yaf’al* structure means *in fa’ala* (which makes possible the interpretation that the condition was not fulfilled) and he

⁶² Ibn ‘Āšūr, *Tahrīr* III, 269: *qawluhu fa-in tawallaw ḡī’a fī hādā š-šarṭi bi-ḥarfi in li-anna t-tawallī ba’da nuḥūdi hādīhi l-ḥuḡḡati wa-mā qablahā mina l-adillati ḡarību l-wuqū’i fa-l-maqāmu muštamilun ‘alā mā huwa šāliḥun li-qtilā’i ḥuṣūli hādā š-šarṭi fa-šāra fī’lu š-šarṭi min ša’nihi an yakūna nādira l-wuqū’i mafrūdan wa-dālika min mawāqī’i in aš-šarṭiyya fa-in kāna dālika minhum fa-qad šārū biḥaytu ya’nasū min islāmihim fa-a’riḏū ‘anhum wa-msukū antum bi-islāmikum wa-ašhidūhum annakum ‘alā islāmikum ... wa-ma’nā hādā l-išhādi ‘alayhim bi-annā muslimūna.*

⁶³ Jones: (III. 124. When you said to the believers, ‘Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord will reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down?’) 125. Of course it is, but if you persevere and fear God, and [the enemy] come against you in the rush they make, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels driving on.’

Dawood: III. 125: Yes! If you have patience and guard yourselves against evil your Lord will send to your aid five thousand angels splendidly accoutred, if they suddenly attack you.

⁶⁴ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi’ al-bayān* VI, 26: *wa-qāla āḥarūna inna Allāha ‘azza wa-ḡalla innamā wa’adahum yawma Badrin an yumiddahum in ṣabarū ‘inda ṭā’atihi wa-ḡihādi a’dā’ihi wa-ttaqūhu bi-ḡtinābi maḥārimihī an yumiddahum fī ḥurūbihim kullihā fa-lam yattaqū illā fī yawmi l-aḥzābi fa-amaddahum ḥīna ḥāšarū Qurayzata wa-qāla āḥarūna bi-naḥwi hādā l-ma’nā ḡayra annahum qālū lam yašbiri l-qawmu wa-lam yumaddū bi-šay’in fī Uḥudin. 27: qāla lam yašbirū wa-lam yattaqū fa-lam yumaddū yawma Uḥudin wa-law muddū lam yuhzamū yawma ‘iḏin.*

⁶⁵ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Maḡma’* II, 307: *in tušbirū ma’nāhu in ṣabartum ... wa-‘an Qatādata: lam yumaddū yawma Uḥudin wa-lā bi-malakin wāḥidin.*

quotes what 'Ikrima, one of the companions of the Prophet, said, that in reality God had not supported the Muslims at Uḥud not even with one angel.

All this indicates that the conditional has a negative presupposition.

11. *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 149.

*yā ayyuhā alladīna āmanū in tuṭī'ū llaḍīna kafarū yaruddūkum 'alā a'qābikum fa-tanqalibū ḥāsirīna*⁶⁶

aṭ-Ṭabarī⁶⁷ states that by this *āya*, God prohibits the Muslims from yielding to the unbelievers in their opinions and religions. al-Bayḍāwī⁶⁸ holds that the *āya* was revealed on the occasion of the hypocrites saying to the believers after the defeat at Uḥud that they should return to the religion (of their ancestors), but they did not do so. Ibn 'Āšūr⁶⁹ says conveys a similar viewpoint.

The meaning of the *āya* is: Do not obey the disbelievers – and they did not do so. Therefore, the conditional has a negative presupposition.

12. *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 183.

*allaḍīna qālū inna Allāha 'ahida ilaynā allā nu'mina li-rasūlin ḥattā ya'tiyanā bi-qurbānin ta'kuluhu n-nāru qul qad ḡā'akum rasūlun min qablī bi-l-bayyinātin wa-bi-llaḍī qultum fa-limā qataltumūhum in kuntum ṣādiqīna*⁷⁰

The commentators unanimously interpret *in kuntum ṣādiqīna* in this *āya* as unconditionally false, as the meaning of the verse refutes the claim (of the Jews) that what they say is true. For instance, aṭ-Ṭabarsī writes: “This is a refutation of their claim and a proof for their obstinacy (not to accept the truth).”⁷¹ al-Bayḍāwī similarly

⁶⁶ Jones: O you who believe, if you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back on your heels ('to disbelief') and you will come away losers.

⁶⁷ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* VI, 125: *yanhā bi-dālika ahla l-īmāni bi-Allāhi an yuṭī'ū ahla l-kufri fī ārā'ihim wa-yantaṣiḥūhum fī adyānihim yaqūlu lā tantaṣiḥū l-yahūda wa-n-naṣārā 'alā dīnikum wa-lā tuṣaddiqūhum bi-ṣay'in fī dīnikum.*

⁶⁸ al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār at-tanzīl* II, 42: *nazalat fī qawli l-munāfiqīna li-l-mu'minīna 'inda l-hazīmati irḡa'ū ilā dīnikum wa-iḥwānikum wa-law kāna Muḥammadun nabīyyan la-mā qutila.*

⁶⁹ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Taḥrīr* IV, 122: *wa-'alā l-waḡḥi t-tānī fī ma'nā in tuṭī'ū llaḍīna kafarū takūnu l-munāsabatu bi-'tibāri mā fī tā'ati l-munāfiqīna min mawālātihim wa-tarki walā'i Allāhi ta'ālā.*

⁷⁰ Jones: 'Those who have said, 'God has made a covenant with us that we should not believe in any messenger until he brings us a sacrifice devoured by fire.' Say, 'Messengers have come to you before me with the clear proofs and with what you have described. Why did you kill them, if you speak the truth?'

⁷¹ aṭ-Ṭabarsī, *Maḡma' al-bayān* II, 369: *in kuntum ṣādiqīna fīmā 'uhida ilaykum fīmā ddu ṭumūhu wa-hāḍā takḍībun lahum fī qawlihim wa-dalālatun 'alā 'inādihim.*

asserts that their claim is false.⁷² Ibn ‘Āšūr state: “It is evident that God’s words ‘if you speak the truth’ mean that their claim for a special covenant with God is a lie and an untrue plea.”⁷³

13. *al-Qur’ān* VI *al-An’ām* 40.

*qul a-ra’aytum in atākum ‘aḏābu Allāhi aw atatkumu s-sā’atu a-ḡayra Allāhi
tad’ūna in kuntum ṣādiqīna*⁷⁴

aṭ-Ṭabarī⁷⁵ explains that the conditional sentence in this *āya*, ‘if you are truthful’, means: “if you are correct in your claim and assertion that your deities to which you pray instead of God, could help (you) or harm (your enemies). This, according to the commentator, implies the impossibility of their claim being true.

According to Ibn ‘Aṭīyya⁷⁶ the meaning of ‘*a-ra’aytum*’ is ‘Will you call your idols and seek refuge at them for help? Abū Ḥayyān⁷⁷ echoes Ibn ‘Aṭīyya’s explanation but adds: In case of harm, you forget your idols, that is, you abandon them. This indicates that they are not truthful when they call their idols godheads, as they know that these idols are not truly divine. aṭ-Ṭabarsī⁷⁸ emphasises that God revealed that they do not call upon their idols for help when a calamity befalls them; instead, they call upon God. Ibn Kaṭīr⁷⁹ says approximately the same.

⁷² al-Bayḏāwī, *Anwār at-tanzīl* II, 52: *al-’ahdu takḏībun*.

⁷³ Ibn ‘Āšūr, *Tahrīr* IV, 186: *wa-qawluhu in kuntum ṣādiqīna zāhirun fī anna mā za’amū mina l-’ahdi lahum bi-ḏālika kiḏbun wa-ma’āḏīru baṭīlatun*.

⁷⁴ The English translation differ in some respect from each other, so I quote three of them. Jones: Say, ‘Have you considered? If God’s torment comes to you or the Hour comes to you, Will you call on any other than God, if you are truthful?’ Arberry: Say: What think you? If God chastisement comes upon you, or the hour comes upon you, will you call upon any other than God if you speak truly? Yusuf Ali: Say: “Think ye to yourselves, if there come upon you the wrath of Allah, or the Hour (that ye dread), would ye then call upon other than Allah. – (reply) if ye are truthful! Paret: Sprich: “Was denkt ihr? Wenn die Strafe Allahs über euch kommt oder die Stunde euch ereilt, werdet ihr dann zu einem anderen rufen als zu Allah, wenn ihr wahrhaftig seid?”

⁷⁵ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi’ al-bayān* IX, 241: *in kuntum ṣādiqīna yaqūlu in kuntum muḥiqqīna fī da’wākum wa-za’mikum anna ālihatakumu llatī tad’ūnahā min dūni Allāhi tanfa’u aw taḏurru*.

⁷⁶ Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *al-Muḥarrar* II, 290: *al-ma’nā a-ra’aytum ... a-tad’ūna aṣnāmakum wa-talḡu’ūna ilayhā fī kaṣfi ḏālika in kuntum ṣādiqīna fī qawlikum innahā ālihatun bal tad’ūna Allāha*.

⁷⁷ Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ* IV, 507.

⁷⁸ aṭ-Ṭabarsī, *Maḡma’ al-bayān* IV, 41: *in kuntum ṣādiqīna fī anna hāḏihi l-awṭāna ālihatun lakum iḥtaḡḡa subḥānuhu ‘alayhim bimā lā yadfa’ūnahu li-annahum kānū iḏā massahumu ḏ-ḏarru da’aw Allāha tumma qāla bal iyyāhu tad’ūna*.

⁷⁹ Ibn Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr* III, 256: *in kuntum ṣādiqīna ay fī ttiḥāḏikum ālihatan ma’ahu ... fī waqti ḏarūratin lā tad’ūna ḡayrahu (Allāha)*.

14. *al-Qur'ān* VI. *al-An'ām* 143.

tamāniyata azwāğin mina d-da'ni tṅayni wa-mina l-ma'zi tṅayni quli d-dakarayni ḥarrama ami l-unṭayayni ammā štamalat 'alayhi arḥāmu l-unṭayayni nabbi 'ūnī bi-'ilmin in kuntum šādiqīna⁸⁰

aṭ-Ṭabarī⁸¹: In this *āya*, God informs the Prophet that everything these polytheists (that is, the Jews) say about God's prohibition is a lie, and they follow in this the footsteps of Satan. Ibn 'Aṭīyya⁸² describes this conditional sentence as “blame and reproach because of their lies.” Abū Ḥayyān⁸³ adds that it is impossible to provide trustworthy information about these alleged prohibitions. Ibn 'Āšūr⁸⁴ states that the *āya* clearly shows that they could not prove their claim that these things had been prohibited by God, so they are liars.

15. *al-Qur'ān*, VII. *al-A'rāf* 85.

wa-ilā Madyan aḥāhum Šu'ayban qāla yā qawmi 'budū Allāha mā lakum min ilāhin ġayruhu qad ġā'atkum bayyinatum min rabbikum fa-awfū l-kayla wa-l-mīzāna wa-lā tabḥasū n-nāsa ašyā'ahum wa-lā tufsidū fī l-arḍi ba'da iṣlāḥihā dālikum ḥayrun lakum in kuntum mu'minīna⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Jones: Eight paired together: two of sheep and two of goats; Say, 'Has He forbidden the two males or the two females or what the wombs of the two females contain?

⁸¹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* IX, 626: *wa-innamā hādā i'lāmun mina Allāhi ġalla ṭanā'uhu nabiyyahu anna kulla mā qālahu hā'ulā'i l-mušrikūna fī dālika wa-aḍāfūhu ilā Allāhi fa-huwa kaḍibun 'alā Allāhi wa-annahū lam yuḥarrim šay'an min dālika wa-annahumu ttaba'ū fī dālika ḥuṭuwāti š-šayṭāni wa-ḥālafū amrahu. ... ay in kuntum šādiqīna lam uḥarrim min hādā šay'an.*

⁸² Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar* II, 355: *taqrī'un wa-tawbīḥun*. In the edition *taqrīr* is written incorrectly which is a misprint or misreading.

⁸³ Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ* IV, 672: *nabbi 'ūnī bi-'ilmin in kuntum šādiqīna ay lā yumkinu minkum tanbi'atun bi-dālika ... wa-ntaqala min tawbīḥihim fī nafyi 'ilmihim bi-dālika ilā tawbīḥihim fī nafyi šahādathim dālika waqta tawšiyati Allāhi iyyāhum bi-dālika.*

⁸⁴ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* VIIIa 133: *wa-qawluhu in kuntum šādiqīna ay fī qawlikum inna Allāha ḥarrama mā dākartum annahu muḥarramun li-annahum law kānū šādiqīna fī taḥrīmi dālika la-ṣtaṭ'ū bayāna mā ḥarramahu Allāhu wa-la-abadū ḥikmata taḥrīmi mā ḥarramūhu wa-nasabū taḥrīmahu ilā Allāhi ta'ālā.*

⁸⁵ Jones: To Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu'ayb. He said, 'O my people, serve God. You have no god other than Him. A clear proof from your Lord has come to you. Give full weight and full measure and do not defraud the people of their things and do not cause mischief in the land after it has been set right. That is better for you if you are believers.

aṭ-Ṭabarī⁸⁶: If you believe in what I say to you from God about His prohibition and command. aṭ-Ṭa‘labī⁸⁷ explains, the phrase ‘That is better for you if you are believers’ means ‘if you believe in what I say’, signifying true belief. Abū Ḥayyān⁸⁸ adds that from (the hidden reference of) the conditional sentence ‘(in *kuntum mu‘minīna*), it is clear that they are unbelievers, a fact known from the beginning of the *āya* and from the end of the story as well.

16. *al-Qur‘ān* VII. *al-A‘rāf* 89.

*qaḍi ftaraynā ‘alā Allāhi kaḍiban in ‘udnā fī millatikum ba‘da id naḡḡānā
Allāhu minhā wa-mā yakūnu lanā an na‘ūda fīhā illā an yašā‘a Allāhu rabbunā
wasi‘a rabbunā kulla šay‘in ‘ilman ‘alā Allāhi tawakkalnā rabbanā ftaḥ baynanā
wa-bayna qawminā bi-l-ḥaqqi wa-anta ḥayru l-fātiḥīna*⁸⁹

aṭ-Ṭabarī⁹⁰: It would not be desirable for us to return to your polytheism (*širk*) after that God delivered us from it. Thus, the conditional clearly has a negative presupposition. az-Zamaḥšarī⁹¹: ‘The *āya* contains an indirect speech (*iḥbār*), which is bound (*muqayyad*) to the conditional in *‘udnā*. It can be explained in two ways (*waḡhāni*). First, it can be a nominal sentence (*musta‘nifa*), expressing astonishment as if they said: How would we tell lies about God if returned to unbelief after Islām! Second, it can be conceived as an oath, with an implicated *la-* (*laqaḍi ftaraynā ‘alā Allāhi*): By God, certainly we would tell etc.’ In both cases, it becomes clear that the realisation of the conditional is impossible.

⁸⁶ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi‘ al-bayān* X, 312: *in kuntum muṣaddiqiyya fīmā aqūlu lakum wa-u‘addī ilaykum ‘ani Allāhi min amrihi wa-nahyihi.*

⁸⁷ aṭ-Ṭa‘labī, *Kašf* IV, 261: *ḥayrun lakum in kuntum mu‘minīna muṣaddiqīna bimā aqūlu.*

⁸⁸ Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, V, 105: *wa-zāhiru qawlihi in kuntum mu‘minīna annahum kānū kāfirīna wa-‘alā dālika yadullu ṣadru l-āyati wa-āḥiru l-qišṣati.*

⁸⁹ Jones: We would be inventing lies against God if we return to your religion after God has saved us from it. It is not for us to return to it unless God, our Lord, wishes. God embraces all things in [His] knowledge. We put our trust in God. Our Lord, decide with truth between us and our people. You are the best of those who decide.’

⁹⁰ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi‘ al-bayān* X, 319: *mā yanbaḡī lanā an na‘ūda fī širkikum ba‘da id naḡḡānā Allāhu minhā illā an yašā‘a Allāhu rabbunā fa-Allāhu lā yašā‘u š-širka walākin yaqūlu illā an yakūna Allāhu qad ‘alīma šay‘an fa-innahu wasi‘a kulla šay‘in ‘ilman.*

⁹¹ az-Zamaḥšarī, *Kaššāf* II, 486: *huwa iḥbārūn muqayyadun bi-š-šarṭi wa-fīhi waḡhāni aḥaduhumā an yakūna kalāman musta‘nifan fīhi ma‘nā t-ta‘aḡḡubu ka-annahum qālū mā akḍabanā ‘alā Allāhi in ‘udnā fī l-kufri ba‘da l-islāmi ... wa-t-tānī an yakūna qasaman ‘alā taqḍīri ḥaḍfī l-lāmi bi-ma‘nā wa-Allāhi laqaḍi ftaraynā ‘alā Allāhi kaḍban.*

17. *al-Qur'ān IX. at-Tawba 41.*

(i) *nfirū ḥifāfan wa-ṭiqālan wa-ḡāhidū bi-amwālikum wa-anfusikum fī sabīli Allāhi dālikum ḥayrun lakum in kuntum ta'lamūna*⁹²

aṭ-Ṭabarī⁹³: If you knew the preference (*faḍl*) of going to fight for God to remaining at home. However, they did not know it. Ibn 'Aḡṭba⁹⁴: Had you known it, you would not have stayed away from the raiding party. al-Ālūsī⁹⁵: If you knew that striving for God is better than staying away, you would hurry to fight without delay. It is an implied apodosis to the conditional *in kuntum*. Ibn 'Āšūr⁹⁶: If you had known the goodness of the fight and what it meant (*ša'bahu*).

18. *al-Qur'ān IX. at-Tawba 62.*

*yaḥlafūna bi-Allāhi lakum li-yurḍūkum wa-Allāhu wa-Rasūluhu aḥaqqu an yurḍūhu in kānū mu'minīna*⁹⁷

aṭ-Ṭabarī⁹⁸ says that those who seek to please you instead of God and His Messenger are not true believers. That is, the implied apodosis (*ḡawāb*) of the protasis of the conditional phrase (*šarṭ*) shows a negative presupposition. Similarly, az-Zamaḡṣarī⁹⁹ argues that they (the hypocrites) could not be true believers as they claim, because they want to please others than God and His Messenger, between whom there is no

⁹² Jones: Go out, light and heavy, and strive with your persons and your possessions in God's way. That is better for you, if you have knowledge.

⁹³ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān XI*, 476: *in kuntum min ahli l-'ilmi bi-ḥaqqiqati mā buyyina lakum min faḍli l-ḡihādi fī sabīli Allāhi 'alā l-qu'ūdi 'anhu*.

⁹⁴ Ibn 'Aḡṭba, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, II, 384: *in kuntum ta'lamūna ... ay law 'alimtum dālika mā qa'adtum ḥalfā sariyyatin*.

⁹⁵ al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī X*, 344: *in kuntum ta'lamūna ay in kuntum ta'lamūna l-ḥayra 'alimtum annahu ḥayrun aw in kuntum ta'lamūna annahu ḥayrun id lā ḥtimālun li-ḡayri ṣ-ṣidqi fī aḥbārihi ta'ālā fa-bādarū ilayhi fa-ḡawābu in muqaddarun*.

⁹⁶ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr X*, 208: *in kuntum ta'lamūna ay in kuntum ta'lamūna dālika l-ḥayra wa-ša'bahu*.

⁹⁷ Jones: They swear to you by God to please you, but God and His messenger have a better right to be pleased by them, if they are believers.

⁹⁸ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān XI*, 539: *yaqūlu ta'ālā ḍikruhu li-l-mu'minīna bihi wa-bi-Rasūlihi yaḥlafu lakum ḥā'ulā'i l-munāfiqūna bi-Allāhi li-yurḍūkum ... wa-l-aymāni l-fāḡirati wa-Allāhu wa-Rasūluhu aḥaqqu an yurḍūhu bit-tawbati wa-l-inābati mimmā qālū wa-naṭaqū in kānū mu'minīna ay in kānū muṣaddiqīna bi-tawḥīdi Allāhi muqirrīna bi-wa'dihi wa-wa'idīhi*.

⁹⁹ az-Zamaḡṣarī, *Kaššāf III*, 62: *fa-qīla lahum in kuntum mu'minīna kamā taz'amūna fa-aḥaqqu man arḍaytumu Allāhu wa-Rasūluhu bi-t-ṭā'ti wa-l-wifāqi wa-innamā waḥḥada ḍ-ḍamīra li-annahu lā tawāfata bayna riḍā Allāhi wa-riḍā Rasūlihi ... ka-qawlika iḥsānu Zayḍin wa-iḡmāluhu na'aṣanī wa-ḡabara minnī aw wa-Allāhu aḥaqqu an yurḍūhu wa-Rasūluhu ayḍan*.

difference. Abū Ḥayyān¹⁰⁰ and Ibn ‘Aǧība¹⁰¹ also reject the notion of their true belief because they do not swear by God or His Messenger. Ibn ‘Āšūr¹⁰² holds the same view but adds that the *āya* also urges these men to become true believers.

Finally, the subsequent *āya* clarifies that the conditional *in* in the preceding *āya* must be interpreted as *law*, since they were unaware ‘that those who oppose God and His messenger will have the Fire of Jahannam’¹⁰³, indicating their lack of sincerity in their belief.

19. *al-Qur’ān XXI al-Anbiyā’* 17.

law aradnā an nattaḥiḍa laḥwan la-ttaḥaḍnāhu min ladunnā in *kunnā fā’ilīna*¹⁰⁴ aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁰⁵ cites explanations according to which *laḥw* means a woman or, in the Yemeni dialect, a child; *min ladunnā* refers to the people of the heaven, while *in kunnā fā’ilīna* can be interpreted as ‘we do not do that’. az-Zamaḥṣarī¹⁰⁶ shares the same interpretation regarding the meaning of *laḥw*, and he adds that *min ladunnā*

¹⁰⁰ Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥiṭ* XI, 337: *in kānū mu’minīna kamā yaz’amūna fa-ahaqqu man yurḍūnahu Allāhu wa-Rasūluhu bi-ṭ-ṭā’ati wa-l-wifāqi*.

¹⁰¹ Ibn ‘Aǧība, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, II, 400: *in kānū mu’minīna ṣādiqīna fī ṡmānihim*.

¹⁰² Ibn ‘Āšūr, *Taḥrīr* X, 245: *wa-ṣarṭu in kānū mu’minīna musta’malun li-l-ḥaṭṭi wa-t-tawaqqu’i li-ṡmānihim li-anna mā ḥukiya ‘anhum min l-aḥwāli lā yabqā ma’ahu ḥtimālun fī ṡmānihim fa-sta’ mala ṣarṭa li-t-tawakkuli wa-l-ḥaṭṭi ‘alā l-ṡmāni*.

¹⁰³ Jones: Do they not know that those who oppose God and His messenger will have the Fire of Jahannam, in which they will remain for ever? That is the great humiliation.

¹⁰⁴ Jones: Had We wished to choose a diversion, We could have chosen it from within Us – had We done [anything]. Bell: If We wished to choose a pastime, We should choose one within Ourselves, if we were going to do (anything). Yusuf Ali: If it had been Our wish to take (just) a pastime, We should surely have taken it from the things nearest to Us, if We would do (such a thing)! Arberry: had We desired to take to Us a diversion We would have taken to it Us from Ourselves, had We done aught. Paret: Hätten Wir Uns einen Zeitvertreib schaffen wollen, so hätten Wir dies von Uns aus vorgenommen, wenn Wir das überhaupt hätten tun wollen. N.B.: I quoted so many translations because none of them has succeeded in giving a meaningful sense to the words *laḥw* and *min ladunnā*, unlike the Mediaeval commentaries, which, however, were not taken into consideration by the translators.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi’ al-bayān* XVI, 237: *law aradnā an nattaḥiḍa zawġatan waladan ...qīla l-laḥwu l-mar’atu. ... al-laḥwu bi-luġati ahli l-Yamani l-mar’atu. 239: in kunnā fā’ilīna mā naf’alu ...wa-qīla mā kunnā naf’alu min ladunnā min ‘indinā min ahli s-samā’i ...240: wa-mā ḥalaqnā ġannatan wa-lā nāran wa-lā mawtan wa-lā ba’ṡan wa-lā ḥisāban*.

¹⁰⁶ az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaššāf* IV, 133: *tumma bayyana anna s-sababa fī tarki ttiḥāḍi l-laḥwi wa-l-la’bi wa-ntifā’ihi ‘an af’ālī huwa anna l-ḥikmata ṣārifatun ‘anhu wa-illā fa-anā qādirun ‘alā ttiḥāḍihi in kuntu fā’ilan li-annī ‘alā kulli šay’in qādirun. wa-qawluhu la-ttaḥaḍnāhu min ladunnā ay min ġihati qudratinā wa-qīla l-laḥwu l-waladu bi-luġati l-Yamani wa-qīla l-mar’atu wa-qīla min ladunnā ay mina l-malā’ikati lā mina l-insi raddan li-wilādati l-Masīḥi wa-’Azīzin*.

signifies 'by way of our power'. Ibn 'Aṭīyya¹⁰⁷ says that *in* occupies here the place of *law*, that is, an irreal conditional phrase meaning that 'we did not do that'. According to Ibn Kaṭīr¹⁰⁸ *lahw* means a *hūrī* woman. He also considers the conditional with *in* to mean that 'we did not do it'. He also quotes the opinion of Muğāhid that every *in* in the *Qur'ān* is negation. Ibn 'Āšūr¹⁰⁹ explains *min ladunnā*: from the world of the angels who are the nearest to God. According to him, this *in* can also function as a conditional or a negative particle. The meaning, however, in both cases is 'we did not do it'.

20. *al-Qur'ān* XLVI. *al-Aḥqāf* 4.

*qul a-ra'aytum mā tad'ūna min dūni Allāhi arūnī māḍā ḥalaqū mina l-arḍi am lahum širkun fī s-samāwāti tūnī min qabli ḥādā aw aṭāratin min 'ilmin in kuntum šādiqīna.*¹¹⁰

According to aṭ-Ṭabarī¹¹¹ if they were truthful in their claim, they would have been able to provide evidence for it, which they did not. Ibn Abī Zamanīn¹¹² asserts that the *āya* unequivocally indicates that there exists no scripture or oral report (*riwāya*) supporting the notion that their idols played a role in the creation of the heavens and the earth. Ibn 'Āšūr¹¹³ maintains that their inability to present any supporting arguments demonstrates that their claim was false.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar* IV, 77: *wa-in fī qawlihi in kunnā fā'ilīna yuḥtamalu an takūna š-šarṭīyya bi-ma'nā law kunnā ay wa-lasnā kaḍālika ... wa-yuḥtamalu an takūna nāfiyatan bi-ma'nā mā wa-kullu ḥadā qad qīla.*

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Kaṭīr, *Tafsīr* V, 335–336: *law aradnā ... (lam nurid) ... laḥwan ... al-laḥwu l-mar'atu aw mina l-hūrī l-'ayni ... awi l-waladu in kunnā fā'ilīna ay mā kunnā fā'ilīna wa-qāla Muğāhidun kullu šay'in fī l-Qur'āni in fa-huwa inkārūn.*

¹⁰⁹ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* XVII, 33: *wa-ḡumlatu in kunnā fā'ilīna in ḡu'ilat in šarṭīyatan fa-rtibāṭuhā bi-llatī qablahā rtibāṭu š-šarṭi bi-ḡazā'ihī l-mahḍūfi d-dāllu 'alayhi ḡawābu law wa-huwa ḡumlatu la-ttaḥadnāhu fa-yakūnu takrīran li-t-talāzumi wa-in ḡu'ilat in ḥarfa nafyin kānati l-ḡumlatu musta'nifatan li-taqrīri l-imtinā'i l-mustafādi min law ay mā kunnā fā'ilīna laḥwan.*

¹¹⁰ Jones: Say, 'Have you considered what you call on apart from God? Show me what part of the earth they have created? Or have they a share of the heavens? Bring me a Scripture from before this, or some trace of knowledge, if you speak the truth.'

¹¹¹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi'* *al-bayān* XXI, 116: *in kuntum šādiqīna fī da'wākum laḥā mā tadda'ūna fa-inna d-da'wā idā lam yakun ma'ahā ḥuḡḡatun lam tuḡni 'ani l-mudda'ī šay'an*

¹¹² Ibn Abī Zamanīn, *Tafsīr* IV, 221: *i'tūnī bi-kitābin ... aw aṭāratin min 'ilmin bi-ḥādā in kuntum šādiqīna ay laysa 'indakum bi-ḥādā kitābun aw aṭāratu ya'nī riwāyatun.*

¹¹³ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* XXVI, 11: *fī qawlihi in kuntum šādiqīna ilḥābun wa-ifḥāmun lahum bi-annahum ḡayru ātīna bi-ḥuḡḡatin lā min ḡānibi l-'aqli wa-lā min ḡānibi n-naqli l-mastūrī awi l-ma'tūrī wa-qad qāla ta'ālā fī sūrati l-Qaṣaši fa-in lam yastaḡībū laka fa-'lam innamā yatba'ūna aḥwā'ahum.*

21. *al-Qurān XLVI. al-Aḥqāf* 8.

