THE "COLLECTIONS" OF THE MECCAN ARABIC LECTIONARY

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Introduction

At the end of his important study on the collection of the Qurʾān, Harald Motzki concludes:

> [However,] Muslim accounts are much earlier and thus much nearer to the time of the alleged events than hitherto assumed in Western scholarship. Admittedly, these accounts contain some details which seem to be implausible or, to put it more cautiously, await explanation, but the Western views which claim to replace them by more plausible and historically more reliable accounts are obviously far from what they make themselves out to be.[1]

We agree with him on the antiquity of most of the reports on the collection of the Qurʾān, but not when he says "some details", because there are many contradictions between some of them.[2] Above all, he does not seem to pay attention to the role of the religious, theological, ideological and political "imaginaire"[3] of a human group which constructs its foundations by means of narratives that are not only "factual", but partly adapted to a theological/ideological and political thought *in statu nascendi*, in accordance with which the "events" have to be.

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[1] Harald Motzki, "The collection of the Qurʾān: A reconsideration of Western views in light of recent methodological developments", *Der Islam*, vol. 78, 2001, 31.

[2] We reject the ludicrous story of Khuzayma or Ibn Khuzayma al-Anṣārī, or Khuzayma b. Thābit al-Anṣārī, or somebody of the Anṣār, from whom two "forgotten" verses were allegedly accepted and placed at the end of *al-Tawba*, because Muḥammad is said to have called him Dhū l-Shahādatayn! See *Geschichte des Qorāns (GdQ)*, 1961, vol. II, 14, n. 3; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Faṣl li-l-waṣl al-mudraj fī l-naql*, 2 vols., Maḥmūd Naṣṣār (ed.), Beirut, 1424/2003, vol. I, 483–7, with many references 486, n. 2, 490–2, 293–4, in several versions; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 6 vols., M. al-Zuhrī al-Ghamrāwī (ed.), Cairo, 1313/1895, vol. V, 188/*Musnad*, 20 vols., A. M. Shākir *et al.* (eds.), Cairo, 1416/1995, vol. XVI, 47, no. 21536.

[3] See the interesting case-study by Patrick Franke, *Begegnung mit Khidr: Quellenstudien zum Imaginären im traditionnellen Islam*, Beirut & Stuttgart, 2000 (reviewed by Claude Gilliot, in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, vol. 90, 2006, 355–6).

Elsewhere, we have attempted to show the ambiguity of the verb *jamaʿa* (to memorize, to know by heart, to collect),[4] or of *taʾlīf/allafa* (to compose, to write down, to assemble the verses in the Sūras, to collect),[5] and we believe that this ambiguity was not accidental but intended to cloud the issue! In another study[6] we have also made a distinction betweeen the "reconstruction of the Qurʾān after the fact (*en aval*)",[7] i.e. based on the so-called ʿUthmanic codex as seen in the project *corpus coranicum*[8] of Gotthelf Bergsträßer (1886–1933) and Otto Pretzl (1893–1941), but also of Arthur Jeffery (1892–1959), and the "reconstruction of the Qurʾān before the fact (*en amont*)",[9] i.e. by researching "textual" elements "borrowed" from previous scriptures or religious traditions.[10] Nowadays, some scholars prefer to speak of "intertextuality", but this notion is rarely well defined, at least in Qurʾānic studies!

In the present study we shall not be concerned with the establishment of the so-called ʿUthmanic codex, but with "the Qurʾān before the Qurʾān", of whose "history" the Qurʾān itself contains elements or allusions, and which is also present in the Islamic exegetical tradition

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[4] Claude Gilliot, "Collecte ou mémorisation du Coran: Essai d'analyse d'un vocabulaire ambigu", in: Rüdiger Lohlker (ed.), *Ḥadīṯstudien: Festschrift für Prof. Dr. Tilman Nagel*, Hamburg, 2009, 77–132. We thank Harald Motzki for his valuable remarks on a first version of this paper at the 8th Colloquium *From Jahiliyya to Islam*, Jerusalem, July 2–7, 2000.

[5] Claude Gilliot, "Les traditions sur la composition ou coordination du Coran (*taʾlīf al-Qurʾān*)", in: Claude Gilliot & Tilman Nagel (eds.), *Das Prophetenḥadīṯ: Dimensionen einer islamischen Literaturgattung*, Göttingen, 2005.

[6] Claude Gilliot, "Une reconstruction critique du Coran ou comment en finir avec les merveilles de la lampe d'Aladin?", in: M. Kropp (ed.), *Results of contemporary research on the Qurʾān: The question of a historico-critical text*, Beirut & Würzburg, 2007.

[7] Ibid., 34, 35–55.

[8] For the new *Corpus coranicum* project in Berlin (Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften and Freie Universität Berlin), see Michael Marx, "'The Koran according to Agfa': Gotthelf Bergsträßers Archiv der Koranhandschriften", *Trajekte (Zeitschrift des Zentrums für Literatur- und Kulturforschung, Berlin)*, vol. 19, 2009.

[9] Gilliot, "Reconstruction", 34, 55–102, 102–4.

[10] See the *status quaestionis* by Gilliot, "Rétrospectives et perspectives: De quelques sources possibles du Coran mecquois, I, Les sources du Coran et les emprunts aux traditions religieuses antérieures dans la recherche (XIX^{e} et début du XX^{e} siècles)", to be published in *Mélanges Emilio Platti*, 2010, which deals in particular with studies written in German, from Abraham Geiger (1810–1874), etc., to Tor Andrae (1885–1947) and Wilhelm Rudolph (1891–1987), etc. The second part of this study: "Rétrospectives et perspectives: De quelques sources possibles du Coran mecquois, II, Le Coran, production littéraire de l'antiquité tardive", will be published in *Mélanges à la mémoire d'Alfred-Louis de Prémare* (*Revue des mondes musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 2010).

and historiography.[11] We shall concentrate on the beginning of Muḥammad's preaching, that is the Meccan Qurʾān.

The Qurʾān about its "Prehistory"

With prehistory we do not mean here the Qurʾānic words, passages or themes borrowed from Judaism, Christianity, Jewish-Christianity, Manicheism, gnosticism, etc.,[12] but those words, expressions or passages that seem to hint at a "text" or an oral "source" on which the Qurʾān could have been dependent.

We shall examine here what Günter Lüling[13] has called "The Islamic scholarly terminology for the different layers of the Qurʾān text". Without necessarily accepting his general thesis on the Qurʾān originating in pre-Islamic Arabic Christian hymns, and in particular his argument that the adversaries of Muḥammad must have been Hellenistic Christians,[14] we believe that the Orientalists before Jan Van Reeth were wrong not to take his ideas about "the Islamic scholarly terminology for the different layers of the Qurʾān text"[15] into consideration, as we shall see below. Another stimulating point of departure for the present study has been the thesis of Ch. Luxenberg, according to whom:

> If *Koran*, however, really means *lectionary*, then one can assume that the Koran intended itself first of all to be understood as nothing more than a liturgical book with selected texts from the scriptures (the Old and New

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[11] We have dealt more thoroughly with these issues in "Rétrospectives et perspectives, I, II".

[12] See Gilliot, "Rétrospectives, I".

[13] Günter Lüling, *Über den Ur-Qurʾān: Ansätze zur Rekonstruktion vorislamischer christlicher Strophenlieder im Qurʾān*, Erlangen 1974 (review by Maxime Rodinson, *Der Islam*, vol. 54, 1977, 321–5)/2nd ed., *Über den Urkoran*…, 1993)/English translation and revised ed., *A challenge to Islam for reformation: The rediscovery and reliable reconstruction of a comprehensive pre-Islamic Christian hymnal hidden in the Koran under earliest Islamic reinterpretations*, Delhi, 2003.

[14] Id., *Die Wiederentdeckung des Propheten Muḥammad: Eine Kritik am "christlichen Abendland"*, Erlangen, 1981 (review by Claude Gilliot, "Deux études sur le Coran", *Arabica*, vol. 30, 1983, 16–37); cf. against this idea Jan M. F. Van Reeth, "Le Coran et les scribes", in: C. Cannuyer (ed.), *Les scribes et la transmission du savoir (XLII^e Journées Armand Abel-Aristide Théodoridès, Université de Liège, 19–20 mars 2004)*, Bruxelles, 2006, 73.

[15] Lüling, *Challenge*, 12–13, 69, 111 (*muḥkam* vs. *mutashābih*, and *mufaṣṣal*)/*Ur-Qurʾān*, 5, 62–63, 206–7, 209 (*muḥkam* vs. *mutashābih*, (*mufaṣṣal*, ibid. and 111, 427)/*Ur-Koran*, same pagination (in both German editions less developed than in *Challenge*).

> Testament) and not at all as a substitute for the Scriptures themselves, i.e. an independent *Scripture*.[16]

It should be clear to the reader that it is not necessary to follow either Lüling (pre-Islamic Arabic Christian hymns), or Luxenberg (entire passages of the Meccan Qurʾān being mere palimpsests of Syriac primitive text) in their systematic, sometimes probably too automatic ways of proceeding, if we consider that a part of their point of departure and some of their ideas have some *fundamentum in re*, or rather a certain basis in the Qurʾānic text itself, in the Islamic tradition, and in the cultural environment in which the Qurʾān was born. Speaking of "cultural environment" means that we shall concentrate here on the "Meccan Qurʾān".

