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Éditorial

Nous avons le plaisir d'annoncer l'ouverture d'une revue de presse arabe, assurée par Maxim Yosefi (Université de Göttingen).

Centrée sur les manuscrits de la péninsule Arabique ou abordant les questions générales de catalogage, conservation, préservation ou sauvegarde, trafic illégal, elle est partie prenante des Actualités.

La direction des *CmY*.

Actualités

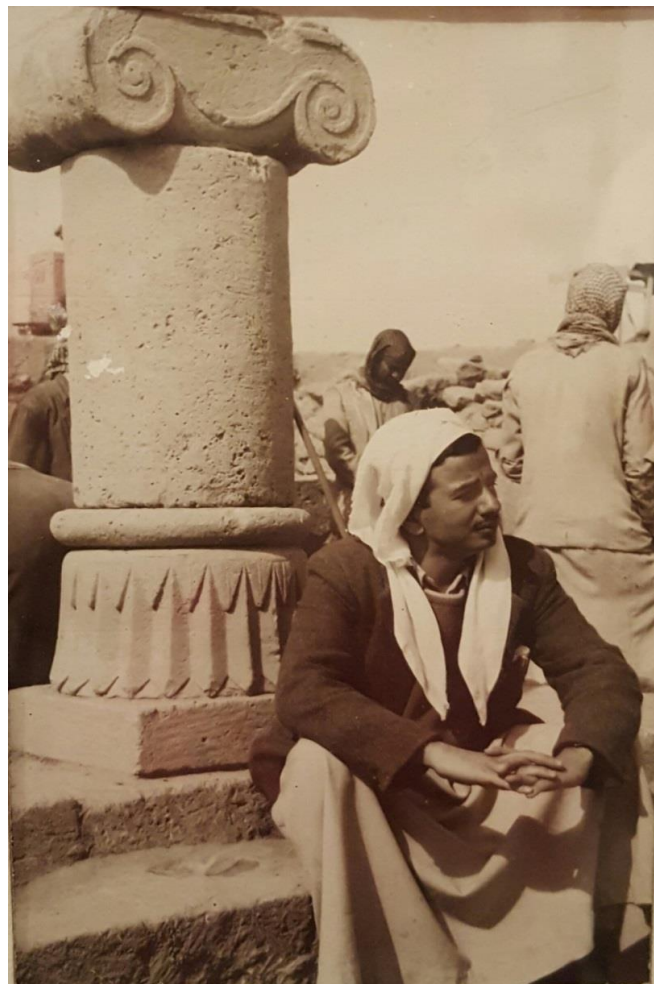
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OBITUAIRE

Tareq Sayid Rajab 1934 (?) to 2016

Renowned Kuwaiti collector of Islamic art and manuscripts



Tareq Sayed Rajab at the Failaka excavation site, circa 1961

Tareq Sayid Rajab, who died in June 2016, was an artist, architect, photographer, educator and collector. Together with his wife, Jehan, who predeceased him in 2015, he founded an important collection of Islamic art and manuscripts that is housed in two museums in the neighbourhood of Jabriya where he resided in Kuwait.

His year of birth is unclear as such information was not generally recorded outside of the family circle in early 20th century Kuwaiti society, but his mother recalled that he had been born in the *sanat al-hadm* (the “Year of Destruction” or 1934), when Kuwait was subjected to torrential rains that destroyed hundreds of houses. He was raised in an old part of Kuwait near the Seif Palace on the coast to a family of merchants and scholars. His grandfather was the principal of the Mubarakkiyyah School, the first formal school in Kuwait, founded in 1911, and from an early age, Tareq displayed a love of learning and books. A solo excursion to Baghdad in 1951 as a teenager to acquire books and manuscripts, sponsored by some farsighted mentors, seems to have been the spur to a lifetime of travelling and collecting.

After school, Tareq won a generous scholarship to study art in the UK, the first Kuwaiti to do so, and spent three years at the Eastbourne College of Art and Design on the south coast of the UK, where he was taught by the English printmaker Robert Taverner, who stimulated his interest in Islamic art. It was in Eastbourne that he met Tiki de Montfort Wellborne (Jehan Rajab), his future wife and lifelong partner. Tareq immersed himself in the creative arts, producing oil paintings and lithographs. Later, in the 1960s and 1970s, he became a prodigious photographer, recording the lives of the Marsh Arabs in southern Iraq and the vestiges of old Kuwait; a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964 also resulted in the recording of old shrines and forts in Najd, and some unique images of the Hajj.

Following a further year at Bristol University doing a teaching diploma, Tareq returned to Kuwait from the UK in 1958, followed shortly after by Jehan and their young family. He taught art in one of the new model schools for the first year, before joining the newly-created government Department of Antiquities and Museums. He was appointed its Director in 1960, with responsibility for the establishment of the first National Museum of Kuwait in a mansion given by Sheikh Abdallah Al Jaber Al Sabah, the Minister for Culture and Education, and advisor to the Amir.

In around 1959, the Minister invited the Danish archaeological mission, which had been excavating in Bahrain, to investigate the possibility of a related Dilmun civilization on the Kuwaiti island of Failaka. Tareq was closely involved with the excavations of both the Bronze Age and Hellenistic sites on Failaka during the 1960s. Both he and Jehan were present at the discovery of the Failaka stele—the stone tablet inscribed in ancient Greek which identified the island as Ikaros, a Greek colony dating to the 4th century BCE. A museum was constructed on the island to house the finds, and Tareq was closely involved with its design and building. He founded a second museum devoted to ethnography nearby in the summer house of the late Amir, Sheikh Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah. These early achievements in archaeology and museology laid the foundations for such activities in Kuwait.

In the late 1960s Tareq turned his attention to education, establishing the New English School in 1969, the first educational establishment to follow the English school curriculum in Kuwait. A purpose-built school was erected in the residential quarter of Jabriya in Kuwait in 1974, and it was in this neighbourhood that the Rajabs opened their first museum in 1980. The Tareq Rajab Museum still houses Islamic manuscripts and

miniature paintings, ceramic vessels, metalwork, coins, fine Islamic-period jewellery, glass, musical instruments and arms and armour. Jehan was closely involved in all aspects of the school and the collection. While many artefacts were acquired at auction or from dealers, the couple travelled extensively together by car through the Middle East, including Yemen, acquiring objects as they went. Jehan had a particular interest in costume, textiles and jewellery, and built a truly important collection of great ethnographic interest which is housed in separate rooms in the museum. A richly embroidered indigo-dyed dress from the Yemeni village of Ḥawlān is one of the many examples of women's costume that is precisely identified by its origin in the Museum.

Tareq's interests, however, lay predominantly in the arts of the book: in addition to some superb examples of Iranian miniature paintings, he acquired some very important Qur'an and other manuscripts, including a part *mushaf* made in Mosul for the Ilkhanid Sultan Ūlğāytū, signed and dated 710/1310; some leaves from the largest parchment Qur'an manuscript known, dating to the 8th century; and a very early copy of a work on optics by al-Kindī, dating to the late 9th or 10th century. His significant collecting activities in this area led in 2007 to the establishment of a separate Calligraphy Museum in a building called Dar Jehan in a neighbouring street. This beautiful Museum houses an astonishing collection of Islamic calligraphy, including early Qur'an pages, as well as decorative calligraphic exercises from all over the Islamic world, some by famous calligraphers. Particularly interesting is a large group of specimens of Chinese calligraphy done with the brush rather than the pen, evidence of a living Far Eastern tradition that is still little known outside of specialist circles. Another great rarity is a huge carved wooden Qur'an box from Yemen, decorated with verses from the Qur'an, and dated 989/1581¹.

Tareq Sayid Rajab was a remarkable Kuwaiti who was born into the pre-oil era when his country was still a sea-faring nation and saw it become a modern country overtaken by rapid development. He brought education to his country in the widest sense: via the model of a western school that has been educating Kuwaitis and foreigners for nearly 50 years; through the investigation and preservation of Kuwait's ancient past and more recent historical heritage; and through his own collecting activities that resulted in one of the first museums of Islamic art in the Gulf region.

The Museums remain open to the public under the stewardship of his children and grandchildren, and continue to provide an educational resource and a source of inspiration to local residents and visitors alike.

He is survived by his daughter Nur, his sons Ziad and Nadr, nine grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Deborah Freeman Fahid
with thanks to Dr Ziad Sayid Rajab

¹ To be published by the author.

Comment citer les Actualités ?/How to refer to the News?

Avec date/With date

CmY 18 (Juil. 2014), Actualités, <26 avril 2014>

CmY 19 (Janv. 2015), Actualités, <Décembre 2014>, p. 25.

Sans date/Without date

CmY 18 (Juil. 2014), Actualités, <Oman. Activités de l'Organisation des Archives Nationales du Sultanat d'Oman>

CmY 19 (Janv. 2015), Actualités, <Nouvelle série « Studies on Ibadism and Oman »>, p. 39.

N.d.l.R.

YÉMEN

2003. David Hollenberg, « Disrobing judges with veiled truths: an early Ismā'īlī Torah interpretation (*ta'wīl*) in service of the Fāṭimid mission », *Religion* 33, p. 127-145.

This paper analyses the stories from the Torah and Gospels interpreted by the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlīs. The author, David Hollenberg (University of Oregon) attempts to show how the Ismā'īlīs used an hermeneutical model to the Torah and the Gospels not to proselytise Jews and Christians, but to convey messages for the Muslims, the *mu'minūn* ("believers"), or probably the Ismā'īlīs themselves.

The author examines the *Asrār al-nuṭaqā'* (The Secrets of the Speakers), an anthology of early Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* by the Ismā'īlī Fāṭimid spokesman Ġa'far b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman (d. after 341/953). The general goal of the paper is to cast doubt on Samuel M. Stern's assertion as to the Jewish audience for Torah *ta'wīl*. The stories highlighted in Hollenberg's paper show stylistic features and untraditional sources for *ta'wīl*, exposing how the Fāṭimid missionaries demonstrated the capacity to transcend the Muslim canon. Furthermore, they were able to continue to offer esoteric truths through the interpretation of a wide range of materials, including non-Qur'ānic scriptures. This new hermeneutical model for the scriptures in the Ismā'īlī works would have been later reused by Hollenberg himself and other scholars in the analysis of the Ismā'īlī multi-scripture model of the *ta'wīl* literature. Rather than using Torah to narrate ancient stories of the prophets, the Ismā'īlīs used the Torah as, like the Qur'ān, revealed scripture, applying *ta'wīl* to it. A theoretical basis for this practice is that an Imam with access to divine support can recover signs of God in a wide variety of object, including previously abrogated scriptures, like the Torah.

Corrado la Martire
Thomas-Institut, Universität zu Köln

2014. Olly Akkerman, « The Bohra Dark Archive and the Language of Secrecy: A Codicological Ethnography of the Royal Alawi Bohra Library in Baroda », Doctorat, Université libre de Berlin, 360 p.

Olly Akkerman a soutenu sa thèse « The Bohra Dark Archive and the Language of Secrecy: A Codicological Ethnography of the Royal Alawi Bohra Library in Baroda » à la Freie Universität de Berlin en 2014. Elle y présente une étude sur les manuscrits arabes appartenant aux Bohras 'Alawī, une minorité chiite ismaélienne tayyibite d'origine indienne. La formation de cette communauté d'environ 8.000 personnes établie à Vado-dara (anciennement Baroda), dans l'état du Gujarat, Inde, remonte à une scission qui a pris place parmi les Bohras ismaéliens tayyibites en 1034/1624.

Pour pouvoir accéder aux manuscrits, O. Akkerman a dû s'engager à ne pas aborder de façon détaillée le contenu textuel des 250 manuscrits examinés (p. 130), mais à le placer dans un catalogue à l'usage exclusif de la hiérarchie religieuse de cette communauté (p. 107-108). Sa thèse est centrée, en effet, dans un premier temps, sur l'analyse de la fonction sociale de ces manuscrits en tant qu' « archive privée ». Dans un deuxième temps, elle étudie la reconstruction de l'histoire de leur provenance telle que présentée par les Bohras 'Alawī. Enfin, elle s'interroge sur leurs aspects visuels, codicologiques et paratextuels.

Divisée en deux parties principales, cette thèse inclut une annexe, un glossaire, des cartes et des illustrations. Dans l'introduction, l'auteur situe d'abord son travail par rapport aux travaux ultérieurs sur les Bohras (p. 11-19). Ceux-ci ont eu tendance à privilégier l'approche anthropologique². La recherche sur les manuscrits tayyibites indiens des Bohras, quant à elle, s'est limitée à l'étude des textes ismaéliens, notamment d'époque fatimide. Plus récemment, certains aspects codicologiques de ces manuscrits ont été relevés par François de Blois dans son Catalogue du fonds Hamdani³. Si l'auteur prolonge ses remarques en s'appuyant sur la collection des manuscrits des Bohras 'Alawī, sa participation *in situ* aux pratiques sribales et codicologiques transmises de nos jours à l'intérieur de la hiérarchie religieuse de cette communauté offre une perspective inédite. L'auteur se penche ensuite sur les questions d'accès et d'altérité (p. 20-47). Elle explique son accueil et son intégration au sein des Bohras 'Alawī comme chercheuse occidentale, précisant qu'elle a pu être acceptée du fait de la volonté de la hiérarchie religieuse de sauvegarder leurs manuscrits et de faire connaître leur histoire par rapport à celle de la communauté démographiquement et économiquement plus importante des Bohras tayyibites daoudites.

² Voir par exemple Jonah Blank, *Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and Modernity among Daudi Bohras*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2001; Denis Gay, *Les Bohra de Madagascar: religion, commerce et échanges transnationaux dans la construction de l'identité ethnique*, Berlin/ Münster/Wien/Zürich, Lit, 2009, « Freiburger Sozialanthropologische Studien », 23, et Christelle Brun, « De la caste marchande gujarati à la communauté religieuse fatimide : construction identitaire et conflits chez les daoudi bohras (Ouest de l'Inde) », thèse non publiée, Université de Toulouse-Jean Jaurès, 2013, 199 p.

³ François De Blois, *Arabic, Persian and Gujarati Manuscripts: The Hamdani Collection*, Londres, I. B. Tauris, 2011.

La première partie de cette thèse (p. 48-193) se subdivise en trois chapitres. Le premier chapitre (p. 49-105), synthétique, présente les grandes étapes de l'histoire de l'ismaélisme. L'étape déterminante en ce qui concerne les Bohras est l'émergence d'une communauté ismaélienne tayyibite au Yémen, fidèles d'al-Ṭayyib, fils du Calife fatimide ismaélien al-Amīr, mort au Caire en 524/1130. Les tayyibites ont diffusé leurs doctrines en Inde, notamment au Gujrat, qui devint à l'époque moghole un centre tayyibite important. En effet, en 974/1567, les quartiers généraux de la mission ismaélienne (*da'wa*) tayyibite du Yémen furent transférés à Ahmedabad, au Gujrat. Si l'époque pré-moghole se caractérise dans la littérature Bohra du xix^e s. comme la période des conversions des castes hindoues à l'ismaélisme tayyibite – les nouveaux convertis ismaéliens tayyibites indiens seront dénommés Bohras, l'époque moghole est marquée avant tout par des schismes divisant les Bohras en plusieurs communautés en fonction de leur adhésion à des membres différents de la lignée des chefs spirituels tayyibites (*dā'īs*). À l'époque coloniale, les Bohras se sont organisés sous forme d'une caste marchande musulmane prospère impliquée dans le commerce régional et sur l'océan Indien. L'auteur présente ensuite des croyances et des doctrines chiites ou spécifiquement ismaéliennes des Bohras ainsi que leur jurisprudence. Enfin, elle évoque, d'une part, l'organisation de la hiérarchie religieuse ismaélienne des Bohras 'Alawī, particulièrement sa transformation dans le contexte sud-asiatique en famille royale, et, d'autre part, les plus importants rituels du groupe, à savoir ceux liés au culte de l'Imām Ḥusayn (m. 61/680) et la visite pieuse (*ziyāra*) aux sanctuaires des *imāms* et des *dā'īs* reconnus.

Le deuxième et le troisième chapitre de la première partie étudie l'« archive privée » des Bohras 'Alawī. Dans le deuxième chapitre (p. 106-141), l'auteur spécifie pourquoi le terme « archive privée » saisit le mieux le sens de l'espace chez les Bohras 'Alawī, communément appelé *ḥizāna* suivant la terminologie fatimide, où sont conservés leurs manuscrits. Seule la hiérarchie religieuse des Bohras 'Alawī jouit du droit d'accéder au *ḥizāna*, de consulter ses manuscrits, de les interpréter et de les transmettre. Le *ḥizāna* en tant qu'archive privée sert ainsi à légitimer le pouvoir spirituel et politique que le *dā'ī* et sa famille, c'est-à-dire le ménage royal (« royal household »), exercent sur la communauté des Bohras 'Alawī. Or, ces derniers, de toute vraisemblance, ne réclament pas l'accès au *ḥizāna* à leur *dā'ī* à la différence du mouvement réformiste Bohra tayyibite daoudite. L'auteur s'intéresse, finalement, à la manière dont les Bohras 'Alawī ont construit l'histoire de la transmission textuelle des manuscrits de leur *ḥizāna*, du Caire fatimide à Baroda. Les différentes phases de cette histoire correspondent, en effet, au système utilisé pour classer les manuscrits.

Le troisième chapitre (p. 142-193) localise spatialement le *ḥizāna* des Bohras 'Alawī dans le bureau d'un des fils du *dā'ī* (*ma'zūn ṣāhib*) au quartier de Badri Mohalla à Baroda, avant de présenter une réflexion sociologique sur son accessibilité, confrontant deux perspectives différentes, celle de l'auteur elle-même comme femme étrangère et celle des croyants Bohras 'Alawī (*mu'minūn*), divisés en deux groupes, l'élite (*al-ḥāṣṣa*) et la masse (*al-'amma*). La masse des croyants Bohras 'Alawī prend certes conscience de l'existence matérielle du *ḥizāna* en se rendant là où il se trouve. Mais seule les élites

représentées par la hiérarchie religieuse de la communauté peuvent accéder aux vérités ésotériques (*ḥaḡā'iq*) des manuscrits du *ḥizāna* grâce à leur maîtrise de l'arabe et leur connaissance des choses extérieures (*'ilm al-zāhir*) et cachées (*'ilm al-bāṭin*).

La deuxième partie de la thèse (p. 194-337) est consacrée à la culture manuscrite des Bohras 'Alawī. Dans le quatrième chapitre (p. 201-229), l'auteur démontre que la *ḥizāna* des Bohras 'Alawī contient en fait quatre types de manuscrits : (1) des manuscrits « royaux » copiés par des membres de la lignée du *dā'ī* Bohra 'Alawī, l'écriture de ces manuscrits est considérée comme thaumaturgique ; (2) des manuscrits venant du milieu Bohra tayyibite daoudite, copiés notamment par des membres de la famille Hamdani ; (3) des manuscrits non-ismaéliens, sunnites ou chiites duodécimains et (4) des manuscrits de provenance non déterminée ou contestée. L'auteur souligne l'existence d'un processus d'appropriation des manuscrits Bohras tayyibites daoudites. Les manuscrits d'origine Bohra tayyibite daoudite sont identifiables car la *basmala* « royale » écrite de la main du *dā'ī* Bohra tayyibite daoudite manque, elle a le plus souvent été découpée et vendue à des prix onéreux. Ce commerce des *basmalas* « royales » n'existerait pas cependant chez les Bohras 'Alawī.

Le cinquième chapitre (p. 230-290) revient sur ce que l'auteur désigne précédemment par « *da'wa records* » (p. 130). Il s'agit ici des registres d'aumône (*zakāt*), de mariage (*nikāḥ*), de comptabilité, ainsi que divers rouleaux avec des inventaires de manuscrits, des actes de *waqf*, des formules récitées lors de la prise du serment d'allégeance au *dā'ī* (*'ahd/mītāq*) et des décrets de nomination (*naṣṣ*) du nouveau *dā'ī* par son prédécesseur, connus également sous le nom de *siḡill*⁴. Les quelques images de ces rouleaux de papier que l'auteur inclut dans sa thèse (p. 236-238) suggèrent une forte ressemblance avec les rouleaux yéménites⁵. On notera aussi l'existence d'un nombre de documents relatifs au partage de l'héritage des biens des Bohras 'Alawī décédés, écrits de sorte que les éléments du texte prennent la forme d'un triangle (p. 240-241). Il est évident que ces documents, que l'auteur n'a malheureusement pu examiner en détail à la différence des manuscrits, sont de première importance pour l'étude de l'histoire de l'ismaélisme tayyibite en Inde, et en particulier, de la communauté Bohra 'Alawī. Le *ḥizāna* contient, par ailleurs, des textes talismaniques (*ta'wīz*) ainsi que des notes personnelles (*awrāq*) de la hiérarchie religieuse des Bohras 'Alawī.

O. Akkerman s'attache ensuite à décrire les aspects codicologiques des manuscrits des Bohras 'Alawī. Elle traite systématiquement de la reliure, du papier et de la mise en page de ces manuscrits avant d'aborder leurs éléments paratextuels, en particulier l'*incipit*, le colophon, la pagination, les sceaux de propriété ainsi que les *marginalia*. Les *marginalia* diffèrent en fonction du type de manuscrit qu'ils entourent. Les manuscrits considérés comme ésotériques (*bāṭinī*) sont entourés par des *marginalia* destinés à les protéger, tels les invocations du type *yā kabikaḡ*, le sceau de Salomon, les

⁴ Sur les rouleaux dans les *ḥizānas* de la communauté Bohra tayyibite dāwūdite, voir Ismail K. Poonawala, *Bibliography of Ismaili Literature*, Malibu, Gustave E. von Grünebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies, UCLA/Undena Publications, 1977, p. 213-218.

⁵ Comparer ces rouleaux avec celui, yéménite, qui apparaît sur la couverture de l'ouvrage de Brinkley Messick, *Sharia Scripts: A Historical Anthropology*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2018.

noms des Prophètes ou encore les malédictions contre les trois premiers califes codées à l'aide de chiffres (*abġad*) ou d'alphabets secrets (*kitāb sirīyya*). Les *marginalia* des manuscrits reconnus comme exotériques (*zāhiri*) renvoient, eux, davantage aux pratiques divinatoires et talismaniques. Ils sont utilisés à cet effet quotidiennement par la hiérarchie religieuse de la communauté. Enfin, on boit, mélangés à de l'eau, les « restes » des manuscrits devenus inutilisables pour la guérison des maladies.

Dans son sixième et dernier chapitre (p. 291-332), l'auteur étudie en premier lieu les rapports entre langue, écriture et statut social chez les Bohras 'Alawī. Le développement du *lisān al-da'wa*, un sociolecte du Gujarati spécifique aux Bohras, façonné par l'arabe, le persan et l'ourdou, utilisé pour transcrire des textes exotériques et lors des cérémonies et rituels, a élevé l'arabe au rang de langue ésotérique. Par voie de conséquence, l'arabe des manuscrits, écrit en caractères *nashī*, est devenu progressivement le domaine exclusif de la hiérarchie religieuse. En deuxième lieu, l'auteur s'appuie sur la paléographie pour donner une typologie des écritures des manuscrits du xviii^e s. à nos jours. Le chapitre se termine avec une description de la méthode, ainsi que des règles d'étiquette (*adab*) suivies pour préparer la copie d'un manuscrit et observées par la hiérarchie religieuse aujourd'hui.

Au total, on a ici une contribution originale à l'étude des sociétés chiïtes et des manuscrits arabes. L'approche pluridisciplinaire sociologique et codicologique de l'auteur réussit très bien à démêler l'imbrication, à l'époque contemporaine, d'une structure sociale sud-asiatique et d'une tradition manuscrite ismaélienne d'origine yéménite. On regrettera que le *terminus ad quem* de cette recherche ne lui ait pas permis de faire référence à l'article d'I. K. Poonawala sur les manuscrits ismaéliens du Yémen⁶ et que l'étude pionnière de D. Menant sur les Bohras soit absente de sa bibliographie abondante, mais sélective⁷. Les redondances dans le texte, tout à fait naturelles dans une thèse, ainsi que de rares erreurs typographiques (p. 345 *sijill* – et non pas « *sijil* », etc.), n'enlèvent rien à la valeur de ce travail érudit rehaussé par un sens de l'humain profond et généreux.

Zahir Bhalloo

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⁶ Ismail K. Poonawala, « Ismaili Manuscripts from Yemen », dans : Anne Regourd (Guest Ed.), « Manuscripts in Transit/Manuscrits en transit », *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 5/2-3, 2014, p. 220-245.

⁷ Delphine Menant, « Les Bohras du Guzarate », *Revue du monde musulman* 12, 1910, p. 465-493.

2014. David Hollenberg, « The Empire Writes Back: Fāṭimid-Ismaʿīlī *taʿwīl* (Allegoresis) and the Mysteries of the Ancient Greeks », dans : Farhad Daftary & Gurdofarid Miskinzoda (eds.), *The Study of Shiʿi Islam: History, Theology and Law*, Londres/New York, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, p. 135-147. ISBN : 9781780765068.

The present article illustrates some particular features of Shii exegesis and surveys its content. The author, David Hollenberg (University of Oregon), focuses on early Ismaili interpretation, with the extraordinary mix that characterizes the genre, attempting to explain how it relates to the doctrines and teachings that the Ismaili missionaries intend to convey. It shows also methodological features of the Ismaili exegesis, which rather than being massive, is particularly selective: only lines which are believed to carry an esoteric meaning, receive a comment.

In addition, he examines the style and function of Ismaili *taʿwīl* with the aim of resolving a specific problem in the development of Ismaili doctrine—namely the presence of Neoplatonic material in two texts in which one would expect to find it, namely the *Kitāb al-faratāt* and the *Risālat al-mudhiba*, two pre-Kirmānian Fatimid texts. The most straight forwarding problem is the presence of God in the text referred as *al-ʿilla al-ūlā* (“the First Cause”), quite common statement among the Islamic philosophers in the Greek tradition but also quite problematic for the Ismaili metaphysicians. In fact, Abū Yaʿqūb al-Siġistānī (d. after 361/971) claimed that God cannot be called a cause. Thus, *taʿwīl* of the “wisdom of the Greeks” is meant to signal, rather than to provide a doctrinal concession to the eastern Ismaili dioceses. Hollenberg shows a case study of the *taʿwīl* of Adam escaping from an island in which the ruling king “patronized philosophers and astronomers”, taken from the *Sarāʾir al-nuṭaqāʾ*, ascribed to Ġaʿfar b. Maṣṣūr al-Yaman (d. after 341/953). This *taʿwīl* depicts a struggle between two Ismaili dioceses: one in which renegades the rule by using philosophy and astrology without recourse to a proper Imam, and another ruled by the Intellect who governs the animal-believes and who bequeaths the imamate to the rightful Imam, Adam. This *taʿwīl* should be seen as a polemic against the Iranian missionaries, who according to the Fatimids, “philosophized” without the Imam’s guidance. In other words, the author’s point is that the missionaries conveyed a message which does not contain any particular esoteric interpretation, but rather was a direct polemic against those who departed from the Fatimid interpretation of the Greek philosophical thought.

Corrado la Martire

Thomas-Institut, Universität zu Köln

2016. Sara Fani, compte-rendu [Karin Scheper, *The Technique of Islamic Bookbinding: Methods, Materials, and Regional Varieties*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2015], *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*. Nouvelle série 11, p. 254-256.

Voir aussi *CmY* 20 (Juil. 2015), Actualités <Avril 2015>, p. 6.

https://iris.unive.it/retrieve/handle/10278/3687218/101582/QSA11_17_Recensioni.pdf

2016. Meliné Pehlivanian, Christoph Rauch, Ronny Vollandt (éd.), *Orientalische Bibelhandschriften aus der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK : eine illustrierte Geschichte/Oriental Bible manuscripts from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK: an illustrated history*, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Wiesbaden, Reichert, 2016, 186 p. Illustrations, cartes, facsimilés. ISBN 3-95490-209-5 - 978-3-95490-209-5.

Outre le rouleau d'Esther, partie de l'exposition qui a eu lieu à Berlin entre les 14 juillet et 15 octobre 2017 (voir ci-dessous) et décrit aux pages 36-39 de ce livre, un autre codex yéménite, le manuscrit Or. quart. 578, contenant le Targoum des Prophètes ou Targoum Jonathan, fait l'objet d'une notice aux pages 39-41 du catalogue (avec ill. et bibliographie). Il comprend 341 feuillets s'achevant par un colophon qui indique que les livres bibliques furent écrits à Sanaa en 5243 (calendrier hébraïque), soit 1482/1483 de notre ère, par le scribe Yosef ben Benaya ben Se'adya ben Zekharya. La famille Benaya, qui a vécu dans la région de Sanaa aux xv^e-xvi^e s., a donné une lignée de scribes identifiés par une quarantaine de manuscrits, dont une Torah de la main de Benaya lui-même se trouve à Berlin (ms. Or. 13420). Les livres bibliques étant précédés, comme il arrive souvent, de 39 feuillets du *Maḥberet ha-Tiḡan*, expliquant les fondements de la grammaire hébraïque, le système vocalique et la lecture massorétique, l'hypothèse a été formulée d'un second scribe pour ce manuscrit.

2016. Florian Sobieroj, « The Chinese Sufi Wiqāyatullāh Ma Mingxin and the Construction of his Sanctity in *Kitāb al-Jahrī* », *Asia* 70/1, p. 133-169. DOI 10.1515/asia-2016-0006.

The above article, based on the study of the hagiographical works of the Naqšbandiyya-Ġahriyya Sufi order of Northwest China composed by some of their leading members in Arabic or in a hybrid Arabo-Persian version thereof, centres around the sanctity of the “pathfinder” Wiqāyatullāh Ma Mingxin of Guanchuan in Gansu (d. 1781), and it has been attempted to show how his *wilāya* has been construed by the Ġahrī authors.

The major features of this Sufi construction of sanctity are miracles (*karāmāt*) believed to have been an indispensable part of *wilāya*, predictions of future events, exorcisms that proved to function as promoters of conversion to his reform-oriented school of Sufism (*al-islām al-ġahrī*), as well as spiritual states ascribed to the shaykh such as annihilation, drunkenness—occasionally accompanied by ecstatic utterances, divine attraction (*ġadba*), clairvoyance etc.

Due to a mixed methodological approach, a detailed description of the Sino-Arabic manuscript of the main source tapped, *Kitāb al-Ġahrī* of Ma Xuezhi Muḥammad Maṣṣūr (d. 1923), has been included (with an image taken from the manuscript facsimile). The philological approach shows itself, i.e. in the use of variant versions of individual narratives derived from the oldest source, the *Raṣaḥāt* of Guan Li Ye, who wrote in the first half of the 19th century—the text is accessible in a Chinese translation only. The article includes the following sections:

1. Chinese Sufism; Wiqāyatullāh and the *Ṭarīqa Ġahriyya*; hagiography of the Ġahriyya; the *K. al-Ġahrī*: language, sources, content; the manuscript of *K. al-Ġahrī* and its codicology. 2. The construction of the sanctity of Wiqāyatullāh: Islamic ideal of sanctity; spiritual training and ascription of sanctity; awareness of his own sanctity; Wiqāyatullāh's definition of sanctity; aspects of Wiqāyatullāh's sanctity: miracle working, prediction of future events; fighting against sorcery and exorcism; spiritual states and stations: annihilation, drunkenness and ecstatic utterances, divine attraction, clairvoyance and training of novices; awe of the charismatic teacher. Conclusion.

The subject discussed in the article relates to the social and religious situation prevailing in Yemen and Central Arabia in the 18th c. Departing from Joseph Fletcher's (d. 1984) seminal studies on the Yemenite connection of the Chinese Ġahriyya order, his findings have been complemented and amplified through the analysis of hitherto unexplored manuscript material of Chinese origin.

The Arabian Peninsula at that time saw the rise of a number of luminaries who were related, directly or indirectly, to a *tağdīd*-oriented current of Islamic mysticism, viz. the Naqšbandiyya brotherhood, which entered Yemen mainly from the Indian subcontinent. Some of the individuals in question, by evidence of the *silsilas* copied in China, were looked up to as the founding fathers of a Chinese offshoot of the above Sufi order, viz. the Ġahriyya which has spread mainly in the provinces of Gansu, Ningxia and Yunnan. According to the sacred history of the Ġahriyya (*K. al-Ġahrī*; *Manāqib Ġahriyya*, *Raṣaḥāt*), extant in manuscript form and/or Chinese translation, the Chinese founder of the order, Wiqāyatullāh Ma Mingxin, travelled to Central Arabia to perform the pilgrimage and having lost his uncle in a desert storm he studied there with some of the indigenous masters, viz. "Aqīla" and "Ibn Zayn", in particular. While the former, 'Aqīla al-Ḥanafī al-Makkī al-Zāhir al-Yamanī (d. 1150/1737), not identified by Fletcher, may only have been distantly related to the Naqšbandiyya (however, Tāğ al-Dīn al-Hindī al-Naqšbandī, who had introduced the Sufi order from India, figures prominently in 'Aqīla's ḥadīth compilation entitled *Al-fawā'id al-ğalīla*), Ibn Zayn who has been identified as Muḥammad b. Zayn al-Mizğāğī of Zabīd is believed by the Chinese Sufis to have been a master and renewer of the Naqšbandiyya and to have initiated Wiqāyatullāh into his school of mysticism. The latter transmitted to Wiqāyatullāh the license (*iğāza*) to study and recite specific religious texts, viz. an elaboration of al-Būṣīrī's *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* as well as a prayer collection entitled *Madā'ih*, both in praise of Prophet Muḥammad, that are recited liturgically within the order to the present day.

Likewise, Abū al-Futūḥ Ma Laichi, Mingxin's elder colleague and opponent (the rivalry between the two shaykhs which proved to be fatal for legions of Chinese Muslims revolved around the issue of the correct performance of the Sufi remembrance, by secrecy [*sirran*] or vocally [*ğahran*]) as the head of the Naqšbandiyya of Northwest China, had travelled to Arabia overland where he saw 'Aqīla, and he studied under him. The name of 'Aqīla occurs in a list of spiritual authorities at the end of the *Awṛād* or liturgical prayers used within the Naqšbandiyya order ("Huasi Menhuan") of Abū al-Futūḥ "al-Ṣīnī" in Hezhou (modern Linxia), Gansu, the heart of Islamicate China. By the rec-

ommendation, in Mecca, of his Shaykh “A-chi-lai” (‘Aqīla), Ma Laichi studied under a Sufi master called Mawlānā Maḥdūm and he attained “the degree of *walī*” and went back to China with various signs of investiture. According to one of the anecdotes included in *K. al-Ġahrī*, it was Mingxin who informed Ma Laichi about the death of their common teacher.