*am yaqūlūna fītarāhu qul ini fītaraytuhu fa-lā tamlikūna lī mina Allāhi šay'an huwa a'lamu bimā tufīdūna fīhi kafā bihi šahīdan baynī wa-baynakum wa-huwa l-ḡafūru r-raḥīmu*¹¹⁴

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹¹⁵: Say (Muḥammad) to them (the Meccan pagans) that if I had fabricated this Qur'ān, you could not protect me from God's punishment (so I had not fabricated it). az-Zamaḥṣarī¹¹⁶: Since God inevitably punishes whoever fabricates lies against Him ... how could I fabricate lies and expose myself to His punishment? aṭ-Ṭabarī¹¹⁷: The intention of the *āya* is: How can I invent lies against God when you are not able to ward off His punishment from me? Ibn 'Ādil¹¹⁸ explains in detail why Muḥammad considered it impossible for himself to have invented lies for the sake of the unbelievers. Ibn 'Āšūr¹¹⁹: If I had fabricated (the Qur'ān) I would have been punished by God.

All the commentators agree that the *in* of the conditional phrase corresponds here to the irreal *law*, so the conditional phrase carries a negative presupposition.

¹¹⁴ Jones: Or do they say, 'He has invented it'? Say, 'If I have invented it, you have nothing to help me against God. He is well aware of what you engage in. He is sufficient witness between me and you. He is Forgiving and Compassionate.' Yusuf Ali: Or do they say, "He has forged it"? Say: "Had I forged it, then can ye obtain no single (blessing) for me from Allah. He knows best of that whereof ye talk (so glibly)! Enough is He for a witness between me and you! And he is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." Dawood: Say: „If I have indeed invented it, then there is nothing you can do to shield me from the wrath of God. He well knows what you say about it. Sufficient is He as my witness and your witness. He is the Forgiving One, the Merciful.” Arberry: If I forged it, you have no power to help me against God.

¹¹⁵ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* XXI, 118: *yaqūlu ta'ālā dīkruhu: am yaqūlu hā'ulā'i l-mušrikūna bi-Allāhi min Qurayšin: iftarā Muḥammadun hādā l-Qur'āna fa-ḥtalaqahu wa-taḥarraṣahu kiḍban. qul lahum yā Muḥammadu: ini fītaraytuhu wa-taḥarrastuhu 'alā Allāhi fa-lā tamlikūna lī yaqūlu fa-lā tuḡnūna 'anni mina Allāhi in 'āqabanī 'fīrā'ī iyyāhu wa-taḥarruṣī 'alayhi šay'an wa-lā taqdirūna in tadfa'ū 'annī sū'an in ašābanī bihi.*

¹¹⁶ az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaššāf* V, 493: *lā maḥālata bi-'uqūbati l-iftirā'i 'alayhi ... kayfa aftarīhi wa-ata'arraḍu li-'iqābihi.*

¹¹⁷ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Maḡma' al-bayān* IX, 107: *al-murādu kayfa aftarī 'alā Allāhi min aḡlikum wa-antum lā taqdirūna 'alā daf'i 'iqābihi 'annī iḡā fītaraytu 'alayhi.*

¹¹⁸ Ibn 'Ādil, *Lubāb* XVII, 381: *am yaqūlūna fītarāhu am li-l-inkāri wa-t-ta'aḡḡubi ka-annahu qīla da' hādā wa-sma'i l-qawla l-munkara l-aḡṭba tumma bayyana baṭlāna šubhatihim fa-qāla qul yā Muḥammadu ... 'alā sabīli l-farḍi ... wa-in 'aḡḡabanī Allāhu 'alā fīrā'ī fa-kayfa aftarī 'ala Allāhi min aḡlikum.*

¹¹⁹ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* XXVI, 14: *ma'nā lā tamlikūna lī lā taqdirūna 'alā daf'i ḍarri Allāhi 'annī fa-qtadā anna l-ma'nā: ini fītaraytuhu 'āqabanī Allāhu wa-lā tastaḥī'ūna daf'a 'iqābī.*

22. *al-Qur'ān* LXXXVII. *al-A'lā* 9–10.9. *fa-dakkir* in *nafa'ati d-dīkrā* 10. *sa-yaddakkaru man yaḥšā*¹²⁰

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹²¹: Warn (Muḥammad) them about His punishment, although reminding (of the punishment) those who drove you to despair will not be beneficial for them. az-Zamaḥṣarī¹²² says that on the surface it is a conditional, but its meaning is dispraise. He sums up his commentary with the following words: 'The aim of this conditional is to exclude the possibility of the usefulness of the reminder. He cites an example from the everyday language: As if you told a preacher (*wā'iz*) to admonish the tax-collectors if they listen to it from you.

Ibn 'Aṭīyya¹²³ also notes that the real meaning of the *āya* is to censure the Meccans. He quotes two earlier commentators, al-Farrā' and az-Zahrāwī, according to whom the conditional has a negative meaning (*in lam tanfa'*). In as-Samnānī's¹²⁴ interpretation, the two *āyas* instruct the Prophet that his task is only to warn the infidels and to inform them about the consequences of their infidelity, regardless of whether they benefit from his preaching or not. However, the commentator adds that the warnings of the Prophet will be useful only for those who fear God. Ibn 'Āšūr¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Jones: 9. So remind – if the reminder is useful. 10. He who fears will be reminded.

¹²¹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* XXIV, 317: *yaqūlu ta'ālā dīkruhu faḍakkir 'ibāda Allāhi yā Muḥammadu 'azamatahu wa-'izhum wa-ḥaddīrhūm 'uqūbatahu in nafa'ati d-dīkrā llaḏīna qad āyastuka min imānihim fa-lā tanfa'uhumu d-dīkrā.*

¹²² az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaššāf* VI, 359: *in nafa'ati d-dīkrā dālika ba'da ilzāmi l-ḥuḡḡati bitakrīri t-taḍkīri wa-t-tānī an yakūna zāhiruhu šarṭan wa-ma'nāhu ḍamman li-l-muḍakkirīna wa-iḥbāran 'an ḥālīhimi stib 'ādan li-ta'tīri d-dīkrā fīhim wa-tasḡīlan 'alayhim bi-ṭab'i 'alā qulūbihim kamā taqūlu li-l-wā'izi 'izi l-makkāsīna in sami'ū minka qāšidan bi-hāḏā š-šarṭi stib 'āda dālika wa-annahu lan yakūna. ... an yakūna zāhiruhu šarṭan wa ma'nāhu ḍamman li-l-muḍakkirīna ... wa-sti'bādan li-ta'tīri d-dīkrā fīhim ... qāšidan bi-hāḏā š-šarṭi stib 'āda dālika wa-annahu lan yakūna.*

¹²³ Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar* V, 470: *iḥtalafa n-nāsu fī ma'nā qawlihi ta'ālā in nafa'ati d-dīkrā fa-qāla l-Farrā'u wa-z-Zahrāwīyyu ma'nāhu wa-in lam tanfa' fa-qtašara 'alā l-qismi l-wāḥidi li-dalālatihī 'alā t-tānī wa-qāla ba'du l-ḥuḏḏāqi ... 'alā ḡihati t-tawbīhi li-Qurayšin ay in nafa'ati d-dīkrā fī hā'ulā'i t-tuḡāti l-'utāti ... kamā taqūlu li-raḡulin qul li-fulānin wa-'id lahu in sami'aka innamā huwa tawbīḥun li-l-muṣāri ilayhi.*

NB: Neither the *Ma'ānī* of al-Farrā', nor the collected sayings of az-Zahrāwī contain this explanation. Cf. al-Farrā', *Ma'ānī* III, 256 where he explains *Sūrat al-A'lā* and az-Zahrāwī, *Aqwāl*.

¹²⁴ as-Samnānī, *Ayn al-ḥayāt* VI, 301: *in kunta tuḍakkiru mā qara'ta 'alā lawḥika fa-mā 'alayka an yanfa'a lahumu d-dīkrā aw lā yanfa'a wa-'alayka l-wa'zu wa-l-iblāḡu. sawfa yanfa'u llaḏīna yaḥšūna min rabbihim mina l-quww l-musta'iddati l-ḡayri l-mulattāḥati biturābi t-ṭabī'ati.*

¹²⁵ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* XXX, 284: *wa-hāḏā ta'rīḏun bi-anna fī l-qawmi man lā tanfa'uhu d-dīkrā wa-dālika yufhamu minī ḡitābi ḥarfī in al-muqtaḏī 'adama ḥtimāli wuqū'i šarṭi aw nadrati wuqū'ihī.*

states that this *āya* alludes to those who cannot make use of the Prophet's warnings. This is evident from the use of the conditional particle *in*, which indicates the improbability or impossibility of the occurrence of the conditional event.

2.2 Positive presupposition

23. *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 63.

*fa-in tawallaw fa-inna Allāha 'alīmun bi-l-mufsidīna*¹²⁶

at-Ṭabarī asserts that the Jews rejected the truth that had come from God and did not accept it.¹²⁷ al-Bayḍāwī similarly interprets the conditional *in* in the *āya* as confirming their (i.e., the Jews of Medina) refusal of Muḥammad's arguments and (the concept of) Divine Oneness.¹²⁸ at-Ṭa'ālibī¹²⁹ citing the opinion of a certain Abū l-Baqā', emphasises that they had turned away from God, as indicated by the use of the past tense (*fi'l māḍī, tawallaw*), and it cannot be construed as if it were *tatawallaw* (real conditional, by implication), since in that case the true meaning of the *āya* would be lost, namely that God said to the believers: Say and testify, while He said to the polytheists: You turned away.

24. *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 120.

in tamsaskum ḥasanatun *tasu'hum wa-in tuṣibkum sayyi'atun yafraḥū bihā wa-in taṣbirū wa-tattaqū lā yaḍurrukum kayduhum šay'an inna Allāha bimā ya'lamūna muḥīṭun*¹³⁰

al-Bayḍāwī says about this *āya* in his *Tafsīr*¹³¹: Your (i.e., the true Muslims of Medina) victory over your enemies and your seizing of spoils from them make them (i.e., the hypocrites of Medina) sorrowful, whereas they rejoice when you suffer defeat or discord arises among you. That means the two conditional sentences are

¹²⁶ Jones: If they turn away, God is aware of those who wreak mischief.

¹²⁷ at-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* V, 467: *fa-in tawallaw ya'nī fa-in adbara ... hā'ulā'ī llaḍīna ḥāggūka fī 'Isā 'ammā ḡā'aka min al-ḥaqqi min 'indī rabbika ... fa-a'raḍū 'anhu wa-lam yaqbalūhu.*

¹²⁸ al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār at-Tanzīl* II, 21. *wa'īdun lahum wa-waḍ'u l-muḥari mawḍi'a l-muḍmari li-yadulla 'alā anna t-tawallīya 'ani l-ḥuḡaḡi wa-l-i'rāḍa 'ani t-tawḥīdi ifṣādun li-d-dīni wa-l-i'tiqādu l-mu'addī ilā fasādi n-naḥsi bal wa-ilā fasādi l-'ālamī.*

¹²⁹ at-Ṭa'ālibī, *Ġawāhir* II, 56: *fa-in tawallaw Abū l-Baqā' (qāla) tawallaw fī'lun māḍī wa-lā yaḡūzu an yakūna t-taqdīru tatawallaw li-fasādi l-ma'nā li-anna qawlahu a-qūlū ṣhadū ḥiṭābun li-l-mu'minīna wa-tawallaw li-l-muṣrikīna.*

¹³⁰ Jones: If a piece of good fortune touches you, it is evil in their view; but if a piece of evil befalls you, they rejoice at it. But if you persevere and protect yourselves, their trickery will not harm you in any way. God encompasses what they do.

¹³¹ al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār at-Tanzīl* II, 35: *bayānun li-tanāhī 'adāwatihim ilā ḥaddīn ḥasadū mā nālahum min ḥayrin wa-manḡa'atin wa-ṣatamū bimā aṣābahum min ḍarrīn wa-siddatīn.*

not to be considered as speaking of future events; rather, they refer to current and frequent occurrences of unbelief, and the real meaning of *in* is 'whenever'. Ibn 'Āšūr says that God disclosed (*kašafa*) what can be found in their (hypocrites, *munāfiqūn*) hearts (*fī šudūrihim*). That is, their would-be behaviour is presupposed on the basis of their previous feelings.¹³²

For the second conditional sentence (*in tašbirū wa-tattaqū*), al-Bağawī considers the trickery of the hypocrites to be a fact rather than just an assumption. He explains the apodosis (*ğawāb*) *lā yađurrukum* as *fa-laysa yađurrukum* meaning 'so they (really) do not harm you'.¹³³

25. *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 140.

in yamsaskum qarhun *fa-qad massa l-qawma miṭluhu wa-tilka l-ayyāmu*
nudāwiluhā bayna n-nāsi wa-li-ya'lama Allāhu llađīna āmanū wa-yattaḥida
*minkum šuhadā'a wa-Allāhu lā yuḥibbu z-zālimīna*¹³⁴

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹³⁵ asserts that the believers were indeed wounded (by God's decree), and this *āya* can be seen as an encouragement for them to persevere in their fight against the infidels. al-Bayḏāwī¹³⁶ also observes the ups and downs of war, noting that God alternates success among the fighters, giving believers hope for success from God, while their enemies lack such assurance. Ibn 'Āšūr¹³⁷ offers a similar interpretation of the *āya*, adding that it serves as a source of comfort (*tasliya*) for the believers after the painful defeat at Uḥud, rather than a punishment as some commentators have suggested.

¹³² Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* IV, 68: *zāda Allāhu kašafan limā fī šudūrihim bi-qawlihi in tamsuskum ḥasanatun tasu'hum ay tušibkum ḥasanatun wa-l-massu l-išābatu*.

¹³³ al-Bağawī, *Ma'ālim at-Tanzīl* II, 96.

¹³⁴ Jones: If a wound touches you, a similar wound has already touched the people [who oppose you]. These are the turns of fortune that We deal out in turn amongst the people. [We do this] that God may know those who believe and that He may take witnesses from among you – God does not love the wrong-doers.

¹³⁵ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* VI, 81: *in kāna ašābakum qarhun fa-qad ašāba 'aduwwakum miṭluhu yu'azzī ašāba Muḥammadin wa-yahuttuhum 'alā l-qitāli*.

¹³⁶ al-Bayḏāwī, *Anwār at-tanzīl* II, 40: *wa-l-ma'nā in ašābū minkum yawma Uḥudīn fa-qad ašabtum minhūm yawma Badrīn miṭlahu ... fa-antum awlā ... fa-innakum tarğawna mina Allāhi mā lā yarğawna ... nudāwiluhā ya'nī nušarrifuhā baynahum nudūlu li-hā'ulā'i tāratan wa-li-hā'ulā'i tāratan uḥrā*.

¹³⁷ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* IV, 99: *wa-l-ma'nā in huzimtum yawma Uḥudīn fa-qad huzīma l-mušrikūna yawma Badrīn wa-kuntum kifāfan wa-li-đālika a'qabahu bi-qawlihi wa-tilka l-ayyāmu nudāwiluhā bayna n-nāsi wa-t-ta'bīru 'ammā ašāba l-muslimīna bi-šīğati l-muđāri'i fī yamsaskum li-qurbihī min zamāni l-ḥāli wa-'ammā ašāba l-mušrikūna bi-šīğati l-māđī li-bu'dihī li-annahu ḥašala yawma Badrīn. IV, 100: *naşrun mubīnūn wa-hāđihī l-muqābalatu bimā ašāba l-'aduwwa yawma Badrīn ta'ayyana an yakūna l-kalāmu tasliyatan wa-laysa i'lāman bi-l-'uqūbati kamā qāla ğam'un mina l-mufasssīna*.*

Based on the interpretations provided above, it becomes evident that the conditional carries a positive presupposition – that indeed you (the believers) were hit by calamity at Uḥūd.

26. *al-Qur'ān* III. *Āl 'Imrān* 184.

*fa-in kaḏḏabūka fa-qad kuḏḏiba rasūlun min qabluka ḡā'ū bi-l-bayyināti wa-z-zuburi wa-l-kitābi l-munīri*¹³⁸

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹³⁹ says: “God sent this *āya* to console Muḥammad regarding the distress caused by the Jews and the polytheists. God reassures him, saying: Do not be saddened Muḥammad, those who claim that God has made a covenant with us, (ordering) not to believe in (further) messengers even if they were to bring offerings (*qurbān*), since it is (not from God but) from Hell. Therefore, do not let their accusation of you distress you.” aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁴⁰ emphasises that God intended to inform His Prophet that he was not the first to face denial of his prophecy. In the Ibn 'Āšūr's interpretation,¹⁴¹ the *āya* serves to reassure Muḥammad that it has been a longstanding custom among peoples to treat prophets like him in such a manner.

All this shows that Muḥammad's prophecy was really denied, and the conditional has a positive presupposition.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Jones: If they say that you lie, messengers before you were said to lie, who came with the clear signs and the Psalms and the illuminating Scripture.

¹³⁹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* VI, 286: *hāḏā ta'ziyatun mina Allāhi ... nabiyyahu Muḥammadan ... 'alā l-aḏā llaḏī kāna yanāluhu mina l-yahūdi wa-ahli š-širki bi-Allāhi min sā'iri ahli l-milali yaqūlu Allāhu ... lahu lā yaḥzunka yā Muḥammadu kaḏiba hā'ulā'i llaḏī qālū ... inna Allaha 'ahida ilaynā allā nu'mina li-rasūlin ḥattā ya'tiyanā bi-qurbānin ta'kuluhu n-nāru ... wa-lā yu'azzimanna 'alayka takḏībuhum iyyāka wa-ddi'ā'uhumu l-abāṭila min 'uhūdi Allāhi ilayhim ... kaḏḏabūka ... faqad kaḏḏaba aslāfuhum min rusuli Allāhi qablaka.*

¹⁴⁰ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Maḡma' al-bayān* II, 369: *fa-in kaḏḏabūka fa-qad kuḏḏiba rusulun min qabluka – hāḏā tasliyatun li-n-nabiyyi fī takḏībi l-kuffāri iyyāhu wa-ḏālika annahu ta'ālā aḡbara bi-annahu laysa bi-awwalin mukaḏḏabin mina r-rusuli bal kuḏḏiba qablahu rusulun.*

¹⁴¹ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* IV, 186: *fa-in kaḏḏabūka fa-lā 'aḡaba aw fa-lā taḥzan li-anna hāḏihi sunnatun qadīmatun fī l-umami ma'a r-rusuli miṭlika wa-laysa ḏālika li-naqšin fīmā ḡi'ta bihi.*

¹⁴² It is to be noted here that the structure *in fa'ala fa-qad fa'ala*, where the two verbs are identical, always indicates that the first part of this structure, the conditional phrase, signifies that what it contains has indeed occurred, and it is not merely a supposition.

27. *al-Qur'ān* VIII. *al-Anfāl* 1.

*yas'alūnalaka 'ani l-anfāli quli l-anfālu li-Allāhi wa-r-Rasūli fa-ttaqū Allāha wa-aṣliḥū dāta baynakum wa-aṭī'ū Allāha wa-Rasūlahu in kuntum mu'minīna*¹⁴³

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁴⁴ says: 'If you are believers' means that if you consider the Messenger of God to be true in what he brought to you (from the message of God). az-Zamaḥṣarī¹⁴⁵ states that the perfection (*kamāl*) of the belief depends on the devoutness (*tawaffur*) to it. So, the meaning of the conditional 'if you are believers' is 'if you are perfect believers ... with such and such characteristics'. Ibn 'Aṭīyya¹⁴⁶ repeats what az-Zamaḥṣarī said, but he complements it with an example from everyday language. Ibn 'Āšūr¹⁴⁷ states that the conditional phrase with *in* does not allude to the weakness of their belief but only to the manifestation of the characteristics that belief (in God) requires.

So, the meaning of the conditional phrase is 'since you are (true) believers'.

28. *al-Qur'ān* VIII. *al-Anfāl* 41.

*wa-'lamū annamā ḡanimtum min ṣay'in fa-anna li-Allāhi ḥumsahu wa-li-r-Rasūli wa-li-ḡī l-qurbā wa-l-yatāmā wa-l-masākīni wa-bni s-sabīli in kuntum āmanū bi-Allāhi wa-mā anzalnā 'alā 'abdinā yawma l-furqāni yawma ltaqā l-ḡam 'āni wa-Allāhu 'alā kulli ṣay'in qadīrun.*¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ Jones: They ask you about the spoils of war. Say, 'Spoils belong to God and to the messenger. Bep God-fearing and put right what is between you, and obey God and His messenger, if you are believers.'

¹⁴⁴ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* XI, 26–27: *wa-ammā qawluhu wa-aṭī'ū Allāha wa-Rasūlahu-fa-inna ma'nāhu wa-ntahū ayyuhā ṭ-ṭālibūna l-anfāla ilā amri Allāhi wa-amri Rasūlihi fīmā afā'a Allāhu 'alaykum fa-qad bayyana lakum wuḡūhahu wa-subulahu in kuntum mu'minīna yaqūlu in kuntum muṣaddiqīna Rasūla Allāhi fīmā atākum bihi.*

¹⁴⁵ az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaṣṣāf* II, 552: *wa-qad ḡa'ala t-taqwā ... wa-ṭā'ata Allāhi wa-Rasūlihi min lawāzimi l-īmāni wa-muwaḡḡibātīhi li-yu'limahum anna kamāla l-īmāni mawqūfun 'alā t-tawaffuri 'alayhā wa-mā'nā qawlihi in kuntum mu'minīna in kuntum kāmīlī l-īmāni ... ay innamā l-kāmīlū l-īmāni min ṣifatihim kayta wa-kayta.*

¹⁴⁶ Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrir* II, 500: *in kuntum mu'minīna ay kāmīlī l-īmāni kamā taqūlu li-raḡulin in kunta raḡulan fa-f'al kaḏā ay in kunta kāmīla r-ruḡūlati wa-ḡawābu ṣ-ṣarṭi fī qawlihi l-mutaqaddimi wa-aṭī'ū hādā 'inda Sībawayhi wa-maḡhabi Abī l-'Abbāsi anna l-ḡawāba maḡḏūfun muta'aḥḥirun yadullu 'alayhi l-mutaqaddimu taqḏīruhu in kuntum mu'minīna aṭī'ū wa-maḡhabuhu fī hādā an lā yataqaddamu l-ḡawābu ṣ-ṣarṭa.*

¹⁴⁷ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* IX, 254: *wa-laysa l-ityānu fī ṣ-ṣarṭi bi-in ta'rīḏan bi-du'fi īmānihim ... walākīna ḡūlāba in fī hādā ṣ-ṣarṭi li-t-ta'rīḏi 'alā iḏhāri l-ḥiṣāli llatī yataṭallabuhā l-īmānu.*

¹⁴⁸ Jones: And know that a fifth of whatever you take as spoils belongs to God and to the messenger and the [near] kinsmen and the orphans and the destitute and the traveller, if you believe in God and in that which We sent down to Our servant on the day of salvation, the

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁴⁹ interprets the phrase ‘*in kuntum āmanū*’ to signify more than merely verbal profession, indicating genuine acquisition of faith. He then outlines the requirements of belief. Ibn ‘Aṭīyya’s¹⁵⁰ commentary centres on the notion that God expressed Himself as their Lord, and they have accepted it – thus, the meaning is: ‘since you have become believers’. According to Abū Ḥayyān¹⁵¹, the conditional *in kuntum āmantum bi-Allāhi* means: ‘since you have accepted belief in God’. al-Ālūsī¹⁵² also links ‘know’ (*i’lamū*) with the conditional, suggesting that the Medinese Muslims have indeed become believers, with their belief grounded in obedience to God and the Prophet.

29. *al-Qur’ān* IX. *at-Tawba* 13.

*a-lā tuqātīlūna qawman nakaṭū imānahum wa-hammū bi-ihrāgi r-rasūli wa-hum bada’ūkum awwala marratin a-taḥṣawnahum fa-Allāhu aḥaqqu an taḥṣawhu in kuntum mu’minīna*¹⁵³

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁵⁴ emphasizes that believers should fear only God. Ibn ‘Aṭīyya¹⁵⁵ adds that their belief is not questioned here. What requires affirmation is whether it is perfect,

day the two hosts met each other. God has power over everything. Yusuf Ali: ... if ye do believe in God. Ṣaḥīḥ International: ... if you have believed in God. NB.: This translation is the only one which tries to take into consideration the meaningful difference in Arabic between *in kuntum āmanū* and *in kuntum mina l-mu’minīna*. Perhaps the best interpretation of the Arabic would be: If you have really become believers.

¹⁴⁹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi’ al-bayān* XI, 200: *al-qawlu fī ta’wīli qawlihi in kuntum āmanū bi-Allāhi wa-mā anzalnā ‘alā ‘abdinā yawma l-furqāni yawma ltaqā l-ḡam’āni wa-Allāhu ‘alā kulli šay’in qadīrun allaḏī yubayyinuhu wa-ṣaddiqū bihi in kuntum aqrarna bi-waḥdāniyyati Allāhi wa-bimā anzala Allāhu ‘alā ‘abdihi Muḥammadin yawma farqin bayna l-ḥaqqi wa-l-bāṭili bi-Badrin fa-abāna falaḡa l-mu’minīna wa-zuhūrahum ‘alā ‘aduwwihim wa-ḡālīka yawma ltaqā l-ḡam’āni ḡam’u l-mu’minīna wa-ḡam’u l-mušrikīna wa-Allāhu a’lamu.*

¹⁵⁰ Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar* II, 531: *al-ma’nā wa-’lamū anna Allāha mawlākum in kuntum mu’minīna.*

¹⁵¹ Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ* V, 326.

¹⁵² al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-mā’ānī* XI, 126: *in kuntum āmantum bi-Allāhi šarṭun ḡazā’uhu maḥḏūfun ay ... i’lamū annahu ḡa’ala l-ḥumsa liman ḡa’ala fa-sallimūhu ilayhim wa-qna’ū bi-l-aḥmāsi l-arba’ati l-bāḡiyati wa-laysa l-murādu muḡarrada l-’ilmi bi-ḡālīka bali l-’ilma l-mašfū’a bi-l-’amali wa-ṭ-ṭā’ati li-amrihi ta’ālā.*

¹⁵³ Jones: Will you not fight a people who broke their oaths and intended to drive out the messenger, and took the initiative against you first? Do you fear them? God is more deserving of your fear, if you are believers.

¹⁵⁴ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi’ al-bayān* XI, 368: *in kuntum muqirrīna anna ḥašiyata Allāhi bikum awlā min ḥašiyati hā’ulā’i l-mušrikīna ‘alā anfusikum.*

¹⁵⁵ Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar* III, 13: *qawluhu in kuntum mu’minīna kamā taqūlū kaḏā in kunta raḡulan ay raḡulan kāmīlan fa-hāḏā ma’nāhu in kuntum mu’minīna kāmīlī l-īmāni li-anna imānahum qad kāna staqarra.*

as their belief has been proven to be firm. As if you ask a man whether he is a man, that is, a perfect man. az-Zamaḥṣārī¹⁵⁶ speaks about genuine (*ṣaḥīḥ*) belief instead of perfect belief, but his conclusion is the same: they are believers. aṭ-Ṭabarsī¹⁵⁷ interprets this *āya* and the conditional as encouragement to fight against the infidels. al-Bayḍāwī¹⁵⁸ also warns the believers that true belief means one must not fear anyone except God. Abū Ḥayyān¹⁵⁹ also differentiates between belief and perfect belief, affirming, that they are believers without a doubt, but they must strive for perfection. as-Sa'dī¹⁶⁰ also states that this *āya* is a stimulus and encouragement for the Muslims, that is, the believers. Ibn 'Āšūr¹⁶¹ says that, although they are believers, they can prove their true belief by not fearing their enemies. This means that their status as believers is not in doubt; the *āya* is meant only to urge them to fight against the Meccans.

So, this conditional has a positive presupposition.

