A life with the Prophet?

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A life with the Prophet?

Examining Hadith, Sira and Qur'an

In Honor of Wim Raven

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Introduction

Stefan Weninger/Albrecht Fuess

The following contributions of the present volume "'A life with the Prophet?' Examining Hadith, Sira and Quran" serve two aims. They present on one side a comprehensive insight into actual trends in academia in Arabic literature and Islamic studies, but first and foremost they shall pay tribute to an outstanding scholar of early Arabic literature and the formative period of Islam. Wim Raven has deepened the international knowledge on the prophet tremendously through his works on the sources for Muḥammads life, especially the Sīra and the Ḥadīth. And he continues to do so in his scholarly publications and his ongoing writings on his blog "lesewerkarabisch.wordpress.com" which might perhaps not be categorized as too scholarly in an academic sense. But the texts there are humorous and very informative which fits Wim Raven well. And after all did not the Prophet use to "laugh so loud that his eyetooth could be seen" as Wim has reminded us in some of his writings? And of course Wim Raven remarks that some critics might argue that the themes in his blog are treated better in the form of good scholarly works, but he would reply to such argumentations "you wouldn't read them anyway".

However, we would like to argue here that almost everything Wim Raven has ever written is a worthy read and the same holds true for the contributions we a have gathered here in his honor. While organizing the conference "'A life with the Prophet?' Examining Hadith, Sira and Quran" in the year of his retirement in May of 2012 at the Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies at Marburg University (thankfully funded by the Fritz Thyssen foundation), we tried to bring together academic friends and colleagues from the Netherlands and Germany who accompanied him either personally at different stages of his life or were guided by his work.

The volume gathers authors from among his teachers, friends from his study days at university, colleagues and his students to present aspects of

scholarship on early Islam which were dear to Wim Raven. It has a clear emphasis on the early Islamic period looking at the language and stories of the Qur'an (Robert Hoyland), medieval and contemporary literature on the prophet (Anna Akasoy and Remke Kruk), depicting a Maghrebian love story with adventurous and fantastic elements (Jan Witkam) and finally trying to make sense of it all by describing the development of Early Islamic thinking (Hans Daiber).

In recent years the discussion about Islam and its prophet has become a hotly debated issue in European societies. The fact that young men and women try to lead their life as close as possible to the way of life of the prophet is alienating western societies and is a matter of intensive debate in Islamic countries as these movements tend to become more radical and threaten the inner security of societies. However, in contrast to medieval Europe which had a very negative image of the prophet as "polygamist, epileptic and fanatic" in the Islamic lands the prophet was idealized as the ideal man and husband. Especially Sufism depicted Muhammad as a role model one has to follow in daily life. However, the Muhammad we encounter through the stories of the Ḥadīths and the Sīra never seems as stern and strict as we encounter him in modern Salafism with its urge to get even the last detail of Muhammads life right. Perhaps this development was in some kind due to European colonialism and counter reactions. In being asked to getting rid of ambiguities within the Islamic image of the prophet by Christian missionaries and orientalists many features of the human prophet disappeared in modern islamist movements trying to depict a rational prophet who was beyond any doubt, as has been recently argued by Thomas Bauer, who said that the "Frühzeitversessenheit" ("obsession with the early Islamic period") of western scholars and Islamic reformers since the 19th century did Islam no good.[1]

However, in order to understand these processes of transformations of religious concepts and also to improve our interpretation of the early Islamic periods we would need more scholarship like the articles in the present volume and more erudite scholars like Wim Raven. He really has provided us with valuable insights of the human and humanistic nature of the early Islamic image of the prophet and of literature, stories and

[1] Thomas BAUER, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität. Eine andere Geschichte des Islams.* Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen 2011, 161.

poems contemporaries told among them for religious instruction but also as romantic, sometime even frivolous, entertainment.

Wim Raven

Willem Raven was born on the 26th of July in 1947 in Raamsdonk in the Dutch province of Northern Brabant. After his time at a humanistic Grammar school in Amsterdam he started studying Theology there. This makes him member of an illustrious group of scholars who, like Heinrich Ewald, Gustav Flügel, Georg Wilhelm Freytag, Enno Littmann und Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje found their way to Oriental studies through Christian Theology. When he had finished his first propaedeutic exam, Wim Raven enlarged the subjects of his study with Arabic, cultural history of Islam, Semitic philology and Aramaic. Then after having passed the "Kandidaatexamen" he changed to Leiden, where he enrolled at the Rijksuniversiteit in the subjects Semitic Languages and Literatures. His major was Arabic Language and Literature. As minors he chose Modern History of the Near East and Indonesian Language and Literature. During his Leiden years he stayed abroad in Cairo where – as he recalls himself – he got distracted by the Egyptian dialect and Egyptian daily life more than he should have in respect to his classic course work he was supposed to have followed.

Back in Leiden he then finished his graduate studies with a double master degree. As a result of a peculiar rule of Leiden University he had to write two M.A. theses because there were two professors teaching Oriental Studies at the University. Whether this would be treated as a "human right offense" in current post-bologna European academia is a question open to debate, but at the time it enabled Wim Raven to dig deep into his two long life academic passions: Ḥadīth and Arabic literature. His first thesis dealt with the genre of the works of the forty *ḥadīths* (*arbaʿūna ḥadīṯan*) which were very popular special collections of 40 *ḥadīths* of the prophet each in order to be learnt by heart. The learning was very recommendable as the prophet once said in a *ḥadīth* that God will resurrect any Muslim together with all the erudite Islamic scholars at the day of judgment, who knows 40 *ḥadīths* by heart and is teaching them. For whatever this is worth, we are quite sure that Wim Raven, who has also published extensively on the

Islamic perceptions of heaven and hell, is up to the task and qualifies as Muḥaddith.

His second thesis dealt with Ibn Dāwūd (254–296/7 = 868/908/9), an author of Abbasid times and his Anthology *az-Zahra,* a work he would later on pursue during his PhD thesis. However, before he started his PhD thesis he worked at the "Netherlands Institute for Pure Research", where he was in charge together with Jan Just Witkam to complete the monumental Ḥadīth-concordance which had been initiated by Dutch scholar Arent Jan Wensinck (1882–1939). When Wim Raven took on the task to finish the *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane,* with the final eighth volume which was to contain the indices of names, places and Koranic verses, this seemed at first sight like the easy and boring work of just typing the existing file cards. However, it turned out to be a very complex mission! The work on the *Concordance* had already been started in 1922 (sic!) but many of the files were erroneous or missing at the time Wim Raven went through them. Moreover, the work of the fifty volunteers who had helped Wensinck turned out to be very inconsistent regarding quality standards. Wim Raven had to re-index large parts of the nine Ḥadīth-collections. That he became a real world leading expert on Ḥadīth is therefore not really surprising. It is thanks to Wim Raven that Arabic and Islamic Studies could then finally make use of the complete *Concordance* since 1988.

After this endeavor, Wim Raven lectured Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Free University of Amsterdam before finishing his PhD, again at Leiden, in the year 1989.

His dissertation represented a follow-up of a topic of his second Master thesis on *Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī and his Kitāb az-Zahra.* The result of his work was a new look on the poetic and literary Anthology. Ibn Dāwūd, author of the examined anthology, wrote in – we dare to say it[2] – the "classical" time of the Abassid caliphate. Wim Raven showed convincingly that the *Kitāb az-Zahra* represented in fact an anthology of genres (*afānīn*) and motives (*maʿānī*). This went against the former assumption of some Arabists who had prematurely classified it as a book on love theory. Had early Orientalists used anthologies like *Kitāb az-Zahra* in their "Frühzeitverses-

[2] After Thomas BAUER'S fundamental critique of the notion of a "post-classical" Arabic literature, and thus implying the very notion of a "classical" Arabic litererature (*Mamlūk Studies Review* 11.2 [2007], 137ff) the very term "classical" seems to be problematic, when applied to Arabic literature.

senheit", quoted above, only as a quarry for finding citations of earlier poetry, Raven analyzed it as a work with its own merits, as witness of the literary production and taste of its times. This research angle seems to be self-evident nowadays but for the 1980s these were new academic paths to be taken and many researchers took them in addition to Wim Raven like Fedwa Malti-Douglas[3], Hilary Kilpatrick[4] and Stefan Weninger[5] (the co-author of the present introduction).

During the years at the Islamic Institute in Amsterdam Wim Raven met the German Islamicist Hans Daiber. When Hans Daiber got the position of Professor of Islamic Studies at the Goethe-University in Frankfurt as successor of the quite remarkable Rudolf Sellheim in 1995, he managed to obtain a position as senior lecturer (Studienrat im Hochschuldienst) for Wim Raven the year later. For the students of Frankfurt Wim immediately developed through his humorous character into a well-liked teacher and fatherly friend. He was reported to have been the "good soul of the Institute". In summer of 2005 then came the re-structuring of the universities in the land of Hesse concerning the so-called "Area Studies" by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and the Arts. According to the plans, Frankfurt should obtain a center for East Asia, Gießen a center for Eastern Europe, and Marburg should have a Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies. The plans, however, and that was the tricky bit, included that professors and staff had to move from one university to another and build new structures. Immediately there was resistance against these plans from above. Many argued it should be better if fields of study such as Islamic Studies, Russian or Chinese should be present in all three universities instead of the concentration at one single place. How, so one voice from the Eastern European studies, could this field leave Marburg where Michael Lomonossow and Boris Pasternak had studied? The Jewish Studies Department of Frankfurt University simply refused to leave Frankfurt

3 See, e.g. the paper "Structure and Organization in a Monographic *Adab* Work: Al-Taṭfīl of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40 (1981), 227–245.

4 See e.g. her contribution „A genre in classical Arabic literature: the adab encyclopedia", in Robert Hillenbrand (ed.): *Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants. 10th Congress. Edinburgh 9–16 September 1980. Proceedings* (Edinburgh 1982), 34–42.

5 See his dissertation *Qanāʿa (Genügsamkeit) in der arabischen Literatur anhand des Kitāb al-Qanāʿa wa-t-taʿaffuf von Ibn Abī d-Dunyā* (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen 154; Berlin 1992), where he focusses strongly on the choice and arrangement of the material quoted by Ibn Abī d-Dunyā and his successors.

for Marburg, because of the long history of the Jewish community and of Jewish studies in Frankfurt. Wide critique swept even through nationwide newspapers and magazines about this issue. Finally, Jewish Studies were spared to become part of a Center for Middle East, which suffered another loss when Turkish Studies were declared part of Eastern Europe and staid at the University of Gießen.

Still, above all stood Wim Raven and wondered. In the midst of the turmoil where universities clashed about money and positions he called Stefan Weninger from Frankfurt and told him in his calm voice "I like the idea of an Orient-Center. It is good if students have more than one professor to teach them and it is good to work in larger research groups. Therefore I gladly would come to Marburg." That was the first time he had spoken to one Professor of our Institute and Marburg was glad that he came and staid. But, before that could finally happen, the fight of university presidents continued and at one point Wim Raven even wrote to Marburg: "Now I have heard from the dean in Frankfurt that I have to stay in Frankfurt and be the last one to turn the light off." Thankfully for us this did not happen. In the summer of 2006 the ministry for Higher Education did finalize it plans and the Center of Near and Middle Eastern Studies at Marburg University was founded, first as an idea, than as a sketch and then filled with life. Needless to say, that the life at the Center in Marburg was in the early years very much shaped by Wim Raven. Until the advent of further new professors for Arabic Literature and Islamic Studies Wim hold up the classes and taught the students Marburg had inherited from Gießen. At Marburg University those of us who just knew him from his writings before, then could witness the commitment he showed to academic teaching. His position included a high teaching load but he managed to teach students the contemporary situation of the Near- and Middle East combined with the sound knowledge of the orientalist philological tradition. That is the legacy he has left for the center after his retirement in 2012.

Although teaching was very important for Wim Raven he always upheld research. Witness to this are his publications and the participation of well-known scholars at the workshop in his honor in 2012. Besides the aforementioned books, Wim Raven published several articles in journals, edited volumes and encyclopedias, which underlined his knowledge and deep understanding of research. Of his numerous texts only a few should be named here (a complete list is to be found at the end of this volume):

"Some early Islamic texts on the Negus of Abyssinia" (1988), "[Ps.-]Aristoteles *De Mundo* in arabischer Überlieferung" (1989), A *Kitāb al-ʿAẓama*: on Cosmology, Paradise and Hell" (1993), "The Chew Stick of the Prophet in Sīra and Hadīth" (2003), "Ibn Ṣayyād as an Islamic "Antichrist". A Reappraisal of the Texts" (2008).

No wonder he was chosen to author a central twenty pages long entry in the *Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān* about the genre of the biography of the prophet (the *sīra*).

He also translated central Islamic texts into Dutch to initiate an interested public into the reading of the genre. Ibn Isḥāqs Sīra of the prophet was published under the title *Het leven van Mohammed*, first in 1980, and then again in a second edition in 2000. Moreover he translated a selection of the Ḥadīth-collections of Bukhārī and Muslim (*Leidraad vor het leven: De tradities van de profeet Mohammed*). In addition to that Wim Raven wrote texts for newspapers, literary journals and translated from French, which plays witness to his versatile interests.

And as already mentioned above, Wim Raven goes with the time. He is very active on the net where he writes texts full of academic insights but in a light heartedly way. His weblog 'Lesewerk Arabisch und Islam' shows that he is still ready to search new ways of communications. If readers find him, good, if not, their fault, but when they find, they can be sure of a bit of investigative academic entertainment ranging from Arab Grammar, the *ridda* wars, the laughing of the Prophet to Muslim female super heros in contemporary comic strips. We are sure that he will continue to work, travel and publish, especially his edition of the *Kitāb Dalāʾil al–iʿtibār* he is working on.

The contributions of this volume

The present volume is not only a dedication for Wim Raven, but a publication in its own right. As editors we were keen to single out contributors who could relate to the way Wim Raven worked and published, i.e. there had to be a new and innovative twist to the topic and the thematic frame we chose had to be the early Islamic period or Arabic Literature. We had somehow given the task to look for something unconventional in one's own research which could be realized here.

Robert Hoyland therefore presents us with his reasoning about the origin of the term "*aʿjamī language"* in the Qur'an. Was this really a "non-Arab" tongue as later tradition would have it, or is it not more plausible to classify it as a "North-Arabian" dialect? He also uses examples of the tale of the famous "sleepers from Ephesus" present in Christian Arab traditions and the Qur'an to make his point against a possible Syriac origin of these words as proposed by Luxenberg.

Anna Akasoy deals with "chick lit" in the Hijaz and she is not writing about the almost unavoidable "Girls vom Riad" of present Saudi-Arabia, but about entertaining literature for young women ("chick lit") which is written for an US audience either by Muslim and Non-Muslim authors. She argues thereby that while these stories have of course fantastic elements and try to empower the (young) women, especially by depicting Aisha as an active Muslim hero, they might be helpful as well for historians. Historians would too often shy away from reconstructing personal relations between leading actors. This holds mainly true if it comes to gender relations and contacts between the prophet and his wives. It would be therefore too simple for an historian to just refuse these stories as they can provide us with insight into the present image of the prophetic family and moreover might sometimes be on the right path when reconstructing historical facts.

Quite a similar theme is touched upon by Remke Kruk who looks at the seldom treated topic of the prophet Muhammad in classic Arabic popular epic. Some of the most popular Arabic epics are set in Pre-Islamic times, but were of course written down in the Islamic era. Therefore it seems that the authors felt compelled to include references to the prophet by including prophecies of a character about his later arrival. However in the *Sīrat ʿAntar* about the semi-historical pre-Islamic Arab hero and poet ʿAntar, the prophet shows up himself fighting alongside a famous warrior woman who embraces Islam, long prior to his actually advent. It is quite interesting that the prophet is also linked to another warrior woman, the Princess Dhāt al-Himma, in a story about the Arab–Byzantine wars, i.e. a period after the death of the prophet. The influence on the princess is that the prophet guides the warrior woman through appearing in her dreams.

Stories of princesses and love (sometimes even a little bit saucy) were always dear to Wim Raven, as is pointed out by his longtime friend and colleague Jan Just Witkam, who could unfortunately not join us at the

honorary workshop but agreed to contribute to the congratulatory volume by saying that he had just the right piece for it and that he always thought of Wim Raven once he had discovered the story in a manuscript. Jan Just Witkam provides us here with the Arabic edition and an English translation of a Medieval manuscript. The content of the story represents the Maghrebian version of the story of a young man setting out from Damascus with his wife towards Basra but being bored there, then travelling further north looking for adventures, fighting monsters, losing his wife, marrying a second one, then a third one, only to find out that she can transform into a gazelle: Indeed, this story has it all!

A little bit less fantastic, but still quite complex is the final contribution of this volume about critical thought in the Early Islamic Period. Hereby Hans Daiber explains how the thinking of Aristotels *Organon* became included and modified in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿs (d.140/757) *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr (Great Book of the Rules of Conduct)*. Central themes of his contributions, which explore also the reasoning of later Muslim thinkers, are the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, virtue and friendship as motors for human behaving which brings us back to our colleague Wim Raven.

The Language of the Qur'an and a Near Eastern Rip van Winkle[1]

Robert Hoyland

Qur'anic Arabic and the *A'jamī* tongue

The language of the Qur'an as we have it is quite close to classical Arabic, that is, the form of Arabic that was used in literary texts of the early to medieval Islamic period. Yet there are enough differences to suggest that Qur'anic Arabic is not the same as classical Arabic. Early Muslim linguists and modern Arabists tend to gravitate towards the same two options for explaining what the language of the Qur'an is: the dialect of Arabic spoken in west Arabia at the time of the Prophet or a form of Arabic used for poetry.[2] Muslim theologians preferred the former option, narrowing its scope slightly and elevating it to a dogma: namely that the Qur'an was revealed in the dialect of Quraysh. This tenet is put into the mouth of Caliph 'Uthman (644–56) as he issues the instructions for the creation of a single authoritative version of the Qur'an: "Wherever you differ from (the Prophet's scribe) Zayd ibn Thabit, write the word in the dialect of Quraysh, for the Qur'an was revealed in that tongue".[3]

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1 This paper was given in Marburg in May 2012 as part of a celebration of Dr. Wim Raven's career, and was intended as a light-hearted lecture appropriate to such a convivial occasion. I have equipped it with some scholarly trappings but it remains more of an exploratory sketch than an in-depth study. I hope that it will, nevertheless, be accepted as a fitting tribute to a man who has done much to advance our knowledge of Muhammad and the Qur'an.

2 For recent discussion of this question and earlier bibliography see GILLIOT and LARCHER, "Language and Style". JALLAD, *Ancient Levantine Arabic*, 30–74, after reviewing previous scholarship, concludes that Qur'anic Arabic is not Poetic Arabic (often called the Poetic Koine), and it is the latter, blended with numerous dialectal features, that goes on to become Classical/Imperial Arabic.

3 This is a very widespread hadith; it is already cited by Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 224/838) in his *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, 1.282.

On a number of occasions the Qur'an actually gives a name to the language in which it is revealed: it is the "Arab(ic) language"/*lisānun ʿarabīyun* (16:103, 26:195, 46:12) and the text was deliberately revealed "as an Arab(ic) recitation"/*qur'ānan ʿarabīyan* (12:2, 20:113, 39:28, 41:3, 42:7, 43:3). The Qur'an hints that this name is connected with Muhammad's people, declaring that God has "made it (the message) easy (by revealing it) in your (Muhammad's) language" (*yassarnāhu bi-lisāni-ka*; 19:97 and 44:58),[4] in conformity with the general principle that He "has only ever sent a messenger (with a message) in the language of his people so that he makes it clear for them" (14:4). And it was precisely for reasons of clarity and clear understanding that it was revealed in Arabic (12:2, 20:113, 39:28, 41:3). It could have been revealed in what the Qur'an calls, without explanation, the *aʿjamī* tongue, and there were apparently some – designated al-aʿjamīn (26:198) – who called for this (41:44). It is implied, however, that this would not have facilitated the clear exposition of the Qur'an's message. But why not and what in any case was the *aʿjamī* language and who were those *aʿjamīn* who spoke it? It is often assumed that the term *aʿjam* means "non-Arab" and *aʿjamī* means "non-native Arabic-speaker", but Muslim lexicographers, perhaps by inference from Qur'anic usage, explain *aʿjam* as "one who does not speak (Arabic) fluently or clearly, even though he may be of Arab descent".[5] Muhammad could presumably understand their speech, for, according to Qur'an 16:103, the language of the person said to have been teaching Muhammad was *aʿjamī* – or else, and perhaps more likely, this instructor could speak *aʿjamī* and ʿarabī. But whether the latter was a different dialect or register of Arabic, or a different language altogether, is not explained by the Qur'an.[6]

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4 Unless one understands "We made it easy (for you to recite it) on your tongue", even though the message is in a high/esoteric form of the language, but this seems to go against verse 14:4. Luxenberg, *Syro-Aramaic Reading*, 123–24, suggests that we take Arabic *yassara* to be parallel to/a rendering of Syriac *pashsheq*, which means "to expound, explain, translate", and so the sense is: "We have set out the message clearly in your own language". This certainly offers a clear and reasonable reading, but it is debateable whether that makes it likely to be right (see below for more discussion of this point).

5 Retsö, "Das Arabische der vorislamischen Zeit", 139, citing *Lisān al-ʿarab*, s.v. *ʿjm*. The same root is used in Jewish Aramaic to refer to a drunken person whose tongue is heavy and constricted (*Jastrow*, *Dictionary*, 1042, s.v. *ʿjm*).

6 Retsö, "Das Arabische der vorislamischen Zeit", argues that *aʿjamī* denotes a different kind of Arabic to *ʿarabī*. Wansbrough, Quranic Studies, 93–94 and 98–99, notes the

Qur'anic Arabic and West Arabian epigraphy

We do have a resource external to the Qur'an that might help us understand what the Qur'an means, namely the epigraphic record. A considerable number of inscriptions are found in and around the ancient oases of Dedan (modern al-'Ula), Hegra (modern Mada'in Salih) and Tayma; some are building and funerary texts, but most are graffiti. A very few are in Arabic,[7] but the majority are in either Aramaic or Ancient North Arabian (ANA). The latter term refers to a broad group of dialects, which are probably to be distinguished from the Arabic dialects[8] and which appear in short inscriptions, written in varietes on the South Semitic script family, from the sixth century BC to the fifth century AD. An epitaph from third-century AD Hegra illustrates the diversity of the language situation (fig. 1). Down

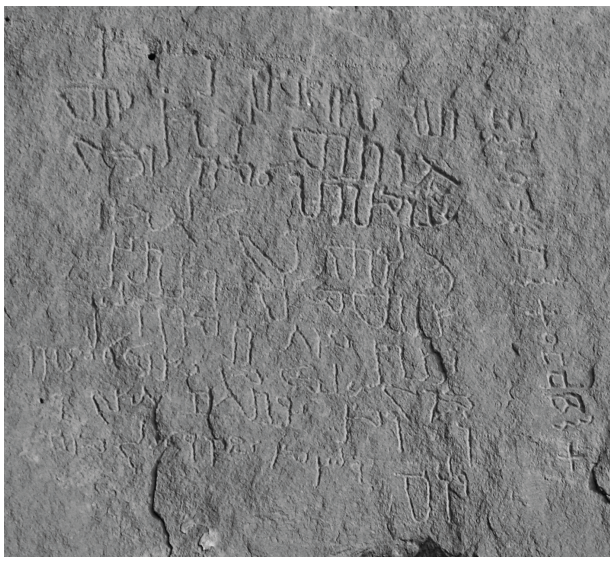

FIG. 1 Arabic inscription from Hegra (JS17), NW Saudi Arabia, AD 267.

clear/unclear distinction conveyed by the Qur'an in respect of *'arabī/a'jamī* and opines that the latter term, originally at least, was simply "a term of linguistic description" (i.e. rather than referring to a specific language). This is certainly the impression the Qur'an gives, but it still begs the question of what properties qualified a language as clear or unclear in the view of the Qur'an.

7 See ROBIN, "Les inscriptions de l'Arabie antique", and MACDONALD, "Old Arabic".

8 Though this is not easy to decide with certainty since ANA texts tend to be brief and are written without vowels; for recent discussion see JALLAD, *Ancient Levantine Arabic*, 81–85.

the right side the name of the person who is the subject of the text is given in Ancient North Arabian. The main text is written in Nabataean Aramaic letters, but the language seems to be a local dialect of Arabic:[9]

دنه قبرو صنعه كعبو بر حرتت لرقوش برت عبد منوتو أمه. وهي هلكت في الحجرو سنت ماه وستين وترين بيرح تموز. ولعن مري علما من يسني القبر دا ومن يفتحه حشى وولده ولعن من يقبر ويعلي منه.

This is the tomb which Ka'bu son of Ḥaretat made for his mother Raqqāsh daughter of 'Abdmanātu. She died in al-Ḥijru (Hegra) in the year one hundred and sixty-two in the month of Tammuz. May the Lord of the World curse whoever spoils this tomb and whoever opens it except for his offspring and whoever inters or disinters from it.

The syntax and much of the vocabulary are recognisably Arabic, but there are a number of Aramaic terms, such as *yarḥā/*"month", the demonstrative *dnh, bar/*"son" and *trayn/*"two", which reflects the influence of Nabataean Aramaic, as might be expected given that Hegra was the southern capital of the Nabataean Kingdom. It also exhibits *wawation*: the addition of a final *waw* to proper names and certain substantives (possibly to mark definiteness). Qur'anic Arabic also shows the influence of Aramaic, but does not appear to exhibit *wawation* (though it comprises remarkably few proper names).[10] This may mean that the above text belongs to a different Arabic dialect – could it be what the Qur'an refers to as the *a'jamī* tongue?

[9] Healey and Smith, "Jaussen-Savignac 17". I have used Arabic *sīn* to represent Nabataean Aramaic *shīn*, though if the inscription is in the Arabic language it may be that Nabataean Aramaic *shīn* renders Arabic *sīn*. One could read the phrase "whoever spoils" as Aramaic *man nəshanē* or one could postulate that underlying Qur'anic Arabic *tasannaha/*"to go bad or spoil" (2:259), which some Arab grammarians said should be read *tasannā* (with *ya*), is a Qur'anic/Hijazi Arabic verb *sannaha/sannaya* meaning "to make go bad or spoil" (Lane, *Lexicon, s.v. snh* and *sny* – verbal form V thereof).

[10] On this phenomenon see Jallad, *Ancient Levantine Arabic*, 12, 187–88, 222, 344–47, who notes that it is present in the Arabic inscriptions of Nemara (AD 328), Zebed (512) and Harran (567) and the Ahnas papyrus (643), but not in the Jabal Usays inscription (AD 528) or the Petra papyri (6th century) or the Violet psalm fragment (4–5th century?).

Graffiti in various Ancient North Arabian dialects (referred to by modern scholars by such names as Thamudic, Hismaic and Safaitic) can be found in their tens of thousands etched into rocks from Najran to Palmyra. However, their frequent reference to raiding, herding and seasonal migrations into and out of the desert, as well as their location on the desert fringes, suggest that they were the work of nomads, and they are unlikely to have acted as teachers of Muhammad. The only remaining contender for the *aʿjamī* tongue would be some variety of Aramaic, which was indeed the prestige language in this region and would appear to have survived in the Hijaz until Muhammad's day.[11] It had been in use in West Arabia at least as far back as the sixth century BC when it was an outpost of the Achaemenid Empire. Later it was the official language of the Nabataean Kingdom that extended its sway over the region for some three centuries (ca. 200 BC – 100 AD) and after that it was employed by the local Jewish communities. In the third century the Galilean rabbis Ḥiyyā the Great and Simeon ben Ḥalaftā considered it worth while making the journey to "Hegra of Arabia" in order to "learn again" the meaning of some Aramaic words that they had forgotten.[12] From Tayma and Hegra we have two funerary texts in Aramaic, dated AD 203 and 356 respectively, which record the names of two Jewish headmen of those oases, Isaiah Neballaṭa son of Joseph and ʿAdyon son of Ḥaniy son of Samuel.[13] And thousands of Aramaic graffiti, usually short requests for remembrance and wellbeing, adorn the west Arabian mountains; those that are dated span the first five centuries AD.[14] Finally, according to later Muslim tradition, Aramaic

[11] Arabic and Aramaic had already appeared in texts together as early as the second century AD (e.g. from southern Palestine we have two lines of Arabic verse in a larger Nabataean Aramaic inscription from ʿAyn ʿAbada/En Avdat and some Aramaic papyri of the Babatha archive that include Arabic legal terms as complements to the Aramaic terms; see MACDONALD, "ARNA Nab 17", 23, for further comments and references).

[12] *Midrash Rabbah* 79.7 (re Genesis 33.19), page 946.

[13] Full text, translation and references given in my "The Jews of the Hijaz", 95–96. It is tempting to assume that the celebrated Jewish poet Samuel ibn ʿĀdiyā (the Arabic form of ʿAdyon), who was a man of influence in sixth-century Tayma, was a descendant of the same family.

[14] NEHMÉ, "A Glimpse of the Development of the Nabataean Script into Arabic", provides a useful survey of these texts and shows how the Nabataean Aramaic script gradually evolves into what we call the Arabic script.

continued in use among Jews until the time of Muhammad; they taught it in schools so that their children could read sacred texts.[15]

Now it is usually Jews who are identified by Muslim exegetes as the informers of Muhammad alluded to in Qur'an 16:103,[16] which makes it plausible that by "the *a'jamī* tongue" a local Aramaic dialect was intended. Muhammad's innovation would have been, then, to have used a language that had not before been used for Scripture. Holy texts were always in foreign languages – such as Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek and Ethiopic – but now the Hijazi Arabs were being offered one in their own language. As God said: "We have sent it down as/made it an Arabic Qur'an so that you (Hijazis) can understand" (12:2/43:3) and "We have imparted to you (Muhammad) an Arabic Qur'an so that you can warn the mother of towns and those (who live) around it (i.e. the Hijaz)" (42:7; cf. 6:92). It was a bold step, and there were probably many who felt it wrong not to use a language in which Scripture was traditionally written, but it was an idea whose time had come. At about the time of Muhammad's birth a tribal chief named Sharahil son of Zalim decided to demonstrate his allegiance to the Byzantine Empire and to Christianity by dedicating a martyrium to Saint John in the town of Harran in southern Syria. But instead of having the commemorative inscription written solely in Greek, as would have been the usual practice in that region, he decided to include his own language, Arabic, alongside the Greek (fig. 2). Before this, signatures had been scrawled in Arabic at the bottom of official inscriptions, and the odd Arabic graffito had been etched on rocks, but this was the first time that someone had made Arabic part of an official inscription. Even if not the very first to use Arabic for a public text, Muhammad was certainly breaking new ground and this is presumably why he made such a show about the fact that the Qur'an was written in Arabic.

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15 LECKER, "Zayd B. Thābit", and GILLIOT, "Reconsidering the Authorship", 92–93. There is some doubt as to whether Aramaic or Hebrew is intended, but the former seems more likely given its long history in the region and the fact that the Qur'an relies heavily on late antique Jewish Aramaic texts rather than drawing directly from the Hebrew Bible.

16 The most popular candidate was one Yasār Abū Fukayha, a Jewish servant of a member of Quraysh in Mecca, but there were others (and some were Christian). See GILLIOT, "Les 'informateurs' Juifs et Chrétiens de Muḥammad", and *idem*, "Reconsidering the Authorship".

FIG. 2 Arabic inscription from Harran, S. Syria, AD 567.

Qur'anic Arabic and Syriac

Although it might seem more natural to look to an Aramaic dialect from Muhammad's own homeland for influences upon the Qur'an, it is nevertheless the Aramaic dialect of faraway Osrhoene, most commonly referred to as Syriac, which has held the attention of modern scholars, despite the fact that its core area was more than a thousand miles away from Mecca. The reason for this is that those who propose it also wish to claim strong Syriac Christian influence on the content of the Qur'an. The first to argue for this was Alphonse Mingana, an interesting character who was at one time a Chaldaean priest in Iraq and subsequently librarian of Oriental manuscripts in Birmingham and then Manchester. He started from the premise that there was no literary writing in Arabic before the Qur'an, obliging its author to innovate: "He (Muhammad) had to adapt new words and new expressions to fresh ideas, in a language that was not yet fixed

by any grammar or lexicography".[17] It is important to bear in mind, however, that Arabic was already an ancient language by Muhammad's day, and though there is no clear evidence for a written Arabic culture we do have indications of an Arabic literary style. For example, an epitaph from southern Syria for Imru' al-Qays ibn 'Amr, dated AD 328, ends with a boast – "No king ever achieved (the like of) his achievements" (*lam yablugh malik mablaghahu*) – which contains a rhetorical device, the absolute accusative (*al-maf'ūl al-muṭlaq*), that went into the classical Arabic rhetorical repertoire.[18]

Since Muhammad had no Arabic models to draw upon, argued Mingana, he had no choice but to turn to other languages: "The best policy was to use for his new idea of Islam the words which were understood by his hearers and found in a language akin to his that had become an ecclesiastical and religious language centuries before his birth and the adherents of which were surrounding him in all directions in highly organised communities, bishoprics and monasteries". By this Mingana meant Syriac Christianity, and he concludes that "almost all the religious terms found in the Kur'an are derived from Syriac".[19] But this is evidently faulty reasoning; since we have so few extant pre-Islamic Arabic texts we cannot describe Arabic religious vocabulary before Islam, but that does not mean it did not exist.[20]

A look through Mingana's list of Syriac words in the Qur'an quickly reveals a much more complex situation than he allows for. As an example, let us consider the first item on the list, namely *kāhin*, which means diviner or seer in classical Arabic and which Mingana says is from the Syriac word for priest, *kahnā*. In fact, the word pre-dates Syriac Christianity, being used in inscriptions in the northwest Arabia/Sinai/Negev region to refer to a performer of cultic functions at a pagan sanctuary.[21] For example, an inscription by the temple of Allat at Jabal Ramm in mod-

17 "Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur'ān," 77.