This "Lectionary" is in Arabic, Commenting a non-Arabic "Lectionary"?

We shall begin with Q. 1: 103 (*Naḥl*): "And We know very well that they say: 'Only a mortal is teaching him'. The speech (tongue) of him at whom they hint is barbarous; and this is speech (tongue) Arabic, manifest (*lisānu l-ladhī yulḥidūna ilayhi aʿjamiyyun wa-hādhā lisānun ʿarabiyyun mubīn*)" (adapted from Arberry's translation). *Lisān* is rather to be translated in both cases by "tongue" than by "speech" (in Arberry's translation).

Most of the ancient Muslim scholars consider this Sūra to be Meccan (al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, ʿIkrima, etc.),[17] with some Medinan interpolations. Ibn ʿAbbās, for instance, believed that verses 126–29 were revealed between Mecca and Medina when Muḥammad returned

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[16] Christoph Luxenberg, *Die Syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache*, Berlin, 2000, 79/2nd ed., 2004, 111/*The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: A contribution to the decoding of the language of the Koran*, Berlin, 2007, 104. Cf. the three positive review articles by Rainer Nabielek, "Weintrauben statt Jungfrauen: Zu einer neuen Lesart des Korans", *Informationsprojekt Naher und Mittlerer Osten* (Berlin), (Herbst/Winter 2000), 66–72; Claude Gilliot, "Langue et Coran: Une lecture syro-araméenne du Coran", *Arabica*, vol. 50, 2003, 381–9; Jan M. F. Van Reeth, "Le vignoble du paradis et le chemin qui y mène: La thèse de C. Luxenberg et sources du Coran", *Arabica*, vol. 53, 2006, 511–24; and the following negative reviews: François de Blois, *Journal of Qurʾānic studies,* vol. 5, 2003, 92–97; Simon Hopkins, *Jerusalem studies in Arabic and Islam*, vol. 28, 2003, 377–80.

[17] Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr = al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 20 vols., A. ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm al-Bardūnī *et al.* (eds.), Cairo, 1952–1967, vol. X, 65.

from Uḥud,[18] and that verses 95–97 were Medinan.[19] Some of them said that this Sūra is Medinan from the beginning to verse 42. The opposite view is reported from Qatāda b. Diʿāma: it is Meccan from the beginning to verse 42, but the rest is Medinan.[20] For the Muʿtazilī Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm it is entirely Medinan.[21] As for the chronological order, it is the 70th Sūra in the codex attributed to Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq,[22] which was adopted by the "Cairo edition" of the Qurʾān. The order in the chronological classifications proposed by the Orientalists is as follows:[23] Muir (88th, first Medinan period);[24] Nöldeke (73th with some Medinan interpolations);[25] Grimme (83th, last Meccan period, save verses 110–124 or 110–128, Medinan);[26] Hirschfeld (Meccan of the fifth type: descriptive revelations, verse 1–114, *leg.* 113; 114–128,

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[18] Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib al-Qaysī (d. 437/1045), *al-Hidāya ilā bulūgh al-nihāya* [*Tafsīr Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib*], 13 vols., ed. under the direction of al-Shāhid al-Būshīkhī, Sharjah, 1429/2008, vol. VI, 3943; Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, vol. X, 201. Father Ludovico Marracci, o.m.d. (i.e. Congregatio clericorum regulorum Matris Dei, 1612–1700), who did an excellent work in his edition, translation and annotation of the Qurʾān, already knew through the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* that some people considered the three last verses of this Sūra to be Medinan; *Alcorani Textus Universus* […], Patavii, ex typographia Seminarii, 1698, 399, *Notae*, col. 1.

[19] Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr*, vol. X, 65.

[20] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr = Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 32 vols., M. Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, ʿA. I. al-Ṣāwī *et al.* (eds.), Cairo, 1933–1962, vol. XIX, 117; Régis Blachère, *Le Coran, traduction selon un essai de reclassement, des sourates*, 3 vols., Paris, 1947–1951, vol. II, 196; Blachère's formulation is ambiguous, because by writing "v. Qatāda chez Rāzī", he seems to suggest that Qatāda had the opposite position to the one given here. He writes also that this Sūra is considered to be Meccan up to verse 29 (*leg.* 39), with a reference to Abū l-Qāsim Hibat Allāh b. Salāma al-Baghdādī (d. 410/1109), *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*, in the margin of al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, Cairo, 1316/1895, 207, but Ibn Salāma writes *nazalat min awwalihā ilā raʾs arbaʿīn āya bi-Makka*, which means up to verse 39, and the rest is Medinan.

[21] Rāzī, ibid.

[22] Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the history of the text of the Qurʾān*, Leiden, 330–1.

[23] William Montgomery Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qurʾān*, Edinburgh, 1970, 207. Montgomery Watt himself numbered the chronological classifications of Muir, Nöldeke and Grimme, in front of the "Egyptian", i.e. the Cairo edition; on 110 he lists Q. 16 in the third Meccan period; see id., *Companion to the Qurʾān*, London, 1967, 130: "seems to be partly Meccan, partly Medinan".

[24] Sir William Muir, *The Coran: Its composition and teaching and the testimony it bears to the Holy Scriptures*, Londres, 1878[3], reprint Kessinger Publishing's, n.d. [ca. 2000], 44. When necessary the numeration of the verses in the Flügel edition of the Qurʾān has been replaced by that of the Cairo edition.

[25] Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, vol. I, 145–9: third Meccan period with some (possible) Medinan interpolations.

[26] Hubert Grimme, *Mohammed*, I, *Das Leben nach den Quellen*, II, *Einleitung in den Koran. System der koranischen Theologie*, Münster, 1892–1895, vol. II, 26.8; 27.14.

Medinan);[27] Blachère (75th, verse 110, interpolation).[28] We may conclude that according to the great majority of Muslim and Orientalist scholars the verse quoted above is to be assigned to the last Meccan period.

This verse requires some remarks.

i. First of all, it is within a group of verses (106–3) that constitute "a passage packed with self-referentiality".[29]

The word *lisān* is used in numerous other instances with the unmetaphorical sense of the vocal organ "tongue". Some of these uses do not refer to the Arabic language, but rather, to the task of prophetic communication[30] (Q. 28: 34; 19: 97; 44: 58; this last example has to be connected with Q. 54: 17 and 22: 40). In Q. 28: 34, where Moses says: "And loose a knot from my tongue" and also in Q. 28: 34: "My brother Aaron is more eloquent than me in speech (*afṣaḥu minnī lisānan*)", we find a reversal of Ex. 4:14–15: "Is not Aaron my brother? I know that he can speak well […]. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth with thy mouth, and with his mouth".

The expression *lisān ʿarabī* occurs three times in the Qurʾān (16: 103; 26: 195; 46: 12), all during the Meccan period, and always with the metaphorical sense of speech. As the Qurʾān is a highly self-referential text, it is "somewhat self-conscious with respect to its language".[31] It says not only that it is in Arabic or in Arabic tongue/speech/language (*lisān*), but it also seems to declare that it is in a plain/clear (*mubīn*) tongue/speech/language: "We have revealed it, a lecture [or lectionary] (*qurʾānan*) in Arabic" (Q. 12: 2; 20: 113); "We revealed it, a decisive utterance (*ḥukman*) in Arabic" (Q. 13: 37); "a lecture [or lectionary] in Arabic" (Q. 39: 28; 41: 3; 42: 7; 43: 3); "this is a confirming Scripture in the Arabic language (*lisānan ʿarabiyyan*)" (Q. 46: 12); "in plain

[27] Hartwig Hirschfeld, *New researches on the composition and exegesis of the Qoran*, London, 1902, 144.

[28] Blachère, *Le Coran*, vol. II, xv.

[29] Stefan Wild, "An Arabic recitation: The meta-linguistics of Qurʾānic recitation", in: Stefan Wild (ed.), *Self-referentiality in the Qurʾān*, Wiesbaden, 2006, 148.

[30] John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*: *Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation*, Oxford, 1977, 99; cf. Neal Robinson, *Discovering the Qurʾān: A contemporary approach to a veiled text*, London, 1996, 158–9.

[31] Herbjørn Jenssen, "Arabic language", Jane Dammen McAuliffe *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, 6 vols., Leiden, 2001–2006, vol. I, 132a.5–6.