30. *al-Qur'ān* IX. *at-Tawba* 23.

yā ayyuhā llaḍīna āmanū lā tattaḥīdū ābā'akum wa-iḥwānakum awliyā'a ini
staḥabbū l-kufra 'alā l-īmāni wa-man yatawallahum minkum fa-ulā'ika humu z-
*zālimūna*¹⁶²

aṭ-Ṭabarsī¹⁶³ states that in this *āya*, God has prohibited Muslims from maintaining friendly connections with their relatives and members of their clan who remained in Mecca instead of emigrating to Medina. al-Qurṭubī¹⁶⁴ adds that the Muslims are not

¹⁵⁶ az-Zamaḥṣārī, *Kaššāf* III, 19: *in kuntum mu'minīna ya'nī anna qaḍīyyata l-īmāni ṣ-ṣaḥīḥi allā yaḥṣā l-mu'minu illā Rabbahu wa-lā yubālī biman siwāhu.*

¹⁵⁷ aṭ-Ṭabarsī, *Mağma' al-bayān* V, 19: *in kuntum mu'minīna al-ma'nā lā taḥṣūhum wa-lā-tatrukū qitālahum ḥawfan 'alā anfusikum minhum fa-innahu subḥānuhu aḥaqqu an taḥḥafū 'iqābahu fī tarki amrihi bi-qitālihim in kuntum muṣaddiqīna bi-'iqābi Allāhi wa-tawābihi ay in kuntum mu'minīna fa-ḥaṣīyatu Allāhi aḥaqqu bikum min ḥaṣīyata ġayrihi.*

¹⁵⁸ al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār at-tanzīl* III, 74: *a-tatrukūna qitālahum ḥaṣīyata an yanālakum makrūhun minhum ... in kuntum mu'minīna fa-inna qaḍīyyata l-īmāni an lā yuḥṣā illā minhu.*

¹⁵⁹ Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ* XI, 212: *in kuntum mu'minīna ay kāmilī l-īmāni li-annahum kānū mu'minīna wa-qāla z-Zamaḥṣārī ya'nī anna qaḍīyyata l-īmāni ṣ-ṣaḥīḥi an lā yaḥṣā l-mu'minu illā rabbahu wa-lā yubālī biman siwāhu.*

¹⁶⁰ as-Sa'dī, *Taysīr* X, 376: *wa-kullu ḥādā ḥattun wa-inḥādun li-l-mu'minīna 'alā qitālihim.*

¹⁶¹ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Taḥrīr* X, 134: *wa-ğī'a bi-š-šarṭi l-muta'alliqi bi-l-musataqballi ma'a annahu lā šakka fīhi li-qaṣḍi iṭārati hammatihimi d-dīniyyati fa-yubarhinū 'alā annahum mu'minīna ḥaqqan yuqaddimūna ḥaṣīyata Allāhi 'alā ḥaṣīyati n-nāsi.*

¹⁶² Jones: O you who believe, do not take your fathers and your brothers as friends if they prefer unbelief to belief. Those of you who take them for friends – those are the wrong-doers.

¹⁶³ aṭ-Ṭabarsī, *Ğāmi' al-bayān* XI, 384: *wa-qīla inna ḍālika nazala nahyan mina Allāhi li-mu'minīna 'an muwālāti aqrībā 'ihimi llaḍīna lam yuhāğirū min arḍi š-širki ilā dāri l-islāmi.*

¹⁶⁴ al-Qurṭubī, *Ğāmi'* X, 139: *ay lā tuṭī'uhum wa-lā taḥuṣṣūhum.*

allowed to obey them, (as the ancient tribal custom of honouring family ties would require). Abū Ḥayyān¹⁶⁵ suggests that the conditional is regarding those relatives of the Muslims who became renegades by remaining in Mecca, with whom friendly connections are prohibited by God. Ibn 'Āšūr¹⁶⁶ mentions that this *āya* serves as a warning to Muslims to stay away from their pagan relatives.

All of the above-mentioned commentaries agree that some or many of the near relatives mentioned in the *āya* preferred infidelity to belief, indicating that the presupposition of the conditional is positive.

31. *al-Qur'ān* IX. *at-Tawba* 24.

*qul in kāna ābā'ukum wa-abnā'ukum wa-iḥwānukum wa-azwāḡukum wa-ašīratukum wa-amwālun iqtaraftumūhā wa-tiḡāratun taḡšawna kasādahā wamasākinu tarḡawnahā aḡabba ilaykum mina Allāhi wa-Rasūlihi wa-ḡihādin fī sabīlihi fa-tarabbašū ḡattā ya'iyā Allāhu bi-amrihi wa-Allāhu lā yahdī l-qawma l-fāsiqīna*¹⁶⁷

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁶⁸ states that the lengthy protasis (*šart*) of the conditional sentence in the *āya* applies to those who remained in Mecca, failing to emigrate to Medina, making it a factual statement rather than a mere supposition. Ibn 'Aṭīyya¹⁶⁹ holds the opinion that this *āya* aims to encourage Muslims to leave Mecca and move to Medina. al-Qurṭubī¹⁷⁰ shares the same view, stating that when the Prophet ordered Muslims to leave Mecca for the *hiḡra* some neglected to follow the order. Ibn Kaṭīr¹⁷¹ mentions that God commanded Muslims distance themselves and separate from infidels, even

¹⁶⁵ Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḡr al-muḡīṭ* V, 390: *fa-yakūnu lahum taba'an fī sukna bilādi l-kufri. nazalat fī t-tis'ati llaḡīna rtaddū wa-laḡiqū bi-Makkata fa-nahā Allāhu l-mu'minīna 'an muwālātihim.*

¹⁶⁶ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Taḡrīr* X, 153: *ḡaḡira Allāhu l-mu'minīna min muwālāti mani staḡabbū l-kufra 'alā l-īmāni.*

¹⁶⁷ Jones: Say, 'If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives and your tribe, and wealth you have acquired, and commerce you fear will slacken, and dwellings you approve of are dearer to you than God and His messenger and striving in His way, wait till God brings His command. God does not guide the people who are reprobates.'

¹⁶⁸ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* XI, 384: *yaqūlu li-nabiyyihi Muḡammadin qul yā Muḡammadu li-l-mutaḡallifīna 'ani l-hiḡrati ilā dāri l-islāmi l-muḡīmīna bi-dāri š-širki in kāna l-muḡāmu ma'a ābā'ikum wa-abnā'ikum wa-iḥwānikum ... Allāhu lā yaffīqu li-l-ḡayri l-ḡāriḡīna 'an tā'atihi wa-fī ma'šiyatihi.*

¹⁶⁹ Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *Muḡarrar* III, 18: *hāḡihi l-āyatu tuḡawwī maḡhaba man ra'a anna hāḡihi wa-llatī qablahā innamā maḡšūduhā l-ḡaḡḡu 'alā l-hiḡrati.*

¹⁷⁰ al-Qurṭubī, *Ġāmi'* X, 140: *lammā amara Rasūlu Allāhi bi-l-hiḡrati min Makkata ilā l-Madīnati ... minhum man tasāra'a li-dālika wa-minhum man abā an yuhāḡira.*

¹⁷¹ Ibn Kaṭīr, *Tafṡīr* 868: *amara ta'ālā bi-mubāyanati l-kuffāri bihi wa-in kānū ābā'a wa-abnā'a wa-nahā 'an muwālātihim idā staḡabbū ay iḡtārū l-kufra 'alā l-īmāni.*

if they were close relatives of the believers. Ibn 'Āšūr¹⁷² explains that it became necessary to choose between the attachment (*maḥabba*) to such (infidel) individuals and attachment to God and the Prophet. Accordingly, the conditional is presupposed to be a positive statement.

32. *al-Qur'ān* IX. *at-Tawba* 28.

*yā ayyuhā llaḏīna āmanū innamā l-mušrikūna nağasun fa-lā yaqrabū l-masğida l-ḥarāma ba'da 'āmihim hāḏā wa-in ḥiftum 'aylatan fa-sawfa yuğnikumu Allāhu min faḏlihi in šā'a inna Allāha 'alīmun ḥakīmun*¹⁷³

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁷⁴ and Ibn 'Aṭīyya¹⁷⁵ offer the same explanation: 'if you fear' (*in ḥiftum*) means 'since you fear' (*id ḥiftum*), indicating that the absence of non-Muslims causes financial harm. al-Ḥāzin¹⁷⁶ provides a detailed account of why this *āya* was revealed to the believers. The essence of it is that the people of Mecca genuinely feared poverty due to the prohibition of pagans entering the holy district (*ḥaram*), thus

¹⁷² Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* X, 153: *wa-ğū'ila t-tafḏīla fī l-maḥabbati bayna hāḏihi l-aṣnāfi wa-bayna maḥabbati Allāhi wa-Rasūlihi wa-l-ğihādi li-anna tafḏīla maḥabbati Allāhi wa-Rasūlihi wa-l-ğihādi yūğibu l-inqītā'a 'an hāḏihi l-aṣnāfi.*

¹⁷³ Jones (21st c.): "O you who believe, the polytheists are unclean. Let them not approach the Sacred Mosque *after this year of theirs*. If you fear poverty, God will give you sufficiency from His bounty, if He wishes. God is Knowing and Wise." Sale (18th c.): "O true believers, verily the idolaters are unclean; let them not therefore come near unto the holy temple *after this year*. And if ye fear want, (by the cutting off trade and communication with them), God will enrich you of his abundance, if he pleaseth; for God is knowing and wise." Kazimirsky (19th c.) "0 croyants ! ceux qui associent (d'autres divinités à Dieu) sont immondes ; *cette année expirée*, ils ne doivent point s'approcher de l'oratoire sacré. Si vous craignez l'indigence, (A cause des pertes que vous éprouverez en cessant des relations de commerce avec ceux qui viennent à la Mecque.) Dieu vous rendra riches par les trésors de sa grâce. Il est sage et savant." NB.: I quoted three translations of this *āya*, since the I disagree with the modern (20th–21st c.) the meaningless but widespread *verbatim* translation of the expression *ba'da 'āmihim hāḏā* (that is, this *hiğrī* year, 9). In the previous two centuries it was translated according to its real meaning. All the commentators agree with the two earlier translations.

¹⁷⁴ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ğāmi' al-bayān* XI, 399–400: *ḏukira 'an 'Amri b. Fā'idin annahu kāna ta'awwala qawlahu wa-in ḥiftum 'alayhi bi-ma'nā wa-id ḥiftum wa-yaqūlu kāna l-qawmu qad ḥāfū wa-ḏālika naḥwa qawli l-qā'ilin li-abīhi in kunta abī fa-akrimni bi-ma'nā id kunta abī.*

¹⁷⁵ Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *Muḥarram* III, 21: *wa-in ḥiftum 'alayhi qāla 'Amru b. Fā'idin al-ma'nā wa-id ḥiftum.*

¹⁷⁶ al-Ḥāzin, *Lubāb at-ta'wīl* II, 349: *in ḥiftum 'aylatan ya'nī faqran wa-fāqatan wa-ḏālika anna ahla Makkata ma'āyiṣuhum mina t-tiğārāt wa-kāna l-mušrikūna yağlabūna ilā Makkata ṭ-ṭa'āma wa-yattağirūna fa-lammā muni 'ū min duḥūli l-ḥarama ḥāfa ahlu Makkata mina l-faqri wa-ḏiqi l-ma'āsi fa-ḏakarū ḏālika li-Rasūli Allāhi fa-anzala Allāhu (tilka l-āyata).*

preventing Meccans from receiving the food they used to bring. Ibn ‘Ağ̃iba¹⁷⁷ adds that God indeed fulfilled his promise to compensate the Muslims for their losses.

This refers to the positive presupposition of the conditional, since the Muslims did fear, and they incurred actual losses due to the prohibition of non-Muslims from entering Mecca from that year onward.

33. *al-Qur’ān IX. at-Tawba 65.*

*wa-la-in sa’altahum la-yaqūlunna innamā kunnā nahūdu wa-nal’abu qul a-bi-
Allāhi wa-āyātihi wa-Rasūlihi kuntum tastahzi’ūna.*¹⁷⁸

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁷⁹ quotes a *ḥadīṭ* of Qatāda, stating that while the Prophet was en route to attack Tabūk some hypocrites had mocked him. Upon learning of this (from God), the Prophet inquired about it, and they claimed they had only been playing, not seriously mocking. Similarly, az-Zamaḥṣarī¹⁸⁰ recounts the same story but with a slightly different response from the hypocrites: ‘We only wanted to relieve the fatigue of the journey’. Ibn ‘Ağ̃iba¹⁸¹ also repeats the same story.

From these and similar narratives recounted by the companions of the Prophet, it is evident that the true meaning of the conditional particle is ‘whenever’, referring to events that actually occurred, rather than merely a supposition.

34. *al-Qur’ān IX. at-Tawba 129.*

*fa-in tawallaw fa-qul ḥasbiya Allāhu lā ilāha illā huwa ‘alayhi tawakkaltu wa-
huwa rabbu l-‘arṣi l-‘azīmi*¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Ibn ‘Ağ̃iba, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, II, 372: *wa-in ḥiftum ‘aylatan bi-sababi man’i l-mušrikīna mina l-ḥarami wa-kānū yağlibūna laḥā ṭ-ṭa’āma fa-ḥāfa n-nāsu qillata l-qūti minhā idā nqaṭa’a l-mušrikīna ‘anhum fa-wa’adahumu Allāhu bi-l-ğinā ... fa-qad anğaza wa’dahu.*

¹⁷⁸ Jones: If you ask them, they will say, ‘We were only plunging and playing.’ Say, ‘Were you mocking God and His messenger and His signs?’

¹⁷⁹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi’ al-bayān XI*, 544–545: *baynā Rasūlu Allāhi yasīru fī ġazwatihī ilā Tabūka wa-bayna yadayhi nāsun mina l-munāfiqīna qālū a-yarğū ḥādā r-rağulu an yaftaḥa quşūra ş-Şāmi wa-ḥuşūnahā hayhāta hayhāta. fa-aṭla’a Allāhu Nabīyyahu ‘alā dālika ...fa-atāhumu n-Nabīyyu fa-qāla qultum kaḍā qultum kaḍā qālū yā Nabīyyu wa-Allāhi innamā kunnā nahūdu wa-nal’abu fa-anzala Allāhu mā tasma’ūna.*

¹⁸⁰ az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaşşāf III*, 63–63: *yā Nabīyya Allāhi lā wa-Allāhi mā kunnā fī şay’in min amrika wa-lā min amri aşḥābika walākin kunnā fī şay’in mim mā yaḥūdu fīhi r-rakbu li-yuqşira ba’dunā ‘alā ba’di s-safari.*

¹⁸¹ Ibn ‘Ağ̃iba, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, II, 401: *la-in sa’altahum ‘ani stihzā’ihim la-yaqūlunna innamā kunnā nahūdu wa-nal’abu fīmā baynanā.* Then he continues verbatim with the explanation of az-Zamaḥṣarī.

¹⁸² Jones: If they turn away, say, ‘God is sufficient for me. There is no God but Him. I put my trust in Him – He is the Lord of the mighty throne.’

The *āya*, according to the *tafsīrs*, pertains to the hypocrites, pagans, and Jews of Medina, as well as the Arabian tribes who did not support the Muslims in their fight against the Meccans and did not acknowledge Muḥammad as the prophet of God.

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁸³ states that the unbelievers have turned away from God and His Prophet. Fahr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī¹⁸⁴ echoes the same sentiment regarding the unbelievers but adds that the Prophet did not feel sorry because God had provided him with sufficient support in his fight against his enemies. Ibn 'Aṭīyya¹⁸⁵ and Ibn 'Ağṭba¹⁸⁶, following his lead, emphasise that the Prophet did not need the help of those who turned away from him, as God provided him with enough support in his fights. This implies that they did indeed turn away.

35. *al-Qur'ān* XVII. *al-Isrā'* 8.

'*asā rabbukum an yarḥamakum wa-in 'udtum 'udnā wa-ğa'alnā ġahannama li-l-kāfirīna ḥaṣīran*¹⁸⁷

aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁸⁸: They had returned to sin, so God also returned to punishment and inflicted His angry on them. Ibn 'Abbās said: They had returned; therefore, God gave power to the believers over them. al-Māturīdī¹⁸⁹ quotes the divine decree in *āya*

¹⁸³ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* XII, 100: *fa-adbarū 'anka wa-lam yaqbalū mā ataytahum bihi mina n-naṣīḥati fī Allāhi ... ya 'nī l-kuffāru tawallaw 'an Rasūli Allāhi.*

¹⁸⁴ Fahr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ* XVI, 243: *ammā qawluhu fa-in tawallaw yurīdu l-muṣrikīna wa-l-munāfiqīn tumma qīla tawallaw ay a'raḍū 'anka wa-qīla tawallaw 'an ṭā'ati Allāhi ta'ālā wa-taṣḍīqi r-Rasūli ... wa-qīla ... tawallaw 'an naṣratika fī l-ğihādi wa-'lam anna l-maqṣūda min hādīhi l-āyati bayānu anna l-kuffāra law a'raḍū wa-lam yaqbalū hādīhi t-takālīfa (š-šāqqata l-maḍkūrata fī hādīhi s-sūrati) lam yadhul fī qalbi r-Rasūli ḥuznun wa-lā asaḥun li-anna Allāha ḥasbahu wa-kāfīhi fī naṣrihi 'alā l-a'dā'i.*

¹⁸⁵ Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar* III, 100: *fa-in tawallaw yā Muḥammadu ay a'raḍū ba'da hādīhi l-ḥālī l-mutaqarrirati llatī mina Allāhi 'alayhim bihā fa-qul ḥasbiya Allāhu.*

¹⁸⁶ Ibn 'Ağṭba, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, II, 446: *fa-in tawallaw 'ani l-īmāni bika ba'da hādīhi l-ḥālī l-maṣhūrati llatī mina Allāhi 'alayhim bihā fa-qul ḥasbiya Allāhu ay kāfīnī amrukum fa-in qulta ḍālīka fa-innahu yakfīka ša 'nuhum wa-yu'īnuka 'alayhim..*

¹⁸⁷ Jones: Perhaps your Lord will have mercy on you ('if you repent'); but if you return ('to sin'), We shall return ('to punishment'). And We have made Jahannam a prison for those who are ungrateful. ('Hell a 'permanent' confinement for the disbelievers.'). (The additions in parentheses are mine.)

¹⁸⁸ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* XIV, 505: *qāla ġalla ṭanā'uhu lahum wa-in 'udtum yā ma'şaru banī Isrā'īla li-ma'şiyatī wa-ḥilāfī amrī wa-qatli rusulī 'udnā 'alaykum bi-l-qatli wa-s-sibā'i wa-iḥlālī ḍ-ḍalli wa-nṣiğārin bikum fa-'ādū fa-'āda Allāhu 'alayhim bi-'iqābihi wa-'iḥlālī suḥīḥi bihim. 506: qāla Ibn 'Abbās: fa-'ādū fa-sallaṭa Allāhu 'alayhim al-mu'minīna.*

¹⁸⁹ al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt* VII, 7.

XVII. 4,¹⁹⁰ stating ‘twice you will cause corruption in the land’. Based on this prediction, he asserts that the Israelites indeed returned to their sins. He also adds that Muhammad knew the contents of their Book (the *Torah*) without having direct knowledge of the Book itself. al-Makkī¹⁹¹ expresses the same, but in another *ḥadīṭ*, he mentions that God empowered three Persian kings over them (the Israelites). al-Qurtūbī¹⁹² gives the same meaning of the conditional in reference to the *ḥadīṭ* of Qatāda. al-Quṣayrī¹⁹³ also confirms their sinfulness.

This indicates that both the protasis and the apodosis of the conditional sentence have positive presuppositions, as the events, which may seem hypothetical, did indeed occur.

36. *al-Qur’ān* XXXIII. *al-Aḥzāb* 28.

*yā ayyuhā n-nabiyyu qul li-azwāḡika in kuntunna turidna l-ḥayāta d-dunyā wa-zīnatahā fa-ta’ālayna wa-umatti ’kunna wa-usarriḡkunna sarāḡan ḡamīlan*¹⁹⁴

According to aṭ-Ṭabarī¹⁹⁵ the cause of this *āya* was definitely revealed because of something ‘Ā’iša had said to the Prophet – either she demanded more provision of food or clothes (*naḡaqa*), or she had said something against one of the other wives out of jealousy. He also mentions that, according to some unnamed *ḥadīṭs*, the cause of the revelation was that the wives of the Prophet had desired more worldly goods. al-Māwardī¹⁹⁶ says that the commentators differ in their opinions regarding the object of the choice offered by the Prophet to his wives. Some said that the choice was between the enjoyments of this transient world, while others maintained that the

¹⁹⁰ *al-Qur’ān* XVII. *al-Isrā’* 4: *wa-qaḡaynā ilā Banī Isrā’īla fī l-Kitābi la-tufsidunna fī l-arḡi marratayni*.

¹⁹¹ al-Makkī, *Hidāya* VI, 4150: *qāla Ibn ‘Abbās ‘ādū fa-’āda tumma ‘ādū fa-’āda fa-sallaṡa Allāhu ‘alayhim al-mu’minīna wa-’anhu ‘ādū wa-sallaṡa Allāhu ‘alayhim Muḡammadan yu’ṡūna l-ḡizyata ‘an yadin wa-hum ṡāḡirūna*.

¹⁹² al-Qurtūbī, *Ḡāmi’* XIII, 32: *in ‘udtum ‘udnā qāla Qatādatu fa-’ādū fa-ba’atā Allāhu ‘alayhim Muḡammadan fa-hum yu’ṡūna l-ḡizyata bi-ṡ-ṡāḡāri*.

¹⁹³ al-Quṣayrī, *Laṡā’if* II, 337: *ay in ‘udtum ilā z-zallati ‘udnā ilā l-’uqūbati ... wa-yuqālu in ‘udtum ilā naḡḡi l-’ahdi ‘udnā ilā taṡḡīdi l-’aḡābi ... fa-’ādū*.

¹⁹⁴ Jones: O Prophet, say to your wives, ‘If you want the life of this world and its ornament, come. I shall make provision for you and release you fairly.’

¹⁹⁵ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ḡāmi’* *al-bayān* XIX, 84: *ḡukira anna ḡāḡihi l-āyatu nazalat ‘alā Rasūli Allāhi min aḡli anna ‘Ā’išata sa’alat Rasūla Allāhi ṡay’an min ‘araḡi d-dunyā immā ziyādatan fī n-naḡaḡati aw ḡayra ḡālika ... wa-qīla kāna sababu ḡālika ḡayratan kānat ‘Ā’išatu ḡārathā*.

¹⁹⁶ al-Māwardī, *Nukat* IV, 394: *wa-ḡtalaḡa ahlu t-ta’wīli fī taḡyīrihi lahunna ‘alā qawlayni aḡaduhumā ḡayyarahunna bayna -ḡtiyāri d-dunyā ... wa-ḡtiyāri l-āḡirati wa-lam yuḡayyirhunna fī ṡ-ṡalāḡi. aṡ-ṡānī annahu ḡayyarahunna bayna ṡ-ṡalāḡi awi l-maḡāmi ma’ahu*.

choice was about the divorce or remaining his wives. Ibn 'Arabī¹⁹⁷ suggests that in this *āya*, God obliged the Prophet (*qul*) to offer a choice (*taḥayyur*)¹⁹⁸ to his wives between divorce and maintaining the marriage. Ibn 'Āšūr¹⁹⁹ believed that the cause of revelation was not only 'Ā'iša's improper behaviour, but that all the other wives also desired a greater share of the goods that God had bestowed upon His Prophet.

Therefore, the presupposition of the protasis (*šarṭ*) of the conditional is positive, but not that of the apodosis (*ğawāb*), as the wives did not desire to be divorced by the Prophet.

37. *al-Qur'ān* XLVI. *al-Aḥqāf* 10.

*qul a-ra'aytum in kāna min 'indi Allāhi wa-kafartum bihi wa-šahida šāhidun min banī Isrā'īla 'alā miṭlihi fa-āmana wa-stakbartum inna Allāha lā yahdī l-qawma z-zālimīna*²⁰⁰

aṭ-Ṭabarī²⁰¹ states that God ordered the Prophet to inform those pagans, who had claimed that the *Qur'ān* was mere sorcery, of the consequences of their disbelief if it became evident that it was truly revealed by God. aṭ-Ṭabarī²⁰² shares the same interpretation, adding that the meaning of *in* here is 'since'. Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī²⁰³ explains: The apodosis of the conditional sentence is suppressed. Its implication is that if the protasis is true (*in kāna hādā l-kitābu min 'indi Allāhi*), and yet you deny

¹⁹⁷ Ibn 'Arabī, *Aḥkām* III, 557: *in kuntunna turidna ... huwa šarṭ ġawābuhu fa-ta'ālayna ... fa-'allaqa t-taḥayyura 'alā š-šarṭi*. NB.: The author, a *mālikī qāḍī*, then complements his commentary with a notice on the validity of the divorce if it depends on a conditional sentence, in contrast with some opinions of his age.

¹⁹⁸ This *āya*, called *āyat at-taḥyīr*, became later the legal basis (*aṣl*) of the *taḥyīr* divorce.

¹⁹⁹ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Taḥrīr* XXI, 314: *ra'ayna wafrata mā afā'a Allāhu 'alayhi (an-nabī) mina l-māli ḥasibna annahu yuwassi'u fī l-infāqi fa-šāra ba'ḍuhunna yastakīrnahu mina n-naḥqati*.

²⁰⁰ Jones: Say, 'Have you considered? If it is from God and you do not believe in it, and a witness from the Children of Israel has testified to its like and has believed, and you are haughty – God does not guide the people who do wrong.' Yusuf Ali: 'Say: See ye? If (this teaching) be from Allah, and ye reject it, and a witness from among the Children of Israel testifies to its similarity (with earlier scripture), and has believed while ye are arrogant, (how unjust ye are!) truly, Allah guides not a people unjust.'

²⁰¹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Gāmi' al-bayān* XXI, 124: *qul yā Muḥammadu li-hā'ulā'i l-mušrikīna l-qā'ilīna li-hādā l-Qur'āni lammā ġā'ahum hādā siḥrun mubīnun a-ra'aytum ayyuhā l-qawmu in kāna hādā l-Qur'ānu min 'indi Allāhi' anzalahu 'alayya wa-kafartum antum bihi yaqūlu wa-kaddabtum antum bihi*.

²⁰² aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Mağma' al-bayān* IX, 108: *a-ra'aytum ma'nāhu aḥbarūnī māḍā taqūlūna in kāna min 'indi Allāhi ay in kāna hādā l-Qur'ānu min indi Allāhi huwa anzalahu wa-hādā n-nabīyyu rasūluhu wa-kafartum antum ayyuhā l-mušrikīna bihi ... wa-šahida šāhidun 'alā annahu min 'indi Allāhi*.

²⁰³ Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, *Maḥāṭib* XXVIII, 9ff.

its truthfulness (*tumma kafartum bihi*), you will face great trouble (*la-kuntum ḥāsirīna*), since one knows from the *Qur'ān* that it is truly the Book of God.”

The truth of the conditional is thus contingent upon a positive presupposition.

2.3 Double interpretation of the conditional phrase

38. *al-Qur'ān*, VII. *al-A'rāf* 70.

*qālū a-ḡi'tanā li-na'buda Allāha waḥdahu wa-naḍara mā kāna ya'budu ābā'unā fa-'tinā bimā ta'idunā in kunta mina ṣ-ṣādiqīna*²⁰⁴

aṭ-Ṭabarī²⁰⁵: You (Hūd) came to us (the people of 'Ād) threatening punishment from God because we remained loyal to the religion of our forefathers, and you wanted us to worship God alone. But where is this punishment? Bring to us then with what you threatened us if you are of those who speak truthfully. an-Nasafī²⁰⁶ provides a detailed description of the stubbornness of the people of 'Ād in clinging to the religion of their ancestors. Therefore, when they sarcastically demanded the promised punishment, they questioned the prophet truthfulness of the prophet Hūd. Abū Ḥayyān²⁰⁷ also suggests that they doubted his truthfulness, despite the fact that he spoke the truth according to the *Qur'ān* – thus, there is a twofold presupposition. Ibn 'Āšūr²⁰⁸ states: They continued their discourse with a conditional sentence, testing Hūd's ability to fulfil his promises, but their true intention was to expose his inability to do so, revealing their lack of belief in his sincerity.

²⁰⁴ Jones: They said, 'Have you come to us that we should serve God alone and forsake what our forefathers used to serve? Then bring us what you promise us, if you are one of those who tell the truth.'

²⁰⁵ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* X, 279: *qālat 'Ādun li-Hūdīn a-ḡi'tanā tatawa 'adunā bi-l-'iqābi mina Allāhi 'alā mā naḥnu 'alayhi mina d-dīni kay na'buda Allāha waḥdahu wa-nadīna lahu bi-t-ṭ'ati ḥālīṣan wa-nahḡura 'ibādāta l-ālihati wa-l-aṣnāmi llatī kāna ābā'unā ya'budūnahu wa-natabarra'a minhā fa-lasnā fā'ilī dālika wa-lā muttabi'ika 'alā mā tad'unā ilayhi fa-'tinā bimā ta'idunā mina l-'iqābi wa-l-'aḍābi 'alā tarkīnā ihlāṣa t-tawḥīdi li-Allāhi wa-'ibādātīnā mā na'budu min dūnihi l-awṭāni in kunta min ahli ṣ-ṣiḍqi 'alā mā taqūlu wa-ta'idu.*

²⁰⁶ an-Nasafī, *Madārik at-tanzīl* I, 579: *ankarū wa-stab'adū ḥtiṣāṣa Allāha waḥdahu bi-l-'ibādāti wa-tarka dīni l-ābā'i fī ttiḥāḍi l-aṣnāma ṣurakā'an ma'ahu ḥubban limā naṣa'ū 'alayhi fa-'tinā bimā ta'idunā mina l-'aḍābi in kunta mina ṣ-ṣādiqīna anna l-'aḍāba nāzilun binā.* Cf. Ibn Ṣāh al-Hindī, *Iklīl* III, 428.