18 I make this point in my "Epigraphy and the Linguistic Background to the Qur'ān," 64, where I also consider other evidence for pre-Islamic Arabic texts.

19 "Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur'ān", 85.

20 Indeed, given that we have a number of sixth-century inscriptions in Arabic by Christian Arabs, there is a good chance that some Christian theology had already come to be expressed in Arabic. See the conclusion and notes 45–47 below.

21 For a dated example (AD 275) from near Dumat al-Jandal, modern Jawf (in north Saudi Arabia), see MACDONALD, "ARNA Nab 17".

ern south Jordan records a certain Malikallatu son of 'Amr as the priest (*khn*) of Allat (fig. 3). The language of these inscriptions is Nabataean Aramaic, but very often with intrusions from an Ancient North Arabian

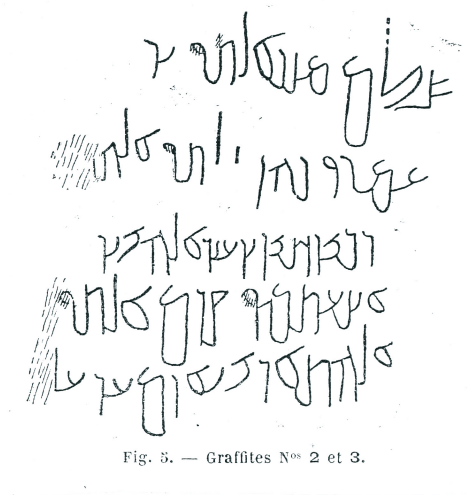

Fig. 5. — Graffites Nos 2 et 3.

FIG. 3 Aramaic inscription from temple of Allat, Iram, S. Jordan, ca. 2nd century AD.

or Arabic dialect. In Aramaic inscriptions without any such intrusions, in areas where Aramaic cultural influence was strong (e.g. in the region of the Hauran in southern Syria and at the cities of Palmyra and Hatra), the term for a cultic official was not *kāhin/kahnā*, but rather *kumrā*. It is, therefore, easier to assume that *kāhin* came into the Qur'an from Ancient North Arabian or Arabic rather than from Aramaic (whether Syriac or any other Aramaic dialect).[22]

Another item on Mingana's list, namely the root *s-f-r*, which concerns "writing", is indeed not found in classical Arabic of the Islamic period, whereas it is encountered in a variety of Aramaic dialects, including Syriac. However, it also occurs in a number of Ancient North Arabian dialects (fig. 4), which raises the question of how we can ascertain the specific origin of a root in the Qur'an that occurs in multiple languages. Ancient

[22] The editor observes that "*khn* ne se trouve pas dans les inscriptions purement araméenes; l'inscription de Hebran porte *kumar Allat*. Par contre *khn* revient assez fréquemment dans les inscriptions sinaïtiques sous l'influence de l'arabe" (SAVIGNAC, "Notes", 592–93). Interestingly, the deities mentioned in such inscriptions in connection with a *khn* are most often Allat and 'Uzza, both of whom feature in the Qur'an (53:19).

FIG. 4 Safaitic inscription from Jabal Usays, S. Syria, ca. 1st-3rd century AD.

North Arabian is at least attested in the Hijaz, whereas Syriac is not, and so it might appear a more plausible source for a borrowing into Qur'anic Arabic. It is also not impossible that the word was used in pre-Islamic Hijazi Arabic and simply did not continue into classical Arabic.[23] In any case we have to move away from the idea that we are dealing with only two languages – Arabic and Aramaic – and from the idea that these two labels represent uniform and homogenous categories. We need to accept that a much more complex linguistic situation prevailed in the pre-Islamic

[23] This is a thorny issue that is almost totally ignored by Qur'an scholars. The Qur'an is an early seventh-century document and Classical/Imperial Arabic only emerges in the late eighth century, and yet we judge, study and translate the Qur'an's Arabic on the basis of this later form of Arabic (of which we only have surviving manuscripts from the 820s and later).

Near East, particularly before the establishment of the Arab Empire, which had the capacity to develop and disseminate standardised forms of Arabic for bureaucratic and literary ends.

More recently, Christoph Luxenberg has taken up Mingana's baton, accepting his main argument that "the initiators of the Arabic written language had acquired their knowledge and training in the Syro-Aramaic cultural milieu".[24] He then proceeds to select "obscure" Qur'an passages and to see whether reading them as the product of a Syriac[25] linguistic milieu will render them more intelligible. In many cases it is not obvious that any improvement in sense is achieved:

Qur'an 18:47 (Luxenberg, 151–57)

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

Traditional reading: "On the day when We shall cause the mountains to move (*nusayyiru*) and you will see the earth projecting (*bāriza*), We shall gather them[26] (humans) together and not leave anyone behind".

Luxenberg: "On the day when the mountains collapse (*tusattar*) and the earth appears to be split open (*trīzā*), We will gather them together and none of them will be overlooked".

Qur'an 26: 90–91 (Luxenberg, 160–62)

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَاوِينَ

[24] *Syro-Aramaic Reading*, 10–11. I use the English edition of Christoph LUXENBERG'S work since it is a "revised and enlarged edition" of the German original.

[25] Luxenberg uses the term "Syro-Aramaic", but he only ever deals with the Syriac dialect, and he does make clear that by the term "Syro-Aramaic" he means only the Aramaic dialect of northern Mesopotamia (i.e. Syriac).

[26] The Arabic literally has "and We shall gather them", but this is evidently the apodosis and so the "and" should, as Luxenberg rightly notes, be omitted in translation. Luxenberg wishes to see it as an example of Syriac influence, but since it also occurs frequently in Biblical Hebrew it could plausibly have been a feature of pre-Islamic Arabic too.

> Traditional reading: "Paradise shall be brought near for the God-fearing and Hell brought out for those gone astray".
>
> Luxenberg: "Paradise will shine forth (from Syriac *zlaf or zlaq*) for the God-fearing and Hell will split itself open (from Syriac *traz*) for those gone astray".

The problem is that Luxenberg's principal criterion for emendation, namely what "Western Koran studies" has designated as "obscure" (p. 22), is rather subjective. What is obscure to us may not have been so to Muhammad's audience. A different criterion has been developed by Gabriel Reynolds, namely comparison with other monotheist texts.[27] This makes good sense in that the Qur'an does present itself as in dialogue with other religions, though of course one should bear in mind that it does adapt earlier monotheist narratives to its own ends and is not necessarily trying to render them faithfully. Luxenberg does use this criterion occasionally, as in his reworking of the account of Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac:

> Qur'an 37: 103–4 (Luxenberg, pp. 166–77):
>
> فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ
>
> Traditional reading: "When they (Abraham and his son) had both submitted (*aslamā*) and he (Abraham) had thrown (*talla*) him (his son) onto his forehead (*jabīn*), We called to him:[28] O Abraham..."
>
> Luxenberg: "When the two of them were finished (*shlemū*, i.e. arranging the altar for the offering) and he (Abraham) had bound (*tlā*) him upon the firewood (*ḥabīnā*), We called to him: O Abraham..."

[27] In a general way it has of course been commonly employed before, but REYNOLDS, in his *The Qur'an and its Biblical Subtext*, applies it systematically and tries to use late antique texts, which are near in time to the Qur'an. Joseph WITZTUM has also done some interesting work in this vein, taking a more philological approach; see, for example, his "Foundations of the House".

[28] Again a *wa*/and precedes the verb; see note 26 above.

The emendation in the first clause is not cogent, since the meaning "submit" could simply mean that Abraham and his son submitted to God's will, which would suit well the Qur'anic ethos. The two emendations in the second clause would be attractive in that they make the sentence conform to the text of Genesis 22:9 ("Abraham built an altar and arranged the firewood; then he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar upon the firewood") and would require very little alteration of the Qur'anic text, but they require considerable laxity with the sense of the Syriac words.[29]

In general, however, Luxenberg makes only sparing use of this comparative approach, even in cases that cry out for it. A good example is provided by the story of how Mary, mother of Jesus, was given sustenance by a palm tree:

Qur'an 19:24 (Luxenberg, pp. 127–42)

فَنَادَاهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَّا تَحْزَنِي قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا

Traditional reading: "He (the new-born Jesus) called to her (Mary) from below her (*min taḥtihā*): 'Don't be sad, your Lord has put below you a rivulet (*sarīyan*)".

Luxenberg: "He called to her immediately after her delivery (*min nḥathā*): 'Don't be sad, your Lord has made your delivery legitimate (*sharyā*)".

In the first part, the new reading of "delivery" (i.e. of the foetus) is slightly forced; as Luxenberg himself says, *nḥatā* "does not exactly mean foetus", but "it does have something to do with it…by way of the meaning 'descent, origin'". In the second part one might at first think that the change from the ostensibly nonsensical "rivulet" to "legitimate" is an improvement. However, the Qur'an is clearly influenced by the tale in the Christian tradition of how Mary, tired on the journey to Egypt, seeks rest under a palm

[29] *Tlā* means to hang or suspend rather than to bind (it can convey an idea of fastening an object, but by means of hanging it up onto something). More problematic, however, is Luxenberg's coining of the word *ḥabīnā; ḥabb* means "to be kindled/set on fire," but there is no attested word derived from it for kindling/firewood. The Peshitta Syriac Bible uses the word *qarsē*/"dry/hard (wood)" in Gen 22.9 and the Hebrew Bible has *'oṣīm*.

tree, whereupon Jesus, "looking up from his mother's bosom", calls upon the palm tree to lower its fruit-bearing branches and to let a stream come out from under it; thus Mary is able to eat and drink.[30] It would, therefore, be essential to understand how the Qur'an makes use of this narrative (which Luxenberg does not do) before one could contemplate emending the text of the Qur'an.

Qur'an 2:259 and its background

As a last example of the problems of emendation I shall turn to verse 2:259, which contains the Rip van Winkle episode that I allude to in the title to this paper.

> Or it is like the one who passed by a township which had fallen into ruin. He said, "How will God bring this to life after its death?" So God made him die for a hundred years; then He revived him. He said, "How long have you remained (thus)?" The man said, "I have remained (thus) a day or part of a day." He said, "Rather, you have remained (thus) one hundred years. Look at your food and your drink; it has not gone bad. And look at your donkey; and so that We make you a sign for the people, look at the bones (of this donkey) – how We put them in their place and then We clothe them with flesh". And when it became clear to him, he said, "I know that God has power over all things".

Luxenberg declares that the story in its current form is irrational: "One cannot see why God first of all points out to the man who has been restored to life that his food and drink have not gone bad" (p. 192). One might say that the freshness of the food is just another sign of God's power – He can

[30] The Qur'an itself recounts elements of this story in 19:23–26. For the Christian traditions (especially the Gospel of *Pseudo-Matthew*) see PARRINDER, *Jesus*, 75–78, and MOURAD, "Mary in the Qur'an", 167–69, who notes that the story draws on the Greek myth of Leto's labour and the birth of Apollo. VAN REETH, "L'Evangile du Prophète", 165–66, explains why the Qur'an places the palm-tree story amid the birth of Jesus when Christian apocrypha place it in the course of Mary's flight from Egypt by arguing for the influence of the Diatesseron tradition.

revive a human, so why not his food too? However, there is a clear sense in the above verse that the imperishable victuals are a clue to how much time has elapsed. At first sight this does indeed seem counter-intuitive, and this irrationality, Luxenberg argues, reflects a misreading of an original Syriac text, which he attempts to recover:

> Qur'an 2:259 (Luxenberg, pp. 191–97)
>
> فَانْظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ
>
> Traditional reading: "Behold your food (*ṭa'ām*) and your drink (*sharāb*): it has not gone bad (*yatasannah*). Behold your donkey (*ḥimār*)".
>
> Luxenberg: "Behold your condition (*ṭa'mtā*) and your state (*sharbā*): it has not changed (*yeshtanī*). Behold your perfection (*gmārā*)".

Luxenberg's changes might seem to make good sense. They remove the apparent contradiction that someone's food *not* having gone bad could somehow signify their long-term absence. And doing away with the donkey simplifies the tale, making one less ingredient to account for. But is what appears reasonable to us moderns a valid basis for emending a seventh-century text? Moreover, the Qur'an seems here to be alluding to a story already known ("like the one who…"). It is perhaps worthwhile, then, to investigate possible links between this Qur'anic parable and related Middle Eastern narratives.

Gilgamesh

Qur'an 2:255, only a couple of verses before ours, observes that "God is neither affected by slumber or sleep" (*lā ta'khudhuhu sina wa-lā nawm*), echoing Psalms 121:4: "He who watches over Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps" (*lā yanūm wə-lā yīšān*) and reminding us of a crucial division between humans and the divine. This distinction was demonstrated long before in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, where the latter begs Utanapishti, the

Sumerian Noah, who had been elevated to the rank of deity, to help him join the immortals.[31] Utanapishti says he must first pass a test: to stay awake for seven days, for he who cannot resist sleep will not be able to resist death either. This link between death and sleep is also found in Qur'an 39:42, which speaks of souls being taken from this world during their sleep, and in the reply of the prophet Muhammad to the question whether people in paradise sleep: "No, for sleep is the brother of death".[32] This link is present in our verse too, in that the verb used to express God's putting of the protagonist to sleep is *amāta*: "make die".[33] One thinks here of the apparently dead daughter of an official brought before Jesus, who says that "the little girl is not dead, only sleeping" (Matthew 9:24), and subsequently demonstrates this by reviving her.

In order that Gilgamesh cannot cheat and claim that he was not really sleeping, Utanapishti has his wife bake a loaf of bread each day and place it next to him for him to eat. When Gilgamesh awakes and finds seven loaves by him, he realises his failure. As in Qur'an 2:259, food lying beside the sleeper tells us something about how long that person has slept. And also as in Qur'an 2:259, the sleeper stands accused of arrogance before the divine. In the Qur'anic case, the man put to sleep questioned whether God would be able to restore a ruined settlement, and his long sleep and subsequent revival (and that of his donkey) make him understand the extent of God's power. In Gilgamesh's case, it was his presumption that he could become one of the gods that was criticised, and he was brought to appreciate the futility of his quest. The link between sleep and death is again reaffirmed in the lament he utters before Utanapishti when he realises his failure: "there in my bed-chamber death does abide".

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31 This episode is recounted in Tablet 11 of the standard version of the Babylonian Epic; for a recent translation see George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 95–97. I of course do not mean to say that there is any direct link between the Gilgamesh narrative and the Qur'an, but I include this episode simply because it is interesting to see the antiquity of the conjunction of motifs of death, sleep and food in the Middle East.

32 Al-Tha'labī, *Al-Kashf*, 2:231.

33 By understanding "made him dead" as equivalent to "put him to sleep" I am following Muslim commentators; e.g. al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi'*, 4.593: "God cast drowsiness upon and when he had fallen asleep God removed his soul" (*wa-alqā Allāh 'alayhi al-subāt fa-lammā nāma naza'a Allāh rūḥahu*).

Seven Sleepers

Despite these parallels, however, there are many differences, and in particular Gilgamesh's sleep is all too human in its origin, whereas that of the protagonist of Qur'an 2:259 is most definitely imposed on him by God. Much closer in this respect is the tale of the sleepers of Ephesus, referred to in the Qur'an as "the companions of the cave". In its Christian form, which is attested by a number of sixth-century Syriac manuscripts and by the history of the famous Frankish writer, Gregory of Tours (d. 594),[34] this narrative concerns a group of Christian youths who fled the persecution of the third-century pagan Roman emperor Decius (249–51) and hid in a cave, where they slept for a couple of hundred years, waking to find themselves in a now Christian land. The Qur'an recounts this basic story line, but abbreviates it very considerably, though it still keeps some of the original details, such as the sending of one of the sleepers' number, upon their waking, to go and buy food in the town with their old coins, and also the presence of a guardian figure – specified as a dog in the Qur'an, as opposed to the watcher/angel (*'īrā*) of the Syriac accounts.[35] Moreover, the narrative is focused, as it is in 2:259, on the overall theme of the signs of God's power, for which these events serve as a vivid illustration.

It is perhaps worth mentioning in passing another example of the problem of revising the Qur'an according to what seems to make better sense. The Qur'an introduces the account of what is known in Christian texts as the "sleepers of Ephesus" with the words: "Do you not think that the companions of the cave and *al-raqīm* are a wonderful example of our signs?" (18:9). The mention of *al-raqīm* is at first sight puzzling and the explanations of Muslim commentators – some sort of inscription, from the meaning of the root "to make an imprint"; a place name connected with the cave; the name of the dog that features in the Qur'anic version of the

[34] Guidi, *Testi Orientali*; Gregory of Tours, *Passio sanctorum martyrum*.

[35] The Muslim aversion to dogs led to some attempts to explain away the word *kalb*, either as a personal name (perhaps of the companions' cook), or as a mistake for *kāli'*, an interesting example of a medieval Muslim emendation of the Qur'an.

story – have been deemed wanting by modern scholars, who have come up with a variety of suggestions:[36]

أَمْ حَسِبْتَ أَنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيمِ كَانُوا مِنْ آيَاتِنَا عَجَبًا

> Revised reading (Torrey): "Do you not think that the people of the cave and Decius (*wa-dqīs*) were a wonderful example of Our signs?"
> Revised reading (Bellamy): "Do you not think that the sleeping people of the cave (*al-raqūd*) were a wonderful example of Our signs?"
> Revised reading (Luxenberg): "Do you not think that the people of the cave and the sleep (*al-ruqād*) were a wonderful example of Our signs?"

Torrey's and Bellamy's emendations make reasonable sense, but both require a degree of change to the original script that could not easily result from a copyist's error. Luxenberg, like Bellamy, was attracted by the similarity of the root *rqm* to the root *rqd*, which means 'sleep', a key motif of the story. Luxenberg's emendation necessitates less change than Bellamy's, but it also reads less smoothly. The most popular explanation of medieval Muslim commentators was that the word referred to an inscription of some sort.[37] Although this might seem odd at first, if we turn to the verse homily of the Syriac author Jacob of Serugh (d. 521) on this story, we find the following information:

> There were there two sophists, sons of the leading men,
> and they reckoned that the Lord would resurrect them (the youths),
> so they made a tablet of lead and placed it by them;
> on it they wrote down the names of these Children of Light,

[36] TORREY, "Three Difficult Passages"; BELLAMY, "Some Proposed Emendations"; LUXENBERG, *Syro-Aramaic Reading*, 80–85. See also GRIFFITH, "Christian Lore and the Arabic Qur'ān", 125–27.

[37] Thus al-Ṭabarī notes in his Qur'an commentary on this word:
أولى هذه الأقوال بالصواب في الرقيم أن يكون معنيا به: لوح أو حجر أو شيء كُتب فيه كتاب. وقد قال أهل الأخبار: إن ذلك لوح كتب فيه أسماء أصحاب الكهف.

and why the young men had gone to hide in the cave,
and at what time they had fled from the presence of the emperor Decius.[38]

This came to be important later when the emperor Theodosius (408–50) was summoned and arrived on the scene, and was able to read for himself on the lead tablet what had happened to these youths. Another possibility is that *al-raqīm*, "the imprinted", refers to the coins used by one of the youths to buy food in town upon awakening, as is mentioned by the Syriac texts and the Qur'an (18:19). They are the means by which the youth's secret is first revealed and are designated in the Syriac by the word *ṭab'ā* (*men haw ṭab'ā d-malkē ḥanpē shqalw hwā 'amhūn*), "stamp" or "impress", which could reasonably be translated by *al-raqīm*. This may not be right, but it does show that we should not rush to emend the text of the Qur'an or to dismiss the ideas of medieval Muslim commentators on it before giving both due consideration.

Abimelech and the figs

There are a couple of elements of the story in Qur'an 2:259 that we have not yet discussed; the first is the identity of "the township which had fallen into ruin" and of the person who questioned God's ability to revive it. The majority of Muslim commentators were in agreement that the former was Jerusalem, but were divided over whether the latter was Jeremiah (sometimes identified with al-Khiḍr) or Ezra ('Uzayr in Arabic).[39] Both of these prophets were connected by the writings attributed to them with the sack of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. Yet in the works of Jewish and Christian exegetes neither was known to have undergone a lengthy period of sleep. This honour went to the Ethiopian Abimelech, the faithful

[38] Translated by BROCK, "Jacob of Serugh's poem on the Sleepers of Ephesus", 25 (lines 68–72).

[39] Jeremiah tends to be regarded as the more likely contender and al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, 1.647–8, has him perform exactly the same actions as Abimelech does in *4 Baruch* (except that he sleeps for 70 years, which, interestingly, is the figure given in the Coptic version of this text – see note 45 below). The Muslim tradition would seem to have omitted the minor characters of Abimelech and Baruch and assigned their roles to Jeremiah. For full discussion see SCHÜTZINGER, "Die arabische Jeremia-Erzählungen", 2–8.

servant of Jeremiah, who asked God to reward his servant for his loyal service (he twice freed his master from imprisonment) by sparing him from the destruction of Jerusalem. His story is told by a Greek apocryphal text known as *4 Baruch* or "the things omitted from Jeremiah" (*Paraleipomena Jeremiou*).[40] Just before the siege of the holy city commenced, Abimelech was sent by Jeremiah to collect some figs to give to the sick, and having picked a few and put them in his basket, he lay down under a tree to rest. God, respecting the promise he had made to Jeremiah, put him to sleep for sixty-six years.

When Abimelech awakes, he assumes that, like the man of Qur'an 2:259 and the companions of the cave, he has only slept for a little while (*oligon*). He goes off to Jerusalem, but, like the youth standing before Ephesus, is confused by the changed appearance of the city. He asks an old man about the whereabouts of Jeremiah, who tells him that the prophet is now in captivity in Babylon with much of Jerusalem's Jewish population. Abimelech argues that not enough time has elapsed for all this to have happened, and he remarks upon the freshness of his figs to confirm how little time can have gone by. But the old man points to the fields, observing that the crops have not yet matured and figs are not yet in season. The figs, then, serve the same purpose as the coins of the sleepers of the cave– in both cases they are out of their proper time, an anachronism, and so make clear to their owners that they too are an anachronism. Abimelech was next taken by an angel of the Lord to see Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, who, on seeing the figs, proclaims:

> 6:5. Look at this basket of figs, for behold, they are sixty-six years old and have not become shrivelled or gone bad (*ouk emaranthēsan oudhe ōzesan*), but they are dripping milky juice (*alla stazousi tou galaktos*).

[40] In the Bible (Jer. 39:16–18) Jeremiah's servant (called Ebedmelech rather than Abimelech) is told by God that he will be spared the destruction of Jerusalem, but it is not revealed how this comes about and it is this gap that *4 Baruch* fills. Since it draws upon the first-century Syriac text *2 Baruch* (which does not mention Abimelech), *4 Baruch* is usually dated to the late first/early second century AD (see HERZER, *4 Baruch*, xxx–xxxvi). For earlier scholarship on the link between Q 2:259 and Abimelech/Ebedmelech see SCHÜTZINGER, "Die arabische Jeremia-Erzählungen", 9–13.

The figs dripping with milky juice echo the "food and drink" of Qur'an 2:259, as indeed was realised by Muslim commentators, who explain the words in the Qur'an as a reference to fruits and their juice,[41] even though they attribute them to Jeremiah rather than Abimelech. The same observation, "they have not gone bad", is found in both texts, and the point of this statement, which Luxenberg had thought so irrational, now becomes clear: the figs are fresh and yet it is not their season, which occasions a moment of *anagnōrisis* in the food's owner, a sudden realisation of the truth about his situation and how long he has slept.[42]

Though 4 Baruch is set in the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, it is an early Christian text, and one that emphasises the idea of the resurrection. The verb used for Abimelech's sleep and awakening, *anapausis* and *exypnizein*, allude to the sleep of death and the entry into eternal life. The ripe flesh and juice of the figs symbolises the fleshly home (*sarkikos oikos*), the dwelling place of the soul, which shall not rot, but will be reserved for the bodily resurrection promised to the righteous, as is indicated by what Baruch goes on to say to Abimelech after his exclamation about his ripe figs:

> Thus will it be for you, my flesh, if you do the things commanded you by the angel of righteousness. He who preserved the basket of figs, the same one will again preserve you by his power (6.6–7).

Bodily resurrection is also a major theme in the Qur'an, and indeed it links the stories of the companions of the cave and the subject of verse 2:259. In both cases, the sleepers are put to sleep and roused from it directly by God, the verb for the latter action being *ba'atha*, which is also employed in the context of the resurrection of the God-fearing on Judgement Day. In both cases too, the sleepers are asked how long they remained (*kam labithtum*) in their respective sleeping spots, and this same question is,

[41] For example, al-Ṭabarī in his commentary on this verse (*Jāmi'*, 4.596) quotes the paraphrase of Isma'īl al-Suddī (d. 774): "Look at your food {of dates and grapes/min al-tīn wa-l-'inab} and your drink {of juice/*min al-'aṣīr*}".

[42] I should note that LUXENBERG, *Syro-Aramaic Reading*, 194–95, makes clear that he is aware of the postulated link between Qur'an 2:259 and the story of Abimelech, but he prefers the option of a Syriac reading.

according to Qur'an 23:113, put to the souls of the departed lined up on Judgement Day, meaning how long had they remained on the earth. In all three cases, the answer is the same: "a day or a part of a day" (*yawman aw ba'ḍa yawmin*), though it is a common perception of long sleepers that they have only dozed a brief while, as for example in the tale of Abimelech above and also in the Greek myth of Epimenides (*nomizōn ep' oligon kekoimēsthai*), who sleeps for fifty-seven years in a cave in Crete.[43] These parallels again reinforce the link between sleep and death, and between death and resurrection, and also buttress the Qur'an's teaching of the bodily resurrection.

The second and last element of the story of verse 2:259 that remains to be discussed is the man's donkey. One could try and explain this detail away, as Luxenberg does, replacing the Arabic word for "donkey" (*ḥimār*) with the Syriac word for "perfection" (*gemārā*). Indeed, one does not need to turn to Syriac for this reinterpretation; the Arabic root underlying the word "donkey" conveys the sense of redness, ruddiness, and one could stretch this to healthiness. Both the Syriac "perfection" and the Arabic "ruddiness/healthiness" would seem to fit well with the remaining portion of the Qur'anic verse, which speaks of Abimelech's rejuvenation: the re-knitting of his bones and re-clothing with flesh, itself an allusion to Ezekiel's vision of how God spoke to dry bones, saying:

> Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live: I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord (37:5–6).

One could cast around for parallels in other traditions from which the Qur'an might have borrowed, such as the Talmudic tale of the enigmatic Ḥoni the Circle-Drawer, a holy man and miracle-worker of the first century BC, who fell asleep for 70 years and upon waking saw that his donkey was still alive and had sired many offspring.[44] Otherwise, one could regard the donkey as a narrative elaboration that took place in the Arabic-speaking

[43] Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum*, 1.109.

[44] For references and previous scholarship see SCHÜTZINGER, "Die arabische Jeremia-Erzählungen", 12–13. Note that again food plays a role in indicating the passage of time, for the first thing Ḥoni sees when he awakes is a man picking carobs, and when he asks

monotheist circles of West Arabia; the same goes, perhaps, for the dog who acts as a guardian in the tale of the companions of the cave.

Conclusion

From what we have said, it would seem certain that the story of Abimelech and the figs, as expounded in 4 Baruch, underlies Qur'an 2:259. The same story appears in a Coptic Jeremiah apocryphon that was copied in the seventh century, so we know that it was still in circulation in the Near East at the time of Muhammad.[45] However, like many of the narratives from Bibical and extra-Biblical texts in the Qur'an, it is recounted in an elliptic and allusive manner such that one could not understand it if one did not already know the story. This leads us to one of two conclusions: either the Qur'an as we have it has been abridged or these texts were already very well known to Muhammad's audience. I favour the latter explanation and, returning to my first point about the status of Arabic, I would suggest that Arabophone Christianity was a lot more developed than has previously been thought. A careful analysis of a variety of texts, including papyri and inscriptions, reveals that places like Najran, Hira, Petra, Nessana and Jabiya were home to substantial communities of Arabic-speaking Christians.[46] Christian missionaries usually carried out their proselytization by teaching Christian texts in their target audience's native language, even devising a script for it if necessary. In the third to fifth centuries AD this is accomplished for Coptic, Armenian, Georgian and Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and it seems reasonable to assume that it was done for Arabic too. This would help to explain the emergence of the Arabic script at this time, which is being used by the aspiring Christian Arab provincial elite of the Byzantine Empire.[47] And it has recently been argued that the Gospel and the Psalms had already been translated into Arabic by the

him "are you the man who planted the tree?", he is told that he is his grandson whereupon "he exclaimed: It is clear that I slept for seventy years".

45 See KUHN, "A Coptic Jeremiah Apocryphon", 97. The story of Abimelech/Ebedmelech is recounted in paragraphs 22 and 38–40 (*ibid.*, 293–94 and 320–24).

46 Many of them are analysed by JALLAD, *Ancient Levantine Arabic*, for what they can tell us about pre-Islamic Arabic.

47 See my "Epigraphy and the Linguistic Background to the Qur'an", 57–60, and "Late Roman Provincia Arabia".

sixth century.[48] In short, it seems very likely that a monotheist vocabulary had begun to be elaborated in Arabic in the century or so before Muhammad, via interaction with other Christian traditions, and so we do not have to assume, with Mingana and Luxemberg, that it had to be created at short notice by wholesale appropriation of Aramaic texts.[49] What we can assume, though, is that this Arabic religious vocabulary evolved in dialogue with Aramaic-speakers/Aramaic texts, in particular with the Peshitta Bible, which was the most authoritative version of the Christian Scripture in the Aramaic-speaking lands of the Near East in the sixth century. This would then open up a whole new avenue of research, namely the reconstruction of pre-Islamic theological discourse in Arabic.[50]

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48 Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels*; Jallad, *Ancient Levantine Arabic*, 143–67 (he re-dates to the 4–5th century AD an Arabic gloss on a Greek Psalms text that had originally been dated to the 8–9th century).

49 And so we can do away with the old notion, which still lingers on, that Muhammad was personally responsible for all the theological vocabulary and concepts that we find in the Qur'an and that the Qur'an is full of foreign words (as opposed to words ultimately of foreign origin, but subsequently naturalised in Arabic).

50 Luxenberg gives a number of pointers – and indeed it is in this respect that his work might yield more insights. See note 4 above and *Syro-Aramaic Reading*, 210–11, where he notes the parallel between Qur'an 24:31 ("let them [believing women] not stamp their feet [*lā yaḍribna bi-arjulihinna*] to give knowledge of the finery they conceal") and Isaiah 3:16 ("[the women of Zion] walk and trip along with their feet tinkling [from their ankle-rings] as they go") and plausibly infers that the Qur'an is here translating from the Peshitta Bible, which has *mṭarrpān b-reglayhēn*, rather than from the Hebrew Bible, which has *ṭāfōf b-raglēhem*. This was already noticed by Wilhelm Gesenius, whom Luxenberg (ibid., 211 n. 277) – probably wrongly – accuses of focusing on the wrong verb (the later *tʻakkasnāh*).

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Chick-Lit in the Hijaz: Why Historians should sometimes be more frivolous

Anna Akasoy

Historians and historical fiction: a difficult relationship

The methodological tidal wave that accompanied the linguistic turn and transformed the academic study of history so profoundly also influenced the historiography of the Islamic world. It is nowadays widely acknowledged that texts such as the prophetic Sīras by Ibn Isḥāq and Ibn Hishām or al-Ṭabarī's History of Prophets and Kings can be examined from literary points of view. Publications such as Boaz Shoshan's Poetics of Islamic Historiography, Tayeb El-Hibri's Parable and Politics in Early Islamic History or the collected volumes edited by Stefan Leder (to which Wim Raven has contributed), Philip Kennedy and Julia Bray testify to the fruitfulness of this tendency.[1]

Historians are much more reluctant, however, to switch perspective by considering literature as an exercise of history-writing. More specifically, they tend to dismiss much modern historical fiction as superficial and cliché-ridden, often resenting the role novelists claim as interpreters and popularizers, who, they complain, fail to draw a clear line between what they 'borrow' from scholarship and their own imagination. Historical novels are informative perhaps as far as the authors, their readership

I would like to thank Chase Robinson for his comments on an earlier version of this article.

1 Stefan LEDER, ed., *Story-telling in the Framework of Non-fictional Arabic Literature*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998; Philip F. KENNEDY, ed., *On Fiction and Adab in Medieval Arabic Literature*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005; Julia BRAY, ed., *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam*. London: Routledge, 2006. Wim RAVEN's 'The Biography of the Prophet and its Scriptural Basis' is on pp. 421–432 in LEDER's volume. See also Boaz SHOSHAN, *Poetics of Islamic Historiography. Deconstructing Ṭabarī's History*. Leiden: Brill, 2004 and Tayeb EL-HIBRI, *Parable and Politics in Early Islamic History. The Rashidun Caliphs*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

and modern images of historical characters are concerned, but they cannot be relied upon to tell us anything about the past. And they certainly do not realize what some promise. Hilary Mantel, currently one of the most highly acclaimed authors of historical fiction, postulated an enormous ambition for the genre. While an author could not change the past, 'she presumes to know the secrets of the dead and the mechanics of history'.[2] According to the consensus of the profession, such insights are entirely beyond the grasp of the genuine historian.

Still, I should like to suggest that historians have something to gain from reading popular historical fiction, for all its ambition.

First of all, fiction is beneficial for the mind and may be useful for historians no matter what the story is about. In an article published on March 17, 2012 in The New York Times, Annie Murphy Paul examined for the general reader what neuroscience has to say about reading fiction, emphasizing that it improves cognitive skills and empathy (e.g., the ability to change perspectives and to put ourselves in another person's shoes). Although historians know all too well that they cannot read the thoughts of a person long dead, they are familiar with the exercise of changing perspective. Why not take a frivolous step, then, and find inspiration in the work of novelists who deal with the same characters and events that we seek to illuminate?