Arabic speech (*bi-lisānin ʿarabiyyin mubīn*)" (Q. 16: 103; 26: 195).[32] The reasons why the Qurʾān insists on the quality and value of its own language seem to be polemical and apologetic. The argument for its Arabic character, first of all, should be put in relation with Q. 14: 4: "We never sent a messenger save with the language/tongue of his folk (*bi-lisāni qawmihi*), that he might make [the message] clear for them". This declaration, by stressing the language of this messenger (Muḥammad) and this people (the Arabs), can be understood as a declaration of the ethnocentric nature of this prophetic mission, but also as divine proof of its universality,[33] challenging another sacred language, Hebrew,[34] perhaps also Syriac, or more generally, Aramaic.[35]

But in stressing that it is in Arabic, the Qurʾān also answers accusations that were addressed to Muḥammad during the Meccan period: "And We know very well that they say: 'Only a mortal is teaching him'. The speech (tongue) of him at whom they hint is barbarous; and this is speech (tongue) Arabic, manifest (*lisānu l-ladhī yulḥidūna ilayhi aʿjamiyyun wa-hādhā lisānun ʿarabiyyun mubīn*)" (Q. 16: 103). The commentators explain *yulḥidūna* (Kūfan reading *yalḥadūna*)[36] as "to incline to, to become fond of", which is the meaning of the Arabic *laḥada*.[37] This is the reason why, following most of the commentators, Marracci translated: *Lingua ad quam inclinant* (*idest, qua loquntur homines illi, a quibus dicunt Mahumetum doceri*) *est barbara*.[38] George Sale (1697?–1736), who is often very dependent on Marracci, has: "The tongue of the person unto whom they incline is a foreign tongue".[39]

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[32] Claude Gilliot & Pierre Larcher, "Language and style of the Qurʾān", Jane McAuliffe *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, Leiden, 2001–2006, vol. III, 113a.

[33] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 52–53, 98.

[34] Ibid., 81.

[35] Claude Gilliot, "Informants", Jane McAuliffe *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, Leiden, 2001–2006, vol. II, 513; id., "Zur Herkunft der Gewährsmänner des Propheten", in: Hans-Heinz Ohlig & Gerd-Rüdiger Puin (eds.), *Die dunklen Anfänge: Neue Forschungen zur Entstehung und frühen Geschichte des Islam*, Berlin, 2005, 151–6, 167–9.

[36] Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 30 vols., A. Saʿīd ʿAlī, Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā *et al.* (eds.), Cairo, 1954, vol. XIV, 180; A. Mukhtār ʿUmar and ʿAbd al-ʿĀl Sālim Makram, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt al-qurʾāniyya*, 6 vols., 3rd ed., Cairo, 1997, vol. III, 34–35; ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Khaṭīb, *Muʿjam al-qirāʾāt al-qurʾāniyya*, 11 vols., Damascus, 1422/2002, vol. IV, 689–90.

[37] Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 6 vols., ʿAbdallāh Maḥmūd Shiḥāta (ed.), Cairo, 1980–1989, vol. II, 487; Farrāʾ, *Maʿānī l-Qurʾān*, 3 vols., M. ʿAlī al-Najjār *et al.* (eds.), Cairo, 1955–1973, vol. II, 113.

[38] Marracci, *Alcorani Textus Universus*, 398.

[39] George Sale, *The Koran; commonly called the Alcoran of Mohammed* […], new ed., London, n.d. (*ca*. 1840), 207.

But this interpretation of *yulḥidūna* by "to incline to" does not seem to be convincing. Indeed, it has been shown elsewhere that the linguistic and social context to which this verse refers could be a Syriac one, the Arabic root *l-ḥ-d* being probably an adaptation of the Syriac *lʿez* (to speak enigmatically, to allude to), like the Arabic root *l-gh-z*.[40]

The contrast *aʿjamī*, often understood as barbarous or outlandish, with *ʿarabī*/Arabic, becomes very significant, if we consider Q. 41: 44 (*Fuṣṣilat*): "And if We had appointed it a lecture in a foreign tongue (*qurʾānan aʿjamiyyan*), they would assuredly have said: 'If only its verses were expounded (*fuṣṣilat*) [so that we might understand]? What! A foreign tongue and an Arab (*aʿjamī wa-ʿarabī*)'". *Fuṣṣilat* was understood by an ancient exegete, al-Suddī (d. 128/745), as "clarified" (*buyyinat*).[41] The exegete al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1035), not quoting al-Suddī, writes: "whose verses are clear; they reach us so that we understand it. We are a people of Arabs, we have nothing to do with non-Arabs (*ʿajamiyya*)".[42] Long before him Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) commented: "Why are they [i.e. the verses] not expounded clearly in Arabic in order that we understand it [i.e. the Qurʾān] and we know what Muḥammad says? (*hallā buyyinat bi-l-ʿarabiyyati ḥattā nafqaha wa-naʿlama mā yaqūlu Muḥammad*)".[43]

According to these passages of the self-referential Meccan Qurʾān, it seems that it is a kind of commentary or exegesis in Arabic of a non-Arabic book, or of non-Arabic collections of "texts" or *logia*, or of portions of a non-Arabic lectionary. The Qurʾān does not deny that Muḥammad could have information from informants, but it insists on the fact that what Muḥammad delivers is in a language that Arabs can understand.

ii. Our second remark has to do with the expression "in plain/clear Arabic speech/tongue (*bi-lisānin ʿarabiyyin mubīn*)" (Q. 16: 103; 26: 195), which still needs more reflection, because the translation given here is—like most translations of the phrase—misleading from the

[40] Luxenberg, *Syro-aramäische Lesart*, 87–91/2004², 116–119/*Syro-Aramaic reading*, 112–115; cf. Claude Gilliot, "Le Coran, fruit d'un travail collectif?", in: Daniel De Smet, G. de Callataÿ & J. M. F. Van Reeth (eds.), Al-Kitāb*: La sacralité du texte dans le monde de l'Islam*, Louvain, 2004, 190–1.

[41] Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. XXIV, 127.

[42] Thaʿlabī, [*Tafsīr*] *al-Kashf wa l-bayān ʿan tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 10 vols., Abū M. ʿAlī ʿĀshūr (ed.), Beirut, 2002 (a bad edition!), vol. VIII, 298.

[43] Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, vol. III, 746.

point of view of morphology, and consequently of semantics. *Mubīn* is the active participle of the causative-factitive *abāna*, which can be understood as "making [things] clear" (so understood by al-Suddī and others, as seen above). Such an understanding of this expression is suggested by Q. 14: 4, which utilises the causative-factitive *bayyana*: "And We never sent a messenger save with the language/tongue of his folk, that he might *make* [the message] *clear* for them (*li-yubayyina lahum*)".

But the adjectival opposition found in Q. 16: 103 between *aʿjamī* on the one hand, and *ʿarabī* and *mubīn*, on the other, was understood by the exegetes as "barbarous", i.e. non-Arabic (*ʿajamī*) and indistinct (*aʿjamī*) in contradistinction to clear/pure Arabic.[44] G. Widengren refers to "Muḥammad's quite conscious effort to create an Arabic holy book, a *Ḳurʾān*, corresponding to the Christian Syriac *Ḳeryānā*".[45] Consequently, according to the theologians, the Qurʾān must be in a "smooth, soft, and plain/distinct speech (*sahl, layyin, wāḍiḥ*)": "In the Qurʾān there is no unusual/obscure (*gharīb*) sound-complex [*ḥarf*, or articulation, as the linguists say nowadays] from the manner of speaking (*lugha*) of Quraysh, save three, because the speech (*kalām*) of Quraysh is smooth, soft, and plain/distinct, and the speech of the [other] Arabs is uncivilised (*waḥshī*), i.e. unusual/obscure".[46] Elsewhere, we have dealt with the alleged superioritiy of the Qurashi manner of speaking and the so-called Qurashi character of the language of the Qurʾān.[47]

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[44] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, 98–99; Pierre Larcher, "Language, concept of", Jane McAuliffe *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, Leiden, 2001–2006, vol. III, 108–9; Gilliot & Larcher, "Language and style", 114–5.

[45] Geo Widengren, *Muhammad, the apostle of God, and his ascension*, Uppsala, 1955, 152.

[46] Abū l-ʿIzz al-Wāsiṭī (d. 521/1127), *al-Irshād fī l-qirāʾāt al-ʿashr*, quoted by Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, chap. 37, *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, 4 vols. in 2, Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (ed.), revised ed., Beirut 1974–1975, vol. II, 124; the three articulations quoted are: Q. 17: 51 (*fa-sa-yunghiḍūna*), 4: 85 (*muqītan*), and 8: 57 (*fa-sharrid bi-him*).

[47] Gilliot & Larcher, "Language and style", 115–121, *et passim*. See the following seminal studies of Pierre Larcher, "Neuf traditions sur la langue coranique rapportées par al-Farrāʾ *et alii*", in: B. Michalak-Pikulska & A. Pikulski (eds.), *Authority, privacy and public order in Islam*, Leuven, 2004; id., "D'Ibn Fāris à al-Farrāʾ. ou un retour aux sources sur la *luġa al-fuṣḥā*", in: *Asiatische Studien. Etudes asiatiques*, vol. 59, 2005; id., "Un texte d'al-Fārābī sur la 'langue arabe' réécrit?", in: Lutz Edzard & Janet Watson (eds), *Grammar as a window onto Arabic humanism: A collection of articles in honour of Michael G. Carter*, Wiesbaden, 2006; id., "Qu'est-ce que l'arabe du Coran? Réflexions d'un linguiste", *Cahiers de linguistique de l'INALCO*, vol. 5, 2003–2005.