²⁰⁷ Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, V, 89: *fa-lammā kānū ya'taqidūna kawnaḥu kāḍiban qālū fa-'tinā bimā ta'idunā in kunta mina ṣ-ṣādiqīna.*

²⁰⁸ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* VIIIb, 209: *wa-'aqqabū kalāmahum bi-ṣ-ṣarṭi fa-qālū in kunta mina ṣ-ṣādiqīna stiṣā'an li-maḡdaratihi qaṣḍan minhum li-iḥāri 'aḡzihi 'ani l-ityāni bi-l-'aḍābi fa-lā yasa'uhu illā l-i'tirāfa bi-annahu kāḍibun wa-ḡawābu ṣ-ṣarṭi maḡḍifun dalla 'alayhi mā qablahu taqḍīruhu atayta bihi wa-illā fa-lastā bi-ṣādiqin.*

The beginning of the subsequent *āya* sheds light on the positive nature of the presupposition of the conditional sentence in *āya* VII.70; *qāla qad waqa' 'alaykum min rabbikum riğsun wa-ğaçabun* (VII. 71).²⁰⁹

39. *al-Qur'ān*, VII. *al-A'rāf* 77.

*fa-'aqarū n-nāqata wa-'ataw 'an amri rabbihim wa-qālū yā Šālihu 'tinā bimā ta'idunā in kunta mina l-mursalīna*²¹⁰

aṭ-Ṭabarī²¹¹ explains that the infidels challenged the prophet Šāliḥ to bring forth the promised punishment as proof of his legitimacy as God's messenger. Meaning that if he could not do so, they would not consider him a prophet. Abū Ḥayyān²¹² also asserts that they rejected his (Šāliḥ's) status as a prophet sent by (*mursal*) God, thus presupposing the answer to the following conditional as false. Ibn 'Āšūr²¹³ says that the messengers of God have consistently faced rejection and denial of their prophethood by the unbelievers. He emphasises that while God will indeed punish those who reject the truth of His messengers, His anger and punishment may come upon them at any time He desires. This serves as the answer to the question implicit in the conditional: Yes, Šāliḥ was truly a prophet.

In this conditional phrase, as in several other cases, there are two contradictory presuppositions: those of the unbeliever speakers and the text of the *Qur'ān*. The unbelievers presumed that Šāliḥ had not been sent by God. However, the answer to this belief is provided in the next *āya* – the presupposition being that the prophet

²⁰⁹ Jones: He said, 'Abomination and anger from your Lord have fallen on you (i.e., the people of 'Ād).

²¹⁰ Jones: So they hamstringed the she-camel and turned with disdain from their Lord's command; and they said, 'O – Šāliḥ, bring us what you promise us, if you are one of those who have been sent.'

²¹¹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* X, 302: *yaqūlūna ... in kunta li-Allāhi rasūlan ilaynā fa-inna Allāha yanşuru rusulahu 'alā a'dā'ihī fa-'ağğil dālika lahum kamā sta'ğalūhu.*

²¹² Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, V, 96: *i'tinā bimā ta'idunā ay mina l-'adābi li-annahū kāna sabaqa minhu wa-lā tamussūhā bi-sū'in fa-ya'ḥudukum 'adābun alīmun fa-sta'ğalū mā wa'adahum bihi min dālika id kānū mukaḍḍabīna lahu fi l-iḥbāri bi-dālika l-wa'di wa-bi-ğayrihi wa-li-dālika 'allaqūhu bimā hum bihi kāfirūna wa-huwa kawnuhu mina l-mursalīna.*

²¹³ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* VIII/b, 226: *wa-qad faradū kawnahu min al-mursalīna bi-ḥarfi in ad-dālli 'alā š-şakki fi ḥuşūli š-şarṭi ay in kunta mina r-rusuli 'ani Allāhi fal-murādi bi-l-mursalīna man şadaqa 'alayhi ḥādā l-laqabu wa-hā'ulā'i li-ğahlihim bi-ḥaqiḳati taşarrufi Allāhi ta'ālā wa-ḥikmatihī yaḥsabūna anna taşarrufāti Allāhi ka-taşarrufāti l-ḥalqi fa-idā arsala rasūlan wa-lam yuşaddiqhu l-mursalū ilayhim ḡaçāba Allāhu wa-ndafa'a ilā inzāli l-'iqābi ilayhim wa-lā ya'lāmūna anna Allāha yumhilu z-zālimīna tumma ya'ḥuduhum matā šā'a.*

Šāliḥ was indeed sent by God, since his threat was carried out, as stated in *al-Qur'ān*, VII. *al-A'rāf* 78: *fa-aḥaḍathumu r-raġfatu fa-aṣbaḥū fī dārihim ġātimīna*.²¹⁴

40. *al-Qur'ān XXI al-Anbiyā'* 38.

*wa-yaqūlūna matā hādā l-wa'du in kuntum ṣādiqīna*²¹⁵

aṭ-Ṭabarī²¹⁶ says that the unbelievers call not only the Prophet, but also all the believers for the fulfilment of their threats. Ibn 'Aṭīyya²¹⁷ adds that the believers had also continuously been threatened by the pagans with God's punishment, which is why they included them in their call for its fulfilment. Ibn 'Āšūr²¹⁸ states that the *āya* contains a rhetorical figure called *maġāz mursal* ('incomplete metaphor'), the meaning of which is that the pagans held the Prophet and the believers accountable for the punishment not taking place, which can only be inflicted by God.

The conditional has a twofold presupposition: The unbelievers held that the Prophet and the believers had not spoken the truth. However, the *Qur'ān* states the opposite, as the previous *āya* says that God will show them (the pagans) His signs, but without haste: *al-Qur'ān XXI. al-Anbiyā'* 37: *sa-uwarrikum āyātī fa-lā tasta'ġilūni*.²¹⁹

41. *al-Qur'ān XLVI. al-Aḥqāf* 22.

*qālū a-ġi'tanā li-ta'fikanā 'an ālihatinā fa-'tinā bimā ta'idunā in kunta min aṣ-ṣādiqīna*²²⁰

²¹⁴ Jones: So the earthquake seized them, and in the morning they were prostrate in their dwelling-place.

²¹⁵ Jones: And they say, 'When is this promise to be, if you tell the truth?'

²¹⁶ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi' al-bayān* XVI, 276: *yaqūlu ta'ālā đikruhu wa-yaqūlu hā'ulā'i l-musta'ġilūna rabbahum bi-l-āyāti wa-l-'aḍābi li-Muḥammadin matā hādā l-wa'du yaqūlu matā yaġī'unā hādā llaḍī ta'idunā mina l-'aḍābi in kuntum ṣādiqīna fīmā ta'idūnanā bihi min ḍālika ... ka-annahum qālū ḍālika li-Rasūli Allāhi wa-li-l-mu'minīna bihi.*

²¹⁷ Ibn 'Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar* IV, 83: *wa-ka-anna stīfhāmahum 'alā ġihati l-haz'i wa-t-takḍībi wa-qawluhu in kuntum ṣādiqīna yurīdūna Muḥammadan wa-man āmana bihi li-anna l-mu'minīna kānū yatawa'adūnahum 'alā liṣāni š-šar'i.*

²¹⁸ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* XVII, 69: *istīfhāmuhumu sta'malūhu fī t-tahakkumi maġāzan mursalan bi-qarīnati kuntum ṣādiqīna li-anna l-mušrikīna kānū mūqinīna bi-'adami ḥuṣūli l-wa'di l-murādu bi-l-wa'di mā tawa'adahum bihi l-Qur'ānu min naṣri rasūlihi wa-sti'šāli mu'ādinīhi wa-ilā hādā l-āyatu wa-naẓīruhā.*

²¹⁹ Jones: I shall show you My signs, but do not ask Me to make haste.

²²⁰ Jones: They said, 'Have you come to tell lies to turn us from our gods? Brings us what you promise us, if you are one of those who speak the truth.'

al-Māturīdī²²¹ states that the unbelievers considered Hūd to be a liar, mocking him that he had not spoken the truth, because the threats he had made were not fulfilled. az-Zamaḥṣarī²²² completes the conditional phrase with 'if you are truthful in your promise'. Ibn 'Āšūr²²³ says the unbelievers were convinced that the prophet Hūd had not spoken the truth, as the promised punishment had not befallen them. However, according to the commentary, the Prophet did speak the truth, even though the timing of the punishment might not necessarily be immediate.

Therefore, the conditional phrase in this *āya* can be interpreted as having a double reference: from the perspective of the unbelievers, it carries a negative presupposition, while from the viewpoint of the commentators, its presupposition is positive.

2.4 The apodosis has a negative presupposition

42. al-Qur'ān VII. *al-A'rāf* 189–190.

189. *huwa llaḏī ḥalaqakum min nafsin wāḥidatin wa-ḡa'ala minhā zawḡan li-yaskuna ilayhā fa-lammā taḡaššāhā ḥamalat ḥamlan ḥafīfan fa-marrat bihi fa-lammā atqalat da'awā Allāha rabbahumā la-in ātaytanā ṣāliḥan la-nakūnanna mina ṣ-ṣākirīna*²²⁴

190. *fa-lammā ātāhumā ṣāliḥan ḡa'alā lahu ṣurakā'a fīmā ātāhumā fa-ta'alā Allāhu 'ammā yuṣrikūna*²²⁵

²²¹ al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt* IX, 252: *in kunta mina ṣ-ṣādiqīna kānū yaqūlūna ḏālika stihzā'an bihi minhum wa-lam yazali l-kafaratu yas'alūna wa-yasta'ḡilūna l-'aḏāba llaḏī kānū yū'adūna stihzā'an minhum wa-takḏīban bimā yū'adūna.*

²²² az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaššāf* V, 503: *in kunta ṣādiqan fī wa'dika.*

²²³ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* XXVI, 46: *ḡawābun 'an qawlihi an lā ta'budū illā Allāha wa-li-ḏālika ḡa'a fi'lu qālū mafṣūlan 'alā ṭarīqi l-muḥāwarati l-istiḥāmū inkārun wa-l-maḡī'u musta'ārun li-l-qasḏi bi-ṭalabi amrin 'aẓīmin wa-hāḏā l-inkāru ta'rīḏun bi-t-takḏībi fa-li-ḏālika fara'a 'alayhi fa-'tinā bimā ta'idunā in kunta mina ṣ-ṣādiqīna wa-ṣarraḥū bi-t-takḏībihi bi-ṭarīqi l-mafḥūmi. ... ay fa-in lam ta'ti bihi fa-mā anta bi-ṣādiqin fīhi. XXVI, 47: wa-l-ma'nā 'tinā bi-l-'aḏābi llaḏī ta'idunā bihi ... wa-arādū 'tinā bihi l-āna li-anna l-maqāma maqāmu takḏībin bi-anna 'ibādāta āliḥatihim taḡurru lahumu l-'aḏāba.*

²²⁴ Jones: 189. [It is] He who created you from a single soul, from whom He made his spouse, that he might dwell with her. Then when he covered her, she bore a light burden and passed by with it; but when it became heavy, the two of them cried out to God, their Lord, saying, 'If you give us a righteous [son], we shall be grateful.'

²²⁵ Jones: 190. But after He had given them a righteous [son], they associated others with Him concerning that which He had given them. God is exalted high above anything that they might associate with Him.

aṭ-Ṭabarī²²⁶ states that they prayed for a *ṣāliḥ* to be born, which could mean a son, a righteous child, a human being (not animal), a healthy child, and so on. However, when a healthy son was born, they forgot their promise to be grateful to God and instead associated partners with God, giving their sons the names of Satan. az-Zamaḥṣarī²²⁷ also explains that their polytheism, except for Adam and Eve, became evident when they named their sons ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā, ‘Abd Manāt (or: ‘Abd Manāf) and ‘Abd Šams, instead of ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān, ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm, and the like. al-Bayḍāwī²²⁸ interprets the term *ṣāliḥ* as meaning a well-proportioned and straight-bodied boy. He also adds that, despite this, they became polytheists. Ibn ‘Āšūr²²⁹ mentions that some commentators consider Adam not only the father of his own children but also the father of all mankind. Despite the divine grace they received, they became ungrateful to God and instead showed gratitude to their idols (*aṣnām*).

The protasis has a positive presupposition: God granted them a *ṣāliḥ* (in every sense of the term) descendant, but the presupposition of the apodosis is negative, since they did not show gratitude to God as they had promised.

43. *al-Qur’ān* IX. *at-Tawba* 75.

*wa-minhum man ‘āhada Allāhu la-in atānā min faḍlihi la-nuṣaddiqanna wa-lan-
nakūnanna mina ṣ-ṣāliḥīna*²³⁰

aṭ-Ṭabarī²³¹: They were a type of hypocrites who, when they were given what they asked for, withheld it as misers, remaining hypocrites (not true Muslims) and

²²⁶ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi’ al-bayān* X, 620–622: *la-in ātaytanā ṣāliḥan: wa-ṣ-ṣalāḥ qad yašmalu ma’āniya kaṭīratan gulāman bal huwa an yakūna l-mawlūdu bašaran ašfaqā an yakūna šay’an dūna l-insāni ašfaqā an lā yakūna insānan ašfaqā an yakūna bahīman šibhanā miḡlanā. 623: fa-lammā razaqahumā Allāhu waladan ṣāliḥan kamā sa’alā ḡa’alā lahu šurakā’a fīmā ātāhumā wa-razaqahumā ḡa’alā lahu šurakā’a fi l-ismi.*

²²⁷ az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaššāf* II, 541ff: *ḥaytu ḡama’a l-fi’la (yušrikūna) wa-Ādamu wa-Hawā barī’āni mina š-širki fa-ma’nā isrākihīm fīmā ātāhum Allāhu tasmiyatuhum awlādahum bi-‘Abdi l-‘Uzzā wa-‘Abdi Manātin (aw: ‘Abdi Manāfin) wa-‘Abdi Šamsin wa-mā ašbaha ḡālika makāna ‘Abdi r-Raḥmāni wa-‘Abdi r-Raḥīmi wa-waḡhin āhara.*

²²⁸ al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār at-tanzīl* III, 45: *ṣāliḥan ya’nī waladan sawiyyan qad ṣaluḥa badanuhu ḡa’alā lahu šurakā’a ay ... sammūhu ‘Abda l-‘Uzzā wa-‘Abda Manāfin ‘alā ḥadfi l-muḍāfi wa-iqāmati l-muḍāfi ilayhi maqāmahu.*

²²⁹ Ibn ‘Āšūr, *Tahrīr* IX, 210: *ḡa’ala kaṭīrun mina l-muḥaqqiqīna n-naḡsa l-wāḥidata Ādama wa-ba’du l-muḥaqqiqīna minhum ḡa’alū l-aba li-kulli wāḥidin. 214: kufrānu ni’mati ḡālika l-ḡā’ili (Allāh) iḍ ṣakara liman lam yu’ṭihi (al-aṣnām) wa-kafara man a’ṭāhu wa-iḡlāfu l-wa’di l-mu’akkadi. 215: ay ḡa’alā lahu l-aṣnāma širkan (aw šurakā’a).*

²³⁰ Jones: Among them there are those who made a covenant with God: ‘If He gives us some of His bounty, we shall make offerings and be among the righteous.’

²³¹ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi’ al-bayān* XI, 583: *hā’ulū’i šinfun mina l-munāfiqīna wa-lammā ātāhum ḡālika baḡilū bihi fa-lammā baḡilū bi-ḡālika a’qabahum bi-ḡālika niḡāqan ilā yawmi*

therefore will not receive forgiveness from God. az-Zamaḥṣarī²³² explains that the *āya* refers to a certain Medinese Muslim who, out of miserliness, failed to give the (obligatory) alms (*zakāt*). Abū Ḥayyān²³³ also affirms that although God granted him what he desired, he did not contribute to the Muslim community. Ibn 'Ağṭiba²³⁴ further elaborates on az-Zamaḥṣarī's interpretation, adding that it involves a certain *Ṭa'labā*, who said (in anger): This alm (*ṣadaqa*) is similar to the poll-tax (*ğizya*, i.e., burdensome, and mandatory). Ibn 'Āšūr²³⁵ also recounts this narrative, stating that thanks to God he had obtained a large sum in Syria, but he did not want to part with even a small part of it.

The presupposition of both the protasis and the apodosis of the conditional in *āya* IX. 75 is clarified in the next *āya*: *al-Qur'ān* IX. *at-Tawba* 76: *fa-lammā ātāhum min faḍlihi baḥilū bihi wa-tawallaw wa-hum mu'riḍūna*.²³⁶ This indicates that although God had granted them what they requested, they still refused to believe in God and His Prophet.

2.5 Conditional phrase interpreted by the next *āya*

44. *al-Qur'ān* II, *al-Baqara* 23.

*wa-in kuntum fī raybin mim mā nazzalnā 'alā 'abdinā fa'tū bi-sūratin min miḥlihi wa-d'ū šuhadā'akum min dūni Allāhi in kuntum ṣādiqīna*²³⁷

yalqūnahu laysa lahum minhu tawbatun wa-mağfiratun wa-lā 'afwun kamā ašāba Iblīsa hīna mana 'ahu t-tawbata.

²³² az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaššāf* III, 70–71: *ruwiya anna Ṭa'labatan qāla yā Rasūla Allāhi ud'u Allāha an yarzuqanī mālan ... qāla la-in razaqanī Allāhu mālan la-u'ṭiyanna kulla dī ḥaqqin ḥaqqahu fa-da'ā lahu fa-ttaḥaḍa ḡanaman fa-namat hattā dāqat bihā l-Madīnatu fa-nazala wādiyan wa-nqaṭa'a 'ani l-ḡamā'ati wa-l-ḡum'ati ... wa-kaṭura māluhu ... fa-ba'aṭa Rasūlu Allāhi muṣaddiqayni li-'ahḍi ṣ-ṣadaqāti ... fa-sa'alāhu (Ṭa'labata) aṣ-ṣadaqata fa-qāla mā hādīhi illā uḥtu l-ḡizyati*

²³³ Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ* XI, 363: *fī rağulin min banī 'Amri bni Awfīn kāna lahu mālun bi-š-Sāmi fa-abṭa'a 'anhu fa-ḡuhida li-dālika ḡuhdan šadīdan fa-ḥalafa bi-Allāhi la-in ātānā min faḍlihi ay min dālika l-māl la-uṣaddiqanna minhu wa-la-aşilanna fa-ātāhu fa-lam yağ'al.*

²³⁴ Ibn 'Ağṭiba, *al-Baḥr al-madīd*, II, 401: *fa-qāla (Ṭa'labatun) mā hādīhi ṣadaqa mā hādīhi illā uḥtu l-ḡizyati.*

²³⁵ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* X, 245: *nazalat fī Ṭa'labata bni Ḥāṭibin min al-munāfiqīna sa'ala Rasūla Allāhi an yad'uwa lahu bi-sa'ati r-rizqi fa-da'ā lahu fa-aṭrā iṭrā'an kaṭīran fa-lammā ḡā'a l-muṣaddiqūna li-yu'ṭiya zakātan imtana'a min dālika.*

²³⁶ Jones: Yet when He gave them some of His bounty, they were stingy with it, and turned away, averse.

²³⁷ In Jones' translation: "If you are in doubt about what We have sent down to Our servant, then bring a *sūra* like it, and call your witnesses apart from God, if you are truthful."

The next *āya* (II. 24) explicitly states that they (perhaps the hypocrites and the Jews) cannot support their allegations:

*fa-in lam taf' alū fa-lan taf' alū fa-ttaqū n-nāra llatī wuqūduhā n-nāsu wa-l-
ḥiğāratu u'iddat li-l-kāfirīna*²³⁸

Ibn 'Aṭiyya²³⁹ informs us about two explanations of the final conditional phrase: One of the commentators says that 'if you are truthful' relates to their doubts, while another commentator thinks that their truthfulness depends on whether they are able to contradict (Muḥammad and the *Qur'ān*) and whether they can make utterances similar to the *āyāt* of the *Qur'ān* or not. The answer is given by the next *āya* (II. 24): They will not do that. Their inability to do so becomes more astonishing (*abda 'a*) by stimulating their efforts through this *āya*."

an-Nīsābūrī²⁴⁰ says roughly the same about the conditional phrase *in kuntum ṣādiqīna*, adding a lengthy grammatical discussion about its implied protasis before stating that they (the unbelievers) did not speak the truth (*kāḍibūna*). Then he adds: The particle *in* was used here only because it refers to the doubtful occurrence (*šakki*) of the conditional, while *idā* signifies a necessary occurrence (*wuğūb*).

al-Mahā'imī²⁴¹ emphasises that they must not doubt the revelations of the *Qur'ān* since they contain pure and profound wisdom. According to al-Biqā'ī²⁴², those who doubt must consider the perfection and inimitability of the *āyāt* of the *Qur'ān* if they possess the power of mental perception, and they must cease to doubt their divine origine.

Ibn 'Āšūr explains the preposition *fī* in the phrase *in kuntum fī raybin* as a sign of their indeed being in doubt²⁴³ about the divine origin of the Prophet's recitations.

²³⁸ Jones: And if you do not – and you will never be able to –, protect yourselves against the Fire, whose fuel is men and stones, which has been prepared for the unbelievers.

²³⁹ Ibn 'Aṭiyya, *Muḥarrar* I, 107: *in kuntum ṣādiqīna ay fīmā qultum mina r-raybi hādā qawlu ba'di l-mufasssīrīna wa-qāla gayruhu fīmā qultum min annakum taqdirūna 'alā l-mu'araḍati wa-yu'ayyidu hādā l-qawla annahu qad ḥakā 'anhum fī āyatīn uhrā law našā'u la-qulnā miṭla ḍālika. wa-qawluhu ta'ālā fa-in lam taf' alū wa-lan taf' alū (II. 24) iṭṭaratu li-himamihim wa-taḥrīkun li-nufūsihim li-yakūna 'ağzuhum ba'da ḍālika abda 'a.*

²⁴⁰ an-Nīsābūrī, *Tafsīr* I, 195: *wa-innamā ġī'a bi-in alladī li-š-šakki dūna idā alladī li-l-wuğūbi.*

²⁴¹ al-Mahā'imī, *Tabṣīr* I, 88: *in kuntum fī raybin yuṣīru ilā annahu lā yanbağī an yurtāba fīhi li-kawnihī mahḍa l-ḥikmatī l-bāliğati.*

²⁴² al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm ad-durar* I, 159–160: *wa-in kuntum min ḍawī l-bašā'iri ṣ-ṣāfiyati ... 'alimtum bi-ḥaqqiyyati hādihī l-ma'ānī wa-ğalālātī hādihī l-asālībi ... anna hādā kalāmī ... wa-in kuntum fī raybin ayi š-šakku muḥīṭun bikum mina l-kitābi llaḍī qultu innahu lā rayba fīhi.*

²⁴³ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Taḥrīr* I, 336: *wağhu l-ityāni bi-fī ad-dāllati 'alā z-zarfīyati l-išāratu ilā annahum qad imtalakahumu r-rayb wa-aḥāta bihim iḥāṭata z-zarfi bi-z-zurūfi wa-sti'aratu fī li-ma'nā l-mulābasati šā'i atun fī kalāmi l-'arabi ka-qawlihim huwa fī ni'matin.*

This means that this conditional also carries an affirmative presupposition, indicating that some of the so-called Arab hypocrites (*munāfiqūna*) and the Medinese Jews challenged Muḥammad's words.²⁴⁴ The author then elucidates the meaning of *ṣidq* as a 'speech act (*kalām*) which is in accordance with reality' and its counterpart *kiḏb* as a 'speech act which is not in accordance with the reality'. Then he states that this *āya* demonstrates the lack of truth in their assertions (rejecting the divine origin of the Qur'ānic *āyas* recited by the Prophet). According to al-Bayḏāwī, *ṣidq* means 'true to nature, agreeing with the facts, reality' – 'but God has already disproved what the hypocrites had said'.²⁴⁵

2.6 More than one conditional phrase in one *āya*

45. *al-Qur'ān* II. *al-Baqara* 94.

*qul in kānat lakumu d-dāru l-āḥiratu 'inda Allāhi ḥāliṣatan min dūni n-nāsi fa-tamannū l-mawta in kuntum ṣādiqīna*²⁴⁶

aṭ-Ṭabarī says:²⁴⁷ If the Jews had truly desired to enter Paradise, which they claimed had been exclusively designated for them by God, they would have wished for death on the day it was commanded to them, and no Jew would have remained alive on the earth. However, they did not wish to die, which proves the falsehood of their claims. as-Suyūṭī²⁴⁸ quotes a *ḥadīṭ* of the Prophet to support his view that the conditionals in the *āya* carry negative presuppositions: If they had been truthful, they would have prayed for God to make them dead, but none of them did so except for Barīqa, who died immediately.

²⁴⁴ Ibn 'Āšūr, *Tahrīr* I, 341: *in kuntum ṣādiqīna ... yaqūlu ṣidquhum ḡayru muḥtamali l-wuqū' wa-in kuntum ṣādiqīna fī anna l-Qur'āna kalāmu baṣarin wa-annakum ataytum bi-miṭlihi*. This explanation can already be found in some early commentaries, e.g., al-Aḥfaṣ al-Awsaṭ, *Ma'ānī* I, 402.

²⁴⁵ al-Bayḏāwī, *Anwār at-tanzīl* I, 66: *aṣ-ṣidqu l-iḥbāru l-muṭābiqū ... li-annahū Ta'ālā kaḏḏaba l-munāfiqīna*.

²⁴⁶ Jones: Say, 'If the last abode with God is yours alone, to the exclusion of [other people], wish for death, if you speak the truth.'

²⁴⁷ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ġāmi'* *al-bayān* II, 267–272: *qāla Ibn 'Abbās law tamannā l-yahūdu l-mawta la-mātū ... law tamannawhu yawma qāla lahum ḏālika mā baqiya 'alā zahri l-arḏi yahūdīyyun illā māta ... qul yā Muḥammadu lahum ya'nī l-yahūda in kānat lakumu d-dāru l-āḥiratu 'inda Allāhi ... fa-tamannawu l-mawta fa-lam yaḡ'alū wa-ḏālik bi-annahum qālū lan yadhūla l-ḡannata illā man kāna Hūdan (al-Qur'ān II. al-Baqara 111.) qālū lanā d-dāru l-āḥiratu 'inda Allāhi min dūni n-nāsi ... min dūni Muḥammadin wa-aṣḥābihi llaḏīna stahza 'um bihim wa-za'amtum anna l-ḥaqqā fī aydīkum*.

²⁴⁸ as-Suyūṭī, *ad-Durr al-manṭūr* I, 220: *fa-qāla lahum (al-yahūd) Rasūlu Allāhi in kuntum fī maqālatikum ṣādiqīna fa-qūlū Allāhumma aminā fa-wa-llaḏī nafsī bi-yadihi lā yaqūluḥā raḡulun minkum illā Barīqa fa-māta makānahu*.

The next *āya*, *al-Qur'ān* II. *al-Baqara* 95,²⁴⁹ helps in interpreting both conditional sentences of the previous *āya*:

wa-lan yatamannawhu abadan bimā waddamat aydīhim wa-Allāhu 'alīm bi-ẓ-ẓālimīna.

aṭ-Ṭabarī²⁵⁰ says that *āya* II. 95 provides information from God about the Jews and their aversion to death, contradicting their claim of desiring it. az-Zamaḥṣarī²⁵¹ describes this revelation as a marvel (*mu'ǧiza*), as it reveals the unknown future (*ǧayb*). It also serves as evidence that the afterlife was not exclusively designated for the Jews by God and that they were not truthful.

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²⁴⁹ Jones: But they will never wish for it because of what their hands have forwarded. God is aware of the wrong-doers.

²⁵⁰ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ĝāmi' al-bayān* II, 272: *hādā ḥabarun mina Allāhi ǧalla ʔanā'uhu 'ani l-yahūdi wa-karāhatihimi l-mawta wa-mtinā'ihim mina l-iǧābati ilā mā du'ū ilayhi min tamannī l-mawti li-'ilmihim bi-annahum in fa'alū dālika fa-l-wa'īdu bihim nāzilun wa-l-mawtu bihim hāllun wa-li-ma'rifatihim bi-Muḥammadin annahu rasūlun mina Allāhi ilayhim mursalun wa-hum bihi mukaḍḍibūma.*

²⁵¹ az-Zamaḥṣarī, *Kaššāf* I, 299: *wa-qawluhu wa-lan yatamannawhu abadan min al-mu'ǧizāt li-annahu iḥbār bi-l-ǧaybi wa-kāna kamā aḥbara bihi.*

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Appendix 1.

The list of Qur'ān commntators in order of their dates of death

Ibn 'Abbās d. 687	al-Qurṭubī d. 1273
Muḡāhid d. 722	aṭ-Ṭūsī d. 1274
Muqātil d. 767	an-Nasafī d. 1310
al-Farrā' d. 822	al-Bayḍāwī d. 1319
Abū 'Ubayda d. 825	al-Ḥāzin d. 1324
al-Aḥfaš al-Awsaṭ d. 830	as-Samnānī d. 1336
az-Zaḡḡāḡ d. 922	Abū Ḥayyān d. 1344
aṭ-Ṭabarī d. 923	Ibn Qayyim al-Ğawziyya d. 1350
Ibn Abī Zamanīn d. 935	Ibn Kaṭīr d. 1373
al-Māturīdī d. 944	al-Mahā'imī d. 1432
an-Naḥḥās d. 949	an-Nīsābūrī d. 1446
al-Makkī d. 996	al-Maḥallī d. 1460
aṭ-Ta'labī d. 1035	Ibn 'Ādil d. 1475
al-Baḡawī d. 1041 or 1044	aṭ-Ta'alībī d. 1479
al-Māwardī d. 1058	al-Biqā'ī d. 1480
al-Quṣayrī d. 1072	al-Īḡī d. 1499
al-Wāḥidī d. 1075	as-Suyūṭī d. 1505
az-Zahrāwī 1136	Ibn 'Aḡṭba d. 1809
az-Zamaḥṣarī d. 1143	al-Ālūsī d. 1854
Ibn 'Aṭīyya d. 1146	Ibn Šāh al-Hindī d. 1914
Ibn 'Arabī d. 1148	as-Sa'dī d. 1957
aṭ-Ṭabarsī d. 1153	Ibn 'Āšūr d. 1973
Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī d. 1209	az-Zuhaylī 2015
al-Kubrā 1221	

Appendix 2.