A recent trend in Western literature: historical fiction on early Islam

In what follows, four recently published historical novels, each set in early Islamic Arabia, will illustrate what I have in mind. All of them were written in English. Three of the novels, Kamran Pasha's *Mother of the Believers* and Sherry Jones's *The Jewel of Medina* and its sequel, *The Sword of Medina*, recount Aisha's life; Ann Chamberlin's *The Woman at the Well* features Khālid ibn al-Walīd.[3] Unlike the numerous examples of strongly

[2] In an interview with Larissa MacFarquhar ('The Dead are Real. Hilary Mantel's Imagination') published on October 15, 2012 in The New Yorker.

[3] Kamran PASHA, *Mother of the Believers. A Novel of the Birth of Islam* (published in 2009 by Washington Square Press); Sherry JONES, *The Jewel of Medina* (published in 2008 by Beaufort Books) and *The Sword of Medina. A Novel* (published in 2009 by Beaufort

narrativized history-writing, often produced by professional historians for a general readership, these are explicitly presented by the authors and marketed by publishers as fiction.

The three Aisha novels follow the conventional narrative of early Islamic history from the time of Aisha's childhood until the aftermath of the Battle of the Camel. By putting Aisha at the centre of events and focussing on her view of and role in these events, they open up perspectives that are meant to give voice to an authentic young woman rather than the Aisha of *isnads*, the authenticator of prophetic stories.

In Mother of the Believers, Aisha tells the story of her life to her nephew Ibn al-Zubayr. Her account is very much in line with the traditional picture of the beginnings of Islam that is also often presented in literature written by scholars for a general Western audience. At one point, however, his account may be critically received by such a readership: Pasha endorses the traditional narrative according to which Aisha was indeed only nine years old when her marriage with Muhammad was consummated. As the author explains, 'The reason I have done this is to show that it is foolish to project modern values on another time and world.'[4] As we shall see later, modern concerns are not entirely absent from *Mother of the Believers*, but Pasha's agenda is less marked by promoting specific values by identifying precedents in the past. He rather hopes that his work may inaugurate a different kind of debate about Muhammad and Islam. 'I encourage those who disagree with my presentation to write books that reflect the truth as their hearts see it. In fact, I hope a day comes when novels about Prophet Muhammad, Aisha, and Ali become as commonplace in Western literature as the diverse and beloved books on historical figures such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, and Queen

Books); Ann CHAMBERLIN, *The Woman at the Well* (published in 2011 by Epigraph Publishing). Further examples include Kader ABDOLAH's novel about the compilation of the Qur'an (translated from Dutch into German and published in 2009 as Mohammad, der Prophet by Claassen), and scenes involving the pre-Islamic goddesses in Nedim GÜRSELS' autobiographical Allah'ın Kızları (published in 2008 by Doğan Kitap). An academic study of Aisha is Denise SPELLBERG, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past. The Legacy of 'A'isha Bint Abi Bakr*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. Details of the scandal which preceded the publication of JONES's Jewel can be readily found on the internet.

4 PASHA, *Mother of the Believers*, XIII. Aisha's age when the marriage was consummated is also an important concern for scholars who write about Muhammad for a general Western readership. See Jonathan A.C. BROWN, *Muhammad. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 76–78.

Elizabeth I.'[5] Pasha, it seems, would like to turn Muhammad from a figure of religion, where his status elevates him high above other mortals, into a figure of human history, where he has many peers.

The Jewel of Medina focuses on the accusation of adultery directed against Aisha. Here, the provocation lies in Aisha's coquettish behaviour. The novel opens with her return to Medina after she is left behind in the desert and discovered by a young man, Ṣafwān, who brings her home; it then narrates events that precede and follow this crucial event. Aisha has what almost amounts to a fling with this childhood friend of hers, and is caught between passion and love, freedom and duty. It is only after this incident that the marriage between Muhammad and Aisha is consummated, which takes place half-way through the book. The sequel, *The Sword of Medina*, which resumes the story after Muhammad's death, focuses on Aisha's flirtations with her cousin Ṭalḥa and the conflict with Ali. While the Jewel is told only from Aisha's point of view, the Sword switches between Aisha and Ali. His recommendation to Muhammad to divorce her after the Ṣafwān incident instils in Aisha a desire for revenge, which ultimately leads to the Battle of the Camel.

The fourth novel, *The Woman at the Well*, takes place largely in the same historical period and region, but is set in a different milieu than that of Muhammad and Aisha and presents other characters. The protagonist of the novel is Rayah, a young Muslim girl who belongs to a line of blue-eyed women with the magical powers of seers and healers. In stories about her female ancestors, the mystery of her genealogy is gradually solved (Khālid ibn al-Walīd turns out to be her grandfather) and the story of the transition from *Jāhiliyya* to Islam is told. The narrative switches between different women and Khālid, who is dictating his memories.

Before turning in more detail to some specific features of these novels and their benefits for historians of early Islam, a few comments regarding the genre of historical fiction and the choice of this genre for telling the story of early Islam are in place.

[5] Pasha, *Mother of the Believers*, xiv. For such author's notes as a typical feature of historical novels see Jerome de Groot, *The Historical Novel* (London/New York: Routledge, 2010), 6–7.

The provocation and the promise of historical fiction on early Islam

Explicitly fictional accounts of the earliest days of the Islamic religion, albeit historically founded, appear to be a Western phenomenon. The enormous vitality of this literary genre in the West explains in part why these events became the subject of novels, but in the Middle East too authors have been writing historical fiction for several decades. While modern Arabic historical fiction has chosen the Muslim conquests as a subject, authors mostly seem to have stayed away from such religiously charged subjects as the life of Muhammad, his wives and companions.[6] In cinematography, there is the famous example of Muṣṭafā ʿAqqād whose film about the life of the prophet attracted great controversy in the 1960s and 1970s in Egypt.[7] Apart from the fact that religious figures are bound to be controversial material for biography, the film necessarily created the additional difficulty of visual representation. Likewise, the choice of fiction as an art form may be the most controversial decision the authors of novels set in the early Islamic Hijaz have made. Kamran Pasha, as mentioned above, considers the possibility of fictionalizing a historical person as a way of treating him like any other famous man of the past. In other words, it is not so much the specific representation of Muhammad and his contemporaries which is provocative, but the fact that they are the protagonists of novels. While deviations from the traditional account may be read as a challenge, accordance with this story may suggest that the conventional version too is 'merely' fiction.

Another reason why biographies of Muhammad have stirred controversy in the Middle East is their potential for sectarian conflict.[8] A noteworthy difference between the Aisha novels and conventional historiography is that the former attempt to reconcile Sunnis and Shiites by pre-

6 For Jūrjī Zaydān's (1861–1914) historical novels see, for example, Roger Allen, "The Beginnings of the Arabic novel," in *Modern Arabic Literature*, ed. M. M. Badawi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 187, and 188 for Faraḥ Anṭūn's (1874–1922) novel about the Arab conquest of Jerusalem.

7 Werner Ende, "Muṣṭafā ʿAqqād's «Muḥammad» Film und seine Kritiker," in *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Vorderen Orients. Festschrift für Bertold Spuler zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Hans R. Roemer (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 32–52.

8 See the article by Ende mentioned in the previous footnote and Rotraud Wielandt, *Offenbarung und Geschichte im Denken moderner Muslime*. Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1971.

senting the split as a tragedy unintended by the protagonists. Jones especially makes an effort to offer a 'balanced' narrative. Her narrative either clearly reflects one point of view which is also open in its bias, or both positions are represented. As the author explains in her preface, 'Whatever your opinion of A'isha, she remains larger than life, an unforgettable heroine who spoke her mind, followed her heart, loved her God, and won a place in her community and in history as the Mother of the Believers.'[9] By acknowledging that readers have different opinions of Aisha, Jones accommodates the view which is more sympathetic of her antagonist Ali. In the novel itself, their premonitions of future conflict make Aisha and Ali uncomfortable, but only when it is too late can they find it in themselves to overcome their resentment and appreciate each other's qualities. While Jones follows a Shiite point of view by giving credence to the accusation of adultery with Ṣafwān, she reduces the moral significance of the incident. It is not full-fledged adultery and so 'meaningless' to Aisha. Likewise, in the three novels Aisha is given religious authority, which mirrors the Sunni perspective, but she acquires her insight as redemption following repentance and therefore as a counterpart to her flaws as a very immature teenager.

Historical fiction offers the opportunity for rewriting history, if only by changing the point of view. All four novels exemplify this. It depends on the readership though where precisely they recognize a challenge to the established narrative. Some readers may see the greater challenge in the art form, others in the fact that the conventional picture is slightly redressed with the help of a cherished character such as Aisha, and others may see it in the resurrection of a culture that has been demonized.

Where and how exactly a novel about a religious figure challenges established narratives also depends on a few fundamental choices concerning the plot. The four novels face many of the same difficulties which the common historical milieu of their plots engenders, but there is also a marked contrast between the Aisha novels and *The Woman at the Well* which derives from the difference between historical and fictitious events and protagonists. While the main characters are in all cases used in order to introduce a historical culture and period, it is because of the protagonists of the Aisha novels that this period is of particular interest in the first

9 *Jewel of Medina*, IX.

place.[10] Unlike Jones and Pasha, Chamberlin is free to create her principal female characters from scratch with all their likeable and unlikeable features. Jones and Pasha, on the other hand, whether they want it or not, confirm or challenge established images and sympathies.

Once again, there are interesting parallels with cinematography. In movies set in early Islamic times, Egyptian filmmakers preferred fictitious characters which allowed them to cover a period of great interest to their audiences, but avoided those historical figures who are particularly sensitive, not least because of sectarian conflicts.[11] Curiously, Khālid in *The Woman at the Well* is initially also reluctant to describe his encounter with the prophet, but is pushed by his scribe to speak about these events as well. 'All historians from this day forward must do so.'[12] It seems as if the historical character encouraged the modern author to write about the most sensitive and most revered of all men.

Feminism, historical fiction and early Islam

The most striking common feature of all four novels is the empowerment of women, notably Aisha and Hind. Aisha, like Chamberlin's Rayah, is a precocious little girl. In Jones's novels, she is also a tomboy – and how she was able to wield a sword whilst constantly struggling with her 'wrapper' is not quite clear. Pasha's Aisha dreams of visiting foreign places and going as far as China, but such options are unavailable for women. The following scene from *The Woman at the Well*, in which the soothsayer Umm Taghlib is threatened with being stoned, is representative of the situation of women in all four novels: 'Dignitaries, soldiers, condemned and executioners, and the mob of men formed themselves into a procession. The last knot in this winding rope were the women, whose mothers or sisters had met such a fate. Women who knew if Umm Taghlib could die thus knew, how easy it might be for them to meet the same death for similar crimes. Or women who saw, in the murderous anger of their menfolk, how that

[10] About pars pro toto in historical fiction see Hans Vilmar GEPPERT, *Der Historische Roman. Geschichte umerzählt – von Walter Scott bis zur Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Francke, 2009), 171–172.

[11] ENDE "Muṣṭafā ʿAqqād's «Muḥammad» Film und seine Kritiker," 35.

[12] *Woman at the Well*, 11.

same anger might so readily fall on them for no reason at all, in the privacy of their homes. For the moment, Umm Taghlib served as a scapegoat for evil that wasn't sin but a common condition of women, falling like rain on the just and the unjust alike. So it was no use, really, trying to find anyone to blame. Women could only weep.'[13] Although systematically victimized, women are much tougher and stronger than men. They have embraced and transcended their suffering. With their inventiveness and their deeper insights into the workings of men and nature, they often turn desperate situations to their advantage. In some areas of political relevance too men accept their authority. In *The Woman at the Well*, women are repositories of genealogical knowledge and consulted in such a capacity.[14]

This subtle female empowerment features prominently in historical fiction in general, usually in novels written by women for women. The literary agent Irene Goodman has discussed the appeal of one particular woman, Anne Boleyn, whom she calls the 'poster girl of historical fiction'. Her story 'has sex, adultery, pregnancy, scandal, divorce, royalty, glitterati, religious quarrels, and larger-than-life personalities.'[15] Jerome de Groot asks 'do historical novels cater to international audiences who might fetishise epochs from the history of another nation?'[16] The Tudors are an especially good example of fetishizing an epoch, and Goodman's observation explains in part why this is the case.

The story of early Islam may well stem from Tudor England since the same ingredients make Aisha's story so attractive to the contemporary reader. While many readers will appreciate her story as an introduction to a period they know very little about, many others are likely to be already familiar with the events, if only from the history channel, and will read such historical novels as the latest instalment of a story which is expected to change its face throughout the ages – a modern version of the poetic principle of presenting ever new versions of *qifā nabki*, or, to choose an example from Western cinematography, of finding ever more contemporary versions of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy.

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13 *Woman at the Well*, 287.

14 *Woman at the Well*, 6.

15 Irene GOODMAN, "Why Anne Boleyn is the Poster Girl of Historical Fiction," Solander: *The Magazine of the Historical Novel Society* 9/2 (2005): 15. For this tendency in historical novels see DE GROOT, *The Historical Novel*, 52–78.

16 DE GROOT, *The Historical Novel*, 95.

The silence of women which has been perpetuated in centuries of scholarship is perhaps one of the most consistent problems of modern history-writing. For authors of historical fiction, this may be an advantage; they can use their imagination much more freely and unconstrained by historical sources and research. They do not even have to resort to inventing entirely new characters. This situation also leaves more space to promote a certain political agenda, in the case of Western novels about Muhammad, his wives and companions social justice and women's rights. In both cases, there are parallels in modern Middle Eastern approaches to Prophetic biography. Not unlike those who practice Christian liberation theology, Muslim intellectuals have applied the principles of historical materialism to the early days of Islam, although they did not select the genre of historical fiction to do so.[17] The ideal of economic justice is also to a certain extent present in our novels. Pasha's Muhammad is popular among Mecca's social underdogs and Jones's Ali hopes to win Aisha over for restoring Islam 'to its original purpose: that of glorifying al-Lah, not men, and of caring for all God's children, not just a privileged few'.[18] All things considered, however, the issue of economic privilege is a side concern compared with gender politics.

In the Aisha novels, the empowerment of women is achieved not merely by giving voices to female characters. It is deeply connected with what is presented as the original intentions of Islam, an interpretation in line with modern Islamic feminism.[19] 'Before islam, women were as chattel. Now we could inherit property, testify in hearings, and write provisions for divorce into our wedding contracts. Hadn't those rights come at al-Lah's behest? Muhammad's revelations proved that God valued women, also.'[20] The Aisha novels praise Muhammad while blaming the brutish and fanatical Umar for denying rights which the Prophet had granted them. This too is in line with the tendency of feminists to criticize later Muslims for imposing the patriarchal principles which mark the religion today.

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17 For examples see ENDE, "Muṣṭafā 'Aqqād's «Muḥammad» Film und seine Kritiker," 45ff for interest of Egyptian intellectuals in prophetic biography.

18 *Sword of Medina*, 217.

19 See, for example, Fatima MERNISSI, T*he Veil and the Male Elite. A Feminist Interpretation of Islam*. Cambridge: Perseus Books, 1991, and the chapter on Leila AHMAD in *The New Voices of Islam. Reforming Politics and Modernity*. A Reader ed. Mehran KAMRAVA. London: Tauris, 2006.

20 Aisha in *Jewel of Medina*, 158.

'Muhammad wanted to give us freedom, but … the other men took it away.'[21] In *The Woman at the Well*, Khālid already anticipates such a development. Commenting on a passage about women in the Qur'an, he elaborates: 'I have no doubt there will come interpreters to put a thousand faces on such a thing, to preach their thousand interpretations from a thousand pulpits. Yes, even to send young men off to die for their interpretations. God knows, I was one of those young men – once. And God knows I didn't die. Yes, go and find your wise mullah this very moment …'[22] Jones's Ali joins the choir when he observes critically during Umar's rule: 'I wanted to return the faith to its origin – to restore equality among men, respect for women, and honesty and humility in government.'[23]

Turning the silent, historical Aisha into a spokeswoman for gender equality is especially effective, perhaps even more than the popular strategy of presenting Muhammad as a proto-socialist. For her perspective has the advantage of lending a normative dimension to this description of early Islam. Since she appears close to Muhammad, who cherishes her, it seems that she has been rightly granted religious authority. Yet, her perspective, especially as a very young woman, leaves room for error and different interpretations since she frequently questions her own intentions. Aisha's position as an advocate of modern values of gender equality is complicated by her role in sectarian conflicts. The same applies to the criticism of socio-economic inequality which is projected back into early Islamic times and bears a sectarian dimension.[24] The Aisha novels, however, develop a good way of dealing with such sectarian tensions that surface when the prophetic biography is used to promote modern political messages. They move within the sphere of conventional Sunni narratives, but the risk of opposing Shiite traditions or challenging other established interpretations is reduced by focusing on a character with obvious flaws.

Chamberlin's novel offers a contrasting picture of female life, which presents Islam not in an entirely positive light since it adopts the perspective of followers of the old religion. In fact, her tale seems to belong to

21 Aisha in *Jewel of Medina*, 11.
22 *Woman at the Well*, 176.
23 *Sword of Medina*, 112.
24 For associations between Shiism and an interpretation of early Islam from the point of view of historical materialism see ENDE, "Muṣṭafā ʿAqqād's «Muḥammad» Film und seine Kritiker," 48.

a different literary genre. The best-known example of feminist fantasy fiction is probably Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon* (published 1983). Like *The Woman at the Well*, this Arthurian novel posits a dichotomy between the old era, where female seers hold sway over the mother goddess's world (the mystical language of pregnancy and wombs also permeates Chamberlin's novel), and a new era with a monotheistic religion represented by men hostile to the women's knowledge and skills. In the old era, even men accept the power of the womb. Thus, reflecting on the barren womb of his third wife who became pregnant with a girl after a night of compassion, Khālid thinks about what it meant to have a baby girl: 'I did all of that hiding and sulking. Muhammad never told us not to do such things. He himself had but a single child, a daughter, blessings to her, come to adulthood; he knew what such grief was like. Perhaps this was the Hand of the Almighty, teaching the Seal of the Prophets His great compassion. In our language, the word for compassion comes from the same root as the womb's emptiness.'[25] Male genitalia in *The Woman at the Well* appear in a mutilated state, either because of circumcision or procedures which turn men into eunuchs. Typical of the genre, both Zimmer Bradley's and Chamberlin's novels clearly contain elements of fantasy such as *jinns*. Chamberlin's real magic is impossible and not mimetic and establishes another clear contrast to the Aisha novels.[26]

Likewise, although both fantasy novels contain elements of feminist writing, such as empowerment and female perspective, the tension between the old and the new eras is not resolved in a feminist spirit. They are not examples of counter-history. In *The Mists of Avalon*, Christian religion ultimately prevails when the cult of the Virgin Mary absorbs that of the female deity; the same can be said of Chamberlin's novel. Once she discovers it, Rayah embraces the gift of her 'pagan' mother, but she remains a pious Muslim and appeals to Allah instead of the female deities. Furthermore, if one understands a feminist narrative to undermine binaries and present 'continual resistance and critical reflection', *The Woman*

25 *Woman at the Well*, 94–5.

26 For this feature of fantasy literature see Jan SHAW, "Feminism and the Fantasy Tradition: The Mists of Avalon," in *A Companion to Arthurian Literature*, ed. Helen FULTON (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 463–477.

at the Well does not meet such criteria, but is rather satisfied with the harmony Rayah achieves.[27]

Historical fiction on early Islam: readership and appeal

For whom were these novels written? Given that historical novels feature among the most popular literary genres on the market and assuming that at least the publishers had a commercial interest, what can we say about audience? Since all these novels focus on the experience of women, albeit not exclusively, one supposes that they were written for a female readership. The Ya-Ya sisterhood in the early Islamic Hijaz appeals to those with a particular interest in spiritual powers of historical women. Western women with little previous knowledge and an open mind may find a sympathetic introduction to Islam, which has sometimes Christian undertones; an example is the conversion to Islam of Umar who deeply regrets the murder of his newly-born daughter: 'Umar ibn al-Khattab was freed. The man he had been, the murderer, the drunk, the adulterer, died. And the man who now walked purposefully through the cobbled alleys of Mecca had been born.'[28]

It is also of some significance that one of the novels, Mother of the Believers, was written by a Muslim who reveals his religious identity in the preface. Although Kamran Pasha tries to move Muhammad into a more mundane sphere, as mentioned above, he also contributes to the debate about the shape of the Islamic religion in the twenty-first century. The other authors too seem to have a sympathetic view of Islam and are trying to recover a more positive, modern and liberal image. While a voice is given to those who doubt the prophet, even within the community of believers, these challenges are ultimately retorted, often by explaining them as later distortions of the original message of Islam.

Some Muslim women may find that the presentations of Islam in the novels resonate with their own interpretations. Young Muslim women in particular can probably identify with Aisha, who shares their desire to

[27] For this definition of feminist literature see Jan SHAW, "Troublesome Teleri: Contemporary Feminist Utopianism in Marion Zimmer Bradley's Lady of Avalon," *Sydney Studies in English 35* (2009): 73–95.

[28] *Mother of the Believers*, 86.

have the same rights as men, and their struggle with obligation, piety, love etc. 'The injustice of how women are judged, by their features rather than the character of their souls, never outraged me more than at that moment.'[29] Which woman, young or old, is not familiar with this outrage? Given that the vast majority of historical voices of the Islam are male, and that the Qur'an too is usually recited by men, historical fiction with female protagonists is a way of making female voices heard without challenging the convention too much and without engaging in debates about historical sources. Sherry Jones has been sharply criticized for her account of Aisha's life, which in the opinion of some critics occasionally verges on soft porn.[30] Her intention, however, seems to be a positive portrayal and a gentle rather than a polemical contribution to the debate about Islam in the West.

Muslims typically insist on the human nature of Muhammad. Apart from implying a polemical response to the Christian doctrine of Jesus as the son of God, this makes Muhammad an approachable person. The Aisha novels also contain elements of such a down-to-earth veneration of Muhammad. They present the prophet as a DIY aficionado which a great aptness for practical matters. Furthermore, he is gentle, opposed to harshness and violence and enjoys the company of women, all of with makes him a very positive character and a model that is not too distant for emulation even in mundane matters.

Other features which typically attract a wide audience have nothing to do with religion. A typical feature of historical novels is exoticism. By evoking foreign smells, for example, authors try to draw in the readers.[31] In her author's note, Jones invites the reader 'on a journey to another time and place, to a harsh, exotic world of saffron and swordfights, of desert nomads living in camel's-hair tents, of caravans laden with Persian carpets and frankincense, of flowing colorful robes and kohl-darkened eyes and perfumed arms filigreed with henna.'[32] The neurological research referred to above confirms that we experience related sensations when reading such descriptions. Exoticism and Orientalism are virtually ubiquitous in

29 Aisha in *Mother of the Believers*, 160.
30 For Denise Spellberg's criticism see http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/14/books/review/Adams-t.html?_r=0 (last accessed 23 December 2012).
31 Geppert, *Der Historische Roman*, 169.
32 *Jewel of Medina*, VII.

the four novels and may have additional purposes. Muslims in the West, for example, may identify with the Orientalism in these novels insofar as it represents a positive notion of otherness.[33] In all four novels, this Orientalism is expressed in form of the sumptuous and exotic material culture even in the harsh Arabian desert. Another aspect that young Muslims in the West may identify with is the code-switching, especially in Jones's novels. They frequently address each other with 'yaa' and instead of 'mum' and 'dad', her Aisha calls her parents ummi and abi.

Imagination and history-writing: what historians can learn from historical fiction

These novels are striking expressions of the modern popular image of the protagonists of early Islam. In what follows, I would like to argue that historians concerned with this period may also find them interesting to consider in the context of their research. Even if we do not find the stories and the characters particularly plausible, we may still find that the historical settings have the plausibility the authors claim for them. By and large, the authors seem to have carried out reasonable research, and while it is certainly possible to identify mistakes (for example when Chamberlin and Jones make their characters use expressions from modern Lebanese dialect or terms of later Islamic history such as purdah and hatun), one should not dismiss this literature too easily. Scholars should acknowledge that historical fiction operates with its own poetics in which discourses of different truth claims are intertwined.[34] The same critical yardstick should not be applied to each and every sentence of such a novel.

One of the most important principles of historical fiction is the combination of sameness and difference, of balancing cultural translation and historical authenticity. Historians struggle with similar issues, both as readers of source material which works with literary representation, and as writers who try to bridge the gap between past realities and the way

[33] For 'Orientals' adopting Orientalizing traditions see also Donald S. Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La. Tibetan Buddhism and the West*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

[34] For the poetics of historical fiction see Geppert, *Der Historische Roman*, in particular chapter five.

they can be understood by a modern audience.[35] Some representations strike us as more plausible than others. We all have likely had the experience of reading a fictionalized account of historical times and responding immediately as to how believable we find it. If nothing else, examining the literary elements in modern historical fiction and trying to disentangle the different discourses of its poetics may give us a better sense of the ways we use our own imagination in exploiting our sources and reconstructing a foreign culture.

In an article about 'Wissenschaft und Phantasie', the medievalist Johannes Fried argued that imagination defines what we consider possible in our research.[36] When we look at a historical situation, we typically seek to explain why men acted in a certain way, what certain cultural practices meant, how past realities were captured in written text; we then we seek evidence in support of our provisional answers. Historical fiction often provides the reverse experience: we read things we cannot imagine.

Indeed, some scenes in the Aisha novels sound as if they had come straight out of a Hollywood movie. In *The Sword of Medina*, for example, Ali tells Aisha that Ṭalḥa has died:

"A'isha," I said when her tears had finally subsided, "remember what I said before. We cannot correct the errors that have been made, or bring back the lives lost. But we can give meaning to the sacrifice. We can join together, I and you, to do what we have both wanted to do: to return islam to its original vision." Her eyes flashed like daggers. "What does that mean to you, Ali? Power? Money? Status?" "Refuge for the poor, the orphans, and the weak," I said. "Recognition that we are all created from a single soul. Submission to the One God." She fell back, her eyes wide. "By al-Lah!" she whispered, "I and you want the same things." "You speak truly." I gripped the edges of my cushion. "A'isha, work with me. Together, we can make islam strong again, and we can prevent Mu'awiyya (!) from seizing the khalifa."[37]

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35 In her study of Aisha, Denise Spellberg writes that 'In this study, invention will not be shunned, but will instead be examined and utilized.' SPELLBERG, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 21.

36 Johannes FRIED, "*Wissenschaft und Phantasie. Das Beispiel der Geschichte,*" Historische Zeitschrift 263/2 (1996): 291–316.

37 *Sword of Medina*, 251.

Although many of us will find such scenes laughable, it might be worthwhile exploring why we consider them unlikely as representations of historical events. Is it simply their over-dramatic manner of speech? The condensing of larger conflicts into a personal encounter? The idea of an 'original' Islam at such an early point in the religion's history? The specific vision for such an original Islam? Understanding why we find certain things implausible may help us realize why we find others plausible.

A common feature of these novels and historical fiction in general, for example, is that characters make observations concerning the time they are living in and the politics that shape their lives. In *The Woman at the Well*, Khālid's father says about Byzantium and the Sasanians: 'They pay us … we who build our routes not with finely polished stones, but with living blocks of flesh-and-blood genealogies.'[38] Aisha sounds like a modern-day statesman: 'Our policy of religious tolerance was soon to have a proactive effect in generating support for our expansion.'[39] About Persians and Byzantines, she says 'Neither side had shown much compassion to the people of Egypt, who were merely pawns in the great game of empire.'[40] Characters often comment on what cultures have preceded theirs and remain manifest in buildings of former times. 'Ancient Tadmor spread its ruins around her. Rayah tried to keep her eyes on the rise ahead, where the mosque stood. But the building's exterior reminded her that before it had been converted to the revelation of Muhammad, blessings on him, it had been a Christian church. And before that, a pagan temple.'[41]

Although the interest in the palimpsestic seems a rather modern or even postmodern obsession, it apears unlikely that the early Muslims were completely oblivious to such cultural differences, but we don't have a good idea of how interested they were in these issues and how they would have described them. The same applies to an observation made by a Christian in Chamberlin's novel: '… when the Muslims came promising us, as fellow monotheists, to leave us our faith in peace, we and the Jews knew we must embrace them as liberators, not conquerors.'[42] We often present such explanations for the success of the Muslim conquests,

38 *Woman at the Well*, 83.
39 *Mother of the Believers*, 488.
40 *Mother of the Believers*, 488.
41 *Woman at the Well*, 65.
42 *Woman at the Well*, 164.

but would contemporaries have put this in so many words? In discussing different strands in historical fiction, Hans Vilmar Geppert distinguishes self-referential from lighter, more playful elements.[43] The truth is that even if novelists have a sense of what are 'authentic' statements of historical characters and what they add for their uninitiated readers, historians may find the different strands much more difficult to evaluate than we may think at first glance.

In other cases our imaginative techniques are not so different from those of the novelist. Their guesses about the state of the pre-canonical Qur'an in those early years, for example, may not be exactly what modern scholars of the text suggest, but one may as well think about the following scene. In *The Woman at the Well*, a family's treasure is described as follows: 'Upon the table lay an odd assortment of writings: parchments of different sizes, vellum, papyrus, the broken half of a pot, a stack of dried palm leaves, even the shoulder blade of a camel. This was the collection of Quranic verses which Sitt Umm Ali's pious relatives had gathered from their travels – to Bosra, Damascus, Jerusalem, Egypt. They bartered in this small oasis for the word of God, in this great market for an assured recitation in the exact cadence of the Prophet, and with an extra lump of the finest frankincense, a fair Kufic copy thrown in. The family owned nearly all of the sacred book now, each Surah written separately on what the recite had to hand.'[44] In *Mother of the Believers*, Aisha sounds strangely detached when she describes the following development: 'The Holy Book had never been compiled into one document during the Prophet's lifetime, primarily since he was illiterate, as were a great many of the Arab tribesmen, and symbols on a parchment were meaningless to them. Because of this stark reality, Muslims committed the Qur'an to memory and relayed its teachings orally. This system worked well in the early years of our faith, but as we came into contact with highly advanced civilizations where literacy was the norm, the need to present the Word of God to the new believers in written format became a priority.'[45] Although the historical Aisha would probably not have spoken in such a worldly-wise way about this development, they are in accordance with the way many modern historians see

[43] Geppert, *Der Historische Roman*, 182.
[44] *Woman at the Well*, 206–7.
[45] *Mother of the Believers*, 493.

the history of the Islamic scripture. Thinking about how the historical Aisha would have described this development instead may help us reconstruct a more plausible story.

There are other examples where Pasha, Jones and Chamberlin are hardly less convincing than historians. They present perfectly plausible accounts of the responses to the question of Muhammad's succession or to the growing number of invented reports about the Prophet. *Jinns* aside, Chamberlin gives a fairly plausible idea of what the polytheistic culture of Arabia may have been like. On the other hand, the novels tend to present Islam much more fully formed than is commonly assumed for this early period. Thus, it is already decided that Muhammad is the last prophet and ritual is as we know it from classical Islam. Religion is characterized by a settled piety, which leaves little room for the urgency of the early Meccan *suras*. Questions of theology and ritual such as the definition of *jihad*, the position of Muslim women in paradise or the status of martyrs are already explored in their full range of interpretations. If these novels are meant to offer an introduction to the Islamic religion, one can understand why these choices have been made. It might be interesting though to explore here as well why some of these descriptions do not strike us as particularly plausible historical reconstructions.

The same is true for a curious distinction between two different concepts of religion. 'Where there are men, there is dogma, and where there is dogma, there is blood', says Khālid ibn al-Walīd to his scribe in *The Woman at the Well*.[46] In the four novels, for women, religion boils down to nothing other than ritual. A woman in Chamberlin's novel describes the conversion of Zura's people to Christianity as 'They were washed in water as is their rite', upon which another woman says, 'He must have some power, this God, if his followers can afford to waste water for washing like that'.[47] Women of various faiths lend each other helping hands and even pray together. Their different rituals seem to be manifestations of a much older and intuitive female spirituality and religiosity. It is mostly their suffering which makes women join a transreligious community. In *Mother of the Believers*, Aisha recalls: 'I moved toward a woman of the Qurayza who could not have been older than my mother, her dark hair streaked with

46 *Woman at the Well*, 12.
47 *Woman at the Well*, 55.

gray, and embraced her. At that moment, we were neither Muslim nor Jew, neither friend nor foe. We were just women caught in a world that was bigger than us and we held each other tightly, sobbing in our shared grief at the tragedy of life in this cruel wilderness.'[48] In *The Woman at the Well*, this is put simply 'Women of any creed must stick together.'[49]

In *Mother of the Believers*, however, it is Hind who alerts her husband Abū Sufyān to the danger of the Jews joining Muhammad, since his views on religion are so similar to theirs. 'Abu Sufyan tried to find a response, but for once he was struck dumb. He had never paid much attention to Muhammad's theology.'[50] Given that Hind is a fierce and warlike person, this division between the manly concern in dogma and the womanly lack of interest is replicated here too. Modern historians struggle with the understanding of religion in past times and we usually do not even consider a gender dimension of this problem. The above may be an inflated contrast between male and female views of religion, but that does not mean that such differences did not exit.

Especially in Jones's novels, religion actually plays a surprisingly small role. Pasha lets Aisha say 'My fate was to be the mother of a nation',[51] an expression which to many modern readers will evoke the nation state rather than a religious community. Such an approach ties in with modern research that stresses the significance of kinship in the emergence of Islam. While the author of Mother of the Believers describes Muhammad's experience of the revelation in some detail, religion, god, dogma, spirituality, even ritual are surprisingly little explicitly present in the *Jewel* and *The Sword of Medina*. The enemy party is the Quraysh, not the unbelievers or polytheists. Religion is mostly the function of something else. We frequently ask ourselves what it meant to be a Muslim in those days and what, for example, the role of religion for the conquests was. I cannot say that I find the pictures painted in the novel particularly convincing, but at least they help to think more about the different options. Last but not least, it is curious that novels which deal with a subject that is important because of religion should give so little importance to religion.