The adjective *mubīn* recurs in another later Meccan or early Medinan passage Q. 12: 1–2 (*Yūsuf*) (chronology: 77th for Muir, Nöldeke; 85 for Grimme; 53th for the Cairo edition, save verses 1–3, 7 Medinan):[48] "These are the signs of the manifest [rather: making things clear] book (*tilka āyātu l-kitābi l-mubīn*). We have sent it down as an Arabic lectionary (*innā anzalnāhu qurʾānan ʿarabiyyan*); haply you will understand (*laʿallakum taʿqilūn*)" (adapted from Arberry's translation). Here again *mubīn* means "making things clear" in opposition to a lectionary in a foreign language, (perhaps) explained or commented on by this Arabic lectionary in Arabic! For this verse, Ch. Luxenberg proposes the following translation according to the Syro-Aramaic understanding (but it could be also understood in this way without having recourse to Syriac):

> These are the (*scriptural*) signs (i.e. the *letters* = the *written copy, script*) of the <u>*elucidated*</u> Scripture. We have sent them down as an Arabic <u>*lectionary*</u> (= Koran) (or as an Arabic <u>*reading*</u>) <u>*so that*</u> you <u>*may understand*</u> (it).[49]

The idea that the Qurʾān "translates", or rather transposes (French *transposer*; German: *übertragen*) into Arabic or comments passages from a foreign lectionary seems to be more clearly expressed in other passages.

What do fuṣṣilat *and* mufaṣṣal *"really" mean?*

Q. 41: 44 and fuṣṣilat

To some extent, the Meccan Arabic lectionary makes a distinction between a "lectionary in a foreign language" (*qurʾānan aʿjamiyyan*), and the commentary, explanation, translation or transposition (German: *Übertragung*), i.e. *al-mufaṣṣal*, which is delivered by Muḥammad. The Qurʾān itself seems to suggest that some of its passages are commentaries of a lectionary recited or read in a foreign language (Syriac or Aramaic? this will be examined below): "If We had made it a barbarous lectionary (*qurʾānan aʿjamiyyan*), they would have said: 'Why are its signs not distinguished (*law lā fuṣṣilat āyātuhu*)? What, barbarous

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[48] Montgomery Watt, *Bell's Introduction*, 207; [Sami Awad Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh] *Le Coran, texte arabe et traduction française par ordre chronologique selon l'Azhar avec renvoi aux variantes, aux abrogations et aux écrits juifs et chrétiens*, Vevey (Suisse), 2008, 15.

[49] Luxenberg, *Syro-Aramaic reading*, 105–106/*Syro-aramäische Lesart*, 2000[1], 80–81/2004[2], 112 ; confirmed by Van Reeth, "Scribes", 77.

and Arabic? (*aʿjamiyyun wa-ʿarabiyyun*)'. Say: 'To the believers, it is a guidance, and a healing'" (Q. 41: 44).[50]

In this context, *fuṣṣilat* does not mean "to be distinguished or separated", but "rendered clear", i.e. to be explained, *buyyinat*, in the interpretation of al-Suddī, and also the interpretation chosen by Ṭabarī himself;[51] neither one of them, of course, means that Muḥammad was explaining parts of previous non-Arabic Scriptures, which is our own interpretation. In some languages, to "interpret" means both to explain and to translate (French *interpréter, interprète*; German *übertragen* "to translate, to transpose, which is a form of explanation or free translation"; Arabic *tarjama* "to translate", but *turjumān/tarjumān* has the meaning of translator, but also of exegete. Ibn ʿAbbās is said to have been called by his cousin Muḥammad *turjumān/tarjumān al-Qurʾān*. *Tarjama* comes from the Syro-Aramaic *targem* "to interpret, to explain"). In the synagogues, the rabbis used to read *targum*s in Aramaic after reading the Hebrew Torah, which uneducated people could not understand.[52] The verb *faṣṣala* has the meaning of the Syro-Aramaic *prâsh/parresh* (to interpret, to explain), and it is a synonym of *bayyana*.[53]

Fuṣṣilat is understood by the exegetes in contradistinction with *uḥkimat*, in Q. 11: 1 (*Hūd*) "A book whose verses are set clear, and then distinguished from One All-wise, All-aware (*kitābun uḥkimat āyātuhu, thumma fuṣṣilat min ladun ḥakīmin khabīr*)" (translation Arberry), on which J. Horovitz comments: "seine Verse sind fest zusammengefügt und dabei jeder einzelne wohl durchgearbeitet".

ʿĀʾisha on al-mufaṣṣal *and "the Prophet of the end of the world"*

But this understanding of *uḥkimat/muḥkam* vs. *fuṣṣilat/mufaṣṣal*, corresponding to the interpretation of the exegetes does not seem to fit in the context of the Meccan preaching. According to a tradition transmitted by Yūsuf b. Māhak al-Fārisī al-Makkī (d. 103/721, 110, perhaps

[50] Ibid., 77.
[51] Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. XXIV, 90, ad Q. 41: 1–2.
[52] Van Reeth, "Scribes", 76.
[53] Luxenberg, *Syro-aramäische* Lesart, 85/2004², 117/*Syro-Aramaic reading*, 110; see the excellent study of Jaroslav Stetkevych, "Arabic hermeneutical terminology: Paradox and the production of meaning", *Journal of the Near Eastern Society*, vol. 48, 1989, 88–91 on the meaning of *fassara, faṣṣala, faṣl, tabyīn, mubīn*, etc.

even 114!)[54] from ʿĀʾisha (quoted by Tor Andrae,[55] then by Günther Lüling):[56] "The first [revelation] of it which descended was a Sūra of *al-mufaṣṣal* in which Paradise and Hell were mentioned (*innamā nazala awwalu mā nazala minhu sūratun min al-mufaṣṣali fīhā dhikru l-jannati wa-l-nār*)".[57] This tradition poses a problem to the commentator for whom the first revealed Sūra is Sūra 96 (*ʿAlaq/Iqraʾ*), in which there is no mention of Paradise and Hell. This is why they propose to understand *awwalu mā nazala*: "Among the first…", expressing the hypothesis that it could be Q. 74 (*Muddaththir*), in which Paradise and Hell are mentioned at the end, adding that this part of the Sūra was revealed "before the rest of Sūra *Iqraʾ* (96, that is after verses 1–5 or more)"![58]

Already in 1912, Tor Andrae called attention to the fact that the Sūras 96 and 74, with their scenes of prophetic call were not the first Sūras, but that the first revelations according to an old well-established tradition were commentaries of previous Scriptures or traditions.[59]

The great divergences of the exegetes on what *al-mufaṣṣal* could refer to are well known.[60] But the tradition of ʿĀʾisha hints at an interpretation of *al-mufaṣṣal* and *fuṣṣilat* that the exegetes could definitely not have held. This tradition shows first of all that the first preaching of Muḥammad dealt with the Last Judgement and the Hereafter.[61] Paul Casanova has shown that at the beginning of his message (and probably later as well), Muḥammad considered himself to be *nabī*

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[54] Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl*, 23 vols., A. ʿA. ʿAbīd & Ḥ. A. Āghā (eds.), revised by S. Zakkār, Beirut, 1414/1994, vol. XX, 501–3, no. 7744.

[55] Tor Andrae, "Die Legenden von der Berufung Mohammeds", *Le Monde Oriental*, vol. 6, 1912, 18.

[56] Lüling, *Ur-Qurʾān*, 62; 427, n. 56/*Challenge*, 69 and n. 69; Gilliot, "Traditions", 20–21.

[57] Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 46, *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān*, 6, ed. Krehl, vol. III, 395/Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ al-bārī bi-sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 13 vols. + *Muqaddima*, ʿA. ʿA. Bāz (ed.), numbering of the chapters and *aḥādīth* by M. Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī, under the direction of Muḥibb al-Dīn Khaṭīb, Cairo, 1390/1970 (reprint Beirut, n.d.), vol. IX, 38–39, no. 4993/Trans. O. Houdas & W. Marçais, *El-Bokhâri, Les Traditions islamiques*, 4 vols., Paris, 1903–14, vol. III, 526.

[58] Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ*, vol. IX, 40.18–21.

[59] Andrae, "Legenden"; Lüling, *Wiederentdeckung*, 98.

[60] See the excursus in Gilliot, "Collecte", 104–6, with bibliography.

[61] Richard Bell, *The origin of Islam in its Christian environment*, London, 1926, 69–70, on the contrary, writes: "too exclusive attention has of late been paid to his proclamation of the approaching judgement" (69); Bell focuses rather on "the idea of gratitude to God", "the power and bounty of the Creator, in the first predications" (74ff.).

al-malḥama[62] (*rasūl al-malḥama*[63] or *nabī l-malāḥim*),[64] i.e. "the prophet of the end of the world".[65] To these qualifications could be added that of the Gatherer (*al-ḥāshir*), as explained by Jubayr b. Muṭʿim al-Nawfalī (d. 58/677)[66] given to ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān: "Muḥammad was called *al-ḥāshir* 'because he was sent with the Hour, a warner to you (*nadhīrun lakum*) in front of a great torment (*bayna yaday ʿadhābin shadīd*)'".[67] This thesis corresponds to the tradition attributed to ʿĀʾisha.