The āyāt of the Qur'ān dealt with in the paper

II al-Baqara

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {23}

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَٰؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {31}

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنْ اسْتَطَاعُوا وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فِيمَتٌ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ {217}

III Āl-'Imrān

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ {31}

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدْخُرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةٌ لِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {49}

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ {63}

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ {64}

كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِالتَّوْرَةِ فَاتْلُوهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {93}

إِنْ تَمَسَسْتُمْ حَسَنَةً نَّسُوهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصِيبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا وَإِنْ تُصِيبُوا وَتَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ {120}

بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُمْ مِنْ فُورِهِمْ هَذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ {125}

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {139}

إِنْ يَمَسُّكُمْ فَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ فَرْحٌ مِثْلُهُ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نَدَاوَلَهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ {140}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ تُطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ {149}

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَهْدُ إِلَيْنَا أَلَّا نُؤْمِنَ لِرَسُولٍ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِينَا بُرْهَانٌ تَأْكُلُهُ النَّارُ قُلْ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ قِبَلِي بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَبِالذِّكْرِ فَلَمَّ قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {183}

فَإِنْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ قِبَلِكُمْ جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالرُّبْرِ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ {184}

VI al-An'ām

وَإِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ فَإِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَبْتَغِيَ نَفَقًا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ سُلَّمًا فِي السَّمَاءِ فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ {35}

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمُ السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {40}

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لَيُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ {109}

ثَمَانِيَةَ أَرْوَاحٍ مِنَ الضَّأْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْمَعَزِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ الذَّكْرَيْنِ حَرَمٌ أَمْ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمْ مَا اسْتَمَلْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ نَبِيُّنِي بَعْلِمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {143}

VII al-'arāf

قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِنُعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ وَنَدْرَ مَا كَانَ يَعبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا فَآتِنَا مَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ {70}

فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ ائْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ {77}

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {85}

قَدْ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ نَجَّانَا اللَّهُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ {89}

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّاهَا حَمَلَتْ حَمْلًا خَفِيًّا فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ فَلَمَّا أَثْقَلَتْ دَعَا اللَّهَ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِنْ آتَيْنَا صَالِحًا لَنُكَوِّنَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ {189}

VIII al-Anfāl

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {1}

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسُهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ الْنَقَى الْجَمْعَانَ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ {41}

IX at-Tawba

أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ قَوْمًا نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ وَهَمُّوا بِإِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ وَهُمْ بَدَّوْكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ أَتَخْشَوْنَهُمْ فَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {13}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَعْبَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنْ اسْتَحْبَبْتُمْ الْكُفْرَ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ {23}

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِنُ تَرْضَوْنََهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ {24}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَذَا وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُعِينُكُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنْ شَاءَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ {28}

انْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ {41}

يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ لِيُرْضَوْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ {62}

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ قُلْ أَبِاللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِئُونَ {65}

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ عَاهَدَ اللَّهُ لَئِنْ أُتُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَنَكُونُنَّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ {75}

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ {129}

XVII al-Isrā'

عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يَرْحَمَكُمُ وَإِنْ عُذْتُمْ عُدْنَا وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيرًا {8}

XXI al-Anbiyā'

لَوْ أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نَنْخِذَ لَهَوًا لَاتَّخَذْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا إِنْ كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ {17}
وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {38}

XXXIII al-Aḥzāb

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِأَزْوَاجِكَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُرَدُّنَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ أُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَأَسْرَحْكُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا {28}

XLVI al-Aḥqāf

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ انزوني
بِكِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَنزَارَةٍ مِنْ عَلَمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {4}
أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ إِنْ افْتَرَيْتُهُ فَلَا تَمْلِكُونَ لِي مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ كَفَىٰ بِهِ شَهِيدًا
بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ {8}
قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَىٰ مِثْلِهِ فَأَمَنْ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ إِنْ
اللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ {10}
قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِنَتَأَفَّكُنَا عَنْ آلِهَتِنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ {22}

LXXXVII al-A'lā'

فَذَكِّرْ إِنْ نَفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ {9} سَيَذَكِّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَىٰ {10}

Appendix 3.

*The āyāt of the Qur'ān containing conditionals with presupposition
not dealt with in this paper*

II al-Baqara

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ {24}
وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا تَوْحِينَ بِمَا نُرِيدُ وَمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا
مَعَهُمْ قُلْ لِمَ تَقُولُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {91}
وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَسْمِعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَسْرَبُوا
فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ أَلْعَجَلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بِنَسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيْمُنُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {93}
قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {94}
وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَىٰ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
{111}

وَلَوْ أَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ
بَعْضٍ وَلَئِن اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ {145}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ {172}
 الْحَرَامَ وَادْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الضَّالِّينَ {198} فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمْ
 الْبَيِّنَاتُ فاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ {209}
 وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ
 هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {248}
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {278}
 وَإِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ {280}

III Āl- 'Imrān

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ فَادْرَءُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
 {168}
 إِنَّمَا دَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا اللَّهَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {175}

V al-Mā'ida

قَالَ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أُنْعِمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا ادْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ فَانْتُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ
 فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {23}
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَكُمْ هُزُؤًا وَلَعِبًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَافِرَ
 أَوْلِيَاءَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {57}
 إِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يَنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {112}
 قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا لِنُعْبِدَ اللَّهَ وَحَدَهُ وَنَدَّرَ مَا كَانَ يَعْْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا فَآتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ {70}
 فَعَفَرُوا النَّاقَةَ وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوا يَا صَالِحُ ائْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ {77}
 وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا
 الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ
 كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {85}
 قَدْ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ إِذْ نَجَّانَا اللَّهُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ
 اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبُّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ
 {89}
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ نَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادًا أَمْثَلُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {194}

X Yūnus

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {48}
 وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يَا قَوْمِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُسْلِمِينَ {84}

XI Hūd

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَادْعُوا مَنْ اسْتَعْظَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ
 {13}
 قَالُوا يَا نُوحُ قَدْ جَادَلْتَنَا فَكُنتَ جِدَالِنَا فَأْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ {32}

XII Yūsuf

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ لَا تَقُولُوا يُوسُفُ وَالْقَوْهُ فِي غِيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطُهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ {10}

XV al-Ḥiğr

لَوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا بِالْمَلَايِكَةِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ {7}
قَالَ هُوَ لَاءِ بَنَاتِي إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ {71}

XVI an-Naḥl

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رَجَالًا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ {43}
وَلَا تَسْتَرْوُوا بَعْدَ اللَّهِ تَمَنَّا قَلِيلًا إِمَّا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ {95}
فَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمْ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاشْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ {114}

XIX Maryam

قَالَتْ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا {18}

XXI al-Anbiyā'

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ إِلَّا رَجَالًا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ {7}
وَلَيْنِ مَسَّئُهُمْ نَفْحَةً مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ {46}
قَالُوا حَرِّفُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ {68}

XXII al-Ḥağğ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُضْغَةٍ
مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى {5}

XXIII al-Mu'minūn

إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَاتٍ وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِينَ {30}
قُلْ لِمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ {84}
قُلْ مَنْ بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ {88}

XXIV an-Nūr

وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ {9}
يَعْظُمُكَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ {17}

XXVI al-Šu'arā'

قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ {24}
قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ {28}
قَالَ فَاتِّبِعْهُ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ {31}
لَعَلَّنَا نَتَّبِعَ السَّحَرَةَ إِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الْعَالِيِينَ {40}
فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوا لِفِرْعَوْنَ أَئِنَّا لَأَجْرًا إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْعَالِيِينَ {41}

تَاللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنَّا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ {97}
مَا اَنْتَ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا قَاتِ بَايَةً اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ {154}
اَفَرَايْتَ اِنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُمْ سِنِيْنَ {205}

XXVII an-Naml

اَمَّنْ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَمَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْاَرْضِ اَلَيْسَ بِاللّٰهِ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ {64}
وَيَقُولُوْنَ مَتَىٰ هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ {71}

XXIX al-'Ankabūt

وَإِنرَاهِيْمَ اِذْ قَال لِقَوْمِهٖ اَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَانْفُوْهُ دَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ {16}
اِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُوْنَ السَّبِيْلَ وَتَأْتُوْنَ فِي نَادِيْكُمْ الْمُنْكَرَ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهٖ اِلَّا اَنْ قَالُوْا اَنْتِنَا بِعَذَابِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ {29}

XXX ar-Rūm

وَلَقَدْ صَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هٰذَا الْفُرْقَانِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَلَئِنْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا مُبْطِلُوْنَ {58}

XXXII as-Sağda

وَيَقُولُوْنَ مَتَىٰ هٰذَا الْفَتْحُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ {28}

XXXIV as-Saba'

وَيَقُولُوْنَ مَتَىٰ هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ {29}

XXXV Fāṭir

وَإِنْ يُكْذِبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَآلِی اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُوْرُ {4}
وَإِنْ يُكْذِبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَبِالرُّبْرِیْرِ وَبِالْكِتٰبِ الْمُنِيْرِ {25}

XXXVI Yā sīn

وَيَقُولُوْنَ مَتَىٰ هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ {48}

XXXVII as-Şāffāt

فَاتُّوْا بِكِتٰبِكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ {157}

XXXIX az-Zumar

اَنْ تَقُوْلَ نَفْسٌ يَا حَسْرَتَا عَلٰی مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللّٰهِ وَاِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السّٰخِرِيْنَ {56}

XLI Fuṣṣilat

وَمِنْ آيٰتِهٖ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوْا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ {37}
قُلْ اَرَأَيْتُمْ اِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهٖ مِنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي سَفَاكٍ بَعِيْدٍ {52}

XLIII az-Zuhruf

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ {81}

XLIV ad-Duḥān

رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ {7}
فَأْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {36}

XLV al-Gāṭiya

وَإِذَا تَنَزَّلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {25}

XLVII Muḥammad

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ {22}

XLIX al-Ḥuḡurāt

وَإِنْ يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَثَمُودٌ {42}
وَإِنْ جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلْ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ {68} اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ {69}
يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمُنُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {17}

LII at-Tūr

فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِثْلِهِ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ {34}

LVI al-Wāqi'a

فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ {86}
تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {87}
فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ {88}
وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ {90}
وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَدِّبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ {92}

LIX al-Ḥašr

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَئِنْ أُخْرِجْتُمْ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا وَإِنْ قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنصُرَنَّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بَشِيرٌ أَلِيمٌ {11}
لَئِنْ أُخْرِجُوا لَا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ وَلَئِنْ قُوتِلُوا لَا يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ وَلَئِنْ نَصَرُوهُمْ لَيُولَّيَنَّ الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يُنصَرُونَ {12}

LXI as-Ṣaff

تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ {11}

LXII al-Ġum'a

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِنْ رَعَيْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَتَّعُوا بِالْمَوْتِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {6}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ {9}

LXVII al-Mulk

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ {25}

LXVIII al-Qalam

أَنْ اغْدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرْثِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَارِمِينَ {22}
أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ {41}

LXXIII al-Muzammil

فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا {17}

LXXVII al-Mursalāt

فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِيدُوا {39}

XCVI al-'Alaq

أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ الْهُدَىٰ {11}
أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ {13}

MUḤAMMAD’S JUG: ARABIC MOTIFS IN BORGES’S TEXTS

Gábor Korvin

Independent scholar, Budapest

“Sentí que Averroes, queriendo imaginar lo que es un drama sin haber sospechado lo que es un teatro, no era más absurdo que yo, queriendo imaginar a Averroes, sin otro material que unos adarmes de Renan, de Lane y de Asín Palacios.” (Borges, *Obras Completas I*, 588)¹

Abstract:

In this study I discuss twenty-three Arabic motifs in Borges’s texts and trace them back to their most likely sources. Borges did not know Arabic and gained his knowledge of the Orient from secondary sources, books by Burton, Lane, Asín Palacios, and others. In many cases Borges playfully changed these Arabic motifs, or invented new ones. In the rare occasions when he gave his sources, these were as fantastic as the stories themselves: references to non-existing tomes by non-existing scholars, to an odd book of Burton (instead of the correct one by Lane), or to an out-of-context citation from Gibbon. I succeeded in locating the sources of most of these motifs and proved for a few others that they are inventions of Borges. I could not find the source of one poem. For one motif (“Iskander’s mirror”) I could only show that it is well-documented in Oriental literature, but I could not find any likely source where Borges could have learned about it.

Keywords: Borges, Burton, Lane, Asín Palacios, *1001 Nights*, narremes, Arabic motifs

1 Introduction

These words of Borges (Jorge Luis Borges, b. 1899, Buenos Aires; d. 1986, Geneva) , selected as motto for this essay, have been frequently quoted in writings

¹ “I felt that Averroës, trying to imagine what a play is without ever having suspected what a theater is, was no more absurd than I, trying to imagine Averroës yet with no more material than a few snatches from Renan, Lane, and Asín Palacios.” (Borges, *Busca*; “Averroës’ Search” in Borges 1999a:241.

on the Oriental motifs in Borges's texts: "Borges's intellectual understanding of Islam comes from his own wide reading of Western Orientalists (Burton, Renan, Palacios, Margaret Smith)" (Almond 2004:446), and they usually add the biographical odd bit² that his father's library contained translations of the *One Thousand and One Nights* by Lane, Burton and John Payne, and other works on the Orient. Borges himself, in a tape-recorded lecture he gave on Creative Writing, says of his short story "The Two Kings and Their Two Labyrinths" that he wanted it to look like "a page overlooked by Lane and Burton out of the Arabian Nights"³. Borges – as many others⁴ – forgot to mention the influence of Rafael Cansinos Asséns (1883–1964)⁵, his friend and master in his salad years (1919–1921) in Madrid, who introduced him to the Arabic literary tradition⁶, whose style "he was aping"⁷, and of whose new Spanish translation of the *Thousand and One Nights* Borges fondly wrote "*Rafael Cansinos Assens nos da, por fin, el libro esperado*"⁸ and "his [Cansino's] book has been published in Mexico; it is perhaps the best of all the versions"⁹.

In the *Busca (Obras Completas I, 582)*, Averroes – the *alter ego* of Borges – who knew neither Greek nor Syriac (to which *Poetics* was first translated), studied Aristotle, "using a translation of a translation" (*Averroes, ignorante del siríaco y del griego, trabajaba sobre la traducción de una traducción*), an already available Arabic version of a Syriac translation of the Greek text¹⁰. Stavans (1988) argues that Borges could not read Arabic, according to Spikovsky (1968:223) he had a "knowledge of Arabic – however imperfect that might be". Borges admitted his ignorance of Greek and Arabic, "*The fact that I do not know Greek and Arabic helped me to read, say, the Odyssey or the Thousand and One Nights, in many*

² Borges (1970c:209) wrote "if I were asked to name the chief event in my life, I should say my father's library". I could not find a published inventory of Borges's personal library. This library has been fully restored and is now kept in the *Jorge Luis Borges International Library*, in Buenos Aires next to the house where his family lived between 1938–1943 (see *El Nuevo Diario*, Buenos Aires, August 18, 2018).

³ In 1971, Columbia University, see Borges 1973:109. Emphasis mine.

⁴ Such as Aizenberg 1980, Schwartz 1989, del Río 2003; Vaccaro 2008. Martínez 2012 discussed the Persian and Jewish motifs in the texts of Borges attributable to Cansinos-Asséns, but his influence on the Arabic motifs has not been studied yet.

⁵ Borges, 1970c; Williamson 2004.

⁶ Martínez 2012.

⁷ Borges, 1970c:152.

⁸ "[Cansinos] finally gave us the book we were waiting for".

⁹ Borges 1984. In the original: "Ahora, felizmente, tenemos la versión castellana de quien fue mi maestro Rafael Cansinos-Asséns. El libro ha sido publicado en México; es, quizá, la mejor de todas las versiones." (*Obras Completas III, 240*).

¹⁰ Spivakovsky 1968; Dapía 1999; Ackerley 2006.

different versions"¹¹, he only started in the last months of his life to take Arabic lessons from an Egyptian teacher in Geneva, who traced the Arabic letters with his finger in the palm of the blind writer¹².

Whatever Borges knew of the Arabic and Islamic world, he learnt from *translations*, though not "*translations of translations*", because his sources (Burton, Lane, Renan¹³, Asín Palacios, Margaret Smith, and probably Cansinos-Asséns) were *bona fide* Orientalists, with first-hand knowledge of the language.

Usually, Borges acknowledged his sources, but his references are not reliable. His short story *La busca de Averroes* starts with a quotation from Renan's (1852) book on the philosopher; his *Zahir* refers to a scholarly book (Julius Barlach: *Urkunden zur Geschichte der Zahir sage*); he claims the story in *The Mirror of Ink* (*El espejo de tinta*) had been taken from Burton's (1860) book, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*¹⁴; and in his essay *The Argentine Writer and Tradition*¹⁵ he cites the remark of Gibbon that the Qurān does not contain references to camels. Actually, only the Renan reference is correct, Barlach and his book are non-existent¹⁶, Burton's book does exist, but does not contain the "mirror of ink" episode, and Gibbon was cited out of context.

As Almond (2004:443) observed, "Rarely does Borges venture a remark upon his Orient without citing an 'expert' of some kind on the subject, fictitious or otherwise". Borges had an inclination for the "perverse custom of falsifying and magnifying things" as he himself admitted in *Borges y Yo*¹⁷, a "tendency to exaggerate" and "playing literary pranks"¹⁸.

By a careful reading of Borges's *Obras Completas*, I identified around hundred Arabic motifs and narremes¹⁹ in his work (see Appendix). Out of this, I selected a manageable one-fourth of them (23), which I found most interesting. These twenty-three examples represent the different genres of the Borges oeuvre (fictions, poems, prologues to and essays on books, public lectures) and span his whole

¹¹ Sorrentino 1974:71: "*El hecho de desconocer el griego y el árabe me permitía leer, digamos, la Odisea y Las mil y una noches, en muchas versiones distintas*".

¹² Kodama 1986, 2004; D'Amico 1993; Kansoussi 1999; Ormsby 1999; Tornielli 2001; Jullien 2007.

¹³ Renan had no access to the Arabic manuscript and used instead a Latin translation of Averroes's Arabic text, see Hulme 1979; and Balderston 1996.

¹⁴ Borges wrote "Equatorial" instead of "Central".

¹⁵ Borges, *Escritor argentino* in *Obras Completas* I, 270.

¹⁶ Another nonexistent book, that Borges cites as source of the "Hakim, the Masked Dyer of Merv" (*El tintorero enmascarado Hákim de Merv, Obras Completas* I, 324) story is "*Die Vernichtung der Rose, nach dem arabischen Urtext übertragen von Alexander Schulz, Leipzig, 1927*".

¹⁷ "Borges and I" (in Borges, *Hacedor, Obras Completas* II, 186).

¹⁸ Ross 2004; Martínez 2012.

¹⁹ Narreme is a bit of legend, the basic unit of narrative structure (Dorfman 1969; Baikadi et al. 2012.)

active life as an author. My aim had been to trace the motifs back to their most likely sources, and to check the accuracy of the references provided by Borges. It had been an enjoyable exercise, and I hope the “very rigorously maintained circles”²⁰ of Borges scholars and Arabists would forgive me for this intrusion.

I used Borges’s Spanish text (mostly, as in *Obras Completas*²¹) as starting point. In the English editions the translators sometimes corrected Borges’s errors, sometimes introduced new ones. Andrew Hurley, in his translation of *La busca de Averroes*, translated *los muchos volúmenes del Mohkam del ciego Abensida* as “the many volumes of blind ibn-Sina’s Moqqām”, that is he confused the blind lexicographer Ibn Sīda (c. 1007–1066) with Ibn Sīna (c. 980–1037), and his big dictionary, *al-Muḥkam* became “Moqqām” [sic]. In the same story, *Abrió el Quitah ul ain de Jalil* was translated as “He opened Khalil’s *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*”, that is he corrected the misprinted word “*Quitah*” [for *kitāb*] to *Kitāb*. Translations do not always reflect the idiosyncrasies of Borges. In most cases²² he used the term *Hindustan* for India, even in *Averroës’ Search* where it was anachronistic. The term occurs in his story *El hombre en el umbral* (The Man on the Threshold): *Bioy Casares trajo de Londres un curioso puñal de hoja triangular y empuñadora en forma de H; nuestro amigo Christopher Dewey, del Consejo Británico, dijo que tales armas eran de uso común en el Indostaní*. Hurley translates this as “Bioy Casares brought back a curious knife from London, with a triangular blade and an H shaped hilt; our friend Christopher Dewey, of the British Council, said that sort of weapon was in common use in Hindustan”; but another translator, di Giovanni has “Christopher Dewey of the British Council, told us that such weapons were commonly used in India”²³.

2 Arabic motifs, and narremes, and their sources

The motifs and narremes will be treated in alphabetic order, so we shall proceed in a Borguesque way, visiting the same writing once, and then again.

2.1 Arabic poems

The *Obras Completas* contains a few lines from classical Arabic poetry, in Spanish translation, or paraphrased, from al-Mutanabbī (Abū ṭ-Ṭayyib Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mutanabbī, 916–965), from Zuhayr (Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā, c. 520 – c. 609), and from the Umayyad ruler ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān I (756–788). The famous al-Mutanabbī lines “*al-ḥaylu wa-l-laylu wa-l-baydā’u ta’rifunī / wa-s-sayfu wa-rumḥu*

²⁰ Judy 2010:127.

²¹ Borges, *Obras*, see the Appendix.

²² See Appendix, items 34, 40; a few times he used “India” (App. # 39).

²³ Borges 1970d: 85; Borges 1999a: 269.

wa-l-qirtāsu wa-l-qalamū” (in Spanish *El caballo, la noche y el desierto me conocen / La espada y la lanza; el pergamino y la pluma*; in English “The horsemen [*sic!*] and the night and the desert know me,/and the sword and the lance, the paper and the pen”²⁴) were used by Borges to characterize Richard Burton – translator and journeyman – in his essay on the *1001 Nights*’ translators: *Hombre de palabras y hazañas, bien pudo Burton asumir el alarde del Diván de Almotanabí: El caballo, el desierto, la noche me conocen, El huésped [*sic!*] y la espada, el papel y la pluma.* / “A man of words and deeds, Burton could well take up the boast of al-Mutanabbī’s *Diwan*: The horse, the desert, the night know me, / Guest [*sic!*] and sword, paper and pen.”²⁵ The same lines were found, in Borges’s handwriting, in the margin of the Arabic-language menu of a Lebanese restaurant in Buenos Aires, *La Rosa Blanca*, where Borges dined once with friends in the 1940s. The facsimile of the document was published in the 1964 issue of the yearly *Cahiers de l’Herne* (Paris), with the caption *Vers d’un poète arabe écrits par BORGES sur un menu de ce restaurant de Buenos Aires* (Verse of an Arabic poet, written by Borges on the menu of this restaurant in Buenos Aires)²⁶.

The daily menu contained mouth-watering Lebanese and international delicacies (*kibbeh*, *mešwī*, *koftah*, *milanesā ma’a baṭāṭā*, etc.) – as well as a philological delicacy: why did Borges use, once again, the meaningless translation *El huésped [*sic!*] y la espada* (“Guest [*sic!*] and sword”) instead of the usual translation “*La espada y la lanza*” (“The sword and the lance”) when quoting al-Mutanabbī? It took more than fifty years for Borges-research to discover this error, until Tornielli (in his blog, 2019) pointed it out, and he suggested that it cannot be Borges’s fault, because “it could only be committed by [a translator], who knows as much Arabic as to confuse *sayf* (*espada*, sword) with *ḡayf* (*huésped*, guest)”. Tornielli could not locate the source of this error, but assumed it comes from “some English translation”²⁷. He was right. In Burton’s (1855–1856) “*Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Medinah & Meccah*”, al-Mutanabbī’s lines are quoted twice, in different translations, first as a motto on the first page of vol. 1, and then in the main text, Chapter XXV of vol. 2.

In the motto Burton translates the verse (archaically, but correctly) as “Dark and the Desert and Destriers me ken, / And the Glaive and the Joust, and Paper and Pen.” In the main text, however, we find the story of al-Mutanabbī’s last night:

²⁴ Ormsby 1999.

²⁵ Borges, *Traductores*. In Borges, *Obras Completas I*: 403; in English: Borges 1999b, transl. by Esther Allen.

²⁶ de Roux and de Milleret 1964; Ormsby 1999; D’Amico 1993; Spivakovsky 1968.

²⁷ Tornielli, on May 5, 2019, in an already unavailable blog. He verified this quote in a more recent personal email: *El inexistente huésped sale de la confusión entre “sayf” (سيف), espada, y “ḡayf” (ضيف), huésped. En el entrevero se ha perdido la lanza, mientras que “sajf” se ha desdoblado en espada y huésped. No encontré el texto original donde está este error que Borges no pudo haber inventado, ¿quizá en alguna traducción inglesa?*

“When Al-Mutanabbi, the poet, prophet, and warrior of Hams (A.H. 354) started together with his son on their last journey, the father proposed to seek a place of safety for the night. “Art thou the Mutanabbi,” exclaimed his slave, “who wrote these lines, ‘I am known to the night, the wild, and the steed, / To the guest, and the sword, to the paper and reed’? The poet, in reply, lay down to sleep on Tigris’ bank, in a place haunted by thieves, and, disdaining flight, lost his life during the hours of darkness.”

In Borges’s *La busca de Averroes* we encounter three times paraphrases of the famous line-from Zuhayr’s *Mu’allaqa*:

ra’aytu l-manāyā ḥabṭa ‘ašwā’a man tuṣīb
tumithu wa-man tuḥṭi’ yu’ammiru fa-yahramī

which is usually translated as “I see death is like the blundering of a blind camel / him who he meets he kills and he whom he misses, lives and will become old”²⁸. In the *Busca*, however “Zuhair comparó al destino con un camello ciego”, “Zuhair, en su mohalaca, dice que en el decurso de ochenta años de dolor y de gloria, ha visto muchas veces al destino atropellar de golpe a los hombres, como un camello ciego”, “dos imágenes, la del viejo camello y la del destino” (in English: “Zuhayr compared fate to a blind camel”, “In his *mu’allaqa*, Zuhayr says that in the course of his eighty years of pain and glory many is the time he has seen destiny trample men, like and old blind camel”, “two images – that of the old camel and that of destiny”, transl. by Hurley). While it was *destino* (fate) that Borges compared to the blind camel, in most translations – as in Johnson’s cited above – it is *death* which is associated with it. Both interpretations are right, because *manāyā* (broken plural of *maniyya* = fate, destiny) means fates or decrees [of God]”²⁹, or can be a euphemism for “death”. But where had Borges come across the “*manāyā* = destiny” interpretation? This phrase occurred in the translation of Sir Charles James Lyall (1885), who wrote “I have seen the Dooms trample men as a blind beast at random treads/whom they smote, he died; whom they missed, he lived on”. Lane’s, or Burton’s writings do not contain this verse, so I suggest the source of the Zuhayr paraphrase in the *Busca* is the 1888 or 1930 edition of Lyall’s *Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry*.

The *Busca* also contains a strophe from ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān: *Así, atormentado hace años en Marrakesh por memorias de Córdoba, me complacía en repetir el apóstrofe que Abdurrahmán dirigió en los jardines de Ruzafa a una palma africana: Tú también eres, ¡oh palma! / En este suelo extranjera...* (“Thus it was that many years ago, in Marrakesh, tortured by memories of Córdoba, I soothed myself by repeating the apostrophe which ‘Abd-al-Rahman spoke in the gardens of

²⁸ English transl. in Johnson 1893: p. 84 (line 48).

²⁹ Lane 1863: 3025.

al-Rusayfah to an African palm: Thou too art, oh palm!, On this foreign soil...”). This is not a direct quote but only a paraphrase of the Arabic original³⁰:

*tabaddat lanā waṣṭa r-ruṣāfati naḥlatun
tanā'at bi-ardī l-ġarbi 'an baladī n-naḥlī
fa-qultu ṣabīhī fī t-taġarrubi wa-n-nawā
wa-tūli t-ttanā'ī 'an baniyya wa-'an ahlī
naṣa'ti bi-ardīn anti fihā ġarībatun
fa-miṭluka fī l-iqṣā'i wa-l-munta'ā miṭlī*

I do not know where Borges could have found this poem, and why did not he quote it in full?