48 *Mother of Believers*, 324.
49 *Woman at the Well*, 236.
50 *Mother of the Believers*, 136–7.
51 *Mother of the Believers*, 5.

Explanatory patterns

Historical fiction fills in gaps where academic historians remain silent. While we can be fairly certain that the historical Khālid ibn al-Walīd would not have committed his inner thoughts to writing or mused in sophisticated ways about history-writing and while Ali's elaborate self-doubts in *The Sword of Medina* betray a modern creator, we do not know what inner thoughts these historical men had instead. A common response to this problem among historians is to focus on the historical 'facts'. Thus, in his *Muhammad at Mecca*, W. M. Watt stated that 'the modern historian will … largely discount allegations of motives in his sources and will suggest his own motivations in the light of what he knows about the total pattern of the external actions of a man.'[52] To be sure, we may be able to reconstruct 'external actions', for example, that someone moved from A to B or that person X killed person Y. But if we restrict ourselves to aligning the empirical 'fact', which we can grasp, and a superficially corresponding motive, we often run the risk of overstating certain incentives such as material gains. Reading modern novelists may not lead to any increase in our knowledge of past times, but it does remind us of how limited our accounts sometimes are, as the following examples will show.

A hallmark of popular literature is the physiognomic reflection of character traits. Excess weight betrays laziness and greed, a prominent nose goes along with assertive behaviour. In the four novels, eye colours are a surprisingly prominent feature. The blue eye colour is a distinctive feature of the blessed women in *The Woman at the Well*. Aisha's special eyes were 'unlike any' Abu Bakr 'had ever seen before. Golden, like those of a lion, they seemed to glow with their own fire'.[53] Accordingly she says: 'I looked at Uthman, my gold eyes focused on him like a hawk.'[54] 'My mother's eyes glittered, as hard and black as onyx.'[55] Hind's eyes are 'Yellow green like a cat's, piercing in their intensity. They exuded pride and disdain, as well as a clear hint of danger.'[56] 'The most striking thing about

[52] William Montgomery WATT, *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), XIV. Quoted according to SPELLBERG, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 22–23.
[53] *Mother of the Believers*, 30.
[54] *Mother of the Believers*, 481.
[55] *Jewel of Medina*, 39.
[56] *Mother of the Believers*, 66.

the Prophet was his eyes, so black that it was difficult to discern his pupils and yet always filled with light. Few men could gaze deep into them for long. It is said that the eyes are the mirrors of the soul.'[57] So says Aisha in *Mother of the Believers*, but in *The Jewel of Medina*, she says about Muhammad 'His golden eyes softened, like honey in the sun.'[58] 'His eyes were like bronze mirrors that reflected only my loveliness and none of my flaws.'[59] 'I could feel Ali's intense green eyes on me.'[60] There is even 'a small gray cat that looked at me from atop a pile of rubbish with its mysterious yellow eyes'.[61]

Undoubtedly, such intuitive responses to other people and their bodily features are important explanations for our actions, but auratic compatibilities don't feature in history-writing. Jones's Ali says about Aisha: 'I was the one she hated, not my beliefs.'[62] Their mutual resentment is a gut-feeling which had grown for years before it festered in the aftermath of the Ṣafwān episode. Likewise, Aisha's relationship with Fatima is all too human. 'I and Fatima had not been friends. In truth, we had despised each other. We'd clashed since the day we'd met – not in the way Ali and I did, like sharpened blades, but more quietly, like rams butting heads over a fence.'[63] In this case too it is true that historians avoid writing about such personal sympathies and antipathies because we do not have any foundation for reconstructing them. We should, however, bear in mind that they influenced the way people acted in the past.

Conclusion

Academic studies of historical fiction often point out that the genre is frequently and too easily dismissed as lowbrow. In the opinion of many critics, history is an interesting extra to advertise these books, but apart from the historical setting there is little that makes them interesting.

57 *Mother of the Believers*, 58.
58 *Jewel of Medina*, 25.
59 *Sword of Medina*, 74.
60 *Mother of the Believers*, 452.
61 Aisha in *Mother of the Believers*, 316.
62 *Sword of Medina*, 121.
63 *Sword of Medina*, 27.

Although several counter-examples demonstrate that a setting in the past does not necessarily go along with a story of modest literary qualities, the four novels under consideration here hardly qualify as highbrow historical fiction. At least to the present reader, none of the authors succeeds in creating complex characters. There is too much action for that: people are always running, crying, shouting, rushing, yelling, shrieking, flying, leaping, snapping, gasping, hurrying, stomping, bumping, bolting, choking, swirling. Furthermore, like many other authors of historical fiction, Chamberlin's ambition is to write about what 'the people in the time of the Prophet … [were] thinking, doing, feeling',[64] but in this as well as in the other novels one cannot help the impression that the historical characters are explaining their world to a modern person in too artificial ways.

In a critical piece on the 'current superstars of British history', Sarah Dunant asks 'Is making the Tudors sexy a mistake?'. 'In the right hands,' the author and BBC presenter writes, 'imagination working its magic on a complex past could surely help to make better historians of us all.'[65] These four novels are a case in point.

As I have tried to show, historical fiction can serve as a reminder of questions that we too seldom ask. While most historians are aware of the biases of our sources as well as our own biases, which privilege certain and sometimes the same narratives, we fall too easily back into our old habits and stick to those aspects of the past where the sources are loquacious. Critical approaches in historical studies have tried to give greater prominence to those whose voices are less loud, mostly the poor and women. In historical fiction, the female perspective has probably exhausted its subversive potential, given that strong women have become such a popular topic of historical novels. Where exploiting the primary sources reaches a limit, historical fiction can still open perspectives for undermining established narratives in academia, for example, by giving greater prominence to the unwritten chemistry between two individuals.

Historical fiction, even where it does not write counter-history, helps us to expand our perspective to encompass what could have been. Often, historians limit their work to what they think happened and lose a sense for the openness of the past. Disappointed hopes, foiled ambitions, exag-

64 *Woman at the Well*, author's note.
65 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-11743600.

gerated fears were just as real at the time as those which were proven right by subsequent developments. Using our imagination as readers of historical fiction, we may be able to remind ourselves of these and other alternatives.

The role of the Prophet in Arabic popular epic

Remke Kruk

As is well known, the veneration of the Prophet Muḥammad plays an overwhelming role in the Islamic popular tradition. A vast literature is devoted to his life, his superior qualities, the miracles he wrought and the many ways in which he protects the pious. Annemarie Schimmel has extensively dealt with this subject in her *And Muhammad is His Messenger*; the Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety[1]. The major sources that she draws upon are the so-called *dalāʾil* and *šamāʾil* books, which deal with the special and miraculous characteristics of the Prophet, and the many poems in honour of Muḥammad. One of Schimmel's chapters is devoted to legends and miracles[2]. In these legends the Prophet usually comes to the rescue of people in distress, helping or saving them in a miraculous manner. Often this is done by means of a dream or vision.

Next to the sources used by Schimmel, the *dalāʾil* and *šamāʾil* books, there are of course many other branches of Arabic literature in which stories about the Prophet play a part. Often his miraculous powers are a central theme in these stories, just as in the literature explored by Schimmel, but he may also simply be introduced as a protagonist in historical or semi-historical events. A literary genre that is of interest in this respect is Arabic popular epic, the vast corpus of lengthy adventure tales about legendary heroes of the past that played such an important part in the Arabic popular tradition. These stories deal with heroes such as ʿAntar, Princess Ḏāt al-Himma, Sultan Baybars and other semi-historical figures. They were passed on over the centuries by professional storytellers, in oral as

1 Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985. The book is an expanded version of her *Und Muhammad ist sein Prophet; Die Verehrung des Propheten in der islamischen Frömmigkeit*. Düsseldorf-Köln: Diederichs, 1981.

2 Schimmel 1985, Chapter 4, 67–81.

well as in written form. Some of these epics can be traced back to the 12th century, while others are much younger. The oldest known manuscripts of this genre date from the 14th–15th century. Traditional performances of some of these epics still take place, such as reciting the *Sīrat Banī Hilāl* on festive occasions in Upper Egypt. The vitality of the genre up to the present day is also demonstrated by the fact that some of the epics have found their way to the television screen as musalsals, television series.

These popular epics, by the way, are not to be confused with the type of Volksepos referred to in Enno Littmann's *Mohammed im Volksepos* (1950), which presents a transcription and translation of a manuscript containing a long epic song, taken from a manuscript, about Muḥammad's marriage to Ḫadiğa and the travels he made while working in her service. It is belongs to the same genre as those studied by Schimmel, namely texts in which the veneration of the Prophet in every aspect of his life and personality stands central.

Arabic popular epic is quite a different matter. Although Islamic piety plays an important part in some of the epics, notably in *Sīrat al-amīra Ḏāt al-Himma*, the main purpose of these tales is to offer amusement. This may have been the reason why Schimmel has not taken them into account. Yet the part which the Prophet plays in these tales merits a closer scrutiny. It vastly differs from one epic to another, and in that way it is not only relevant for our understanding of the role of the Prophet in popular belief and imagination, but also illustrative for the particular character of each epic.

What I intend to do here is to give a succinct picture of the Prophet's role in these tales, mainly to draw attention to this particular type of source material, without further analysis of parallels and sources of the stories. Arabic popular *sīra* is a vast field, and a number of the texts belonging to it are still unstudied and even unedited. These texts are a rich source of information for many aspects of Arab-Islamic culture, but they are rarely taken into account in mainstream scholarship, in spite of the fact that there exist excellent studies on them. I will basically restrict myself here to five of them. My main focus will be on *Sīrat al-amīra Ḏāt al-Himma*, which has the Arab-Byzantine wars as its narrative context, and on *Sīrat ʿAntara ibn Šaddād*, set in pre-Islamic Bedouin society. *Sīrat al-malik al-ẓāhir Baybars*, in which urban life and culture dominate the background, will also briefly be mentioned, as well as two *sīras* that, like

ʿAntar, have a pre-Islamic narrative setting, namely *Qiṣṣat*[3] *al-amīr Hamza al-Bahlawān* and *Sīrat al-malik Sayf ibn Ḏī Yazan*.

These five are included in Malcolm Lyons' three volumed *The Arabian Epic* (1995), a basic tool for everyone who is interested in Arabic popular epic. It contains, among other things, summaries of the epics that are available in print as well as extensive indices which greatly facilitate research on the occurrence of specific themes in the epics, among them the role of the Prophet. The narrative index gives an idea of the role of the Prophet[4].

The role of Muḥammad in these epics, as it turns out, roughly falls into three categories:

– His appearance and mission are announced as future events;
– He actually is a protagonist in the story, not as a supernatural being performing miraculous deeds but as a person of flesh and blood;
– He plays a part in the story by performing miraculous deeds, usually by appearing in dreams and visions.

1. The Prophet Muḥammad and his religious mission are announced: *Qiṣṣat al-amīr Hamza; Sīrat al-malik Sayf ibn Ḏī Yazan; Sīrat al-malik al-ẓāhir Baybars; Sīrat ʿAntara.*

A number of the popular *siyar* are situated in pre-Islamic times, even though much of the narrative material obviously draws on later historical events. So, formally, the Prophet might not be expected to play a part in these *siyar*. Of course it does not quite work out that way. These tales, after all, were popular amusement for audiences that largely consisted of Muslims, and religious fervour was apt to creep in especially in situations where heroes of Arab descent were confronted with foreign enemies. Thus the Prophet may occasionally be invoked or referred to long before he actually makes his appearance on the historical scene in which the story is set. Several of the *siyar* anyhow are situated in pre-Islamic times, such

3 *Qiṣṣa* is the name used for some *sīras*.
4 See, for instance the narrative index, entries 'dream', LYONS 1995, II: 286 no. 23 (15); 'miracle', id. II: 302 no. 25 (11); and 'prophecy', id. II: 308 no. 31 (2).

as *Sīrat al-malik Sayf ibn Ḏī Yazan, Qiṣṣat al-amīr Hamza al-Bahlawān* and *Qiṣṣat al-amīr Fīrūzšāh*, and also the larger part of *Sīrat ʿAntara* (or *Sīrat ʿAntar*). In most of these cases the tale is set in a time shortly before the emergence of Islam. Yet Islam and the Prophet usually are not completely absent. References to God and occasionally also to His prophet occur regularly. Such slips of the tongue are to be expected in the context of telling stories to a largely Muslim audience. More specific instances also occur. The Prophet's coming may be announced, as happens in ʿAntar, where a four hundred years old vizier utters a prophesy to that effect[5]. Similar instances also occur in *siyar* situated in later times, such as Baybars: the author of the ancient *Kitāb al-Yunān*, the secret book that plays an important role in this *sīra*, foretold the appearance of the Prophet[6]. Heroes also may be converted to a pre-Islamic, Abrahamitic form of Islam by holy men whom they meet when starting out on their heroic career, as happens to Sayf in *Sīrat al-malik Sayf ibn Ḏī Yazan*[7]. References to this religion and its prophet Ibrāhīm continue to occur throughout this epic, for instance when Sayf's son Naṣr trusts himself to God when in difficulties, praising His prophet Ibrāhīm[8] and also converts a woman to this Abrahamitic religion, referred to as Islām[9].

2. The Prophet as an actual protagonist: Sīrat ʿAntara.

Sīrat ʿAntar is unique in offering us a narrative sequence in which the Prophet actually appears as a protagonist taking part in the action. To introduce the Prophet as a protagonist in a fictional context, without providing a supernatural setting for his interference, is a remarkable step. Anna Akasoy's contribution to the present volume demonstrates that this has been done in modern novels set in early Islam, but in fictional literature of the past it is a rare phenomenon.

This remarkable occurrence takes place at the end of *Sīrat ʿAntar*, the long (four thousand pages in print) adventure tale about the semi-histor-

5 Lyons 1995, II: 20 (8).
6 Lyons 1995, II: 58 (41).
7 *Sīrat fāris al-Yaman al-malik Sayf ibn Ḏī Yazan* 1971: I, 69–72.
8 *Id.* 1971, III: 125.
9 *Ibid.* III: 126.

ical pre-Islamic Arab hero and poet ʿAntar and his companions. ʿAntar is in many ways the archetypical Arab hero, and the *sīra*, with its prominent love interest and its emphasis on heroism and manly virtue (*muruwwa*) has always been popular. It describes a way of life that is distinctly un-Islamic, with even the leading hero occasionally indulging in drinking bouts and fornication. Thus it is not surprising that the need was felt to give ʿAntar some kind of Islamic legitimization, and this is exactly what happens in the last part of the *sīra*. By then, ʿAntar has already been killed. Vengeance is sought by three of his children, two formerly unknown sons by Christian princesses and a posthumous daughter born from ʿAntar's Arab warrior wife Hayfāʾ. Her name is ʿUnaytira, and she becomes a redoubtable warrior woman herself. She becomes the leading character in the last part of the sīra. It is at this time that the Prophet Muḥammad appears on the scene. News of the new religion that he preaches soon spreads among the Bedouins, and tribe after tribe converts. In due time, ʿUnaytira's family members also convert, including her mother Hayfāʾ. Finally ʿUnaytira herself also accepts Islam. The Prophet Muhammad is delighted to welcome such a renowned warrior, and hopes that she will be prepared to fight for the cause of Islam, as of course she is. Her acceptance of the Prophet's authority also has serious personal consequences for her. Up till then, she had consistently refused to marry, preferring to be her own mistress. Her cousin Ḫuḏrūf had fallen in love with her, but she refused to consider his proposal of marriage. After she has converted, Ḫuḏrūf seeks help from the Prophet in order to gain his wish. The Prophet is of the opinion that it is suitable for ʿUnaytira to marry, and tells her so: "Know, ʿUnaytira, that there is no celibacy (*rahbānīya*) in Islam." Resigning, she asks him to choose a husband for her. He calls upon Ḫuḏrūf and marries them straightaway. ʿUnaytira bears Ḫuḏrūf five sons, who all become brave warriors on the path of Islam. Eventually, ʿUnaytira dies as a martyr, battling side by side with the Prophet. Muḥammad himself speaks words of mourning, saying that God will show his approval of her on the Day of Judgment[10].

So, the function of the Prophet in this sīra is very different from the legends forming part of his veneration. There his miraculous powers are a central theme, while here he is basically just another warrior hero, albeit a

[10] *Sīrat ʿAntara ibn Šaddād*. 1961–62/1381, XII, 319–322. References are to volume and page. Volumes of this edition are often not consistent with the binding.

hero with a special kind of authority. His role is of a down-to-earth, practical kind, which fits the nature of this *sīra*. By introducing him in the last part of the *sīra*, the narrator bridges the gap between pre-Islamic Bedouin culture with its heathen customs and the orderly rules of Islam. Any sense of discomfort that the audience might feel about enjoying the (supposedly) pagan Bedouin tales is thus eliminated.

3. Muhammad's appearance in dreams and visions: Sīrat al-amīra Ḏāt al-Himma

The importance of dreams about the Prophet in popular piety, and in popular imagination in general, can hardly be overrated. As Schimmel formulates it: "....the greatest boon that one can hope for in this life, <is> the vision of the Prophet in a dream. Such dreams play an extraordinary role in Islamic piety to this day. They are always true, for Satan can never assume the Prophet's form."[11] That this belief plays an important role to the present day is, among other things, illustrated by pious publications, for instance a book such as *Li-man arāda ruʾyat al-nabī fī l-manām* ("For those who want to see the Prophet in a dream"), compiled by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Malik al-Zuġbī, published in Mansūra in 2009/1430, and widely available in Egyptian bookstalls.

The veracity of dreams about the Prophet not only concerns what he says, but also what he does in dreams, and, as said above, the effect of his acts may extend beyond the dream: it crosses the threshold between the spiritual world and everyday reality. Many such cases are also mentioned by Schimmel, such as that of a mystic who, on the point of starvation, went to the Prophet's tomb, claiming his hospitality, and in a dream was given bread. Half of it he ate, and the other half he found on his mat when he woke in the morning[12].

As was said above, the literature studied by Schimmel does not include popular *sīra*. Whether and how dreams about the Prophet play a part in this genre may be demonstrated by the examples given below, taken from

[11] Schimmel 1985: 79 and the extensive note 58, which refers to other scholarly literature on the subject.
[12] Schimmel 1985: 79.

Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma. As we will see, they are consistent with the pious tradition described by Schimmel. It shows how at least *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* has absorbed this tradition, and thus offers us a little more insight in the elements from which popular epic was constituted.

Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma

Just as the Prophet's very down-to-earth appearance in *Sīrat ʿAntar* fits in well with the general nature of this sīra, his role in *Sīrat al-amīra Ḏāt al-Himma* also is in tune with the general nature of that epic. The Arab-Byzantine wars of the eighth and the ninth centuries form its narrative setting, and more than in any of the other epics, Islam plays a part in it[13]. Its eponymous heroine, Princess Ḏāt al-Himma, is an almost invincible warrior, just like the heroes of other *siyar*, but as opposed to the multi-marrying and not always virtuous heroes of those *siyar* she is an ascetic and very pious woman.

Given the pious character of this epic, it is not surprising that dreams about the Prophet frequently occur in *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma*. This occurrence has already been pointed out by Udo Steinbach, who cites several cases[14]. In the following, we will give a number of examples demonstrating the various motifs relating to the dreams.

Evoking dreams

Dreams about the Prophet may occur spontaneously, but one can also try to evoke them. Such rituals to obtain help and support of holy persons are a widespread phenomenon in Islam, especially in connection with saints. Sleeping in a sanctuary after having performed certain rituals was a common way to obtain such help. In Arabic popular epic this is also a familiar theme, notably in *Sīrat Baybars*, in which saints play a dominant role; in fact, in this epic they have taken over the role played by the Prophet in *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma*. In *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* we read that people who are anxious to see the Prophet must go to a certain mosque on a mountain top, called the Mosque of the Prophet. They must do so on a Thursday evening, after having fasted the whole day.

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13 The title under which it is also known, *Sīrat al-muǧāhidīn*, clearly demonstrates this. For that reason, Claudia Ott (2003) has argued that this title is to be preferred over the more commonly used *Sīrat al-amīra Ḏāt al-Himma*.

14 Steinbach 1972: 65.

> "The person must also bring a votive offering to the mosque .... he must not break his fast that night, but perform the *ṣalāt* till drowsiness overcomes him. After every second *rakʿa*, he must shout: 'O messenger of God, I long to see you!' When sleep then overcomes him he will see the Prophet, God bless him and grant him salvation, saying to him: "O you who are longing for the delightful experience to see me: in this world I love those people who love me and who frequently wish God's blessings upon me, and in the hereafter I will be their intercessor."[15]

Not unexpectedly, this mosque is a favourite place of the pious and ascetic Princess Ḏāt al-Himma. The story is noteworthy because it focuses on an important theological issue, namely the Prophet's intercession in the hereafter.

The description of this ritual further indicates the importance of dreams in *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma*. The themes occurring in them roughly fall into the following categories:

Deciding controversial matters

A theme occasionally occurring is that of the Prophet deciding a controversial question by way of a dream. Example: Princess Ḏāt al-Himma has given birth to a son who is black, in spite of the fact that his father is white. The father refuses to acknowledge his son, and the matter casts serious doubts on Ḏāt al-Himma's virtue. The Prophet appears in a dream to the caliph al-Muʿtaṣim and confirms the paternity of Ḏāt al-Himma's husband[16].

Themes more frequently encountered are conversion, rescue, healing, consolation and encouragement, often in combination. In the conversion dream, the Prophet appears to a non-Muslim, usually a Christian, and says something that brings about the person's conversion to Islam. This theme is often combined with that of rescue and miraculous healing: the new convert lets a Muslim escape; the Prophet restores his health. Some examples:

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15 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 16: 6. References are to *ǧuzʾ* and page.
16 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 7: 42–43.

Conversion

-Princess Ḏāt al-Himma, in her youth a girl with little interest in religion, turned into a Muslim of exemplary piety and ascetic behaviour after having been admonished by the Prophet in a dream. In this dream he told her about the career that lay ahead of her, namely to become a great warrior for Islam and the mother of another great warrior. The narrator reminds us of this dream when Ḏāt al-Himma has been taken captive by her grandson Baḥrūn, now a Christian enemy. She supports herself in her misery by reciting *Sūrat Yā Sīn* and praising God. The piety conveyed by her words, emphatically brought into focus by the account of the dream, is such that one of Baḥrūn's slave girls, deeply moved by what she hears, cuts her bonds straightaway and declares that God has opened her heart to Islam[17].

-Two dreams figure in the following episode. Two of the Muslim champions, Princess Ḏāt al-Himma's black son ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and his friend Muḥammad al-Baṭṭāl, meet a monk who has been converted to Islam by a dream in which the Prophet appeared to him. In this dream, the Prophet told him about a Muslim who had been a captive for fourteen years, constantly being tortured. He had been beaten, starved, his fingers and toes had been cut off, his eyes gouged out, and they now threatened to cut off his feet and cut out his tongue. He implored God to let them spare his tongue: how else could he continue to praise Him? The Prophet tells the monk to expect a black man and to assist him in freeing this captive. If he does so, it will count in his favour on the Day of Judgment. The black man indeed appears. Together they manage to locate and free the captive, who falls asleep after he has eaten. The Prophet appears to him in a dream, restores his limbs and asks him to greet ʿAbd al-Wahhāb from him[18].

Rescue and healing

-The following story also contains two dreams. Hayyāǧ al-Kurdī, one of the Muslim champions, is attacked and wounded during a conflict at Hārūn al-Rašīd's court and thrown out at the palace gate. When the news of the attack reaches his wife al-Ġaydāʾ and their daughters (all of them brave warrior women), they go out barefoot, their hair pulled loose, loudly

17 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 42: 40–41.
18 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 9: 38–42.

lamenting deep into the night. When sleep overcomes her, al-Ġaydāʾ has a dream in which the Prophet appears to her. She complains to him about her husband's fate. He tells her that he is still alive and orders her to open the door as soon as she awakes, because salvation is near. She gets up and orders her daughters to open the door. They find a surgeon waiting at the door. He has been ordered by the Prophet in a dream to go to the house in order to save Hayyāǧ al-Kurdī, who is severely wounded. They quickly fetch Hayyāǧ from the place where the Prophet told al-Ġaydāʾ to look, and the surgeon's expert treatment saves his life[19].

Consolation and healing

-Al-Ḥaǧǧāf, who for years has been trying to find his daughter but whose legs have been cut off, sees the Prophet in a dream and tells him about his despair. The Prophet consoles him, saying that all will be well. When he wakes up he finds that his legs have been restored[20].

-ʿAbd al-Wahhāb has been wounded by Baḥrūn, his son by his wife Maymūna who has turned against him, renouncing Islam and taking their son with her. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb tells his mother Princess Ḏāt al-Himma about the Prophet's appearance to him in a dream. The Prophet commiserated about the sad fate that had befallen him with Maymūna, his formerly beloved wife, and their son. He also emphasizes that there is no hope that Maymūna will repent, and that he has to give her up. He also directs ʿAbd al-Wahhāb to a pavilion where he finds a beautiful maiden who says to him: "Son of the pious and ascetic woman, you weep about Maymūna, while she has left the religion of Islam; I will be her replacement for you." It remains unclear whether this is a hourī from paradise or a possible future wife; most likely the former, since no new wife makes her appearance in the epic. In the dream, the Prophet also healed ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's wound, as his mother finds out when she uncovers it[21].

19 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 11: 27–28.
20 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 57: 46.
21 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 44: 23–24.

Consolation and encouragement

-Princess Ḏāt al-Himma has seen the Prophet in a dream, promising her deliverance, and she uses this experience to encourage her fellow warriors[22].

-At a time that Princess Ḏāt al-Himma has disappeared, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb sees the Prophet (*sayyid al-bašar*) in a dream with on his right Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq and on his left "the imām ʿUmar". The Prophet tells ʿAbd al-Wahhāb not to weep about the loss of his mother, because his worries will eventually come to an end. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb asks the Prophet when they will at last be relieved from the harm that their enemies cause them. The Prophet tells him to be patient, and assures him that those enemies will receive their punishment in due time. A description of the punishments awaiting them in Hell follows[23].

-Another story containing two dreams: ʿAbd al-Wahhāb sees the Prophet in a dream and tells him about the misery that his enemy ʿUqba is causing them. The Prophet speaks consoling words and tells him to go to a certain valley the next morning with his companions. They go there and find a huge tree, large enough to offer shade to the whole company. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb falls asleep under the tree and in his dream he hears the tree groaning, telling him to cut it down the next morning and to take the wood with them, because it is on this wood that ʿUqba will be crucified at the Golden Door in Constantinople. When ʿAbd al-Wahhāb wakes up he hears the tree groaning just as it did in his dream. Rejoicing, they cut it down, taking the wood with them[24].

-A story featuring three dreams, two of them about the Prophet. They all convey the message that the cause of the Muslims has God's blessing and is supported by the Prophet: the Muslims are engaged in battle, and their situation is precarious. Then the Prophet appears to ʿAbd al-Wahhāb in a dream and promises victory[25]. Princess Ḏāt al-Himma (her real name is Fāṭima) also has a dream which she tells to her son ʿAbd al-Wahhāb: she saw how a big door opened in heaven and a large cupola covered with pearls descended, radiating light. The inside was lavishly furnished.

22 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 19: 21.
23 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 69: 117–18.
24 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 10: 7–8.
25 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 70: 72.

> "In it were virgin girls like moons whose faces were more radiant than the day. They called out: 'Rejoice about God's benevolence towards you, o Fāṭima! You will gain your wish regarding your enemy, worry will be taken away from your heart and you will soon be with us in this exalted cupola. There you will be together with Fāṭima the Radiant, the daughter of the Prophet of Islam.' Then I woke from my dream."[26]

They go to the caliph al-Muʿtaṣim, who invites them to sit down. Tears are streaming over his face. He also has had a dream. He tells them that before going to sleep, he had been musing about all the Muslims who had died, and had read a portion of the Qurʾān. Then he fell asleep, and, as he tells them:

> "I saw lights descending from heaven until my bed was illuminated by them. And lo, a person approached, with the light shining on him and light glittering on his face. He was pleasant of appearance, of medium height. Between his shoulder blades there was the birthmark that was the sign of his prophethood, God bless him and grant him peace. I noticed that he could see behind him as well as before him. He stood between four men as if he was the full moon between stars. I said to him: 'Who are you, my lord?' He answered: 'I am Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā.' Then I stretched out my hand and slapped hands with him. I kissed his hand, saying: 'O my lord, o Messenger of God, God bless you and grant you peace, will you not ask God Most High to grant us victory over these infidels?' He answered: 'Know, Abū Isḥāq, that the time has come near, and this is what I have promised Prince ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. Early tomorrow morning you will gain victory over these infidels, just as God Most High granted me the victory on the Day of the Parties.' I asked him: 'Who are the people that are with you?' He answered: 'Know that on my left there are al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and on my right Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.

[26] *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 70: 72.

> Tomorrow, in the afternoon, you will crucify ʿUqba[27]. The infidels will be shattered, the pious Muslims will be victorious, and the soul of ʿUqba will reach the lowest level of Hell. Three hundred thousand unbelievers will be killed because of the cursed ʿUqba.' I saw Princess Ḏāt al-Himma go to the Prophet and kiss his hand. He said to her: 'Fāṭima, rejoice about going to the highest level of Paradise. You will be one of the handmaidens of my daughter Fāṭima the Radiant. She awaits you this very moment, o Mother of the Holy Warriors.' Then the Messenger of God, God bless him and grant him peace, went away, saying: 'Who has seen me has truly seen me, for Satan does not assume my likeness.'"[28]

Then they all cry together, deeply moved, and prepare for battle. It is a remarkable episode, especially for the way dreams are used here to express the intensity of religious feeling about the just cause of Islam and its imminent victory.

Narrative aspects

As these examples demonstrate, the belief in the Prophet's effectuating miraculous deeds through dreams offered storytellers an excellent narrative device to find a way out of difficult situations. It is a familiar narrative pattern: when a situation has become so hopeless and complicated that the narrator sees no way out, supernatural help is called in. This help can take many forms: sorcery, jinns, saints –and, as it turns out, also the Prophet, acting in dreams. Thus, from a narrative point of view the Prophet's role is not basically different from that of other miraculous helpers. Seen from this angle, we may, somewhat irreverently, state that the role of the Prophet in *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* in some aspects resembles that of the *ʿayyār*, the trickster, a stock character in Arabic popular epic[29]. The *ʿayyār* may cross all sorts of thresholds, social, moral, and natural, including spatial and temporal barriers. He is a master of disguise, can speak

[27] The villainous *qāḍī*, a crypto-Christian, who throughout the epic is the Muslims' arch enemy.

[28] See also STEINBACH 1972: 65, who cites part of the dream. In the edition of *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* used by Steinbach it is found in *ǧuz'* 70: 78; in the edition used for the present article (see bibliography) it is 70: 72–73.

[29] See Malcolm C. LYONS. *The Man of Wiles in Popular Arabic Literature: A Study of a Medieval Arab Hero*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.

any number of languages, and often (not always) has supernatural abilities, allowing him to cover long distances in no time at all and to turn up in the nick of time to save the day.

The unconditional belief in the veracity of Prophetic dreams also offered the narrators another possibility: enemies could exploit this belief to set a trap for the Muslims. A familiar pattern is that of an enemy announcing that he has been converted by the Prophet in a dream, thus persuading the Muslims to trust him, and then leading them into a trap or ambush. Two examples:

-The evil monk Šūmdaris tells the hero al-Baṭṭāl, who is threatening him with a sword, that he has seen the Prophet in a dream, admonishing him to leave the Christians and Jews and to return to the true King. This softened his heart and he now wants to ask the captive Muslim Princess ʿUlwa and her son Ibrāhīm for intercession. As proof of his sincerity, he offers to hand over his dagger to al-Baṭṭāl. When al-Baṭṭāl lowers his sword, Šūmdaris stabs him with the dagger[30].

-Kūǧār, an enemy leader, tricks ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and Ḏāt al-Himma by sending a messenger to them explaining that his master had been planning to attack them, but then the Prophet had appeared to him in a dream, taking him by the hand and telling him not to discard the Muslim religion and become an unbeliever. He was told that if he should decide to attack the Muslims, God would be very angry with him and hellfire would await him. The messenger says that when he master woke up, he was very frightened and eager to accept Islam. He now sends a present, and is eager to renew his acceptance of Islam in their presence (*ʿalā yadaykum*). They go to see him and are lured into trap[31].

Conclusion

As this survey illustrates, the Prophet plays various parts in popular epic. By far the most prominent of them is his role in dreams, and these almost exclusively occur in *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma*. The nature and contents of these dreams is in accordance with the wider pious tradition, and demonstrates

30 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 15: 1–2.
31 *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma* 28: 25 ult.–27.

the connection of popular epic, or at least of *Sīrat Ḏāt al-Himma*, to this tradition. Specific narrative devices, such as combining dreams and producing false dream accounts, serve to exploit the theme yet more fully.

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King Ṣābūr and the gazelle. An Oriental story from the Maghreb

Jan Just Witkam

Preamble

The roads that Wim Raven and I have followed in life show, with all the differences between us, a number of similarities with some overlaps. More than forty-five years ago I saw him coming as a graduate student from Amsterdam's Free University to Leiden. He knew much more than we Leiden students of Arabic and Islam did, and he was also much more serious in his study than we were. After he had come back from his year in Egypt he started writing short articles about his Egyptian experiences. These were illuminating stories about the clash of ideas between East and West, mixed with remarks of human interest focused on that very different world that is Egypt. Not only did he study Indonesian next to Arabic, but he also followed courses on comparative literature. I admired either activity, especially when I read his astute analysis of Naguib Mahfouz's short story *Zaabalawi*. It was also my first acquaintance with the work of the later Nobel prizewinner. Still later Wim Raven took upon himself to finish the eighth volume of the *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane*,[1] where I had left it in 1974. That final volume was published in 1988, and for making it, Wim Raven and I had to re-read the entire canonical *Ḥadīth* literature. Wim Raven took advantage, much more than I have done, of the wide and complete reading that was necessary for the compilation of the Indices, and part of his later scholarly and literary production is a witness of this. When he became member of Hans

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1 A.J. WENSINCK, a.o., *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane*. 8 vols. Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1936–1988.