Sobieroj’s study aims to show that the Chinese Muslims have participated in and benefitted from the transmission of the spiritual knowledge of the Yemenite masters who became integrated into the Ġahrīs’ *silsila* under the famous formula *li qi wai ba*, i.e. “seven masters from inside [Arabia] and eight master from outside” [i.e. from China].⁸

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12-15 septembre 2016. Palerme, UEAI. Communication de Delia Cortese, « Knowledge Transfer: Circulating Ideas of the Fatimid Period within Tayyibi/Da’udi Bohra scholarly circles »

De façon à illustrer par un exemple concret le processus au terme duquel des textes ismaéliens de la période fatimide sont devenus partie intégrante du patrimoine littéraire yéménite tayyibite, puis, plus tard, bohra daoudite d’Inde, Delia Cortese a retracé l’histoire d’une compilation yéménite tayyibite de la fin du xii^e s., le *Mağmū’ al-ṭarbiya*, lors du congrès biennuel de l’Union européenne des arabisants et islamisants (UEAI), qui s’est tenu à Palerme (Italie). L’œuvre est communément attribuée au savant religieux Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥarīṭī (m. 1188). Cette collection, consistant en quelques 50 œuvres de longueur variées, traite principalement de cosmologie, de la question de la désignation d’un Imam par ses prédécesseurs (« *naṣṣ* ») et de l’accès légitime à l’imamat d’al-Ṭayyib. Les 12 manuscrits des collections de la Bibliothèque de l’Institut d’études ismaéliennes de Londres qui constituent la base de cette communication sont d’origine indienne et datent principalement de la fin du xix^e s. Dans son analyse, D. Cortese s’est penchée sur le contexte socio-culturel qui permet d’éclairer la production et la circulation importante de copies manuscrites de cette œuvre yéménite dans le sous-continent indien de la fin du xix^e-début du xx^e s.

⁸ In *Kitāb al-Ġahrī*, p. 261 (chapter on Mingxin’s seventh successor called ‘Abd al-Ġāmi’), a collocation of 15 names of Ġahrī masters has been entered, beginning with one Muḥyī al-Dīn, difficult to identify. The name of Mingxin Wiqāyatullāh (the eighth in this *silsila*) is preceded by that of Muḥammad b. Zayn of Yemen and it is followed by Muḥammad Rabbānī of the town of Pingliang in Northeastern Gansu, hence he is also known as Pingliang Taiye. The names of the Arab and Chinese masters in this passage are also related to the 16 individual sections of which the *Madā’ih*, one of the canonical writings, is composed.

2017. Musaed Jaber Alenezi, « Political and Economic Relations between the Ayyūbids and the Bahrī Mamlūks and the Ashraf of Hijāz, 567-784 A.H./1171-1382 A.D. », Doctorat, Grande-Bretagne, Université de Leicester.

Musaed Jaber Alenezi a soutenu sa thèse de doctorat à l'Université de Leicester en 2017. La thèse examine 1) la légitimité des Ayyūbides et des Mamlūks dans leur politique économique envers les Ašrafs du Ḥiğāz, 2) les relations politiques entre les Ayyūbides, les Mamlūks bahrī et les Ašrafs du Ḥiğāz et 3) leurs relations économiques à travers les activités religieuses et commerciales dans le Ḥiğāz. L'étude s'appuie sur les sources principales utilisées pour l'étude de l'Égypte et de La Mecque médiévales comme *Al-sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk* d'al-Maqrīzī (m. 845/1442) et *Al-durar al-kāmina fi a'yān al-mī'a al-tāmina* d'Ibn Hağar al-'Asqalānī (m. 852/1449), auxquelles s'ajoutent des sources yéménites telle la *Şifat ġazīrat al-'Arab* d'al-Hamdānī (m. 336/947) ou *Al-'uqūd al-lu'lu'iyya* d'al-Ḥazrağī (m. 812/1410).

L'auteur résume ses conclusions ainsi :

« Les relations politiques et économiques entre le Ḥiğāz et l'Égypte deviennent plus fortes aux périodes ayyūbides et mamlūkes. Les Ayyūbides et les Mamlūks assoient leur autorité par leur lutte (*ğihād*) contre les Francs et les Mongols. Les deux régimes ont tenté de renforcer leur légitimité religieuse par le contrôle du Ḥiğāz, parce que les sultans se sont aperçus du bénéfice que cela représentait pour la croissance de leur pouvoir. Ils ne pouvaient cependant pas espérer pouvoir contrôler le Ḥiğāz dans la même mesure que l'Égypte et la Syrie. Pourtant, leur hégémonie sur le Ḥiğāz les a aidés à asseoir leur légitimité. En même temps, ils en ont tiré avantage, politiquement, d'une part, en empêchant d'autres pouvoirs de contrôler la région, et économiquement, de l'autre, en contrôlant les activités commerciales de la même région ».

Voir aussi le lien suivant : <https://ira.le.ac.uk/handle/2381/40663>

2017. Khalil Andani, « The Merits of the Bāṭiniyya: Al-Ghazālī's Appropriation of Ismā'īlī Cosmology », *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2017, p. 1-50. DOI : 10.1093/jis/etx054.

This paper discusses the question of an Ismā'īlī influence within the cosmology of al-Ġazālī, through some analogies between al-Ġazālī's *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya* and the *Miškāt al-anwār* of the Persian Ismā'īlī Nāṣir-i Ḥusraw (d. ca. 481/1088).

The author shows how a great deal of the Ismā'īlī doctrinal material from the *Faḍā'ih*, including cosmology, prophetic revelation, and esoteric interpretation of ritual practices, can be traced back to Nāṣir-i Ḥusraw's *Vajh-i dīn* and other works, and indicate how al-Ġazālī had direct or indirect access to those sources. These doctrines could have been then reworked and adapted for his own cosmological speculations in the controversial *Miškāt al-anwār*.

Many similarities come out of the comparison. Al-Ġazālī's cosmology in the *Miškāt* and the cosmology of Nāṣir-i Ḥusraw reveal how both thinkers conceived the cosmos created by God along similar lines. For both Nāṣir-i and al-Ġazālī, human beings possess two kinds of vision: physical vision of the eyes and spiritual vision of the intellect. They both hold that each of these two faculties of vision requires its own "sun" to op-

erate: the physical sun and divine revelation respectively. The overall goal of the article is to assess the statements of scholars like Hermann Landolt, who in 1991 held that Ġazālī in some way adapted the Bāṭinī speculation to suit his own Sufi world-view, particularly in the Veils section of his *Miškāt al-anwār*. Here, as the article shows, the true God is presented as being superior to the First Mover of the Aristotelians and the Necessary Existent of the *falāsifa*, mirroring Nāṣir-i Ḥusraw's Neoplatonic theology.

The results of this study call for a re-assessment of the prevalent view in scholarship, meaning that the Ismā'īlī influence on al-Ġazālī is either unlikely or negligible because he did not have access to or detailed knowledge of Ismā'īlī materials. However still many issues remain open on the deepness of al-Ġazālī's knowledge of the Ismā'īlīs. According to Henri Corbin, in his article "The Ismā'īlī Response to the Polemic of Ghazālī", where he writes about Ibn al-Walīd's reply to the *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*, the overall judgement is that Ibn al-Walīd had "no trouble showing that Ghazālī must have been completely unfamiliar with the books of the *ahl al-bayt*, since their genealogy is widely known" (p. 75).

The role of the so-called "Western Ismā'īliyya" is even more interesting in light of al-Ghazālī's polemics, which begins with an explanation of the Ismā'īlī Neoplatonic doctrine of the Universal Intellect and Universal Soul, also called *Sābiq* and *Tālī*, as Andani himself shows through the paper. This doctrine is misrepresented by al-Ġazālī as a doctrine of two eternal divinities (*ilāhayn qadīmayn*). But the earliest manifestation of such polemic is found in the works of the Zaydī historian al-Hamdānī (fourth/tenth century), who quotes the verses of a Yemeni poet, al-Tamīmī, in reference to the two highest hypostases of Ismā'īlī cosmology. Apart from that, Andani's article is of great value and excellent methodological rigor, but it is surprising to see how, in the article on the "The Merits of the Bāṭiniyya", the reply of that same Bāṭiniyya to al-Ġazālī's work is absent.

Corrado la Martire

Thomas-Institut, Universität zu Köln

2017. Fred M. Donner. *In Memoriam*, « Günter Lüling (1928—2014) », *Al-Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* 25, p. 229-234.

2017. Marijn van Puten, « The illusory Yemenite connection of Andalusī Arabic », *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik* 66, p. 5-44.

L'article discute l'hypothèse selon laquelle la racine linguistique de l'arabe andalous (et dans une mesure plus limitée de l'arabe du Maroc et du Maghreb en général) est l'arabe yéménite. Cette hypothèse a été avancée par Federico Corriente et elle a connu une reconnaissance substantielle. Marijn Van Puten évalue dans son article l'évidence linguistique proposée par F. Corriente – comprenant des phénomènes phonétiques, morphologiques et lexicaux – à la lumière de l'évidence linguistique apportée par l'histoire de la langue arabe (ancien arabe, dialectes non maghrébins, arabe classique et fonds sémitiques). Ce sont essentiellement des études linguistiques que l'auteur

discute, le matériel primaire est celui de ces études. Il conclut que très peu des phénomènes discutés par F. Corriente permettent d'établir une connexion entre l'arabe andalou et yéménite, dans la mesure où il n'existe pas de vrai fondement linguistique pour supposer une présence élevée de Yéménites dans le Maghreb et al-Andalus. C'est surtout l'évidence phonétique et morphologique présentée par F. Corriente qui, selon l'auteur, n'est pas convaincante, bien que ce soit précisément sur ce genre de phénomène linguistique que l'on doive s'appuyer pour soutenir l'hypothèse d'une présence importante de Yéménites dans la péninsule Ibérique.

<https://doi.org/10.13173/zeitarablang.66.0005>

2017. Nancy Um, « Aromatics, Stimulants, and their Vessels: The Material Culture and Rites of Merchant Interaction in 18th-century Mocha », dans : Sussan Babaie & Melanie Gibson (éd.), *The Mercantile Effect: On Art and Exchange in the Islamicate World during the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Londres, Gingko Library, 2017, p. 56-67.

In the early eighteenth century, the Red Sea port of Mocha bustled with activity. Along with the expected activities of loading goods and commercial negotiations, the major merchants of the city participated in a range of ceremonial activities that were seemingly non-transactional. Of key interest are the repetitive rites that merchants staged as they welcomed each other into their homes, which involved the serving of coffee, the burning of incense, and the sprinkling of rosewater. I argue that these familiar (and seemingly generic) practices of reception and sociability must be understood as central to the long-distance trade as they involved the strategic use of a number of its main commodities.

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<http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/M/bo27397264.html>

2017. Mohammed Alwageeh, « The Intellectual and Educational Impact of Ismailia's Entry into Yemen (280–322/894–934) », *ASRO Journal of Education* 2/1, p. 5-53 [en arabe, résumé en anglais].

The early history of the Ismā'īlīs in Yemen is a still understudied topic of research. The Ismā'īlīs attempted without lasting success in the late 3rd/9th and early 4th/10th centuries to establish a political base from Egypt into the remote, distant Yemen, from which to challenge openly the orthodox Sunnis of the Abbasid Empire in Baghdad. These failed attempts involved efforts of secret “missionaries” (*dū'āt*) headed by Manṣūr al-Yaman and whose activities in the region are scarcely documented.

The paper analyses the story of the establishment of the Ismā'īlīs in Yemen during the early phase and the reason for the failure. The author, Mohammed Alwageeh (University of Bisha, Yemen) subdivides the analysis into three moments: an introduction to the Ismā'īlī movement; a historical analysis of the accounts about the entry of the Ismā'īlism in Yemen; a study of the intellectual propaganda. The point of the author is

to demonstrate the failure in light of the intellectual conflict among the Ismā'īlīs themselves, which caused them to go back to the secret stage until the rise of the Sulayḥid State in 439/1047. The author analyses particularly the activities of the *dā'ī* Maṣṣūr al-Yaman already in 270/833 and of the *dā'ī* Ibn al-Faḍl in 293/905-906 during the occupation of Sanaa. Apart from the intellectual failure of the missionaries, still the main reason behind the failure is the death of *dā'ī* Ibn Ḥawṣab in 302/914-915 and then of Ibn al-Faḍl, which led to the extinguishment of the movement and to the reverse of the country to the Yu'firids and the Ziyādids, and to the Zaydī imamate. Yet the general goal of the paper is to analyse the collapse of the Ismā'īlī *da'wa* in Yemen challenging the loss of leadership and reading it instead as an intellectual failure of the missionaries and as a strategic resistance carefully planned by the Sunnis in the region.

The article includes a robust and extensive range of manuscript sources which deserve more accurate analysis: above all, Maṣṣūr al-Yaman's *Kitāb al-ṣawāhid wa-al-bayān fī itbāt amr al-mu'minīn wa-al-a'imma*; the oldest biographic source on al-Raṣṣās, *Al-ḥadā'iq al-wardiyya* of Ḥumayd b. Aḥmad al-Muḥallī (d. 625/1254); the chronicle on the history of Yemen, *Fākihāt al-zaman wa-mufākahāt al-ādāb wa-al-fiṭan fī aḥbār man malaka al-Yaman* of al-Aṣraf Ismā'īl; finally the *Nuzhat al-afkār* of the *dā'ī* Idrīs 'Imād al-Dīn b. al-Ḥasan (d. 872/1468), a robust source and the only book elucidating a clear picture of the history of the Ismā'īlīs in Yemen without interruption from the days of the *dā'ī* Maṣṣūr al-Yaman until the time of Idrīs himself, with some insights on the relations between the *da'wa* in Yemen and the mission in India. Al-Raṣṣās is mentioned in the section of the article related to the impact of the Ismā'īlīs on thought and education in Yemen, which according to the author generated a wave of numerous 'defensive' Sunni and Zaydī *tafsīr*, among which is listed a *tafsīr* of al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn and his son, which is contained in the mentioned manuscript of al-Muḥallī.

Corrado la Martire

Thomas-Institut, Universität zu Köln

2017. Mark S. Wagner, « When Jews Attack: Toward a Social Psychology of Inter-Communal Violence in Yemen », dans : Joseph E. Lowry & Shawkat M. Toorawa (éd.), *Arabic Humanities, Islamic Thought. Essays in Honor of Everett K. Rowson*, Leyde/Boston, E. J. Brill, 2017, p. 416-424.

Prolongeant ses réflexions de : *Jews and Islamic law in early 20th-century Yemen*, Bloomington, 2015, Mark Wagner présente quelques cas d'attaque de Musulmans par des Juifs ayant entraîné des dommages corporels sur les premiers, au Yémen, au temps de l'Imam Yaḥyā (m. 1948). Ces cas, concrets, tirés principalement de sources en hébreu, sont passés au crible de théories sociales et psychologiques de la seconde moitié du xx^e s. Leur analyse met en évidence l'utilisation par des individus des deux groupes, commune, séparément ou de partie liée, de ressorts sociaux et politiques, de configurations locales, pour régler leurs conflits, durant une période, celle de l'entre-deux-guerres, où l'Imam Yaḥyā est reconnu par des auteurs des deux bords pour avoir conduit des réformes ouvrant une période d'ordre et de tranquillité légales. Au terme de

l'analyse, ces éléments sociaux apparaissent plus importants que les ressorts psychologiques et des regroupements d'intérêt de personnes de bas statut social des deux groupes sont observés.

Juin 2017. André H. Kaplun, *La Reine de Saba, légende ou réalité ?*, 2^e éd. revue et augmentée, Genève, Slatkine, 121 p. ISBN 978-2-05-102810-3.

L'opposition entre « légende » et « réalité » n'a pas toujours été aussi résolue qu'elle peut nous apparaître aujourd'hui. Les textes religieux anciens ne s'inscrivent en tout cas guère dans cette perspective : se mêlent leurs enjeux historiques et théologiques ainsi que leurs sources et leur influence. Dans son ouvrage *La Reine de Saba, légende ou réalité ?*, André H. Kaplun entreprend d'interroger les grands textes concernant ce personnage qui fascine toujours. Son objectif est clair, il s'agit de « la recherche d'une preuve : celle de l'existence de la reine de Saba », quête menée déjà par bien des chercheurs, historiens ou archéologues. C'est naturellement par les « sources » que commencent ses investigations : la Bible, le Coran et le Kebra Nagast, présentant quelques interprétations de ces textes parfois énigmatiques. Ce parcours omet cependant largement de considérer leur dimension historique, non comme « réalité » mais comme s'inscrivant dans une époque et un lieu donnés et surtout dans une chronologie qui aurait dû être envisagée bien davantage en termes d'influences et de réécriture. Si la rédaction de l'Ancien Testament est prise en compte, celle du Nouveau est pratiquement passé sous silence ; les deux sont généralement confondus dans la suite de l'ouvrage dans une seule référence à : « la Bible ». Quant au Coran, il est expédié sans nuances ni considération pour sa dimension spirituelle, l'auteur insistant sur la « violence » de l'islam.

Le chapitre II, « Une datation confuse », prévient d'emblée de « l'absence de toute donnée historique ou archéologique permettant de situer dans le temps le règne de la souveraine de Saba » et enquête avec justesse sur les différents points d'ancrage historiques possibles : le règne de Salomon, la rédaction du récit biblique, le barrage de Ma'rib, le Temple de Jérusalem, les caravanes et les inscriptions sabéennes. Mais ces hypothèses de datation ne coïncident jamais avec le règne d'un Salomon contemporain d'une Reine de Saba au X^e s. av. J.-C. C'est donc vers le nom de la Reine de Saba que se dirigent alors les investigations d'André H. Kaplun, qui envisage rapidement chacun des noms qui ont été donnés à la Reine : Makéda, Nikaulis, Bilqis, Balqama, Neghesta-Azeb... Et de conclure que l'énigme reste entière.

Notre enquêteur se tourne alors vers le lieu-même du Royaume de Saba, qui correspondrait, selon la plupart des recherches, au Yémen actuel et peut-être à une partie de l'Éthiopie. La possibilité d'un voyage de la Reine de Saba à Jérusalem au X^e s. av. J.-C. est interrogée : par voie terrestre et, pourquoi pas, maritime, même si cette dernière est finalement écartée. Le lieu de la rencontre entre les deux monarques fait ensuite l'objet d'un doute, de pure forme (la Jérusalem historique n'étant pas aussi fastueuse que sa description biblique), mais s'avère finalement tout à fait probable. L'auteur remet ainsi en question les grandes données factuelles de la rencontre (personnages, dates, lieux, possibilités matérielles...) sans jamais approfondir sa valeur symbolique

(les énigmes, la sagesse, les cadeaux...), son ancrage dans les traditions du Proche-Orient et sa portée politique et spirituelle, ni à l'époque où elle est censée avoir eu lieu, ni à celles où ont été rédigés ces différents textes. Or non seulement cette démarche n'est pas toujours constructive, mais elle occulte la nature même des textes-sources, leur dimension et leurs enjeux religieux, en les mettant finalement sur le même plan que ceux des historiens, antiques ou modernes, des universitaires ou même que des sources littéraires et artistiques.

Si la démarche peut donc sembler un peu légère, le livre se lit assez facilement ; il a le mérite de se présenter comme une enquête sincère et passionnée, et de mettre en valeur la nécessité de croiser différents documents et considérations interdisciplinaires.

Aurélia Hetzel,

EPHE (Paris)

Université de Manouba (Tunis)

<https://www.honorechampion.com/fr/10769-book-08102810-9782051028103.html>

Juillet 2017. Nancy Um, « Mocha: Maritime Architecture on Yemen's Red Sea Coast », dans : Trevor H.J. Marchand (éd.), *'Architecture That Fills My Eye': The Building Heritage of Yemen*, Catalogue d'exposition, p. 60-69, Londres, Gingko Library, 2017.

The city of Mocha provides important avenues for thinking about maritime architecture, particularly because it has been subject to relatively extensive documentation. Numerous records, both visual and textual, help us to understand the buildings that remain and also, to a certain extent, those that have been lost. In this investigation, the notion of "maritimity" hinges upon an active engagement with the seas and those locations that were accessible by it, rather than being a casual by-product of geographic location. Architecture is one way for us to understand Mocha's strong ties to a sea-based world.

Nancy Um

Binghampton University

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/yemen/>

14 juillet-15 octobre 2017. Berlin, Musée d'Art islamique. Exposition « Gläubiges Staunen – Biblische Traditionen in der Islamischen Welt »

Sous le titre « Gläubiges Staunen – Biblische Traditionen in der Islamischen Welt » (« Testimonies of faith—Biblical traditions in the Islamic World ») s'est tenue à Berlin une exposition à l'initiative conjointe du Département oriental de la Bibliothèque d'État de Berlin (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) et du Musée d'Art islamique (Museum für Islamische Kunst).

Du 14 juillet jusqu'au 15 octobre 2017, des manuscrits bibliques hébreux, araméens, coptes, arméniens, éthiopiens et arabes, ainsi que des manuscrits islamiques aux motifs bibliques étaient présentés dans deux salles du Musée. Quelques-uns des manus-

crits du genre « Qışaş al-anbiyā' » (Histoires des prophètes) les plus magnifiquement illustrés, venant probablement de Shiraz, ainsi que des feuillets exquis du xvi^e/xvii^e s., prêts de la collection Vollmer, un collectionneur de peinture moghole résidant à Fribourg, avec des motifs chrétiens visiblement inspirés par des bibles illustrées rapportées par les Jésuites et fabriquées à la cour des empereurs Moghols, témoignaient de l'influence de l'iconographie biblique dans la culture des manuscrits islamiques.

Le Yémen était représenté par un rouleau hébreu d'Esther, écrit sur cuir, comme le veut la tradition, et datant du xix^e s. (voir ill.). Les dimensions du rouleau, le seul objet de l'exposition d'origine yéménite, sont de 27,5 cm de hauteur sur 260 cm de longueur (en six feuillets de peau), et représente un exemple « d'écriture yéménite carrée ». Ce manuscrit est numérisé et accessible via la banque de données « Orient-digital » (voir :

<http://sbb.berlin/q0grmz>).

<https://www.smb.museum/ausstellungen/detail/glaebiges-staunen-biblische-traditionen-in-der-islamischen-welt.html>

Une brochure richement illustrée de 60 pages accompagnait l'exposition :

Nicoletta Fazio, Meliné Pehlivanian, Christoph Rauch (éd.), *Gläubiges Staunen : biblische Traditionen in der islamischen Welt : eine gemeinsame Ausstellung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin und des Museums für Islamische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin : 14. Juli.-15. Oktober 2017*, Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, [2017], 60 p.

Un livre de référence bilingue (allemand/anglais) traitant du même sujet et de la même collection de manuscrits du Département oriental de la Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin est paru en 2016 (toujours disponible) :

Meliné Pehlivanian, Christoph Rauch, Ronny Vollandt (éd.), *Orientalische Bibelhandschriften aus der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK : eine illustrierte Geschichte/Oriental Bible manuscripts from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – PK: an illustrated history*, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Wiesbaden, Reichert, 2016, 186 p. Illustrations, cartes, facsimilés. ISBN 3-95490-209-5 - 978-3-95490-209-5.



Ill. Rouleau d'Esther, Yémen, xix^e s., Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, ms. Hs.or.13926.

La notice du rouleau d'Esther donné en illustration se trouve aux pages 14-15 de la brochure et 36-39 du livre cités en référence. Voir ci-dessus à l'entrée consacrée au livre, la mention à un autre codex yéménite en hébreu.

Meliné Pehlivanian
Orientabteilung
Stellvertretende Abteilungsleiterin
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz

04.09.2017. Live auctioneers, vente n° 15. Lot de 2 manuscrits du Yémen, xix^e siècle

« Lot of two hand written manuscripts. Yemen. 1. Handwritten Dikduk in commonly spoken Hebrew. Exegesis of the Teamim in form of Amida and Hiluch, a copy from the booklet of Tijan. Incomplete copy. 12 pages. 12 “cm. New binding. Stains. Overall good condition. 2. Handwritten list of Pirke Mishnayot from Shas according to *alef-bet*. Most likely made in order to remember the Mishnayot by heart. Yemen 19th century. Pleasant miniature handwriting. 10 “cm. 48 pages. New binding. Stains. Overall good condition ».

Quatre photos.

https://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/55406063_lot-of-two-handwritten-manuscripts-yemen-19th-century

07.02.2018. Moreshet, vente n° 17, lots n° 270 et 300. Lots de manuscrits du Yémen xix^e/xx^e siècle

- n° 270, Dīwān, xix^e s.

« It seems that the songs don't appear in the copies known to us previously. At the end of the colophon is written 'written by Yaakov ben Salam Eljamal...I, the writer, Haim ben Ya'ish ben Aaron Elsharabi.' 232 pages, moth marks, 13x18cm, generally good condition ».

- n° 300, Lot de 3 manuscrits, xix^e/xx^e s.

« 1. Manuscript copy of the commentary on the Mishnah with the Rambam, nice handwriting but not professional, with names of the owners 'this is the writing of Salam ben Yosef Siri,' a student of Rav Yechiya Kapach. On the page before the cover is the name of the writer, and the year (Sanaa 1929). 21x30cm, 142 pages. Light moth damage, generally ok to good condition. 2. Questions and answers using kabbalah, the identity of the scribe is unknown, 19th century. Not professional, 32 pages, of which 10 last are on treifut. Size: 8x13cm. Good condition. New binding. 3. Bakasha Na'ah by Mori Sa'adeh Toweel (Encyclopedia of Sages of Yemen 189). These bakashot appear in Divan. Signatures of Avraham bar Reb Avraham Sa'id. In addition is a bakasha with the symbol 'Avraham Salama.' Size: 7x11cm, 8 pages, nice writing from the 19th century. Good condition ».

<http://www.moreshet-auctions.com/divan-manuscript-with-poems-yemen-19th-century>

<http://www.moreshet-auctions.com/lot-of-3-manuscripts-yemen-1920th-century>

2017. Festschrift Mikhail Rodionov disponible sous forme de PDF libre d'accès

Les contributions au volume de Pavel Pogorelski & Maxim Vasilenko (eds.), *Arabian Roots in the Asian Context*, Saint-Petersburg, Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkammer), 2016, 616 p., 175 ill. ISBN : 978-5-88431-323-1, dédiées aux 70 ans de Mikhail Rodionov, sont désormais accessibles sous forme de PDFs séparés, depuis la table des matières, en suivant ce lien :

http://www.kunstkamera.ru/lib/rubrikator/03/03_03/978-5-88431-323-1/

Voir CmY 24 (Juillet 2017), Actualités, <Festschrift Mikhail Rodionov>, p. 1-14, en particulier celles dédiées au Yémen et à la péninsule Arabique.

Printemps 2017. John Møller Larsen, « [Review of:] David Hollenberg, Christoph Rauch, and Sabine Schmidtke, eds, *The Yemeni Manuscript Tradition* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015) », *COMSt Bulletin* 3/1, Spring 2017, p. 70-75.

Voir CmY 20 (Juil. 2015), Actualités, <Mai 2015>, p. 10-12.

Octobre 2017. Lamya Khalidi, « The Destruction of Yemen and Its Cultural Heritage », *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49/4, 2017, p. 735-738.

L'article de Lamya Khalidi donne l'alarme sur la destruction du patrimoine culturel dans le contexte actuel de crise au Yémen, surtout depuis la campagne aérienne déclenchée en mars 2015 par la coalition militaire dirigée par l'Arabie Saoudite. Le bref état des lieux des destructions porte sur des incidents à Sanaa, Zabīd, Ma'rib, sur les sites archéologiques de Sirwa et Barāqīš, Šibām et Kawkabān, et sur les musées dans l'ensemble du pays. Selon l'analyse de l'auteur, le royaume saoudien y a une responsabilité directe et se rend donc coupable de violations du droit international, car les bombardements aériens ciblent intentionnellement des sites historiques et détruisent donc systématiquement l'héritage culturel du pays. À côté des bombardements aériens, ce sont surtout des groupes salafistes radicaux comme al-Qā'ida et IS/Daesh qui sont impliqués dans des attaques perpétrées sur le patrimoine yéménite. De surcroît, de nombreux biens culturels sont sortis du pays de manière frauduleuse : ce trafic représente une autre menace. L. Khalidi parvient donc à des conclusions très similaires à celles d'une analyse de la destruction des manuscrits yéménites publiée en 2016 dans les *CmY*⁹.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743817000691>

12-13 octobre 2017. Londres. Institut d'études ismaéliennes, Conférence « Before the Printed Word: Texts, Scribes and Transmission. A Symposium on Manuscript Collections Housed at The Institute of Ismaili Studies ». Communication de Delia Cortese, « The *Maǧmū' al-ṭarbiya*. Between Text and Paratext: Exploring the Social History of a Community's Reading Culture »

Partant de son travail sur le *Maǧmū' al-ṭarbiya* (voir ci-dessus, en 2016), Delia Cortese explore ici l'intention au fond du projet de compilation de l'œuvre, les questions qu'elle soulève sur la notion d'auteur et les implications doctrinales se trouvant derrière la sélection d'œuvres incluses dans le recueil par le compilateur. Un examen serré des notes marginales laissées par des utilisateurs des manuscrits du *Maǧmū' al-ṭarbiya* actuellement à la Bibliothèque de l'Institut d'études ismaéliennes (Institute of Ismaili Studies), à Londres, ainsi que l'étude effective des textes, documentée et rapportée, par l'élite de la communauté Bohra/Tayyibite, a permis à D. Cortese de jeter quelques lumières sur les pratiques de lecture de la communauté Bohra tayyibite/daoudite. Quelques notes marginales semblent relier les manuscrits indiens tardifs à l'environnement culturel yéménite auquel le texte ultimement appartient. Par ex., certaines annotations marginales autorisent à établir une forte connexion entre le *Maǧmū' al-ṭarbiya* et le *dā'ī muṭlaq* tayyibite du ^exx s., le Yéménite al-Ḥasan b. Idrīs (m. 1527), qui, selon d'autres données discutées dans la communication, semble avoir été un grand promoteur de l'utilisation de cette œuvre pour des raisons éducatives, contribuant ainsi à la rendre populaire dans la communauté.

⁹ Voir David Hollenberg & Anne Regourd, « Manuscripts Destruction and Looting in Yemen: A Status Report », *CmY* 21 (janv. 2016), p. 157-177.

13 octobre 2017. Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. Communication de Sabine Schmidtke « Salvaging the Rational Heritage of Islam: The Zaydi Manuscript Tradition Project »

Dans une communication à l'Institut d'études avancées (Institute for Advanced Study, IAS), Princeton, Sabine Schmidtke a présenté le projet en cours, « The Zaydi Manuscript Tradition (ZMT) », fruit d'une collaboration entre l'IAS et le Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Minnesota. Le projet a pour ambition de créer un dépôt numérique des manuscrits zaydites conservés au Yémen et ailleurs. Il vise à faciliter l'accès libre et global aux matériaux zaydites et à numériser des textes manuscrits afin de les protéger d'une destruction définitive, dans le contexte yéménite actuel¹⁰. La communication a été enregistrée, elle est accessible sous le lien suivant :

<https://www.ias.edu/ideas/2017/schmidtke-rational-heritage>

20 octobre 2017. Bruxelles, Parlement européen. Session spéciale sur le Yémen, communication d'Anne Regourd, « Splendeur et misère du patrimoine du Yémen »

À l'occasion de la demi-journée organisée par l'Académie de géopolitique de Paris au Parlement européen, à Bruxelles, sur le thème « Quel avenir pour le Yémen et ses relations avec l'Union européenne ? », consacrée à la situation actuelle au Yémen et, plus spécifiquement, à l'intervention armée saoudienne et à la position de l'Union européenne sur ce sujet et sur celui des ventes d'armes aux Saoudiens, différents aspects du problème ont été évoqués, dont les effets désastreux sur le patrimoine culturel yéménite. Anne Regourd a évoqué la richesse et la variété de ce patrimoine, dont une partie est détruite, endommagée ou en danger, en faisant la différence, au sein du patrimoine matériel, entre le bâti, dont les atteintes sont apparentes, visibles, et le patrimoine mobilier, dont l'état est plus difficile à cerner, en prenant l'exemple des manuscrits. Elle a aussi distingué entre les belligérants selon l'importance de l'impact produit par leurs attaques, ainsi que sur les cibles de ces attaques, dans le même sens que Lamya Khalidi (voir ci-dessus).

Une partie de la séance a été publiée en version papier.

<http://www.academiedegeopolitiquedeparis.com/colloque-international-quel-avenir-pour-le-yemen/>

<http://www.politique-actu.com/actualite/quel-avenir-pour-yemen-colloque-octobre-2017-bruxelles-academie-geopolitique-paris/1701821/>

<http://www.cvd-tunisie.org/colloque-international-quel-avenir-pour-le-yemen/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suotvFLqLuU>

¹⁰ Pour plus de détail sur l'initiative ZMT, voir Sabine Schmidtke, « Preserving, Studying, and Democratizing Access to the World Heritage of Islamic Manuscripts: The Zaydi Tradition », *CmY* 23 (janv. 2017), p. 103-166.

25 octobre 2017. Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. Communication de Hassan Ansari et Jan Thiele, « 'Unconventional' *kalām* texts: examples from the Zaydī literature »

Dans une session de la « Islamicists' Seminars Series » à l'Institut d'étude avancée (Institute for Advanced Study, IAS), Princeton, Hassan Ansari et Jan Thiele ont discuté trois textes manuscrits d'auteurs zaidites yéménites de la première moitié du vii^e/xiii^e s. Les textes en question sont des traités de théologie rationnelle (*kalām*) et ils portent sur des réflexions « philosophiques » (métaphysique et ontologique, épistémologique). Jan Thiele était reçu dans le cadre du Programme d'études chiites (« Shii Studies Program ») en cours à l'IAS (oct. 2017).

<https://www.ias.edu/ssrp/visitors>

https://www.hs.ias.edu/islamic_world

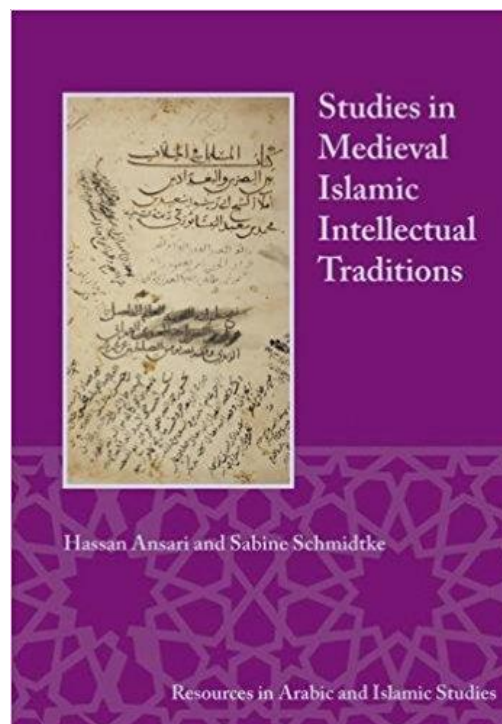
25 octobre 2017. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. Communication d'Anne Regourd, « Texts of records, Records of texts: ms. Leiden Or.6980 »

Dans le cadre d'un séjour de deux mois consacré à l'étude des collections yéménites de la Bibliothèque d'État de Berlin (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin), effectué en septembre et octobre 2017, grâce au soutien du Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Anne Regourd a donné une conférence sur un manuscrit de la collection de Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, conservée à la Bibliothèque de l'Université de Leyde (Pays-Bas). La conférence, intitulée : « Texts of records, Records of texts: ms. Leiden Or.6980 », s'inscrivait dans le cycle de conférences « Atelier du savoir, atelier-débat » (« Wissenswerkstatt, Werkstattgespräche ») et a pris place dans la salle de séminaire de la Bibliothèque. Elle reprenait les acquis de l'article en deux parties publié dans les *CmY* 20 (juillet 2015) et 24 (juillet 2017) : Anne Regourd, « Le ms. Or. 6980 de la Bibliothèque universitaire de Leyde. I. Premiers éléments de datation et de localisation du manuscrit : apport d'un papier Andrea Galvani inédit », p. 65-81 » ; Jean Lambert & Anne Regourd, « Le manuscrit Leyde Or. 6980. 2^e partie. Poésies chantées dans le Ḥiǧāz au début du xx^e siècle : la transcription par un lettré de documents sonores. Édition du texte », p. 113-216. L'enregistrement de l'un des poèmes chantés a été diffusé durant la séance.