2.2 Averroes's name

Borges's short story *La busca de Averroes* (*Obras Completas* I, 582) starts with Averroes's full name, and we are told how “Ibn Rušd” had changed to “Averroes”:

Abulgualid Muhámmad Ibn-Ahmad ibn-Muhámmad ibn-Rushd (un siglo tardaría ese largo nombre en llegar a Averroes, pasando por Benraist y por Avenryz, y aun por Aben-Rassad y Filius Rosadis) redactaba el undécimo capítulo de la obra Tahafut-ul-Tahafut (Destrucción de la Destrucción), en el que se mantiene, contra el asceta persa Ghazali, autor del Tahafut-ul-falasifa (Destrucción de filósofos), que la divinidad sólo conoce las leyes generales del universo, lo concerniente a las especies, no al individuo. (“Abu-al Walíd Muhammad ibn-Ahmad ibn-Rushd (it would take that long name, passing through “Benraist“ and “Avenris“ and even “Aben Rassad“ and “Filius Rosadis,“ a hundred years to become “Averroës”) was at work on the eleventh chapter of his work Taháfut al-Taháfut (“Destruction of the Destruction”), which maintains, contrary to the Persian ascetic al-Ghazzáli, author of the Taháfut al-Falásifah (“Destruction of Philosophers“), that the deity knows only the general laws of the universe, those that apply not to the individual but to the species” – transl. by Hurley).

The careful reader would discover the difference in the *nasab* (series of *patronymics*) between the two versions: In the English text one “ibn Muḥammad” was left out. Borges copied the name from Renan³¹ where there is *Le kadhi Aboulwalid Mohammed Ibn-Ahmed Ibn-Mohammed Ibn-Roschd naquit à Cordoue l'an 1126* Renan used for his book three biographies of Averroes, of Ibn al-Abbār (1199–1260), of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (1203–1270), and of aḍ-Ḍahabī (1274–1348), all three were appended to Renan's book. Both Ibn al-Abbār and aḍ-Ḍahabī gave the *nasab* as Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Aḥmad b. Rušd (Renan 1852:435, 456). Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a had Abū l-Walíd Muḥammad b.

³⁰ *Obras Completas* I, 587. Arabic text in Nykl 1946:18.

³¹ Renan 1852: 10.

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Rušd (*ibid.* 448). Renan accepted the version of Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘a, and this is how it was used by Borges.

As for the change of “Ibn Rušd” to “Averroes”, Renan (1852:7 fn.1) mentions several Latin transcriptions of Ibn Rušd: “*Ibin-Rosdin, Filius Rosadis, Ibn-Rusid, Ben-Raxid, Ibn-Ruschod, Ben-Resched, Aban-Rassad, Aben-Rois, Aben-Rasd, Aben-Rust, Avenrosd, Avenryz, Adverroys, Benroist, Avenroyth, Averroysta, etc.*”, of which Borges selected four at random.

2.3 Bahamut, Falak, Kujata

In his *El Libro de los Seres Imaginarios* (“Book of Imaginary Beings”) Borges discusses *Bahamut*, or *Behemoṭ* (from Ar. *bahāmūt*, Heb. *behēmōṭ*) the gigantic fish, which – deep below – supports a hierarchic structure that holds up the Earth, according to the cosmogony of Zakariyyā al-Qazwīnī (1203–1283).³² Borges (*Obras en Colaboración* 590) refers to Lane (1883) and to the 496th night³³ of Burton’s *1001 Nights*³⁴ as his sources. The reference to Lane is missing in di Giovanni’s English translation: *Leemos en una tradición recogida por Lane: Dios creó la tierra, pero la tierra no tenía sostén y así bajo la tierra creó un angel* became in his English version: “A Moslem tradition runs: God made the earth, but the earth had no base and so under the earth he made an angel” (Borges and Guerrero 1974:25), but it is duly included in Hurley’s (Borges and Guerrero 2006): “Here is the story of this creature in Lane’s translation: The earth was, it was said, originally unstable, and therefore God created an angel of immense size and of the utmost strength, and ordered him to go beneath it and place it on his shoulders ...”. The rest of Borges’s text consists of four narremes (translations are by di Giovanni: Borges and Guerrero 1974:25–26):

(i) *Pero el ángel no tenía sostén y así bajo los pies del ángel creó un peñasco hecho de rubí. ...bajo el toro creó un pez llamado Bahamut, y bajo el pez puso agua, y bajo el agua puso oscuridad, y la ciencia humana no ve más allá de ese punto ...Otros declaran que la tierra tiene su fundamento en el agua; el agua, en el peñasco Tan inmenso y tan resplandeciente es Bahamut que los ojos humanos no pueden sufrir su visión. Todos los mares de la Tierra, puestos en una de sus fosas nasales, serían como un grano de mostaza en mitad del desierto* (“But the angel had no base and so under the angel’s feet he made a crag of ruby... and so under the bull he made a fish named Bahamut, and under the fish he put water,

³² Al-Qazwīnī, *‘Aḡā’ib wa ḡarā’ib*. In the cosmogony of al-Qazwīnī the sky is held by Allah so that it does not fall on earth (Q 22:65), the earth is flat and surrounded by mountains of *Qāf*, which is supported by an ox, the ox stands on a fish (Bahamut) swimming in an ocean inside a bowl on top of an angel.

³³ This tale from the *Adventures of Buklukiyya* cycle is not contained in Lane 1840.

³⁴ Burton 1900–1901: V, 324–325.

and under the water he put darkness, and beyond this men's knowledge does not reach ...Others have it that the earth has its foundation on the water; the water, on the crag ... So immense and dazzling is Bahamut that the eyes of man cannot bear its sight. All the seas of the world, placed in one of the fish's nostrils, would be like a mustard seed laid in the desert".) This narreme was taken from Lane, the three others from Burton:

(ii) *En la noche 496 del Libro de las Mil y una Noches, se refiere que a Isa (Jesús) le fue concedido ver a Bahamut y que, lograda esa merced, rodó por el suelo y tardó tres días en recobrar el conocimiento* ("In the 496th night of the *Arabian Nights* we are told that it was given to Isa (Jesus) to behold Bahamut and that, this mercy granted, Isa fell to the ground in a faint, and three days and their nights passed before he recovered his senses");

(iii) *Se añade que bajo el desafortado pez hay un mar, y bajo el mar un abismo de aire, y bajo el aire, fuego, y bajo el fuego, una serpiente que se llama Falak, en cuya boca están los infiernos* ("... beneath the measureless fish is a sea; and beneath the sea, a chasm of air; and beneath the air, fire; and beneath the fire, a serpent named Falak in whose mouth are the six hells."). In Burton's *1001 Nights*: "Under the sea the Lord created a vast abyss of air, under the air fire, and under the fire a mighty, serpent, by name Falak; and were it not for fear of the Most High, this serpent would assuredly swallow up all that is above it, air and fire and the Angel and his burden, without sensing it."³⁵

(iv) *La ficción del peñasco sobre el toro y del toro sobre Bahamut y de Bahamut sobre cualquier otra cosa parece ilustrar la prueba cosmológica que hay Dios, en la que se argumenta que toda causa requiere una causa anterior y se proclama la necesidad de afirmar una causa primera, para no proceder en infinito* ("The idea of the crag resting on the bull, and the bull on Bahamut, and Bahamut on anything else, seems to be an illustration of the cosmological proof of the existence of God. This proof argues that every cause requires a prior cause, and so, in order to avoid proceeding into infinity, a first cause is necessary").

Infinity is a recurring theme in Borges's works³⁶ and he possibly found the connection to the cosmological proof in Burton's odd footnote to the *496th night*: "The cosmogony of the world' etc., as we see in the *Vicar of Wakefield*." Burton's tongue-in-cheek hint does not refer to some learned discussion of the cosmologic argument by the vicar, Dr. Charles Primrose, as it would seem, but to an episode in Oliver Goldsmith's Victorian novel³⁷, where a swindler (Ephraim Jenkinson, "the greatest rascal under the canopy of heaven") started a conversation with the vicar, delivered "a long string of learning about Greek and cosmogony, and the world", and then cheated him out of his money.

³⁵ Burton 1900–1901: V, 325.

³⁶ Martínez 2003.

³⁷ Goldsmith 1766: Ch. XIV.

Borges found the name of the giant bull in Lane's book, who wrote: "But there was no support for the rock: wherefore God created a huge bull, with four thousand eyes and the same number of ears, noses, mouths, tongues, and feet; between every two of which was a distance of five hundred years' journey; and God, whose name be exalted, ordered this bull to go beneath the rock; and he bore it on his back and his horns. The name of this bull is Kuyootà.³⁸ But there was no support for the bull, therefore God, whose name be exalted, created an enormous fish ... to be a support to the feet of the bull. The name of this fish is Bahamoot [Behemoth]³⁹." Borges did not tell the name of the bull in the entry *Bahamut* of the *Seres Imaginarios* but devoted a separate entry *Kuyata* to it (*Obras en Colaboración* 654): "*Según un mito islámico, Kuyata es un gran toro dotado de cuatro mil orejas, de cuatro mil narices, de cuatro mil bocas, de cuatro mil lenguas y de cuatro mil pies. ... A Kuyata lo sostiene el pez Bahamut ...*" ("In Moslem cosmology, Kujata is a huge bull endowed with four thousand eyes, ears, nostrils, mouths, and feet. Kujata stands on the back of the fish Bahamut ...", transl. by di Giovanni, Borges and Guerrero 1974:89).

2.4 Bull and buffalo

In the concluding lines of the *La busca de Averroes* (*Obras Completas* I, 587–588; "Averroës's Search"), Borges complains: *sentí lo que hubo de sentir aquel dios mencionado por Burton que se propuso crear un toro y creó un búfalo* ("I felt what that god mentioned by Burton must have felt – the god who set himself the task of creating a bull but turned out a buffalo."). Borges refers here to a narreme in Burton's *Terminal Essay*⁴⁰: "Thus, when Hormuzd created the planets, the dog, and all useful animals and plants, Ahriman produced the comets, the wolf, noxious beasts and poisonous growths. The Hindus represent the same metaphysical idea by Bramha the Creator and Visva karma, the Anti-creator, miscalled by Europeans Vulcan: the former fashions a horse and a bull and the latter caricatures them with an ass and a buffalo, evolution turned topsy turvy."

Borges ingeniously paraphrases Burton's convoluted argument changing it to the frustration felt by the Creator god who "set himself to the task of creating a bull that turned out a buffalo". The second part of Burton's narreme, concerning the

³⁸ In different editions of al-Qazwīnī's *Cosmography* we find the bull's name as *Kīyūbān*, *Kībūtān*, *Kuyūtā*.

³⁹ Lane 1883:107. Burton did not name the bull, in a footnote (Burton 1900 – 1901 vol. 5: 324 fn.2) he called it "*Gaw-i-Zamun* = Bull of the Earth", in *The Terminal Essay* (Burton 1900–1901: X, 131) he wrote "[the Earth is] supported by the *Gav-i-Zamin*, the energy, symbolized by a bull, implanted by the creator".

⁴⁰ Burton 1900–1901: X, 130–131.

rivalry between Brahmā and Viśvakarman is not supported by any classical texts⁴¹, because Hinduism is not a dualistic religion as the Persian used to be, with positive and negative Creators. Until I found the source of this narreme, I was sure that it is an invention of Borges, now we see it had been made up by Burton!

2.5 *al-Burāq*

The *Burāq* (a grammatically both masc. and fem. diminutive⁴², from Ar. برق = “lightning”, or “bright”) is a horse-like creature in Islamic tradition that was said to be a transport for certain prophets⁴³. *Hadīṭ*, *tafsīr*, *sīra* books recount in their chapters on Muḥammad’s *mi’rāğ* that al-Burāq carried the Prophet from Mecca to Jerusalem, then up in the heavens and back in one night. Its name is not mentioned in the Qurān.⁴⁴

Borges devoted a long section to al-Burāq in *Seres Imaginarios (Obras en Colaboración 599)* and repeated it in the *Historia de la eternidad (Obras Completas I, 361, footnote)*. It consists of a chain of seven narremes (see Table 1):

Discussion of the seven narremes in *al-Burāq*:

2.5.(i) Q. 17:1

Borges’s Spanish text does not mention the source of the translation of Q. 17:1 *subḥāna l-laḏī asrā bi-‘abdihi laylan mina l-masğidi l-ḥarāmi ilā l-masğidi l-aqşā l-laḏī bāraknā ḥawlahu li-nuriyahu min āyātīnā innahu huwa s-samī‘u l-başīru*. It is close to Cansinos-Assén’s (1973) translation, which starts as *La loanza a Aquel que hizo viajar a su siervo de noche, desde la mezquita la vedada hasta la mezquita la remota ...*, and to that of Julio Cortés (1979) that reads: *¡Gloria a Quien hizo viajar a Su Siervo de noche, desde la Mezquita Sagrada a la Mezquita Lejana ...!* In the *El Sagrado Coran* (1953) by Ahmed Abboud and Rafael Castellanos, Q. 17:1 reads *Glorificado sea Dios, quien, durante la noche, transportó a tu siervo, el Apóstol desde la sagrada mezquita de la Meca hasta la mezquita lejana*

⁴¹ See e.g. Doniger O’Flaherty 1975: 358; Dowson 1879:323–324 and 363–364; Wilkins 1882:75–77. (I acknowledge the useful advice on this point from my Indologist friend, Professor Gyula Wojtilla.)

⁴² This was the opinion of Horowitz, 1919, who adopted the view of classic Muslim commentators, that *Burāq* is a *nomen deminutivum*, formed by applying the rare *fu’āl* pattern (indicating the *small portion of something*, see Wehr 1981 “Grammar” I, §.287(b)) to the root *b-r-q* (instead of making it *Burayq*), thus, its meaning is “a flash of lightning”. See Horowitz 1919, Gruber 2012; Dankoff 1971.

⁴³ Ibn Hişām 1858–1860: I, 263.

⁴⁴ Schimmel 1985:159–175 and endnotes 297–301; Heath 1992; Colby 2002, 2008; Vuckovic 2005; Gruber 2012.

de Jerusalén, almost as in di Giovanni's English translation, which is a modernized version of Sale's archaic Q. 17:1 (Praise be unto him who transported his servant by night, from the sacred temple of *Mecca* to the further temple of *Jerusalem* ...). Borges's rendering omits the place names.⁴⁵

I propose that the Spanish Q. 17:1 in Borges's text, "*Alabado sea El que hizo viajar, durante la noche, a su siervo desde el templo sagrado hasta el templo que está más lejos ...*" is Borges's *own translation*. In his studies for the "Burāq" entry he had certainly come across with Sale's translation, "The Glory of Him who transported His servant by night from the Sacred temple (of Mecca) to the Remote Temple (of Jerusalem), whose precincts we have blessed, that we might show him of our signs" in one of the notes to a *1001 Nights* story⁴⁶, and with the *abridged version* (explanatory place names omitted) of Marracci's⁴⁷ classic Latin translation of Q. 17:1, *Laus illi qui transtulit servum suum ab oratorio Haram ad oratorium remotissimum* ..., in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* (1776–88: Note 98 to Ch. 50⁴⁸). The lack of placenames in Borges's rendering of Q. 17:1 suggests his source was Gibbon.

At this point it should be mentioned that Borges did not refrain from modifying even Qurānic texts. In his essay *Las Kenningar (Obras Completas I, 380)* he refers to Q 22:5 in the form "[*el hombre sea generado*] por "*unas gotas de vil*"⁴⁹ (in Arabic *min nutfatin*). No other translator, or commentator, of the Qurān have ever termed *nutfā* ('sperm-drop') as a drop of vile (i.e., base, wicked) water!

2.5.(ii) The Prophet's Night Journey

Borges's text is correct. In the English text, the words "that the sacred temple is that of Mecca, that the distant temple is that of Jerusalem" are superfluous, because this explanation was already included in Sale's translation.

2.5.(iii) al-Burāq's description by Burton

Borges's source was Burton's 1900–1901: fn. 435 to the *457th Night*: "When Abu Bakr was hiding with Mohammed in a cave on the Hill Al-Saur (Thaur or Thūr⁵⁰) South of Mecca ... the fugitives were protected by a bird which built her nest at the

⁴⁵ The Qurān translations quoted are: Cansinos-Asséns 1954, 1973; Cortés 1979; Abboud and Castellanos 1953; Sale 1734.

⁴⁶ Kirby 1901a: note 1 to the *Tale of the Warlock and the Young Cook of Baghdad*.

⁴⁷ Marracci 1698: II, 407.

⁴⁸ "Yet the Koran without naming either heaven, or Jerusalem, or Mecca, has only dropped a mysterious hint: *Laus illi qui transtulit servum suum ab oratorio Haram ad oratorium remotissimum* (Q. 17:1 [Marracci 1698: II, 407])."

⁴⁹ See App. # 81, Borge, *Obras Completas I*, 380.

⁵⁰ See Burton 1855–1856: II, 131.

entrance (according to another legend it was curtained by a spider's web), while another bird (the crow of whom I shall presently speak) tried to betray them. The first bird is popularly supposed to have been a pigeon, and is referred to by Hudibras⁵¹: 'Th' apostles of this fierce religion / Like Mahomet's, were ass and pigeon'. The ass I presume alludes to the marvellous beast Al-Burāk ... which Indian Muslims picture with human face, ass's ears, equine body and peacock's wings and tail."

2.5.(iv) al-Burāq tipped a jug of water and 2.5.(v) No drop spilled from the jug

As Annemarie Schimmel noted "the heavenly journey [of Muḥammad] became a model of the ecstatic state in which man can live in a single moment through years"⁵². The Prophet's still-warm bedclothes, or the tipped-over jug that had not spilled out fully, or these two tropes mentioned together, had become in the *mi'rāğ* accounts and commentaries symbols of this ecstatic moment.

Only a few classical Muslim accounts of the *Night Journey* specified the duration of this event, because if too short, this would imply the journey was spiritual, or just a dream, not corporeal, thus losing its miraculous nature and religious significance. Ibn Sīnā (980–1037) narrated the episode⁵³ as "He [Muḥammad] said: When I did all this I returned to the house. Because of the swiftness of the journey the bedclothes were still warm", then commented: "that is the journey was intellectual [*fikrī*]. He went by thought [*ḥāṭir*]". The narration of Ibn 'Abbās (c. 619 – 687) is more cautious: "I woke up in Makkah the next morning"⁵⁴. Faḥr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī (1150–1210), in his *Tafsīr*, used physical-geographical arguments to prove that the *Night Journey* could have been done physically "in one third of a night" or

⁵¹ *Hudibras* is a mock-heroic narrative poem by Samuel Butler (1612–1680). Zachary Grey (1688–1766) notes on lines 231–232 of Part 1, Canto 1 that "Mahomet had a tame dove, that used to pick seeds out of his ear that it might be thought to whisper and inspire him. His ass was so intimate with him, that the Mahometans believed it carried him to heaven, and stays there with him to bring him back again." (Butler 1805: I, 26).

⁵² Schimmel 1985a:161. The possibly earliest occurrence of this motif is the "charming story of Kaṇḍu the Penitent" in the *Viṣṇu purāṇa* I, 15, composed in early 1st millennium), "who spends many hundred years in erotic dallings and, at last, waking up from the ecstasy of his love [finds that] only a few hours of a single day have passed by"; see Winternitz 1981: I, 511.

⁵³ Heath 1992.

⁵⁴ Asín Palacios (1919) calls Ibn 'Abbās's narration *Redacción C del ciclo 2º*. In the translation of Colby (2008:208): "Praise be to God for that [journey]! It was all in a single night, with God's permission and power." See also the *Tafsīr* of Ibn Kaṭīr on Q. 17:1: "Imam Ahmad also recorded that Ibn 'Abbās said: The Messenger of Allah said: *lammā kāna laylata usriya bī fa-aṣbaḥtu bi-Makkata faẓi'tu wa-'araftu anna n-nāsa mukaḍḍibī* ("On the night when I was taken on the Night Journey, I woke up in Makkah the next morning having anxiety because I knew the people would not believe me.").

– more likely – “over the course of a full evening”⁵⁵. Those accounts that do speak of the swiftness of the journey base this on (a) only the warmth of the bedclothes; (b) or they tell the bed was still warm and the tipped-over jug was still not empty; or (c) they refer only to the jug. In this last case, it is mentioned that (c1) (somehow) it was tipped; or (c2) it was tipped by al-Burāq (as Borges does); (c3) or it was tipped over by the angel Gabriel; or (c4) by the Prophet’s feet or clothes⁵⁶.

From among Borges’s usual sources, Gibbon⁵⁷ does not mention bedclothes or jug, he only writes “[the Prophet] performed in the tenth part of a night the journey of many thousand years”. Asín Palacios quoted Ibn ‘Abbās, according to whom “*y la leyenda termina haciendo constar Mahoma que el maravilloso viaje se realize en el breve espacio de una sola noche*” (“and the legend ends with the statement of Mohammed, that the miraculous journey had taken place in a single night”)⁵⁸. Burton’s⁵⁹ *1001 Nights* provided Borges with both tropes “[Muḥammad] found his bed still warm, and the water had not fully run out of an ewer which had been upset beside him”.

I have another, very enticing, hypothesis which – of course – would be very hard to prove: Borges might have also learned about the narremes from Dostoevsky’s *Idiot*⁶⁰ (part 3, chapter V, section 5) where Kirillov describes to Shatov his ‘seconds of eternal harmony’, and Shatov replies: “Take care, Kirillov, I’ve heard that’s how epilepsy begins... Remember Muhammad’s jug that didn’t have time to spill while he flew round paradise on his horse ... It’s too much like your harmony, and Muhammad was an epileptic. Take care, Kirillov—it’s epilepsy!”. Dostoevsky was one of Borges’s favourite writers, Borges included the *Idiot* among the most important books in anyone’s personal library⁶¹. In his short story *El Otro (Obras Completas III, 13; “The Other”)* the old Borges asks the young Borges what he was reading. *Los poseídos o, según creo, Los demonios de Fyodor Dostoievski – me replicó no sin vanidad.* (“The Possessed—or, as I think would be better, The Devils, by Fyodor Dostoevsky,” he answered without vanity”, transl. by Hurley). Dostoevsky’s sources were also traced back⁶² to Orientalist sources, namely to

⁵⁵ Vuckovic 2005:80–81.

⁵⁶ Narrations according to this typology are: (a) Ibn Sīnā (quoted in Heath 1992); (b) Schimmel 1985a; Kazimirski 1840; Burton 1900–1901; Gibbs 1886; (c1) Dostoevsky 1974; see Freemon 1976, Futrell 1979; (c2) Borges and Guerrero, *Seres Imaginarios*, Ch. “Burāq”; (c3) Irving 1849; (c4) Frederick Colby, *Pers. comm. by email* 19 April 2020.

⁵⁷ Gibbon 1776–88: II, Ch. 50, 98.

⁵⁸ Asín Palacios 1919: 30.

⁵⁹ “The Tale of the Warlock and the Young Cook of Baghdad” and its fn. 1. in Burton 1900–1901 (*Suppl. Nights*): VI, 505–537.

⁶⁰ Freemon 1976; Dostoevsky 1974; Futrell 1979.

⁶¹ Crow 2015.

⁶² Futrell 1979.

Kazimirski's Qurān translation⁶³ (of which Dostoevsky obtained a personal copy in 1859) and to Washington Irving's *Mahomet and his Successors* (1849) that appeared in Russian translation in 1857. Kazimirski's commentary on Q. 17:1 contained both the warm bed and spilled jug motifs; *le prophète trouva son lit qu'il avait quitté, tout chaud, et que, le pot où il chauffait de l'eau étant près de se renverser à son départ, il revint assez à temps pour le relever sans qu'il y eut une goutte d'eau de répandue*. In Irving (1849:95) the anecdote lacks the "warm bed" motif: "on his return, he was able to prevent the complete overturn of a vase of water which the angel Gabriel had struck with his wing on his departure". I suggest Borges learned of the jug episode from Burton's *1001 Nights*, or from Washington Irving, or Kazimirski. He might also have found the motif from Dostoevsky. Of course, it was Borges's own playful idea to make *al-Burāq* responsible for the accident.

2.5.(vi) Cold hand of God

The narreme "[*el Profeta*] sintió un frío que le heló el corazón cuando la mano del Señor le dio una palmada en el hombro" ("[the Prophet] felt a coldness that chilled his heart when the Lord laid a hand on his shoulder") was common in the early narrations of Muḥammad's *Night Journey*, told in the name of Ibn 'Abbās⁶⁴. In the "primitive version"⁶⁵ of Ibn 'Abbās's narration the relevant part reads as "He placed one of his hands between my shoulder blades, and I felt the coldness of his fingers upon my heart for some time"⁶⁶. aṭ-Ṭabarī (839–923) includes the trope, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, in his *Tafsīr*⁶⁷: "So he placed his hand between my shoulder blades and I felt the coldness between my nipples."

From among the sources used by Borges, Asín Palacios 1919 contains only an abbreviated version of Ibn 'Abbās's narration, which refers to God's hands touching the Prophet, without mentioning their coldness, "*Al posarse las divinas manos sobre los hombros de Mahoma ...*"⁶⁸. Burton's and Lane's⁶⁹ books do not contain the episode, but Gibbon's does: "Beyond the seventh heaven, Mahomet

⁶³ Kazimirski 1840.

⁶⁴ For a detailed discussion of this trope see Colby 2002 and 2008.

⁶⁵ So called by Colby 2008. Asín Palacios 1919 called it *Redacción C del ciclo 2º*.

⁶⁶ Transl. in Colby 2008:186.

⁶⁷ aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* XI, 510 (commentary on Q. 53:11).

⁶⁸ Asín Palacios 1919:28.

⁶⁹ Lane 1883 (note 21 to Ch. 3) contains a wonderful *al-Burāq* legend, that somehow escaped Borges's attention: "When I was taken up into heaven," said the Prophet, "some of my sweat fell upon the earth, and from it sprang the rose; and whoever would smell my scent, let him smell the rose." In another tradition it is said, "The white rose was created from my sweat on the night of the Meṛāj; and the red rose, from the sweat of Jebraeel; and the yellow rose, from the sweat of El-Burāk."

alone was permitted to proceed; he passed the veil of unity, approached within two bowshots of the throne, and felt a cold that pierced him to the heart, when his shoulder was touched by the hand of God.”⁷⁰

Borges’s text had been taken, almost *verbatim*, from this last source.

2.5.(vii) The mystic from Murcia

The *místico murciano* is Ibn ‘Arabī (1165–1240); Borges learned of him from Asín Palacios’s two books⁷¹. He took both Ibn ‘Arabī quotes, *verbatim*, from him (Asín Palacios, 1919:62, main text and fn.1), where we find “*Para este místico viaje, la veloz cabalgadura que los transporta es el amor divino, simbolizado por Borac* (“for this mystic journey, the fast mount that carried him is the divine love, symbolized by Burāq”); and “*el Borac de la pureza de intención*” (“al-Burāq, the purity of intention”). The first quote is from Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Isrā*, the second from his *Šaqq al-ğayb*.

2.6 Camels in the Qurān

In his 1932 essay *El escritor argentino y la tradición* (*Obras Completas I*, 267–274; “The Argentine Writer and Tradition”) Borges criticized his compatriots who thought that “gauchesque literature is the only truly Argentine mode of aesthetic expression”⁷², and he claimed, using a quote from Gibbon’s *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that the Qurān, “the Arab book par excellence”, contains no references to camels, the typical symbol of the Arabs’ everyday life:

“Gibbon observa que en el libro árabe por excelencia, en el Alcorán, no hay camellos; yo creo que si hubiera alguna duda sobre la autenticidad del Alcorán, bastaría esta ausencia de camellos para probar que es árabe. Fue escrito por Mahoma... Mahoma, como árabe ... sabía que podía ser árabe sin camellos. Creo que los argentinos podemos parecernos a Mahoma, podemos creer en la posibilidad de ser argentinos sin abundar en color local.” (*Obras Completas I*, 270) (“Gibbon observes that in the Arabian book par excellence, in the Koran, there are no camels; I believe if there were any doubt as to the authenticity of the Koran, this absence of camels would be sufficient to prove it is an Arabian work. It was written by Mohammed ... Mohammed, as an Arab ... knew he could be an Arab without camels. I think we Argentines can emulate Mohammed, can believe in the possibility of being Argentine without abounding in local color,” transl. by Esther Allen).

⁷⁰ Gibbon 1776–88: II, Ch. 50.

⁷¹ Asín Palacios, 1919, 1931.

⁷² Quoted and discussed in Zivin 2011.