Daiber's team in Amsterdam, I still saw him from time to time, but when the entire Daiber tribe migrated to grazing pastures in Frankfurt am Main, our encounters became rare. However, we had become friends in such a way that our friendship was not in need anymore of frequent encounters. We were just friends. When, in 2011, I found the story of 'King Ṣābūr and the gazelle' I instinctively thought of how Wim Raven would have liked it, and decided to publish it both in Arabic and in translation and to dedicate it to him. When his Marburg colleagues decided to publish a congratulary volume and invited me to contribute to it, my choice of a subject was quickly made.

The story of King Ṣābūr and the gazelle, an outline

1. King Ṣābūr goes out hunting and sees the gazelle. It is covered with jewels. He wants to obtain the animal, but it escapes. The hunting party arrives at a castle. The young man who lives there is the owner of the gazelle. King Ṣābūr asks him to give or sell the animal to him, but the young man refuses: the gazelle is in fact his wife. The gazelle is brought in and changes into a beautiful woman. The young man is asked to tell the story about how this has come about.

2. He tells that he comes from Damascus, and that he has received an excellent education, both in literary studies and in physical training. His father marries him to his cousin, the daughther of his uncle. They are very happy. His father gives him a powerful amulet. A year later the father dies, and the young man tries to console himself in amusement.

3. He meets a young man from Basra, who rouses in him the desire to go to Basra. The daughter of his uncle also becomes desirous of Basra. The young man sells his property and they depart for Basra. On the way there they are received in a castle on the seashore. A young man lives there and invites them. He comes from Basra as well. After a while they go to Basra together. The two young men see one another in dissipation every night. Finally the daughter of the uncle protests, and they make an arrangement: one day the young man is with his friend, the other day he is with his wife. Five months later the young man from Basra falls ill and dies. The young man of Damascus gets half of his inheritance. He is very sad.

4. He departs for al-Hind and they travel overseas with ten ships. They run out of water and land on an island. While they replenish their provisions, they are confronted with a monstruous *ʿIfrīt* that attacks them. The young man inflicts twenty-six blows with his sword on the monster. Wounded, it flies away, but not without having first kidnapped the daughter of his uncle. The young man travels after him, and he and his retinue depart to the town that lives under the terror of the *ʿIfrīt*.

5. In that town they learn more about the terror of the *ʿIfrīt*. The monster lets a yellow wind blow over the town, and everybody's face turns yellow, except the young woman that the *ʿIfrīt* wishes to possess, her face turns red. She is then made beautiful and put in a cave ready for the monster that will come and fetch her. Afterwards no one has news from the girl. Some days after the young man's arrival the yellow wind blows and the face of the daughter of the king of the town turns red. She is placed in the cave and the young Damascene hides there. The monster comes to fetch the princess, but sees the young man. It tries to attack him, but the twenty-six blows have weakened it, and the young man still has the amulet that his father gave him. The monster flees without the princess, who is reunited with her father the next morning. The king offers his daughter and his realm to the young man. He declines the offer, at least for the time being.

6. The king and the young man now go after the *ʿIfrīt* who has retired to his own land, a sinister place. They arrive at the monster's castle. There the daughter of his uncle is kept prisoner, but the monster has not yet violated here because of his weakness due to the twenty-six blows. There is also the half-sister of the monster, a very beautiful woman. She hates the monster. They have the same father, but her mother was a human. She offers to reunite the young man with the daughter of his uncle and to bring the young man to the monster. For this he has to undertake to marry her. The young man agrees on condition that the daughter of his uncle gives her permission to do this, which she does. Then he kills the monster with its own sword and takes possession of its treasures. He liberates the three hundred young women that the monster held captive. When he comes back the king marries him to his daughter, with the permission of the daughter of the uncle and of the sister of the *ʿIfrīt*.

7. The young man sails back to Basra, with his three wives and the treasures. He sells his possessions and builds a house in Baghdad. The

daughter of the uncle dies there, and the young man consoles himself with the sister of the *ʿIfrīt*. She is able to take on many different forms: the peacock bent on love, the onager which is the hunter's preference, and so on. She is in fact the bejeweled gazelle that king Ṣābūr saw at the beginning of the tale. King Ṣābūr finds it a marvellous story and stays for a while with the young man. Then he departs, and receives many costly presents. Afterwards they visit one another regularly, till death, the only certainty, does part them.

It is not difficult to discern in this sequence of seven episodes a number of events that have been designated by Christopher Booker as 'basic plots' of storytelling.[2] Booker's seven 'basic plots' are: overcoming the monster, rags to riches, the quest, voyage and return, comedy, tragedy, rebirth. Basic plots can become sub-plots within any one of the other basic plots. Comedy, tragedy and rebirth do not seem to play a role in the story of King Ṣābūr and the gazelle, but Booker's first four plots are very much in evidence. However, the purpose of this article is to publish the story in Arabic as a primary source, and to make its content known in English translation. An analysis in depth of the story lines, of the numerous details of storytelling techniques, and a comparison with other similar stories, will have to wait for the moment. Nor is here the place to try to find out how a story that is set in the Middle East and beyond, as far as India, has found its way to the Maghrib. The view of the storyteller is evidently directed to the East. The young protagonist travels from Damascus to Basra, from there to India and finally comes home and settles in Baghdad. Oriental elements are abundantly present in the story. In the Maghrib there may have existed a certain taste for stunning stories and amazing anecdotes from that Orient, but that as well needs further investigation. Within the three stories in the Toulouse manuscript the first and the third are *ʿArabī* stories, this one is evidently an *ʿAǧamī* one. Another feature in the story

[2] Christopher BOOKER, *The seven basic plots. Why we tell stories*. London (Continuum) 2004. I have refrained from determining the plots and sub-plots of the story of 'King Ṣābūr and the gazelle' according to the categories proposed by Hasan M. EL-SHAMY, *Folk Traditions of the Arab World. A Guide to Motif Classification*. Bloomington and Indianapolis (Indiana University Press) 1995 (2 vols.) and Hasan M. EL-SHAMY, *Types of the Folktale in the Arab World. A demographically oriented tale-type index*. Bloomington and Indianapolis (Indiana University Press) 2004, and even less so according to the Aarne-Thompson classification system.

is the recurrent mention of 'the storyteller'. These frequent mentions may also have served to give the story teller a moment of pause in order to recover his breath.

Introducing the source

The text that is herewith edited and translated is the second text in a collective manuscript from the Maghrib, possibly from Algeria as is often the case with manuscripts in French collections, containing three stories. It is registered as No. 899 in the Library of Toulouse, in the South of France, which I visited a few days in December 2011.[3] The manuscript is mentioned in the *Catalogue générale*,[4] with this interesting but entirely misleading title:

> 'Essai de la plume et de l'Esprit. Anecdotes sur le Prophète. Ms. arabe. Vélin. 44 feuillets. Caractères rouges et noirs. 210 sur 160 millim. Rel. parchemin, filets sur les plats. – (Desbarreaux-Bernard.)'.

The erroneous title is based on a note in Arabic on the first page of the first text (f. 44b), where is written *Taǧrīb al-Qalam wal-Murād*, 'The trial of the pen and the wish'. That title, if it is indeed a title, does not seem to have a relationship to the content of the volume, but it has evidently influenced the description in the Toulouse catalogue of 1904.

The manuscript came in the Toulouse library through Dr. Tibulle Desbarreaux-Bernard (1798–1880), a local bibliophile and historian of printing, large parts of whose collections were acquired by the Toulouse library after his death, which thereby becomes a *terminus ante quem* for the manuscript. Desbarreaux-Bernard's bookplate is inside the back cover of the manuscript: 'Ex Musaeo Doct. D-Bernard – In secundis voluptas in adversis perfugium' ('From the Museum of Dr. Desbarreaux-Bernard – In propitious times a pleasure, in adversity a refuge'). No information is given about

[3] See now my 'Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of Toulouse (France)', in *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 5 (2014), pp. 43–62.

[4] *Catalogue Général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France.* Tome 43. Paris 1904, p. 373.

the earlier provenance or the date of copying of the manuscript.[5] The fact that European machine-made paper was used by the copyist points to a date from c. 1830 onwards, when this type of paper was first produced. It provides a date *post quem* for the manuscript, which therefore was written between 1830–1880.

As said, MS Toulouse 899 is a collective volume with three texts in Arabic. It contains [1] + 45 + [1] folios. The pages with text are numbered by a European librarian in reverse order as far as the text is concerned: ff. 44b–1b, and f. 25 is inadvertently numbered twice. The pages measure 21.3 x 16.2 cm, the texts are written in *Maghribī* script, possibly in more than one hand, in 17 lines to the page, with the use of brown-black ink and with occasional rubrication. There are catchwords at the bottom of each verso page. The text block is contained in a full-parchment European binding with gilded ornamentation (borders, corner pieces, small ornaments) on boards and spine.

The volume contains three stories, the background of the first and third of which can be placed in the period of the early expeditions of conquest within the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad. No authors are given, but some authorities and transmitters are mentioned. Here follow first short indications of the first and third texts of the volume:

(1) ff. 44b–23b. *Ghazwat Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb* (title on f. 44b), 'The expedition against the Fortress of the Raven'. The proficient transmitter Ibn ʿAbbās is indicated as the authority (*ruwiya, al-Rāwī*) for the story (mentioned *al-Khabar*, f. 39b, or *al-Ḥadīth*, f. 37a). It tells about the Muslim expedition against Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb in the Yemen. Basically it belongs to the genre of conversion stories. Beginning (f. 44b):

(بسملة) ... غزوة حصن الغراب
روى عن ابن عباس رضى الله عنه انه قال صلى بنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ذات يوم صلاة الصبح واسند بظهره المبارك الى المحراب وجعل يحدثنا باخبار الاولين والاخرين واخبار النبيين عليهم السلام اذ نزل عليه الامين جبريل عليه السلام وقال له يا محمد العلى الاعلى يقريك السلام

[5] It does not seem to be mentioned in Dr. DESBARREAUX-BERNARD's own catalogue. That catalogue of mostly printed books, which consists of twelve small oblong leather-bound volumes ('Catalogue des livres composant la bibliothèque du Docteur DESBARREAUX-BERNARD. 1843'), is preserved in the Toulouse Library as MS 1019 (see *Catalogue général*, 1904, p. 422).

ويخصك بالتحية والاكرام ويقول لك يا محمد ابشر بخير عاجل وفرح عاجل غير ءاجل عليك وعلى امتك من بعدك يا محمد ان الله تعالى يقول لك ان بارض اليمن حصن يقال له حصن الغراب وفيه اموال كثيرة ونعم غزيرة وقد جعله الله فايدة لك ولاصحابك ...

End (f. 23b):

... صلى الله عليك وسلم فاخبرهم بما جرى لهم وبما اتفق كله وسلم عليه ابو ناعج وجدد اسلامه بين يديه ورده الى حصنه هو وشداد بن الصمصع كالاخوة وهذا ما وجدنا مقيد والحمد لله رب العالمين

(3) ff. 13a–1b. *Ghazwat Qaṣr al-Dhahab maʿa al-Thaʿbān wal-Imām ʿAlī*. 'The expedition against the Castle of Gold with the Snake and the Imām ʿAlī', which is transmitted on the authority of the Yemeni narrator Wahb b. Munabbih (f. 13a), on the authority of *Ashyākh Ahl al-Madīna*, 'the Shaykhs of the people of Medina'. Alternative title (f. 1b): *Ghazwat Banī Riyāḥ wa-Qaṣr al-Dhahab*, the 'Expedition against the Banū Riyāḥ and the Castle of Gold'. Beginning (ff. 13a–12b):

غزوة قصر الذهب مع الثعبان والامام على رضى الله عنه روى عن وهب بن منبه || رضى الله عنه عن اشياخ اهل المدينة قالوا كلهم ولما تنقض اقوالهم ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يبعث العساكر والجيوش والامراء وكان رايس العساكر والامراء عن على بن ابى طالب رضى الله عنه قال قال وكان الامام على من اشجع اشجعان وكان بعثه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لبني رياح ...

End (f. 1b):

... قال فامر على بالذى فى القصر فحضروا وعلمهم الصلاة والقرءان وحضر بني رياح ومكنهم من القصر ورفعوا الصحابة ما قدروا عليه من الامتعة ومشى على واصحابه بالغنيمة فارحين بما فتح الله عليهم حتى بلغوا المدينة فاستقبلهم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وفرح بقدومهم هذا ما بلغنا من غزوة بني رياح وقصر الذهب والحمد لله رب العالمين هـ هـ هـ

The earlier edition of the story of 'King Ṣābūr and the gazelle'[6]

The text of the story of 'King Ṣābūr and the gazelle' has been edited before. This was done by Maḥmūd Ṭarshūna in his edition of *Miʾat Layla wa-Layla*,

[6] I gratefully acknowledge having received in February 2015 the information about the earlier Arabic edition of the present story from Dr. Ibrahim Akel (Paris) and Dr. Ulrich Marzolph (Göttingen).

'Hundred and One Nights'.[7] Ṭarshūna mentions five manuscripts in all of *Miʾat Layla wa-Layla*, three in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris (Arabe 3660, Arabe 3661 and Arabe 3662) and two in al-Maktaba al-Waṭaniyya, the National Library, in Tunis (Nos. 4576 and 18260). He based his edition on the two oldest dated manuscripts of these five manuscripts: MS Paris, BnF Arabe 3602 (2), which is dated 1190/1776[8] and MS Tunis, al-Maktaba al-Waṭaniyya, No. 4576, which is dated 1268/1852. The content of each of the five manuscript volumes is far from identical, but either manuscript on which Ṭarshūna did base his edition, contains a version of the story of 'King Ṣābūr and the gazelle'. The other manuscripts do not contain the story. So, with Ṭarshūna's edition and the version of the story that is herewith presented on the basis of the manuscript in Toulouse, all presently known textual witnesses are taken into account by me.[9]

In 1911 M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes published a French translation of MS Paris Arabe 3660, which, however, does not contain the story of 'the King and the gazelle'.[10] In it Gaudefroy-Demombynes gives a comparative table of the content of the three Paris manuscripts and also of a manuscript in the private collection of René Basset, which he gives the siglum B.[11] Ṭarshūna gives a similar table of contents, of the three Paris manuscripts and the two manuscripts in Tunis.[12] From Ṭarshūna's table it becomes clear that the story of 'King Ṣābūr and the gazelle' is present

7 *Kitāb Miʾat Layla wa-Layla*. Dirāsa wa-Taḥqīq Maḥmūd ṬARSHŪNA. Lībiyā - Tūnis (al-Dār al-ʿArabiyya lil-Kitāb) 1399/1979. This edition contains on pp. 346–362 (Nights 95–100) the story of 'the King and the gazelle'.

8 M. le Baron DE SLANE, *Bibliothèque Nationale. Département des manuscrits. Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*. Paris (Imprimerie Nationale) 1883–1895, p. 625. ṬARSHŪNA (p. 7) on the basis of the patronymic of the copyist (al-Ḥāǧǧ Muḥammad b. al-Ḥāǧǧ Ḥamīda) decides that this manuscript is Tunisian by transmission and registration.

9 Ṭarshūna's choice of Paris Arabe 3662 and Tunis 4576 as the textual basis of his *Miʾat Layla* is because these two manuscripts are dated. The other manuscripts are described by Ṭarshūna but they do not play a role of importance in his edition.

10 M. GAUDEFROY-DEMOMBYNES, *Les cent et une nuits. Traduites de l'arabe*. Paris (Librairie Orientale et Américaine) [1911]. This translation was reprinted, with numerous additional explanatory notes, in 1982. I have seen the second edition of this reprint, which was published in Paris in 1998 in the series 'Sindbad'. The comparative table is on pp. 350–351 of the 1911 edition, and on pp. 17–18 of the 1998 edition.

11 This manuscript was acquired by Messrs. Brill of Leiden from the estate of René Basset (1855–1924) and in 1975 it was sold to Leiden University Library, where it is now registered as Or. 14.303. Its content is described in J.J. WITKAM, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and other collections in the Netherlands*. fasc. 4 (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1986), pp. 428–429.

12 ṬARSHŪNA, *Miʾat Layla*, pp. 12–13.

as the seventeenth text in MS Paris, Arabe 3662, ff. 227b–232a (Nights 95–100), and as the eleventh text in MS Tunis No. 4576, pp. 222–266 (Nights 32–38). The three other manuscripts do not contain the story. That shows that there is no uniform content nor order of content within the collections that go by the name 'Hundred and One Nights'. Ṭarshūna is not aware of the present whereabouts of the Basset manuscript (which does not contain the story of the 'King and the gazelle'). Nor could he know about the Toulouse manuscript, which only has the story of King Ṣābūr and the gazelle, without any mention of the framework of the 'Hundred and One Nights', before I published about it in 2014.[13]

The Paris and Tunis versions of the stories in the 'Hundred and One Nights' considerably differ from one another, so tells Ṭarshūna us. Either manuscript differs from the text in the Toulouse manuscript in the sense that the Toulouse text lacks all elements of a frame story, and that the king has a name, Ṣābūr. And, as could be expected, the Toulouse version, which basically contains the same story, presents a very different wording.

In the collections of the 'Hundred and One Nights' the main story teller, the *Rāwī*, is given as Fahrās al-Faylasūfī, whom I have not been able to identify.[14] Also there are narrative elements that separate the different nights and in which Shahrāzād is mentioned as the story teller. Looking at these instances one cannot escape the impression that these are later additions. They form no organic whole with the story. Leaving them out does not in any way diminish the narrative quality of the story. On the contrary, one would say, that these elements seem *corpora aliena*, and in the Toulouse version they are absent. The story of 'King Ṣābūr and the gazelle' as presented in the Toulouse manuscript may have been detached from a frame story or it may be a version that already existed when the 'Hundred and One Nights' was compiled. It being a stand-alone witness of the text does not neecessarily mean that the story of 'King Ṣābūr and the

[13] With the progress of Arabic bibliography new versions of the story will no doubt come to the light.

[14] To try to identify him with the equally unidentified magician and alchemist Mahrārīs (see about him Manfred Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam*. Leiden (E.J. Brill) 1972, p. 177ff) is tempting, but it leads nowhere. In the context of the 'Hundred and One Nights' he may best be seen as an exotic and legendary wise man of old times. I am grateful to Dr. Lucia Raggetti for suggesting to me Mahrārīs' name as a possible explanation for the name Fahrās.

gazelle' is an older substrate from before the compilation of the collection of the 'Hundred and One Nights'.

Comparative table of the beginning and the end of the story of 'the King and the gazelle' in the Paris manuscript, in Ṭarshūna's edition and in the Toulouse manuscript.

1. MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 3662[15]	2. Edition Maḥmūd Ṭarshūna[16]	3. MS Toulouse 899 (2)
:227b–228a حديث الملك والغزالة ثم قالت الجارية زعموا ايها الملك انه كان ملكا من الملوك ركب ذات يوم من الايام الى الصيد والقنص | ووزراؤه وارباب دولته فبينما هو يسير فى البرية اذا قامت امام القوم غزالة حسنة الصورة وفي عناقها قلادة جوهر وفى ايدها اسورة من ذهب وخلاخل من فضة وعليها جلال من الديباج الاخضر فلما نظر الملك الى حسنها وجمالها قال لوزرايه ...	:346 حَديثُ الملك وَالغزالة ثم قالت: زعموا – أيّها الملك – أنه كان ملك من الملوك قد ركب ذات يوم من الأيام إلى الصّيد والقنص / وزرائه وأرباب دولته. فبينما هو يسير في البريّة اذ قامت أمام القوم غزالة حسنة الصورة وفى عنقها قلادة جوهر وفي يديها أسورة من ذهب وفي ساقيها خلاخل من فضّة، وعليها حلل من الديباج الأخضر فلما نظر الملك إلى حسنها وجمالها قال لوزرائه ...	23b: (title lacks) ذكر ان الملك صابور خرج يوما يتصيد فعرضت له غزالة مقنعة القرنين بالذهب والفضة والجوهر والياقوت واللؤلؤ وفى رقبتها قلادة الجوهر فقال الملك صابور
:232a ... ثم ماتت ابنت عمى فحزنت عليها مدة ثم ماتت ابنت الملك رحمها الله وهنا ادرك شهرزاد الصبح فسكتت عن الكلام الليلة الموفى ماية قال فهراس الفيلسوفى قالت يا مولاى ثم ان الفتى الدمشقى لما ماتت ابنت عمى وابنت الملك ضاقت بي البلاد وخرجت الى هذا المرج وبنيت هذا القصر وجلست مع اخت العفريت متونسا بها فهي تتنوع على كل رهط فمرة ترجع طاوس ومرة غزالة كما رايتها ايها الملك ولى منها ولدان وهذا ما كان فى قصتى فتعجب الملك والوزير من حديثه فلما اصبح الله بخير الصباح تودع الملك والوزير من الدمشقى وصاروا يزورونه فى كل عام للنزاهة ثم سار الملك ووزيره الى بلاده وتركوه فى قصره فبقوا كذلك فى كل سنة يتونه الى ان اتاهم اليقين والحمد لله رب العالمين	:361–362 ... ثم ماتت ابنة عمّي فحزنت عليها مدّة، ثم ماتت ابنة الملك رحمها الله. وهنا أدرك شهرزاد الصبح فسكتت عن الكلام. | قال فهراس الفيلسوف: قالت: يا مولاي، ثم إنّ الفتى الدمشقي قال: - لما مات ابنة عمّي وابنة الملك ضاقت بي البلاد فخرجت إلى هذا المرج وبنيت هذا القصر وبقيت مع أخت العفريت متونسا بها. فهي تتنوّع على كل رهط. فمرّة تصير طاووسا، ومرّة غزالة كما رأيتها – أيها الملك – ولي منها ولدان. فتعجب الملك والوزير من حديثه. فلمّا أصبح الله بخير الصباح تودّع الملك والوزير من الدمشقي وتركاه في قصره وبقي كذلك في كلّ سنة يزورانه إلى أن أتاهم اليقين والحمد لله ربّ العالمين.	:13a ... ثم ماتت بنت عمى وبقيت مع اخت العفريت وهى هذه الغزالة التى رايت وبنت الملك وتسليت بالغزالة عن بنت عمى فانا شديد العشقى فيها وهى معى كذلك فاذا اصبحت صارت فى اى صورة ارادت فمرة تتصور فى صورة طاوس فينظر فى الهوى او فى اى صنف كان من العير ومرة جارية كما ترى كانها الشمس او القمر فهذا جملة حديثى وخبرى قال الملك ما سمعت قصة باعجب ولا اطيب من هذا الحديث وما ظننت احد فى هذا العالم جرا عليه ما جرا عليك فاقام الملك عنده ثلاثة ايام ثم اراد الانصراف فصنع له الدمشقى هدية عظيمة رافعة من الذهب والفضة والجواهر والزمرد والياقوت وكذلك لوزيره ثم ودعوه وانصرفوا شاكرين عنه فكانوا يزورونه فى كل شهر ويتفرجون عنده حتى اتيهم اليقين والحمد لله رب العالمين هـ

15 I am most grateful to Ms. Marie-Geneviève GUESDON, *chargée des manuscrits arabes* in the Manuscript Department of the National Library in Paris, for putting images of MS Arabe 3662 at my disposal. In July 2016 she permitted me an exceptional autopsy of the manuscript. The photos of the Paris version of the story that I took in 2016 can be seen at: www.islamicmanuscripts.info/files/Paris-BnF-Arabe-3662-7-227b-232a-King-gazelle.pdf.

16 I have not seen the Tunis manuscript and for my information about it I rely on ṬARSHŪNA'S description and variant readings.

Ṭarshūna follows the Paris manuscript in his edition and in his footnotes he gives variant readings from the manuscript in Tunis. From columns 1 and 2 of my comparative table it is evident that Ṭarshūna has felt justified to considerably change the wording of the text of the Paris manuscript. About his handling of the text Ṭarshūna says: 'We have maintained the language and the idiom of the book and we have only permitted ourselves to correct the numerous grammatical mistakes.'[17] My comparative table tells another tale, however. Even in the two short fragments of the text that I have selected here, it shows evident instances of inaccuracy in the edition and of trivialisation of the text. In addition Ṭarshūna has normalized the languange (for instance by using the dual *yazūrānihi* where his manuscript has a plural), so the question may be asked what exactly can Ṭarshūna have meant with 'correcting grammatical mistakes'. As the purpose of the present study is not to criticise Ṭarshūna's work but to integrally present the story of 'the King and the gazelle' in a newly discovered version, I will leave it at that. I do believe, however, that in general an accurate and adequate rendering of manuscript sources is an absolute necessity.

Comparison between the Paris and Toulouse versions of the story (columns 1 and 3 of the table) shows that some times the Paris version is a fuller one (the opening passage), and sometimes that goes for the Toulouse version (the closing passage). It shows that this story is no exception to the genre, namely that the transmission of this sort of texts is a fluid one. For the interpretation of the larger themes in the story it does not make much difference, but on the micro-level the texts are very different. Yet, adding a critical apparatus, as one might decide to do with mainstream classical texts, is no option here. That is why I have remained as faithful as possible to the Toulouse manuscript, so that my edition is not only authentic as far as the themes (*maʿnā*) are concerned, but also in what regards the wording (*lafẓ*).

The story of King Ṣābūr and the gazelle. The Arabic text:

The second story in MS Toulouse 899 is the one which follows hereafter. It occupies ff. 23b–13a in the volume. It is not titled and its present title

[17] Ṭarshūna, *Miʾat Layla*, p. 11.

was given by me. It seems to come from a background that is different from that of the two other stories in the same volume. It is here transcribed from the manuscript as diplomatically as possible and for details I refer to my notes hereunder. For practical reasons I have left out the few vowels and reading marks (the *tashdīd*, mostly) that occur in the manuscript. Peculiarities in the manuscript that are not usable for establishing a continuous text I have placed between verticals (|). In the single case that a letter was omitted by the copyist, this letter was added to the text, but placed between pointed brackets (< >). This was done in order to create a readable text throughout. The folio numbers of the manuscript have been placed between verticals within the text.

ذكر ان الملك صابور خرج يوما يتصيد فعرضت له غزالة مقنعة القرنين بالذهب والفضة والجوهر والياقوت واللؤلؤ وفى رقبتها قلادة الجوهر فقال الملك صابور اظن هذا الغزالة لبعض الملوك فارسل عليها الكلاب والبيزان فمشت فى اثرها وكان اذا بلغها بازا وكلبا |٢٣و| وشمها فيرجع عنها فتعجب الملك || صابور من ذلك عجبا شديدا وكان تحته فرس ياخذ الضبا فقال لوزيره سر بنا فى طلبها فعسى نظفر بها وهي بين ايديهم الى ان وصلت الى مرج كثير الانهار والاشجار والثمار والبساتين والبقر والاغنام وفى وسط الاشجار نهر عليه غلمان وعبيد فخرج شاب على جواد حسن الوجه مليح القد كثير الشجاعة والفروسية فلما راته الغزالة ارتفعت فى حجره |فغ| فغطاها بكمه ودخل القصر واغلق الباب وقال الملك ان فى هذه الغزالة لعبرة وانى اظنها لهذا الشاب فسر بنا اليه نسئله ان يبيعها منا او يهديها لنا فان فعل كفيناه وان ابا عاقبناه واخذناها منه فرسة قال فاتوا الى باب القصر فلما راوهم الحجاب عرفوا الملك صابور وميزوه قال فتبادروا الى مولاهم فخرج له وساله النزول عنده فاجابه الى ذلك ودخل الملك صابور القصر فنظر الى قصر عظيم واسع فى وسط |٢٢ظ| بساتين وماء يجرى وعلى القصر شباك من نحاس احمر ومن تحتها اصناف الطير تغرد بلغات مختلفات قال فنظر فاذا بمجالس القصر مفروشة بالحلى والحرير قال فجعل الملك صابور يلتفت يمينا وشمالا لعله يرى الغزالة فلم يراها ولم يجد لها اثرا قال فلما استقر بهم المجلس اتتهم العبيد بالماء فغسلوا ايديهم ثم تقدمت المايدة بالطعام والشراب وعليها اصناف من الوان الطعام ثم قاموا الى مجلس الشراب فتعجبوا من حسنه ومن كمال رتبته قال فلما اخذ بهم الشراب اقبل الملك صابور على صاحب القصر وقال له يا فتى انه قد وجب حقا عليك بدخولنا الى منزلتك وقد صارت لنا عليك حرمة ولنا اليك حاجة يجب عليك قضاؤها لنا قبل ان يفوت بنا الشراب فقال له الرجل انما انت اعبد والنعمة كلها لك فامر بما شيئت فقال له حاجتى اليك ان تهدى الى هذه الغزالة التى تبعتها اليوم |٢٢و| حتى دخلت فى قصرك هذا او تبيعها منا فقال له ايها الملك ليست بغزالة وانما هى زوجتى فقال الملك هذا اعجب شيء رايته وسمعته فكيف ذلك قال فقام الرجل الى جوف قصره ورجع بالغزالة بين ذراعيه حتى وضعها بين يدي الملك فقال له الملك بالذى وضع لك هذه الاستطاعة كيف هذا قال فما تم الكلام حتى انتفضت الغزالة وصارت جارية حسنة القد مليحة الخد فتعجب الملك من صورتها وبهت وحار مما رءا من حسنها وجمالها فقال |الما| الملك صابور ان كانت خادما فبعها لنا او وهبها لنا فقال له ايه الملك وكيف ابيعها وهى زوجتى ومعي منها ولدين

فى حديثتى وحديثها عبرة لمن سمعته فقال له الملك حدثنا حديثك يرحمك الله قال الفتى قضى الله تعالى انه كان لي والد وكان رجلا من اهل دمشق ولم يكن فيه اكبر منه ولا احسن |٢١ظ| نعمة ولم يكن له ولد غيرى فلما كبرت جمع لى |المعا| المعلمين فتادبت بكل ادب ثم جاوزنى اوسعهم علما وكان لي ملازما ورءانى قد انتهيت فى العلوم فقال لي يا بنى انى اخشى عليك الناس والعين السوء وكان على عضده كتابا كان عليه قفلا من ذهب فدفعه الى وقال لي يا بنى احفظ هذا الكتاب ولا تفارقه ابدا لا فى اليل ولا فى النهار فما دام عندك تامن من العين ومن كل شيء من جميع الجن والانس والسباع والهوام فانى بذلت كثير فيه من الاموال قال ثم انى درست العلم فلما بلغت مبلغ الرجال وركبت الخيل وتعلمت الفروسيه وحملت السلاح وجعلت العب فى الميدان فلم يبق لعب الا وتعلمته حتى تحدث الناس بشدتى وشجاعتى فى الحرب فقال لى ابى يا بنى ارا لك رايا فقلت وما هو يابى قال لي انى اريد ان ازوجك فى حياتى فافرح بذلك قبل وفاتى لك ابنت عم قد خطبوها سادات دمشق وابناء ملوكها واعطيت من الحسن |٢١و| والجمال ما لم يعطى لغيرها من بنات هذا الزمان من اهل عصرها ولها مع ذلك ادب وعقل وفهم فقلت له يا ابت قد رضيت بما رضيت لى انت فزوجنى من بنت عمى فلما بنيت بها وجدتها كما وصفها لى |انت| فزوجنى ابى من عقل وادب وجمال وكمال فاقضت معها عاما كاملا فى اتم عيش وانعام فلما كان بعد العام مات ابى فضاقت على الارض لفقده وضاق على البلد وكان لى بساتين ورباع فخرجت اتفرج فى بعض المنازل التى كانت لى فقلت لبعض عبيدى تقدم امامى فبينما انا امشى على اثر العبيد انى بفارس مقبل عليه سلاحه ومعد دواب وعبيد فقلت لبعض عبيدى |اد| امض بهذا وانزله فى دار الضيافة وانزل حشمه وبادر اليه بالطعام والشراب والعلف لدوابه قال ففعل الغلام ما امرته به ثم رجع الى فدخلت على الفتى وسلمت عليه وجلست معه ثم امرت بالطعام فاوتى به ثم بالشراب فمازحت الفتى فرايت منه ادبا وفهما وعقلا وعلما باخبار الملوك قال فرحبت |٢٠ظ| به وجلست معه احدثه فحبسته عندى عشرة ايام ناكل معه ونشرب معه فسالته عن حاله وعن بلده واعلمنى انه من البصرة فوصف لى ازهارها وانوارها وبساتينها وثمارها وشوقنى اليها وقال لى ان لى حاجة فاذا قضيتها رجعت اليك بالقرب ان شاء الله قال فاخذت العهد والميثاق عليه بالرجوع اليّ ثم انى عدت لبنت عمى وقلت لها ما وصف لي الرجل من البصرة فقالت اعزم الى هذه البصرة بتفرج وتكون لنا نزاهة بها قال فعاد الى الرجل فبعت الاثاث والضياع والعقار وجمعت الكل وشددته وعينت جمالا وبغالا وغلمانا وحملت بنت عمى فى احسن زي حتى وصلت الى موضع فاكريت على الاجمال والدواب مركبا ثم نزلنا على شاطى البحر فاذا به قصر عظيم واذا فى القصر غناء من داخله فقالت بنت عمى ما سمعت قط مثل هذا الغنا وما رايت موضعا افرج من هذا الموضع ففرش لنا على شاطى البحر فاذا به قصر عظيم فنزلنا وقدم لنا |٢٠و| الطعام فاكلنا ثم الشراب فشربنا فاخذت بنت عمى فغنت فما تمت غناءها حتى فتح باب القصر فخرج منه فتى حسن الوجه مليح القد وحوله عشرة رجال وجواره مثل البدور فسلم على وقال لى اعزك الله انك غريب ولا يصلح لك ان تبيت فى هذا الموضع ومعك عيالك فادخل القصر ففيه حجره خالية للضياف تكن فيها انت وعيالك قال فدخلنا معه فى القصر الى المجلس مفروش بجميع ما يصلح من الفرش الجليل والاوانى وغير ذلك قال ثم عمد الى منزله بعد ان نزلنى فادخلت بنت عمى فى الحجرة ونزل الاعوان والعبيد مكانهم فلما استقر مجلسه وجه الى رقعة وهى تقول لى ان رضيت يا سيدى اعزك الله ان تتفضل على وتوانسنى بحضورك فى مجلسى ولك الفضل قال فخرجت من الحجرة وسرت اليه فلما نظر الى وثب قايما واستقبلنى بالسلام واخذ بيدى واجلسنى الى جانبه واقبل يسئلنى عن حالى وبلدى وقال