Annonce, <http://blog.sbb.berlin/texts-of-records-records-of-texts-werkstattgespraeche-zur-handschrift-ms-leiden-or-6980-am-25-10/>

Texte intégral (en anglais), <http://blog.sbb.berlin/text-of-records-records-of-texts/>

Novembre 2017. Hassan Ansari & Sabine Schmidtke, *Studies in Medieval Islamic Intellectual Traditions*, Atlanta, Lockwood Press, coll. « Resources in Arabic and Islamic Studies », 7, 2017, xiv + 494 p., ill. ISBN : 9781937040918.



Ce nouveau livre est une collection d'articles des deux auteurs, publiés entre 2010 et 2016 dans des revues et des ouvrages collectifs. Une très grande partie des articles – qui ont parfois été légèrement modifiés et mis à jours – auront un intérêt direct pour les lecteurs des *CmY* parce qu'ils portent sur des sujets zaydites, font un usage extensif de manuscrits yéménites et offrent plusieurs éditions critiques. En ce qui concerne les manuscrits, le livre est abondamment illustré. Il est, de plus, doté de différents index (personnes, titres d'ouvrages, lieux et institutions, manuscrits).

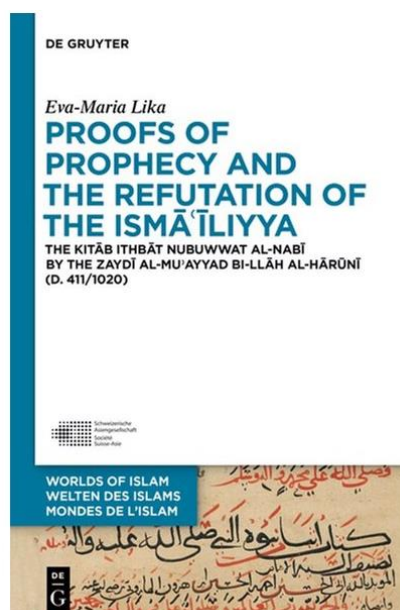
<https://isdistribution.com/BookDetail.aspx?aId=85491>

November 2017. Eva-Maria Lika, *Proofs of Prophecy and the Refutation of the Ismā'īliyya: The Kitāb Ithbāt nubuwwat al-nabī by the Zaydī al-Mu'ayyad bi-llāh al-Hārūnī (d. 411/1020)*, Berlin/Boston, Walter de Gruyter, coll. « Welten des Islams – Worlds of Islam – Mondes de l'Islam », 9, 2018, ix + 329 p. ISBN : 9783110539769.

Ce livre propose une étude du livre *Ithbāt nubuwwat al-nabī* de l'imam zaydite al-Mu'ayyad bi-Allāh al-Hārūnī (m. 411/1020). Al-Mu'ayyad bi-Allāh régnait dans le Nord de l'Iran, mais il a laissé des traces profondes sur la théologie et le droit zaydite en général. Il a contribué à l'adoption des doctrines mu'tazilites – et notamment celles de la Mu'tazila de Basora – et au développement du droit hādawite, c'est-à-dire à l'école de droit zaydite nommée d'après le fondateur de l'imamat zaydite au Yémen, al-Hādī ilā al-ḥaqq (m. 298/911). Le livre présenté ici se concentre sur les deux premières parties de l'*Ithbāt nubuwwat al-nabī*: l'introduction (*Muqaddima*) qui contient une polémique anti-ismaélienne et le premier chapitre (*Al-bāb al-awwal*) qui traite de sujets clas-

siques de théologie musulmane, notamment l'inimitabilité du Coran (*i'ğāz al-Qur'ān*). Eva-Maria Lika commence son étude par une présentation des cinq manuscrits de l'*Itbāt nubuwwat al-nabī* qui ont été préservés, dont trois proviennent du Yémen et deux de l'Iran. Puis, elle donne un aperçu du contexte historique dans lequel le livre a été écrit, mettant l'accent sur le développement historique de l'ismaélisme au Tabaristan, dans le Nord de l'Iran, ainsi que sur la biographie d'al-Mu'ayyad bi-Allāh. Suivent deux chapitres qui analysent la polémique anti-ismaélienne de la *Muqaddima* et l'argument sur l'inimitabilité du Coran. Le livre est complété par une édition critique des deux parties mentionnées de l'*Itbāt nubuwwat al-nabī*¹¹.

<https://www.degruyter.com/viewbooktoc/product/487835?rskey=BACmN&format=EBOK>



13 novembre 2017. Paris, BULAC. Présentation d'Asma Hilali sur le palimpseste de Sanaa

Le 13 novembre 2017, Asma Hilali (Université de Lille) présentait à la Bibliothèque universitaire des langues et civilisations (BULAC, Paris) son ouvrage récemment paru : *The Sanaa Palimpsest. The Transmission of the Qur'an in the First Centuries AH*, Oxford University Press, 2017 [voir CmY 24, Actualités <Juillet 2017>, p. 29-32]. Cette intervention auprès d'un public d'étudiants en Master et de doctorants a eu lieu dans le cadre du stage d'initiation aux manuscrits à caractères arabes organisé chaque année par la section arabe de l'Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes (CNRS, UPR 841). Depuis 2016, ce stage se fait en partenariat avec la BULAC et dans ses locaux. La cinquantaine d'étudiants présents les 13 et 14 novembre ont entendu des spécialistes dans le

¹¹ Il existe deux éditions complètes du texte (i. éd. Ḥalil Aḥmad Ibrāhīm al-Ḥaḡḡ, Le Caire, Dār al-turāt al-'arabī, 1399/1979 et ii. éd. 'Abd al-Karīm Ġadbān, Ṣa'da, Maktabat al-turāt al-islāmī, 1424/2003), mais ces éditions n'utilisent pas la totalité des manuscrits conservés.

but de se familiariser avec toutes les disciplines en lien avec l'étude du manuscrit médiéval. Une exposition de manuscrits orientaux conservés à la BULAC ainsi que des ateliers étaient également proposés.

Dans son livre, Asma Hilali fait l'édition de l'un des fragments coraniques les plus anciens découverts à ce jour, daté du i-ii^e/vii^e s. Le manuscrit, 01.27-1, est conservé à Dār al-Maḥṭūṭāt à Sanaa, au Yémen. Le dit « palimpseste de Sanaa » contient 38 feuillets sur lesquels sont écrits deux textes coraniques superposés : le texte inférieur daté du vii^e s. a été effacé et un second, daté du viii^e s., a été écrit au-dessus. Les deux textes coraniques sont fragmentés et présentent des aspects d'un travail en cours, tels que la décoration incomplète dans le texte supérieur et une instruction de lecture dans le texte inférieur. Dans une longue introduction, Asma Hilali expose la contribution de l'ouvrage aux études des manuscrits coraniques anciens et aux études coraniques. Son édition propose la reconstruction et l'édition du texte inférieur du palimpseste et l'édition du texte supérieur. Ces deux éditions sont annotées et des références sont systématiquement faites aux études précédentes des mêmes fragments. Le livre fournit la première édition complète du manuscrit 01.27-1 avec ses deux couches et offre de nouvelles hypothèses concernant la transmission du Coran pendant les premiers siècles de l'Islam. Le contexte historique et institutionnel de la transmission du manuscrit y sont analysés. Ce contexte est probablement celui d'un enseignement et d'un apprentissage du texte coranique pour le texte inférieur et celui d'un texte incomplet dont l'écriture et la décoration sont partiels pour le texte supérieur. Avec ses deux couches de textes, le manuscrit ne constitue probablement pas une partie d'un codex du Coran. Dans sa couche inférieure, le manuscrit est le plus ancien témoin de l'enseignement de la lecture du texte du Coran et peut-être du texte arabe.

Asma Hilali

Université de Lille

Muriel Roiland

Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes (IRHT)-CNRS, Paris

16 novembre 2017. Paris, Sorbonne, EPHE. Conférence Julien Dufour, « La poésie yéménite en moyen arabe, ou comment changer de langue pour relire un héritage »

Julien Dufour (Université de Strasbourg/ENS) a présenté « La poésie yéménite en moyen arabe, ou comment changer de langue pour relire un héritage », dans le cadre du séminaire *SCRIPTA-PSL: Diglossie, traduction intralinguale, réécriture, commentaire*. Ce séminaire, organisé par Rainier Lanselle et Andréas Stauder, Directeurs d'études à la Section des Sciences historiques et philologiques, lancé dans le cadre de cette Section de l'EPHE et du programme « SCRIPTA-PSL. History and Practices of Writing », s'inscrit dans une démarche tout à la fois culturelle, textuelle et linguistique. Son ambition est d'inviter de nombreux collègues à participer à ce qui souhaite être « un espace de discussion et de confrontation entre démarches et aires culturelles diverses ».

[D'après le résumé de l'auteur] La langue standard dont le monde arabo-islamique s'est très rapidement dotée a d'emblée été normée d'une façon telle que son acquisition représentait une difficulté pour la plupart des locuteurs arabophones. Produit d'une élaboration mais conçue comme perfection originelle, cette clé de voûte sociolinguistique a, sans doute depuis le départ, laissé un vaste champ libre non seulement à des arabes parlés extrêmement divers mais également à des registres écrits non standard (voire pré-standard), qui se sont de fait retrouvés dans une situation médiane entre ce qu'on nomme aujourd'hui les arabes « dialectaux » et l'arabe « classique », et qui ont tiré parti de cette position. C'est ce qu'on a coutume d'appeler le moyen arabe.

Le Yémen, en particulier rural, pratique abondamment des poésies de tradition orale dont la langue, sans être pour autant identique à celle de la parole non poétique, peut être raisonnablement qualifiée de « dialectale ». On n'en possède aucun document écrit avant le ^{xx}^e s. De la poésie en arabe « classique » canonique est par ailleurs attestée dans les milieux sociaux dominants à toutes époques. Mais à partir du ^{xiii}^e s., notre documentation commence à révéler une poésie qu'on doit bien qualifier de « moyen arabe ». Elle est pratiquée plutôt en milieu citadin et suppose une familiarité avec l'héritage littéraire classique, auquel elle puise abondamment thèmes, topos, lexique, formes et diverses structures linguistiques. Elle opère cependant une nette rupture avec ce modèle aux niveaux métrique et morphologique, basculant à cet égard du côté de la langue parlée. C'est la poésie qu'on nomme aujourd'hui *ḥumaynī*.



<https://www.ephe.fr/actualites/seminaire-diglossie-conference-de-julien-dufour>

18-21 novembre 2017. Washington, D. C. Congrès annuel de la MESA

Le 51^e Congrès annuel de la Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) s'est tenu cette année à Washington, D. C. Les guerres actuelles au Moyen-Orient ont figuré parmi les sujets prédominants de la rencontre. Deux sessions complètes étaient financées par l'American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS). La première était une table ronde intitulée « Updating the Yemen Crisis » (<http://aiys.org/blog/?p=1297>). La deuxième session s'est tenue sur le sujet « The South in the Yemeni Conflict » (<http://aiys.org/blog/?p=1303>).

L'intervention intéressant les *CmY* dans l'ensemble du programme est la suivante :

Thomas Kuehn, « Managing nature's hazards, furthering state control: Nature and imperial governance in Ottoman Yemen re-visited, 1872-1914 ».

Dans cet exposé, Thomas Kuehn a analysé le rôle qu'ont joué les concepts de « nature », lorsque la province du Yémen faisait partie de l'Empire Ottoman, de 1872 à la Première Guerre Mondiale. Dans son étude, il a eu recours à des sources primaires en ottoman, arabe et anglais, tels que des mémorandums gouvernementaux, des rapports consulaires, des chroniques locales et des récits de voyage, et a discuté l'hypothèse des historiens selon laquelle les gouvernants ottomans essayaient de développer une forme de gouvernement qui était acceptée comme légitime par la population locale car s'appuyant, et donc respectant, des liens sectaires, des formes locales de résolution des conflits et les stratifications sociales existantes.

https://mesana.org/mymesa/meeting_program_abs.php?pid=47f4b5cc21ab496ba1c16628a219ceaf

Le programme complet du congrès de la MESA 2017 est téléchargeable sous le lien suivant : https://mesana.org/mymesa/meeting_program.php

18-19 décembre 2017. Hamburg. Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures. Conférence internationale, « Rulers as Authors in the Islamic world. Knowledge, authority and legitimacy »

Organisée par Sonja Brentjes (Max Planck Gesellschaft, Berlin), Maribel Fierro (ILC-CSIC, Madrid) & Tilman Seidensticker (CSMC), la Conférence du Centre pour l'étude des cultures du manuscrit dédiée aux gouvernants comme auteurs dans le monde islamique a reflété la vivacité des études yéménites avec pas moins de trois communications prévues :

Olly Akkerman (Freie Universität Berlin), « The Bohras and the making of the Neo-Fatimid Library »

[Résumé de l'auteur] « The Bohras, a small but vibrant Muslim Shia community in India that is almost entirely closed to outsiders, hold a secret Arabic manuscript culture, which is enshrined and preserved in royal archives or *khizānāt*. As Ismailis, the Bohras were one of the few communities to survive the fall of the Fatimid Caliphate in North Africa in the late twelfth century, having established an independent community well before its demise. Unlike Persian Ismaili Islam, which reached the Indian subconti-

nent during the ninth century over land, the Arabic Ismaili tradition travelled from Yemen to Gujarat via Indian Ocean trade several centuries later. In the new social, political, and historical reality of medieval Gujarat Bohra clerics reworked and enshrined their Fatimid heritage from North Africa in *khizānāt* under the supervision of local sacerdotal families, bringing into being a new sacred literary canon and manuscript culture with a local South Asian touch. In my paper I argue that, from the fifteenth century onwards, a narrative was constructed in which these sacerdotal families were depicted as the direct spiritual heirs of the Fatimid intellectual heritage: only the highest clerics could access, comment upon, and transmit the sacred knowledge of the Fatimid Imams. The invention of the secret royal *khizānāt* in particular played a vital role in strengthening the community's "Neo-Fatimid" identity and hierarchical structures, a practice that is continued to the present time. Additionally, this paper will shed new light on the multi-lingual, scriptural, and scribal contexts of transmission and reception of Bohra *bāṭinī* knowledge in Yemen and Gujarat ».

Hasan Ansari (Institute for Advanced Study Princeton), « Imam al-Manṣūr bi-llāh ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamza: A Zaydī ruler and author »

[Résumé de l'auteur] « As a result of the unification of the Caspian Zaydiyya and the Zaydis in Yemen in the 6th/12th century a massive transfer of knowledge from Iran to Yemen increased. This led on the one hand to a cultural revival as a result of which the cultural center of Zaydī Mu‘tazilism gradually shifted from the coastal regions south of the Caspian Sea to Yemen, and on the other to a renewed blossoming of Mu‘tazilī theology. The cultural transfer process reached its peak under the reign of Imam al-Manṣūr bi-llāh ‘Abdullāh b. Ḥamza (d. 614/1217) who further encouraged the transfer of Caspian Zaydī and Mu‘tazilī religious literature to Yemen. At his initiative numerous books, among them many Mu‘tazilī texts, were acquired, copied and subsequently incorporated into his library in Ḥafār, his residential town. He took on a staff of professional scribes – who were often scholars in their own right – in order to copy a wide range of Mu‘tazilī texts written by chief representatives of the Baṣran Mu‘tazila in its scholastic phase. Many of the texts copied for al-Manṣūr bi-llāh's library have survived in Yemeni collections as unique manuscripts. Al-Manṣūr bi-llāh is also known as a very respected Zaydī scholar whose writings were among the most important sources of Zaydī knowledge for centuries. He wrote on Zaydī *kalām*, jurisprudence and Hadith. In my paper I examine his writings in which he benefits from the above-mentioned cultural transfer from Iran to Yemen in his time ».

Petra G. Schmidl (Exzellenzcluster *Normative Ordnungen*, Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt), « The Rasūlids in Yemen and the Science »

[Résumé de l'auteur] « The Rasūlids, a dynasty of most probably Kurd, or Turk descent, at first in the service of the Saljūqs and the Ayyūbids, eventually ruled over Yemen, or most parts of it, from 13th to 16th century. Their interest in promoting and patronizing arts and architecture, learning and scholarship is reflected in artefacts and buildings, instruments and texts accrued during their reign. Aside from this commitment, the Rasūlids emerge also as authors of scholarly texts in different fields of knowledge. Most creative and productive was al-Ashraf ‘Umar (d. 1296), the third sul-

tan, but some of his predecessors and successors also either wrote texts themselves or were closely related to their emergence. After shortly introducing the Rasūlids, this talk will first introduce these examples, and second use them to address the topics of this conference, in particular knowledge, authority, and legitimacy ».

Pour les *CmY*, on notera également la contribution d'Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk (Qatar University), « The Pen and the Sword: The Case of the Sudanese Mahdi (1844-1885) ».

7-9 décembre 2017. Princeton, Institute for Advanced Study. Conférence internationale « Shii Studies: The State of the Art »

Ces trois journées organisées par Sabine Schmidtke & Hassan Ansari (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton), très nourries, réunissaient plus d'une trentaine de participants. Les courants chiites les plus divers ont été abordés du point de vue de nombreuses disciplines. Pour les *CmY*, on retiendra les contributions de :

- Nebil A. Husayn (University of Miami), « From Kūfa to Yemen to Baghdad: The Evolution of Zaydī Dialectics on the Imamate » ;
- Brinkley Messick (Columbia University), « Imamic Governance and Shari'a Justice in 20th century Yemen », une présentation de son livre, *Shari'a Scripts. A Historical Anthropology*, Columbia, Columbia University Press, janv. 2018. ISBN : 9780231541909 ;
- Anne Regourd (University of Copenhagen, ERC Project « Islam in the Horn of Africa »), « Between the lines: reading the history of papers from early manuscripts in the Glaser collection held in Berlin », qui exposait le résultat récent de ses recherches à la Bibliothèque d'État de Berlin (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin).

Des Actes sont prévus à publication dans la revue *Shi'i studies*.

ARABIE SAOUDITE

Guy Burak, « Between Istanbul and Gujarat: Descriptions of Mecca in the Sixteenth-Century Indian Ocean », *Muqarnas* 34/1, 2017, p. 287-320.

[Résumé par l'auteur] « In 1543, a quarter century after the Ottoman conquest of the Holy Cities, the Meccan jurist, hadith scholar, and chronicler Jār Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Fahd (d. 1547) completed a short work devoted to the construction projects undertaken in the city by the Ottoman sultans Selim I (r. 1512–20) and his son Süleyman (r. 1520–66). The work is highly unusual from the perspective of the Arabic historiographical tradition and constitutes the first comprehensive response by an Arab chronicler to the emergence of an Ottoman imperial architectural idiom around the turn of the sixteenth century. The article situates Ibn Fahd and his work in three inter-related contexts: (a) the incorporation of Mecca and Medina into the Ottoman domains; (b) the emergence of an Ottoman architectural idiom and visual interest in the

description of the Holy Sanctuaries across the Indian Ocean, from Istanbul to Gujarat; and (c) the competition between the new Custodians of the Two Holy Sanctuaries and other Islamic rulers, past and present. In particular, the article focuses on the challenges posed by the sultans of Gujarat, who were also quite interested in the Holy Sanctuaries. This interest is captured in Muḥyi al-Dīn Lārī's (d. 1526–27) description of the pilgrimage and the Ḥaramayn, which was written for the Gujarati sultan Muẓaffar Shāh II (r. 1511–26) ».

http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/22118993_03401p012

Article intégralement accessible en ligne, ici :

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1J5IGkiuygU2s7m490Emk4olTklLzc9jc/view?usp=sharing>

KUWEÏT

26 September 2016. Kuwait, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Yarmouk Cultural Centre. Lecture « Tareq Sayid Rajab - A lifetime of art and culture »

Ziad Sayid Rajab, Directeur de la Nouvelle école anglaise, Kuweït, et membre exécutif du Musée Tareq Rajab, a donné une conférence illustrée à la mémoire de la vie et de l'œuvre de son père, Tareq Sayid Rajab, décédé en juin 2016. Devenu tôt collectionneur d'art islamique et de manuscrits, Tareq Rajab a fondé deux musées durant sa vie, qui ont abrité les collections qu'il avait constituées avec sa femme, Jehan. Dans une première vie, il s'était consacré à la préservation du patrimoine archéologique et historique du Kuweït et à l'établissement d'une école secondaire moderne adoptant le modèle anglais. Cette conférence a servi de base à la biographie de Tareq Rajab rédigée par Deborah Freeman Fahid dans ce numéro des *CmY* (obituaire ci-dessus).

OMAN

2017. Fahad Ahmad Bishara, *A Sea of Debt: Law and Economic Life in the Western Indian Ocean, 1780-1950*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 290 p. ISBN : 9781316609378.

Fahad Ahmad Bishara, Professeur assistant à l'Université de Virginie, propose dans son nouveau livre une histoire légale de la vie économique de l'océan Indien occidental entre 1780 et 1950. Il analyse les transformations du droit islamique ainsi que des pratiques commerciales entre l'Oman, l'Inde et l'Afrique de l'Est pour la région. Dans le contexte de l'expansion de l'activité économique sur la période traitée, des commerçants, des planteurs, des juristes, des juges, des soldats et des marins arabes, indiens, swahilis et baloutches ont créé un monde commun.

L'une des principales sources pour reconstruire l'histoire socio-économique et la mobilité des acteurs de ce monde sont les *waraqas*, littéralement « papiers ». Il s'agit de contrats de dettes que signaient des individus avec des financiers indiens. Ces derniers donnaient des crédits en échange d'hypothèques sur des propriétés familiales ou de promesses de livrer de l'ivoire, des clous de girofles ou d'autres marchandises. La structure du commerce fondé sur des dettes a changé au cours du temps, surtout avec l'expansion britannique lors de la deuxième moitié du xix^e s. C'est alors que le pouvoir colonial a commencé à enregistrer officiellement les *waraqas*, ce qui lui permit de contrôler et d'intervenir dans les transactions.

Les sources utilisées dans cette étude comprennent principalement des *fatwās* ibadites venant des archives de Zanzibar. L'auteur se sert aussi des archives de l'Office britannique des Indes (British India Office), d'archives se trouvant en Inde, à Bahrain et en Tanzanie, ainsi que d'œuvres et d'études en arabe, par ex. les textes juridiques et les bibliographies des Omanais Ḥamīs b. Saʿīd al-Šaqṣī al-Rustāqī (m. 1070/1659-1660), Saʿīd b. Ḥalfān al-Ḥalīlī (m. 1287/1870-1871), Saʿīd b. ʿAlī al-Muḡayrī (m. 1381/1962), ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥumayd al-Sālimī (m. 1332/1914) and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥumayd al-Sālimī (m. 1406/1985).

Plus ici :

<http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/history/south-asian-history/sea-debt-law-and-economic-life-western-indian-ocean-1780-1950?format=HB#sVZuIXzSXxxTi7qL.97>

Voir ici le compte rendu de Sebastian Bernburg :

<https://www.themaydan.com/2017/12/book-review-fahad-ahmad-bishara-sea-debt-law-economic-life-western-indian-ocean-1780-1950-johan-mathew-margins-market-trafficking-capitalism-across/>

2017. Paul M. Love, « The Sālim Bin Yaʿqūb Ibādī Manuscript Library in Jerba, Tunisia: A Preliminary Survey & Inventory », *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 8/3, 2017, p. 257-280.

Bien que l'article de Paul M. Love porte sur des manuscrits préservés en Tunisie, il revêt un intérêt spécifique pour nos lecteurs spécialisés dans les études ibadites, étroitement liées à l'histoire, à la culture et à la littérature manuscrite de l'Oman. Il s'agit d'un rapport sur un projet de conservation d'une bibliothèque privée de l'île de Djerba. La bibliothèque a été fondée au xx^e s. par Šayḥ Sālim b. Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb (m. 1991). Dans sa première partie, l'article dresse un bilan du projet et des objectifs qui ont été atteints depuis le début du projet en 2015. La deuxième partie offre un inventaire préliminaire des fonds de la bibliothèque. L'article contient plusieurs illustrations.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/1878464X-00803002>

PÉNINSULE ARABIQUE

4-6 août 2017. Londres, British Museum. Seminar for Arabian Studies 2017

Du 4 au 6 août 2017 a eu lieu la rencontre annuelle du Seminar for Arabian Studies au British Museum, à Londres ». Pour les *CmY*, on retiendra les contributions de :

- Alex Bellem (Université de Durham) et G. Rex Smith (Université de Leeds), « A linguistic analysis of two literary mixed Arabic texts from late nineteenth to early twentieth-century Yemen », une analyse de deux œuvres, *Ru'yat al-Yaman* (1893) de Ḥayyim Ḥabšūš et *Sirat al-ḥawāğ al-akram al-marḥūm Harmān Būrḥart al-ʿAlmānī* (1910) d'Aḥmad al-Ġarādī, qui ont été écrites en judéo-arabe tardif du Yémen. L'objectif de l'intervention était d'analyser la proportion d'arabe classique et dialectal.

- Vitaly Naumkin (Académie des Sciences russe) et Leonid Kogan (Université d'État russe pour les sciences), « Women in Soqotri and Omani folklore », qui présentaient le travail actuellement en cours sur de nouveaux volumes du *Corpus of Soqotri Oral Literature*. Le projet consiste à comparer le folklore des femmes de Socotra avec celui des femmes de l'Oman (voir aussi :

<https://brill.com/view/title/26374>)

- Fergus Reoch (Barker Langham), « Routes across Arabia: Pilgrimage routes from the UAE region in historical context », sur les routes de pèlerinage de trios pèlerins des Émirats arabes unis du xx^e s. La communication s'appuyait sur des sources médiévales, principalement les relations de voyage de Nāṣer Ḥusraw (m. 481/1088), Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (m. 770/1368-1369) et al-Hamdānī (m. 334/945), les récits des explorateurs britanniques du xx^e s. (St. John Philby (m. 1960), Wilfred Thesiger (m. 2003)), des interviews collectées dans les années 1980s et des images satellite.

Voir aussi : <https://www.thebfsa.org/seminar/the-latest-seminar/>

QATAR

2012. Zekeriya Kurşun, « Does the Qatar Map of the Tigris and Euphrates belong to Evliya Çelebi? », *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 39, 2012, p. 1-15. Abstract en turc (liminaire) et en anglais (final).

Zekeria Kurşun relate l'enquête qui l'a conduit à attribuer la carte du Tigre et de l'Euphrate, acquise en 1988 par le Şayḥ Ḥassan b. Muḥammad al-Ṭānī, un membre de la famille régnante du Qatar, au célèbre historien ottoman, Evliya Çelebi (1611-ca. 1685), ou à l'un de ses proches et sous sa direction. L'article débute par une historiographie sur la question des cartes possédées par l'historien, s'interrogeant au passage sur leur paternité : étaient-elles de sa main ? Ces cartes sont pour l'instant au nombre

de trois, il s'agit d'une recherche en cours, car on est sûr de ne pas avoir tout entre nos mains. L'article se poursuit par l'itinéraire connu à ce jour de la carte jusqu'à ce qu'elle parvienne au Qatar. L'enquête passe dans les années 1980s par Bernard Quaritch & Co, un vendeur de livres rares et de manuscrits à Londres depuis 1847. Il s'y intéresse probablement parce qu'il s'agit de la plus ancienne carte ottomane incluant le golfe Persique.

La carte, du xvii^e s., commence à Erzurum, puis suit l'Euphrate et le Tigre dans la direction nord-sud, pour s'achever sur la région du Šaṭṭ al-ʿArab (plus amples descriptions physiques de la carte en p. 4). Par ses détails, elle reflète l'itinéraire suivi par Evliya Çelebi dans son *Seyahatnâme* (Livre de voyages). Une collection d'exemples analysés par l'auteur, avec illustrations en couleur, le conduit à la conclusion d'une élaboration étroite entre la carte et le *Seyahatnâme*. Cet article réunissant quelques premiers résultats préfigure un livre que Zekerîa Kurşun souhaite écrire sur la carte.

ARAB PRESS REVIEW

As follows from the Arab press, in the second half of 2017, the main manuscript-related problem the world faced was the one of loss and preservation. It turned out that not only the dramatic developments in Yemen, but also storage conditions in peace-time threaten invaluable handwritten documents and books. The situation, however, gets better as archivation, restoration and digitalisation projects are being undertaken in different parts of the Arab world. Since a considerable part of Arabic manuscripts remain in small libraries of mosques and churches, there is still room for amazing discoveries to come.

November 2017. *Sabq*, « Ancient manuscripts are destroyed in Yemen »

The Minister of information of Yemen Muʿammar al-Iryānī has told the media that the Houthis militia systematically destroys the objects of cultural heritage in the country, including monuments, old books and ancient manuscripts. The official has accused the rebels not only of plundering cultural sites, but also of destroying the libraries and intentionally burning the rare books and manuscripts kept there.

<https://sabq.org/Z9jxD3>

October 2017. *Al-ʿArab*, « Invaluable manuscripts from all over the Arab world are under threat of danger and loss »

As Egyptian specialists warn, invaluable ancient manuscripts from all over the Arab world suffer from being spread between various storages around the country. The website of the newspaper *Al-ʿArab* reports in October 2017 that, for this reason, numerous manuscripts remain under threat of danger and loss, and some of them have been already lost. Hundreds of thousands of manuscripts in Egypt are still dispersed between the National Library and Archives House of Cairo (*Dār al-kutub wa-al-watāʾiq al-qawmiyya*), Al-Azhar University Library, the Library of Alexandria, the Central Li-

brary of the Cairo University, and others. Apart from that, scholars still find rare ancient manuscripts in the libraries of old mosques. Precious documents and books are discovered in the libraries of Al-Sayyida Zaynab Mosque (Cairo), Al-Sayyid al-Badawī Mosque (Gharbia Governorate), Abū al-‘Abbās al-Mursī Mosque and al-Nabī Daniel Mosque (Alexandria). The estimated number of manuscripts in the libraries of the mentioned mosques is 132 thousand. The Central Library for Islamic Manuscripts of the al-Sayyida Zaynab Mosque stores manuscripts previously discovered in the libraries of other mosques, like the Imam Ḥusayn Mosque of Cairo and Abū al-Riṣ Mosque of Damanhur (Lower Egypt).

The vast variety of ancient manuscripts demands centralisation, because their storage and reparation require considerable human and technical resources which cannot be provided for each library separately. In the dispersed libraries, manuscripts of different sorts are often stored in the same conditions, while each material used for them—whether paper, parchment or leather—demands special storage regime and fitting methods of restoration and conservation. Centralisation is, moreover, needed for encompassing digitization projects aimed at preserving ancient manuscripts and making them easily accessible for scholars worldwide. As an example of positive dynamics, the project carried out jointly by the Information Centre of the Office of the Prime Minister and the al-Ahrām Association must be mentioned. The program includes micro-filming and digitization of a large corpus of ancient manuscripts of the Islamic world stored in the Dār al-Kutub (the Bāb al-Ḥalq district of Cairo)—the first national public library opened in the Arab world (1870). The project undertaken in the recent years attracted attention of wide public interested in manuscripts and, of course, of a large number of specialists.

<http://www.alarab.co.uk/article/morenews/121185/>
المخطوطات 20% كنوز 20% ثمينة 20% مهددة 20% بالتلف 20% والضائع

October 2017. *Al-bayān*, « Special Manuscript House is opened in Sharjah to store 1,500 rare Arabic books »

At the al-Qāsimiyya National University in Sharjah (the UAE), a special Manuscript House (Dār al-Maḥṭūṭāt) has been inaugurated by the Governor of the city, Prince Sulṭān b. Muḥammad al-Qāsimī, as his donation. The center is designed not only for storing and research, but also for restoration, disinfection and conservation of ancient manuscripts. The Manuscript House is now proud of storing about 1,500 valuable Arabic manuscripts, including original manuscripts written by the authors themselves or copies made during the author's lifetime, guarantying especial authenticity of the text for today's scholars.

Among the most precious items of the collection are:

- a copy of the book on the interpretation of the Qur'ān entitled *Asrār al-tanzīl* ("The Secrets of the Revelation"), by Fahr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), performed just six years after the death of the author;

- a copy of the book on the art of recitation entitled *Fath al-waṣīd fī šarḥ abyāt al-qaṣīd* ("An Introduction into the Commentary on the Verses of the Poem"), by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Saḥāwī (d. 643/1246), made about twenty years before the author's death;
- a copy of the Hadith collection *Al-ḡāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* ("The Collection of Authentic [Hadith]") compiled by the imam Muslim (d. 261/875), performed in the 2d/8th century;
- a copy of *Al-ḡāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* by the imam al-Buḥārī (d. 256/870) made in the 6th/12th century;
- a copy of the book on astronomy entitled *Al-hay'a al-islāmiyya al-muntaḥaba min kutub al-aḥādīṭ al-ṣaḥīḥa* ("The Selected Islamic Corpus [of reports] from the Books of Authentic Hadith") by al-Kirmānī (d. after 412/1021), performed during the author's lifetime;
- a copy of the book on philology entitled *Al-wāfiya fī muḥtaṣar al-kāfiya* ("The Complete [book] of the Abridged Sufficient") by al-Aqṣarā'ī (d. 937/1531), made by the author himself.

Also, among the relics of Dār al-Maḥṭūṭāt, there are parts from Qur'anic manuscripts of the first Islamic centuries.

It was reported that the work on the index of the manuscripts stored in the centre was about to be completed in the nearest future. The index was being prepared for use in both printed and digital forms.

<http://www.albayan.ae/across-the-uae/news-and-reports/2017-10-07-1.3061170>

December 2017. *Al-iqtisādiyya*, « The huge manuscript collection of the King Saud University has been available in the digital form »

The collection of more than 11 thousand manuscripts owned by the King Saud University is now fully digitized and available online, as the website of *Al-iqtisādiyya* reports. The items of the collection are mostly related to the Qur'anic and Šarī'a studies, Arabic, Persian and Ottoman poetry. Users from all over the world already gain a lot from the accessibility of valuable documents. The collection gains as well. The founders of the project receive messages from the academic users who supply missing information on authors of the manuscripts and notice mistakes which crept in during the work on the database.

http://www.aleqt.com/2017/12/08/article_1295576.html

September 2017. *Akādīmyā*, « Rare Arabic manuscripts have been discovered by Kuwaiti researchers on the Mount Athos »

A group of researchers from the University of al-Kuwait has discovered rare Arabic manuscripts in course of an expedition to the Mount Athos in the North-East of Greece. This is the first record of this sort made by Arab scholars in the libraries of the

“Holy Mountain”, which is home to twenty monasteries under the direct jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Presumably, the libraries of the monasteries store rare, unknown Islamic manuscripts, most of which have not been discovered yet. The expedition has been possible after long-lasting negotiations with Greek authorities and considerable efforts required for receiving permission to conduct research on the site. Dr. ‘Abd al-Hādī al-‘Ağamī, one of the scholars who took part in the expedition, told that the manuscripts discovered by his group date back to the early Islamic period. Thematically, the manuscripts consider various aspects of everyday life and numerous topics of Islamic history related to society, medicine and law. He expressed an opinion that, although thousands of Arabic and Islamic manuscripts have been already scrutinized by scholars and stored in the libraries and museums, a considerable part still remain in small libraries of holy sites like the Mount Athos, waiting for explorers who will discover them.