The quote, indeed, occurs in Gibbon⁷³, where the passage runs as follows: “Alive or dead, almost every part of the camel is serviceable to man: her milk is plentiful and nutritious: the young and tender flesh has the taste of veal [fn. 13] a valuable salt is extracted from the urine: the dung supplies the deficiency of fuel; and the long hair, which falls each year and is renewed, is coarsely manufactured into the garments, the furniture, and the tents of the Bedoweens. In the rainy seasons, they consume the rare and insufficient herbage of the desert”. It is explained by footnote 13: “*Qui carnibus camelorum vesci solent odii tenaces sunt*, [Those who are accustomed to eating camel meat are tenacious in their hatred] was the opinion of an Arabian physician, (Pocock, Specimen, p. 88.) Mahomet himself, who was fond of milk, prefers the cow, and does not even mention the camel” – that is, it was *camel-milk* (and not camels) what Muḥammad (rather than the Qurān) “[did] not even mention”⁷⁴. Borges-criticism, of course, discovered the falsity of the quote: “Borges cites Gibbon’s (erroneous) remark”⁷⁵; “while humorous, this false reference (a favorite literary ploy of Borges) does not prove the inexistence of camels in the Koran (there are, in fact, camels in Islam’s holiest text)”⁷⁶. One wonders how come Borges had not read the Qurān translation of his old friend Rafael Cansinos Asséns where the index of the book has five references to camels, and there are nineteen verses (incl. Q. 6:145 and Q. 91: 13–14) that contain the word “camel”.

Borges certainly realized this, but he was stubborn. In 1954 he participated at a conference in Buenos Aires celebrating the publication of Cansinos’s *new translation of the Qurān*⁷⁷, and at this occasion republished⁷⁸ his old essay with some modifications (but keeping the notorious “no camels in Koran” part intact).

In Borges’s essay the *fue escrito por Mahoma* (“it [the Qurān] was written by Mohammed”) phrase is also strange, because Borges had certainly read, in the same chapter in Gibbon’s book, the refutation of the claims that the Prophet could read and write. Gibbon (1776–1788: III, 69, Ch. 50) wrote: “With these powers of eloquence, Mahomet was an illiterate Barbarian: his youth had never been instructed in the arts of reading and writing”, and elaborated in fn. 70: “Those who

⁷³ Gibbon 1776–88: V, Ch. L: Description of Arabia and Its Inhabitants. Part I.

⁷⁴ As a matter fact, camel milk was also mentioned by the Prophet: “Narrated Abū Qilaba: “Anas said, “Some people of ‘Ukl or ‘Uraina tribe came to Medina and its climate did not suit them. So the Prophet ordered them to go to the herd of (Milch) camels and to drink their milk and urine (as a medicine).” (Bukhari n.d., Ablutions (*Wuḍū’*), I, Book 4, Number 234). Also, there is a *ḥadīṭ* on camel meat: *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 3, Ch 25 “Performing wudu’ after eating camel meat”, *Ḥadīṭ* Number 700.

⁷⁵ Almond 2004:441 and fn. 5.

⁷⁶ Zivin 2011:135–136.

⁷⁷ Cansinos-Asséns 1954.

⁷⁸ See Lastra 1998. Hernaiz 2019 compares the different published versions of the essay.

believe that Mahomet could read or write are incapable of reading what is written with another pen, in the Suras, or chapters of the Koran, vii. xxix. xcvi. These texts, and the tradition of the Sonna, are admitted, without doubt, by Abulfeda, (in Vit. vii.) Gagnier, (Not. ad Abulfed. p. 15,) Pocock, (Specimen, p. 151,) Reland, (de Religione Mohammedica, p. 236,) and Sale, (Preliminary Discourse, p. 42.)”.

The phrase occurs once more, in Borges’s short story *Un doble de Mahoma* (*Obras Completas* I, 346; “A Double for Mohammed”): *El verdadero Mahoma, que redactó el Qurán, ya no es visible a sus adeptos.* (“The real Mahomed, who wrote the Koran, is not at this day to be seen among them”, transl. by Hurley). In his many other writings Borges treats the Holy Book with due respect, in a theologically correct way, as e.g. in *La busca de Averroes* (*Obras Completas* I, 584):

“Farach expuso largamente la doctrina ortodoxa. El Qurán (dijo) es uno de los atributos de Dios, como Su piedad; se copia en un libro, se pronuncia con la lengua, se recuerda en el corazón, y el idioma y los signos y la escritura son obra de los hombres, pero el Qurán es irrevocable y eterno. Averroes, que había comentado la República, pudo haber dicho que la madre del Libro es algo así como su modelo platónico.” (“Faraj discoursed long on orthodox doctrine. The Qur’an, he said, is one of the attributes of Allah, even as His Mercy is; it may be copied in a book, pronounced with the tongue, or remembered in the heart, but while language and signs and writing are the work of men, the Qur’an itself is irrevocable and eternal. Averroës, who had written his commentary on the Republic, might have said that the mother of the Book is similar, in a way, to the Platonic Idea”, transl. by Hurley)⁷⁹.

2.7 Copyist’s error, or is the *Thousand and One Nights* infinite?

“Games with time and infinity” (*juegos con el tiempo y con lo infinito*)⁸⁰ are recurring motifs in Borges’s works⁸¹. As a writer, and librarian, he was especially concerned with the possibility of *infinite books*. As Nada Elia, and Ian Almond, observed⁸², Borges equated infinity with *The Thousand and One Nights*. In his essay *Las mil y una noches* (“The Thousand and One Nights”) he wrote *La idea de infinito es consustancial con Las mil y una noches* (“The idea of infinity is con-

⁷⁹ Other similar places are listed in App. # 45; see also Scott 2001; González 1992.

⁸⁰ The phrase is from his 1960 story, *Borges y Yo* (*Obras Completas* II, 186; “Borges and I”).

⁸¹ Reviewed in Barrenechea 1956.

⁸² Elia 1998:142 “Borges says he owns Burton’s translation of the Islamic anthology, a collection he equates with infinity”; Almond 2004:436 “[Borges makes] repeated references to the *Thousand and One Nights* almost as a standard metaphor for infinity”.

substantial with *The Thousand and One Nights*”, transl. by Weinberger)⁸³. In *El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan* (*Obras Completas I*, 477; “The garden of forking paths”) he tells how he found a model for the infinite book in the *1001 Nights*:

“yo me había preguntado de qué manera un libro puede ser infinito ... Recordé también esa noche que está en el centro de las *1001 Noches*, cuando la reina *Shahrazad* (por una mágica distracción del copista) se pone a referir textualmente la historia de las *1001 Noches*, con riesgo de llegar otra vez a la noche en que la refiere, y así hasta lo infinito.” (“I had wondered how a book could be infinite ... I also recalled that night at the centre of the *1001 Nights*, when the queen *Scheherazade* (through some magical distractedness on the part of the copyist) begins to retell, verbatim, the story of the *1001 Nights*, with the risk of returning once again to the night on which she is telling it—and so on, ad infinitum.” Transl. by Hurley).

Borges refers here to a tale which resembles an episode in the frame story, “King *Shahryar* and his Brother encountering the woman kept in a chest by the *Genie*”.⁸⁴ In his essay *Cuando la ficción vive en la ficción* (“When Fiction Lives In Fiction”)⁸⁵ Borges points out the “vast possibilities, the curious danger” of this repetition:

“[el rey] oye de boca de la reina su propia historia. Oye el principio de la historia, que abarca a todas las demás, y también – de monstruoso modo –, a sí mismo? Intuye claramente el lector la vasta posibilidad de esa interpolación, el curioso peligro? Que la reina persista y el inmóvil rey oirá para siempre la trunca historia de *Las Mil y Una Noches*, ahora infinita y circular ...” (“The King hears his own story from the Queen’s mouth. He hears the beginning of the story, which embraces all the others as well as – monstrously – itself. Does the reader really understand the vast possibilities of that interpolation, the curious danger – that the Queen may persist and the Sultan, immobile, will hear forever the truncated story of *A Thousand and One Nights*, now infinite and circular?”), transl. by Esther Allen).

Borges-researchers denied such “unlimited possibilities of interpolated repetitions”⁸⁶. According to Kilito (1992) the infinity of the *1001 Nights* should be understood only symbolically⁸⁷. Concerning Borges’s claim (*Obras Completas I*, 477) that this episode was included in the *1001 Nights* “through some magical distractedness on the part of the copyist” (*por una mágica distracción del copista*),

⁸³ *Obras Completas III*, 234.

⁸⁴ Burton, “King’s Son and the Ifrit’s Mistress”, *Burton 1900–1901*: VI, 199, Night 602.

⁸⁵ Borges, *Obras Completas IV*, 434.

⁸⁶ Fishburn and Psiche 1990:139–140, entry “Night of Nights (*Noche de las Noches*)”.

⁸⁷ In the axiomatic theory of narrative structures (Baikadi et al. 2012:45) it is proved that “there are no self-loops ... there cannot exist a link between a narreme and itself”.

Kilito says, “only the naïve reader will go from version to version of the *Nights* trying to verify the fact”⁸⁸. Table 2 (based on Kirby 1901b) summarizes the tale’s redaction history. Let us indeed go “from version to version”.

The story occurs in three printed Arabic texts of the *1001 Nights*, including the Calcutta text (ed. by MacNaghten⁸⁹) which was the basis for Burton’s translation, and the Būlāq text (1835) used by Lane. Burton gives the story in full (Burton 1900–1901: VI, 199–202); Lane only gives an “Abstract “of the whole cycle “*Story of the King and his son and the Damsel and the Seven Wezeers*” (Lane 1840: III, 145–167, Chap. 21) where he refers to the story (on p. 148) only with its title, “On the third day (for on each day one Wezeer tries his influence), the Damsel relates *The Story of the Envious Wezeer and the Prince and the Ghooleh*”. Both Burton and Lane observed that the narreme repeats the episode found at the beginning of the frame story: Burton noted (p. 199, fn. 3), “This is a mere abstract of the tale told in the introduction (I, 10–12). Here, however, the rings are about eighty; there the number varies from ninety to five hundred and seventy”; Lane is shorter (p. 148, fn 15), “Nearly as told in Chapter ii. in this work”. Borges was the first to realize the possibility of an *infinite cycle*. His claim that this was due to a “magical slip of the copyist” is reasonable. The episode existed as a separate anecdote in the *Seven Wezeers* story-cycle⁹⁰ and became incorporated the second time in the *1001 Nights* through careless edition when fusing the two cycles.

2.8. *Iskander Dū l-Qarnayn*

The legendary *Iskander Dū l-Qarnayn* appears in two stories of Borges: (1). In *La busca de Averroes (Obras Completas I, 585)* he writes: “*Farach preguntó si la ciudad quedaba a muchas leguas de la muralla que Iskandar Zul Qarnain (Alejandro Bicornes de Macedonia) levantó para detener a Gog y a Magog*” (Faraj asked whether the city lays many leagues from that wall erected by Iskandar dhual-Qarnayn (Alexander of Macedonia) to halt the advance of Gog and Magog. Hurley’s transl.). (2) It also appears in *El Aleph* (“The Aleph”, *Obras Completas I, 627*): “*Doy mis razones. Hacia 1867 el capitán Burton ejerció en el Brasil el cargo de cónsul británico; en julio de 1942 Pedro Henríquez Ureña descubrió en una biblioteca de Santos un manuscrito suyo que versaba sobre el espejo que atribuye el Oriente a Iskandar Zú alKarnayn, o Alejandro Bicornes de Macedonia. En su cristal se reflejaba el universo entero. Burton menciona otros artificios congéneres...* (Around 1867, Captain Burton held the post of British Consul in

⁸⁸ Cited in Ross 2004. (Italics mine).

⁸⁹ MacNaghten 1839–1842.

⁹⁰ Lane 1840: III, 145, fn. 51: “The next story in my original is that of the *King and his Son and the Damsel and the Seven Wezeers* which ends with part of the six hundred and sixth night. It is similar in its framework to the *Bakhtyár Námeḥ ...*”. The *Seven Wezeers* story-cycle was published by Clouston 1884.

Brazil. In July, 1942, Pedro Henríquez Ureña came across a manuscript of Burton's, in a library at Santos, dealing with the mirror which the Oriental world attributes to Iskander Zu al-Karnayn, or Alexander Bicornis of Macedonia. In its crystal the whole world was reflected. Burton mentions other similar devices Transl. by di Giovanni)."

In Burton's *1001 Nights* (V, 464th night) a brief story⁹¹ *Iskandar Zu al-Karnayn and a Certain Tribe of Poor Folk* and two footnotes are devoted to Iskandar. Note No. 460 instructs to pronounce the name as "Zool Karnayn", an advice Borges followed. Note No. 461 refers to Iskander's Qurānic fame⁹²: "At the end of Persia ... he came upon two huge mountains on the same line, behind which dwelt a host of abominable pygmies, two spans high [1 span = 0.2286 m], with curious eyes, ears which served as mattresses and coverlets, huge, fanged mouths, lions' claws and hairy hind quarters. They ate men, destroyed everything, copulated in public and had swarms of children. These were Yájúj and Májúj (Gog and Magog) descendants of Japhet. Sikander built against them a famous wall with stones cemented and riveted by iron and copper"⁹³.

The main motif of the *1001 Night* story, Dū l-Qarnayn's visit to the "tribe of poor folk" and his discussion with the sage, is not mentioned in the Qurān, though it is included in the *Tafsīr* of aṭ-Ṭabarī. Yamanaka convincingly⁹⁴ proved that the story had been adopted to the *1001 Nights* from al-Ġazālī's (1058–1111) *Counsel for Kings* (*Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*)⁹⁵.

The story *El Aleph* (*Obras Completas* I, 627) also mentions the motif "*el espejo que atribuye el Oriente a Iskandar Zú alKarnayn*" (the mirror which the Oriental world attributes to Iskander Dū l-Qarnayn) in which "the whole world was reflected". The mirror motif is very common in Burton's *1001 Nights*⁹⁶, but there is no reference there, nor in Lane, or Asín Palacios, to "Iskander's Mirror". Iskander's mirror is mentioned, among others, in the *Romance of Alexander the Great* (Persian: *Eskandar-nāmeḥ*) by Nizāmī Ganjavī (1141–1209), and in the *matnawī*

⁹¹ Yamanaka 2006:93 notes "Lane compresses most of these shorter stories into the notes to the chapters in small print and omits to mention even the title of minor tales such as that of Alexander."

⁹² Q. 18:83–101.

⁹³ Q 18:93–96. Asín Palacios 1919 (English transl. Asín Palacios 1926:367), a book known to Borges, also contained this legend. "Finally, the region of darkness recurs in all the versions of the tale of Dulcarnain, who in Arabic legend is identified with Alexander the Great; and the monument appears as a wall built, according to the Koran, by Dulcarnain as a protection against the peoples of Gog and Magog, who, according to a version of the Islamic legend—like the pygmies of the Christian legend, whose stature was only an ell [about 1.14 meters]—measured but a hand and a half in height".

⁹⁴ Yamanaka 2006.

⁹⁵ Al-Ghazali 1971.

⁹⁶ See the section "Burton's Mirrors" in Ling 2012.

“*Ā’īna-yi Sikandarī*” of Amīr Ḥusrau Dihlavī⁹⁷ (1253–1325), a heroic poem narrating the deeds of Alexander the Great⁹⁸. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland, keeps a page of an illuminated manuscript of Dihlavī’s *Ā’īna-yi Sikandarī*, where the miniature illustration shows how “Alexander the Great (Iskandar) invents a mirror that, when mounted on a tower, shows everything within a radius of sixty farhangs and thus enables Alexander’s men to attack marauding pirates”⁹⁹.

2.9 *The Mirror of Ink*

Borges narrates the strange tale of *el más cruel de los gobernadores del Sudán, Yakub el Doliente* (“the crudest of the governors of the Sudan, Yakub the Afflicted”) with *el hechicero Abderrahmen El Masmudí* (“the sorcerer Abderramen al Masmudí”) in *El espejo de tinta (Obras Completas I, 342; “The Mirror of Ink”, transl. by Hurley)*. In the first paragraph (*Obras Completas I, 343*) he attributes the story to Burton, *Sin embargo, el capitán Richard Francis Burton conversó con ese hechicero el año 1853 y cuenta que le refirió lo que copio* (“Capt. Richard Francis Burton spoke with this sorcerer in 1853, and he reported that the sorcerer told him this story that I shall reproduce here”), and at the end (*Obras Completas I, 345*), refers to Burton’s book as his source: “From Richard Francis Burton, *The Lake Regions of Equatorial Africa*”¹⁰⁰. Di Giovanni (2011:202) claims that the story is “pure, original Borges ... [it had] nothing whatever to do with Burton”. According to Almond (2004: note 1), “this is one of his [Borges’s] fictitious references”. According to Di Giovanni (2011:202) “The mirror of ink, the device itself, comes from Edward William Lane’s *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, one of Borges’s favourite books. What is seen in the pool of ink, however, is Borges’s invention, not Lane’s.” Ling (2012) agrees with di Giovanni, that one of Borges’s sources was Lane (1860) but tries to find motifs of the story in Burton’s *1001 Nights* and even in the very book cited by Borges¹⁰¹. I want to point out two more

⁹⁷ See Schimmel 1985b.

⁹⁸ Fishburn and Psiche 1990: entry *Iskander*; Nizāmī: Canto XXIII Sikandar’s mirror making.

⁹⁹ See <https://art.thewalters.org/detail/18740/alexander-the-great-invents-a-mirror-2/>. Illustrated in the Walters manuscript W. 623. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland.

¹⁰⁰ The correct title is: Burton, Richard F. 1860. *The Lake Regions of Central Africa: A Picture of Exploration*. New York: Harper and Brothers. This was not a deliberate hoax to mislead the reader. Borges also referred to the book under the same name in another writing: Borges, *Traductores (Obras Completas I, 401)*.

¹⁰¹ Burton 1860.

books¹⁰² by Burton where the sorcery is described similarly as in Lane (and in Borges). Compare the following four descriptions:

(a) Borges *El espejo de tinta* (*Obras Completas* I, 343): *Recorté la hoja en seis tiras, escribí talismanes e invocaciones en las cinco primeras, y en la restante las siguientes palabras que están en el glorioso Qurán: 'Hemos retirado tu velo, y la visión de tus ojos es penetrante'. Luego dibujé un cuadro mágico en la mano derecha de Yakub y le pedí que la ahuecara y vertí un círculo de tinta en el medio.* (“I cut the paper into six strips and wrote charms and invocations upon the first five; on the last I inscribed the following words from the glorious Qur’an: ‘We have removed from thee thy veil, and thy sight is piercing.’ Then I drew a magic square in Yakub’s right palm and asked him to hold it out to me; into it, I poured a circle of ink”, transl. by Hurley).

(b) Lane (1860: 274) “In the palm of this boy’s right hand, the magician drew, with a pen, a certain diagram¹⁰³, in the centre of which he poured a little ink. Into this ink, he desired the boy steadfastly to look. He then burned some incense, and several bits of paper inscribed with charms; and at the same time called for various objects to appear in the ink. The boy declared that he saw all these objects”.

(c) Burton (1851:180 and note) “The most curious and complicated charms are those used in recovery of stolen property, and the detection of thieves. Strange to say, the Egyptian practice of seeing figures shifting over the ink poured into a boy’s hand is, with certain small differences, known in Sindh. The *Vinyane-waró*, or finder of lost goods, rubs some dark substance upon the thumb-nail of a youth not arrived at the age of puberty, or directs him to look at a black spot painted on the bottom of a bright brass pot. ... The branch of magic set apart for the recovery of stolen goods, is called *Vinyano* or *Gahno*.”

(d) Burton (1855–1856:95) “The modern Sindians¹⁰⁴ know the art by the name of *Gahno* or *Vinyano*; there, as in southern Persia, ink is rubbed upon the seer’s thumbnail. The people of northern Africa are considered skilful in this science, and I have a Maghrebi magic formula for inking the hand of a “boy, a black slave girl, a virgin, or a pregnant woman,” which differs materially from those generally known. The modern Egyptians call it *Zarb el Mandal*, and there is scarcely a man in Cairo who does not know something about it. In selecting subjects to hold the

¹⁰² A third place, Burton’s 1876 letter to *The Times* (London) was very likely not known to Borges.

¹⁰³ I thank Tamás Iványi and Dóra Zsom for kindly discussing with me this magic square.

¹⁰⁴ Sharīf (1972: Ch. 28 (Magical Methods)) describes this divination among Indian Muslims, and refers to both Lane and Burton among his sources: “On *Lekanomancy*, or magic by staring into a vessel filled with some fluid, see Halliday Greek Divination, 145ff; Lane M.E. [*Modern Egyptians*: 1860] i. 337ff.; Burton *Pilgrimage* (1873) i. 387f.; ERE [*Enc. of Religion and Ethics* (Ed. by J. Hastings) 10 vols. Edinburgh 1908–1918], iv. 351 ff., 807, 817.”

ink, they observe the right hand, and reject all who have not what is called in palmistry the *linea media naturalis* straight and deeply cut.”¹⁰⁵

By Lane’s request, the wizard wrote down on a piece of paper¹⁰⁶ the spoken part of the spell which contained a call for the help of Jinns, and the Quranic invocation (Q. 50:22): *fa-kašafnā ’anka ġiṭā’aka fa-bašaruka l-yawma ḥadīdun*. Borges repeats the same supplication in his story¹⁰⁷, which proves that his source had been Lane.

2.10 *The Rose of Hindustan (Indostán)*

The “rose of Hindustan” is mentioned in *La busca de Averroes (Obras Completas I, 583)*: *Farach no se dejó sobornar; observó que el docto Ibn Qutaiba describe una excelente variedad de la rosa perpetua, que se da en los jardines del Indostán y cuyos pétalos, de un rojo encarnado, presentan caracteres que dicen: No hay otro dios que el Dios, Muhámmad es el Apóstol de Dios* (“Faraj was not to be suborned by flattery; he observed that the learned ibn Qutaybah had a superb variety of the perpetual rose which grows in the gardens of Hindustan, and whose petals, of a deep crimson red, exhibit characters reading ‘There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet’”, transl. by Hurley).

Here we are only concerned with the source of this motif, and the anachronistic use by Averroes of the word *Indostán* (Hindustan) for India.¹⁰⁸

Borges came across Ibn Qutayba’s mysterious rose in Lane¹⁰⁹, who wrote “The rose is even a subject of miracles. It is related by Ibn-Ḳuteybeh, that there grows in India a kind of rose upon the leaves of which is inscribed, ‘There is no deity but God’”. Note that Lane used the word “India”, same way as in the original text of Ibn Qutayba (828–889) and in its translation, where we find *ra’aytu bi-bilād al-hindī šağaran lahu wardun aḥmaru maktūbun fīhi bi-bayāḍin Muḥammadun rasūlu Allāhi* (“I saw in India trees with red leaves on which was written in white: ‘Muhammad is the Prophet of God’, etc.”)¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁵ On the same page (Burton 1855–1856:95) Burton acknowledges the priority of Lane: “In the first account of the magician, by Mr. Lane, we have a fair and dispassionate recital of certain magical, mystical, or mesmeric phenomena”.

¹⁰⁶ Reproduced in Lane 1860: 276.

¹⁰⁷ “*escribí ... las siguientes palabras que están en el glorioso Qurán: ‘Hemos retirado tu velo, y la visión de tus ojos es penetrante’* (“I inscribed ... the following words from the glorious Qur’an: ‘We have removed from thee thy veil, and thy sight is piercing.’”).

¹⁰⁸ The symbolic meaning of the “perpetual rose” and the role of rose in Borges’s oeuvre are discussed in Balderston 1996; Abadi 1999; López-Baralt 2011–2013.

¹⁰⁹ Lane 1860:188, note 21 to ch. 3. Lane’s sources were “*Halbet el-Kumeyt*, [of an-Nawāğī, 1386–1455] ch. xvii.; and [his personal copy of a MS of] Es-Suyooṭee’s [as-Suyūṭī, c. 1445–1505], account of the flowers of Egypt, in his history of that country.”

¹¹⁰ Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn al-aḥbār* 121 (transl. Ḥuseini 1950:36).

The *Hobson-Jobson* of Yule and Burnell defines *Hindustan* (from Pers. *Hindūstān* = Persian word *Hindū* cognate with Skrt. *Sindhu* + the suffix “-stān”) as “the country of the Hindūs, India”¹¹¹. In the age of Ibn Qutayba the word *Hindūstān* was not used in Arabic. Lane (1863) documents only *hind* and *hindī* from the large Arabic dictionaries: al-Ġawharī’s (d. 1002 or 1008) *Šiḥāḥ*, Ibn Sīda’s *Muḥkam*, Ibn Manzūr’s (1233–1311) *Lisān al-‘arab* and al-Fīrūzābādī’s (1329–1414) *al-Qāmus al-muḥīṭ*.

In al-Bīrūnī’s (973–1050) *India*¹¹², the country is always called Hind. The five apocalyptic *ḥadīṭs* on *ġazwat al- hind* in Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād’s (d. 843) *Fitan* also refer to India as Hind.¹¹³

The real Averroes never used the word Hindustan. It is one of Borges’s idiosyncrasies, who consistently referred to India with this word, as in *El acercamiento a Almotásim (Obras Completas I, 415; “The approach to Al-Mu’tasim”): la peregrinación que comprende la vasta geografía del Indostán* (“a pilgrimage that covers the vast geography of India”, di Giovanni’s transl.); in *El hombre en el umbral (Obras Completas I: 612; “The man on the threshold”): Bioy Casares trajo de Londres un curioso puñal de hoja triangular y empuñadora en forma de H; nuestro amigo Christopher Dewey, del Consejo Británico, dijo que tales armas eran de uso común en el Indostaní* (“Bioy Casares brought back a curious knife from London, with a triangular blade and an H-shaped hilt; our friend Christopher Dewey, of the British Council, said that sort of weapon was in common use in Hindustan.” Hurley’s transl.). There are further examples in Borges’s essay *Formas de una leyenda*¹¹⁴: “todas las religiones del Indostán y en particular el budismo, enseñan que el mundo es ilusorio”; “peregrinó a los reinos del Indostán en busca de libros sagrados”; “la cronología del Indostán es incierta”.

2.11 The two faces of the Qurān

Al-Ġāhiz (776–868) is mentioned in two works of Borges, in the chapter *El Zaratán (Obras en Colaboración 711; “The Zaratán”)* of the *Seres Imaginarios*, and the *Busca (Obras Completas I, 584)*. Zaratán (from Ar. *saraṭān* = crab¹¹⁵) was the giant fish (or crab, or turtle) in the legends of ancient mariners, that looked like an island. Borges found the name and description of this giant animal and references to the *Book of Animals (Kitāb al-ḥayawān)* by al-Ġāhiz, in one of his frequent sources, Asín Palacios¹¹⁶.

¹¹¹ Yule and Burnell 1903: entry *Hindustan*; Wink 1991.

¹¹² al-Bīrūnī 1910.

¹¹³ As e.g. the second one, *ḥadīṭ* No. 1236, Nu‘aym b. Ḥammād, *Fitan* I, 409.

¹¹⁴ In: *En Otras inquisiciones*, Borges, *Obras Completas* II, 118–121; see further examples in App. #40. On Borges’s India image see Betancourt Santos 2010.

¹¹⁵ See Lane 1863:1348.

¹¹⁶ Asín Palacios 1919, 1926, 1930.

“Hay un cuento que ha recorrido la geografía y las épocas: el de los navegantes que desembarcan en una isla sin nombre, que luego se abisma y los pierde, porque está viva. Figura esta invención en el primer viaje de Simbad ... Paradójicamente, una de las primeras redacciones de la leyenda la refiere para negarla. Consta en el Libro de los Animales de Al-Yahiz, zoólogo musulmán de principios del siglo IX. Miguel Asín Palacios la ha vertido al español con estas palabras: en cuanto al zaratán, jamás vi a nadie que asegurase haberlo visto con sus ojos. “(There is one story that has ranged the whole of geography and all epochs - the tale of mariners who land on an unknown island which then sinks into the sea and drowns them because it is a living creature. This invention is found in the first voyage of Sindbad ... Paradoxically, one of the first versions of the legend tells the story to show that it is not true. This is the Book of Animals by Al-Yahiz, a nineteenth-century Muslim zoologist. Miguel Asín Palacios translated it into Spanish with these words: “As for Zaratan, I have never met anyone who says he saw it with his eyes.”)¹¹⁷.

Lane and Burton both included *Sindbad's First Voyage* in their respective translations of the *1001 Nights* but Lane does not mention the name of the animal, and Burton¹¹⁸ refers to al-Qazwīnī, rather than to al-Ġāhiz: “Al-Kazwīnī’s famous treatise on the ‘Wonders of the World’ (*Ajāib al-Makhlúkāt*) tells the same tale of the ‘*Sulahfah*’ tortoise, the *colossochelys*, for which see *Night [note] dl*.”

Borges’s other reference to al-Ġāhiz is found in the *Busca (Obras Completas I, 584)*, where we read “*Otro habló de Cháhiz de Basra, que dijo que el Qurán es una sustancia que puede tomar la forma de un hombre o la de un animal, opinión que parece convenir con la de quienes le atribuyen dos caras.*” (Another spoke of Al-Jahiz of Basra, who had stated that the Qur’an is a substance that can take the form of man or animal – an opinion which appears to agree with that of the people who attribute to the Qur’an two faces).

The “two faces of the Qurān” are the *Qurān* and the *Muṣḥaf*, its oral and written versions¹¹⁹, and al-Ġāhiz was possibly the first who discussed this in his *Kitāb ḥuġaġ an-nubuwwa*¹²⁰. The “human and animal faces of the Qurān” motif stems from Wherry’s¹²¹ popular *Comprehensive Commentary on The Quran*¹²² where we find: “*Opinion of al Jahidh*, chief of a sect bearing his name, [regarding] touching the Quran, is too remarkable to be omitted. ... he used to say it was a body, which might sometimes be turned into a man, and sometimes into a beast, which seems to

¹¹⁷ Borges, *Obras Completas I*, 584.