لي اين تريد فاعلمته بما جار على |١٩ظ| وقلت له اريد البصرة فقال انا من اهل البصرة وان هذا القصر لى وهذه البساتين اتنزه فيها ايام النزاهة فاقيم فيها ما احببت ثم اعود الى البصرة ولى فيها منعمات وبساتين وانا ان شاء الله اول من عرفت من اهل البصرة فما نتفرقا حتى تنقضى نزاهتنا من هذا الموضع قال فلم نزل عنده فى لهو ولعب وفرح وطعام وشراب عشرة ايام فقلت له ان قدى متعلق بروية البصرة فقال لى نعم قد امرت ان يخلى لك دار حسنة تسكن فيها بالقرب منى فابعث اهلك وعبيدك وخدامك فى زورق بين الانهار ثلاثة ايام ومعنا ما نحتاج |اليه| من جميع الاشياء حتى وصلنا الى البصرة واذا على شاطى النهر مطايا تنتظرنا قال فركب الفتى وركبنا فسار بنا الى قصر عظيم جليل فانزلنى فيه وقال لى هذا مجلسك فادخل حشمك وعبيدك فنزلت فى منزل حسن رفيع فما بقيت الا يسيرا حتى وجه الى وسرت اليه ورايت ملكا عظيما فلما |١٩و| وصلت اليه رايت عنده فتيان من اهل البلد وابناء ملوكها فقال هذا الرجل الذى وصفت لكم فقاموا الى وسلموا على ورفعوا مجلسى ثم اوتى |بالمدينة| بالمايدة فقرب الطعام فاكلنا والشراب فشربنا الى ان سكرنا وانصرفت الى منزلي فلما اصبح الله بخير الصباح وجه الى رقعة ومطية فركبت وسرت اليه فقال لى سر بنا ندور فى البصرة وترى ما فيها فركبنا وركب القوم معنا ثم تنزهنا ودرنا ثم اشتد الحر ورجعنا الى منزلنا وبقينا على هذه الحالة مدة الى ان قالت بنت عمى يا ليتنى ما رايت البصرة ولا اجتمع معك |الى| من اليل الى اليل قال فاخبرت صاحبى بذلك واتفقت معه ان يكون يوما عندى ويوما عنده فلم نزالوا كذلك مدة من خمسة اشهر ثم ان الفتى اعتل علة شديدة فلما ءان نفسه على الهلاك احضر القاضى والعدول واوصى له بنصف ماله من جميع ما ترك من دراهم وعقار والنصف الثاني اوصى به لاهله ثم توفى رحمه الله فقبضت |١٨ظ| المال كله وهجرت المنام والطعام والشراب وحزننا عليه حزنا شديدا وبغضت البصرة وتنكسر امرى وكانت مراكب الهند لا تزال تتحدث بامر الهند فاكتريت عشرة مراكب واشتريت عبيدا عالمين بالبحر وناديت فمن اراد النهوض الى بلاد الهند فليات ثم عمدت الى احسنها مركبا فركبت فيها انا وبنت عمى فسرنا فى البحر شهرا حتى طاب الريح من ناحية البحر فبينما نحن نريد البر اذ نفد ما كان عندنا من الماء فقالت لي بنت عمى ما كان اغوانا عن هذا كنا فى دمشق فى احسن عيش وكنا فى البصرة كذلك فانظر ما ساقتنا اليه الاقدار قال فقلت للرايس هل بيننا وبين غدا موضع فيه ماء قال غدا ان شاء الله نتشرف على جزيرة فيها الماء كثير كثيرة الاشجار والثمار والانهار غير انه لا يقدر احد ان يصل اليها لان فيها عفريت عظيم من الجن فقلت له سر بنا اليه فنحن فى الهلاك من العطش قال فرسينا المركب على شاطي تلك الجزيرة |١٨و| فاصبحنا عليها فنظرت الى الثمار وحضرت المرج وجرى الانهار فيها فرسنا فيها وانخدرت من المركب وسيفى معى وجحفتى وحملت معى من جياد الغلمان بالسيوف والسلاح وحملنا معنا خمسين قربة ووصلت الى الماء واستقينا فلما اردنا الرجوع اذا بريح شديد على وجه الارض فلما ضربت منا رايت شخصا عظيم الخلقة له قوايم كقوايم الفيل وله فطوسة بين |بين| عينيه ووجهه كانه الاسد وعينان مشقرقتان يطير منهما شرار النار ويخرج من مناخره الدخان فصاح بنا صيحة منكرة غشى على العبيد من هولها ورموا بالقرب ووقفت حتى ضربنى بصدره فلم يصل الى من اجل الكتاب الذى كان اعطانى والدى وتمكنت منه بضربة شديدة فولى هاربا وطمعت فى العفريت ثم عاد الى ثانية فلم ازل اصبر ووثقت قلبى حتى ضربته ستة وعشرين ضربة وضعف من كثرة ما سال منه من الدم فولى هاربا من شدة الضربات الى جهة المراكب فاختطف بنت |١٧ظ| عمى وولى هاربا طايرا طار بها بين السماء والارض فغشى على وطار عقلى وقلبى ودموعى تنجدر على خدى قال فاتيت المركب فاتى القوم يعزونى

فى بنت عمى فقلت لهم اتعرفون لهذا العفريت موضعا ياوى || فيه غير هذه الجزيرة قالوا لي انما ياوى فى اوقات معلومات فى ايام الاسفار فيقيم فيها اياما ومسكنه بالقرب من مدينة تعرف بالبيضا فى واد عظيم ما يسلكه احد مما فيه من الشياطين والردة فقلت للرايس اطلب بنا تلك المدينة وسر بنا نحوها فكنت حزينا ممتنعا من الطعام والشراب واصحابى يحدثونى بما راوا من المصايب وانا لا اجد صبرا الى ان وصلنا المدينة التى قصدنا نحوها فاقمت فيها اسئل عن العفريت فذكر لي طغيانه وما يلقون منه وانه ياتيهم فى كل عام فتخرج له جارية من بنات المدينة وان منعوها تتساقط عليهم الشياطين بالصيحة وافسدت عليهم معايشهم واحرقوا زروعهم وانهم |وانهم| قد ارادوا الرحيل من المدينة مرارا |١٧و| لولا الملك الذى يحبسهم فيها فقلت لهم وكيف تعرفون الجارية المطلوبة وكيف تعرفون قدومه فقالوا لى علامة ذلك ان تهب ريح صفرا فلا يبقى فى المدينة احد الا اصفر وجهه الا المراة المطلوبة فانه يحمر وجهها فيوخذ فى اصلاح شانها ويحمل معها طعام وشراب ويصبح وليس فى الموضع شيء ولا خبر قال فلم يتم الا ايام يسيرة حتى هبت تلك الريح التى وصفوها فاصفرت وجوههم واحمر وجه بنت الملك وكانت فى نهاية من الحسن والجمال فاقبل الناس الى الملك يعزونه ويصبرونه وهو قد اخذ فى اصلاح شانها وحمل الطعام والشراب والفرش الى الغار فاخذت سلاحى وسرت معهم فاتوا الى مغارة كبيرة كثيرة البيوت وفرشوا فيها الفرش واوقدوا فيها الشمع وتركوا الطعام والشراب وبخروا الموضع بالعود الرفيع وجميع الطيب وانصرف القوم واخفيت نفسى فى موضع واقبل الملك الى بنته وودعها ثم انصرف ودموعها تسقط على خديها كسقوط النداء |١٦ظ| من الورق وانصرف كل من كان معها وبقيت انا مختفيا حتى سمعت الجلبة فاذا بالعفريت قد دخل من باب المغارة فلما رءانى عرفنى ولى هاربا ثم عاد الى فاقبلت عليه وضربته ضربة شديدة فولى هاربا قدامى وما رايته فرجعت الى الجارية فوجدتها قد غشى عليها فرشيت وجهها بالماء ففتحت عيناها فقالت لى يا هاذا من انت الذى من الله على بك فقلت لها ان هذا العفريت ظلمنى واخذ بنت عمى من المركب وان لى فيه ستة وعشرين ضربة فقالت لي وهل وصلت اليها بعدها |قا| فقلت لها لا فقالت لي كل من هذا الطعام واشرب من هذا الشراب ففعلت وعرضت عليها ان تاكل فابت فبقينا كذلك الى الصباح فلما اصبح اقبل الخدام والعبيد يحملون الفرش لقصر الملك فلما نظروا الى الجارية رجعوا مسرعين الى الملك يبشرونه فركب الملك وكل من كان معه ثم اتوا الى المغارة فلما رءاها الملك ترامى عليها وقال لها يا بنتي كيف سبب |خلا| |١٦و| خلاصك قال فقصت عليه القصة فحملنى الى قصره واجلسنى الى جانبه وقال لي حدثنى بحديثك يرحمك الله وعرفنى بخبرك وقصتك فاخبرته الخبر من اوله الى ءاخره فقال لى هذا شى قد سلمت ببركة الله وبركاتك وانت احق بها واشاركك فى جميع ملكى وتكون الخليفه من بعدى وخذها اليك مكان بنت عمك فقلت له جزاك الله عنى خيرا على ما املت لي وبارك لك فى ملكك واعزك اما انا ما فعلت الذى فعلت طلبا لملكك ولاكن فعلته طلبا لبنت عمى وما اريد منك الا ان تساعدنى فى طلبه حتى اقف على البير الذى هو فيه فقال الملك ان هذا البير فى ارض لا يقدر احد ان يصل اليها لكثره باسه وطغيانه ولا يدنوا منه وحش ولا هوام قال برغبته ان يسير معى هو وجنوده حتى يكون بقرب البير وانا اسير الى البار ببعض عبيدى وانزل فيه وانظر ما يكون من امرى فلما اجابنى الى ذلك وركب الملك مع حشمه واهل مملكته واخذت معى خيار عبيدى وسرنا حتى اتينا الواد فوقفوا بناحية وسرت انا حتى وقفت |١٥ظ| على البير فشدونى بحبل عظيم طويل من نحو ماية قامة ودفعته الى العبيد وقلت لهم اذا حركت لكم الحبل فقد وصلت الى قعره فلا تبرحوا حتى تردوني او تيئسوا منى فاذا حركت لكم الحبل فارفعونى قال ثم نزلت الى

قعره فجبدت سيفى واصلحت الكتاب على عضدى قال ورايت فى البعد شبه ضوء فسرت اليه فخرجت الى فسحة عظيمة واسعة واذا بقصر عظيم عليه باب من نحاس واذا بعجوز جالسة على باب القصر وبيدها مفاتح فلما راتنى قالت لي انت الدمشقى اظنك جيئت فى طلب بنت عمك فقلت لها نعم فقالت طب نفسا وقرى عينا فوالله ما وصل اليها ولا عرفها مما هو فيه من الم الجراح وكل يوم تطلع فى اعلى القصر وتقول عسى جاء بن عمى فاقول لها وكيف يصل اليك فى هذا الموضع فتقول ما كان يبقى على ساعة واحدة قال فبينما انا كذلك اذ تطلعت جارية من اعلى القصر خيل لي ان الشمس اشرقت من نور وجهها احسن من بنت عمى فلما نظرت الى قالت من حبابك يا دمشقى فقلت لها |١٥و| وكيف عرفت انى الدمشقى فقالت لى وصفك لى اخى فقلت لها ومن اخيك قالت لى العفريت الدى اخطف بنت عمك فقلت لها وكيف ترحب بى فانا عدو اخيك قالت انى ارجوا ان يكون هلاكه على يديك وانت قد وصلت الى هذا الموضع فمن يدخلك القصر ويدخلك على موضعه فقلت لا اعلم ولاكن الله معى قالت هو كما قلت واخى هو هالك من الضربة التى ضربته فى المغارة حين مضى لاخد بنت الملك وانا اعلمك انه اخى من ابى وليس هو شقيقى لان امى انسية وابى جان فانا الى الانس اقرب من الجن فان اعطيتنى عهدا وميثاقا ان تزوجنى واكون لك اهلا وتكون لى بعلا وصلتك اليه واعنتك على قتله والا فلا تصل اليه ابدا فقلت لها نعم ان رضيت بذلك بنت عمى قال فغابت ثم اتت هي وبنت عمى من اعلا القصر فلما راتنى بكت بكاء شديدا حتى غشي عليها فقالت |١٤ظ| لها اخت العفريت لا تحزنى فقد رايت محبتى فيك وشفقتى عليك وهذا ابن عمك يتزوجنى واكون لك كالاخت الشقيقة على انكما لا تخلوناني ولا تعذرانى وانا ادخلك القصر واملكك كل ما فيه واعينك على قتل اخى فقالت لها بنت عمى نعم واستحلفتنا فحلفنا لها واعطيناها العهود والمواثق الا نغدراها ولا نخونها قال فلما تواثقت منا دلت حبلا فرفعتنى وانزلتنى فى قصر عظيم فيه خزاين مملوة ذهبا وفضة وياقوتا وزبرجد وفيه نحو ثلاث ماية جارية كالبدور من بنات الملوك واشراف الناس حتى انتهينا الى باب القصر وهو على باب الارض عليه قفل عظيم قال ففتحته ونزلت منه الى زرداب عظيم الى ان اخرجنى الى دار كبيرة وفيها مجلس عظيم وفى وسط المجلس سرير من ذهب مرصع بالياقوت الاحمر والزبرجد الاخضر وهو راقد عليه كالفيل العظيم مضطجع من الم الجراح فلما رءاها العفريت قال لها ويلك انى اشم عليك رايحة الدمشقى قالت له من فزعك |١٤و| منه وكيف يستطيع الدمشقى ان يصل اليك وادخلت يدها تحت راسه واخرجت سيفه ودفعته الى فقالت لى اضربه بسيفه ولا تضربه بغيره فضربته ضربة فى نحره فاخرجت السيف من بين كتفيه ثم قطعت راسه وربطت فى رجله حبلا وجمعت جوار القصر وقلت لهن جره معى الى حفره عظيمه كانت فى القصر لا يدرك لها قعر فالقيناه فيه فهبط الى قعرها ثم قالت اخته انما القيناه فى الحفرة ان يخفى امره على مردات الجن والشيطين فان اعلموا بذلك اهلكونا فلما فرغنا من ذلك اتيت الى البير فحركت الحبل فرفعت واتيت المالك وعرفته بما جرا لى فاحمود الله على ذلك واثنى عليه وامتلا فرحا وصرورا فقال لى ما وراءك فقلت ان ارفع كلها فى القصر من مال وجوار وغير ذلك قال فطلعت |١٣ظ| جميع ذلك حتى انى ما تركت فى القصر شيئا وسرنا الى مدينة الملك فخرجوا الينا الناس وهنونا بالسلامة وشكروا فعلى وحمدوا الله واثنوا عليه قال فانزلنى الملك فى قصره وصنع لي وليمة عظيمة وجمع لي ملوك بلده واكلنا وشربنا ثم امر بالجواري فحضرونا بين يديه وردهن الى ابايهن وامهاتهن وزوجنى ابنته برضى بنت عمى واخت العفريت وصنع مهرجانا عظيما الى ان اردت ركوب البحر فامليت المراكب بالمال ودخاير الهند والسند وودعت |الملك| الملك واهل البلد وسرنا حتى وصلنا البصرة فخرج الى الملك مع اهل مملكته وسالنى عما رايت

من العجايب فاخبرته بما جرا لي فانزلنى كما احببت ورسيت مراكبى وبعت كل ما كان معى من حوايجى و<ذ>خايرى وجمعت المال وسرت الى بغداد فاقمت فيها شهرا كاملا وخرجت انظر اين ابنى مسكنا فانتهيت الى هذا الموضع فاعجبنى فبنيت فيه هذا القصر وغرست فيه هذه البساتين |١٣و| واجريت فيه الانهار ثم ماتت بنت عمى وبقيت مع اخت العفريت وهى هذه الغزالة التى رايت وبنت الملك وتسليت بالغزالة عن بنت عمى فانا شديد العشقى فيها وهى معى كذلك فاذا اصبحت صارت فى اى صورة ارادت فمرة تتصور فى صورة طاوس فينظر فى الهوى او فى اى صنف كان من العير ومرة جارية كما ترى كانها الشمس او القمر فهذا جملة حديثى وخبرى قال الملك ما سمعت قصة باعجب ولا اطيب من هذا الحديث وما ظننت احد فى هذا العالم جرا عليه ما جرا عليك فاقام الملك عنده ثلاثة ايام ثم اراد الانصراف

فصنع له الدمشقى هدية عظيمة رافعة من الذهب والفضة والجواهر والزمرد والياقوت وكذلك لوزيره ثم ودعوه وانصرفوا شاكرين عنه فكانوا يزورونه فى كل شهر ويتفرجون عنده حتى اتيهم اليقين والحمد لله رب العالمين هـ

Translation

I have divided the English translation into the seven numbered episodes that together form the story of King Ṣābūr and the gazelle. The division into paragraphs within each episode is also my addition. Finally, I have placed the folio numbers of the manuscript within the translation, as I have done in the Arabic text. All this was done for ready reference and easy reading. The lay-out of the Arabic text, both in the manuscript and in the edition, is one continuous text, from beginning till end.

» 1 «

[f. 23b] The story goes that King Ṣābūr on a certain day went out to hunt, and there a gazelle presented itself to him. Its horns were covered with gold, silver, precious stones, rubies and pearls and around its neck it wore a necklace of precious stones. King Ṣābūr said: I think that this gazelle belongs to one of the kings. Then he sent the dogs and the falcons after it, and these ran after it. When a falcon and a dog were near it [f. 23a] and it smelled them, it avoided them. King Ṣābūr was very amazed by this. He rode a horse in order to get hold of the gazelle. So he said to his vizier, let us go after it, maybe we will overtake it. The gazelle was in front of them and after a while it came onto a meadow with many rivulets, trees, fruits,

gardens, cows and small cattle and in between the trees was a river where there were servants and slaves.

There appeared from among them a young man on a fast horse. He had a good face, a pleasant complexion, and he made an impression of courage and valour. As soon as the gazelle had seen him, it jumped onto his lap and he covered it with his sleeve. Then he entered the castle and closed the gate. King Ṣābūr said: In this gazelle is an example. I think it belongs to the young man. Let us go to him and ask him to sell it to us or to give it to us. If he does so, we will give him a reward, and if he refuses we will punish him and take the animal from him as the occasion presents itself. The narrator continued: Then they went to the gate of the castle and when the guards saw them they recognized King Ṣābūr and they treated him with distinction. The narrator continued: They hastened to their master. He came out to the king and asked him to visit him in his abode.

King Ṣābūr accepted the invitation and he entered the castle. He saw a large and wide castle in the middle [f. 22b] of gardens, and running water. High up on the castle there was a window of red copper. Underneath it there were all sorts of birds that were singing in different languages. The narrator continued: He looked around and he saw the halls of the castle that were furnished with ornaments and silk. The narrator continued: King Ṣābūr started to look right and left, hoping to see the gazelle, but he did not see it and he could discover no trace of it. The narrator continued: When they were seated in the hall slaves entered with water and they washed their hands, then the table was brought with food and drinks. On the table were all sorts of food, and then wine was brought into the hall and they praised its excellence and its perfect quality.

The narrator continued: When the wine had taken possession of them, King Ṣābūr approached the lord of the castle and said to him: Young man, you are under an obligation as you have let us enter your house, and we have acquired a right over you. We have a need that you must fulfill, before wine gets the better of us. The man said to him: You deserve it most to be served, and the favour belongs to you entirely. So order whatever you wish. Then the king said to him: I need from you that you give to me as a present this gazelle which I have followed today [f. 22a] till I entered this castle of yours, or that you sell it to us. He said to him: O, king, this is not a gazelle, but this is my wife. The king said: This is the strangest thing I have ever seen and heard. How is this possible?

The narrator continued: The man stood up and went into the inner part of his castle and came back with the gazelle in his arms. Then he placed it in front of the king. The king said to him: By the one who has placed this power in you, how is this possible? The narrator continued: He had hardly completed his words or the gazelle trembled and became a woman, of good posture and attractive complexion. The king admired her form very much. He was astonished and confused by the excellence and the beauty that he had seen in her. Thereupon King Ṣābūr said: If she is a servant, sell her to us, or give her to us as a present. The other said to him: O king, how can I sell her while she is my wife. I have two sons with her. In our story is an example for whoever hears it. Then the king said to him, so tell us your story, may God grant you mercy.

» 2 «

The young man said: God, the Highest, ordained that I had a father. He was from Damascus. There was in Damascus no greater man than he, and no one better [f. 21b] in kindness. He had no other son than me. When I had grown up he brought teachers together for me, and I was taught every sort of education. Then the one who had the widest knowledge of them gave me his approval. I had a tutor who saw that I completed the sciences. Thereupon he said to me: My son, I fear on your behalf for people and for the evil eye. On his arm he carried an amulet, held in a case of gold. This he gave to me and said to me: My son, keep this amulet and never part from it, not at night and not in the daytime. As long as it is with you, you are safe against the eye, and from everything else, both *Ǧinn* and man, both wild animals and vermin, because I spent a lot on it. The narrator continued: Then I studied science and when I had reached the age of men, when I rode on horses, and I learned chivalry and I carried weapons and I started to play on the exercise field, there was no play that I did not learn, till people started to talk about my strength and courage in war.

Then my father said to me: My son, I have an idea about you. I said: What is that, father? He said to me: I want to marry you off while I am alive so that I can be happy about this before I die. You have the daughter of an uncle, who is being asked in marriage by the lords of Damascus and the sons of its kings. She is gifted with goodness [f. 21a] and beauty, in a way that is not given to anyone else of the daughters of this time and to those who live in this era. In addition she has culture, intelligence and

understanding. I said to him: Father, I am content with whatever you are content with on my behalf. Marry me therefore off to the daughter of my uncle. When I had consummated the marriage with her, I found that she was exactly as he had described her to me. So my father had married me off to intelligence, culture, beauty and perfection. I then passed a full year with her in a most complete life of leisure. When that year had passed my father died. The earth became narrowing for me because of my loss of him, and the town became too small.

» 3 «

I owned gardens and lands, and I went out to find amusement for myself in a house that belonged to me. To some of my slaves I said: You go ahead. When I followed the slaves, I met a horse rider coming from the other direction. He was wearing weapons and he had animals and slaves with him. I said to one of my slaves: Go to that man and make him settle in the guesthouse, and make his servants settle, and bring him food and drinks, and fodder for his animals. The narrator continued: The slave did what I had ordered him to do, and came back to me. Thereupon I went to the young man, greeted him and I sat with him. Then I gave order to bring food, and that was brought, and something to drink. I had a good time with the young man and I saw that he had culture, understanding, intelligence and knowledge about the histories of the kings.

The narrator continued: I welcomed [f. 20b] him and sat together with him in order to speak with him. I then kept him with me ten days long, during which we ate and drank with him. I asked him about himself and about his town. He told me that he came from al-Baṣra, and he described to me its flowers, blossoms, gardens and fruits, and he made me desirous to these. He said to me: I have something to do, and when I have done it, I will come back to you soon, God willing. The narrator continued: Then I took an undertaking and a covenant with him to come back to me. Then I went back to the daughter of my uncle and I told her what the young man from al-Baṣra had described to me. She said: I would like to go to this al-Baṣra with pleasure, so that we can have a good time there.

The narrator continued: Thereupon the young man came back to me, and I sold my furniture, my estates and my land. I brought it all together and packed it up. I designated camels, mules and servants, and I carried the daughter of my uncle in her best dress, until she arrived at the place.

Then I hired a ship for the camels and the animals, and we went down to the shore of the sea. There was a large castle, and from inside the castle singing could be heard. The daughter of my uncle said: I have never heard something like this singing and I have never seen a place more joyous then this place. Carpets were spread out for us on the seashore, and there was a great castle. We went there, and we were given [f. 20a] food, and we ate, and then drinks and we drank. Then the daughter of my uncle started to sing, and she had just stopped singing when the gate of the castle was opened. Out of it came a young man, of good countenance and of attractive posture. Around him were ten men. His female slaves were as beautiful as full moons. He greeted me and said to me: May God give you strength. You are a stranger and it is not good that you spend the night in this place, while you have your family with you. Come into the castle, and there is an empty room in it for the guests, where you and your family can stay.

The narrator continued: We entered the castle together with him and we went to a hall that was furnished with everything appropriate such as excellent carpets, dishes and the like. The narrator continued: Then he went towards his quarters after he had let me settle. I then brought the daughter of my uncle into the room, and the helpers and slaves settled in their place. When its hall was made in order, he sent me a note, which said: If you like, my lord, may God give you strength, to be so kind and so gracious to me by your presence in my hall, then it is by your virtue. The narrator continued: Then I left the room and went to him. When he saw me he jumped on his feet and received me with a greeting. He took me by the hand and made me sit next to him. He started to ask me about myself and my town, and he said to me: Where are you heading? I told him what was happening to me [f. 19b] and I said to him: I am heading for al-Baṣra. He said to me: I am from al-Baṣra myself. This castle belongs to me, and in these gardens I enjoy myself during the days of pleasure and I stay there as long as I wish. After that I go back to al-Baṣra. There I have places of pleasure and gardens. God willing I am the first person from al-Baṣra that you have learned to know. Let us not separate till the end of our stay of pleasure in this place. The narrator continued: We remained with him in dissipation, play and joy, with food and drinks, during ten days.

Then I said to him: My desire is to see al-Baṣra. He said: Yes, I already gave instructions that a good house be vacated for you, in which you can

live near to me. Send your family, your slaves and your servants in a boat in between the rivers for three days. Thus we have everything necessary with us till our arrival in al-Baṣra. And on the shore of the river there were riding animals waiting for us. The narrator continues: Then the young man mounted his animal and we mounted ours, and then he brought us to a large and beautiful castle. He made us settle in it and he said to me: This is your hall. Let your retinue and your slaves enter it. Then I entered a good and lofty place. I only stayed there a short while till he sent me a note, and I went to him and I saw a great king. And when [f. 19a] I had come to him I saw in his company young men of the people of the town, and the sons of its kings. He said: This is the man whom I have described to you. They stood up for me and greeted me. And they made me sit in an elevated place. Then the table was brought in. Food was brought and we ate, and drinks were brought and we drank, untill we were drunk, and I departed to my house. When God made the new morning come well he sent me a note and a riding animal. I mounted it and went to him. He said to me: Come with me and let us tour around in al-Baṣra so that you can see what is in there. Then we mounted and the people mounted together with us. Then we amused ourselves and toured around.

Then the heat became intense and we went back to our house, and we remained doing so for a while, until the daughter of my uncle said: If only I could see al-Baṣra, but night after night I cannot be together with you. The narrator continued: I told this to my friend and I agreed with him that he would be one day in my place and one day in his own place. During a period of five months we kept doing this in this way. Then the young man fell very ill and when he realized that he was going to die, he let the judge and the notarial witnesses come, and he designated to him by testament half of his possessions from his entire legacy, consisting of money and land. The other half he legated to his family. Then he died, may God have mercy upon him. I took hold of [f. 18b] all the possessions and I was unable to sleep, eat and drink, so sad were we about him. Al-Baṣra became an odious place to me and I felt heartbroken.

» 4 «

The ships from al-Hind continually gave news about al-Hind, so I rented ten ships and I purchased slaves who knew the sea and I let it be spoken around: Whoever would like to come on board for a journey to the coun-

try of al-Hind, let him come. Then I went to the best of the ships and I boarded it, together with the daughter of my uncle. We travelled on sea during a month till the wind became good from the direction of the sea. When we were heading towards the land, we had no water anymore. The daughter of my uncle said to me: What has led us astray? We had a good life in Damascus, and in al-Baṣra we had the same, and see where fate has brought us now. The narrator continued: So I said to the captain: Is there between where we are now and tomorrow a place where there is water? He said: Tomorrow, God willing, we will see an island where the water is abundant and which has many trees, fruits and rivers, but nobody can land there because there lives a great ʿIfrīt, family of the Ǧinn. I said to him: Let us go there, because we are dying of thirst.

The narrator continued: We moored on the shore of that island. [f. 18a] The following morning we were there and I looked at the fruits and I went onto the meadow, in which rivulets were flowing. We explored the place, and I had left the ship, while I had my sword with me and the remainder of the water. I had brought with me excellent slaves with swords and weapons, and we carried with us fifty water skins. I reached the water and we took from it. But when we wanted to go back there was a powerful wind blowing over the surface of the land. When it had passed us I saw a person of huge dimensions. He had feet like the feet of an elephant, and between his eyes he had a snout. His face was like that of the lion with two lively eyes from which flew sparks of fire. From his nostrils came smoke. He shouted at us with horrible shouts. The slaves fainted from fear and they threw away the water skins. I stood right up and he wanted to hit me with its chest, but he could not touch me because of the amulet that my father had given to me. I managed to inflict a heavy blow on him, and the *ʿIfrīt* turned away fleeing when I wished to confront him. Then he came back to me once more, and I remained steadfast and I made my heart firm, till I had inflicted twenty-six blows on him. He became weak from the loss of all the blood that streamed from him, and he turned away fleeing because of the force of the blows. He went into the direction of the ships and he grabbed the daughter [f. 17b] of my uncle and turned away fleeing, flying through the air.

He flew away with her between heaven and earth. I fainted, and my intelligence and my heart flew away, while my tears streamed over my cheek. The narrator continued: I then arrived at the ship and the people

came out consoling me about the daughter of my uncle. I said to them: Do you know a place to where this *ʿIfrīt* takes refuge beyond this island? They said to me: On certain times he takes refuge in a place several days of travel away. He stays there for a few days, and its dwelling is near a town which is called 'the white city' in a large *wādī*. Nobody goes there because of the devils that live there and because of the sinister echoes. Thereupon I said to the captain: I want us to go to that town, so bring us towards it. I was sad and deprived myself from eating and drinking, while my companions told me about the disasters that they had seen.

» 5 «

I could not bear with it till we reached the town to where we were headed. I took up residence there in order to ask about the *ʿIfrīt*. I was told about his tyranny, and about what they had suffered from him. That he would come to them every year, and that a young woman from among the daughters of the town was brought out for him. That if they would withhold her the devils would shoutingly fall down on them, would destroy their livelihood and would burn down their fields. And that they had many times wanted to leave the town, [f. 17a] if the king had not kept them there. I said to them: And how do you know who is the desired young woman? And how do you know that he is coming? They said: The sign of that is that a yellow wind comes up, and in town everyone gets a yellow face, except the desired woman, because her face becomes red. Then people begin to make her beautiful, and food and drinks are brought with her. The next morning the place is empty, and there is no news. The narrator continued: Only a few days later this wind, that they had described, started to blow. Thereupon their faces became yellow, and the face of the daughter of the king became red. She was very good and extremely beautiful. Then the people came to the king to console him and to wish him to be steadfast. He began to make her beautiful, he brought food, drinks and a carpet to the cave. Then I took my weapons and I went with the people. They went to a large cave with many hiding places. They laid out the carpet, lighted candles, left the food and the drinks, perfumed the place with incense and all sorts of scent, and then they went away, while I had hidden myself somewhere. The king came to his daughter, said farewell to her, and then left, while her tears fell from her cheek, just as dewdrops fall [f. 16b] from the leaf.

Then everybody who was with her left, and I remained hidden, till I heard the clamour, and there was the *ʿIfrīt*, who had entered the cave. When he saw me, he recognized me. He turned around and fled. Then he came back, but I confronted him and I inflicted a heavy blow on him. Then he turned away and fled away before me, till I did not see him anymore. I went back to the young woman and saw that she had fainted. I sprinkled her face with water and she opened her eyes. She said to me: You there, who are you, who was sent by God to save me? I said to her: This *ʿIfrīt* treated me unjustly and he took the daughter of my uncle from the ship. I inflicted twenty-six blows on him. She said: Have you found her back? I said to her: No. She said to me: Eat from this food and drink from these drinks. So I did , and I proposed to her that she eat as well, but she declined. We remained like that till the morning.

And when the morning had come, there came the servants and the slaves in order to bring the carpet back to the castle of the king. When they saw the young woman they hastened back to the king in order to bring him the good news. The king and everyone who was with him mounted their horses and they came to the cave. When the king saw her, he threw himself on the ground in front of her and he said to her: My daughter, [f. 16a] how could you be freed? The narrator continued: She told him the story. Then he brought me to his castle and made me sit on his side en he said to me: Tell me your story, may God have mercy upon you, and let me know your news and tell me your tale. Then I told him the story from its beginning to its end. Then he said to me: This is something from which you escaped with God's blessing and with your blessings. You are most worthy to her and I let you share in my entire kingdom, and you will be the successor after me. Take her with you instead of the daughter of your uncle. I said to him: May God reward you for the goodness that you make me to expect, and may He bless you in your kingdom and may He give you strength, but I have not done what I have done in order to obtain your kingdom, but I have done it in order to regain the daughter of my uncle. I do not want anything else from you than that you help me in finding the *ʿIfrīt*, till I stand at the well in which it lives.