<https://acakuw.com/افريق-علمي-من-جامعة-الكويت-يكشف-مخطوطا/>

December 2017. *Al-šarq*, « Rare manuscripts telling the history of Qatar have been exhibited in the National Library in Doha »

An exhibition of rare manuscripts, historical documents and old books has been inaugurated in the Historical Library belonging to the Qatar National Library. Unique items tell the history of Qatar in all aspects of the country’s everyday, social and political life. The oldest exhibited documents date back to the end of the fifteenth century AD, in which time the country’s name was firstly mentioned in Latin letters (“Catara”) in European sources.

One of the central items of the exhibition—a manuscript copy of the book entitled *Sabā’ik al-‘Asğad fī Aḥbār Aḥmad Nağl Rizq al-As‘ad* (“Gold Alloys in the Reports of Aḥmad Nağl Rizq al-As‘ad”) by ‘Uṭmān b. Sanad al-Baṣrī—a selection of reports by Aḥmad b. Rizq (d. 1224/1809), a famous merchant who lived in Zubara (ruined and ancient fort located on the North Western coast of the Qatar peninsula, about 105 km from Doha). Another valuable item of special interest is the original letter sent in 1937 by the sheikh ‘Abdallāh b. Qāsim Āl Tānī (national leader who brought Qatar under its Trucial System of Administration in 1916) to one of the richest merchants of the Persian Gulf.

<https://www.al-sharq.com/article/18/12/2017/مخطوطات-نادر-تزين-مكتبة-قطر-الوطنية/>

Articles

A JEWISH MARRIAGE DEED FROM NINETEENTH-CENTURY YEMEN

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Abstract

The article presents a Jewish marriage deed, a *ketubba*, which was written in Sanaa in 1899 CE and later found among the Genizah manuscripts brought out of Egypt. It was written in Aramaic, Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic by a skilled scribe, and is, in fact, a replacement deed, written instead of one that had previously been lost by the couple. On the back it includes arrangements for paying back money that the husband owes his wife. The contract is evidence of the skill of its scribe and the pious adherence of the Jewish community of Yemen to all the legal and traditional aspects of marriage, passed down to them over the centuries. The couple must have left Yemen for Egypt sometime after 1899 and before 1912, when the deed was acquired by Jack Mosseri, an Egyptian Jewish collector of manuscripts.

Résumé

L'article présente un contrat de mariage (*ketubba*) consigné à Sanaa en 1899 et découvert parmi les manuscrits de la Geniza, en Égypte. Il a été rédigé en araméen, hébreu et judéo-arabe par un scribe expérimenté, afin de remplacer le contrat de mariage initial égaré par le couple. Au verso, il comprend des arrangements concernant des montants dus et à régler par le mari à sa femme. Le contrat met en évidence les compétences du scribe, mais aussi la piété et l'adhésion de la communauté juive du Yémen aux aspects légaux et traditionnels du mariage, transmis au long des siècles. Le couple a vraisemblablement quitté le Yémen pour l'Égypte à une date postérieure à 1899, mais antérieure à 1912, lorsque le contrat a été acquis par Jack Mosseri, un collectionneur de manuscrits juif égyptien.

خلاصة

يعرض هذا المقال لعقد زواج يهودي (مكتوب باللغة العبرية)، كُتب في صنعاء في عام 1899م، وُجد في وقت لاحق بين مخطوطات الجنيزة التي أخرجت من مصر، وكان مكتوباً باللغات (الآرامية - والعبرية - والعربية) من قبل كاتب ماهر، وهذا العقد عبارة عن عقد زواج بديل لعقد سابق فُقدت من الزوج. وعلى ظهر العقد جدول يتضمن ترتيبات ومواعيد تسديد المهر الذي يدين به الزوج لزوجته. وبديل هذا العقد على محارة كاتبه والتزامه بالأعراف والأسس الدينية والقانونية الخاصة بالزواج عند اليهود في اليمن، الذين حافظوا عليها على مر القرون، غادرا الزوجان اليمن بعد عام

1899م وقبل عام 1912، عندما حصل عليه جاك موسري، وهو جامع مصري للمخطوطات اليهودية، يتكسب بتجارة المخطوطات.

Keywords

Yemen, Cairo Genizah, Hebrew, Aramaic, history, 1899 C.E., Jewish community, Judaeo-Arabic, marriage, Sanaa, Qā' Bīr al-'Azab

Mots-clés

Yemen, Geniza du Caire, hébreu, araméen, histoire, 1899, communauté juive, judéo-arabe, mariage, Sanaa, Qā' Bīr al-'Azab

تعار رئيسية

اليمن، جنيزة القاهرة، العبرية، الآرامية، تاريخ، 1899، المجتمع اليهودي، اللغة العربية، زواج، صنعاء، قاع بير العزب

I. Introduction

The document presented here is a marriage deed, a *ketubba*, for two Yemeni Jews. It comes from the Jacques Mosseri Genizah Collection and is currently stored in Cambridge University Library.¹ It is of interest for two reasons: though discovered in Egypt, it originated in Yemen and because it was written in 1899 CE, it is the latest dated document to be found in the Genizah Collection.² While most of the manuscripts of the Cairo Genizah date to what is known as the classical Genizah period—the periods of Fatimid and Ayyubid governance in Egypt—there is also a substantial proportion that belongs to the later period under Ottoman rule. This includes leaves from books and documents in manuscript, mostly from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the finds extend all the way to the late nineteenth century.

This manuscript is now part of a Genizah collection, but we cannot say for sure whether it was actually ever in the Cairo Genizah proper, that is, deposited in the sacred storeroom of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Fustāt, Old Cairo; indeed, it is doubtful.³ The material in the Jacques Mosseri Collection was gathered from a variety of sources over a decade after Solomon Schechter had carried away the greater part of the manu-

¹ Images of it can be viewed online through Cambridge Digital Library:

<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-MOSSERI-VII-00019/1> (accessed 3 January 2018). The authors would like to express their thanks to Dr Dotan Arad of Bar Ilan University and Dr Menashe Anzi of Ben Gurion University of the Negev for their very helpful comments on this article.

² The earliest dated manuscript in the Cairo Genizah—and indeed the earliest dated medieval Hebrew manuscript so far discovered—is Cambridge University Library T-S NS 246.26.2, which is a bifolium from a Bible written in Iran in 903–904 CE. These two manuscripts show the great extent of the Genizah, covering a period of at least 996 years and a huge geographical area.

³ Good surveys of the Cairo Genizah, its origins and the history of its discovery, are A. Hoffman & P. Cole, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza*, 2011; and S. C. Reif, *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection*, 2000.

script hoard from the synagogue.⁴ Jacques (Jack) Mosseri, a native of Egypt, was better placed to carry out a more wide-ranging search than the Cambridge scholar Schechter. In an article in *The Jewish Review*, Mosseri wrote that his discoveries came from the original Genizah (a few), from hoards buried in the synagogue precincts, the Jewish cemetery at al-Basātin (between central Cairo and the suburb of al-Ma‘ādi) and from other sources in Cairo.⁵

It would not be surprising, however, if this document, a marriage deed, had been deposited in the Genizah, since over the centuries large numbers of *ketubbot* found their way there, from the tenth century onwards.⁶ The fact that it is Yemenite, and of such a late date, marks it out as unusual. It is not a straightforward *ketubba*, but a replacement marriage deed, since the couple's earlier deed was mislaid. Jewish law requires that a replacement *ketubba* is written, in the case of loss, to ensure that the husband's obligations to his bride are not forgotten, waived or ignored: a couple cannot cohabit without a written legal agreement. The husband, Sālim ibn Hārūn, did not know the date of his original *ketubba*, but the replacement was written in the Jewish quarter in Sanaa on 14th June 1899.

Given that date and the fact that Jack Mosseri assembled his collection in 1909–1912, this document must have found its way either into the Cairo Genizah, or perhaps a different genizah in Cairo, or into some kind of community document repository in a relatively short period of time after being written. The couple were still in Yemen, in Sanaa, in the middle of 1899, but, by 1912 at the latest, the *ketubba* was in Egypt, most probably in Cairo, to fall into the hands of the acquisitive Jack Mosseri.

There were a number of waves of Yemeni Jewish emigration in the nineteenth–early twentieth centuries following the opening up of Yemen to the wider world and the difficult political and economic situation of the Jews there.⁷ Yemeni Jews emigrated in large numbers for Palestine, but also settled in Egypt and even India. The first Yemeni emigrants destined for Palestine in 1881 took a route through Suez and then on to Alexandria, before taking ship for Jaffa.⁸ This is too early for the owners of the *ketubba*, but they could have been among subsequent waves of Yemeni immigrants, par-

⁴ Jack Mosseri's intention was to gather enough manuscripts to safeguard the cultural heritage of Jewish Egypt in its own country. He regretted that Schechter had so easily carried off the Cairo Genizah, saying in an interview: "It is somewhat unfortunate... that these literary treasures were taken away from Egypt... We did not at the time appreciate the nature of the hoard with which we so light-heartedly parted." See "In the Land of the Pharaohs: Interview with Mr. Jack N. Mosseri, of Cairo", *The Jewish Chronicle* 5 May 1911, p. 17.

⁵ See J. Mosseri, "A new hoard of Jewish MSS. in Cairo", 1913–1914, pp. 208–216.

⁶ This can be seen, for example, by a search for the keyword "ketubba" on Cambridge Digital Library (<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk>), which has descriptions and images for currently (3 January 2018) about 10 % of the total number of Cambridge's Genizah fragments. The search returns 284 relevant manuscripts.

⁷ On the political and economic situation of the Jews in the nineteenth century, see J. Tobi, *The Jews of Yemen: Studies in their history and culture*, 1999, pp. 85–86. Ari Ariel states that "economic hardship was the major factor in provoking Jewish migration", see A. Ariel, *Jewish-Muslim Relations and Migration from Yemen to Palestine in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 2014, p. 43.

⁸ See T. Parfitt, *The road to redemption: The Jews of the Yemen, 1900–1950*, 1996, p. 50.

ticularly those in 1910, when two large groups from the Yemen reached Palestine.⁹ Whether they themselves travelled to the Holy Land before returning to Egypt, perhaps due to the harsh conditions they found there, or whether they never left Egypt is impossible to say, with the evidence available. The difficult conditions, particularly in Jerusalem, did lead a number of Yemeni Jewish migrants to Palestine to return and re-settle in Egypt.¹⁰

II. Ketubbas

As befits a document produced by the highly literate Yemenite Jewish community, the *ketubba* is immaculate in linguistic style and execution. It is written predominantly in Babylonian Jewish Aramaic, the language of the Babylonian form of the *ketubba*, with additions in Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic. With the sole exception of the word *אלמכונה*, which is a mixed form (a Hebrew participle with the Arabic definite article), the languages are not intermixed, and there is no real evidence of overt linguistic influence of the Arabic vernacular on the two ancient languages of the marriage deed itself. The basic form of the deed is Babylonian Aramaic; Hebrew is used for later halakhic interpolations, such as the phrase taken from Moses Maimonides' form of the marriage deed in his work the *Mišne Tora* (ll. 16–17), and Arabic is used to specify the financial information in contemporary monetary terms (e.g. ll. 19–22).

The additional deed on verso is mostly written in Arabic, since it is a separate financial arrangement, relating to a debt owed by the husband to his wife, and not part of the Aramaic *ketubba* proper.

III. The Jacques Mosseri Collection at Cambridge University Library, Mosseri VII.19

1. A note on the transcription

The scribe Levi ibn Yaḥyā uses various reading signs, such as Hebrew *gereš*, for shortened words and for the Arabic *tā' marbūṭa*. He uses an occasional *fatha* on Arabic words (in the additional text on verso; reproduced as a Hebrew *gereš* in our transcription). Supralinear dots are used to denote the spirant forms of certain Hebrew or Aramaic consonants, certain Arabic consonants that normally receive dots (e.g., on *פצץ*, *fiḏḏa*, “silver”), and to mark Hebrew and Aramaic acronyms. He uses a horizontal line (a Hebrew *rafe*) for Arabic *šadda*.

⁹ T. Parfitt, *The road to redemption*, 1996, pp. 54–55. There was a suspension of migration from Sanaa, following the siege of 1905, but by 1910 it had resumed; see Y. Nini, *The Jews of the Yemen, 1800–1914*, 1991, p. 216.

¹⁰ On the conditions in Jerusalem see J. Tobi, *The Jews of Yemen*, p. 102.

2. Text edition

Recto

לסימן טוב והצלחה ועושר	1
וכבוד והרוחה	2
בארבעא בשבא דהוא שיתא יומין לחדש תמוז שנת תרין אלפין ומאתן ועסר שנין	3
לשטרי במאתא קאע ביר אלעזב דעל בירין דמיין נבעין דילה מותבה ביומא דנן	4
אתא לקדמנא אנן סהדי דחתימין לתתא סאלם ן הארון אלעזירי אלמכונה זהרה וכן	5
אמר לנא אתון ידעי רבנן דאנא נסיבנא להדא גנא בנת סאלם ן שכר אלתאם בתולתא	6
אנתתי בכתובה וקידושין ויתבת בהדאי כמה שנין ויומי ואית לי זרעא מינה וכתובתה	7
אירכסא לה זמן שטר כתובה לא ידיע ואמרי רבנן אסור לו לאדם לשהות עם אשתו	8
אפי' שעה אחת בלא כתובה והשתא בעיתי למכתב לה כתובה ככתובתא קמיייתא	9
דארכסת ודין קיומה בזכות אברהם אבונא איך סאלם ן הארון אלעזירי זהרה חתנא אמר	10
לה לגנא בנת סאלם ן שכר אלתאם כלתא בתולתא הוי לי לאנתו כדת משה וישראל ואנא	11
במימרא דשמיא אפלה ואייקר ואסובר ואזון ואפרניס ואכסי יתיכי כהלכת גוברין יהודאין	12
דפלחין ומייקרין ומסוברין וזנין ומפרנסיין ומכסין ית נשיהון בקשוט ויהיבנא ליכי	13
מוהרי בתוליכי כסף זוזי מאתן דאינון מזוזי כספא דכיא עסרין זוזין וחמשא זוזי	14
דחאזו ליכי ומזוניכי וכסותיכי וסופקיכי ומיעל לותיכי כאורח כל ארעא וצביאת כלתא	15
דא והות ליה לאנתו ודא נדוניא דהנעילת ליה מאיה' קפלה פצה הכל נתקבל חתן זה ובא	16
לידו ונעשה ברשותו וזקף הכל על עצמו כמלוה ורשו ודי יהב לה בעלה חתנא דנן	17
במתנתא קמיייתא מאיה' קפלה פצה ודרתא במדור יהודאי במפקנה ומעלנה וכל צורכה	18
דחאזו לה מארעית תהומא ועד רום רקיעא ורצה והוסיף לה תוספת בסוף מוהרה מאיה'	19
קפלה פצה אלכל מן הזה אלקפאל אלפצה אלמדכורה פוק אלדי יצח פי כל מאיה' קפלה	20
מנהא	
אתנין ועשרין קפלה פצה טייבה כאלצה בוזן אלצאגה אלצנעאני אלמערוף לאלפצה פי	21
מדינה'	
צנעא פי סוק אלצוֹג וכך אמר לנא חתנא דנן אחריות כתובה דא כולה עיקר ונדוניא	22
ומתנתא קמיייתא ודרתא ותוספתא עם כל שאר תנאיי כתובה קבילית עלאי ועל ירתאי	23
בתראי ועל כל שפר ארג נכסין וקניינין דאית לי תחות כל שמיא דקניתי ודעתיד אנא	24
למקני	
מקרקעי ומט' מט' אגמ' כלהון יהון אחראין וערבאין לכתובה דא כולה עיקר ונדוניא	25
ומתנתא קמיייתא ודרתא ותוספתא להתפרעא מנהון בחיאי ובתר חיאי ואפי' מגלימא	26
דאכתפאי ואי משתכחא כתובתה קמיייתא לית לה למגבי אלא אי האיך אי האיך וקנינו	27
מן סאלם חתנא דנן לכלתא גנא דא על כל מאי דכתיב ומפרש לעיל קש חגמ בכלי הכשר	28
לקנות בו בביטול כל מודעי ותנאיי עס ושטר כתובה דא לא כאס' ולא כטד אלא כחומר	29
חוזק כל שטרי כתובות הנוהגות בישראל וכהוגן וכתר זל וכבר נכלל בכתובה זו כל	30
ענייני מזונות וכסות שבדיני אוהע לעת הצורך חו שעדכ כתב לה מתנתא ותוספתא	31
ומחילת חצי הנדוניא והכל שריר וקיים הצ לוי ן יחיא אלנגאר שיל	32

סט

Verso

1 קנה סאלם ן הארון זהרה אלעזירי קשמ כתר זל באן ענדיה ופי דמתה לזוגתיה
 2 גנא דא תמאנייה ותלאתין קרש ונצף אלגמיע פראנצי חג ומלוה זקופה
 3 דאלך בתופייה אלשרט ובעד אסקאט אלנדוניא אגל תסלימהא לאלוקת אלמסתעמל
 4 עליה ולא ישמיט עליה חוב זה ואפי' בשביעית ושעבד כל נכסיו קרקע ומט'
 5 דקנה ודיקני לא כאס' ולא כטד' יום הנז' בפנים וקיים הצ' לוי' ן יחיא אלנגאר שיל
 סט

3. Translation

The Jacques Mosseri Collection at Cambridge University Library, Mosseri VII.19

Recto

1 For a good sign, and success, and wealth
 2 and honour and comfort
 3 On the fourth day of the week, which is the sixth day of the month of Tammuz,
 in the year two thousand two hundred and ten
 4 of the Era of Documents,¹¹ in the town of Qā' Bīr al-'Azab,¹² which is located on
 her own wellsprings,¹³ at this day
 5 there came before us—we, the undersigned witnesses—Sālim ibn Hārūn¹⁴ al-
 'Uzayrī known as¹⁵ Zihreh¹⁶ and
 6 told us: "You know, O masters, that I married¹⁷ this Ġinā bint Sālim ibn Šakir al-
 Tām, the virgin¹⁸"

¹¹ Tammuz is the fourth month of the Jewish year, and 6th Tammuz 2210 equates to 14th June 1899. The "Era of Documents" is the system of dating deriving from the era of the Seleucid Empire. In the Middle Ages, it was particularly favoured among the Babylonian Jews, hence its continued use among Yemeni Jews. See M. A. Friedman, *Jewish marriage in Palestine: A Cairo Geniza study*, 1980, vol. 1, p. 106.

¹² The Jewish quarter, Qā' al-Yahūd, was situated in the west of the city of Sanaa, in Bīr al-'Azab. The quarter was established there after the expulsion of the Jews from the old city of Sanaa in 1679. See R. Lewcock, P. Costa, R. B. Serjeant & R. Wilson, "The Urban Development of Šan'ā", in: R. B. Serjeant & R. Lewcock (eds.), *Šan'ā: An Arabian Islamic city*, London, 1983, p. 136.

¹³ The same phrase is used to describe Sanaa itself, "Šan'ā, which is on her own wellsprings", in another Jewish document from the Yemen, Sassoon 1055a, l. 2, dated 1662 CE; it is edited in: S. D. Goitein, *The Yemenites: History, communal organisation, spiritual life*, 1983, p. 152. Wells and perpetual springs were the most important source of the city's water; see R. B. Serjeant, P. Costa & R. Lewcock, "The Ghayls of Šan'ā", in: R. B. Serjeant & R. Lewcock (eds.), *Šan'ā*, 1983, p. 19.

¹⁴ This is the Arabic version of the Hebrew name Šaleḥ b. Aaron.

¹⁵ The scribe uses a mixed form, אַלמכונה, a Hebrew participle with an Arabic definite article, for "who is known as", instead of the Hebrew המכונה.

¹⁶ Zihreh, Arabic زهرة. The family name 'Uzayrī was extremely common among the Jews of Yemen, and so often a nickname was added to distinguish different families. The nickname used here, Zihreh, is a very common woman's name in Yemen, but is not usually found as a nickname. It seems likely that this nickname was bestowed after a woman of the family who was successful, perhaps, in business. We are very grateful to Prof. Yosef Yuval Tobi for this information.

¹⁷ "I married" or "I am married to" are both acceptable translations. The use of the participle with a 1 sing. suffixed pronoun נא— for the present tense is characteristic of Babylonian Aramaic; see J. Epstein &

7 who is my wife with a *ketubba* and *qiddušin*,¹⁹ and she lived together with me for
 8 many years and days, and I have children from her. Now, her *ketubba*
 9 was lost,²⁰ and the date of her *ketubba* deed is not known. Our sages said: “It is
 10 prohibited for any man to keep his wife
 11 without a *ketubba* even²¹ for one hour”,²² so now I wish to write her a *ketubba*,
 12 like her former
 13 lost *ketubba*, and its validation is for the sake of Abraham the patriarch”. Thus,²³
 14 Sālim ibn Hārūn al-‘Uzayrī Zihreh, the groom, said
 15 to Ġinā bint Sālim ibn Šakir al-Tām, the virgin bride, “Be my wife, according to
 16 the law of Moses and Israel.
 17 And I by the command of Heaven will serve, honour, support, nourish, provide
 18 and clothe you, in the manner of Jewish men
 19 who serve, honour, support, nourish, provide and clothe their wives faithfully.
 20 And I am giving you
 21 the *mohar*²⁴ of your virginity, two hundred silver *zuz*, which are equivalent to
 22 twenty-five pure silver *zuz*,²⁵
 23 which are due for you, and your sustenance, your clothing and your needs²⁶ and
 24 to come to you as is the custom of the entire world.”²⁷ And this bride consented
 25 and became
 26 his wife. And the total dowry which she brought in to him one hundred²⁸ silver
 27 *qafḷa*.²⁹ This groom has received all of it:

E. Melamed, *A grammar of Babylonian Aramaic* (Hebrew), 1960, pp. 40–41. See also יהיבנא, “I hereby give”, in l. 13.

¹⁸ That is to say, she was a virgin when the original contract was written.

¹⁹ That is, with a written marriage contract (*ketubba*) and act of betrothal (*qiddušin*), as required by Jewish law. See M. A. Friedman, *Jewish marriage*, 1980, vol. 1, pp. 192–215.

²⁰ The term used is כְּתוּבָה דְּאִרְכֶּסֶת in Aramaic. This term is commonly used to denote a lost *ketubba*, and in all the Yemenites prayer-books (*tiḳlāl*s) you can find the formula for writing them. We wish to thank Prof. Yosef Yuval Tobi for bringing this to our attention.

²¹ Hebrew אפילו, “even”, is shortened to אפי throughout the document.

²² A quotation from the Babylonian Talmud, Bava Qama 89b.

²³ “Thus”, אֵיךְ, is a particle used in legal deeds to introduce direct speech. The dot above the final *kaf* presumably denotes the spirant, post-vocalic pronunciation, of the letter, *k*.

²⁴ The *mohar* is the customary marriage payment. The basic sum for a virgin bride was 200 *zuz* (Mišna Ketubbot 5:1), a widow was half as much. See B.-Z. Schereschewsky & M. Elon, “Dowry”, in: M. Berenbaum & F. Skolnik (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., 2007, vol. 5, pp. 768–772. From *Gale Virtual Reference Library* (accessed 30 December 2017).

²⁵ While the western (Palestinian) Jewish custom retained the basic level of 200 *zuz* for a virgin bride, the Babylonian custom preferred 25 *zuz*. Here, the *ketubba* has both, equating the Babylonian 25 *zuz* of “pure silver” with the rabbinically mandated 200. For more on the different interpretations of the *mohar* payment, see M. A. Friedman, *Jewish marriage*, 1980, vol. 1, pp. 251–257.

²⁶ The document has the form סופקיכי for the expected סיפיקיכי, showing short i > u, possibly just an error, due to the similarity of the letters *yod* and *waw*.

²⁷ The last phrase “to come to you...” is the standard euphemism for sexual intercourse used in all Babylonian marriage contracts. It is derived from the Jewish Aramaic translation of Genesis 19:31.

- 17 he has taken possession of it; it has come under his control, and he has undertaken all of it as a loan and debt binding him.³⁰ And this is what her husband the groom gave her
- 18 as a first gift:³¹ one hundred silver *qafla*, and a dwelling in a Jewish property, including its exits and entrances,³² and all
- 19 that is due to her from the base of the world to the top of the sky. And he wanted³³ to give her an additional gift as the last part of her *mohar*, one hundred
- 20 silver *qafla*. All³⁴ of the above-mentioned silver *qafla*—which every hundred *qafla* is equivalent to
- 21 twenty-two good,³⁵ pure silver *qafla* of the standard weight of Sanaa, which is known as the silver of the city
- 22 of Sanaa in the market of the silversmiths.³⁶ And thus this groom said to us: “The responsibility for this *ketubba* as a whole—the basic payment, the dowry,
- 23 the first gift, the residence, and the additional payment along with all the remainder of the conditions of the *ketubba*—I take it upon myself and upon my heirs
- 24 after me. And as for all the choicest³⁷ possessions and purchases that I have under all the heavens, which I have bought and that I shall buy,
- 25 property that is immovable or movable or movable by virtue of real estate³⁸—all of them will be surety and guarantees for the whole of this *ketubba*, the basic payment, the dowry

²⁸ The scribe uses the *gereš* sign after מֵאִיָּה to indicate the Arabic *tā' marbūṭa* in *idāfa* constructions. He uses it again in the same noun phrase in l. 18, 19 and 20, in l. 21 in the phrase “the city of Ṣan‘ā” and in verso l. 3 “fulfilment of a contract”.

²⁹ Arabic, *qafla fiḍḍa*, قفلة فضة. *Qafla* is a unit of weight and a coin “of correct weight”: “qui a le poids voulu (pièce de monnaie)” in: A. Biberstein-Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français*, 1860, vol. 2, p. 791.

³⁰ The Hebrew phrase from הכל “all of it” (l. 16) to כמלוה “as a loan” (l. 17) is taken from the form of the *ketubba* in: Moses Maimonides’ *Mišne Tora*, Yibbum ve-Ḥaliṣa 4:33. See M. A. Friedman, *Jewish marriage*, 1980, vol. 1, p. 305.

³¹ The practice of the groom giving a gift to the bride, known as “the first gift”, when the marriage is contracted is attested in Yemenite marriage deeds as early as the end of the 11th century, see M. A. Friedman, *Jewish marriage*, 1980, vol. 1, p. 281.

³² This is an interesting phrase, which presumably means that he will not lodge her in a house or apartment shared with non-Jews.

³³ For this additional gift clause the language switches to Hebrew again, from ורצה “and he wanted” (l. 19).

³⁴ This clause explaining the coinage is in Judaeo-Arabic, from אלכל “all” (l. 20) to אלצווג “[silver]smiths” (l. 22).

³⁵ The line reflects an Arabic *šadda* over טייבה “good”, *ṭayyiba*.

³⁶ Arabic *ṣuwwāġ* (صواع, also صياغ), “[silver]smiths”. The scribe used a line to denote *šadda*, but the dot above the *zay* is presumably an error.

³⁷ “The choicest of”, שפר ארג, occurs regularly in marriage contracts and other legal deeds. It is originally an Aramaic expression from the Targum Yeruṣalmi to Genesis 45:18. The dot above the *gimel* denotes the *rafe*, spirant, pronunciation of ג, which the Yemenites, with their conservative traditions, maintained in their pronunciation, usually as a voiced uvular fricative (though it could also be an affricate). See D. Ya‘akov, “Yemen, Pronunciation Traditions”, in: G. Khan (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, consulted online.

- 26 the first gift, the residence and the additional payment, for it to be paid from
 27 them, in my lifetime and after my lifetime, and even³⁹ from the shirt
 28 off my back.⁴⁰ And if her former *ketubba* should be found, then she is not al-
 29 lowed to collect [from it] but only [from] that one or this one. And we have per-
 30 formed a *qinyan*⁴¹
 31 from Sālim, this groom, to his bride this Ġinā on everything that is written and
 32 explained above, a complete, strict and valid *qinyan*,⁴² with an implement
 33 fit for making an acquisition, with a nullification of all legal documents and
 34 stipulations to the very end.⁴³ And this *ketubba* is not like an *asmakta*,⁴⁴ nor like
 35 formularies,⁴⁵ but rather like the firm stringency
 36 of all *ketubba* deeds that are customary in Israel, and that are regulated and that
 37 are according to the enactment of our sages, of blessed memory.⁴⁶ And already
 38 included in this *ketubba* are all
 39 matters of sustenance and clothing according to the laws of the nations of the
 40 world.⁴⁷ In a time of need,⁴⁸ God forbid,⁴⁹ for this reason⁵⁰ he wrote her a gift, an
 41 additional *mohar*
 42 and the division of the dowry in half.⁵¹ Everything is valid and established. The
 43 humble⁵² Levi ibn Yaḥyā al-Naḡḡār, may he live forever,⁵³ may his end be good.⁵⁴

³⁸ The scribe has abbreviated the phrase מקרקעי אגב מטלטלי מטלטלי, “movable property, movable property by virtue of real estate”. In Jewish law, a distinction is made between immovable, i.e., land (real estate), and movable property (goods and chattels).

³⁹ Again, the scribe shortens אפילו.

⁴⁰ This expression made its way into the *ketubba* formulary from the Babylonian Talmud, e.g. Bava Qamma 110b:12 כתפיה דעל כתפיה דאפי' מגלימא דעל כתפיה דאפי', where it is used in the context of the repayment of debts. See M. A. Friedman, *Jewish marriage*, vol. 1, p. 462.

⁴¹ Literally “acquisition”, a legal act of symbolic purchase that established the marriage. See M. Elon, “Acquisition” in: M. Berenbaum & F. Skolnik (eds.), *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2007, vol. 1, pp. 359–363.

⁴² The scribe abbreviates the legal phrase קנין שלם חמור גמור.

⁴³ This is a translation of עד סוף, “till the end”, which is abbreviated in the deed.

⁴⁴ An *asmakta*, אסמכתא (abbreviated in the text), is a type of surety for payment of debt, sometimes translated “promise” or “promissory note”.

⁴⁵ “Formularies” or “templates for documents”, טופסי דשטרי, is abbreviated in the text.

⁴⁶ The deed abbreviates the formula וכתקנת רבותינו זכרונם לברכה. A *taqqana* is a legislative enactment that supersedes an earlier law or is new.

⁴⁷ That is, the laws of the state, as distinct from Jewish law, abbreviated from אומות העולם.

⁴⁸ In the event of divorce or death.

⁴⁹ The Hebrew idiom חס ושלום is abbreviated.

⁵⁰ The Hebrew phrase כן שעל דעת כן is abbreviated.

⁵¹ If the wife dies before her husband and there are no children from the marriage, then the husband gives half her dowry back to her father's household. On this stipulation, see M. A. Friedman, *Jewish marriage*, 1980, vol. 1, pp. 391–418.

⁵² “The humble”, abbreviated from הצעיר.

⁵³ Abbreviating ליעד שיחיה.

⁵⁴ The acronym ט"ט, “may his end be good”, can be either Aramaic טב ספיה or Hebrew טוב טיפ. It is a blessing placed usually only on the living, hence the scribe's father is still alive.

Verso

- 1 Ṣālim ibn Hārūn Zihreh al-ʿUzayrī performed a *qinyan*—a complete, effective
 from now *qinyan*,⁵⁵ in accordance with the law of our sages, of blessed
 memory⁵⁶—that he holds⁵⁷ and has as a debt to his wife,
 2 this Ġinā, thirty-eight and a half *qirš*⁵⁸—all in Francs—as a complete debt⁵⁹ and
 an outstanding loan,
 3 and this is after the payment of the marriage gift (lit. “stipulation”) and after the
 deduction of the dowry. This payment is postponed until the time it is imposed
 on him.
 4 And he will not⁶⁰ release himself from this debt, even⁶¹ in the seventh [year].⁶²
 And he mortgaged all his property, land and movable,⁶³
 5 that he purchased⁶⁴ and will purchase, not like an *asmakta*, nor like formular-
 ies,⁶⁵ at the day mentioned above. And everything is valid. The humble⁶⁶ Levi ibn
 Yaḥyā al-Naḡḡār, may he live forever,⁶⁷ may his end be good.⁶⁸

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⁵⁵ The scribe abbreviates the phrase קנין שלם מעכשיו.

⁵⁶ As before, the scribe abbreviates the formula וכתורת רבותינו זכרונם לברכה.

⁵⁷ The scribe switches to Judaeo-Arabic again here.

⁵⁸ The Ottoman currency, *qirš*.

⁵⁹ Abbreviating the Hebrew גמור.

⁶⁰ The scribe switches back to Hebrew here, for the *šemitta* (release) formula.

⁶¹ Abbreviating אפילו again.

⁶² According to Jewish law, in the last year of the seven-year sabbatical cycle, land should remain fallow and debts be cancelled.

⁶³ Abbreviating Hebrew מטלטלין, “movable property”.

⁶⁴ The scribe switches back to Aramaic here.

⁶⁵ He abbreviates the phrase ולא כאסמכתא ולא כטופסי דשטרי.