¹¹⁸ Burton 1900–1901: VI, fn. 8.

¹¹⁹ Stroumsa 1985; Neuwirth 2010.

¹²⁰ al-Ġāhiz, *Rasā’il III*, 221–281.

¹²¹ Rev. Elwood Morris Wherry (1843–1927), an American Presbyterian missionary to India between 1868–1923.

¹²² Wherry 1882: I, Section 3, fn. 1 to pp. 112–113.

agree with the notion of those who assert the Quran to have two faces, one of a man, the other of a beast, thereby, I conceive, intimating the double interpretation it will admit of, according to the letter or the spirit.”

3 Discussion and concluding remarks

“*Su infelicidad, su infelicidad creadora y feliz, es lo que nos debe importar.*”¹²³ Paraphrasing a well-known literary anecdote¹²⁴, we can say that Borges had a ‘love affair’ with the Arabic language. An unsatisfied love, Borges could not read Arabic, he only started in the last months of his life to take Arabic lessons from an Egyptian teacher in Geneva¹²⁵. While sometimes he admitted his ignorance, “The fact that I do not know Greek and Arabic helped me to read, say, the *Odyssey* or the *Thousand and One Nights*, in many different versions”¹²⁶, other times he played the role of the expert Arabist, derived etymologies, clarified the meaning of words and personal names, and even compared translations with the Arabic *Urtext* and criticized their fidelity. Some of his observations are surprisingly sharp, as e.g. when he discovers that, in Islamic culture, the *qutbs* (pl. *aqṭāb*) are analogous to the *Lamed Wufniks* (*Tzadikim*, Righteous Ones) of the Jewish tradition¹²⁷. He invented an “Arabic” saying “nobody can read the *1001 Nights* to the end”¹²⁸, explained that “*Zahir, en árabe, quiere decir notorio, visible*”¹²⁹, and “*Almotásim ... etimológicamente quiere decir El buscador de Amparo*”¹³⁰, and (in his *Foreword* to Paul Valéry’s book) referred to the Arabic name of the rooster, “*nombre árabe de gallo es padre del alba*”¹³¹. In *Las Kenningar* (*Obras Completas* I, 380) he gave

¹²³ “It is his infidelity, his happy and creative infidelity, that must matter to us”. *Traductores* (Borges, *Obras Completas* I, 410; transl. by Esther Allen).

¹²⁴ In the afterword to his book “*Lolita*”, Nabokov wrote “After Olympia Press, in Paris, published the book, an American critic suggested that *Lolita* was the record of my love affair with the romantic novel. The substitution “English language” for “romantic novel” would make this elegant formula more correct.” (Nabokov 1991).

¹²⁵ Kodama 1986, 2004; D’Amico 1993; Kansoussi 1999; Ormsby 1999; Tornielli 2001; Jullien 2007.

¹²⁶ Quoted in Sorrentino 1974:71: “*El hecho de desconocer el griego y el árabe me permitía leer, digamos, la Odisea y Las mil y una noches, en muchas versiones distintas*”.

¹²⁷ *Los Lamed Wufniks*, in Borges, *Obras en Colaboración*: 655; Cowan 1976: 773.

¹²⁸ See App. #8. “*Los árabes dicen que nadie puede leer Las 1001 Noches hasta el fin*”: *Metáforas de las Mil y Una Noches* (poema), *Obras Completas* III, 170; *Las Mil y Una Noches*, *Obras Completas* III, 237.

¹²⁹ See App. #96, *El Zahir*, Borges, *Obras Completas* I, 593.

¹³⁰ See App. # 55, *El acarcamiento a Almotásim*, Borges, *Obras Completas* I, 417.

¹³¹ See App. # 72. Paul Valéry: *El cementerio marino (prólogo)*, Borges, *Obras Completas* IV, 151, footnote.

further examples, taken from the Bohemian Philosopher Fritz Mauthner¹³², for such “*figuras padre-hijas*” in Arabic (“*Mauthner observa que los árabes suelen derivar sus figuras de la relación padre-hijo*”), such as *padre del merodeo = el lobo, hijo del arco = la flecha, padre de los pasos = una montaña*. In an analysis of the French translation by Mardrus of the *1001 Nights* (*Obras Completas* I, 406–410), he blames the translator for his Gallicisms, noting that “*charming meanderings* is not Arabic, it is very distinctly French” (*desvíos encantadores no es árabe, es notoriamente francés*), and compared “three German versions by Weil, Henning, and Littmann, and the two English versions by Lane and Sir Richard Burton” with that of Mardrus (without studying the original Arabic!) to conclude that Mardrus’s text is not faithful to the “Arabic editions” (*las ediciones árabes*). His final conclusion, “It is his [Mardrus’s] infidelity, his happy and creative infidelity, that must matter to us” (*Su infelididad, su infelididad creadora y feliz, es lo que nos debe importar*¹³³) reads as an apology for his own relation to Arabic culture.

As Ian Almond wrote in his seminal paper, “His [Borges’s] East is, to a large extent, the East of a host of European travellers and scholars—Sykes, Müller, Burton, and Renan—a mixture of the exotic and the esoteric, the scholarly and the fantastic, the orthodox and the arcane” (Almond 2004:438). However, I claim, his Orientalism is the “contemporary alternative to Orientalism” what Edward Said dreamt of when he asserted: “Perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective. But then one would have to rethink the whole complex problem of knowledge and power” (Said 1994:24).

Borges’s wife, María Kodama, who took the blind writer to visit the Egyptian pyramids, recalls how happy Borges had been picking up fistfuls of sand and then sifting the grains through his fingers a few steps away. When asked what he is doing, Borges replied, “I am rearranging the Sahara.”¹³⁴

I collected around hundred grains of sand, one hundred and one Arabic motifs that Borges picked up from the infinite *Book of Sand* (*El Libro del Arena*) of Arabic culture¹³⁵, and then, for our enjoyment, he generously scattered them across the four volumes of his *Obras Completas*. In this study I selected and discussed twenty-three representative examples from these motifs and tried to find their most

¹³² On Borges’s reception of Mauthner’s *Sprachkritik* see Dapía 1993; and its review by Patricia Hart 1997.

¹³³ See also App. ## 24 and 50; *Los traductores de las 1001 Noches*, Borges, *Obras Completas* I, 406–410. (Transl. by Esther Allen).

¹³⁴ “*A unos trescientos o cuatrocientos metros de la Pirámide me incliné, tomé un puñado de arena, lo dejé caer silenciosamente un poco más lejos y dije en voz baja: Estoy modificando el Sahara...*” (Borges, *Obras Completas* III, 443; Borges and Kodama 1986).

¹³⁵ See their list in the Appendix. “*El Libro del Arena*” (Borges, *Obras Completas* III, 68–71) is his short story (1975).

likely sources (Chapter 2, summarized in Table 3). For most motifs, I succeeded. I do hope other *aficionados* of Borges and Arabic would continue this work and trace back the remaining motifs to their origin.

This study confirmed the conclusions of Borges research that, “Borges’s intellectual understanding of Islam had come from his own wide reading of Western Orientalists (Burton, Renan, Palacios, Margaret Smith)”¹³⁶, “su propia experiencia de entrar en el orientalismo es a través de textos de Renan, Palacios y Lane.”¹³⁷ I found no example for the direct influence of Borges’s friend and master, the Arabist Rafael Cansinos Asséns, on Borges’s Arabic motifs. This question also calls for further studies.

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¹³⁶ Almond 2004:446. Margaret Smith provided Borges with Persian motifs, see Martínez 2012.

¹³⁷ See the section “La influencia de Oriente en Borges” in Ackerley 2006.

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APPENDIX: List of Arabic Motifs in Borges's Texts¹³⁸

1. A Bao A Ku: *A Bao A Ku*, OCCol: 571(1967)
2. Abubeker Abentofail, novella de: *Historia de la eternidad*, OCI: 356(1936)
3. Abdurrahmán poema de: *Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 587(1949)
4. Abenjacán el Bojari: *Abenjacán el Bojari, muerto en su laberinto*, OCI: 600(1949)
5. Abensida, Mohkam de: *Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 583(1949)
6. Abulcásim el Hadramí, diván de: *El poeta declara su nombradía* (poema), OCII: 228(1960)
7. La aniquilación de la rosa: *El tintorero enmascarado Hákim de Merv*, OCI: 324(1935)
8. Los árabes dicen que nadie puede leer Las 1001 Noches hasta el fin: *Metáforas de las Mil y Una Noches* (poema), CIII: 170(1977); *Las Mil y Una Noches*, OCIII: 237(1980)
9. El ave Roc: *El ave Roc*, OCCol: 589(1967)
10. Averroes (su nombre): *Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 582(1949)
11. Bahamut: *Bahamut*, OCCol: 590(1967)
12. Barlach: *Urkunden zur Geschichte der Zahirsage: El Zahir*, OCI: 592(1949)
13. El barquero cobre: *Talos*, OCCol: 699(1967)
14. El Burak: *Historia de la eternidad*, OCI: 361 nota (1936); *El Burak*, OC Col: 599(1967)
15. Burak de la pureza de la intención: *El Burak*, OC Col: 599(1967)
16. El Burak, según Burton: *El Burak*, OC Col: 599(1967)
17. Burak volcó una jarra de agua: *El Burak*, OC Col: 599(1967)
18. El Caballo del Mar: *El Caballo del Mar*, OCCol: 600(1967)
19. Camellos en el Elcorán: *El escritor argentino y la tradición*, OCI: 270(1932)
20. Cháhiz de Basra (Al-Yahiz): *Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 584(1949); *El Zaratán*, OCCol: 711(1967)
21. Las claras monedas del hechicero: *El Zahir*, OCI: 591(1949)

¹³⁸ References mentioned in the Appendix: Borges, *Obras Completas* ("OC"); Borges, *Obras en Colaboración* ("OCCol"); Borges and Giovanni, *Autobiografía*; Borges, *Craft*.

22. Confabuladores nocturni: *Las Mil y Una Noches*, OCIII: 236(1980)
23. Doble de Mahoma: *De doble de Mahoma*, OCI: 345(1935)
24. Las ediciones árabes [de 1001 Noches]: *Los traductores de las 1001 Noches*, OCI: 408(1936)
25. Elefante de Harun al-Raschid: *Las Mil y Una Noches*, OCIII: 233(1980)
26. Espéjo de Solimán: *La cámara de las estatuas*, OCI: 339(1935)
27. Espejo de Tárik Benzeyad: *El Aleph*, OCI: 627(1949)
28. El espejo de tinta: *El espejo de tinta*, OCI: 342(1935)
29. Falak: *Bahamut*, OCCol: 590(1967)
30. Fastitocalon: *Fastitocalon*, OCCol: 628(1967)
31. El gato del rabino: *El Golem* (poema), OCII: 264(1958)
32. La gente del libro: *El libro*, OCIV: 168(1978),
33. Hákim de Merv: *El tintorero enmascarado Hákim de Merv*, OCI: 324(1935); *Los traductores de Las 1001 Noches*, OCI: 402 nota 1(1936)
34. Hindú: *Las Mil y Una Noches*, OCIII: 236, 238(1980); *El Budismo*, OCIII: 244, 245(1980); *La poesía*, OCIII: 266(1980)
35. Historia de los jalifas por Baladhuri: *El tintorero enmascarado Hákim de Merv*, OCI: 24(1935)
36. El historiador arábigo El Isaqui: *Historia de las dos que soñaron*, OCI: 340(1935)
37. Los historiadores sarracenos: *El arte narrativo y la magia*, OCI: 231(1932)
38. El ídolo de oro de Mahoma: *Parábola de Cervantes y de Quijote* (poema), OCII: 177(1955); *No siquiera soy polvo* (poema), OCIII:176(1977)
39. India: *Formas de una leyenda*, OCII: 119(1952); *Las Mil y Una Noches*, OCIII: 234, 236, 237(1980); *El Budismo*, OCIII: 244(1980)
40. Indostán: *La supersticiosa ética del lector*, OCI: 204(1932); *Los traductores de las 1001 Noches*, OCI: 412(1936); *El acarcamiento a Almotásim*, OCI: 415 n.1(1936); *Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 583(1949); *El hombre en el umbral*, OCI: 612(1949); *De alguien a nadie*, OCII: 116(1950); *Formas de una leyenda*, OCII: 118, 119, 120, 121(1952); *Ariosto y los árabes* (poema), OCII: 215(1960); *El libro de arena*, OCIII: 69(1975); *Las Mil y Una Noches*, OCIII: 237(1980); *El Simurgh y el águila*, OCIII: 365(1982); *El Tiempo*, OCIV: 204(1978); *Los Nagas*, OCCol: 671(1967); *Los Pigmeos*, OCCol: 671(1967); *Los tigres de Annam*, OCCol: 701(1967); *El Unicornio*, OCCol: 703(1967)
41. Infinidad de Las 1001 Noches: *Los traductores de las 1001 Noches*, OCI: 412(1936); *Cuando la ficción vive en la ficción*, OCIV: 434(1939); *El 885jardin de senderos que se bifurcan*, OCI: 477(1944); *Magias parciales del Quijote*, OCII: 46-47(1952); *Metáforas de las Mil y Una Noches* (poema), OCIII: 170(1977); *Las Mil y Una Noches*, OCIII: 234, 237(1980); *A poet's creed*, Craft: 101-102(1967-68)
42. Karkadán (rinoceronte): *El Unicornio*, OCCol: 703(1967)
43. Los Kutb (*quṭb*): *Los Lamed Wufniks*, OCCol: 655(1967)

44. Kuyata: *Kuyata*, OCCol: 654(1967)
45. La madre del Libro: *Una vindicación e la Cábala*, OCI: 209, 211(1932); *El escritor argentino y la tradición*, OCI: 270(1932); *La Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 584(1949); *Del culto de los libros*, OCII: 92, 93(1951); *La cabala*, OCIII: 268(1980); *La larga busca* (poema), OCIII:486(1985); *El libro*, OCIV: 167(1978); *H.G. Wells contra Mahoma*, OCIV: 409(1938); *The riddle of poetry*, Craft: 9(1967-1968)
46. La mano del Señor: *El Burak*, OCCol: 599(1967)
47. La mano derecha del proféta Hákim: *El tintorero enmascarado Hákim de Merv*, OCI: 328(1935)
48. Manual del gigante o Libro de la precisión y la revision: *El tintorero enmascarado Hákim de Merv*, OCI: 324(1935)
49. El manuscrito [de la *Rosa oscura*] encontrado en 1899: *El tintorero enmascarado Hákim de Merv*, OCI: 324(1935)
50. Mardrus, el original de las diez lineas de: *Los traductores de las 1001 Noches*, OCI: 408(1936)
51. Un místico murciano: *El Burak*, OCCol: 599(1967)
52. Al-Moqanna (El Velado): *El Zahir*, OCI: 594 nota (1949)
53. Almotanabí, poema de: *Los traductores de Las 1001 Noches*, OCI: 403(1935)
54. Almotásim, divan de: *Cuarteta* (poema), OCII: 226(1960)
55. Almotásim, etimológicamente: *El acarcamiento a Almotásim*, QCI: 417 nota 1(1936)
56. Las 1001 noches: *El tintorero enmascarado Hákim de Merv*, OCI: 325(1935); *Historia de la eternidad*, OCI: 358 nota (1936); *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*, OCI: 439(1941); *El Sur*, OCI: 524, 526,528(1944); *Ariosto y los árabes* (poema), OCII: 216(1960); *Otro poema de los dones* (poema), OCII: 314(1964); *El informe de Brodie*, OCII: 449(1970); *On his blindness* (poema), OCII: 475(1972); *El libro de arena*, OCIII: 70(1975); *Metáforas de las Mil y Una Noches* (poema), OCIII: 169(1977); *La Divina Commedia*, OCIII: 211, 218(1980); *Las mil y una noches*, OCIII: 232- 241(1980); *Nueve ensayos Dantescos* (Prólogo), OCIII: 341(1982); *Las hojas del ciprés* (poema), OCIII: 481(1985); *Miguel de Cervantes: Novelas ejemplares*, OCIV: 45(1946); *Lewis Carroll: Obras Completas*, OCIV: 102(1976); *A Bao A Ku*, OCCol: 571(1967); *El caballo del mar*; OCCol: 600 (1967); *El unicornio*, OCCol: 703(1967); *Autobiografía*, Autobiografía: 57, 9(1970); *The Telling of the Tale*, Craft: 46, 51(1967-68); *Thought and Poetry*, Craft: 82(1967-68); *A poet's creed*, Craft: 98, 101(1967-68)
57. 1001, noche 3: *Miguel de Cervantes Novelas Ejemplares*, OCIV: 45(1946)
58. 1001, noche 146: *Arte de injuriar*, OCI: 419(1936)
59. 1001, noche 172: *La cámara de las estatuas*, OCI: 339(1935)
60. 1001, noche 272: *El Aleph*, OCI: 627(1949)
61. 1001, noche 351: *Historia de las dos que soñaron*, OCI: 340(1935)

62. 1001, noche 496: *Bahamut*, QCCol: 590(1967)
63. 1001, noches 566- 578: *Los traductores de las 1001 Noches*, OCI: 407(1936)
64. 1001, noche 743: *Las kenningar*, QCI: 379(1933)
65. 1001, primer volumen de Lane (1839): *El Nesnás*, OCCol: 672(1967)
66. 1001, versión de Burton: *A Bao A Ku*, QCCol: 571(1967)
67. 1001, el décimo tomo de Burton: *El acarcamiento a Almotásim*, QCI: 418 nota 1(1936)
68. Name of the 1001 book: *The metaphor*, Craft: 36(1967-68); *Word-music and translation*, Craft: 67(1967-68)
69. Narradores de cuentos en El Cairo: *Las Mil y una Noches*, OCIII: 237(1980)
70. El Nesnás: *El Nesnás*, OCCol: 672(1967)
71. La Noche de las Noches: *Los traductores de las 1001 Noches*, OCI: 405(1936); *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*, OCI: 439(1944)
72. Nombre árabe de gallo: *Paul Valéry: El cementerio marino* (prólogo), OCIV: 151 nota (1932)
73. No se había derramado una sola gota: *El Burak*, OCCol: 599(1967)
74. Padre-hijo figuras: *Las kenningar*, QCI: 380(1933)
75. El término “perro”: *Arte de injuriar*, OCI: 419(1936)
76. Un poema de Moore: *El tintorero enmascarado Hákim de Merv*, OCI: 324(1935)
77. Qurán 2. 261: *El milagro secreto*, OCI: 508(1944)
78. Qurán 17. 1: *El Burak*, OCCol 599, 1967
79. Qurán 29. 40: *Abenjacán el Bojari, muerto en su laberinto*, OCI: 600(1949)
80. Qurán 71. 23: *El Zahir*, OCI: 594 nota (1949)
81. Qurán [22. 5] “[el hombre sea generado] por unas gotas de agua vil”: *Las kenningar*, OCI: 380(1933)
82. Quran, dos caras de: *La Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 584(1949)
83. Religiones anteislámicas: *El Aleph*, OCI: 627(1949)
84. La rosa perpetua: *Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 583(1949)
85. Sale, el discurso preliminar del Alkoran de: *El verdugo piedoso*, OCIII: 357(1982)
86. Simbad , el primer viaje: *El Zaratán*, OCCol: 711(1967)
87. Simbad, el segundo viaje: *El unicornio*, OCCol: 703(1967)
88. Simbad, las etapas de Simbad: *Parabola de Cervantes y de Quijote*, OCII: 177(1960)
89. Templo sagrado de la Meca: *El Burak*, OCCol: 599(1967)
90. Toro y buffalo: *Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 588(1949)
91. Tresores en una pirámide: *La cámara de las estatuas*, OCI: 339(1935); *El suicida* (poema), OCIII: 86(1975)
92. Vendedores [de flores] en El Cairo: *Las kenningar*, QCI: 380(1933)
93. Yaqub Almansur: *Cuarteta* (poema), OCII: 226(1960)
94. Yaúq (idolo en la edad de la Ignorancia): *El Zahir*, OCI: 594 nota (1949)

95. Los Yinn: *Los Yinn*, OCCol: 709(1967)
 96. Zahir en árabe: *El Zahir*, OCI: 593(1949)
 97. Zaratán: *El Zaratán*, OCCol: 711(1967)
 98. Zarathustra según Al-Tabari: *El Asno de Tres patas*, OCCol: 586(1967)
 99. Zéjel (*zağal*) *El poeta declara su nombradía* (poema), OCII: 228(1960)
 100. Zuhair, mohalaca de: *Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 586(1949)
 101. Zul Qarnain :*Busca de Averroes*, OCI: 585(1949); *El Aleph*, OCI: 627(1949)

TABLES

Table 1. Narremes in the *Burāq*

Narreme	Spanish	English (transl. by de Giovanni)
Q. 17:1	<i>El primer versículo del capítulo diecisiete del Alcorán consta de estas palabras:</i> <i>“Alabado sea El que hizo viajar, durante la noche, a su siervo desde el templo sagrado hasta el templo que está más lejos, cuyo recinto hemos bendecido, para hacerle ver nuestros signos”</i>	In George Sale's translation (1734), the opening verse of Chapter XVII of the Koran consists of these words: “Praise be unto him, who transported his servant by night, from the sacred temple of Mecca to his farther temple of Jerusalem, the circuit of which we have blessed, that we might show him some of our signs....”
The Prophet's Night Journey	<i>Los comentadores declaran que el alabado es Dios, que el siervo es Mahoma, que el templo sagrado es el de La Meca, que el templo distante es el de Jerusalén y que, desde Jerusalén, el Profeta fue transportado al séptimo cielo.</i>	Commentators say that the one praised is God, that his servant is Muḥammad, that the sacred temple is that of Mecca, that the distant temple is that of Jerusalem, and that from Jerusalem the Prophet was transported to the seventh heaven.

al-Burāq's description by Burton	<p><i>En las versiones más antiguas de la leyenda, Mahoma es guiado por un hombre o un ángel; en las de fecha posterior, se recurre a una cabalgadura celeste, mayor que un asno y menor que una mula. Esta cabalgadura es Burak, cuyo nombre quiere decir "resplandeciente".</i></p> <p><i>Según Burton, los musulmanes de la India suelen representarlo con cara de hombre, orejas de asno, cuerpo de caballo y alas y cola de pavo real.</i></p>	<p>In the oldest versions of the legend, Muhammad is guided by a man or an angel; in those of a later date he is furnished with a heavenly steed, larger than an ass and smaller than a mule. This steed is Burak, whose name means "shining."</p> <p>According to Richard Burton, the translator of <i>The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night</i>, Moslems in India usually picture Burak with a man's face, the ears of an ass, a horse's body, and the wings and tail of peacock.</p>
al-Burāq tipped a jug of water	<p><i>Una de las tradiciones islámicas refiere que, al dejar la tierra, volcó una jarra llena de agua.</i></p>	<p>One of the Islamic legends tells that Burak, on leaving the ground, tipped a jar of water</p>
Cold hand of God	<p><i>El Profeta fue arrebatado hasta el séptimo cielo y conversó en cada uno con los patriarcas y ángeles que lo habitaban y atravesó la Unidad y sintió un frío que le heló el corazón cuando la mano del Señor le dio una palmada en el hombro.</i></p>	<p>The Prophet was taken up to the heavens with the patriarchs and angels living there, and he crossed the Unity and felt a coldness that chilled his heart when the Lord laid a hand on his shoulder.</p>
No drop spilled from the jug	<p><i>El tiempo de los hombres no es commensurable con el de Dios; a su regreso, el Profeta levantó la jarra de la que aún no se había derramado una sola gota</i></p>	<p>Man's time is not commensurate with God's time; on his return the Prophet raised the jar, out of which not a single drop had yet been spilled.</p>
The mystic from Murcia	<p><i>Miguel Asín Palacios habla de un místico murciano del siglo XIII, que en una alegoría que se titula Libro del nocturno viaje hacia la Majestad del más Generoso ha simbolizado en Burak el amor divino. En otro texto se refiere al BURAK "Burak de la pureza de la intención".</i></p>	<p>M. Asín Palacios, the twentieth-century Spanish Orientalist, speaks of a mystic from Murcia of the 1200s who, in an allegory entitled the <i>Book of the Night Journey to the Majesty of the All-Generous</i>, has seen in Burak, a symbol of divine love. In another text he speaks of the 'Burak of the pureness of heart'.</p>

Table 2. Inclusion of the Tale "King's Son and the Ifrit's Mistress" in subsequent text editions and translations of the 1001 Nights¹³⁹

Arabic text or Translation	Language	Editor/Publisher/Translator	Year	Contained or not
Text	Arabic	aš-Širwānī (Calcutta)	1814	NOT
Text	Arabic	Habicht (Breslau)	1825–43	YES
Text	Arabic	Būlāq (Cairo)	1835	YES
Text	Arabic	MacNaghten (Calcutta)	1839–42	YES
Translation	French	Galland	1704–17	NOT
Translation	French	Perceval	1806	NOT
Translation	French	Gautier	1842	NOT
Translation	English	Scott	1800–11	YES
Translation	German	Hammer-Purgstall	1825	NOT
Translation	German	Zinserling	1823	NOT
Translation	English	Lamb	1826	NOT
Translation	French	Trébutien	1828	NOT
Translation	English	Lane	1840	Only its title and explanatory note
Translation	German	Habicht	1825–43	YES
Translation	German	Weil	1839–42	NOT
Translation	English	Torrens	1838	NOT
Translation	English	Payne	1882–84	YES
Translation	English	Burton	1900–1	YES

¹³⁹ After Kirby 1901b. Contributions to the Bibliography of the Thousand and one Nights, and Their Imitations, with a Table Showing the Contents of the principal editions and Translations of the Nights. Appendix II of Burton, *1001 Nights* X, 465–531.

Table 3. Most likely sources of the discussed Arabic motifs in Borges's works

Motif	Occurrence in Borges	Most likely source(s) used by Borges
Averroes's <i>nasab</i>	<i>Busca</i>	Renan Averroès
Bahamut	<i>Seres Imaginarios</i>	Burton <i>1001 Nights</i> V, 324–325; Lane <i>Arabian Society</i>
Bull and buffalo	<i>Busca</i>	Burton <i>1001 Nights</i> X, 130–131
Burāq's description	<i>Seres Imaginarios</i>	Burton <i>1001 Nights</i> fn. 435 to the 457th Night
Burāq tipped a jug of water	<i>Seres Imaginarios</i>	Playful addition of Borges
Camels in the Koran	<i>Escritor argentino</i>	Gibbon <i>Decline and Fall</i> V, Ch.: Part I
Cold hand of God	<i>Seres Imaginarios</i>	Gibbon <i>Decline and Fall</i> ; Asín Palacios <i>La escatologia Musulmana</i> 28
Copyist's error	<i>El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan</i>	Burton <i>1001 Nights</i> VI, 199, Night 602, "King's Son and the Ifrit's Mistress"; Lane <i>Arabian Nights</i> III, 145 fn. 51
Falak	<i>Seres Imaginarios</i>	Burton <i>1001 Nights</i> V, 325.
Hindustan (for "India")	<i>Busca</i> ; <i>El acercamiento a Almotásim</i> ; <i>El hombre en el umbral</i> ; <i>Formas de una leyenda</i>	Borges's idiosyncrasy
Iskander Du al-Karnayan	<i>Busca</i> ; <i>El Aleph</i>	Burton <i>1001 Nights</i> V, 464th night
Iskander's mirror	<i>El Aleph</i>	Source unknown
al-Ġāhiz of Basra	<i>Busca</i> ; "El Zaratán" (<i>Seres Imaginarios</i>)	Asín Palacios <i>La escatologia Musulmana</i> ; Asín Palacios, <i>Islam and the Divine Comedy</i> : 406
Kuğata	<i>Seres Imaginarios</i>	Lane <i>Arabian Society</i> 107
Mirror of Ink	<i>El espejo de tinta</i>	Lane, <i>Manners and Customs</i> 274; Burton, <i>Sindh</i> 180 and note; Burton, <i>Pilgrimage</i> 95

Mystic from Murcia	<i>Seres Imaginarios</i>	Asín Palacios <i>La escatología musulmana</i> 62, main text and fn. 1; Asín Palacios <i>Islam cristianizado</i>
No drop spilled from the jug	<i>Seres Imaginarios</i>	Burton <i>1001 Nights</i> , Suppl. Nights VI, 505-537
Perpetual Rose	<i>Busca</i>	Lane <i>Arabian Society</i> (note 21 to Ch. 3)
Poem of 'Abd ar-Raḥmān	<i>Busca</i>	Source unknown
Poem of al-Mutanabbī	<i>Los traductores de las 1001 noches</i>	Burton, <i>Pilgrimage</i> II, Ch. 25
Poem of Zuhayr	<i>Busca</i>	Lyall, <i>Ancient Arabian Poetry</i>
Two faces of the Koran	<i>Busca</i>	Wherry, <i>Commentary on the Quran</i> I, 112-113
Zaratān	<i>Seres Imaginarios</i>	Asín Palacios <i>La escatología Musulmana</i> ; Asín Palacios, <i>Islam and the Divine Comedy</i> : 406.