Many passages of the "first Qurʾān" appear as recitations (*qirāʾa*, coming from Syriac *qəryânâ*). Muḥammad (and/or others?) acts in the way of the Syriac *maqrəyânâ* (the one teaching the *qəryânâ*). His art is the *qəryânâ*, the recitation of collected texts. But Muḥammad is also the *məpashqânâ*, the interpreter, the exegete of the "original book" (*umm al-kitāb*), which is not in Arabic. His role is better defined by the Syriac word *mashləmânūtâ*, the one who "translates and explains",[68] here passages in the Arabic language of the "original book". This activity seems to be expressed in the Qurʾān by the verb *faṣṣala*. In this context *faṣṣala* is the equivalent of the *kitāb mubīn* (Q. 5: 15; 41: 1) or the *qurʾān mubīn* (Q. 15: 1), by which the Arabic lectionary is qualified; it is a book which *translates* and *explains*.[69]

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[62] Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 9 vols., Beirut, 1957–1959, vol. I, 105.2–3, according to Abū Mūsá al-Ashʿarī ; cf. Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ al-asmāʾ bi-mā li-rasūl Allāh min al-abnāʾ wa l-amwāl wa l-ḥafada wa l-matāʿ*, 15 vols., M. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Namīsī (ed.), Beirut, 1420/1999, vol. II, 143 (from Jubayr b. Muṭʿim), 143–4 (from Abū Mūsā); 144: al-Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī and others understand this name as that of a prophet sent to kill the unbelievers; or the one sent with the sword; Ibn al-Athīr (Majd al-Dīn), *al-Nihāya fī gharīb al-ḥadīth*, 5 vols., Ṭ. A. al-Zāwī & M. al-Ṭināḥī (eds.), Cairo, 1963–1966, vol. IV, 240.

[63] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. I, 105.6, according to Mujāhid b. Jabr.

[64] Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ*, vol. I, 5.4; vol. II, 146.5.

[65] Paul Casanova, *Mohammed et la fin du monde: Étude critique sur l'islam primitif*, I–II/1–2, Paris, 1911, 1913, 1924, 46–53; cf. Van Reeth, "Scribes", 71.

[66] Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, vol. III, 332–4, no. 888.

[67] Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ*, vol. II, 144.1–8. It should be added that *al-ḥāshir* is also a collector of spoils. In the latter sense *al-ḥushshār* signifies collectors of the tithes and poll-taxes (*ʿummāl al-ʿushūr wa-l-jizya*); Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, 40 vols., ʿAbd al-Sattār A. Farāj *et al.* (eds.), Kuwayt, 1385–1422/1965–2001, vol. XI, 23b; Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon*, 2 vols., Cambridge, 1984, vol. I, 575a.

[68] Arthur Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis*, Louvain, 1965, p. 10, n. 4; p. 12, n. 2; pp. 64, 100, 102; Van Reeth, "Scribes", 79–80.

[69] Ibid., 80; cf. Lüling, *Challenge*, 13, 69, 111, who already understood *mufaṣṣal* as a commentary or a gloss.

Al-mufaṣṣal *called "the Arabic"*

Again Islamic tradition seems to support this hypothesis (according to which passages of the "first Qurʾān" appear to be commentaries of a previous Lectionary), besides the narrative attributed to ʿĀʾisha quoted above. In a loose (*mursal*) tradition found only, till now, in the Qurʾānic commentary of Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) there is an important remark from one of the transmitters about *al-mufaṣṣal*:[70] Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm[71]/Ibn ʿUlayya[72]/(ʿ*an*) Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ (d. 141/758)[73]/(ʿ*an*) Abū Qilāba (d. 107/725 or 106):[74] The Apostle of God said: "I have been given the seven long [Sūras] in the place of the Torah, the duplicated in the place of the Psalms, the hundreds in the place of the Gospel, and I have been given preference with the discrete[75] [Sūras or book]". Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ made a short, but pertinent, remark on *al-mufaṣṣal*: "They used to call *al-mufaṣṣal*: the Arabic. One of them said: there is no prostration in the Arabic (*kānū yusammūna al-mufaṣṣal: al-ʿarabiyya. Qālā baʿḍuhum: laysa fī l-ʿarabiyyi sajda*)".

This tradition and the short comment by Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ on *al-mufaṣṣal* require some explanation:

(a) The seven long [Sūras], the duplicated, the hundreds, *al-mufaṣṣal* in the traditional Islamic understanding[76]

The seven long [Sūras] (*al-sabʿ al-ṭuwal* or *al-ṭiwāl* in other traditions) are the Sūras 2 (*Baqara*), 3 (*Āl ʿImrān*), 4 (*Nisāʾ*), 5 (*Māʾida*), 6 (*Anʿām*), 7 (*Aʿrāf*), 10 (*Yūnus*).[77] But in other versions, Sūra 10 is replaced by

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[70] Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. I, 100, no. 127.

[71] Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm b. Kathīr al-ʿAbdī al-Qaysī al-Dawraqī al-Baghdādī (d. 252/866); Claude Gilliot, *Exégèse, langue et théologie en islam: L'exégèse coranique de Tabari*, Paris, 1990, 28.

[72] Abū Bishr Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm b. Miqsam al-Asadī al-Baṣrī al-Kūfī (d. 193/809); Gilliot, *Exégèse*, 28.

[73] Abū l-Munāzil [and not Abū l-Manāzil] Khālid b. Mihrān al-Baṣrī al-Hadhdhāʾ; Dhahabī, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 25 vols., Shuʿayb al-Arnaʾūṭ *et al.* (eds.), Beirut, 1981–1988, vol. VI, 190–2; id., *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, 4 vols., ʿA. M. al-Bijāwī (ed.), Cairo, 1963, vol. I, 642–43, no. 2466.

[74] Abū Qilāba ʿAbd Allāh b. Zayd al-Jarmī; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. IV, 468–75.

[75] "Discrete", here in the mathematical, medical, and linguistic meaning of "composed of separate elements".

[76] For more references to sources, above all on *al-mufaṣṣal*, see the excursus in Gilliot, "Collecte", 104–6.

[77] Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, M. M. Shākir & A. M. Shākir (eds.), Cairo, 1954–1969, vol. I, 101–2, according to Saʿīd b. Jubayr; cf. Sakhāwī (ʿAlam al-Dīn), *Jamāl al-qurrāʾ wa-kamāl*

9 (*Barāʾa/Tawba*), because ʿUthman believed that Sūras 8 (*Anfāl*) and 9 (*Barāʾa*) were a single Sūra, because they were not separated by the *basmala* (they are called *al-qarīnatān*).[78]

The hundreds (*al-miʾūn*) are the Sūras whose verses number one hundred, more or less.[79] Alternatively, they are the Sūras which follow the seven long Sūras, and whose verses number one hundred, more or less.[80]

The "duplicated" (or "repeated", *al-mathānī*)[81] Sūras (or verses) are the ones which duplicate the hundreds and follow them: the hundreds have the first (formulations), and the duplicated have repetitions (of the previous). It has been said that the reason they received this name was that they repeat the parables, statements and warnings (*al-amthāl wa-l-khabar wa-l-ʿibar*), etc.[82] These fanciful explanations show only one thing: the exegetes did not know what the Qurʾānic word *al-mathānī* meant (probably a term borrowed from the Aramaic or Jewish-Aramaic language, as proposed by Nöldeke).[83]

As for *al-mufaṣṣal*, regarded as a part of the Qurʾān, all Muslim scholars agree that it ends with the ending of the Qurʾān, but they disagree about its beginning, for which several suggestions were made: 1. *al-Ṣaffāt* (37); 2. *al-Jāthiya* (45); 3. *al-Qitāl* (i.e. *Muḥammad*, 47); 4. *al-Fatḥ* (48); 5. *al-Ḥujurāt* (49); 6. *Qāf* (50); 7. *al-Ṣaff* (61); 8. *Tabāraka* (i.e. *al-Mulk*, 67); 9. *Sabbiḥ* (87);[84] 10. *al-Ḍuḥá* (93).[85] Ibn abī l-Ṣayf

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al-iqrāʾ, 2 vols., ʿA. Ḥ. al-Bawwāb (ed.), Mecca, 1408/1987, vol. I, 34; cf. Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, ch. 18, vol. I, 220.

[78] Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, ed. Shākir, vol. I, 102, no. 131, according to Ibn ʿAbbās. The qualification *al-qarīnatāni* is taken from Sakhāwī, *Jamāl al-qurrāʾ*, vol. I, 34.

[79] Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, ed. Shākir, vol. I, 103; Sakhāwī, *Jamāl al-qurrāʾ*, vol. I, 35.

[80] Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, vol. I, 220.

[81] For the meaning of *mathānī* see Q. 15: 87, and for its application to the first Sūra, see Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans*, vol. I, 114–6.

[82] Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, ed. Shākir, vol. I, 103; Fīrūzābādī (Abū l-Ṭāhir Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb), *Baṣāʾir dhawī l-tamyīz fī laṭāʾif al-Kitāb al-ʿazīz*, 6 vols., M.ʿA. al-Najjār & ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm al-Ṭaḥāwī (eds.), Cairo, 1963–1973, vol. II, 345–6, gives a list of the Sūras allegedly pertaining to *al-mathānī*.

[83] See also Arthur Jeffery, *Foreign vocabulary of the Qurʾān*, Baroda, 1938, 257–8.