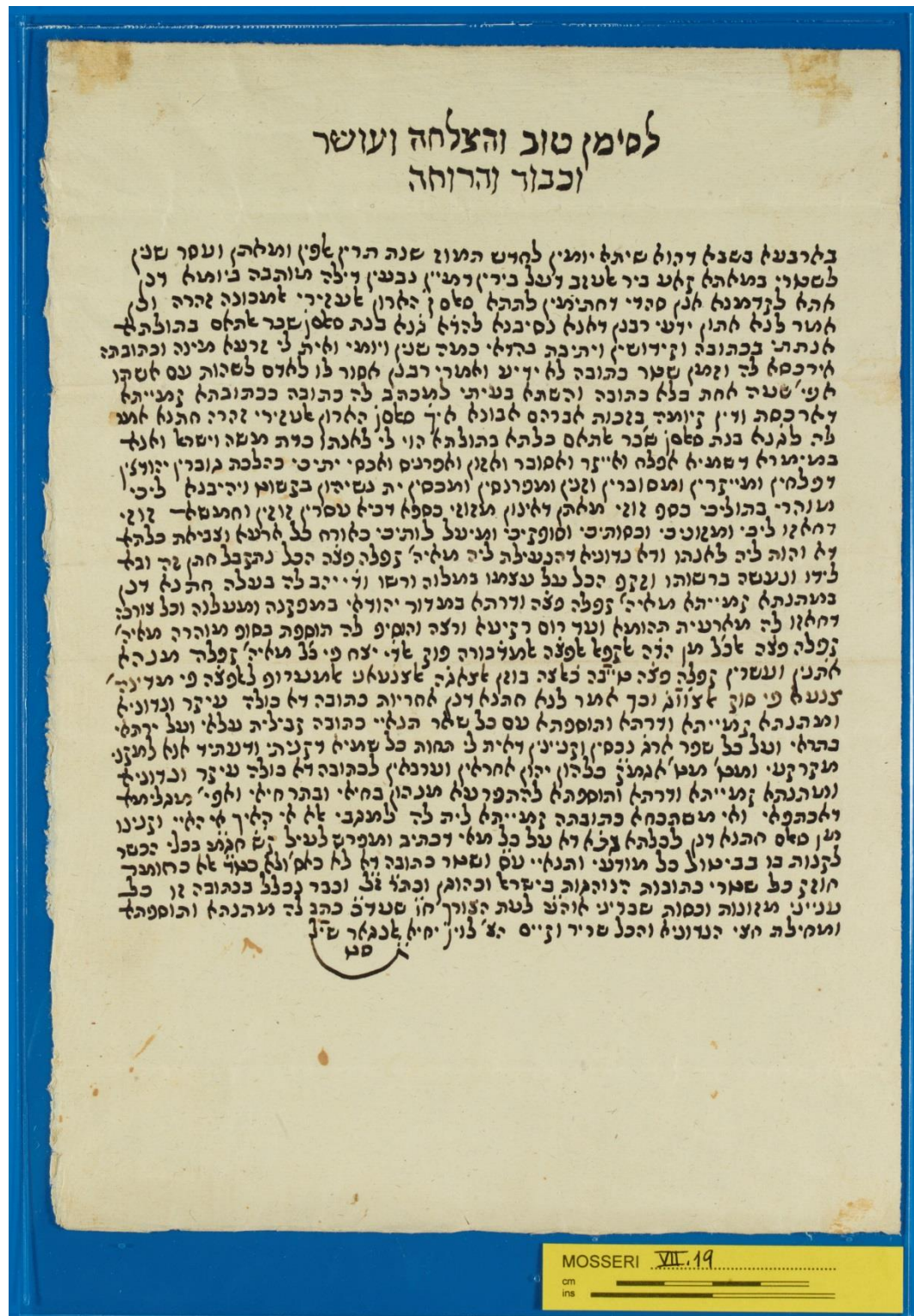
⁶⁶ Abbreviating הצעיר.

⁶⁷ For שי"ל see footnote 52 above.

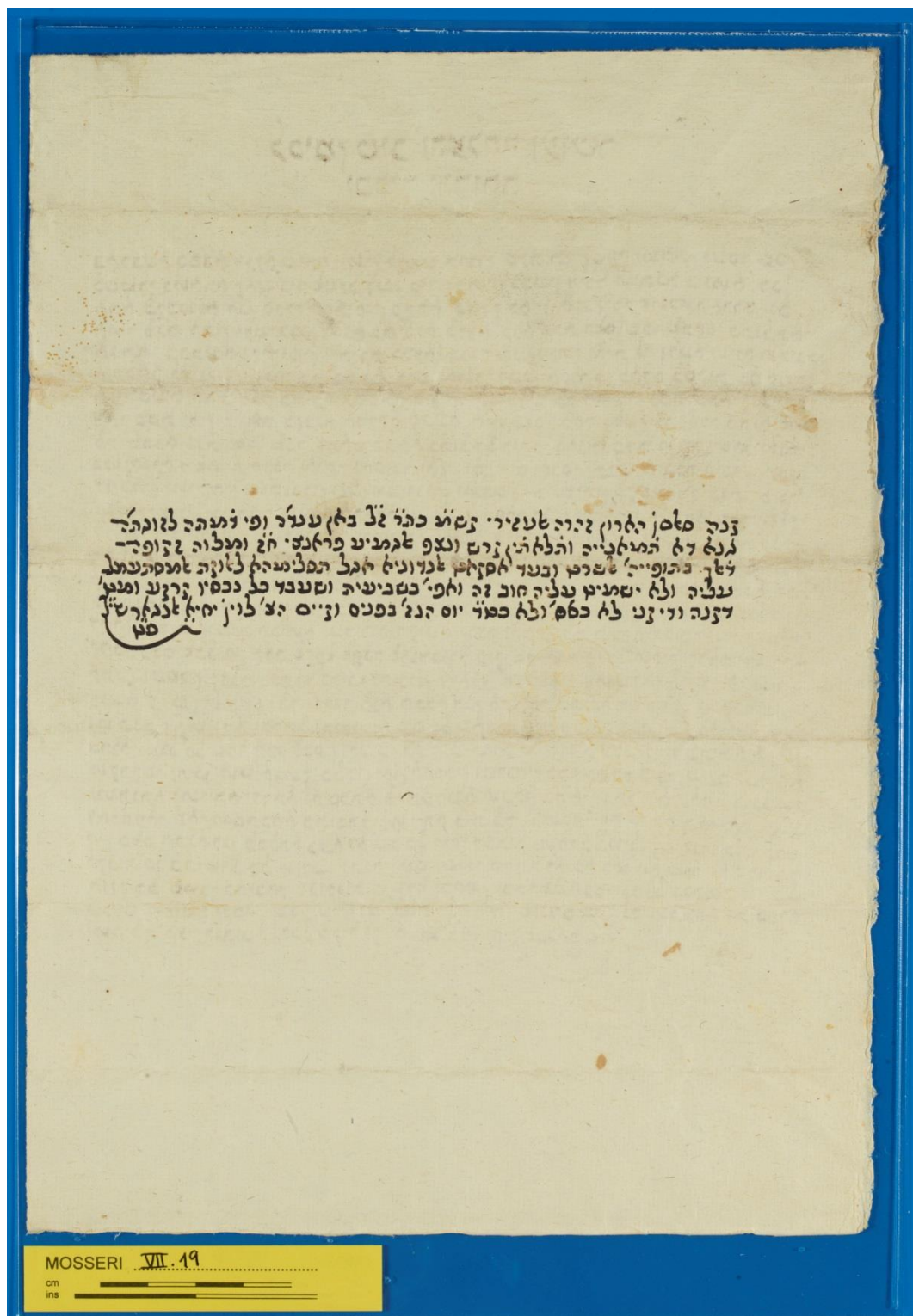
⁶⁸ For ט"ט see footnote 53 above.

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Captions



The text of the *ketubba*, Jacques Mosseri Collection at Cambridge University Library, Mosseri VII.19, recto. By kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.



The additional deed of debt, Mosseri VII.19, verso.

By kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

MĀLIKĪ IMAMS OF THE SACRED MOSQUE AND PILGRIMS FROM TAKRŪR

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the Mālikī imams of Mecca's Sacred Mosque, whom pilgrims from Takrūr believed to be among the most venerable Meccan residents. We analyze descriptions in travel books and biographical dictionaries in order to understand the relationship between Mālikī imams and West African pilgrims and the influence of this relationship on Meccan affairs. This paper finds that: (1) the Mālikī imams and Takrūr pilgrims had a mutually beneficial relationship from the 8th/14th century onwards; (2) the imams gained respect and monetary donations from pilgrims, while the pilgrims could enhance their religious reputation; and (3) in the beginning of the 9th/15th century, the Mālikī imam was expected to negotiate for the Meccan *amīr* with the *amīr* of the pilgrimage caravan from West Africa in gaining donations. This was probably the background of interference in the choice of the Mālikī imams by the Meccan *amīr* in the end of the 8th/14th century. We deduce that the mutually beneficial relationship between the Mālikī imams and Takrūr pilgrims influenced the relationship between the Mālikī imams and the Meccan *amīr*. Thus, this paper provides a new perspective on how pilgrims from relatively far-off regions influenced local Meccan affairs.

Résumé

Cet article se penche sur les imams malikites de la Mosquée sacrée, vénérés entre tous les résidents mecquois par les pèlerins de Takrūr. À partir de relations de voyage et de dictionnaires biographiques, nous analysons les relations entre les imams malikites et les pèlerins d'Afrique de l'Ouest, puis l'impact qu'ont eu ces relations sur les affaires mecquoises. Il ressort finalement que : (1) les imams malékites et les pèlerins de Takrūr ont eu des relations mutuelles fructueuses à partir du viii^e/xiv^e s. ; (2) les imams étaient respectés et ont reçu des donations monétaires de la part des pèlerins, tandis que ces derniers y gagnaient une réputation religieuse ; (3) au début du ix^e/xv^e s., l'imam malékite était pressenti comme négociateur pour le compte de l'Émir de La Mecque avec l'Émir de la caravane du pèlerinage venue d'Afrique de l'Ouest et obtenir des donations. C'est certainement ceci qui est à l'origine de l'interférence des émirs mecquois dans le choix des imams malékites à la fin du xiv^e s. Nous en déduisons que les relations mutuellement bénéfiques entre les imams malékites et les pèlerins de Takrūr ont joué à leur tour sur les relations entre les imams malékites et les émirs de La Mecque. En conséquence cet article offre une nouvelle perspective sur la façon dont des pèlerins de régions relativement éloignées ont influencé les affaires locales mecquoises.

خلاصة

ركزت هذه المقالة على الأئمة المالكية في المسجد الحرام في مكة الذين كانوا يحضون باحترام وتقدير الحجاج القادمين من تكرور ويعتقدون فضلهم على غيرهم من سكان مكة. اعتمدت المقالة على كتب الرحلات والتراجم والطبقات لعرض وفهم العلاقة بين أئمة الحرم المكي من المالكية وبين الحجاج من تكرور وغرب إفريقيا ومدى تأثير هذه العلاقة على شؤون

¹ This study is based on a part of a master thesis submitted to Kyoto University in 2016.

مكة. اكتشفت هذه المقالة أنه (1) كان بين الأئمة المالكية وبين الحجاج التكروريين علاقة مصالح متبادلة منذ القرن الثامن الهجري (القرن الرابع عشر الميلادي)؛ (2) حصل الأئمة المالكية على الصدقات والهبات المالية من الحجاج، كما حصل الحجاج على تعزيز سمعتهم ومكانتهم الدينية؛ (3) في بداية القرن التاسع الهجري (القرن الخامس عشر الميلادي) كان من المتوقع أن يتوسط الأئمة المالكية لدى أمير القافلة التكروري في حصول أمير مكة على الهبات والصدقات منهم. وربما شكّلت هذه العلاقة خلفية للتدخل في اختيار وتعيين الأئمة المالكية من قبل أمير مكة في نهاية القرن الثامن الهجري (القرن الرابع عشر الميلادي). ونستنتج من ذلك أن علاقات المصالح المتبادلة بين الأئمة المالكية والحجاج التكروريين أثرت على العلاقة بين الأئمة المالكية وأمير مكة. وهذه المقالة تقدم وجهة نظر جديدة حول كيفية تأثير الحجاج من المناطق البعيدة نسبياً على شؤون مكة المحلية.

Keywords

Mecca, Mālikī imams, Sacred Mosque, pilgrimage, West Africa, Mali, Takrūr, Meccan *amīrs*, Mamluks, 'ulamā', genealogy, Qaṣṭallānī family, Nuwayrī family, al-Fāsī, 8th/14th century, 9th/15th century, Hiḡāz

Mots-clés

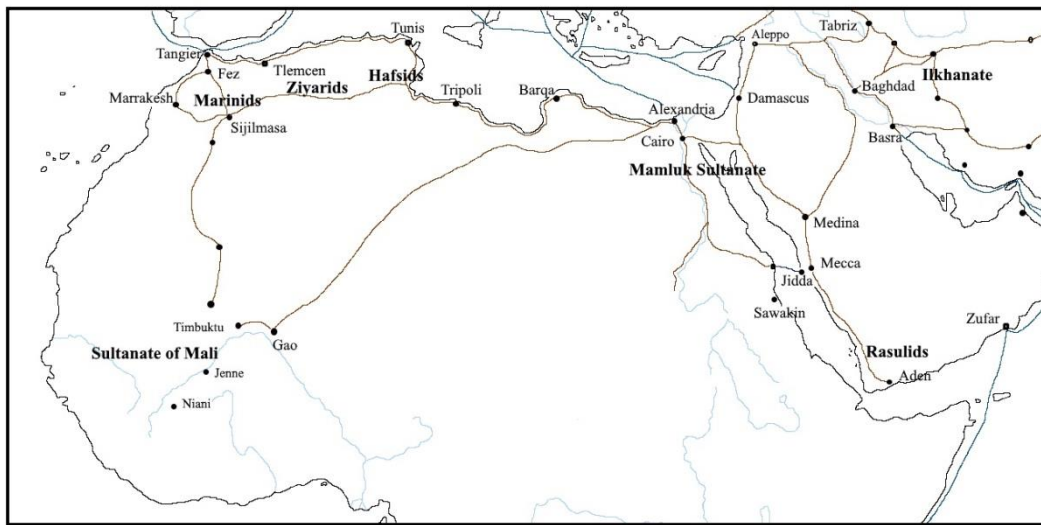
La Mecque, imams malekites, Mosquée sacrée, pèlerinage, Afrique de l'Ouest, Mali, Takrūr, émirs mecquois, Mamlouks, 'ulamā', généalogie, famille Qaṣṭallānī, famille Nuwayrī, al-Fāsī, viii^e/xiv^e s., ix^e/xv^e s., Hiḡāz

كلمات رئيسية

مكة، إئمة المالكية، المسجد الحرام، الحج، غرب أفريقيا، مالي، التكرور، أمراء مكة، الدولة المملوكية، علماء، أنساب، القسطلانيون، النويريون، الفاسي، القرن الثامن الهجري (القرن الرابع عشر الميلادي)، القرن التاسع الهجري (القرن الخامس عشر الميلادي)، الحجاز

I. Introduction

Muslims from around the world make pilgrimages to Mecca. However, while Mecca is generally acknowledged as one of the most important sacred sites in the Muslim world, few have studied the city's history during the late medieval period. In the 8th/14th century, official pilgrimage caravans were sent to Mecca from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Maḡrib, and other regions. Local affairs in Mecca reflected global relationships.



Map 1: the Muslim world ca. 700/1300 (based on Hugh Kennedy (ed.), *An Historical Atlas of Islam*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 2002, p. 11).

Previous studies on Meccan history around the 8th/14th century can be divided into two groups: those that focus on Meccan *amīrs* and those that examine prominent scholars or scholarly families of that time. Richard T. Mortel is still a good example of the former; his detailed research provides us with basic information on Meccan politics and economics.² However, as John Lash Meloy points out, his work has a “Cairo-centered view.”³ Meloy’s studies of 9th/15th-century Mecca indicate that the sovereignty of the Mamluks was more limited than Mortel suggests, and that Meccan *amīrs* enjoyed autonomy as mediators between the Mamluks and other local parties.⁴ Keiko Ota agrees with this theory and emphasizes the *amīrs*’ autonomy, analyzing their diplomatic relationships in the Bahri Mamluk period.⁵ However, while these studies demonstrate that powerful neighboring dynasties including the Mamluks, Rasulids, and Ilkhanate were in conflict over symbolic hegemony in the holy city,⁶ they do not

² Richard T. Mortel, *Al-aḥwāl al-siyāsiyya wa-al-iqtisādiyya bi-Makka fī al-‘aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, Riyadh, Ġāmi‘at al-Malik Sa‘ūd, 1985.

³ Meloy indicates that Mortel’s analysis follows a traditional view in Mamluk studies, which overemphasizes Cairo’s sovereignty over Mecca (John Lash Meloy, *Imperial Power and Maritime Trade: Mecca and Cairo in the Later Middle Ages*, Chicago, Middle East Documentation Center, 2010, p. 4).

⁴ J.L. Meloy, *Imperial Power and Maritime Trade*.

⁵ Keiko Ota, “The Meccan Sharifate and its Diplomatic Relations in the Bahri Mamluk Period,” *Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies* 17/1, 2002, pp. 1–20.

⁶ Éric Vallet’s detailed study explores the mercantile relationship between the Rasulids and Mecca, and the patronage of the Rasulids in Mecca. His work on Meccan *fitnas* provides essential information on various conflicts in Mecca (cf. Éric Vallet, *L’Arabie marchande : État et commerce sous les sultans rasûlides du Yémen (626–858/1229–1454)*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010, pp. 425–469; É. Vallet, “Panique à La Mecque : Écrire la *fitna* au temps des chérifs hasanides (début IX^e/XV^e siècle),” in: Emmanuelle Tixier du Mesnil & Gilles Lecuppre (eds.), *Désordres créateurs: L’invention politique à la faveur des troubles*, Paris, Kimé, 2014, pp. 215–243). For information on conflicts in Mecca between the Mamluks and the Ilkhanids, see Charles Melville, “The Year of the Elephant: Mamluk-Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz in the Reign of Abū Sa‘īd (1317–1335),” *Studia Iranica* 21/2, 1992, pp. 197–214.

explore the relationship between Meccan residents and those of relatively distant regions, including West Africa, or Takrūr, as the region was known during the Mamluk period. According to Hadrien Collet, eastern Arabic historians used the name “Takrūr” throughout the Mamluk period. However, what was designated by the name varied depending on regions and time periods. From the 8th/14th century to 833/1430, for example, “Takrūr” referred to the Sultanate of Mali.⁷ Nehemia Levtzion shows that every year a pilgrimage caravan from Takrūr joined the Egyptian caravan in Cairo. Records indicate that the number of pilgrims from Takrūr reached about 5,000 in 744/1344.⁸

The other group of studies, those that focus on prominent scholars, can be divided into two groups. First, some focus on famous authors and scholarly families from Mecca, including the Ṭabarī family, who adhered to the Šāfi‘ī school of law.⁹ However, as far as we know, no studies have inclusively analyzed Mālikī scholarly families. Second, several studies analyze or mention the roles and lives of intellectual elites.¹⁰ How-

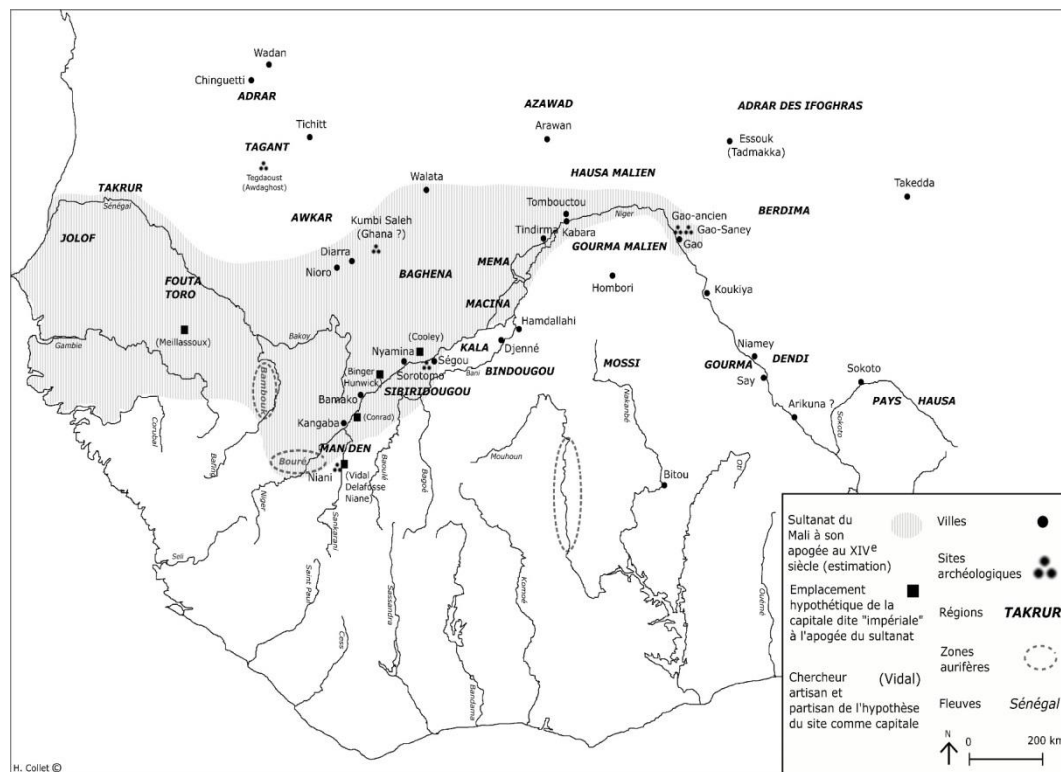
⁷ Collet also indicates that since the Sultanate of Mali declined from 1430, the word “Takrūr” was sometimes used for the Sultanate of Borno (Hadrien Collet, “Le sultanat du Mali (XIV^e-XV^e siècle) : Historiographies d’un État soudanien, de l’Islam médiéval à aujourd’hui,” PhD dissertation, Panthéon Sorbonne University, 2017, pp. 146–149).

⁸ Nehemia Levtzion, “Mamluk Egypt and Takrūr (West Africa),” in: Moshe Sharon (ed.), *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization in Honour of Professor David Ayalon*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1986, pp. 183–208, p. 185, 190; David Courtney Conrad, *Empires of Medieval West Africa: Ghana, Mali, and Songhay*, New York, Chelsea House, 2010, p. 46.

⁹ For specific studies on the Ṭabarī family, see Frédéric Bauden, “Les Ṭabariyya : Histoire d’une importante famille de La Mecque (fin XII^e–fin XV^e s.),” in: Urbain Vermeulen & Daniel De Smet (eds.), *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras. Proceedings of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd International Colloquium organized at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, May 1992, 1993 and 1994*, Leuven, Uitgeverij Peeters, 1995, pp. 253–266; Sulaymān ‘Abd al-Ġanī Mālikī, *Al-Ṭabariyyūn: Mu’arriḥū Makka al-mukarrama: Naṣāṭāthum al-‘ilmiyya wa-waḥa’ifhum fī al-Ḥaram ḥilāla al-qarn al-tāmin al-ḥiḡrī*, al-Ṭā’if, Nādi al-Ṭā’if al-adabī, 2005. For more information on Banū Fahd, see Nāṣir ibn Sa’d al-Raṣīd, “Banū Fahd: Mu’arriḥū Makka al-mukarrama, wa-al-ta’rif bi-maḥṭūṭ al-Naḡm ibn Fahd *Iḥāf al-warā bi-aḥbār Umm al-Qurā*,” in: Abdelgadir Mahmoud Abdalla, Sami al-Sakkar & R. T. Mortel (eds.), *Sources for the History of Arabia/Dirāsāt tāriḡ al-Ġazīra al-‘Arabiyya*, Riyadh, Riyadh University Press, 1979, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 69–90.

¹⁰ ‘Abd al-Maḡīd’s work describes 11 religious offices in Mecca including judges, preachers, and imams. Although his work is useful to know the outline, we should analyze further (Laylā Amīn ‘Abd al-Maḡīd, *Al-tanzīmāt al-idāriyya wa-al-māliyya fī Makka al-mukarrama fī al-‘aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, 667–923 H/1268–1517 M, Riyadh, Mu’assasat al-Furqān li-al-turāṭ al-islāmī, 2010, pp. 189–298). Meloy’s forthcoming work will be a big step towards addressing the lack of studies on Meccan judges. His article argues Meccan judges as agents of the Mamluk hegemony. Here I show my sincere gratitude to Professor Meloy for sending me the draft of his article (J.L. Meloy, “The Judges of Mecca and Mamluk Hegemony,” in: Jo Van Steenbergen (ed.), *Whither the Early Modern State? Fifteenth-Century State Formations across Eurasia*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, forthcoming in 2018). Al-Ṭāsān’s work explores the role of the religious offices in the Sacred Mosque, including imams and preachers (Muḥammad Šāliḡ al-Ṭāsān, “Al-wazā’if al-dīniyya wa-al-idāriyya bi-al-Masḡid al-Ḥarām fī ‘aḥd dawlat al-Mamālīk,” *Al-‘uṣūr* 5/2, 1990, pp. 283–310). Badraṣīnī’s work on the *waqf* for *Ḥaramayn* during the Mamluk period mentions religious elites such as judges, preachers, prayer leaders, and so on (Aḥmad Hāṣim Aḥmad Badraṣīnī, *Awqāf al-ḥaramayn al-ṣarīfayn fī al-‘aṣr al-Mamlūkī: Dirāsa tāriḡiyya waṭā’iqiyya ḥadāriyya*, Medina, Markaz buḥūṭ wa-dirāsāt al-Madīna al-munawwara, 2005, pp. 268–295). Al-Sulaymān’s research also refers to the judges of Mecca. However, it has many mistakes (‘Alī Ḥusayn al-Sulaymān, *Al-‘alāqāt al-ḥiḡāziyya al-miṣriyya zaman salāṭin al-Mamālīk*, Cairo, Al-Šarīka al-muttaḥida li-al-naṣr wa-al-tawzī, 1973, pp. 141–150). Christopher D. Bahl’s recent work on South Asian migrants explores the example of a scholar who

ever, no study has yet examined these topics in depth. In Mecca, scholars held legal or religious offices, including judges (sg. *qāḍī*), preachers (sg. *ḥaṭīb*), prayer leaders (sg. *imām*), and so on. The most prominent office was the Šāfiʿī judgeship, and Šāfiʿī judges sometimes worked as preachers.¹¹ No judgeship except for deputy positions¹² existed for the other Sunni schools of law until the Mamluk sultans began to appoint judges for them in the beginning of the 9th/15th century.¹³ Therefore, prayer leaders of the Sacred Mosque seemed to be representatives of each school of law. However, previous studies tend to focus on Šāfiʿī judges and analyze the relationships between them, the Meccan *amīr*, and the Mamluks. By focusing on the Mālikī imams, we can explore the relationship between scholars and rulers of relatively distant regions, who adhered to the Mālikī school of law, including the Sultanate of Mali, and its famous king, Mansā Mūsā (fl. 724/1324–1325).



Map 2: The Sultanate of Mali (H. Collet, "Le sultanat du Mali (XI^e-XV^e siècle)," p. 25).

became a Ḥanafi judge in the beginning of the 9th/15th century (Christopher D. Bahl, "Reading *tarājim* with Bourdieu: Prosopographical Traces of Historical Change in the South Asian Migration to the Late Medieval Hijaz," *Der Islam* 94/1, 2017, pp. 234–275).

¹¹ Al-Ṭāsān, "Al-waṣāʾif al-diniyya wa-al-idāriyya," p. 287.

¹² Some of the imams of the other Sunni schools of law worked as deputy judges. For example, see Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Makki al-Fāsi, *Al-ʿiqd al-ṭamin fi tarīḥ al-balad al-amin*, Muḥammad Ḥamid al-Fiḳī, Fuʾād Sayyid & Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāḥī (eds.), Cairo, Maṭbaʿat al-sunna al-muḥammadiyya, 1959–1969; reprint, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-risāla, 8 vols., 1985–1986, vol. 6, p. 132. Further studies are needed.

¹³ The Mamluks established the Ḥanafi judgeship in 806/1403, the Mālikī judgeship in 807/1405, and Ḥanbali judgeship in 809/1406 (A.H.A. Badraṣīmī, *Awqāf al-ḥaramayn*, p. 270). The first Mālikī judge was Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Fāsi, the author of *Al-ʿiqd* (al-Fāsi, *Al-ʿiqd*, vol. 1, p. 338).

Mansā Mūsā's pilgrimage attracted much attention, as he spent so much gold that it deflated the value of gold in Cairo for several years. Some studies on the history of West Africa focus on the relationship between the Sultanates of Mali and Songhay and the Mamluks.¹⁴ They have found that some medieval scholars from West Africa studied in Cairo with other prominent scholars on the way to pilgrimage in Mecca.¹⁵ However, none of these studies focus on the relationship between Meccan scholars and West African pilgrims, although this viewpoint can provide us with a much broader picture of the human network around Mecca.

Therefore, this study explores the relationship between the Mālikī imams of the Sacred Mosque and pilgrims from West Africa, as well as the influence of this relationship on Meccan affairs. We also examine the roles played by religious elites in Mecca and the conditions of some scholarly families that followed the Mālikī school of law.

In the next section, we will provide a basic history of the Mālikī imams of the Sacred Mosque and the scholarly families that inherited the Mālikī imamate. The third section analyzes descriptions of the relationship between the Mālikī imams and pilgrims from West Africa. Finally, in the fourth section, we give examples of the Mālikī imams' roles and demonstrate how the Meccan *amīr* and the Mamluks were involved with the imams in order to show how the relationship described in the second section influenced local Meccan affairs.

Our main sources for this study are travel books and biographical dictionaries. For example, travel books by Ibn Ḡubayr (d. 614/1217) and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 770/1368–1369) contain valuable relevant descriptions.¹⁶ Meanwhile, *Al-ʿiqd al-ṭamīn* is a biographical dictionary written in the 9th/15th century by a Mālikī jurist, Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Fāsī (d. 832/1429).¹⁷ We also analyze descriptions in biographical dictionaries written by a Meccan scholar, Naḡm al-Dīn ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. Fahd (d.

¹⁴ For example, see N. Levzion, "Mamluk Egypt and Takrūr." Warren Schultz's study analyzed the impact of Mansā Mūsā's gold in Mamluk Cairo from a numismatic point of view (Warren Schultz, "Mansa Mūsā's Gold in Mamluk Cairo: A Reappraisal of a World Civilizations Anecdote," in: Judith Pfeiffer & Sholeh Alysia Quinn (eds.), *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 2006, pp. 428–447). Collet analyzes descriptions of Mansā Mūsā's pilgrimage in Mamluk sources (H. Collet, "Le sultanat du Mali (XIV^e–XV^e siècle)," 2017). Rémi Dewièrè explores pilgrimage routes from Chad to Mecca in the 10th/16th and the 11th/17th century. He also shows roles of pilgrimage in legitimizing authority of the Sultanate of Borno (Rémi Dewièrè, *Du lac Tchad à la Mecque: Le sultanat du Borno (XVI^e–XVII^e siècle)*, Paris, Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2017).

¹⁵ N. Levzion, "Mamluk Egypt and Takrūr," pp. 198–207. Elizabeth M. Sartain's study analyzes the relationship between Takrūr scholars and Ḡalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (Elizabeth M. Sartain, "Ḡalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī's Relations with the People of Takrūr," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 16/2, 1971, pp. 193–198). For more information on West African history, see John Spencer Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, London, Oxford University Press, 1962.

¹⁶ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Rihlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa al-musammāt* Tuḥfat al-nuẓẓār fī ḡarāʾib al-amṣār wa-ʿaḡāʾib al-asfār, ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Tāzī (ed.), Rabat, Akādīmiyya al-Mamlaka al-maḡribiyya, 5 vols., 1997; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ibn Ḡubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, ed. William Wright, 2nd ed. revised by Michaël Jan de Goeje, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1907.

¹⁷ Al-Fāsī, *Al-ʿiqd*.

885/1480)¹⁸ and those by Egyptian scholars, including Ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) and al-Saḡḡawī (d. 902/1497).¹⁹

II. Inheritance of the Mālikī imamate

In the 8th/14th century, the Sacred Mosque had one prayer leader (imam) for each of the four Sunni and Zaydī schools of law in general.²⁰ In biographical dictionaries, imams for the Mālikī school of law are called *imām al-maqām al-mālikīyya bi-al-Ḥaram al-Šarīf*. They seemed to play a similar role to that of imams at the other great mosques in the Mamluk Sultanate, although there is little specific information.²¹ In addition, as we mentioned earlier, the imams represented their school of law not just to inhabitants but also to pilgrims and *muḡāwirs*,²² since there was no office for the Mālikī judgeship until the beginning of the 9th/15th century.

In the 8th/14th century, particular families inherited the imamates. For example, two prominent families—the Qaṣṣallānīs and the Nuwayrīs—held the Mālikī imamate.

Table 1: Mālikī imams (before 644/1246 to 836/1432)

Term of office (<i>hiḡrī/milādī</i>)		Name	Source
?–644	?–1246	Al-Taḡī ‘Umar b. Muḡammad al-Qaṣṣallānī	<i>Al-‘iqd</i> , vol. 6, pp. 358–360; <i>Al-‘iqd</i> , vol. 8, p. 29
644–663	1246–1265	Al-Ḍiyā’ Muḡammad b. ‘Umar al-Qaṣṣallānī	<i>Al-‘iqd</i> , vol. 2, pp. 230–236
663–671	1265–1272	Al-Šihāb Aḡmad b. Muḡammad al-Qaṣṣallānī	<i>Al-‘iqd</i> , vol. 3, pp. 158–159

¹⁸ ‘Umar b. Muḡammad b. Fahd, *Al-durr al-kamīn bi-ḡayl al-‘iqd al-ṭamīn fī tārikḡ al-balad al-amīn*, ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Duhayš (ed.), Beirut, Dār Ḥiḡr, 3 vols., 2000.

¹⁹ Aḡmad b. ‘Alī ibn Ḥaḡar al-‘Asqalānī, *Al-durar al-kāmīna fī a’yan al-mī’a al-ṭāmīna*, Muḡammad Sayyid ḡād al-Ḥaqq (ed. & ann.), Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-ḡadīṭa, 5 vols., 1966–1968; Muḡammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḡmān al-Saḡḡawī, *Al-ḡaw’ al-lāmī’ li-aḡl al-qarn al-tāsi’*, Cairo, Maktabat al-Quds, 12 vols., 1934–1936.

²⁰ Both Ibn ḡubayr and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mention the order of prayer at the Sacred Mosque in their travel books. First, the Šafī’ī imam prayed, followed by the Mālikī and Ḥanbalī imams, and finally, the Ḥanafī imam (Ibn ḡubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, p. 102; Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḡlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, vol. 1, pp. 397–398). Meanwhile, the Mamluks tried to remove the Zaydī imams from the Sacred Mosque several times (R.T. Mortel, “Zaydī Shi’ism and the Ḥasanid Sharifs of Mecca,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, 1987, pp. 455–472).

²¹ For more information on roles of the imams in the Sacred Mosque, see ‘Abd al-Maḡīd, *Al-tanzīmāt al-idāriyya*, pp. 229–242; al-Ṭāsān, “Al-waṣā’if al-dīniyya wa-al-idāriyya,” pp. 289–295. For more information on the imams in Mamluk Cairo, see Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981, pp. 258–260.

²² This term indicates a person who stays in a holy place, such as Mecca, in order to live a religious life (Werner Ende, “Muḡjāwir,” *EF*).