» 6 «

The king said: This well is in a land where nobody can come because of the *ʿIfrīt's* great force and tyranny. No wild animal approaches him, nor do

vermin. He said that it was his wish to come with me, he and his soldiers, in order to be near the well, while I would go with some of my slaves to the well and descend into it to see what I could do there. When he had complied with my request, the king and his retinue and the people of his kingdom mounted, and I took with me my best slaves. We travelled till we arrived at the *wādī*. They halted aside and I went on, till I stood [f. 15b] at the well. Then they tied me with a great and long rope of about a hundred fathom. I gave it to the slaves and I said to them: When I move the rope for you, I have arrived at the bottom of the well. Do not depart till you have me back or when you have no hope for me anymore. When I move the rope for you, you must bring me up. The narrator continued: Then I descended to the bottom of the well. I drew my sword and attached the amulet to my upper arm.

The narrator continued: Far away I saw a sort of light, and I went towards it. I came out in a large and wide open space, and there was a great castle, which had a gate of copper, and there was an old woman sitting by the gate of the castle. In her hand she held keys. When she saw me, she said to me: Your are the man from Damascus. I think you have come in search of the daughter of your uncle. I said to her: Yes. She said: May joy be in your soul and delight in your eye. By God, he has not come to her and he has not obtained carnal knowledge of her because of the pain of the wound. Every day she goes up to the highest part of the castle and she says: Maybe the son of my uncle has come. Then I say to her: How can he come to you in this place? Then she says: He would not forsake me for one single hour. The narrator continued: And when I was standing there, and I saw a young woman high up in the castle, it was as if the sun started to shine because of the light coming from her face, which was even better than the daughter of my uncle. When she looked at me she said: Whom are you after, man from Damascus? I said to her: [f. 15a] How do you know that I am the man from Damascus? She said to me: My brother described you to me. I said to her: Who is your brother? She said: The *ʿIfrīt*, who abducted the daughter of your uncle. Then I said to her: How can you welcome me while I am the enemy of your brother? She said: I hope that he finds his death at your hand. You have arrived to this place, but who will let you enter the castle and let you come near him? I said: I don't know, but God is with me. She said: It is as I told you. My brother is dying from the blow that you inflicted on him in the cave, when he came to fetch the

daughter of the king. And I have to tell you that he is my brother through my father, but he is not my full brother because my mother was human and my father a *Ǧinn*. I am closer to humans than to the *Ǧinn*. If you promise me solemnly that you will marry me and that I will be your wife and that you will be my lord, I will bring you to him and I will help you killing him. If you don't promise you will never come near him. I said to her: Yes, on condition that the daughter of my uncle agrees.

The narrator continued: Then she disappeared, and she came back with the daughter of my uncle from high up the castle. When she saw me, she wept very much, and then she fainted. [f. 14b] The sister of the *ʿIfrīt* said to her: Do not be sad. You have seen my love for you and my affection for you. This son of your uncle will marry me and I will be to you like a full sister. On condition that you two do not leave me alone and do not reject me I will let you into the castle, and I will let you possess everything that is in it, and I will help you in killing my brother. The daughter of my uncle said to her: Yes. Then she demanded that we give an oath to this, and we gave an oath to her, and we gave her undertakings and covenants, that we would not reject her and that we would not cheat her. The narrator continued: When she had accepted our promises, she let dangle a rope and pulled me up. She let me enter into a big castle, in which there were treasuries full of gold, silver, rubies and emerald. There were approximately three hundred young women, like full moons, the daughters of kings and of noble people. Finally we reached the gate of the castle, which was by the gate of the earth. On it was a great lock. The narrator continued: She opened it, and she went down through it to a large cellar. Finally she brought me to a large house, in which there was a big hall. In the centre of it was a bed of gold, with inlays of red ruby and green emerald.

He was sleeping on it as a great elephant, lying prostrate because of the pain of the wound. When the *ʿIfrīt* saw her, he said to her: Woe unto you. I smell on you the scent of the man from Damascus. She said: That is because of your fear [f. 14b] for him. How can the man from Damascus come to you? Then she held her hand under his head, she drew his sword, gave it to me and said to me: Hit him with his sword and do not hit him with anything else. Then I inflicted a blow on his throat, and I let the sword come out between his shoulderblades. Then I cut off his head, and I attached a rope to his foot. I called together the young women of the castle

and said to them: pull him after me to a large pit that was in the castle, so deep that no one could see the bottom. Then we threw him in it and he went down till the bottom. Then his sister said: We have thrown him into the pit so that the *Ǧinn* and the devils cannot find anything from him. If they would be informed of this, they would kill us.

When we had finished with this I came to the well and pulled the rope. I was lifted and I went to the king and I told him what had happened to me. And he thanked God for this and praised Him and was full of joy and happiness. He said to me: What did you leave there behind you? I said: I lift everything that is in the castle, money, young women and anything else. The narrator continued: Then I lifted [f. 13b] all that, till I had left nothing behind in the castle. We went to the town of the king and the people came out to welcome us with greetings and to express their gratitude for what I had done. They thanked God and praised him. The narrator continued: The king let me come into his castle, and he prepared a large marriage banquet. He brought together for me the kings of his land. We ate and we drank. Then he ordered the young women to be brought and they brought them to us before him. Then he gave them back to their fathers and their mothers. Then he married me off to his daughter with the permission of the daughter of my uncle and the sister of the *ʿIfrīt*, and he organized a big feast.

» 7 «

Finally I wanted to sail away, and I filled the ships with the money and the treasures of al-Hind and al-Sind. I said farewell to the king and the people of the town and we departed, till we arrived in al-Baṣra. There the king came out to me, together with the people of his kingdom, and he asked me about the marvels that I had seen, and I told him what had happened to me. Then he let me settle down as I wished and I moored my ships. I sold all my possessions and my treasures that I had with me. I collected the money and I went to Baghdad. There I stayed for one full month. I looked around to see where I could build a house, and finally I found this spot and I liked it. I built this castle there, and in it I planted these gardens [f. 13b] and I made rivulets flow in it.

Then the daughter of my uncle died, and I remained with the sister of the ʿIfrīt, and she is the gazelle that you have seen, and with the daughter of the king. I consoled myself with the gazelle for the loss of the daughter

of my uncle. I am very much in love with her, when she is with me in this form. In the morning she takes on every shape she wishes. Sometimes she is shaped in the form of a peacock, and love is on her mind, or in the shape of any sort of onager. Sometimes she gives herself the form of a young woman, as you see, and then she is like the sun or the moon. This is all of my story and my news.

The king said: Never before I have heard a stranger nor a better story than this one. I had not thought that to anyone in the world could happen what has happened to you. The king stayed three days with him. Then he wanted to depart. The man from Damascus made him a huge and excellent present consisting of gold, silver, jewelry, emerald and ruby, and he made a similar present for his vizier. Then they said farewell and they left, full of gratitude. They came to visit him every month and enjoyed themselves when they were with him until the only certainty came. Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds. The end.

Notes

References are to the folios and lines in MS Toulouse 899 (2), and notes are given in order of occurrence in the text. A continuous set of images of the entire text of the story of king Ṣābūr in the Toulouse manuscript can be consulted at: <www.islamicmanuscripts.info/files/Toulouse-0899-23b-13a-King-Sabur-and-the-gazelle.pdf>.

Similar or identical features are usually only mentioned once, at their first appearance. Features involving the orthography of the *hamza* are usually excluded from the notes. They are too common and there are just too many of them.

It is evident that the story of King Ṣābūr and the gazelle is not in classical Arabic. There are no doubt many elements of the spoken languages in it, and there are maybe also typically Maghribī features. One striking example of Maghribī influence on the orthography is the shift of long and short vowels in either way, short ones become long and long vowels become short, not seldom in one word. A number of such instances have been indicated in the notes. They show that orality has played a role when the story was put into writing.

No attempt has been made here to find and analyze features on the syntactical level of spoken language in general or of Maghribī speech in particular, although these can be discerned. This as well falls outside of the scope of the present study.

Forms of the *fuṣḥā* language are given only by way of comparison and never in a prescriptive of corrective way.

I have left د and ذ as they occur in the manuscript. The difference can come from defective writing by the copyist, but can also reflect a phonological reality. The word ذلك for instance, occurs with either letter.

f. 23b, line 12: اذا بلغها بازا وكلبا. The nunation in *bāzan* and *kalban* is used to indicate the single unit while the two words are the subject of the verb بلغها.

f. 23a, line 2: الضبا for الظبا, a common feature in the Maghrib.

f. 23a. At end of line 8: فعـ is used for graphical purposes, to fill up the line. It anticipates the full word (فغطاها) which is given in the next line. This is a common feature of the copyist, see also f. 22a, line 10.

f. 23a, lines 11-12: يهديها , the word is broken in two in the transition from line 11 to line 12. This is a common feature, it occurs in the next line as well: واخذناها, and at numerous other instances.

f. 23a, line 12: كفيناه for كافيناه, ultimately form III of كفأ?

f. 23a, line 13: فرسة, instead of فرصة?

f. 22b, line 5: فلم يراها , no apocopate form used.

f. 22b, line 6: اتتهم العبيد, verb in the 3rd person singular feminine.

f. 22a, line 10, end: الما. Anticipation of the complete word الملك on the next line, for graphical purposes. See also the note on f. 23a, line 8, above. The same phenomenon in f. 21b, line 1.

f. 22a, line 12: ايه for ايها.

f. 22a, line 13: ولدين for ولدان.

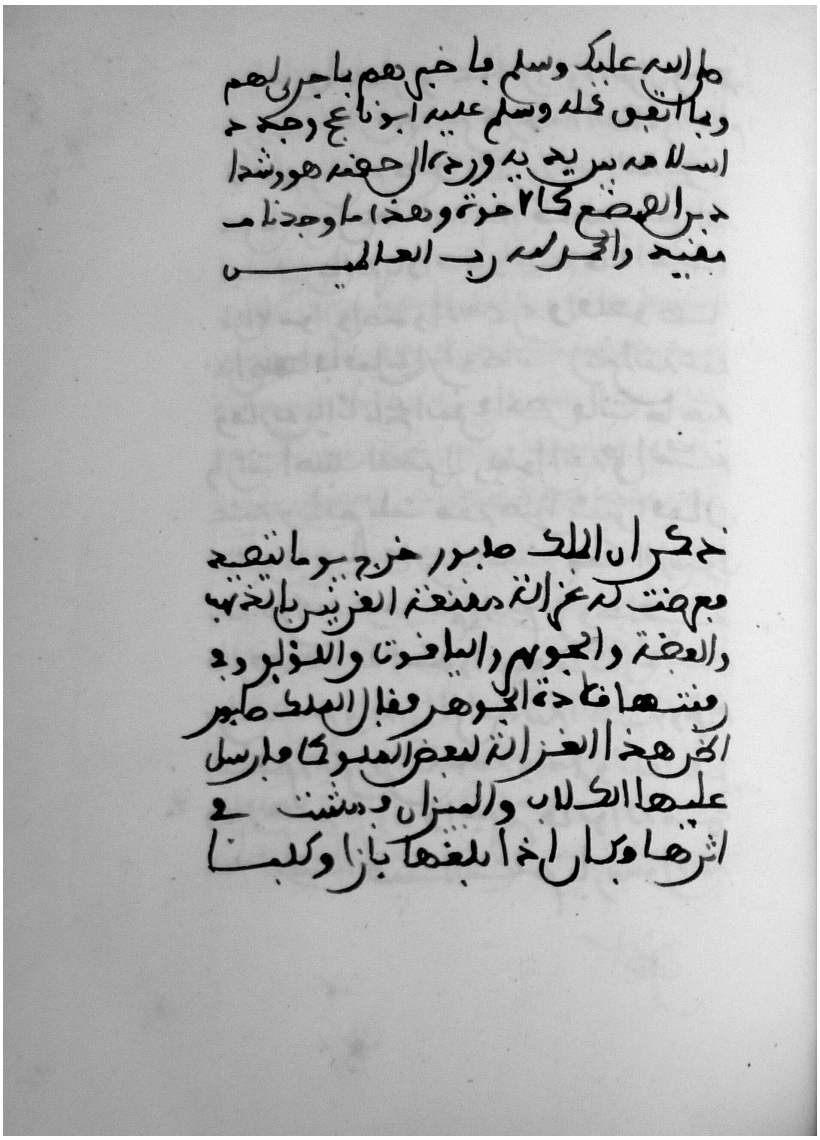
f. 22a, line 7: اليل, the sun letter after the article is assimilated, and then written only with one *lām* with a *tashdīd* assumed. The same occurs twice in f. 19a, line 11. The occurrence of this in *al-Layl* is very common in Maghribī orthography including texts in *fuṣḥā*, but it is not limited to that. See for instance also اشجع اشجعان in the incipit of the third story in the volume (f. 13a), where one would have expected اشجع اشجعان.

f. 22a, line 9: كثير note the absence of nunation, as in numerous similar instances.
f. 22a, line 14: سمعته to be read and translated as سمعه? It is possible that the sign over the *tāʾ* is a correction mark, invalidating the *tāʾ*.
f. 21b, line 2: جاوزنى translated in the sense of form II or IV, rather than form III of جوز.
f. 21b, line 5: the word كتابا has the nunation to indicate a single unit, even if it is the subject of the verb وكان. As in f. 23b, line 12, above. The *kitāb* that is mentioned twice on f. 21b, and also on ff. 18a and 15b, I have translated as amulet. The lock on it (*qufl*) may have been an amulet holder.
f. 21a, line 5: |انت| to be ignored in the translation. The word has been made invalid in the manuscript by the correction mark written over it.
f. 21a, line 5: فاقضت read and translated as فاقضيت.
f. 21a, line 11: |اد| to be considered as a line filler.
f. 20b, line 5: وقال لى, the لى seems to be crossed through.
f. 20b, line 9: نزاهة translated as نزهة. The same in f. 19b, lines 3 and 6.
f. 20a, line 4: وجواره for وجواريه.
f. 19b, line 12: اليه crossed out with a correction mark.
f. 19a, line 3: |بالمدينة| apparently a mistake for بالمائدة, which comes next.
f. 19a, line 11: من |الى| معك, the word الى seems to be crossed out by the copyist.
f. 18a, line 2: وانخدرت, the reading seems clear, but the meaning is not. Here translated on the basis of the context: 'while I had left the ship'.
f. 18a, line 8: |بين بين|, a case of dittography.
f. 17b, line 2: ودموعى تنجدر على خدى, translated according to the context.
f. 17b, lines 4-5: فيه |ا| ياوى, the *alif*, at the beginning of line 5 seems to have no meaning.
f. 17b, line 10: يحدثوننى for يحدثوننى.
f. 17b, lines 16-17: |وانهم وانهم|, a case of dittography.
f. 16b, line 6: فرشيت , colloquial form, that in *fuṣḥā* would have been فرششت.
f. 16b, line 7: عيناها, colloquial form, that in *fuṣḥā* would have been عينيها.
f. 16b, line 8: يا هاذا من انت الذى من الله على بك, construction not clear, but translated according to the context.

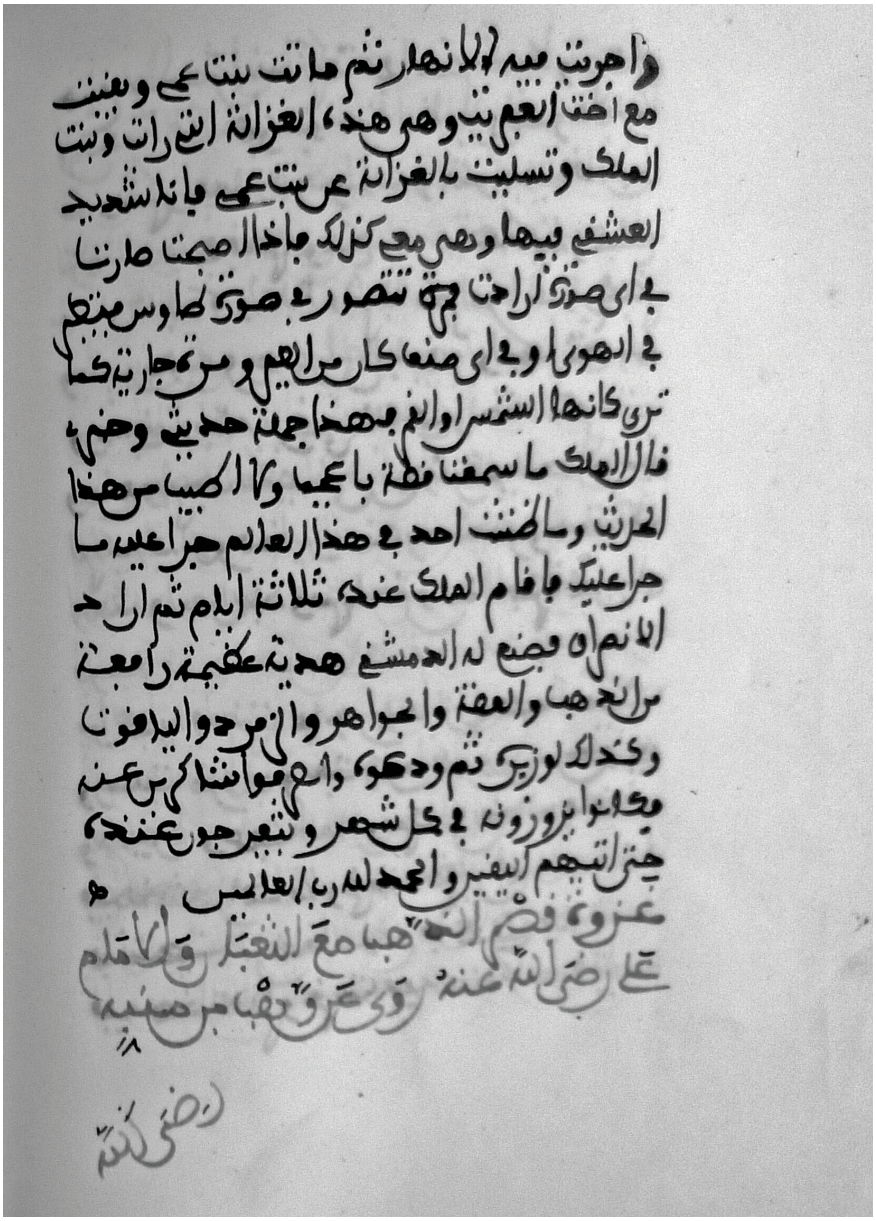
f. 16b, line 10: |قا|, a line filler, anticipating the first word of the next line.
f. 16b, line 17: |خلا|, a line filler, anticipating the first word of the first line on the next page.
f. 16a, line 14: البار, a variant for البير or البئر?
f. 15b, line 1: قامة, translated as 'fathom' according to Hinz, *Measures*, §3.5 (p. 80), s.v. *bāʿ*.[18] The fathom equals c. 2 meter.
f. 15b, line 3: تيئسوا, reading not clear, as the *yāʾ* may be just the carrier of the *hamza*. See for a similar instance also line 9, hereafter with جيئت.
f. 15b, line 5: فجبدت, so in the MS, but translated as if there had been written فجبذت, see Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v. جبذ (part 2, p. 373).[19]
f. 15a, line 2: الدى, read as الذى.
f. 15a, line 3: the sign Λ at the end of the line is a line filler, as in line 7, below.
f. 15a, line 9: لاخد, read as لاخذ.
f. 14b, line 6: والمواثق, read as والمواثيق.
f. 14b, line 14: the word زرداب, *zirdāb*, I could not find in the dictionaries, but a reading of *sirdāb*, 'cellar, subterraneous vault' (Wehr), fits into the context, and was therefore adopted for the translation.[20]
f. 14b, line 14: اخرجنى, translated as اخرجتنى.
f. 14a, line 6: جوار, for جواري, as in line 17, below.
f. 14a, line 10: مردات, meaning not clear.
f. 14a, line 11: والشيطين for والشياطين.
f. 14a, line 13: المالك for الملك.
f. 14a, line 14: فاحمود to be read as فاحمد?
f. 14a, line 15: وصرورا, translated as وسرورا.
f. 13b, line 9: خايرى <ذ> و, the MS has وخايرى for وذخايرى.
f. 13b, line 9: |~~الملك~~| dittography or a line filler crossed out.
f. 13b, line 14: وخايرى, translated as ودخايرى or وذخايرى which is probably meant.

[18] M. Ismail MARCINKOWSKI, *Measures and weights in the Islamic world*. An English translation of Walter HINZ's Handbook *Islamische Maße und Gewichte*. Foreword by C.E. BOSWORTH. Kuala Lumpur (ISTAC) 2003.
[19] Edward William LANE, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*. part 2. Repr. Beirut (Librairie du Liban) 1968.
[20] Suggestion by David HIRSCH, Los Angeles.

f. 13a, line 4: شديد العشقى, a long vowel written at the end of العشقى instead of a short one.



Beginning of the story of King Ṣābūr and the gazelle. MS Toulouse 899 (2), f. 23b.



End of the story of King Ṣābūr and the gazelle. MS Toulouse 899 (2), f. 13a.

*Critical Thinking in Early Islam[1]

Hans Daiber

Muslims are often accused of being uncritical, of clinging to their traditions and of blindly trusting the authority of the Qurʾān or even a secular leadership.

Islamic intellectual history tells a different story and provides examples of critical judgment and examination in accordance with standards that have not been taken from religion or a canonized tradition. Reason appears to be the valid standard for determining what is true, right, and good. In the context of early Islam this is what is beneficial for the community and the individual and what, reasonably considered, is true.

During the reign of the Umayyads in the 8th century we discover tendencies of divine omnipotence (*ǧabr*) and human free will (*qadar*). Both suggest a polarization, which is the result of an increasingly critical attitude towards the leaders of a community: man is free to rebel against them if they fail in their efforts and do not adhere to the Qurʾān, God's book or the Sunna of the Prophet.[2]

At the same time it becomes increasingly clear that a political leadership requires divine inspiration. It is oriented on the revelation of the

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* Beste Wim! Het was een plezier, met jou samen te werken, eerstin Amsterdam (1977–1995) en daarna in Frankfurt/M.!

1 A partly differing and extended version is published under the title "Wissen und Handeln in der philosophischen Ethik des Islam. Griechische Wurzeln und islamische Transformation" [Knowledge and Action in the Philosophical Ethics of Islam. Greek Roots and Islamic Transformation], und in *Phronesis – Prudentia – Klugheit. Das Wissen Des Klugen in Mittelalter, Renaissance Und Neuzeit – Il Sapere del Saggio nel Medioevo, nel Rinascimento E*, eds. A. Fidora, A. Niederberger und M. Scattola, Turnhout: Brepols 2013, 15–61. – The section on Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (here p. 120–126) is part of a longer article, in which we compare the letters by ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib, a contemporary of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, moreover the apocryphal exchange of letters between Aristotle and Alexander the Great from the same time and the letter of the Zoroastrian priest Tansar/Tosar: s. Daiber, "Das *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* des Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ als Ausdruck griechischer Ethik, islamischer Ideologie und iranisch-sassanidischer Hofetikette", in *Oriens* 43, 2015, 273–292.

2 Cf. H. Daiber, *Islamic Thought*, 21ff.

Qurʾān. This is an ethical guideline for the community and determines what is good and just.[3]

The ambivalent situation of a critical thinking discernible here, which however at the same time must be oriented on religion as guideline, became the impetus for the development of different concepts of critical thinking.

A notable example from the early period of Islam is the Persian Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, d. 140 AH/757 AD, one of the early Arabic prose writers. He translated an anthology of Indian fables, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, from Persian and in addition, he (or his son) revised the oldest extant Arabic rendering, possibly by a christian translater, of Aristotle's Organon.[4] Moreover, he compiled various works containing practical advice and counsel for the prince.[5]

In his Great Book of the Rules of Conduct (*ādāb*)[6] he describes a society headed by a minority of people with critical judgment who emulate the ideals of friendship, integrity and brotherhood. The hallmark of this elite[7] is a rationalistic morality, which pursues savoir vivre.

We shall now consider the guiding principles of the Great Book of the Rules of Conduct. It contains many practical and subtle codes of conduct, including much that is still worth reading today and deserves to be heeded by those responsible in the political arena: I mention as example the advice not to misuse a political position for one's own profit. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ wrote his book in the conviction that people can acquire knowledge (*ʿilm*)

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3 Cf. Frederick M. DENNY, "Ethics and the Qurʾān: Community and World View," in *Ethics in Islam*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian, Malibu 1985, 103–121; G. F. HOURANI, *Reason and Tradition in Islamic Ethics*, Cambridge, London (etc.) 1985, 23ff.

4 Cf. the references in VAN ESS, *Theologie und Gesellschaft* [Theology and Society], II, 27. – On the possible christian translator s. now Dimitri GUTAS in *Philosophie in der islamischen Welt* I, ed. by Ulrich RUDOLPH, with the collaboration of Renate WÜRSCH, Basel 2012, 72–74.2

5 Cf. the references in F. GABRIELI, "Ibn al-Muḳaffaʿ," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* 2.A. III, Leiden 1965, col. 884f; Ann K. S. LAMBTON, *Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government*, London 1980, 43ff.

6 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr = ad-Durra al-yatīma*. – With respect to the text, besides the literature cited in the following pages, cf. Gustav RICHTER, *Studien zur Geschichte der älteren arabischen Fürstenspiegel*, Leipzig 1932 (= Leipziger Semitistische Studien. N.F. III; Reprint New York 1968), 5ff; Mirella CASSARINO, *L'aspetto morale e religioso nell'opera di Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ*, Soveria Manelli 2000, 47ff.

7 Cf. CHARLES-DOMINIQUE, "*Le système éthique*," 53f.

about the rules of conduct (*ādāb*) and ethics (*aḫlāq*)[8] from scholars of the past who were versed in religious and worldly affairs.

According to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, knowledge is primarily insight about the origin (*aṣl*) or starting point of a thing; religion (*dīn*) is the right belief (*an taʿtaqida l-īmān ʿalā ṣ-ṣawāb*), the avoidance of grave sins and the fulfillment of religious duty.[9] The health of the body is based on a healthy balance and presupposes knowledge about what is useful and what is harmful.[10] Bravery (*baʾs*) and courage (*šaǧāʿa*) are shown by him who with constant prudence (*ḥiḏr*) attacks first and retreats last.[11] Generosity (*ǧūd*) is shown when one does not keep another person from having something and, on the contrary, lets them have more than they deserve.[12] Eloquence (*kalām*) is shown by him who with all caution (*taḥaffuẓ*) avoids errors and says the right thing (*aṣ-ṣawāb*) in an adroit way.[13] For him, the right way of living (*maʿīša*) is the circumspect and allowed acquisition of the necessities of life.[14]

Following these preliminary remarks, the author begins the first chapter of his book, namely the description of a code of conduct (*ādāb*) for the regent (*sulṭān*), which is directed both to the regent and to the sovereign (*rabb*) above him.[15] A central statement is the warning against exaggeration (*ifrāṭ*) especially in wrath, against too hasty actions and the recommendation to keep one's mind (*raʾy*) focused on what is important (*al-muhimm*) and right (*al-ḥaqq*).[16]

Here religion (*dīn*) and decisiveness (*ḥazm*) were pillars of government (*mulk*), but not arbitrariness (*hawā*).[17]

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8 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 65, 4ff, trans. RESCHER, 38. – Here and in the following we do not always follow the translation by Rescher, which needs to be improved in details and which should be rewritten on the basis of a critical text edition.

9 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 65, 6, trans. RESCHER, 38.

10 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 66, 3ff, trans. RESCHER, 38.

11 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 66, 6ff, trans. RESCHER, 38 below.

12 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 66, 9ff, trans. RESCHER, 39.

13 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 66, 12f, trans. RESCHER, 39.

14 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 66, 14ff, trans. RESCHER, 39.

15 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 68ff, trans. RESCHER, 39ff.

16 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 72, 4ff, trans. RESCHER, 41ff.

17 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* 73, 7ff, trans. RESCHER 43; cf. M. MAHASSINE, "Deux genres d'autorité vus à travers les oeuvres d'Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ: l'autorité fondée sur la religion et l'autorité fondée sur la fermeté," in *Acta Orientalia* 45 (1991), 898–120.

Those who rule shall have faith (*dīn*), piety (*birr*) and honor (*murūʾa*)[18] and rely on people with faith and honor "in every district, village and tribe", who shall be his "brothers", "helpers", "companions" (*aḫdān*), "sincere friends" (*aṣfiyāʾ*), and "confidants" (*biṭāna*).[19]

He shall seek advice from "men of understanding" (*ahl ar-raʾy*)[20] and at the same time he is obliged to be suspicious of "people's affairs" (*umūr an-nās*)[21] and, if necessary, consider them with aversion.[22] He shall be fair[23] and not let wickedness (*fuǧūr*) and meanness (*danāʾa*) have any chance.[24]

Also the following chapter on how to deal with the prince[25] repeatedly stresses the need for "insight" (*raʾy*) and "astuteness" (*naẓar*)[26] as way to "righteousness" (*ṣawāb*). The realization of what is right is a process, in the course of which a partial insight leads to further and finally to "decisive insight" (*taḥkīm ar-raʾy*).[27] Defamation based on lies shall be met with "prudence" (*ḥilm*) and not with anger.[28]

The dialogue with the opponent presupposes listening, careful consideration (*tafkīr*) and argumentative response, based on the good things (*maḥāsin*) that have been heard.[29] Since the regent – as already explained in the first chapter – is dependent on the support of confidants and friends, it is no wonder that the following and final chapter is devoted to friendship and/or dealing with friends (*aṣdiqāʾ*).[30] It repeats many ideals of virtue from the previous chapters and focuses on the virtue of "sincerity" (*ṣidq*), from which the word "friend" (*ṣadīq*) is derived.[31]

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18 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* 79, 9f, trans. Rescher, 46; on the role of religion in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ cf. Charles-Dominique, "Le système éthique," 62f; István T. Kristó-Nagy, "On the Authenticity of Al-Adab Al-Ṣaġīr Attributed to Ibn Al-Muqaffaʿ and Problems Concerning Some of His Titles," in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 62, Budapest 2009, 199–218; id., "Reason, Religion and Power in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ," in ibid., 285–301.

19 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 70, 1ff, trans. Rescher, 41.

20 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 70, 7, trans. Rescher, 41.

21 *yattahim naẓarahū bi-ʿain ar-rība*, 76, ult.s.; cf. 77, 3.

22 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 76, 13ff, trans. Rescher, 45 (ambiguous).

23 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 77, 6f, trans. Rescher, 45.

24 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 79, 10f, trans. Rescher, 46.

25 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 80ff, trans. Rescher, 47ff.

26 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 81, 9, trans. Rescher, 47.

27 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 83, 9ff, trans. Rescher, 49.

28 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 85, 14ff, trans. Rescher, 50f.

29 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 89, 4ff, trans. Rescher, 52f.

30 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 98–134 (end), trans. Rescher, 59–82.

31 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 105, 4ff, trans. Rescher, 63.

Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ explains sincerity as "sincerity of the heart" (*ṣidq al-qalb*), which only evokes doubt (*yuttahamu*) when the tongue is lying.[32] This is explained with man's Plato-reminiscent conflict between "reason" (*ʿaql*), "anger" (*ġaḍab*), "desire" (*hawā*) and "ignorance" (*ǧahl*); each of these forces claims the tongue (*lisān*) as instrument for its own purposes. If it is not an instrument of reason, it will become an instrument of the enemy, the above-mentioned forces of anger, desire and ignorance. [33]

These hidden[34] negative forces[35] existing in every person, which Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ calls "natures" (*ṭabāʾiʿ*)[36], are countered by our author with the already mentioned "prudence" (*ḥilm*), furthermore with "contemplation" (*tafakkur*), "reflection" (*rawīya*), "pointing" (*ḏikr*) to the consequences and the "striving for virtue" (*ṭalab al-faḍīla*); man can help these prevail through "intensity" (*iǧtihād*) and "excellence" (*faḍl*).[37] This requires him to have patience (*ṣabr*) in order to fight the desires and "to realize his insight with firm will" (*wa-li-baṣīratihī bi-ʿazmihī munaffiḏan*).[38]

The above-mentioned intellectual activities lead to practical "knowledge of the useful" (*ʿilm li-l-manāfiʿ*) and to a "sharpening of the mind" (*taḏkiyat al-ʿuqūl*).[39] Here a person could benefit from his fellow man, who knows more and who is better overall, also in religion. Thus, through the "honesty" (*ṣalāḥ*) of the person excellent in religion, he himself would grow in honesty.[40]

Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ ends his treatise with a remarkable sketch about a highly esteemed, unnamed "companion" or "friend" (*ṣāḥib*); because this person attached little importance to worldly things[41], restrained his desires and in the struggle against ignorance (*ǧahāla*) oriented himself on what was useful (*manfaʿa*).[42] Furthermore, he was reserved, considerate

32 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 105, 4ff, trans. Rescher, 63.
33 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 106, 9ff, trans. Rescher, 64.
34 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 109, 10ff, trans. Rescher, 66f.
35 Cf. also the list *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 109, 6f: *saurat al-ġaḍab* "fierce anger", *saurat al-ḥamīya* "fierce rage", *saurat al-ḥiqd* "fierce resentment", *saurat al-ǧahl* "great ignorance".
36 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 109, 10, trans. Rescher, 66 ("emotions").
37 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 109, 7f, trans. Rescher, 66.
38 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 111, 3, trans. Rescher, 67.
39 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 111, 7ff, trans. Rescher, 67.
40 *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 112, 10ff, trans. Rescher, 68.
41 *wa-kāna raʾsu mā aʿẓamahū fī ʿainī ṣiġara d-dunyā fī ʿainihī*, see. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 133, 6, trans. Rescher, 82.
42 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 133, 10f, trans. Rescher, 82.

and prudent in conversation and in dealings with his neighbor (*iḫwān*) he showed attention (*ihtimām*), circumspection (*ḥīla*) and vigor (*quwwa*).[43] According to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, a person should at least try to acquire some of these characteristics (*aḫlāq*). The best persons are those who do not feel superior over those of low degree or who humble themselves to those higher up.