[84] Which is preferred by Ibn al-Firkāḥ, according to Sakhāwī, *Jamāl al-qurrāʾ*, vol. I, 195.1. He is probably Burhān al-Dīn Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ibrāhīm al-Fazārī al-Miṣrī al-Dimashqī (d. 7th Jumāda I 628/13th March 1231); Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʾallifīn*, 15 vols., Damascus, 1957–1961, vol. I, 43–4.

[85] Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ*, vol. II, 249.24–5 (on Bukhārī, 10, *Adhān*, 99, *ḥadīth* no. 765, 247 of Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ*; Bukhārī, ed. Krehl, vol. I, 197.6–8) ; cf. Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, vol. I, 121.

al-Yamanī[86] comes out in favour of nos. 1, 7 and 8; al-Dizmārī,[87] in his commentary of (Abū Isḥāq al-Shīrāzī's) *al-Tanbīh*, for nos. 1 and 8; al-Marwazī,[88] in his commentary, for no. 9; al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388/998) and al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) for no. 10. Nawawī (d. 676/1277) gives only nos. 3, 5 and 6. For Ibn Ḥajar, no. 5 (49, *Ḥujurāt*) is the preferred choice (*al-rājiḥ*).[89] Some, like Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī (d. 694/1295), consider *al-mufaṣṣal* to be the whole Qurʾān, an opinion which Ibn Ḥajar regards as anomalous (*shādhdh*).

The explanations given of the meaning of *al-mufaṣṣal* are as fanciful as those given of the sense of *al-mathānī*: "It is so called because of the great number of sections (*fuṣūl*) into which its Sūras are divided by the *basmala* (*li-kathrati l-fuṣūli llatī bayna suwarihā bi-bi-smi Llāhi l-Raḥmāni l-Raḥīm*)",[90] or by the *takbīr*;[91] or "because of the shortness of its Sūras";[92] or "because of the small number of verses contained in its Sūras (*li-qiṣari aʿdādi suwarihi min al-āyi*)";[93] or it was called thus "because of the small number of abrogated [verses] it contains, and this is the reason why it is [also] called 'the one firmly established' (*al-muḥkam*)".[94] To understand this equivalence between *mufaṣṣal* and *muḥkam* in relation with the abrogation, it should be recalled that *mufaṣṣal* can mean "to be made to measure", in other words "without abrogation", or rather "with few abrogations".

(b) The remark of Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ: "They used to call *al-mufaṣṣal*: the Arabic. One of them said: there is no prostration in the Arabic (*kānū yusammūna l-mufaṣṣala: al-ʿarabiyya* [without *tāʾ marbūṭa*]. *Qālā baʿḍuhum: laysa fī l-ʿarabiyyi sajda*)".

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[86] Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Zabīdī al-Makkī (d. 609/1212); Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, vol. IX, 57.

[87] Kamāl al-Dīn Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Kashāsib b. ʿAlī al-Dizmārī al-Shāfiʿī al-Ṣūfī (d. 17 Rabīʿ II 643/11th September 1245); Subkī (Tāj al-Dīn), *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿiyya al-kubrá*, 10 vols., M. M. al-Ṭināḥī & ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-Ḥulw (eds.), Cairo, 1964–76, vol. VIII, 30, no. 1054; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, vol. II, 53a.

[88] Perhaps Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad (d. 340/901), in his commentary on al-Muzanī's *Mukhtaṣar*; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam*, vol. I, 3–4.

[89] Ibn Ḥajar, *Fatḥ*, vol. II, 249 (on Bukhārī, 10, *Adhān*, 99, *ḥadīth* no. 765); cf. Zabīdī, *Tāj*, vol. XXX, 167–8, for the whole text, taken from Ibn Ḥajar and Suyūṭī, with some additions.

[90] Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, ed. Shākir, vol. I, 101; cf. Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, vol. I, 121.

[91] Sakhāwī, *Jamāl al-qurrāʾ*, vol. I, 35.

[92] Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 18 vols. in 9, Cairo, 1349/1929, reprint Beirut, n.d., vol. VI, 106–7.

[93] Zabīdī, *Tāj*, vol. XXX, 168.

[94] Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, vol. I, 121; Fīrūzābādī, *Baṣāʾir*, vol. IV, 195.1–2.

First of all, the Arabs, at the beginning of Islam, were already well acquainted with the prostration (*sujūd*). They knew this practice, which was diffused in the regions surrounding Arabia and among Christians and Jews.[95] When Islam came, of all the Muslim rites, this was the ritual prayer that met with the greatest opposition,[96] and the reason for this reluctance was the opposition to prostration itself, considered an alien practice and humiliating for their honour.[97]

The number of ritual prostrations in the Qurʾān ranges between four and fifteen in *Ḥadīth* literature; these figures exclude all the prostrations from the *mufaṣṣal*. But there are also traditions prescribing prostration for verses from the *mufaṣṣal* (twelve or fourteen, or even sixteen prostrations).[98] An attempt to harmonize the different statements on prostration in the *mufaṣṣal* is found in, among others, the following tradition: […] Abū Qilāba/*ʿan* Maṭar al-Warrāq[99]/ʿIkrima/ Ibn ʿAbbās: "The Prophet never prostrated himself at the recitation of the *mufaṣṣal* since he moved to Medina (*lam yasjud fī shayʾin min al-mufaṣṣali mundhu taḥawwala ilā al-Madīna*".[100] Those who consider this tradition reliable believe that it abrogates traditions in which Muḥammad appears as prostrating himself at the recitation of a Sūra or of verses from the *mufaṣṣal*, like this one, according to Ibn Masʿūd: "The first Sūra in which prostration (*sajda*) was sent down is *wa-l-najm* (Q. 53): the Prophet recited it in Mecca and he prostrated himself (*fa-sajada*).[101]

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[95] Roberto Tottoli, "Muslim attitudes towards prostration (*sujūd*), I, Arabs and prostration at the beginning of Islam and in the Qurʾān", *Studia Islamica*, vol. 88, 1998.

[96] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, 2 vols., Halle, 1889–90, vol. I, 33: "[…] unter allen Ceremonien und Riten des Dîn hat aber keine mehr Widerstand erfahren, vor keiner religiösen Uebung haben sie entschiedenern Widerwillen bekundet, als vor dem Ritus des Gebets", and 33–9.

[97] Tottoli, "Muslim attitudes", 17; Meir J. Kister, "Some reports concerning al-Ṭāʾif", *Jerusalem studies in Arabic and Islam*, vol. 1, 1979.

[98] Roberto Tottoli, "Traditions and controversies concerning the *suǧūd al-Qurʾān* in *ḥadīth* literature", *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 147, 1997.

[99] Maṭar b. Ṭahmān al-Warrāq Abū Rajāʾ al-Khurāsānī al-Baṣrī (d. 129/746); Mizzī, *Tahdhīb*, vol. XVIII, 136–7, no. 6586; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil li-l-ḍuʿafāʾ*, 9 vols., ʿĀ. A. ʿAbd al-Mawjūd & ʿA. M. Muʿawwaḍ (eds.), Beirut, 1418/1997, vol. VIII, 134, no. 1882.

[100] Ibn Shāhīn (Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar b. Aḥmad, d. 385/995), *al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh fī l-ḥadīth*, M. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥifnāwī (ed.), Mansoura, 1416/1995, 240, no. 238; Ibn Khuzayma (Abū Bakr Muḥammad), *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4 vols., M. Muṣṭāfā al-Aʿẓamī (ed.), Beirut, 1390–1399/1970–1979, vol. I, 280–1, nos. 559–560; Nawawī, *Sharḥ*, vol. V, 76–7: *ad* Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 8 (*Masājid*), 20 (*Sujūd al-tilāwa*), vol. I, 405–7.

[101] Ibn Shāhīn, *Nāsikh*, 239, no. 236, or no. 237, according to Abū Hurayra.

We can say that the report "one of them said: there is no prostration in the Arabic", quoted by the Basran Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ, followed the "Basran" tradition of Ibn ʿAbbās.

(c) After these long but necessary explanations, we may return to the core subject with the commentary of Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ: "They used to call *al-mufaṣṣal*: the Arabic. One of them said: there is no prostration in the Arabic (*kānū yusammūna l-mufaṣṣala: al-ʿarabiyya* [without *ṭāʾ marbūṭa*]. *Qālā baʿḍuhum: laysa fī al-ʿarabiyyi sajda*)". In the Prophetic tradition transmitted by Abū Qilāba, the three previous Scriptures which figure in the Qurʾān (*al-Tawrāt, al-Zabūr, al-Injīl*) are mentioned, but the great specificity of Muḥammad, by which he has been favoured, is *al-mufaṣṣal*. This *mufaṣṣal* is qualified by Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ as "the Arabic", so that it becomes a kind of "name", in the following declaration "there is no prostration in the Arabic".

None of these three Scriptures were "Arabic". The Torah and the Psalms were in Hebrew, but explained/translated (*mufassar/mufaṣṣal*) in Aramaic in targums; the Gospel (in singular) was in Syriac (the *Diatessaron*), but Muḥammad and those who helped him translated/explained logia from these Scriptures, in Mecca, in his language (Arabic).