671–712	1272–1312	Al-Bahā' 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Qaṣṭallānī	<i>Al-'iqd</i> , vol. 5, pp. 405–406
713–760	1313–1359	Ḥalīl Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qaṣṭallānī	<i>Al-durar</i> , vol. 4, p. 126; <i>Al-'iqd</i> , vol. 4, pp. 324–328
760–765	1359–1364	'Umar b. 'Abd Allāh al-Qaṣṭallānī	<i>Al-'iqd</i> , vol. 6, p. 310
765–799	1364–March 1397	Al-Nūr 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī	<i>Al-durar</i> , vol. 3, p. 85; <i>Al-'iqd</i> , vol. 6, pp. 132–134
Ġumādā al-Ūlā, 799–799	March 1397–1397	Al-Bahā' 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī al-Nuwayrī (1)	<i>Al-ḍaw'</i> , vol. 4, p. 94; <i>Al-'iqd</i> , vol. 5, pp. 390–391
Ġumādā al-Ūlā, 799–799	March 1397–1397	Al-Šihāb Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Nuwayrī (1)	<i>Al-ḍaw'</i> , vol. 2, p. 8; <i>Al-'iqd</i> , vol. 3, pp. 98–99
799–Šawwāl, 799	1397–July 1397	Abū al-Ḥayr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Zāhira	<i>Al-ḍaw'</i> , vol. 9, p. 78; <i>Al-'iqd</i> , vol. 3, pp. 286–287
Šawwāl, 799–806	July 1397–1403	Al-Bahā' 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī al-Nuwayrī (2)	
Šawwāl, 799–Dū al-Ḥiġġa, 819	July 1397–February 1417	Al-Šihāb Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Nuwayrī (2)	
806–Dū al-Ḥiġġa, 819	1403–February 1417	Al-Walī Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Nuwayrī (1)	<i>Al-durr</i> , vol. 1, pp. 203–207; <i>Al-ḍaw'</i> , vol. 8, p. 162
Dū al-Ḥiġġa, 819–Ġumādā al-Ūlā, 820	February 1417–June 1417	Abū al-Barakāt Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Fāsī	<i>Al-ḍaw'</i> , vol. 9, pp. 104–105; <i>Al-'iqd</i> , vol. 2, pp. 312–313
Ġumādā al-Ūlā, 820–827	June 1417–1424	Al-Šihāb Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Nuwayrī (3)	
Ġumādā al-Ūlā, 820–836	June 1417–1432	Al-Walī Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Nuwayrī (2)	

* When the same person held the same office more than one time, I indicate the first time by putting (1) after his name, the second time by (2) and the third time by (3).

It is probable that 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Qaṣṭallānī (A1),²³ the founder of the Qaṣṭallānī family, settled in Mecca and held the imamate during the first half of the 7th/13th century. There is no information about his origin, although the description of his son, Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (B1) tells us that he was born in Tozeur, Tuni-

²³ For convenience, I assign a letter to each generation in the included family trees. Every member of the generation, meanwhile, is assigned a number.

sia in 598/1201–1202, and came to Mecca before 620/1223–1224. After the death of ‘Umar (A1), his son Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad (B1) inherited the office. He taught *ḥadīṭ* in the *madrasa Maṣṣūriyya*,²⁴ which was built in Mecca by the Rasulid Sultan, al-Malik al-Manṣūr ‘Umar.²⁵ After his death, the office of the Mālikī imamate was inherited by his son, Bahā’ al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (C2), followed by Ḥalīl Muḥammad (D2).

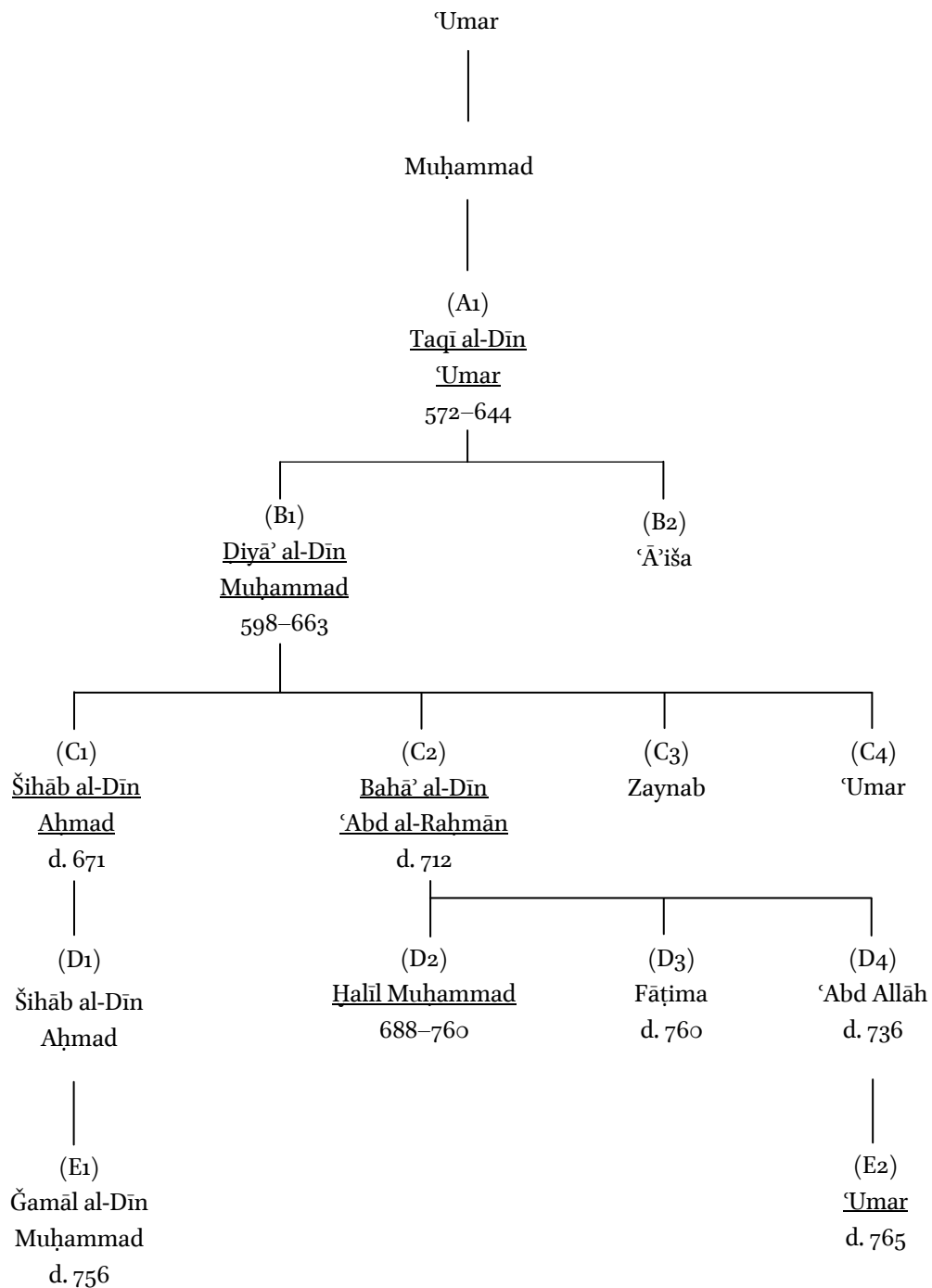
Ḥalīl Muḥammad (D2) was born in Mecca in 688/1289. His maternal uncle was the Šāfi‘ī judge of Mecca, Nağm al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī. Ḥalīl Muḥammad (D2) learned Šāfi‘ī jurisprudence from his maternal uncle and his maternal grandfather. Subsequently, he learned Mālikī jurisprudence from the judges of Alexandria and Damascus, who visited Mecca for pilgrimage. According to custom, he became the Mālikī imam after his father died in 712/1312–1313 and held the position for 47 years, until his death.²⁶ He evidently did not have a long-lived son, and his nephew ‘Umar (E2) inherited the job.²⁷

²⁴ Al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 2, p. 231.

²⁵ Al-Malik al-Manṣūr ‘Umar built his *madrasa* in 641/1243–1244 near the Sacred Mosque. Šāfi‘ī law and *ḥadīṭ* were taught there. For more information on *madrasas* built in Mecca during this period, see R.T. Mortel, “Madrasas in Mecca during the Medieval Period: A Descriptive Study based on Literary Sources,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 60, 1997, pp. 236–252.

²⁶ Al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 4, pp. 324–325, 328.

²⁷ Al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 6, p. 310.

Table 2: The Qaṣṭallānī family²⁸²⁸ Underlined names indicate Mālikī imams (Table 2, and 3).

In the middle of the 8th/14th century, after the death of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Qaṣṭallānī (E2), the Nuwayrī family began taking over the imamate. Although the sources are silent on the reason for this shift, it was probably because the last Mālikī imam, Ḥalīl Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qaṣṭallānī was the former husband of the mother of the new Imam, Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (B3). As Frédéric Bauden discusses in his work on the Ṭabarī family, the most prominent scholarly family in Mecca at the time, most marriages were between cousins.²⁹ However, marriage could also be an important tool to connect with other scholarly families.

Sources suggest that the Nuwayrī family were originally from Nuwayra, Egypt.³⁰ The founder was Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (A1), who settled in Mecca at the beginning of the 7th/13th century and married a daughter of the Meccan Šāfi‘ī judge Nağm al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī. Later, Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (A1) divorced his wife. His two sons, Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad (B2) and Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī (B3) were brought up by their maternal uncle, Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī.³¹ The family eventually divided into two branches: the descendants of Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad (B2) adhered to the Šāfi‘ī school of law and became judges and preachers,³² while the descendants of Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī (B3) held the Mālikī imamate.

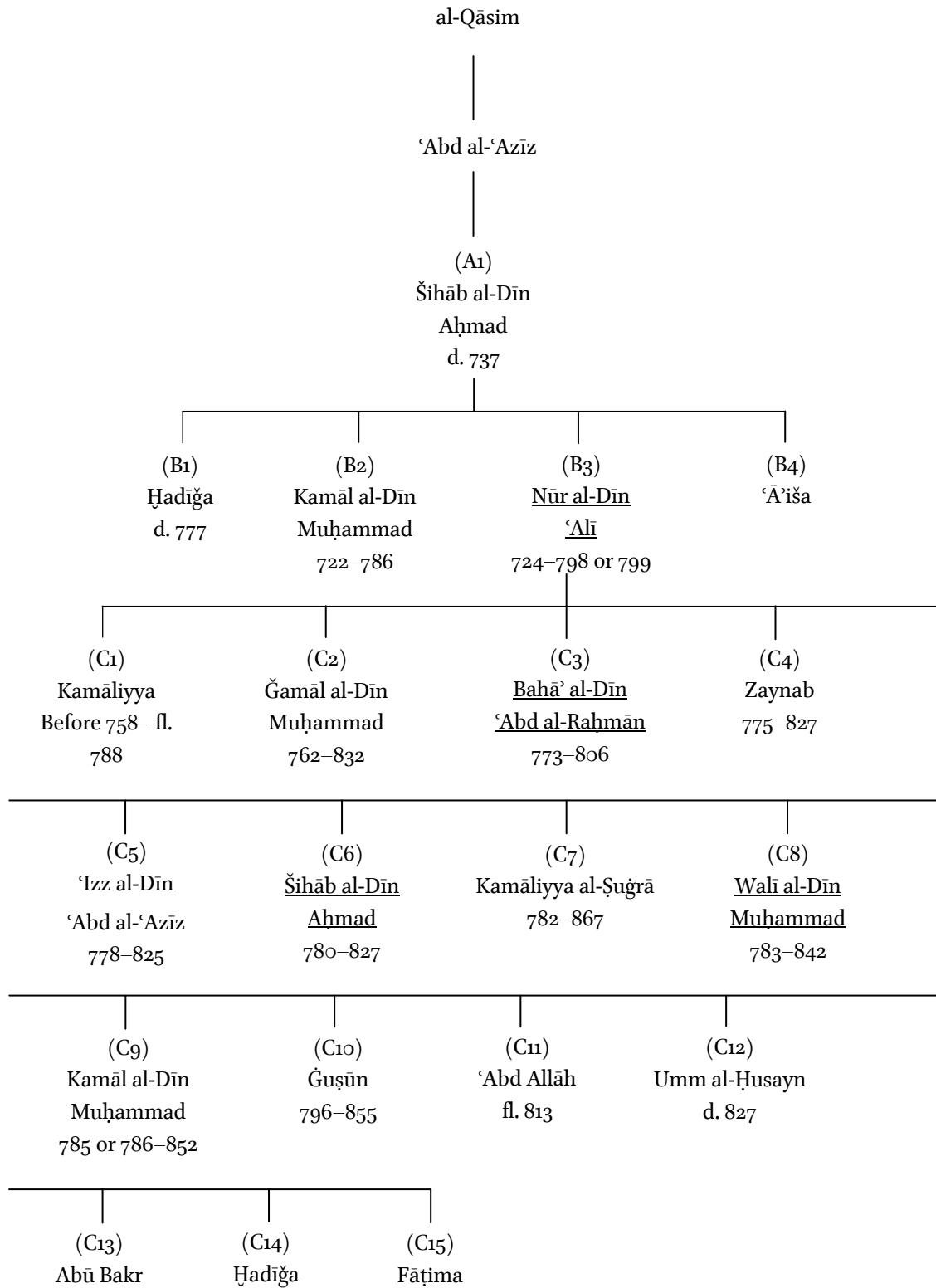
²⁹ F. Bauden, “Les Ṭabariyya,” p. 263.

³⁰ This view is supported by the description of Muḥammad b. Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. al-Qāsim b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-‘Aqīlī al-Nuwayrī, a relative of this family. It is mentioned that he was a relative of the *ḥaṭīb* from the Nuwayrī family in Mecca (al-Saḥāwī, *Al-daw’*, vol. 7, p. 291).

³¹ Al-‘Asqalānī, *Al-durar*, vol. 1, pp. 184–185.

³² Al-Sulaymān, *Al-‘alāqāt*, pp. 145–147. The descendants of Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad (B2) were omitted from the family tree. The Nuwayrī family’s relationships with the Ṭabarī family seemed to give them a great chance of obtaining the judgeship. This is because the Ṭabarī family was prosperous and judgeship was the most prominent legal office.

Table 3: The Nuwayrī family



These two families inherited the Mālikī imamate in the 8th/14th century, and the position continued to be passed down, usually from father to son or from older brother to younger one. There is no evidence that this custom was violated until the end of the 8th/14th century.

III. Relationship between the Mālikī imams and pilgrims from Takrūr

In this section, we analyze the relationship between the Mālikī imams and West African pilgrims. Travel accounts and biographical dictionaries offer some descriptions of the virtues of the Mālikī imams. Authors from Mağrib and Andalus, adherents of the Mālikī school of law, are especially apt to note their Meccan imams.³³ For example, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa notes Mālikī imams in his travel book, mentioning Ḥalīl Muḥammad al-Qaṣṭallānī (D2), the Mālikī Imam at the time:

He is one of the prominent figures in Mecca. He is, rather, the only one according to the consensus of the Meccan people. He is always immersed in worship. He is modest, generous, excellent, and compassionate. He does not disappoint anyone who asks him for alms.³⁴

Al-Fāsī's description of Ḥalīl Muḥammad al-Qaṣṭallānī (D2) also indicates that he was respected among the people from West Africa:

He had indescribable sublimity and power among notable and ordinary people, especially among people from the western regions such as Takrūr and Sūdān. Thus, they regarded meeting with the Mālikī imam as completion of their pilgrimage (*ḥağğ*). They used to bring him many donations (*futūḥāt*).³⁵

Pilgrims from Takrūr and Sūdān considered visiting the Mālikī imam an essential part of completing their pilgrimage. This indicates that the Mālikī imams had a special role during the pilgrimage seasons, as Ibn Ġubayr and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa describe:

When the time of the *naḡr* (departure from Mina) came, the Mālikī imam made a sign with his hand and descended from his position. Then, people suddenly rushed to depart. Because of this, the earth shook and the mountains trembled.³⁶

³³ It is especially worth mentioning Hikoichi Yajima's studies of relevant travel books. He translated Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's work into Japanese, publishing it between 1996 and 2002. He also researched 64 travel books written by authors from Mağrib and Andalus by the end of 13th–14th/19th century. According to his article, pilgrims, scholars, and merchants from Mağrib visited Egypt and Syria from the middle of the 7th/13th century to the middle of the 8th/14th century. In addition, the number of immigrants to the eastern region increased, and immigrant communities formed in big cities such as Alexandria, Cairo, and Damascus (Hikoichi Yajima, "On the Importance of the Maghribian Books of Pilgrimage *al-Riḥlāt*," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 25, 1983, pp. 194–216, pp. 205–208 [In Japanese]). For more information on H. Yajima's studies, see Tamon Baba, "Publications in Japanese Language on Yemen History and its related Regions mainly based on Manuscripts and Sources from Yemen (1964–2014)," *Chroniques du manuscrit au Yémen* 19, 2015, pp. 33–56, pp. 50–62.

³⁴ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, vol. 1, p. 388.

³⁵ Al-Fāsī, *Al-'iqd*, vol. 4, p. 325.

³⁶ Ibn Ġubayr, *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, p. 175. We can find almost the same descriptions in the travel book of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, vol. 1, p. 409).

Thus, the imam indicated the start of *naḡr*. It is likely that such a role enhanced their position among pilgrims.

There are other examples of the relationship between the imam and pilgrims from the western regions. For example, al-Fāsī refers to a Mālikī Imam, Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī al-Nuwayrī (B₃), whose mother was the former wife of the Mālikī Imam Ḥalīl Muḥammad al-Qaṣṭallānī (D₂):

He was in charge of the Mālikī imamate until his death after ‘Umar b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Mālikī, a nephew of Ṣayḥ Ḥalīl al-Mālikī [al-Qaṣṭallānī]. He served for 33 years and a few months. By the virtue of his status as imam, he gained many worldly goods (*dunyā*) from people from Maḡrib and Takrūr. Most were from Takrūr. Nūr al-Dīn gained [annually] about 1,000 *mitqāls* of gold from the sultan of Takrūr in most of the years, apart from what he gained from the *ṣayḥ* of the caravan of Takrūr and eminent people in the caravan. He probably obtained from people in the caravan approximately as much donation as from the sultan. It made his worldly situation and that of his families quite good.³⁷

It is interesting that Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī al-Nuwayrī (B₃) acquired about 1,000 *mitqāls* of gold both from the Sultan and people in the caravan. He gained about 2,000 *mitqāls* of gold annually. The value of this donation can be estimated by comparing it with another donation to Meccan scholars, that from the Rasulid Sultan of Yemen, al-Malik al-Aṣraf II to the contemporary Ṣāfi‘ī judge and preacher of Mecca, Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī. For some years, the Rasulid Sultan sent the judge 27,000 dirhams annually.³⁸ Unfortunately, as far as we know, there is no description indicating the exchange rates between gold *mitqāls* and dirhams in Mecca in the latter half of the 8th/14th century.³⁹ However, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s report in the first half of the 8th/14th century indicates that the exchange rate between gold *mitqāls* and *dirham nuqra* fell to 1:18 due to many donations of gold coins by the Ilkhanid Sultan Abū Sa‘īd.⁴⁰ Considering that the exchange rate in Cairo in the Bahri Mamluk period was

³⁷ Al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 6, p. 133.

³⁸ Al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 1, p. 302. As Mortel shows, in the 8th/14th century, two kinds of dirhams circulated in Mecca: Kāmīlī and Mas‘ūdī. The Kāmīlī dirham was originally minted in Cairo by the order of the Ayyubid Sultan, al-Malik al-Kāmīl in 622/1225 (R.T. Mortel, “Prices in Mecca during the Mamlūk Period,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 32, 1989, pp. 279–334, p. 300). In Mecca, in the 8th/14th century, “Kāmīlī” indicates the Mamluk dirhams, designated “*nuqra*” in the Mamluk sources (J.L. Meloy, “Money and Sovereignty in Mecca: Issues of the Sharīfs in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53, 2010, pp. 712–738, p. 721; É. Vallet, *L’Arabie marchande*, pp. 231–232). Based on Mortel’s detailed work, we can assume the dirham in the above-mentioned description in the 8th/14th century refers to Kāmīlī dirhams (R.T. Mortel, “Prices in Mecca during the Mamlūk Period”). Meloy’s study supports this hypothesis, showing that the Kāmīlī is not mentioned in Meccan textual sources in the 9th/15th and 10th/16th centuries while the Mas‘ūdī is mentioned in the 9th/15th century (J.L. Meloy, “Money and Sovereignty in Mecca,” pp. 721–722).

³⁹ For the 9th/15th and 10th/16th centuries, we have some textual evidence indicating the exchange rates as Meloy’s study on monetary system in Mecca shows (J.L. Meloy, “Money and Sovereignty in Mecca,” pp. 712–738). For the monetary system in Mecca in the 9th/15th and 10th/16th century, also see J.L. Meloy, *Imperial Power and Maritime Trade*, pp. 197–199, 226–227.

⁴⁰ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, vol. 1, pp. 410–411.

relatively constant around 1:20⁴¹, we can try to compare these amounts, based on the exchange rate in Cairo. Based on W. Schultz and Paul Balog's study, we can estimate the exchange rate was between 1:20 and 1:30.⁴² The Mālikī Imam held the imamate from 765/1364 to 799/1397, while the Šāfi'ī judge held office from 763/1362 to 786/1384.⁴³ Based on the 1:20 rate, 2,000 *mitqāls* of gold is equivalent to 40,000 dirhams, while based on the rate 1:30, 2,000 *mitqāls* of gold is equivalent to 60,000 dirhams. Although we cannot know the exact value, it is safe to say that the Mālikī Imam gained a considerable amount of money, far more than the Šāfi'ī judge. This account indicates that the Mālikī imams received many donations from West African pilgrims probably as a sign of their religious devotion.

This evidence suggests that there was a mutually beneficial relationship between the Mālikī imams and West African pilgrims in the 8th/14th century. This was a mutually beneficial exchange: the Mālikī imams gained respect and monetary donations from the pilgrims, while the pilgrims could enhance their religious reputation by associating with the imams. The next section analyzes how this mutually beneficial relationship between the Mālikī imams and Takrūr pilgrims affected the inheritance of the imamate.

IV. Influence of the relationship between Mālikī imams and Takrūr pilgrims on the Imams

To examine the effects of the mutually beneficial relationship described in the previous section, we first give an example of a Meccan *amīr*'s interference in the choice of a Mālikī imam. We then explore the context for this interference, describing how it relates to the aforementioned relationship.

As described earlier in this study, two specific families inherited the Mālikī imamate. Until the end of the 8th/14th century, there is no evidence that political authorities, such as the Meccan *amīrs* or the Mamluk Sultanate, interfered in the passing down of this position. However, at the end of the 8th/14th century, after the death of the Mālikī Imam Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī al-Nuwayrī (B3), these groups did interfere. The descriptions of his son, Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (C6), gives us a brief overview:

When his father (Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī al-Nuwayrī) died in Ġumādā II 799/March 1397, his paternal uncle, the judge of Mecca, Muḥibb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. *al-qādī* Abī al-Faḍl al-Nuwayrī established him and his brother, Bahā' al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, as the Mālikī

⁴¹ W. Schultz, "Medieval Coins and Monies of Account: The Case of Large-Flan Mamluk dinars," *Al-'Usur al-Wusta* 12/2, 2000, pp. 29–33.

⁴² Schultz' work on the Mamluk dinars indicates that the exchange rate between gold and silver coins was 1:20 in 694/1294–1295, 741/1340–1341, and 788/1386–1387 (W. Schultz, "Medieval Coins and Monies of Account," pp. 29–33). P. Balog finds the same rates in 745/1344–1345, 746/1346–1347, 751/1350–1351 to 753/1352–1353, 757/1356–1357 to 760/1358–1359, and 761/1359–1360. Moreover, he indicates that in 770/1368–1369 and 781/1379–1380, the exchange rate fell to 1:30 (Paul Balog, "History of the Dirhem in Egypt from the Fātimid Conquest until the Collapse of the Mamlūk Empire, 358–922 H./ 968–1517 A.D.," *Revue numismatique* (6th ser.) 3, 1961, pp. 109–146, p. 134).

⁴³ Al-Fāsi, *Al-'iqd*, vol. 1, pp. 301–302, p. 305.

imams, instead of their father. However, the *amīr* of Mecca, Šarīf Ḥasan b. ‘Aḡlān opposed this choice, and appointed a jurist, Quṭb al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥayr b. *al-qāḍī* Abī al-Su‘ūd b. Ḥahira, to the Mālikī imamate. Thus, Abū al-Ḥayr held the position until the end of Šawwāl/August 1397. At that time, the abovementioned Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī assumed the imamate, due to a diploma of appointment (*tawqī‘*) that arrived from al-Malik al-Zāhir [Barqūq] of Egypt, requiring him and his brother Bahā’ al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān to be established as the Mālikī imams.⁴⁴

After the Imam’s death, the position was passed to his two sons. As we mentioned, this was the normal pattern of inheritance. However, the Meccan *Amīr* interfered in this succession, and appointed an imam from another family, Banū Ḥahira, who seems to have had no marital relationship with the Nuwayrī family. This violation of custom resulted in the Mamluks issuing a diploma of appointment to ensure that tradition was preserved.

It seems that this interference was influenced by the conflict between the Meccan *amīr* and the Mamluks. Ḥasan b. ‘Aḡlān was a powerful *amīr* at the end of the 8th/14th century and was nominated as the deputy of the Mamluk Sultan (*nā‘ib al-salṭana*) in Hiḡāz in 811/1408.⁴⁵ He also attempted to marry into the Fāsī family in order to extend his power.⁴⁶ At the same time, the Mamluks changed their policy towards legal or religious offices, including judgeships. From the end of the 8th/14th century to the 9th/15th century, the Mamluks frequently changed judges, the most prominent position for scholars. Evidence shows that the *amīr* and the Mamluks came into conflict over choosing judges and preachers.⁴⁷

However, such conflicts did not seem to influence the imams of other Sunni schools of law, where the same families continued to inherit imammates. For example, all Šāfi‘ī imams continued to be from the Ṭabarī family. Abū al-Yumn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī and Raḍī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī held the Šāfi‘ī imamate at the end of the 8th/14th century. This family’s inheritance of the imamate is described in the biography of Raḍī al-Dīn Muḥammad:

He (Raḍī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī) worked as his father’s a deputy in the imamate for some years. Then, his father ceded the imamate to him shortly before his death. After that, he worked together in the imamate with his paternal uncle al-Šayḥ Abū al-Yumn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī for some years.⁴⁸

Thus, the imamate was usually passed down from father to son or older brother to younger one before the current imam’s death.

⁴⁴ Al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 3, p. 98.

⁴⁵ J.L. Meloy, *Imperial Power*, p. 94, 102; K. Ota, “The Meccan Sharifate,” p. 13.

⁴⁶ He got married to Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāsī’s sister, Umm Hānī’ (al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 8, p. 355; J.L. Meloy, “The Judges of Mecca and Mamluk Hegemony”). In addition, he was married to Kamāliyya, the sister of the Mālikī judge, Abū Ḥamid al-Fāsī (al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 8, p. 313). The reason why he was married to women from the Fāsī family could be that this family is ḥasanid *šarīf*.

⁴⁷ J.L. Meloy discusses this in his forthcoming article (J.L. Meloy, “The Judges of Mecca and Mamluk Hegemony”).

⁴⁸ Al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 2, p. 268.

Table 4: Šāfiʿī imams (before 681/1282 to 813/1410)

Term of office (<i>hiğrī</i> / <i>mīlādī</i>)		Name	Source
Before 681–722?	Before 1282–1322?	Al-Rađī Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī	<i>Al-durar</i> , vol. 1, p. 56; <i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 3, pp. 240–247; <i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 8, pp. 117–118
722?–750	1322?–1349	Al-Šihāb Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ṭabarī	<i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 3, pp. 9–10
750–?	1349–?	Al-Rađī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī	<i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 1, p. 280
?–795	?–1393	Al-Muḥibb Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī	<i>Al-durar</i> , vol. 3, p. 394; <i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 1, pp. 280–282
795–809	1393–1406	Abū al-Yumn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī	<i>Al-dawʿ</i> , vol. 6, pp. 287–288; <i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 1, pp. 282–285
795–822	1393–1419	Al-Rađī Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī	<i>Al-dawʿ</i> , vol. 9, p. 2; <i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 2, pp. 267–269
809–813	1406–1410	Abū al-Ḥayr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī	<i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 8, p. 41

Table 5: Ḥanafī imams (before 659?/1260? to 850/1446)

Term of office (<i>hiğrī</i> / <i>mīlādī</i>)		Name	Source
Before 659?–after 675?	Before 1260?–after 1276?	Al-Tāğ ʿAlī b. Yūsuf al-Siğzī	<i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 6, pp. 277–278
After 675?–690s?	1276?–1290s?	ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī al-Siğzī	<i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 5, pp. 214–215
690s?–before 710?	1290s?–before 1310?	Al-Badr al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Siğzī	<i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 4, p. 166
Before 710?–?	Before 1310?–?	Al-Šihāb Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Siğzī	<i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 3, pp. 111–113
?–763?	?–1361?	Al-Tāğ ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan al-Siğzī & Abū al-Faṭḥ b. Yūsuf al-Siğzī	<i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 6, p. 151
?–773	?–1371	Abū al-Faṭḥ b. Yūsuf al-Siğzī	<i>Al-ʿiqd</i> , vol. 8, pp. 81–82

773–779	1371–1377	Al-Sirāğ ‘Umar b. Muḥammad b. al-Šaybī	<i>Al-‘iqd</i> , vol. 6, pp. 355–356
780–813?	1378–1410?	Al-Šams Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥuwārazmī	<i>Al-‘iqd</i> , vol. 2, pp. 349–352
813?–850	1410?–1446	Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥuwārazmī	<i>Al-ḡaw’</i> , vol. 2, p. 207; <i>Al-durr</i> , vol. 1, pp. 554–556

Table 6: Ḥanbalī imams (674/1275 to 853/1449?)

Term of office (<i>hiğrī/milādī</i>)		Name	Source
674–731	1275–1331	Al-Ġamāl Muḥammad b. ‘Uṭmān al-Āmidī	<i>Al-‘iqd</i> , vol. 2, pp. 134–136
731–759	1331–1357	Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Āmidī	<i>Al-‘iqd</i> , vol. 2, p. 316
759–772	1357–1371	Al-Sirāğ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf b. Aḥmad al-Fāsī	<i>Al-‘iqd</i> , vol. 5, p. 487
772–806	1371–1404	Al-Nūr ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Fāsī	<i>Al-ḡaw’</i> , vol. 5, p. 244; <i>Al-‘iqd</i> , vol. 6, p. 187
806–853	1404–1449?	Al-Sirāğ ‘Abd al-Laṭīf b. Muḥammad al-Fāsī	<i>Al-ḡaw’</i> , vol. 4, p. 333; <i>Al-durr</i> , vol. 2, pp. 897–900

As the tables show, the situation at the end of 8th/14th century was similar for both the Ḥanafī and Ḥanbalī imams. In addition, we cannot find a similar mutually beneficial relationship between the imams of these three Sunni schools of law and political authorities, as one that exists with the Mālikī imams. In sources, there is no evidence for why the Meccan *amīr* interfered in choosing the Mālikī imam. However, the case of Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (C6), a Mālikī imam described above, may provide a clue:

In the beginning of the second half of al-Muḥarram 820/February 1417, Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī was given a diploma of appointment to the Mālikī judgeship of Mecca, instead of me [the author of *Al-‘iqd*, Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Fāsī]. However, he was not able to carry out the job [of the judgeship]. He hid, fearing the aforementioned Meccan *amīr* (Ḥasan b. ‘Aḡlān). This is because he did not negotiate well for the Meccan *amīr* at the *amīr* of the caravan of Takrūr (*li-kawnihi lam yatawas-saṭ la-hu bi-ḥayr ‘inda amīr al-rakb al-Takrūrī*), who had much money for alms (*ṣadaqa*) in 819/1417. (. . .) He continued to hide [from the Meccan *amīr* and was not able to carry out the job of the judgeship]. This pleased the Meccan *amīr*.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 3, p. 99.

Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (C6) had trouble with the Meccan *Amīr* over the *Amīr* of the Takrūr caravan in 819/1417, before his appointment as judge. Another description says that in Ġumādā 820/June 1417, when he was reappointed to the Mālikī imamate after a few months of resignation, he was not able to carry out the job of the imamate because he hid in Mecca for fear of the Meccan *Amīr*.⁵⁰ No exact date is given and while we know he resigned from the Mālikī imamate in Dū al-Ḥiġġa 819/January 1417, we cannot know whether he was the Mālikī imam at the time. However, he was the Imam for 20 years, and had relations with pilgrims from Takrūr as we have seen in the previous chapter. The *Amīr* of the caravan possessed excess money for donation, and the Meccan *Amīr* tried to gain it from him through negotiation of the Mālikī imam. In this period, the Meccan *Amīr* Ḥasan b. ‘Aġlān extorted money from merchants.⁵¹ He also demanded money when hostile forces surrendered to him when conquering political factions in Ḥiġāz.⁵² Donation might be another way to gain assets in order to be a powerful *amīr*.

Thus, the imams were expected to stand in the middle of the Meccan *amīr* and pilgrims from West Africa, and help the Meccan *amīr* gain donation from the *amīr* of the pilgrimage caravan. For the Meccan *amīr*, who became the Mālikī imam mattered. We can assume that the Meccan *amīr*’s interference in choosing Mālikī imams at the end of the 8th/14th century might be the case.⁵³ This interference had a permanent effect on the inheritance of the imamate within a particular family and is only seen in the Mālikī imams.

V. Conclusion

In the 8th/14th century, two scholarly families served as Mālikī imams: the Qaṣṭallānīs and the Nuwayrīs. Evidence shows that each had a strong, mutually beneficial relationship with Takrūr pilgrims; the Mālikī imams were respected among pilgrims and received donations, while pilgrims enhanced their religious reputation by associating with the imams.

However, at the end of the 8th/14th century, the Meccan *amīr* and the Mamluks began to interfere in the choice of Mālikī imams. For the Meccan *amīr*, the Mālikī imam was expected to negotiate for him with the *amīr* of the pilgrimage caravan from West Africa in order to gain donations. This was probably the reason behind the Meccan *amīr*’s interference at the end of the 8th/14th century. We deduce that the mutually beneficial relationship between the Mālikī imams and Takrūr pilgrims influenced the relationship between the Mālikī imam and the Meccan *amīr*.

⁵⁰ Al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 2, p. 313.

⁵¹ J.L. Meloy, *Imperial Power and Maritime Trade*, pp. 102–106; R.T. Mortel, “Prices in Mecca during the Mamlūk Period,” pp. 295–296.

⁵² J.L. Meloy, *Imperial Power and Maritime Trade*, pp. 85–94.

⁵³ The Mamluks also interfered in choosing the imams in 819/1417. Although the sources do not say why, it may be for similar reasons (al-Fāsī, *Al-‘iqd*, vol. 3, p. 99).

This study shows us the ties between local Meccan scholars and pilgrims from other parts of the Muslim world, and how they influenced local Meccan affairs; the Mālikī imam was expected to stand in the middle of the Meccan *amīr* and the *amīr* of the pilgrimage caravan from West Africa in order to help the Meccan *amīr* obtain donations. Focusing on this relationship between Meccan scholars and pilgrims from distant regions provides a new perspective on how pilgrimage influenced the local affairs of the holy city. Although previous studies tend to focus on neighboring dynasties including the Mamluks, the Rasulids, and the Ilkhanids, and ignore the impact of people from other regions with no direct political influence on Mecca, such influence cannot be overlooked.

THE *ĠINN* OF POETRY IN CONTEMPORARY YEMEN AND ANCIENT ARABIA: PARALLELS, INCONSISTENCIES, AND THE ORIGINS OF AN AMBIVALENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS INSPIRATION

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Abstract

At the end of the last century, tribal poets in Yemen shared the concepts of *hāḡis* and *ḡalīla*—two *ġinn* of poetry or embodiments of the poet's faculties. This inspiration-related convention has common features with that of the early Arab poets, who also seem to have been relying on the assistance of *ġinn*. In both cases, a male-gendered muse was treated by the poet as a friend in need, while connection with daemons meant a strong talent and exceptional creative energy that distinguished a true poet. In both cases, however, it would be hardly possible to understand with certainty whether poets believed in a kind of daemons or simply referred to inspiration in a conventional way. Since premodern Yemeni poetry in vernacular as well as medieval tribal poetry of later than the eighth century have not been preserved, it would be impossible to substantiate a direct link between the conventions. Focusing on the early Arabic tradition, the study aims at providing insights into the origins of the phenomena evident in the parallels between them.