This final sketch sounds like a summary of central thoughts of *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*. Who is this person Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ mentioned? I would like to suggest that here his contemporary Ṣāliḥ Ibn ʿAbdalquddūs is meant, who in Basra acted as a moral preacher and who in the later tradition was wrongly deemed a heretic (*zindīq*);[44] the proverbs handed down from him extol moderation in speech, true friendship, justice and prudence; they point to the transience of the world and the value of reason and the knowledge of the wise.[45] This implies criticism of the rulers, who surround themselves with ignorant people.[46]

The comparison with Ṣāliḥ Ibn ʿAbdalquddūs provides the historical background of *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and vice versa; simultaneously the presumption is confirmed that Ṣāliḥ Ibn ʿAbdalquddūs was not a heretic, but rather a representative of the parenetic literature of his time, in which the importance of reason for the conduct (*adab*) of man and his way of life is underscored.[47]

The detailed reasoning in Ibn al-Muqaffa's *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, however, is not only a reflection of his time but, upon more systematic consideration of the concepts, leads to a surprising result, which can be explained in my view not only as parallelism and convergence of thoughts. There are similarities and differences to the thoughts of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics which during Ibn al-Muqaffaʿs time had not yet been translated into Arabic. Nevertheless there are echoes, confirming the judgment of Frithiof Rundgren in an essay published in 1976, according to

43 Cf. *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr*, 134, 4f, trans. RESCHER, 82.
44 Cf. VAN ESS, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, II 15ff.
45 Cf. Ignaz GOLDZIHER, "Ṣāliḥ B. ʿAbd-al-Kuddūs und das Zindīkthum während der Regierung des Chalifen Al-Mahdī," in GOLDZIHER, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Joseph DESOMOGYI, Hildesheim 1969, 1(104)–26(129), esp. 7(110)ff.
46 Cf. VAN ESS, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, II 18.
47 Cf. VAN ESS, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, II 19f.

which the *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-kabīr* reveals its author to be "a man influenced by Hellenism".[48]

However, to a greater extent than Aristotle[49], Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ underscores the role of friendship for the community, in Aristotle the polis. At the same time, both in Aristotle and in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ friendship is rated higher than justice.[50]

The virtue of truthfulness (*aletheia*) appears in Aristotle as the mean between boastfulness and hypocritical self-deprecation. It refers to the words and actions of people in dealing with fellow citizens and is friendship (*philia*).[51] Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ does not use Aristotle's concept[52] of the mean between two extremes to explain the virtues of the individual person, but writes of the struggle of reason, the reflection against anger, desire and ignorance in order to prevent the tongue from becoming their mouthpiece.

In Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, the objective of the tension is realization and knowledge about what is useful as well as insights, which shall be "implemented with "firm will". Aristotle means the same thing when he says that the prudent person "first must know [that he is doing virtuous actions] (*eidôs*), second, he must decide on them (*proairoumenos*) and decide on them for themselves, and third he must also do them from a firm and unchanging state (*bebaíôs kai ametakinêtôs*)".[53] However, as a further motivation for action Aristotle adds the good and the pleasant.[54] According to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ friendship is a component of the harmonious interconnectedness of rulers and co-rulers oriented exclusively on utility. It makes use of the "knowledge of the useful", which is based on those who know

48 RUNDGREN, "Über den griechischen Einfluss auf die arabische Nationalgrammatik," in *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis* (Nova series 2:5, 1976), 119–144, 139f; Rundgren's comparison (p. 140) of the Arabic *baʾs* with the Greek *aretē* and the reference to the Middle Persian are not convincing, since Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ does indeed use the term faḍīla for aretē and besides *baʾs* also uses the usual *šaǧāʿa* (see above).

49 *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII and IX.

50 Cf. to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII 1.1155a22ff; "Freundschaft," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (ed. Joachim RITTER) II, Darmstadt 1972, column 1106.

51 Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1108a11ff; 27ff.

52 Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, II 7 with respect to bravery, temperance\prudence, generosity, magnanimity, anger and friendship.

53 *Nicomachean Ethics*, II 7. 1105a31ff, trans. DIRLMEIER 33.

54 Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII 2ff.

more and can be consulted, of knowledge of the scholars in the past and present who are well versed in religious and worldly things.

Such a specification of the sources of knowledge is lacking in Aristotle; moreover, neither Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ nor Aristotle provide a specification of the content of this knowledge; Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ also calls it "insight" (*raʾy*), in Aristotle it is "moral insight" or "practical wisdom", phronesis.[55]

Both limit themselves to a general reference to ethical virtues such as fortitude, prudence, generosity[56] and moderation of anger and desires. According to Aristotle, this can be defined best as the mean between two extremes; Ibn al-Muqaffa' speaks instead of "codes of conduct" (*ādāb*), oriented on the probity or honesty (*ṣalāḥ*) of the person who has the "right belief" and "religion" (*dīn*) and "piety" (*birr*) and "honor" (*murū'a*); he does not mention a specified law or code of conduct.

In Aristotle[57] as in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, knowledge, reflection, and consultation with oneself and others only serve as an orientation for action, in Aristotle for the "decision" (*proairesis*), the decision to act[58], in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ for the realization "with firm will" (*ʿazm*) and after "decisive insight". As in Aristotle[59] there is no "context-determination of prudence."[60] Aristotle's concept of prudence is therefore rightly referred to as "reasonable striving" and "striving reason".[61]

Prudence gives the individual person orientation for his conduct and actions, in his self-design, which occurs in Aristotle in relation with the polis, in Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ in the context of a community consisting of rulers and the ruled; the individual person must constantly reorient himself

55 Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI 5 and DIRLMEIER, 449; thereto Aubenque, *Der Begriff der Klugheit bei Aristoteles*, 41ff; Luckner, *Klugheit*, 94ff.

56 In Aristotle *sōphrosyne*. – Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ uses *ḥilm*, whereas the Arabic tradition Nicomachean Ethics (e.g. 1103a6, 1104a19, 25 etc.) provides the term *ʿiffa* "abstinence"; cf. the Arabic edition, ed. AKASOY/FIDORA; thereto Lawrence V. BERMAN, "Σωφροσύνη and ʾΕγκράτεια in Arabic, Latin, and Hebrew: The case of the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle and its Middle Commentary by Averroes," in *Orientalische Kultur und europäisches Mittelalter*. Albert ZIMMERMANN (ed.), Berlin and New York 1985 (= Miscellanea Medievalia. 17), 274–287.

57 Cf. thereto LUCKNER, *Klugheit*, 75ff.

58 Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, III 4 and VI 2. 1139a22ff; AUBENQUE, *Der Begriff der Klugheit*, 107ff; LUCKNER, *Klugheit*, 89ff.

59 Cf. LUCKNER, *Klugheit*, 94ff.

60 LUCKNER, *Klugheit*, 98.

61 Cf. RIEDENAUER, *Orexis*, 218ff.

in dealing with others. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ mentions the necessary "mistrust" towards people, if necessary followed by "dislike".

Ibn al-Muqaffa' appears to be inspired by central thoughts in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics; they were possibly mediated to him through Iranian-Sassanid ethical traditions, which also resonated in later authors of the Mirrors of Princes, in political writings and in ethical works. There Arabic translations of Greek writings on ethics and politics were additionally used, among these texts by Plato, namely summaries of The Republic, Laws and The Statesman.[62]

Already in al-Kindī (185/801–252/866),[63] the first great philosopher of the Arabs, we find a blend of Aristotelian and Platonic-Neoplatonic anthropology, where the Platonic tripartite division of the soul in a "rational", "desiring" and "angry" part is central. These parts cause the Platonic cardinal virtues wisdom (*ḥikma*), courage (*nağda*), temperance (*ʿiffa*) and justice (*ʿadl*).

Half a century later, at the beginning of the 10th century, the philosopher and physician Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī propagated an ideal of moderation, even in asceticism, in morality. This would occur through increasing knowledge and through just actions to benefit society.

According to Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī, man can attain knowledge through his own efforts and does not need a source of inspiration as authority, nor does he need a prophet. Man can learn from his forefathers, of earlier scholars and philosophers, even from their mistakes. "Whoever reflects (*naẓara*) and makes every effort (*iğtahada*) is on the path of truth (*muḥiqq*), even if he does not reach the utmost limit".[64]

By contrast, in a discussion with him, his Ismailite opponent Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī defended the necessity of prophetic inspiration as a source of knowledge:[65] He asserted that among people there were different classes, namely with respect to their intelligence and their ability to discern and perceive. Therefore, they needed a leader who is chosen by God and endowed by God with divine knowledge.

According to ar-Razi, the Prophet Muhammad was perfect in his reason (*ʿaql*), in his prudence (*ḥilm*), in his patience (*anāt*), as a ruler

62 Cf. here and in the following Daiber, *Political Philosophy*, 842ff.
63 Cf. in detail Daiber, "*Political Philosophy*," 843f; cf. Daiber, "Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī", 279f.
64 Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, *Aʿlām an-nubūwa*, 12, 18f.
65 Cf. Daiber, "*Political Philosophy*," 846ff.

and leader of all people".[66] He possessed the cardinal virtues of wisdom (*ḥikma*), courage (*naǧda*), temperance (*ʿiffa*) and justice.

The model of the prophet as "teacher" with universal knowledge that is not the result of own resourcefulness (*istinbāṭ*), but rather comes by divine revelation, overshadows the political philosophy of Fārābī, probably the most original thinker in early Islam, who died in 950 AD and was also called the "second teacher" (after Aristotle).[67]

According to Fārābī, "religion" (*milla*) is a description of the insights and actions, which are imposed upon society by their God-inspired ruler, the prophet, in the form of laws.

In addition, Fārābī introduces the three Aristotelian capacities of the soul, following Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI[68]: sense perception, understanding and goal-directed desire, which steer the knowledge of what is right and the subsequent human ethical action. He also integrates the Aristotelian concept of phronesis, practical "intelligent awareness", for which he uses the term *taʿaqqul* in accordance with the extant Arabic translation[69]: Reason, philosophical insight determines the virtuous actions of people in the model state.

Here Fārābī declares religion to be the only way through which prudence is realized and becomes action. Philosophy uses religion as an instrument to give people moral insight, practical wisdom, prudence that leads to the "ultimate happiness" (*as-saʿāda al-quṣwā*).

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66 Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī, *Aʿlām an-nubūwa*, 73, 17–19.

67 Cf. in the following Daiber, "*Political Philosophy*," 848f; id., "al-Fārābīs Aristoteles. Grundlagen seiner Erkenntnislehre," in *O ye Gentlemen. Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture. In Honour of Remke Kruk*. Hg. Vrolijk, J.P. Hogendijk, Leiden, Boston 2007 (= Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, 74), 99–112; id., "Al-Fārābī on the Role of Philosophy."

68 *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139a17f; cf. thereto Daiber, "*Prophetie*," 734ff. – Here it should be noted that Book VI in the extant Arabic version (see below) is missing and Fārābī apparently had a complete Arabic translation at his disposal, which is also confirmed by the reference to Book VI of the Nicomachean Ethics by Ibn Rušd in his compendium (Muḫtaṣar) on the Book of the Soul; presumably Ibn Rušd is referring to Al-Fārābī's note in his *Risāla fi l-ʿaql*: see. Wirmer (ed. and trans.), *Averroes - Über den Intellekt*, 57, footnote. 34.

69 Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1145a1 and 5, arab. trans. ed. Akasoy/Fidora, 333, 6 and 7; 1146a4, arab. trans. ed. Akasoy/Fidora (see below,) 375; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1178a18, arab. trans. ed. Akasoy/Fidora, 563, 10.

Fārābī adds that the universals of philosophy and/or their figurative representation in religion through the imagination of people are stimulated by the divine Active Intellect.

This is conveyed in emanations to the prophet, who is active as ruler of the "perfect state". He has the task to convince those learned in philosophy with philosophical argumentation and to persuade the multitudes who only possess "figurative knowledge" through "warnings" and "laws".

Here Fārābī goes far beyond what Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ only touches on about the qualities of the rulers and the function of religion; in Fārābī, the authority of reason and the virtuous pursuit of knowledge appears to be replaced through an original statement of religion as moral action and as a pictorial representation of philosophical insight, which must always constitute itself anew in the aspiring approximation to God. The counsel of the responsible person, the recourse to friends, appears for Fārābī replaced by the divine inspiration of the philosopher-prophet regent, who conveys his knowledge, the divine inspiration, in the symbolic-pictorial design of religion, in the form of rules and regulations, with the necessary intellectual and rhetorical qualities to his subjects. According to Al-Fārābī, insight constitutes itself in a permanent process, in which the divine Active Intellect creates knowledge about the good to striven for and the evil to be avoided, hereby influencing human will (*irāda*) and human choice (*iḫtiyār*). Since this process is never finished, Fārābī does not offer a catalogue of rules, but rather only a method of insight.[70]

Fārābī's model here is Plato, who wrote in his "*Statesman*" (*Politikos*): "The best thing, however, is that it is not the laws that govern but rather the royal man endowed with prudence".[71]

Fārābī's original thoughts have influenced different authors in various ways, which cannot all be discussed here.

A remarkable echo of Fārābī's political philosophy is provided by the so-called "*Epistle of the Brethren of Purity*" (*Rasāʾil Iḫwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ*), an encyclopedia compiled shortly after Fārābī's death and before 956/960 by an author's collective.[72]

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70 Cf. Daiber, "*Al-Fārābī on the Role of Philosophy*," 73ff.

71 Plato, *Politicus*, 294a7f; cf. thereto Wolfgang Kersting, "Der einsichtige Staatsmann und der kluge Bürger. Praktische Vernünftigkeit bei Platon und Aristoteles," in Kersting (ed.), *Klugheit*, Weilerswist 2005, 21f.

72 Cf. in detail Daiber, "*Political Philosophy*," 849–851.

The main objective of the Encyclopedia of the Brethren of Purity is an encyclopedic education of man to a new consciousness; this should enable him to avoid blind obedience to corrupt rulers and to develop independent judgment (*iǧtihād*), in order to find in this way the path to extreme bliss through increasing knowledge of the "intellectual things".

We find a new emphasis in the work of the Iranian philosopher and historian Miskawayh (circa 320/932–421/1030).[73] The virtues of man are prescribed by wisdom (*al-ḥikma*), laws (*aš-šarīʿa*) and tradition (*as-sunna*),[74] whereby his character can be shaped by habit and practice (*ʿāda, tadarrub*);[75] however, because each man has different capabilities[76], he needs help from his fellow citizen.[77] He should therefore live together with him in love (*maḥabba*) and friendship (*ṣadāqa*).[78]

Miskawayh's younger fellow citizen of the city of Iṣfahān, Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī, combines essential thoughts of Miskawaih with those of Fārābī,[79] which to a large extent were mediated by the Encyclopedia of the Brethren of Purity. It integrates Quranic verses to confirm philosophical ethics.[80]

As with Fārābī, the people need a prophet,[81] because "most people are incapable of knowing what is useful or harmful for them in the afterlife".[82]

Iṣfahānīʿs ideas made a big impression on Ġazzālī (d. 505/1111).[83] According to him, the mystical path of the believer, who follows the Islamic law in the context of a primarily Quranic eschatological-oriented

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73 Cf. in detail DAIBER, "*Political Philosophy*," 851f; M. Abdul Haq ANSARI, *The Ethical Philosophy of Miskawaih*, Aligarh 1964.

74 *Tahḏīb al-aḫlāq*, ed. ZURAYK 62, 11, trans. ZURAYK, 55.

75 *Tahḏīb al-aḫlāq*, ed. ZURAYK 31, 8, trans. ZURAYK, 29.

76 *Tahḏīb al-aḫlāq*, ed. ZURAYK 46ff, trans. ZURAYK, 41ff.

77 *Tahḏīb al-aḫlāq*, ed. ZURAYK 29, 8, trans. ZURAYK, 25; cf. Aristoteles' zōon politikon in his Pol. 1.1.1253a2ff.

78 *Tahḏīb al-aḫlāq*, ed. ZURAYK 135ff, trans. ZURAYK, 123ff.

79 Striking parallels are found in al-Fārābī's *Kitāb at-Tanbīh ʿalā sabīl as-saʿāda*; cf. Sahban Mahmoud KHALIFAT, "New Lights on al-Fārābī's Risāla at-Tanbīh ʿalā sabīl al-Saʿādah," in *Acts of the International Symposium on Ibn Turk, Khwarezmī, Fārābī, Beyrūnī, and Ibn Sīnā* (Ankara, 9–12 September 1985), Ankara 1990 (= Atatürk Culture Center Publications. 41), 149.

80 On the ethics of Iṣfahānī, its sources and its echo in Ġazālī; cf. Yasien MOHAMED, *The Path to Virtue*.

81 Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb aḏ-Ḏarīʿa, al-ʿAǧamī* (ed.), 204f.

82 Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb aḏ-Ḏarīʿa, al-ʿAǧamī* (ed.), 204, 4.

83 This has been discussed in detail in Yasien MOHAMED, *The Path to Virtue*.

worldview, is the only way to perfection and happiness in the afterlife. It presupposes the striving of the capacities of the soul, which are steered by reason, to attain knowledge (*ʿilm*) which shall be decisive for action (*ʿamal*). Ġazzālī asserts that this striving is a never-ending learning process. In his work *Mīzān al-ʿamal*, in a chapter on "the necessity of learning to show the paramount importance of reason" Ġazzālī asserts: "One must make an effort (*saʿī*) to actually make it emerge, comparable to the unavoidable effort to dig a well to get water."[84]

Ġazzālī shares the above-mentioned synthesis of Sufism and the Aristotelian doctrine of virtue with Ibn Sīnā (370/980-428/1037). According to him, the regent and the legislator had to be distinguished by the cardinal virtues of prudent conduct, practical wisdom (in relation to actions in this world) and bravery, which together result in justice, which Ibn Sīnā refers to as the "golden mean" (*wasāṭa*); when he combines it in the study of philosophy with "theoretical wisdom" (*al-ḥikma an-naẓarīya*), "he is happy" (*fa-qad saʿida/suʿida*);[85] and when he besides this also has prophetic qualities, he will become *ḫalīfat Allāh*, God's representative on earth.

The ultimate consequence of this doctrine, the withdrawal from society, has not yet been drawn here. This remains to be drawn by the Andalusian philosopher Ibn Bāğğa (d. 533/1138) and his younger contemporary Ibn Ṭufail (d. 580/1185 or 1186).[86]

According to Ibn Bāğğa, only the *mutawaḥḥid*, who has withdrawn from society, is capable of the mystical ascent to higher forms of insight. He can, however, benefit from the encounter with others (*liqā', iltiqā'*), from the pursuit of intellectual perfection in the perfect state by competing with each other. With regard to the "encounter which contri-

[84] Ġazzālī, *Mīzān al-ʿamal*, ed. Dunyā, 334, 11f /trans. Elschazli, 187. – The concept of striving for reason and learning which resonates in Ġazzālī culminates in the development of his conception of *iğtihād*, of the striving of the self in the unprejudiced quest for religious truth far removed from blind belief in authority (*taqlīd*): cf. DAIBER, "Griechische Ethik in islamischem Gewande. Das Beispiel von Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī (11th century)", in *Historia Philosophiae Medii Aevi. Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Kurt Flasch zu seinem 60. Geburtstag*. Burkhard Mojsisch, Olaf Pluta (eds.), Amsterdam, Philadelphia 1991, 192.

[85] Ibn Sīnā, aš-Šifāʾ, al-Ilāhiyāt II, Muḥammad Yūsuf MŪSĀ, Sulaimān DUNYĀ, Saʿīd ZĀYID (eds.), Cairo 1960, 455, 14.

[86] Cf. DAIBER, *Political philosophy*.

butes to well-being"[87] – Ibn Bāǧǧa also calls it the "political encounter of man" (*al-liqā' al-madanī al-insānī*), followed by "the encounter of reason" (*al-liqā' al-ʿaqlī*) "for the purpose of teaching and learning" (*li-t-taʿlīm wa-t-taʿallum*); furthermore "the divine encounter" (*al-liqā' al-ilāhī*), which enables "theoretical knowledge" (*al-ʿilm an-naẓarī*).[88] Here as with Fārābī, the individual needs the aid of divinely inspired persons, the prophets, to convey knowledge to him.[89]

Ibn Rushd (Averroes) from Cordoba (1126–1198) takes this idea further.[90] In his "Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect"[91] he asserts that "happiness is not achieved solely through study or solely by action but by both together; one can only attain it in this life". However, since everyone in his life is a part of society, he can achieve happiness and "theoretical knowledge" as long as society does not prevent this;[92] here "theoretical knowledge" is "in fact useful and essential for action"[93] and is reflected in the laws as God's will.[94]

These, according to Neoplatonic doctrine, can be sought after in an increasing connection (*ittiṣāl, ittiḥād*) of the knowledge acquired by humans

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87 *al-Iltiqāʾ al-muʿāwin ʿalā al-manāfiʿ*: Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-Wadāʿ*, M. Fakhry (ed.), *Rasāʾil Ibn Bāǧǧa*, 142, 16f; cf. 142, 13ff; E.I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought*, 161f.

88 Ibn Bāǧǧa, *Risālat al-Wadāʿ*, Fakhry (ed.), *Rasāʾil Ibn Bāǧǧa*, 142,17ff.

89 Cf. Ṣaghīr Ḥasan al-Maʿṣūmī, "Ibn Bājjah on Prophecy," in *Pakistan Philosophical Journal* 5/1 (1961), 31–37; alsoin: Sind University Journal 1 (1961), 22–29.

90 Cf. Daiber, "Political Philosophy," 856–858; Alfred L. Ivry, "Averroes' Understanding of the Philosopher's Role in Society," in *Islamic Thought in the Middle Ages*, 112–122.

91 Kalman P. Bland (ed. u. trans.), *The Epistle on the Possibility of Conjunction with the Active Intellect by Ibn Rushd with the Commentary of Moses Narboni*, New York 1982, 108f.

92 Cf. Gerhard Endress, "Wissen und Gesellschaft in der islamischen Philosophie des Mittelalters," in *Pragmatik: Handbuch pragmatischen Denkens*. Herbert Stachowiak (ed.), I, Hamburg 1986, 239; Miguel Cruz Hernandez, "La libertad y la naturaleza social del hombre según Averroes", in *L'homme et son destin d'après les penseurs du moyen âge. Actes du premier congrès international de philosophie médiévale*, Louvain-Bruxelles, 28 aout – 4 septembre 1958, Louvain-Paris 1960, 281ff.

93 Cf. E.I.J. Rosenthal (ed. and trans.), *Averroes' Commentary*, 71 / Ralph Lerner (trans.), *Averroes on Plato's Republic* (Ithaca and London, 1974), 89; thereto Charles Butterworth, *Philosophy, Ethics and Virtuous Rule: a Study of Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, New York and Cairo 1986 (= Cairo Papers on Social Science. 9, monograph 1), 19ff; *id.*, "Die politischen Lehren von Avicenna und Averroës," 156ff, esp. 162ff.

94 E.I.J. Rosenthal (ed. and trans.), *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 66 / Ralph Lerner (trans.), *Averroes on Plato's Republic*, 80f.

with the Active Intellect, the connecting link between God's knowledge and the acquired knowledge of the visible and transitory world.[95]

Philosophy is the highest form of seeking universal human knowledge about religious truth, as it is rendered in the *šarīʿa*.[96]

We find this realistic attitude in Ibn Rushd's commentary on Plato's Republic,[97] where he refers to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, Ibn Bāǧǧa and especially Fārābī. As with Fārābī, the perfect regent is described as king, philosopher, legislator and *imām*[98] with specific intellectual and moral qualities.[99] The diversity of society, consisting of rulers and the ruled,[100] require as much cooperation and community as possible.[101] This is a prerequisite for the pursuit of "progress of man in gaining one knowledge after the other", which is a task of individuals, nations and entire humanity. As with Fārābī[102], such an obligation may justify a war to bring wisdom to those who cannot be persuaded by rhetoric or by poetical or demonstrative arguments[103] and which can accept virtue solely under duress.[104]

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95 Cf. DAIBER, *Islamic Thought*, 83ff and the references given there; D. WIRMER, *Averroes – Über den Intellekt*, 21ff.

96 Cf. the literature referred to in DAIBER, "*Political Philosophy*," 868, footnote 227.

97 Hebrew translation, ed. and trans. E.I.J. ROSENTHAL, *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic/* new English translation by Ralph LERNER, *Averroes on Plato's Republic*. – Thereto the literature mentioned in DAIBER, "Political Philosophy," 868, footnote 228.

98 Cf. E.I.J. ROSENTHAL (ed., trans.), *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 60ff / Ralph LERNER (trans.), *Averroes on Plato's Republic*, 71ff.

99 Cf. E.I.J. ROSENTHAL (ed., trans.), *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 71ff / Ralph LERNER (trans.), *Averroes on Plato's Republic*, 90ff.

100 Cf. E.I.J. ROSENTHAL (ed, trans.), *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 65 / Ralph LERNER (trans.), *Averroes on Plato's Republic*, 79f; cf. thereto the references in DAIBER, "Political Philosophy," 868, footnote 231.

101 Cf. E.I.J. ROSENTHAL (ed., trans.), *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 57f / Ralph LERNER (trans.), *Averroes on Plato's Republic*, 64–66; Plato, Rep. 462ff.

102 Cf. Joel KRAEMER, "The Jihād of the Falāsifah," in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987), 288–324.

103 Cf. Charles BUTTERWORTH, AVERROES, "Politics and Opinion," in *American Political Science Review* 66 (1972), 894–901; id., "Rhetoric and Islamic Political Philosophy," in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (1972), 187–198; Louis LAZAR, "L'éducation politique selon Ibn Roshd (Averroes)," in *Studia Islamica* 52 (1980), 135–166.

104 Cf. E.I.J. ROSENTHAL (ed., trans.), *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, 25f / Ralph LERNER (trans.), *Averroes on Plato's Republic*, 11.

Ibn Rushd's theories strongly influenced the political thought of Ibn Ḫaldūn (1332–1406) in his Muqaddima.[105] [106] His central notion of *ʿaṣabīya*, of solidarity,[107] implies the desire for cooperation and friendship[108] in a society which in its composition of elite and masses according to the model of Fārābī needs a regent, a prophet with practical wisdom, which includes political and juridical wisdom[109] and aims to lead the people "in accordance with ethical and philosophical needs" "to a behavior, that results in the preservation and the continuation of the (human) species".[110] The prophet has the task of informing humanity about the law, about what is best for them and protects them.[111]

I would like to summarize with a few final observations: What Islamic thinkers since Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ have thought about knowledge and action appears to a great extent to be a largely convoluted formative and modifying reflection on the role of man as a spiritual being, who has a share in the divine spirit and whose activeness in the human realm constitutes "excellence" (*areté*)[112] and thus leads to a happy life. Aristotle masterfully summarized this in Book X, Chapters 7 and 8 of his *Nicomachean Ethics*,[113] which had existed in Arabic translation since the early 9th century.[114]

In the Islamic history of ideas, at the beginning in the 8th century in the work of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, one can find critical reflection on "exemplary" actions of the individual in politics, as the person responsible for dealing

[105] E. M. Quatremère (ed.), *Prolégomènes d'Ebn Khaldoun* (Paris, 1858) (reprint Beirut, 1970); engl. trans. Franz Rosenthal, *Ibn Khaldūn: The Muqaddima. An Introduction to History*, London 1958.

[106] Cf. in detail Daiber, "Political Philosophy," 21–23; Daiber, "Ibn Khaldūn – Leben und Werk," in B. Schefold (ed.), *Ibn Khaldūn. Ökonomie aus der "Muqaddima"*. Text selection by Hans Daiber, Düsseldorf 2000, 33–54.

[107] Cf. Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy*, 253ff, 263ff; E.I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought*, 84ff; Muhammad Mahmoud Rabīʿ, *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldūn*, Leiden 1967, 48ff.

[108] Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy*, 177f; Peter von Sivers, *Khalifat, Königtum und Verfall: Die politische Theorie Ibn Khaldūns*, Munich 1968, 81ff.

[109] Cf. Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy*, 89ff.

[110] Ibn Ḫaldūn, Muqaddima, ed. Quatremère, I, 62, 7–9, trans. Fr. Rosenthal, I, 78.

[111] Cf. Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy*, 193.

[112] *Nicomachean Ethics* X , 8. 1178a9, trans. Dirlmeier, 232.

[113] Cf. the Arabic translation and the English translation by Dunlop in Akasoy, Fidora (eds.), *The Arabic Version of the Nicomachean Ethics*, 556–569.

[114] Manfred Ullmann provides evidence in Vol. II, Wiesbaden 2012, of his work Die Nikomachische Ethik des Aristoteles in arabischer Übersetzung that Books 1–4 originate from the translation by Isḥāq Ibn Ḥunain c. 870 and Books 5–10 originate from the translation by Eustathius c. 830. Part I, Wiesbaden 2011, contains the Arabic-Greek vocabulary.

with the subjects (Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ); it is the pursuit of knowledge about the "art of living" and "ethics", which shall give the action orientation and lead to prudence. This "political" line of thinking limits, according to Aristotle,[115] the activity of the mind, the "contemplation" (*theõrein*). Deviating from this, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ stresses the pursuit of knowledge about what is "useful" in religious and worldly affairs, which must constitute itself in each new situation in amicable contact with others.

In the 9th century al-Kindī expands the Aristotelian doctrine of virtue with the Platonic-Neoplatonic ethics of the soul and propagates the person of Socrates as a model of moderation and asceticism; spiritual imperatives take precedence over the secular.[116]

At the beginning of the 10th century the physician and philosopher Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī corrects this perception of Socrates and emphasizes in reference to the Neoplatonic doctrine of the soul the need for human striving for knowledge and righteous action in society. According to him, Socrates was not as perfect as he is represented and was only an example of this quest for a "philosophical way of living".[117]

At about the same time the Ismailite Abū Ḥātim ar-Rāzī propagates the figure of the Prophet Muḥammad as a model for a perfect moral life and attributes to him virtues know from Platonic and Aristotelian ethics. Yet man cannot acquire knowledge on his own, but requires divine inspiration.

This line of thinking is carried further by the philosopher Fārābī (d. 950), who only speaks in a general way of the prophet as regent, who has the qualities of a philosopher and who teaches the subjects knowledge about virtuous action in the model state, practical wisdom and prudence. Here al-Fārābī refers to an epistemological novelty, namely the parallelization of philosophy with religion, which he – taking into account the Aristotelian thesis of thinking in the form of perception images – classifies as an imitation of philosophy.

The philosophers after al-Fārābī develop the Platonic-Neoplatonic aspect of divine inspiration further with the increasing liberation of the soul from matter. Here society appears in varying ways as a necessary

[115] *Nicomachean Ethics*, X 7.1177b4ff, trans. Dirlmeier, 231.
[116] Cf. Daiber, "Wissen und Handeln" (as n. 1), 44.
[117] Cf. Daiber, "Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī", 272 and 275.

evil. A system of individual ethics is developed, which focuses more on salvation in the hereafter. Compare the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity in the 10th century and Miskawaih at the turn of the 11th century. Notable here is the greater involvement of the Qurʾān in the more strongly practice-oriented ethics of Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī, a younger contemporary of Miskawaih and based on his example, of al-Ġazzālī, who died in 1111. The latter strives for a synthesis of Sufi virtues with the Aristotelian doctrine of virtue, as before him was rudimentarily apparent in the works Ibn Sīnā, who died in 1037. He thus paves the way for the withdrawal from society of the aspirant who is seeking knowledge, as we find in Ibn Bāǧǧa and Ibn Ṭufail in the 12th century. In contrast, Ibn Rušd in the 12th century is more a follower of Aristotle and Fārābī. He paves the way for the political philosophy of Ibn Ḫaldūn in the 14th/15th century, after which solidarity enables the survival of the individual in society, but also the education of people in accordance with ethical and philosophical requirements to a "behavior" that enables the preservation of humanity.

Ibn Ḫaldūn harkens back to a tradition that runs like a red thread through the corpus of Islamic thinkers including Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ in the 8th century, namely the ultimately Aristotelian definition of virtue as a situation-dependent attitude that must constantly be developed anew, which is based on the voluntary and reason-oriented decision of the individual.[118] In addition, the Islamic thinkers after Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ define reason as divine inspiration, which obligates the individual in his actions to a constant pursuit of knowledge about what is right and useful. The notion that insight into what is good and right develops dynamically in the process of learning does not leave any scope for the development of a concept that

[118] Aristotle, *Nikomachische Ethik* II 6. 1106b36 – 1107a2: "So ist also sittliche Tugend (Dirlmeier: "Werthaftigkeit" = *aretē*) eine feste, auf Entscheidung hingeordnete Haltung (hexis proairetikē); sie liegt in jener von uns bestimmten Mitte (*mesótēs*), die durch die Vernunft (*lógos*; Dirlmeier: "richtigen Plan") festgelegt wird und wie der Kluge (*phrónimos*) sie festzulegen pflegt". We deviate somewhat from the wording of the German translation by Dirlmeier. – Cf. the Arabic translation from the 9th century, eds. Akasoy/Fidora, 173, 14f, trans. Dunlop, 172. The translator wrongly translates *lógos* with *qaul* "word" and *phrónimos* with *ʿāqil* "reasonable", "prudent". – On the concepts *hexis proairetikē* and *logos* cf. the discussion in Ralf Elm, *Klugheit und Erfahrung bei Aristoteles*, Munich 1996, 244f and 191f. – Elm, freely according to Kant, defines prudence as "determining and reflecting power of judgment" (266) and as "form itself of moral-political being"; on logos cf. also Riedenauer, Orexis, 235ff.

can be rendered with "conscience", *conscientia, syneidēsis*[119] – neither in the ancient world nor in Islamic philosophical ethics.

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