According to the Qurʾān itself, it is not only comparable but essential to the previous Scriptures, which are confirmed by it: "This Qurʾān could not have been forged apart from God; but it is a confirmation of (*taṣdīq alladhī*) what is before it, and a distinguishing of the Book (*tafṣīl al-kitābi*), wherein is no doubt, from the Lord of all Being" (Q. 10: 37, translation Arberry). *Tafṣīl al-kitābi* should be put in relation with *mufaṣṣal* (it has the same root and the same grammatical pattern, second form, as *tafṣīl*) and be translated as "explanation [in Arabic] of a Book that is not in Arabic". It corresponds to *al-mufaṣṣal: al-ʿarabī* or *al-ʿarabī*, in the declaration of Khālid al-Ḥadhdhāʾ.

Collections and Interpretation in Arabic

That the Qurʾān itself refers to collections of texts or traditions being the basis of the early predications is not a new idea:

> The frequent phrase 'this Qurʾān' must often mean not a single passage but a collection of passages, and thus seems to imply the existence of other Qurʾāns. Similarly the phrase "an Arabic Qurʾān" seems to imply that there may be Qurʾāns in other languages. (The phrases occur in

> proximity in 39.27/8f.).[102] When it is further remembered that the verb *qaraʾa* is probably not an original Arabic root, and that the noun *qurʾān* almost certainly came into Arabic to represent the Syriac *qeryānā*, meaning the scriptural reading or lesson in church, the way is opened to the solution of the problem. The purpose of an Arabic Qurʾān was to give the Arabs a body of lessons comparable to those of the Christians and Jews. It is known, too, not only from Tradition and continuing practice, but also from the Qurʾān itself that it was used liturgically [17.78/80; 73.20[103]].[104]

That the Qurʾān is a liturgical book is commonly accepted; this feature has been stressed especially for the Meccan Sūras in several studies of Angelika Neuwirth.[105] Moreover, several scholars have drawn attention to a special form of its dependence on previous traditions and practices: "[…] this suggests that liturgy, specially liturgical poetry,[106] the Christian liturgy, which includes the Jewish, has decisively stimulated and influenced Mohammed".[107]

This idea of compiling a lectionary from extracts of the previous Scriptures seems to appear in the following passage: "Move not thy tongue with it to hasten it; ours is to gather it, and to recite it. So, when

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[102] Q. 39: 27–8 (*Zumar*): "Indeed we have struck for the people in this Qurʾān (*fī hādhā al-qurʾāni*) every manner of similitude (*min kulli mathalin*); haply they will remember; an Arabic Qurʾān, wherein there is no crookedness (*qurʾānan ʿarabiyyan ghayra dhī ʿiwajin*); haply they will be godfearing".

[103] Q. 73: 20 (*Muzammil*): "Thy Lord knows that thou keepest vigil nearly two-thirds of the night (*annaka taqūmu adnā thuluthayi al-layli*), or a half of it, or a third of it, and a party of those with thee".

[104] Montgomery Watt, *Bell's introduction*, 136–7; cf. John Bowman, "Holy Scriptures, lectionaries and the Qurʾan", in: Anthony Hearle Johns (ed.), *International Congress for the study of the Qurʾān, Canberra, Australian National University, 8–13 May 1980*, 2nd ed., Canberra, 1983, 32–4.

[105] See several articles or contributions by Angelika Neuwirth, e.g. recently "Psalmen—im Koran neu gelesen (Ps 104 und 136)", in: Dirk Hartwig *et al.* (eds.), *"Im vollen Licht der Geschichte": Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und die Anfänge der Koranforschung*, Würzburg, 2008, 160–2 "liturgische Beleuchtung". She regards the word *sūra*, probably borrowed from Syriac *shūrāyā* (beginning) in the introduction to a psalm's recitation, "a liturgical concept", 160; id., "Vom Rezitationstext über die Liturgie zum Kanon: Zu Entstehung und Wiederauflösung der Surenkomposition im Verlauf der Entwicklung eines islamischen Kultus", in: Stefan Wild (ed.), *The Qurʾān as text*, Leiden, 1996, summary, 100–3 (French trans. "Du texte de récitation au canon en passant par la liturgie: À propos de la genèse de la composition des sourates et de sa redissolution au cours du développement du culte islamique", *Arabica*, vol. 47, 2000, 224–7).

[106] See Lüling, *Ur-Qurʾān/Challenge*.

[107] Erwin Gräf, "Zu den christlichen Einflüssen im Koran", *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 111, 1962, 396–9 (reprint in Rudi Paret (ed.), *Der Koran*, Darmstadt, 1975, 188).

we recite it, follow its recitation. Then ours is to to explain it (*inna ʿalaynā jamʿahu wa-qurʾānahu, fa-idhā qaraʾnāhu fa-tbaʿ qurʾānahu, thumma inna ʿalaynā bayānahu*)".

Bayānuhu, like *mubīn, fuṣṣilat, mufaṣṣal, buyyinat*, etc., may refer to the process of interpretation-translation-explanation by Muḥammad and by those who helped him in his role of commentator. The logia or extracts from a liturgical lectionary, or from several lectionaries, are interpreted in Arabic.

This seems to be suggested also in Q. 19: 97: "Now we have made it easy in thy tongue that thou mayest bear good tidings thereby to the godfearing, and warn a people stubborn". In Syro-Aramaic *pashsheq* means "to facilitate, to make easy, but also to explain, to annotate, and also to transfer, to translate".[108] But it can be also understood without having recourse to Syriac. Muḥammad, the warner (*nadhīr*) (of the last judgement) is the "interpreter" of selections of a foreign lectionary in his own tongue/language, Arabic, to a people who understands only (or, for some of them, almost only) Arabic.

In this context, the ambiguous verb *jamaʿa* (to collect, to bring together, to know by heart, etc.) is put in relation with the lectionary (Syriac *qəryānā*) "which designates a church book with excerpts (readings) from the Scriptures for liturgical use".[109] It corresponds to the Syro-Aramaic *kannesh* (to collect). "It has to do with the collecting of these excerpts from the Scriptures, and indeed specifically in the meaning of '*compilavit* librum'".[110] It could be the basis of the above-mentioned verse (Q. 13: 103),[111] that it was a human who taught Muḥammad. Already before Luxenberg, R. Bell had noted about Q. 25: 4–5:

> It is not certain whether the verse quoted above means that he had books[112] transcribed for him, or whether there is any truth in the charge. He may have thus got copies of some Apocryphal books, but if so he was

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[108] Luxenberg, *Syro-Aramaic reading*, 123–4/*Syro-aramäische Lesart*, 98–9/2004², 130–1.

[109] Ibid., 121/97, 129.

[110] Ibid.

[111] See Claude Gilliot, "Les 'informateurs' juifs et chrétiens de Muḥammad: Reprise d'un problème traité par Aloys Sprenger et Theodor Nöldeke", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, vol. 22, 1998; id., "Informants"; id., "Herkunft".

[112] A. Sprenger's point of view was that Muḥammad had a book on *asāṭīr al-awwalīn* (fairy-tales of the ancients) which could mean also "books of the ancients", from *saṭara* (to trace, to write). See our three articles on the informants mentioned above.

dependent on getting someone, who perhaps happened to be in Mecca, to read them and tell him what was in them.[113]

Reading of Scriptures in the Christian Churches and their Lectionaries

The Christian Churches followed the Jewish custom of reading the Scriptures publicly, but they did it according to the lectionary principle.[114] Thus, the whole of the Scripture, Old and New Testament, were never read to the congregation. The Syriac Churches usually had a lectionary (*kitābā d-qəryānā*) containing selections from the Law (*uraitha*), the Prophets and the Acts of the Apostles.[115] Likewise the *Evangelion* consisted of selections from the four Gospels. "For the hearer this was the Gospel"[116] (this is what is called *al-injīl* in the Qurʾān!). Another volume called the *Shliḥa* contained lections from the Pauline Epistles; then, another volume with the *Davida* or the *Psalter*. A last volume called *Targuma* could contain metrical homilies (*mêmrâ*), read after the *qəryānā* and the *Shliḥa*.[117] For instance, the *mêmrâ* attributed to Jacob of Serug (d. 521) on the "Seven Sleepers" or "Youths (*ṭlâyê*) of Ephesus" in Syriac,[118] or his discourse about Alexander, the believing King, and the gate he made against Gog and Magog,[119] were expected to be read in church, presumably as a *targuma*. J. Bowman has seen a very old manuscript of the Syriac New Testament belonging to the

[113] Bell, *Origin*, 112.

[114] This principle has survived until the present day in both the Eastern and Western Churches (especially, but not only, in monasteries and convents), even if some changes have occurred through time.

[115] Sometimes there were independent volumes for each of the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms; and the Gospels, Acts and Paul's Epistle in still another volume. But very few Syriac churches possessed this.

[116] Bowman, "Holy Scriptures", 31.

[117] Ibid., 31–2.

[118] Fr. Jourdan, *La tradition des sept dormants*, Paris, 1983, 59–65, translation of the short version; S. H. Griffith, "Christian lore and the Arabic Qurʾan: The 'Companions of the Cave' in *Surat al-kahf* and the Syriac tradition", in: G. S. Reynolds (ed.), *Qurʾan in its historical context*, London, 2007, 116–30; cf. Q. 18: 9–26.