Résumé

À la fin du dernier siècle, les poètes tribaux du Yémen partageaient les notions de *hāḡis* et *ḡalīla* – deux djinns de la poésie ou incarnations des facultés du poète. Cette représentation conventionnelle de l'inspiration a des caractéristiques en commun avec celle des anciens poètes arabes, qui, paraît-il, comptaient aussi sur l'assistance des djinns. Dans les deux cas, une muse masculine était traitée par le poète comme un ami, alors qu'une connexion avec des démons signifiait un talent prononcé et une énergie créative exceptionnelle qui distingue le vrai poète. Pourtant, dans les deux cas, il est difficile de savoir avec certitude si les poètes croyaient vraiment en une sorte de démon inspirateur ou s'ils s'y référaient seulement d'une façon conventionnelle. Dans la mesure où la poésie prémoderne yéménite vernaculaire de même que la poésie médiévale tribale postérieure au viii^e s. n'ont pas survécu, prouver un lien direct entre les conventions poétiques est pratiquement impossible. En s'appuyant sur la tradition arabe ancienne, cette étude vise à donner un aperçu des origines du phénomène que les deux traditions ont en commun.

خلاصة

قد تصور الشعراء في اليمن في نهاية القرن الماضي أن إلهام الشاعر ينزله الهاجس والحليمة وهما من جن الشعر أو تجنس القوات الإبداعية. وكانت لهذا الاصطلاح الشعري خاصيات مشابهة لتصوير الإلهام في شعر القدماء الذين يبدو أنهم كانوا يعتمدون على مساعدة الجن. وفي الحالتين الاتنتين، ظهر التابع من الجن كأنه خليل الشاعر أو صديقه عند الضيق، وكانت الفكرة عن العلاقة بين الجن والشاعر أنها ترسم في موهبة شعرية ضخمة أو قوة إبداعية غير عادية. وفي الحالتين الاتنتين، كان هذا صعباً أن يفهم بالضبط إن كانت الإشارات إلى الروح المهمة في الشعر ظهور

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الاعتقادات بالجن أما كان إلا الطريق التقليدي للمناقشة في الوحي والشاعرية. لم تحفظ المصادر الشعر الجيني العامي الذي قبل الحداثة وكذلك الشعر القبلي القديم الذي بعد القرن الثامن، فلماذا السبب تستحيل إقامة صلة وراثية مباشرة بين التصويرين القديم والمعاصر. استنادا على الشعر القديم والأخبار التاريخية المتصلة به، تقصد هذه الدراسة البحث في أصول الظواهر التي تبدو في تشابه هذين الاصطلاحين.

Keywords

Poetry, *ġinn*, poetic inspiration, Arab poets, *hāġis*, *ḥalīla*

Mots-clés

poésie, djinns, inspiration poétique, poètes arabes, *hāġis*, *ḥalīla*

عبارات رئيسية

شعر، جن، إلهام شعري، شعراء العرب، هاجس، حليلة

I. Introduction: the daemons of early Arab poets and contemporary Yemeni tribesmen

In tribal Arab culture, a clear connection has been made between being a poet and being in touch with familiar spirits—the *ġinn* (sg. *ġinnī*)² or *ṣayātīn* (sg. *ṣaytān*)³ of inspiration. Medieval Arabic writings provide reports on the inspirational agents of well-known poets, giving their personal names and describing encounters with them. Pre-Islamic and early Islamic poets address their *ġinn* and *ṣayātīn* in verse,⁴ which proves

² On the etymology of the word *ġinnī*, see: A.J. Wensinck, "The Etymology", 1920, pp. 506–514; E. Zbinden, *Die Djinn des Islam*, 1953, p. 75; J. Henninger, "Beliefs in Spirits", 2004, pp. 44–48; T. Nünlist, *Dämonenglaube im Islam*, 2015, pp. 22–26. On the types and designations of *ġinn*, see: 'A. Ḥamīda, *Ṣayātīn al-ṣu'arā'*, 1956, p. 54; T. Nünlist, *Dämonenglaube im Islam*, 2015, pp. 313–322, 326f; A.S. Tritton, "Spirits and Demons in Arabia", 1934, pp. 715f.

³ A.S. Tritton ("Spirits and Demons in Arabia", 1934, p. 716) notices that the term *ṣaytān*, although a foreign word, found its way to Arabia early. That the word is a Hebrew loan (cf. He: *sātān*) is not doubted, but whether it was known already to the pagan Arabs is debated by J. Wellhausen (*Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 1961, p. 157, n. 3), who asserts that it may have been only the early Islamic tradition that had presented Arab paganism as being aware of it. P.A. Eichler (*Die Dschinn, Teufel und Engel*, 1928, pp. 63–64) contests this opinion, arguing that the term could not have been brought to Arabia only after the advent Islam. He supports the view of T. Nöldeke, I. Goldziher and G. van Vloten who proceed from an assumption that the word was used by the Arabs long before Muḥammad. On the word *ṣaytān* and its derivatives in the Arabic language, see also T. Fahd & A. Rippin, "Shaytān", *EF*, 1997, vol. 9, p. 406.

⁴ On the synonymy of the words *ġinnī* and *ṣaytān* during the *Ġāhiliyya* and in the early Islamic period, especially when referring to poetic inspiration, see: I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen*, 1896–1899, vol. 1, p. 106; P. Eichler, *Die Dschinn, Teufel und Engel*, 1928, p. 26; T. Izutsu, *God and Man*, 1964, p. 178; F. Meier, "Some Aspects of Inspiration", 1966, pp. 424–425; T. Nünlist, *Dämonenglaube im Islam*, 2015, pp. 56–59. After the advent of Islam, this synonymy coexisted with the Qur'anic most frequent meaning of *ṣaytān*—"a rebellious spirit leading astray". When used in this sense, *ṣaytān* is often translated as "satan" or "devil". When used in the sense of "poetic muse", *ṣaytān* can be translated as "daemon". M. Zwettler ("Mantic Manifesto", 1990, p. 76) finds "demons" to be an infelicitous translation. "Daemons", in his view, is more

that these reports may have truly reflected ancient popular beliefs. Medieval accounts, in their turn, find parallels in contemporary ethnographic data. Anthropologists who worked independently in the 1980s and 90s in different parts of Yemen, where the most archaic elements of Arab culture have been preserved to the present time, report that the poets they interviewed kept the tradition of addressing the daemons of inspiration, which, however, may have been regarded by the tribesmen themselves as merely the embodiments of the poet's faculties. Let us therefore first summarize this field data.

In Yemen, the forces responsible for poetic inspiration are referred to as *hāġis* and *halīla*. As a designation of a type of *ġinn*, the term *hāġis* is known already in the medieval historical-literary tradition, where it is applied to Miṣḥal, the attendant *ġinnī* of the poet al-A'šā (d. after 3/625).⁵ A belief in the female *ġinnī* of poetic inspiration named *halīla* is recorded with regard to nineteenth-century Ḥaḍramawt by I. Goldziher (who writes *Halīla*, understanding the term as a personal name),⁶ but is not reflected in the preserved medieval sources. In Yemeni tribal poetry, *hāġis* is sometimes addressed in the beginning of creation, being invoked when poets urgently need inspiration. The inspirer of poetic creativity is treated as a familiar assistant. Adhering to the poetic convention and, at the same time, to a kind of superstition, poets may start as follows: "Oh, my *hāġis*! I got used to your prompt replies"⁷ or "Oh, my head, remember this evening your *hāġis*!"⁸ When the poet's request is accepted and creative energy is afforded to him, it is presented as the aid of a friend that appears to lend a hand when needed: "It (*hāġis*) said, 'Quickly I came to you; // I am not like one who vanishes [the moment he is needed]. // Seize hold [of me] to extract'. // And he answered me in meters."⁹

Whether the authors of the quoted lines, recorded in different parts of Yemen, invoke their daemons or simply refer to their inspiration is unclear. Mikhail Rodionov, who worked in Western Ḥaḍramawt in the 1980s, writes on *hāġis* and *halīla* as the personal names (*Hāġis* and *al-Ḥalīla*) of "*šayṭāns* or *ġinn* of poetry". According to his data,

acceptable to render the term. Similarly, J. Wansbrough (*Quranic Studies*, 1977, p. 60), writing on the essentially neutral content of *šayṭān* when used in the meaning of "inspirational agent", defines this content as "daemoniac as opposed to diabolical". In this study, where sources are referred, the terms *ġinnī* and *šayṭān* are employed in accordance with the word used in the original text. In the general discussion of the traditional notions of poetic inspiration, the words *ġinnī* and daemon are used along with descriptive expressions such as "familiar spirit" and "inspirational agent".

⁵ Al-Ālūsī (d. 1270/1854), *Bulūġ al-arab*, 1964, vol. 2, p. 367; al-Qurašī (d. after 300/913), *Ġamharat aš'ār al-'Arab*, 1981, p. 50. Ġ. 'Alī (*Al-mufaṣṣal*, 1993, vol. 9, p. 119) writes on Miṣḥal as the *šayṭān*, *ġinnī* and *tābi* (following spirit) of al-A'šā. 'A. Ḥamīda (*Šayṭān al-šu'arā*, 1956, p. 54), explaining the term *hāġis* among several other designations of the types of *ġinn*, notes that al-A'šā had a *hāġis*, but cannot provide any other examples. Derived from the verb *haġasa* (to bestir itself in one's mind), the active participle *hāġis*, when refers to an inspirational agent, implies "a secret voice bestirring itself in one's mind".

⁶ I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen*, 1896–1899, vol. 1, p. 213.

⁷ *Yā hāġisi 'ahdī illā bik biddī!* See M. Rodionov, *The Western Ḥaḍramawt*, 2007, pp. 188–189.

⁸ *Yā rāsī al-lēla taḍakkar hāġisak!* See M. Suvorov & A. 'Awdalī, "Yemenski Zāmil", 2000, p. 59.

⁹ *Gāla ġitak sarī // mā maṭīli yidī // iltagif l-in-nazī // ġāba baḥḥārā.* See S. Caton, *Peaks of Yemen*, 1990, pp. 190 and 319.

speaking of poetry-making, the Ḥaḍramīs present *Hāġis* as a daemon that whispers poetic words to the poet. The role of his female counterpart *al-Ḥalīla* is to inspire the poet's imagination.¹⁰ Steven Caton, who worked in the same period in the north of Yemen, gives both words not as personal names, but as local terms. According to his data, the word *hāġis* is used by the tribesmen to refer directly to poetic talent or inspiration, classified among the mental faculties of the poet, while the term *ḥalīla* denotes the poet's imagination. He observes that *hāġis* also serves as a term for poet-genius whose talent is inexhaustible and bottomless.¹¹ Flagg Miller, who conducted field work in the 90s in Yāfi', found the following representation: a male-gendered muse referred to as *hāġis* enables poets to contextualise emotion appropriately and produce verse well suited to occasions, while the forceful female *ḥalīla* produces fleeting verse, "the stuff of raw energy".¹²

Recent studies on Yemeni tribal poetry do not relate *hāġis* and *ḥalīla* to medieval accounts on *ġinn*.¹³ A comparison of this sort would demand going far beyond the scope of works on ethnography of poetry. It would be, moreover, difficult to speculate about the relationship between the late pre-Islamic representation of *ġinn* and the modern Yemeni idea of poetic inspiration. The sources would not allow reaching across the gap of almost 1,500 years to substantiate a link between the conventions as well as between the understandings they express. As for medieval production in the classical idiom, the sources did not preserve tribal poetry of later than the second/eighth century, and the authenticity of the existing corpus is doubted. As for tribal poetry in vernacular, almost all examples available for scholarship have been collected in the twentieth century.¹⁴ The only definite thing is that, at the turn of the

¹⁰ M. Rodionov, *The Western Ḥaḍramawt*, 2007, p. 164.

¹¹ S. Caton, *Peaks of Yemen*, 1990, pp. 37–38, 73.

¹² F. Miller, *The Moral Resonance*, 2007, p. 159.

¹³ M. Rodionov (*The Western Ḥaḍramawt*, 2007, p. 164) only notes that, in the tribal Yemeni idea of poetic inspiration, the notions of *Hāġis* and *Ḥalīla* coexist with the Qur'anic representation of poetry as communication transmitted by *ṣayāṭīn* (Q 26:221–224). In the same context, S.M. Ibn Ṣayḥān (*Al-hāġis wa-al-ḥalīla*, 2006, p. 138 ff.), who compiled a collection of modern Yemeni poems with references to *hāġis* and *ḥalīla*, addresses himself to the Islamic stand on the issue of poetry. To defend the tribal tradition, as against the Qur'anic representation of poetry as communication received from *ṣayāṭīn*, he provides quotations attributed to Muḥammad to illustrate his complimentary attitude towards poetry. Scholars, thus, seem to be aware of the theoretical relevance of the Qur'anic bond between poets and *ṣayāṭīn* to *hāġis* and *ḥalīla*. The Qur'anic idea of inspiration through *ġinn* and *ṣayāṭīn*, however, should be studied apart from the accounts on the *ġinn* of poetic inspiration provided by the medieval historical-literary tradition.

¹⁴ Since the late eighth century, the pre-Islamic *koiné* of poetry was retrieved by philologists as a standard of reference to reconstruct the pure language of the desert Arabs. At the same time, in the tribal world, this poetic *koiné* was undergoing inevitable transformations. After it lost its standard classical idiom, the poetry of the desert was not considered worthy of further study and preservation (see S. Bonebakker, "Aspects of the History", 1970, p. 82; B. Gründler, "Early Arabic Philologists", 2015, p. 93). Therefore, while the earliest tribal poetry included in written reports refers to the very last years of the fifth century, the sources did not preserve ancient tribal poetry of later than the eighth century. Until the end of the twentieth century, Arab specialists of literature showed interest mainly in poems composed in classically-styled language. *Ḥumaynī*, or vernacular, poetry was traditionally ignored, for its character was deemed local and limited. See, e.g., the explanation of the Yemeni philologist 'Abdallāh

twenty-first century, similar notions of *hāġis* and *ḥalīla* were recorded by all scholars who addressed themselves to Yemeni poetry. This fact and the account on *ḥalīla* by Goldziher for nineteenth-century Ḥaḍramawt allow admitting that the idea of these daemons has been a deeply rooted phenomenon that was still widespread in Yemen a couple of decades ago. At the same time, the mere absence of *ḥalīla* in medieval discourse and the particular association of *hāġis* with al-Aʿšā speak against direct continuity between the conception of inspiration reflected in the early Arabic tradition and the respective idea shared by the Yemeni tribesmen. To claim that the latter evolved directly from the former would be as fallacious as to assume that the dialect of the Yemeni tribesmen originated from Classical Arabic.

Two remarks should be made about the absence of *ḥalīla*, or any other female-gendered muse responsible for imagination, in the literary-historical tradition of medieval Arabia. Firstly, unlike their modern Yemeni colleagues, early Arab poets seem not to distinguish between inspiration for words and inspiration for imagery. Secondly, none of them, perhaps with the exception of al-Aʿšā, claimed to have a female-gendered *ġinnī* along with a male-gendered familiar spirit.¹⁵

Another two remarks should be made about the particular association of *hāġis* with al-Aʿšā, who is recognised by the tradition as “the first who asked [money] for his poetry and set off for remote lands looking for opportunities to earn from it”.¹⁶ Firstly, within the corpus of anecdotes about encounters with the *ġinn* of famous pre-Islamic poets, the anecdote mentioning the daemon of al-Aʿšā as his *hāġis* belongs to a relatively late and, moreover, a marginal tradition (this point is addressed in detail further). Secondly, it is noticeable that al-Aʿšā’s encounter with his *hāġis* is described as occurring in Yemen, on the poet’s way to Ḥaḍramawt.¹⁷

This detail may hint at the fact that, already in ancient Arabia, the notion of *hāġis* had a particular link to Yemen. Equally, the reference to Ḥaḍramawt in the anecdote about al-Aʿšā’s *hāġis* may be a coincidence. Either way, it stands to reason that the conception of *hāġis* recorded in last-century Yemen could not have evolved from the understandings of the early Arab poets presented by the classical tradition. Rather it would be correct to assume that, as the contemporary Yemeni dialects have evolved from the local cluster of ancient Arabic dialects, the contemporary Yemeni conception of poetic inspiration originates from a distinctive local variation of the ancient Arabian representation of inspiration. As the old Yemeni dialects, although representing va-

al-Saqqāf (*Tārīḥ al-šūʿarāʾ*, 1934, vol. 1, p. 3), who, at the beginning of the previous century, compiled a collection of local poetry from Ḥaḍramawt and intentionally ignored vernacular poetry. As for Western scholars, they started collecting vernacular Arabic poetry only at the end of the nineteenth century.

¹⁵ There is an opinion that, apart from Miṣḥal, al-Aʿšā was assisted by a female-*ġinnī* named Ġihinnām. See Ġ. ʿAlī, *Al-mufaṣṣal*, 1993, vol. 9, p. 120. The name is mentioned in one of al-Aʿšā’s invective poems and may also refer either to the *ġinnī* of his opponent or to the opponent himself (in the last case, it should be Ġuhunnām). The poem and the interpretations of the name are addressed below.

¹⁶ *Huwa awwal man saʿala bi-šīʿrihi wa-intaġaʿa bihi aqāṣā al-bilād*. See al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), *Al-aġānī*, 2008, vol. 9, p. 81.

¹⁷ Al-Ālūsī (d. 1270/1854), *Bulūġ al-arab*, 1964, vol. 2, p. 367–368; al-Baġdādī (d. 1093/1682), *Ḥizānat al-adab*, 2000, vol. 8, p. 396.

rieties of *al-ʿArabiyya*, may have been influenced by the Old South Arabian languages, this ancient Yemeni variation, sharing some basic characteristics of the Arabian conception, may have been influenced by South Arabian representations and beliefs.¹⁸ On the other hand, as the dialect cluster of Yemen, being very conservative, shares many classical features not found across most of the Arabic-speaking world, the contemporary Yemeni tradition to invoke daemons of inspiration is unique for vernacular Arabic poetry, but, at the same time, has parallels with the notions of inspiration reflected in the classical tradition. Several phenomena draw attention in the light of these parallels.

Firstly, as the representation of *hāḡis* and *ḡalīla*, the attitude of the early Arab poets toward the *ġinn* of poetry seems ambivalent. Studying poetry and anecdotes about familiar spirits, it would be hardly possible to understand with certainty whether poets believed in *ġinn* or simply referred to inspiration, talent and creative energy in a conventional way.

Secondly, the traditional invocation of *hāḡis* in Yemeni poetry indicates that this male-gendered muse is usually treated by the poet as a friend or a fellow-tribesman who is expected to come and back him up in the moment of need. As I argue below, precisely this conception of familiar spirit was shared by the early Arab poets. In both cases, the idea is dissimilar from the early pre-Islamic and, on the other hand, from the Qurʾanic conception of the relationship between the poet and his following spirit. The early pre-Islamic notion associates poets with diviners, implying that both groups operate under the control of invisible beings communicating them words that they repeat verbatim.¹⁹ The Qurʾanic conception leans upon this early pre-Islamic notion and, moreover, interprets the *ġinn* of poetic and divinatory inspiration as *ṣayāṭīn* that take possession of their adherents to lead them astray and make them lie.²⁰ Thus, there is an obvious incompatibility between the Qurʾanic conception of inspiration and the respective idea of creative energy shared by the early Arab poets and the contemporary tribal poets of Yemen.

Finally, a bond between true poethood and contacts with *ġinn* is stressed both in the medieval accounts about inspiration and in the recent field reports from South Arabia. According to al-Ġāḡiẓ (d. 255/869), in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic time, all great poets (those referred to as *fihūl*, sg. *fahl*) were considered to be accompanied by *ṣayāṭīn*.²¹ Similarly, in the view of modern Yemeni tribesmen, only outstanding po-

¹⁸ On the pre-Islamic history of the Arabs in South Arabia, see J. Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity*, 2003, pp. 536–566.

¹⁹ T. Izutsu, *God and Man*, 1964, p. 169; M. Zwettler, “Mantic Manifesto”, 1990, p. 77. The retrieve of this conception in the pioneer works of the Arab studies is considered below.

²⁰ Q 26:210, 221–224. Buḡārī (d. 256/870), *Ṣaḡīḡ*, 2002, pp. 795, 809, 1458, 1550, 1869 (Hadith numbers: 3210, 3288, 5762, 6213, 7561); Muslim (d. 261/875), *Ṣaḡīḡ*, 1994, vol. 14, p. 323 (*Kitāb al-salām*, hadith number 123). See E. Zbinden, *Die Djinn des Islam*, 1953, p. 83; T. Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 1966, p. 75; C. Bürgel, “Der Dichter und sein Dämon”, 2006, p. 44; T. Nünlist, *Dämonenglaube im Islam*, 2015, p. 343.

²¹ Al-Ġāḡiẓ (d. 255/869), *Al-ḡayawān*, 1965–1969, vol. 6, pp. 225, 229. The section on the *ġinn* of poetic inspiration in *Al-ḡayawān* of al-Ġāḡiẓ is entitled *Ṣayāṭīn al-ṣuʿarāʾ*, and the term *ṣayāṭīn* is mostly used in

ets who compose verse constantly, unlike “petty poets” (*šū‘ayr*) who compose occasionally, can claim a connection with preternatural forces.²²

Considering the state of the sources, this study does not purport to relate the Yemeni representation of poetic inspiration to the early Arabic idea of the *ġinn* of poetry directly. Rather it aims at providing insights into the phenomena that become evident in the parallels between the conventions. This objective may be best explained through a comparison to another literary tradition. It is not doubted in the study of English literature that Milton’s *Paradise Lost* was influenced by the Homeric epics and the *Aeneid* of Virgil. The degree of these classical influences is, however, debated. While the earliest critics regard Homer as the key precursor of Milton, the later ones appraise the influence of Homer as minimal by comparison to that of Virgil, or even claim that Homer’s influence on Milton occurred through Vergil.²³ No definitive answer about the link between the poems can be given, but the degree of Milton’s indebtedness to Homer and Virgil should not seriously influence the discussion of certain parallels between the understandings of these poets. Among the parallels between the epics of Homer, the *Aeneid*, and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, the one related to the Muse is especially strong. Not only that Milton, as Homer and Virgil do, resorts to the figure of the Muse. Greek authors offer different conceptions of the Muse, but Milton seems to adopt precisely that of Homer. Unlike Hesiod’s Muses, which speak for themselves, Homer’s Muses speak for gods. They are divine and descend from Olympus to impart divine knowledge to humanity.²⁴ Because divine knowledge is eternal, Homer’s Muses, being themselves a kind of goddesses, “know all things” (*Iliad*, II: 484-5). In the same way, Vergil’s Muses are goddesses that “remember, and have the power to tell”. (*Aeneid*, VII:645). Similarly, Milton’s Muse is a heavenly force that inspired the prophets on mountaintops (I: 6-7) and is, therefore, associated with the Holy Spirit, whose eternal knowledge originates from its being present from the very beginning of creation (I: 19-20).

That Milton shares the Homeric-Vergilian conception of the Muse as a transmitter of divine knowledge should not be interpreted simply as his tribute to the Greco-Roman tradition in general or to Homer and Virgil in particular. Rather one can speak of a close parallel that indicates how Milton understood his own role as a poet. In their epics, Homer, Virgil, and Milton endeavour to express insights into very remote historical and cosmic subjects, for which no authoritative witnesses from humankind could have been found.²⁵ The similarity of the challenges faced by the poets is responsible for the similarity of their cognitive practices: they used to invoke the Muse to receive in-

it. That the word is used without its Qur’anic connotations to evil, perversion and deviance is proven by the parallel use of the term *ġinn* in the same section.

²² M. Rodionov, *The Western Ḥaḍramawt*, 2007, p. 164.

²³ G. Machacek, *Milton and Homer*, 2011, p. 1.

²⁴ On the difference between the Muses of Hesiod and Homer, see K.P. McHugh, *The Muses and Creative Inspiration*, 1993, p. 6.

²⁵ On this similarity between the epics of Homer and Milton, see J. Zonana, “The Embodied Muse”, 1989, p. 244.

sights related to eternal divine knowledge. In the same way, whatever the link between the poetic conventions of the early Arab poets and their contemporary Yemeni colleagues, the outlined parallels between them reflect the similarity of communication practices related to the identical challenges faced by poets in both forms of tribal Arab society. In both of them, the major task of the poet was to defend personal and tribal honour against the opponents. The practices of cognition and expression were, therefore, influenced by poetic experience of challenge.

References to *hāġis* in Yemeni tribal poetry have not gained such a consistent interpretation and conceptualisation as those provided by the medieval literary-historical tradition for the *ġinn* of the early Arab poets. Therefore, in this article, the phenomena that are evident in the parallels between the conventions are studied on the material of early poetry and the related tradition. Due to the outlined parallels between the conventions, insights into the nature of these phenomena, although received from the medieval tradition, may be valuable for the understanding of the contemporary tribal tradition as well.

Basing on early Arabic poetry and reports on poets, I demonstrate the notion of the poet's familiar *ġinnī* as a friend in need. I address the ambivalent attitude towards the *ġinn* of poetic inspiration. This ambivalence manifests itself in a combination of *ġinn*-related superstitions accounting for poetic mastery, on one side, and the conventional use of *ġinn*-imagery, on the other. I show that, in the late pre-Islamic and early Islamic period, a special discourse based on *ġinn*-imagery was employed to express the experience of challenge and to talk of the poet's faculties, talent and creative energy in the context of poetic battling and competition.

II. The material: in search of late pre-Islamic time

The notions of poetic inspiration through *ġinn* at the advent of Islam are reflected and refracted in the Islamic tradition. Akin to the existing examples of *ġāhili* poetry, reports on the inspirational agents of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic poets, to a large part, have been produced, or at least first written down, not earlier than in the second/eighth century. A reasonable question is to what extent one can categorise poetry and the related notions of poetic inspiration as "late pre-Islamic".

The approach towards the problem of authenticity adopted for this study may be best described by the words of R. Blachère, who found that it would be impossible to reconstruct pre-Islamic poems in their original version, but rather it would be possible to reconstruct the "climate" in which they had come into being.²⁶ As F. Rosenthal appraises, in pre-Islamic poetry, there are "sporadic statements and reflections on particular attitudes toward mental activity and intellectual perception" that may have appeared as "later insertions or inventions". At the same time, he suggests to consider as genuine almost everything that is transmitted as pre-Islamic, while at the same time keeping in mind that some legitimate doubt attaches to every detail.²⁷ The assumption

²⁶ R. Blachère, *Histoire de la littérature arabe*, 1952–1966, vol. 1, p. 85.

²⁷ F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge triumphant*, 2007, p. 13.

of this article is that, in general, the references to *ġinn* of inspiration in pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry are an authentic phenomenon. It is unlikely that all poems containing these references are forgeries, as well as that all allusions to attendant spirits are later insertions.

Another consideration in favour of the relevance of poetic material for reconstructing environment and discourse is that forgeries conform closely to earlier conventions of style and theme. When taken together, even the examples which may have been fabricated are useful for a study of the earlier period, because forgers were more proximate in time to the authors of their models. The authors of forged verses were familiar with the conventions of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic tradition and must have followed them very closely to present their production as earlier creations.²⁸

Writing on ideas related to the familiar spirits of the early Arab poets, the scholars are forced to make deductions from reports written down in the second-third/eighth-ninth centuries. The assumption is that the notions of poetic inspiration reflected in these reports have not been an invention of the ‘Abbāsid scholars, but rather date back to the age of the mentioned artists. These notions were kept in the popular traditions that were proximate in time to the mentioned artists, while the ‘Abbāsid scholars relied on those traditions when compiling their anecdotes. The fact that the references to familiar spirits in early Arabic poetry reflect the same inspirational conception as the later reports on poets supports this assumption. Otherwise, one would have to admit that all references to *ġinn* in pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry have been principally inserted to support anecdotes that do not rely on anything but the fantasy of the ‘Abbāsid scholars.

Goldziher, evaluating the credibility of the existing reports on the relationship between the early Arab poets and their *ġinn*, admits that these anecdotes could have been composed later than the poets they mention lived. Nevertheless, in his opinion, these reports are still noteworthy as they indicate how the early Arab poets were perceived in the period which is more proximate to them than the time when the reports were first written down. In his view, authors such as Abū ‘Ubayda (d. 209/825) may have not invented their accounts on poets, but have rather based them on earlier traditions.²⁹

The major primary sources in which reports on the relationship between the early Arab poets and their *ġinn* are concentrated are the anthologies compiled by al-Ġāḥiẓ,³⁰ al-Quraṣī (d. after 300/913),³¹ al-Ta‘ālibī (d. 429/1038)³² and al-Qazwīnī

²⁸ T. Qutbiddin (“*Khuṭba*—the Evolution”, 2008, p. 189) formulates this idea to support the relevance of the existing examples of early Arabic oration. See also S. Bonebakker (“Religious Prejudice”, 1976, p. 78), who employs a similar approach arguing for the use of the examples of *saġ*-incantations from the early Islamic period for the study of the pre-Islamic tradition they must continue.

²⁹ I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen*, 1896–1899, vol. 1, p. 12.

³⁰ Al-Ġāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), *Al-ḥayawān*, 1965–1969, vol. 6, pp. 172–350.

³¹ Al-Quraṣī (d. after 300/913), *Ġamharat aṣ‘ār al-‘arab*, 1981, pp. 47–63.

³² Al-Ta‘ālibī (d. 429/1038), *Timār al-qulūb*, 2003, pp. 62–67.

(d. 682/1283).³³ Biographical and pseudo-biographical accounts on poets provided, first of all, by Abū ‘Ubayda,³⁴ Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889),³⁵ al-İřfahānī (d. 356/967),³⁶ and Yāqūt (d. 626/1229)³⁷ also supply important details. The anecdotal nature of the reports on spirits and inspiration makes the question of their reliability irrelevant. The task is to reconstruct collective notions, conventional discourse and common literary environment.

Apart from the popular anecdotes about *ġinn*, stories of the accompanying spirits of poets are present in personal narratives. The most well-known example is *Risālat al-tawābi‘ wa-al-zawābi‘* (The treatise of familiar spirits and demons) by the Andalusian politician and poet Abū ‘Āmir Aḥmad b. Šuhayd (d. 426/1035).³⁸ To talk of the talent and legacy of several earlier poets, Ibn Šuhayd has chosen the travelogue form. He describes how, accompanied by his own familiar spirit, Zuhayr, he travels in the land of the *ġinn* to interview, amongst others, the daemons of Imru’ al-Qays, Ṭarafa, Qays b. al-Ḥaṭīm, Abū Tammām (d. 231/845), al-Buḥturī (d. 284/897), Abū Nuwās (d. between 198/813 and 200/815), and Abū al-Ṭayyib (d. 354/965). In the view of S. Stetkevych, through this parodic and humorous journey, the poet tests himself against his major poetic and literary influences.³⁹ As J. Hämeen-Anttila shows, the narrative comes into the margin of the eleventh-century *maqāma* tradition.⁴⁰ Presumably, the composition also leans upon the earlier tradition of anecdotes about the *ġinn* of famous poets, including stories about encounters with them. Collective notions, however, should be studied on the basis of the popular tradition itself rather than personal narratives alluding to it. Therefore, Ibn Šuhayd’s work is not as relevant as the anecdotes provided by al-Qurašī, al-Qazwīnī and some other mentioned authors. As for the popular anecdotes, they have enough in common to allow regarding the representations they reflect as traditional.

Since early Arabic poetry and the accounts on those who produced it were first transmitted orally, the texts are characterised with variability. Additional variability has been produced by transmission via manuscripts. Over the first centuries of Arabic handwriting, texts were often copied in the *rasm* script, in which dots and dashes were omitted, and several groups of letters had the same graphic representation or could be easily confused. Variations produced as a result of it are usually too insignificant to influence conclusions on beliefs and conventional discourse. For example, due to the same representation of the letters *ġim* and *ḥā* in the earliest manuscripts, one of the

³³ Al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283), *‘Aġā’ib al-maḥlūqāt*, 1967, pp. 368–374.

³⁴ Abū ‘Ubayda (d. 209/825), *Kitāb al-naqā’id*, 1998.

³⁵ Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), *Al-ši‘r wa-al-šu‘arā*, 1982.

³⁶ Al-İřfahānī (d. 356/967), *Al-aġānī*, 2008.

³⁷ Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), *Mu‘ġam al-udabā’*, 1993.

³⁸ See Ibn Šuhayd (d. 426/1035), *Risāla*, 1996, pp. 91–114; see also Ibn Šuhayd, *The treatise*, 1971.

³⁹ S.P. Stetkevych, “Poetic Genius”, 2007, pp. 333–335.

⁴⁰ J. Hämeen-Anttila, “Ibn Shuhayd”, 1996–1997, pp. 65–80.

traditions mistakenly mentions the daemon of al-Aʿšā as Misġal instead of Miṣḥal.⁴¹ Owing to similar representations of the final *lām* and *kāf*, there are different versions of a verse on the inspirational *ġinnī* of Ḥassān b. Tābit (d. 54/674), the “poet of the Prophet”. In one version, we read that the spirit decorates the speech of the poet with best ornaments by means of “weaving” (*ḥāka*). In another one—by means of painting or calligraphy (*ḥāla* in the meaning of *nammaqa*).⁴² In both cases, however, the difference is not substantial for the conceptual level of the discussion.

On the other hand, misreadings of final *nūn* and *yāʾ* in combination with the same representation of *ġīm* and *ḥāʾ* may have been the reason for a discussion on the expression *kilāb al-ġinn* (the dogs of the *ġinn*). This expression appears in the marginal variation of a line from the *muʿallaqa* of ʿAmr b. Kulṭūm (d. 584 AD), one of the leaders and the greatest poet of the Taġlib, who became famous for poetising the struggle of his tribe against the Laḥmids and the Bakrids. The generally accepted version reads *kilāb al-ḥayy* (the dogs of the tribe/camp). The verse reads: “*The dogs of the tribe* (or “of the *ġinn*”) *barked at us, but we cut the thorns of tragacanth, [neutralising] those who approached us*”.⁴³ Most likely, the poet depicts a raid made upon a camp early in the morning and the dogs of the tribe barking at the enemy approaching in the darkness. The version with *kilāb al-ġinn* presents the picture of a battle and tribal poets (“the dogs of the *ġinn*”) attacking the enemy with invective before actual battling has started. The interpretation of the expression *kilāb al-ġinn* as “poets” belongs to al-Ġāḥiẓ.⁴⁴ The expression “the dogs of the *ġinn*” which, most likely, had never been used by ʿAmr b. Kulṭūm, but has been produced later by some copyists, is, nevertheless, employed by T. Fahd to argue the conception of the absolute dependence of the early Arab poets with regard to their *ṣayātīn*.⁴⁵ This illustrates how transmitting poetry via manuscripts may sometimes produce facts which later influence scholarly discussion at a conceptual level. As this article shows, when the late pre-Islamic and early Islamic artists are considered, the thesis of the absolute dependence of the poets on their following spirits is in fact dubious.