[119] *The History of Alexander the Great* (Pseudo-Callisthenes), trans. E. A. W. Budge, 1889, 182–4; cf. Q. 18: 83–98 and see Emeri van Donzel & Andrea Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in early Eastern Christian and Islamic sources: Sallam's quest for Alexander's wall*, Leiden, 2010.

village of Khoyyi, on the coast of Lake Urmi. "The Gospels had in the margin sections marked off as *qeryane*, and subdivided into *Surata*".[120]

Having said this, it is not easy to determine which Gospel text Muḥammad could have been familiar with. However, there are a few rare direct references in the Qurʾān to the Gospels. Thus Q. 48: 29: "Such is their likeness in the Torah and their likeness in the Gospel—like as sown corn that sendeth forth its shoot and strengthenth it and riseth firm upon its stalk, delighting the sowers—that He may enrage the disbelievers with (the sight of) them. God hath promised, unto such of them as believe and do good works, forgiveness and immense reward". This text combines two Gospel pericopes—Mark 4:26–27 and Matthew 12:23—the same amalgam made by the *Diatessaron*, as for example in the Middle-Dutch translation thereof, made in the 13th century from a lost Latin translation, and in the Arabic translation thereof.[121]

Van Reeth applies the same treatment to those passages of the Qurʾān which pertain to the infancy of Mary (Q. 3: 35–48), John (Q. 19: 3), and Jesus (Q. 3: 37; 19: 22–26), showing again that "the Koran gives evidence (French : témoigner de) to the tradition of the *Diatessaron*".[122] He does the same again with the Docetist version of the Crucifixion of Jesus (Q. 4: 157), but in this case he refers to Angel-Christology[123] (cf. G. Lüling), notably that of the Elkesaites, asserting that "[r]ather than a likeness which God should have shaped and substituted to be crucified instead of him, it would have been originally the human form which God made for Jesus at the time of the incarnation, and in which his transcendent and angelic person could descend".[124] For this docetic

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[120] Bowman, "Holy Scriptures", 31.

[121] *Diatessaron Leodiense*, C. C. de Bruin (ed.), Leiden, 1970, 92, §93sq. (English trans., 93); *Diatessaron de Tatien*, texte arabe…, Marmardji, A. S. (ed.), Beirut, 1935, 159f.

[122] Van Reeth, "Evangile", 163. On the possible influence of the Diatessaron and the Apocryphal Gospels on the Qurʾān see J. Gnilka, *Die Nazarener und der Koran: Eine Spurensuche*, Freiburg, Herder, 2007, 96–104 (French trans., *Qui sont les chrétiens du Coran?*, Paris, 2008, 101–9); on the influence of the Diatessaron on the Qurʾān, see also John Bowman, "*The debt of Islam* to Monophysite Syrian Christianity", in: E. C. B. MacLaurin (ed.), *Essays in honour of Griffithes Wheeler Thatcher* (1863–1950), Sydney, 1967, *passim*.

[123] Lüling, *Challenge*, 21, speaks of the "ur-Christian angel-Christological doctrine… contained in the ground layer of the Koran"; Mondher Sfar, *Le Coran, la Bible et l'Orient ancien*, Paris, 185–6, has shown that the prophet/Prophet has an "angelical status".

[124] Van Reeth, "Evangile", 166.

view of Jesus and the denial of crucifixion, M. Gil refers to Basilides and his followers, and then to the Manichaeans, who are said to have believed that there were two Jesuses. The "false" is sometimes called "the devil", or the "son of the widow", used by God to replace him.[125]

Even though the *Diatessaron* does not explain all of the Qurʾānic details about the life of Jesus (and neither do the Apocrypha), Van Reeth draws the following conclusion:

> In referring to the *Diatessaron* as Mani had done it before him, the Prophet Muhammad could emphasize the unicity of the Gospel. Moreover he came within the scope of the posterity of Marcion, Tatian and Mani. All of them wanted to establish or re-establish the true Gospel, in order to size its orignal meaning. They thought themselves authorized to do this work of textual harmonization because they considered themselves the Paraclete that Jesus had announced.[126]

The followers of Montanus (end of the 2nd century) also believed in the coming of the Paraclete, inaugurated by the activity of Montanus himself, and it is a short step from Montanus to Tatian, whose *Diatessaron* was in vogue for the followers of Mani.[127]

The Gospel's pericopes in the Qurʾān have their origin in the *Diatessaron* of the Syrian Tatian, the founder of the Encratite movement in the 2nd century.[128] Tatian was born in Assyria of pagan parents. He travelled widely, and in Rome became a student of Justin Martyr,

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[125] Moshe Gil, "The creed of Abū ʿĀmir", *Israel Oriental studies*, vol. 12, 1992, 41, referring to H. J. Polotsky, "*Manichäismus*", Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Suppl. VI, 269.

[126] Van Reeth, "Evangile", 174; cf. Robert Simon, "Mānī and Muḥammad", *Jerusalem studies in Arabic and Islam*, vol. 21, 1997, 134: "Both Manicheism and Islam assert the seriality of prophets"; Tor Andrae, *Les origines de l'islam et le christianisme*, French trans. by J. Roche, Paris, 1955, 209; Karl Ahrens, *Muhammed als Religionsstifter*, Leipzig, 1935, 130–2. Mani's prophetic understanding of himself as an equal partner of the Paraclete, as promised by Jesus, even perhaps as the Paraclete himself, was also eschatological. Islamic authors ascribed to Mani the claim that he was the Seal of the Prophets (Henri-Charles Puech, *Le Manichéisme: Son fondateur, sa doctrine*, Paris, 1949, 146, n. 248; Michel Tardieu, *Le Manichéisme*, Paris, 1981, 21; Julien Ries, "Les Kephalaia: La catéchèse de l'Église de Mani", in: Daniel De Smet, G. de Callataÿ & Jan M. F. Van Reeth (eds.), Al-Kitāb*: La sacralité du texte dans le monde de l'Islam*, Louvain, 2004, 143–8).

[127] W. Schepelern, *Der Montanismus und die phrygischen Kulte: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Tübingen, 1929, 28–30; Jan M. F. Van Reeth, "La *zandaqa* et le prophète de l'Islam", in: Christian Cannuyer & Jacques Grand'Henry (eds.), *Incroyance et dissidences religieuses dans les civilisations orientales*, Bruxelles, 2007, 73, 75, 79.

[128] Van Reeth, "Évangile", 162–6.

and a member of the Church. He later broke away from the Roman church and returned to Mesopotamia, where he exerted considerable influence around Syria and Antioch.[129] Van Reeth believes that Muḥammad probably belonged "to a sectarian community which was near to radical monophycism and to manicheism, and which was waiting for the Parousia in an imminent future".[130]

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was not to enter into the details of the various influences which contributed to the constitution of the Qurʾān,[131] especially the Meccan Qurʾān, nor to deal with the intertextuality,[132] or with the "common traditions" in the Bible and the Qurʾān.[133] Our aim was to show that many passages of the Meccan self-referential Arabic lectionary (Qurʾān) contain allusions to its "prehistory": its insistence on its Arabicity, on its explanatory character, its aspect as a book of pericopes (*Perikopenbuch*),[134] its liturgical character, which did not "descend from Heaven", but testifies that Muḥammad and his community around him, who helped him (Waraqa b. Nawfal and Khadīja, Christian or Jewish-Christian slaves in Mecca, for instance) knew more about Jewish-Christianity, Manicheism, gnosticism, etc., than is often accepted. They appear partly as interpreters of collections of logia, oral traditions, possibly taken up from liturgical lectionaries, directly or indirectly, and explained in Arabic during "liturgical assemblies".[135] As we have seen above, the lectionary principle was a common practice

[129] P. M. Head, "Tatian's christology and its influence on the composition of the Diatessaron", *Tyndale Bulletin*, vol. 43, 1992, 121–3.

[130] Van Reeth, "Scribes", 73.

[131] See the *status quaestionis* by Gilliot, "Rétrospectives, I, II".

[132] John C. Reeves (ed.), *Bible and Qurʾān: Essays in scriptural intertextuality*, Atlanta, 2003. See in this volume John C. Reeves, "Some explorations of the intertwining of Bible and Qurʾān", 43–60.

[133] See the very useful book by Johann-Dietrich Thyen, *Bibel und Koran: Eine Synopse gemeinsamer Überlieferungen*, Cologne, 2005. See also Joachim Gnilka, *Bibel und Koran: Was sie verbindet, was sie trennt*, Freiburg, 2007[6]; Karl-Wolfgang Tröger, *Bibel und Koran: Was sie verbindet und unterscheidet, mit einer Einführung in Mohammeds Wirken und in die Entstehung des Islam*, revised ed., Stuttgart, 2008.

[134] Neuwirth, "Rezitationstext", 102/"Texte de récitation", 227.

[135] Jan Van Reeth, "Les études actuelles sur le Coran dans une perspective chrétienne", *Solidarité-Orient* (Bruxelles), vol. 253, 2010, 11 ("Le Coran: recueil liturgique d'une communauté chrétienne?").

in the Syriac churches. It is likely that Muḥammad and his group were influenced by such a practice.

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