III. Divinatory versus poetic: the lack of differentiation

Fahd argues the thesis of absolute dependence not only by quoting one dubious expression from poetry. Another illustration he provides is an anecdote about Ġarīr (d. 110/728), the Umayyad court poet of Bedouin background, whose companion from

⁴¹ See, e.g., the Arabic text of al-Qazwīnī’s “Wonders of Creation” (*ʿAġāʾib al-maḥlūqāt*, 1967, p. 373). The confusion between *ġīm* and *ḥāʾ* is likely to result from a mistake of medieval copyists, rather than from a typographical error in the edition. In the German translation of the book, the name is transliterated as Misdschal (al-Qazwīnī, *Die Wunder*, 2004, p. 183), which means that the Arabic original had *ġīm* instead of *ḥāʾ*.

⁴² Ḥassān b. Tābit (d. 54/674), *Dīwān*, 1994, p. 106. Cf. T. Nünlist, *Dämonenglaube im Islam*, 2015, p. 364.

⁴³ ʿAmr b. Kulṭūm (d. 584 AD), *Dīwān*, 1991, p. 72, n. 34; al-Tibrīzī (d. 502/1109), *Šarḥ al-qasāʾid al-ʿašr*, 1933, pp. 226–227.

⁴⁴ Al-Ġāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), *Al-ḥayawān*, 1965–1969, vol. 6, p. 229.

⁴⁵ T. Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 1966, p. 74.

the *ġinn* claimed that the poet would have been unable to compose even a line of verse without his help.⁴⁶ This is still not a solid base for making conclusions on a conception of the relationship between the poets and their spirits. The first thing to note in this respect is that the inspirational conception relevant to the early *Ġāhiliyya* is quite irrelevant to the late pre-Islamic time, not to mention the early Islamic period.

As T. Izutsu notes, the more we go back to the ancient times the more difficult does it become to distinguish a poet (*šāʿir*) from a soothsayer (*kāhin*).⁴⁷ According to the classical theory suggested by I. Goldziher, at the earliest stage, Arabic poetry developed as a manifestation of soothsaying, and the Arab poet's most ancient role was a shamanistic seer and oracle giver.⁴⁸ Not in vain, the name of the poet's profession in the Arabic language—*šāʿir*—meaning literally “the one who knows [by means of instinctive perception]”, connotes not to the process of creation, but to a special mode of knowing related, in the popular consciousness, to inspirational agents imagined as *ġinn*. Most likely that, at the earliest stage, the term *šāʿir* was a designation of a divinatory specialty (“incantator and inciter to battle”) practiced by shamanistic seers.⁴⁹

It may have been only the linguistic media that marked the initial distinction between the *šāʿir*, who majorly used the primitive poetic meter called *raġaz*, and the *kāhin*, whose principal instrument was rhymed prose (*saġʿ*). Two distinct professions may have developed after different types of secret knowledge and magical pronouncement had been related to different linguistic media. As Fahd holds, the *raġaz* meter had been associated with magical knowledge and enchantments employed for battle incantation and funeral lamentation, whereas *saġʿ* had been linked to divinatory knowledge and oracular pronouncements.⁵⁰ Apparently, this division was not so clear-cut, and even in the latter *ġāhili* period both forms were used for both types of pronouncements. The soothsayers did not confine themselves to rhymed prose and used the *raġaz* meter as well,⁵¹ whereas not only *raġaz*, but also *saġʿ* was employed in pre-battle magic.⁵² In both cases, however, secret knowledge and unusual utterances were believed to come from spirits. Therefore, when the battle incantation and funeral lamentation of the *šāʿir* had been gradually losing its magical role, turning into the literary genres of invective and dirge, the nature of the poet's imagination and metered words was still believed to be the same as the source of the soothsayer's secret knowledge and rhymed prose.

⁴⁶ This anecdote is provided by al-İsfahānī (*Al-aġānī*, 2008, vol. 8, p. 51) and is first discussed by I. Goldziher (*Abhandlungen*, 1896–1899, vol. 1, p. 11).

⁴⁷ T. Izutsu, *God and Man*, 1964, p. 173.

⁴⁸ I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen*, 1896–1899, vol. 1, pp. 1–105.

⁴⁹ T. Fahd, “Kāhin”, *EF*, 1978, vol. 4, p. 422.

⁵⁰ T. Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 1966, p. 117, n. 4.

⁵¹ *Raġaz*-vaticinations of the pre-Islamic *kāhin* Ḥaṭar b. Mālik are a good example. See, e.g., “*Aṣābahu, aṣābahu...*”, al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 853/1449), *Al-iṣāba fi tamyiz al-ṣaḥāba*, 2008, vol. 9, pp. 397–398. See also “*Yā maʿshara banī Qaḥṭāni...*”, al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), *Al-wāfi bi-al-wafayāt*, 2000, vol. 24, pp. 304–305.

⁵² Some examples of pre-battle *saġʿ*-incantations used in the first century of Islam are provided by I. Goldziher (*Abhandlungen*, 1896–1899, vol. 1, p. 72 ff.).

Even though the process of verbal communication coming to a human being from a preternatural force was imagined in both cases as identical, its meaning for the poet as against the soothsayer was changing in course of time. While the evolution of the common conception of divinatory-poetic inspiration and its later adoption in Islam have not lacked academic attention, the difference between the representations of divinatory and poetic inspiration in the late pre-Islamic period has been generally overlooked.

It has never been doubted that the Qur'anic conception of inspiration through *ṣayāṭīn* had not been an invention of Muḥammad. Rather it has been studied how this conception may have evolved over the centuries preceding the advent of Islam, and to what extent it has been modified by the Prophet. J. Wellhausen finds traces of an original conception, according to which a *kāhin* spoke at the behest of a pagan deity.⁵³ At that stage, in his opinion, the *ǧinn* were not perceived as gods themselves, but rather as prophetic spirits in their service.⁵⁴ To the belief of the Islamic time that the *ǧinn* are able to appear in human form, Wellhausen juxtaposes an ancient pre-Islamic conception that an extraordinary person could become a habitation of a superhuman being—as a holy tree or a sacred place could. This conception implied that a human acted and spoke at the behest of his spirit. It is from this notion that Wellhausen derives the pre-Islamic representation of the soothsayer's talent and the poet's genius as an "accompanying" or "following" *ǧinnī* (*ṣāḥib* or *tābi*). This conception, as he recognises, coexisted with the notion that not only outstanding persons, but every human had a follower from the *ǧinn*.⁵⁵ With the advent of Islam, the pre-Islamic gods were reduced to evil spirits and assimilated with them.⁵⁶ The *ǧinn* had become earthly beings without any divine nature. As such, they had been separated from angels and interpreted as their antagonists.⁵⁷ Wellhausen does not consider how the soothsayers and poets may have been influenced by the Islamic reinterpretation of the *ǧinn*, mentioning only that the divination in Arabia became extinct shortly after the advent of the new religion.⁵⁸

As Wellhausen, G. van Vloten finds that Muḥammad generally adopted the pre-Islamic notion of the propensity of the *ǧinn* to pursue humans. As he observes, unlike the Qur'anic conception, the pre-Islamic one related this notion to the good and useful, rather than evil, expressions of the behaviour of the spirits. According to van Vloten, the special connection of the *ǧinn* to the *kuhhān* is the main example of such good expressions: the *ǧinnī* defined as *raʿī* was originally the soothsayer's information spirit, whereas each ordinary human was believed to have a familiar protection spirit de-

⁵³ J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 1961, p. 134.

⁵⁴ J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 1961, pp. 208–224. On this opinion, see: T. Fahd, "Anges, démons et djinns", 1971, p. 191; J. Henninger, "Beliefs in Spirits", 2004, pp. 36–37.

⁵⁵ J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 1961, p. 156.

⁵⁶ On the reinterpretation of the *ǧinn* by Muḥammad, see also J. Chabbi, *Le seigneur des tribus*, 1997, pp. 185–211; E.H. Tengour, *L'Arabie des djinns*, 2013.

⁵⁷ J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 1961, pp. 137, 157–159.

⁵⁸ J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 1961, pp. 138, 156, 157, n. 1.

finer as *qarīn* (pl. *quranā'*). It was only Muḥammad who denounced the *ġinn* of the *kuhhān* as evil (*šayāṭīn*), thus, disparaging the source of the soothsayer's inspiration as impure. In the same way, the *quranā'* had been reinterpreted from the familiar protection spirits into *šayāṭīn* leading astray.⁵⁹ Thus, to a certain degree, the scholar relates Muḥammad's reinterpretation of the *ġinn* to the Prophet's antipathy towards the soothsayers. However, he does not observe the implications of this reinterpretation for poets.

Goldziher finds that the initial notion of the poet's connection to the *ġinn* was based on a belief that higher powers manifest themselves in special functions that an outstanding person is expected to perform, rather than in one's artistic production. This belief evolved in a conception that the *šā'ir* (its meaning was still closer to "soothsayer") owed to the *ġinnī* some sort of special knowledge. Later, after the *šā'ir* had evolved from a kind of soothsayer into "the artist of words" (*Wortkünstler*), the *ġinn* were believed to express themselves through poets or to bring them their endowment of verse composition.⁶⁰ Goldziher reasonably notes that, at the time of the rise of Islam, there was a notion that only a part of the poet's production was composed by spirits and that there was human poetry along with the poetry of the *ġinn*.⁶¹ However, he stops short from analysing the differences between the conceptions of poetic and divinatory inspiration in the latter *ġāhili* period.

Eichler, although passingly, seems to notice that the Islamic conception of demoniac inspiration, which depicts *šayāṭīn* as coming down to take possession of every sinful liar, was in fact hardly applicable to the poets. The scholar suggests that the Qur'anic conception of inspiration through *šayāṭīn* (*Inspiration durch Schaitane*), most likely, builds on the pre-Islamic notion of inspiration through *ġinn* (*Dschinninspiration*), but, in his view, in the days of Muḥammad, this notion had already faded, and it is only after the advent of Islam that it was refreshed. When Eichler assumes that the conception of demoniac, or diabolical, inspiration (*teuflische Inspiration, Teufelsinspiration*) postulated in Q 26:221-223 might have been applied to poets, he notes that it was barely relevant to them, as in the pre-Islamic conception of poetic inspiration usually only one familiar *ġinnī* is attached to each poet.⁶² The scholar does not argue or elaborate this point further.

An overlooking of the difference between the latter *ġāhili* conceptions of divinatory and poetic inspiration led to some confusion. For instance, Fahd, writing on the inspirational function of the *ġinn*, mentions the notion of the ability of the spirits to eavesdrop on heaven. According to the Qur'anic conception, this ability made some *ġinn* informed agents of divinatory knowledge till it was taken from them at the advent of Islam, after the sky had been protected with shooting stars.⁶³ In the same place,

⁵⁹ G. van Vloten, "Geister und Zauberer", 1893, pp. 185–186. The similar view on the Islamic reinterpretation of the *ġinn* was expressed by I. Goldziher (*Abhandlungen*, 1896–1899, vol. 1, p. 7).

⁶⁰ I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen*, 1896–1899, vol. 1, pp. 5–25.

⁶¹ I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen*, 1896–1899, vol. 1, pp. 107–108.

⁶² P. Eichler, *Die Dschinn, Teufel und Engel*, 1928, pp. 26–28.

⁶³ Q 37:6–10; 41:12; 67:5; 72:8–9.

Fahd points to the belief that the endowment of the poet was also personified as a *ǧinnī* or a *šayṭān*, and certain poets claimed to be inspired by such spirits.⁶⁴ Thus, the scholar appeals to the Qur'anic representation of the diviner's inspiration and, at the same time, to the pre-Islamic popular conception of poetic inspiration. Both Wellhausen and Eichler argue that the Qur'anic notion of eavesdropping *ǧinn* pelted with stars is not based on a pre-Islamic Arabian myth.⁶⁵ The *ǧāhili* conception of divinatory inspiration was, therefore, obviously different from the Qur'anic one. To determine the degree of proximity between the notions of divinatory and poetic inspiration, one has to compare parallel pre-Islamic conceptions. As for the Qur'anic conception of demonic inspiration, which is in theory equally applied both to the diviner and the poet, it may only be correlated with the pre-Islamic notions to find what sort of practitioners it primarily targeted.

Since the picture of the pre-Islamic and Islamic notions of preternatural inspiration is multilayered and fragmented, it is important to stress the period and application of each mentioned conception. Fahd considers that "from prophetic and divinatory inspiration there is no more than one step to poetic inspiration as one only needs to change the name of the intermediary", and "the angel of the prophet and the *ǧinnī* of the *kāhin* give way to the *šayṭān* of the poet".⁶⁶ This must be relevant for a very popular pre-Islamic conception only. From the Qur'anic point of view, as Izutsu has shown, there is an obvious conceptual difference between prophetic inspiration and inspiration through *ǧinn*.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the literary-historical tradition indicates the existence of a late pre-Islamic conception of poetic inspiration through *ǧinn*, which is different from the Qur'anic conception of devilish inspiration presented as possession by *šayṭān*.

The same is true for Fahd's thesis that "the Qur'an abhors the poet on account of the mystical and magical nature conferred upon him, both through the mystery of the secret knowledge which he possesses and through the fact that he is the habitation of a spirit at whose behest he speaks and composes his verses".⁶⁸ This is correct for the properly Qur'anic representation, in which the poets are principally considered to be

⁶⁴ T. Fahd, "Anges, démons et djinns en Islam", 1971, p. 191.

⁶⁵ Arguing that this myth could not originate from Arabian paganism, P. Eichler (*Die Dschinn, Teufel und Engel*, 1928, p. 27) does not make assumptions on its probable origins, whereas J. Wellhausen (*Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 1961, p. 137, n. 6) considers it to emerge in Arabia under Christian or Jewish influence.

⁶⁶ T. Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 1966, p. 73.

⁶⁷ From the Qur'anic point of view, the real source of the Prophet's inspiration is the Creator, while the soothsayers and the poets are inspired by the beings that were themselves created by God and will be brought forth before him to be judged. Moreover, the difference between the types of inspiration is based on different patterns of relation between the inspirer and the inspired. In the case of the *šā'ir* and the *kāhin*, there is a two-person-relation: a *ǧinnī* speaks through a human being. The conception of divine prophetic inspiration implies a three-person-relation. An angel does not speak through a human being, as a *ǧinnī* does, but rather acts between God and a prophet, bringing divine words from the former to the latter. See T. Izutsu, *God and Man*, 1964, p. 175.

⁶⁸ T. Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 1966, p. 74.

possessed in a way similar to the soothsayer's inspiration.⁶⁹ This also may be correct with regard to the age of poets-shamans, when the only difference between the *šā'ir* and the *kāhin* was that the latter gave his utterances mostly in the *sağ'* form, whereas the pronouncements of the former appeared in *rağaz*. This would be, however, an oversimplification with regard to the poets of the late pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods.

Authors who address themselves to the relation between the Islamic conception of prophecy and the pre-Islamic notion of communications received from *ġinn* also do not tend to study the difference between divinatory and poetic inspiration in the late *Ġāhiliyya*. T. Izutsu observes that, in the view of the pagan Arabs, Muḥammad, as a common soothsayer or poet, only claimed to have secret knowledge brought to him by a supernatural being from heaven. The scholar notes that, in the pre-Islamic conception of inspiration, there was no distinction between the types of agents: whether that supernatural being be God, an angel or a *šayṭān*—for the pagan Arabs, all were *ġinn*.⁷⁰ M. Zwettler, considering the pre-Islamic idea of inspiration through mantic communication, writes that the poet, in the same way as the soothsayer, was presumed to be operating under the control of an invisible being that “communicated directly and privately to him words that he then repeated verbatim not as his own but as those of his controlling agent”.⁷¹ F. Meier follows how the notion of the demons of poetic inspiration was maintained in Islam. As for the pre-Islam, he only stresses an association between the poet and the diviner as reflected in the fact that Muḥammad was confused with both and had to deny being either of the two.⁷²

The most probable reason for the lack of differentiation between the ancient conception of divinatory inspiration and the late pre-Islamic notion of poetic inspiration in the scholarship is that the Qur'an equally applies the first one to both the *šā'ir* and the *kāhin*. This, in its turn, is related to the fact that, due to the same representation of inspirational process in both cases, in the days of Muḥammad, at a popular level, an association between poetry and divination may have been still strong. The Qur'anic insistent denial of Muḥammad's being a *šā'ir* or a *kāhin*⁷³ and of his revelation's being a result of communication with *šayāṭīn*,⁷⁴ as well as the charge levelled

⁶⁹ Such an interpretation of Q 26:221–224 implies two crucially important assumptions: 1) verses 221–223 are relevant not only to the soothsayers, but also to the poets; 2) *al-ġāwūn* (the deviant/perverse ones) in Q 26:224 (“And [as for] the *šū'arā'*—the perverse ones follow them”) refers to *šayāṭīn* and not, or not only, to deviant, erring humans. That the poet's pronouncements are regarded in the Revelation as words brought down by *šayāṭīn* is reflected in the Qur'anic discourse itself. In particular, the denials that the Qur'an is “neither the word of a *šā'ir*” and “nor that of a *kāhin*” (Q 69:41–42) are functionally equal to the denials: “And the *šayāṭīn* have not brought it (the Revelation) down” (Q 26:210) or “And it (the Revelation) is not the word of an accused *šayṭān*” (Q 81:25). From this follows that the expressions “word of a *šā'ir*” and “word of a *kāhin*” mean communications received from *šayāṭīn*.

⁷⁰ T. Izutsu, *God and Man*, 1964, pp. 171–172, 175.

⁷¹ M. Zwettler, “Mantic Manifesto”, 1990, p. 77.

⁷² F. Meier, “Some Aspects of Inspiration”, 1966, pp. 423, 425–427.

⁷³ Q 36:69; 52:29; 69:41–42.

⁷⁴ Q 26:210; 81:25.

against the Prophet by Meccan detractors that he was a *ġinn*-possessed poet⁷⁵ or practiced sorcery,⁷⁶ assumes that such allegations may have been indeed made.

The confusion of Muḥammad with various sorts of mantic practitioners, which implied the confusion of the Almighty God with *šayāṭīn*, made it essential to dissociate the Prophet equally from all kinds of *ġinn*-inspired figures known to the pre-Islamic Arabs. Therefore, the Qur'anic doctrine argues equally for the inferiority and impurity of the inspirational sources of all practitioners associated with *šayāṭīn*, even though in the days of Muḥammad the masters of *qaṣīda*-odes did not present their relation with *ġinn* as possession and absolute loyalty.

IV. Methodology of distinctions

Dependence and loyalty of the human with regard to his *ġinnī* is a decisive factor for comprehending the conceptual difference between divinatory and poetic inspiration in the late pre-Islamic period. At the stage when the main feature distinguishing the *šā'ir* from the *kāhin* was the use of a regular meter in addition to rhyme, incantations and cursing of the "poet" were believed to have magical effect precisely as pronouncements originating in the unseen powers. At that early stage, both the *šā'ir* and the *kāhin* may have been believed to be fully controlled by invisible beings that communicated them words which they repeated not as their own, but as those of directing forces. Using the formulation of Zwettler, the *šā'ir*, similarly to the *kāhin*, pronounced "words that he could not have been expected to have produced of his own volition".⁷⁷

In the late *Ġāhiliyya*, when the poets were presenting themselves as artists,⁷⁸ the role of their communication with preternatural forces was reinterpreted. Even if the process of verbal communication coming to a man from a spirit was still imagined as similar in the cases of both practitioners, the fact that the poet was no longer regarded as a shamanistic figure gave to this communication a principally different meaning. As opposed to the soothsayer's vaticinations or the ancient *šā'ir*'s incantations, the metered and rhymed pronouncements of the poet-artist were not expected to contain any knowledge of the "unseen"⁷⁹ or to produce magical effect. Rather his *excessive imagination and linguistic virtuosity* were linked to unseen powers. Unlike "magical" words and knowledge, this did not imply full loyalty to spirits, preternatural control and impelled discourses. Rather it meant that supernormal creative energy was being afforded to a gifted person in the moment of need. The notion of *hāġis* and *ḥalīla* in

⁷⁵ Q 21:5; 37:36; 52:30.

⁷⁶ Q 6:7; 11:7; 21:3; 34:43; 37:15; 46:7.

⁷⁷ M. Zwettler, "Mantic Manifesto", 1990, p. 77.

⁷⁸ On this, see T. Izutsu, *God and Man*, 1964, p. 169; M. Zwettler, "Mantic Manifesto", 1990, p. 77.

⁷⁹ "Indeed, the present day and tomorrow depend, // [as well as] the day after tomorrow, on what you are not aware of",—declares 'Amr b. Kulṭūm (d. 584 AD) addressing his beloved in the opening part of his *mu'allāqa*-poem and implying that he himself is also unaware of this sort of things. See 'Amr b. Kulṭūm, *Diwān*, 1991, p. 67. "I know the present day, and what was yesterday, before it, // but regarding the awareness of tomorrow, I am blind",—proclaims Zuhayr b. Abī Sulmā (d. 609 AD) in the didactic part of his *mu'allāqa*-poem. See Zuhayr, *Diwān*, 1988, p. 110.

the modern tribal culture of Yemen seems to reflect a similar vision of the relation between poets and spirits. *Ḥalīla*, as M. Rodionov heard from some Ḥaḍramīs (although does not mention this in his monograph on Western Ḥaḍramawt), may inadvertently send a poet mad by oversaturating his imagination and, thus, stirring his mind. At the same time, nobody presents this muse, responsible for imagination only, as taking possession. Similarly, *hāġis* is merely a familiar prompter, who is expected to supply wording.

Since the early Arabic tradition indicates the conception of *ġinn* as familiar prompters already in the late *Ġāhiliyya*, it would be a fallacy to describe the idea of poetic inspiration in the early Islamic period in terms of absolute dependency and, moreover, to employ an example from the Umayyad period to illustrate it. Thus, the first methodological point for the study of the conception of the properly poetic (not divinatory or divinatory-poetic) inspiration in tribal Arab culture consists of two distinctions. Firstly, the situation in the late pre-Islamic period, when most poets presented themselves as artists and did not pretend to know the “unseen”, has to be distinguished from the situation in the early *Ġāhiliyya*, when the poet was a shamanistic figure, and magical power was attributed to his metered and rhymed incantations and curses. Secondly, the representation of poetic inspiration in early Arabic poetry and accounts on poets of the sixth to eighth centuries AD has to be distinguished from the Qur’anic conception of diabolical divinatory-poetic inspiration. Neither the early *ġāhili*, nor the Qur’anic association between poetry and divination has much to do with the conception of inspiration though *ġinn* as reflected in the Arabic literary-historical tradition with regard to the late pre-Islamic and early Islamic poets.

The second point is related to how the allusions to *ġinn* in poetry and reports on poets are usually addressed in the scholarship. In the majority of studies on spirits in Arabia, the issue of poetic inspiration is treated only passingly, as one of the numerous characteristics of the *ġinn*.⁸⁰ The scale of most articles and chapters dedicated specifically to the *ġinn* of poetry is too small to consider the full complex of anecdotes about the inspirational agents of famous poets or references to familiar spirits made in verse, and these works usually do not aim at performing this.⁸¹ The first work which pays to the issue considerable attention and purports to review most of the existing references to the *ġinn* of poetic inspiration is that of ‘A. Ḥamīda.⁸² This study, however, treats the inspiration of *šu‘arā’* and *kuhhān* as expressions of the same capability of daemons, without noticing the difference between the conceptions of divinatory talent and poetic genius in the late *Ġāhiliyya*. Moreover, it regards the anecdotes about the *ġinn* of poets and references to familiar spirits made in poetry as expressions of sincere beliefs

⁸⁰ See, e.g., J. Tritton, “Spirits and Demons in Arabia”, 1934, p. 723; T. Izutsu, *God and Man*, 1964, pp. 169–175; T. Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 1966, pp. 69–76; id., “Anges, démons et djinns en Islam”, 1971, p. 191; J. Henninger, “Beliefs and Spirits among the Pre-Islamic Arabs”, 2004, pp. 34–35.

⁸¹ See I. Goldziher, “Die Ġinnen der Dichter”, 1891, pp. 685–690; F. Meier, “Some Aspects of Inspiration by Dreams in Islam”, 1966, pp. 421–429; C. Bürgel, “Der Dichter und sein Dämon”, 2006, pp. 43–52; A. El-Zein, *Islam, Arabs, and Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 2009, pp. 121–133.

⁸² ‘A. Ḥamīda, *Šayāṭīn al-šu‘arā’*, 1956, pp. 71–107.

which were shared by the ancient Arabs and the early Arab poets in particular. A recent encyclopaedic work on beliefs in daemons in Islam by T. Nünlist also contains a considerable chapter on poetic inspiration. The most important references to *ġinn* of poetry made in Arabic historical-literary tradition are reviewed as reflections of beliefs and customs.⁸³

This study makes a distinction between beliefs in *ġinn* and the use of *ġinn*-imagery. The employed approach implies that the references to *ġinn* made by some early Arab poets, as well as by the later Arabic writers who transmitted anecdotes about these poets, do not so much reflect beliefs as simply indicate the use of a special discourse for addressing the issue of inspiration and talent. To prove this assumption, I categorise the existing accounts according to their context and consider typical situations in which the poets refer to their familiar spirits. As it turns out, conventional *ġinn*-imagery is used for very specific situations and experiences: poetic battling, other forms of rivalry between poets for leadership, and a very urgent need for inspiration to defend personal honour. In this respect, the use of discourse based on *ġinn*-imagery reflects the pre-Islamic tribal ethics of manly pride and loyalty to the kin. This detail indicates the tribal origins of the tradition to invoke the *ġinn* of inspiration. Considering specific situations and experiences for which the discourse under study is employed, it is unlikely that this tradition has been an invention of some ‘Abbāsid scholars.

V. Poetic inspiration at the advent of Islam and in its first centuries

The Islamic tradition presents the *kuhhān* as fully controlled by their *ġinn* or *šayātīn*. It was believed that when a *kāhin* was in the state of possession and did not speak of his volition, but rather a *šayṭān* spoke through his mouth, his speech was fragmented to the extent that even separate words might have been cut. According to one of the traditions, it is using this characteristic that Muḥammad defined that a *šayṭān* spoke through the *kāhin* Ibn (al-)Šayyād.⁸⁴ On another *kāhin*, Musaylima, Muḥammad told: “He has a *šayṭān* whom he cannot disobey”.⁸⁵

The Qur’anic link between mantic communications received from *šayātīn* and mendacity (Q 26:221-223) is stressed by Musaylima’s nickname in the Islamic tradition—“the Liar” (*al-Kaddāb*). Although this “false prophet” or *kāhin* claimed to be inspired by Raḥmān,⁸⁶ and not by a *šayṭān*, as the Islamic tradition holds, the Prophet’s phrase clearly reflects the Qur’anic conception of divinatory inspiration through spirits. This conception presents the relationship between man and spirit as absolute dependence and obedience which logically imply totally impelled discourses. The *kāhin* only purports to transmit secret knowledge imparted with him.

⁸³ T. Nünlist, *Dämonenglaube im Islam*, 2015, pp. 341–373.

⁸⁴ Ibn Kaṭīr (d. 774/1373), *Taḥṣīr*, 1999, vol. 7, p. 248.

⁸⁵ *Inna ma‘a Musaylima šayṭānan lā ya šīhi*. See al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Tārīḥ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*, 1967–1969, vol. 3, p. 293.

⁸⁶ Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Tārīḥ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*, 1967–1969, vol. 3, p. 286.

Nothing indicates that only one personal spirit was believed to be responsible for communications received by each *kāhin*. By way of illustration, the tradition quotes the *saġ* of Ḥaṭar b. Mālīk, the *kāhin* of the Luhayb tribe, who is reported to have predicted the coming of Muḥammad. To stress the supreme importance of the message, the communication is introduced with the words: “*This is a statement // I have received from the head of the ġinn*”.⁸⁷ Also the end of the message does not indicate a familiar information spirit: “*God is the greatest! // The truth has come and become evident! // And this is the end of the message from the ġinn*”.⁸⁸ Since the *ġinn* of the *kuhḥān* were occasional rather than familiar information spirits, they were principally anonymous.⁸⁹ As opposed to this, the *ġinn* of early Arab poets were mostly personal, familiar spirits. In quite a few cases they remained in the literary-historical tradition under personal names. Unlike the *ṣayāṭīn* of the soothsayers and similarly to the contemporary Yemeni *hāġīs*, they are presented as assisting prompters, co-authors and friends in need.

a) Encounters with the *ġinn* of famous poets

Speaking of the greatest pre-Islamic poets, there are two similar but distinguishable groups of typical anecdotes about encounters with their *ġinn*. Neither of them involves the poet himself. In the reports of the first type, a man comes by accident to a Bedouin camp where he hears from one of the tribesmen the opening of a very famous poem, usually, one of the *mu‘allaqāt*. He easily recognises the author, but the reciter claims co-authorship, thus, revealing his identity as the *ġinnī* of the mentioned renowned poet. Almost identical anecdotes of this sort tell on encounters with the *ġinn* of Imru’ al-Qays (d. 565 AD, the so-called “prince of *ġāhili* poetry”), ‘Abīd b. al-Abraṣ (d. 598 AD, the pre-Islamic chief and poet of the tribe of Asad), al-A‘šā (d. 8/629, the wondering artist famous for travelling across Arabia and beyond) and al-Ḥuṭay’a (d. 41/661, the wondering artist who became famous as an unprincipled and shameless master of invective). The common features of the anecdotes of this type are that the human heroes are anonymous, the *ġinn* appear in the usual human form, are hospitable, and mostly have unusual rhymed names.⁹⁰ In the reports of the second type, it is the human who is asked to recite something to his hosts. The latter recognise the poem, and the “co-

⁸⁷ *Hādā huwa al-bayān aḥbaranī bihi ra’īs al-ġinnān!* See al-Šiblī (d. 869/1465), *Ākām*, 2006, p. 124; al-Šafadī (d. 764/1363), *Al-wāfi bi-al-wafayāt*, 2000, vol. 24, p. 305.

⁸⁸ *Allāhu akbar! Ġā’a al-ḥaqq wa-ṣaḥar! Wa-inqāṭa’a ‘an al-ġinn al-ḥabar!*

⁸⁹ On the anonymity of the spirits as opposed to the pagan deities, see J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 1961, p. 213.

⁹⁰ The *rāwī* ‘Isā b. Yazīd b. Da’b (d. 171/788) reports from an anonymous man originating from Zarūd (historical place in the East of the present Ḥā’il region of Saudi Arabia) that the grandfather of the latter had an encounter with the *ġinnī* of Imru’ al-Qays named Lāfiṣ b. Lāḥiṣ. The *ġinnī* of ‘Abīd b. al-Abraṣ, named Ḥabīd, makes interplay between his and the poet’s name: “If not for Ḥabīd, who would ‘Abīd have been?” (*Wa-man ‘Abīd law lā Ḥabīd?*). The inspirer of al-Nābiġa al-Dubyānī (d. 605 AD) is named Ḥādīr b. Māhīr, while that of al-A‘šā is Miṣḥal b. Ġandal. See al-Quraṣī (d. after 300/913), *Ġamharat aš‘ār al-‘arab*, 1981, pp. 48–51. Al-Aṣma‘ī (d. 213/828) transmits from his father an anecdote about an unknown man who met the inspirer of al-Ḥuṭay’a. The *ġinn* are reported to serve food, and the guest could even feel its taste in his mouth and its weight in his stomach. See al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), *Al-aġānī*, 2008, vol. 2, p. 115.

author” from the *ġinn* appears immediately in front of the guest. The common details of the anecdotes of this type are that the hero is usually a famous early Islamic figure, while the *ġinn* of poetic inspiration have unusual appearance.⁹¹

The anecdotes of the first group date back to the transmitters of the second century of Islam who are reported to have learned the recited stories from earlier narrators. Those of the second group are ascribed, without chains of transmission, directly to the famous persons of the first and second centuries as heroes speaking of their own experience. It would be difficult to decide which variation is older, but, apparently, the whole type of anecdotes depicting encounters with *ġinn* appearing in human form, especially usual human form, has been an invention of the ‘Abbāsid period.⁹² The degree of *ġinn*’s participation in poetry production varies in the anecdotes of both types.⁹³ The element which is common for the equally fabulous variations is that the *ġinn* do not purport to take possession, to impel, to impart secret knowledge and to speak through man’s lips regardless of his volition. These beings only boast mastery of poetry and claim to be assistants, co-authors and those who contribute and grant to the poets with their art.

Taking the example of al-A‘šā, in the referred reports of the first group, his *ġinnī* is a pleasant old man named Miṣḥal⁹⁴ b. Ġandal⁹⁵ who welcomes his guest with a carpet and entertains him with best pre-Islamic poetry.⁹⁶ In the reports of the second

⁹¹ In an anecdote of this type, the *ġinnī* of al-A‘šā is reported to be encountered by Muḥammad’s companion Ġarīr b. ‘Abdallāh al-Baġalī (d. 51/671). The spirit looked like a spear, while his head was jug-shaped (*šaḥṣ ka-annahu rumḥ wa-ra’suhu miṭla qulla*). See al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283), *‘Aġā’ib al-maḥlūqāt*, 1967, p. 373. The *ġinnī* of Zuhayr is reported to be encountered by the Kufan scholar Ḥamza al-Zayyāt (d. 156/772). The creature is depicted as an old man who looked like a piece of meat (*ṣayḥ ka-annahu qit’at laḥm*). See Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), *Mu’ġam al-udabā’*, 1993, p. 2161.

⁹² According to J. Henninger (see “Beliefs in Spirits”, 2004, p. 29), representations of *ġinn* in terrifying form come from ancient Arab beliefs, while usual human appearance is peculiar only to modern popular beliefs. Apparently overlooking the accounts on encounters with *ṣayāṭīn* of poets, Henninger finds no sources indicating that spirits, if they appeared as visible anthropomorphic beings, assumed usual human form and not the form of a monster or a giant. In this type of anecdotes, however, it is clear that *ġinn* appear in usual human form: the heroes of the stories do not realise that they are among *ġinn* till one of them claims to be the companion of a famous pre-Islamic poet.

⁹³ For instance, the *ġinnī* of al-Ḥuṭay’a agrees that the authorship belongs to the poet, claiming only to be his companion in the process of poetry composition. See al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), *Al-aġānī*, 2008, vol. 2, p. 115. The *ṣayṭān* of ‘Abīd b. al-Abraṣ pretends to provide the poet with rhymes. See al-Quraṣī (d. after 300/913), *Ġamharat aṣ‘ār al-‘arab*, 1981, p. 48. Lāfiẓ b. Lāḥiẓ of Imru’ al-Qays says that he has granted the poet all the amazing in his poetry (*ibid.* 51). The *ġinnī* of Zuhayr is told to be the poet’s equal co-author and not only to contribute to him through inspiring his imagination, but also to benefit from him, taking something from human poetry to the poetry of the *ġinn*. See Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), *Mu’ġam al-udabā’*, 1993, p. 2161. As for al-A‘šā’s *mu‘allaqa*, *ġinn* are reported to simply recognise it as the poetry of Miṣḥal. See al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283), *‘Aġā’ib al-maḥlūqāt*, 1967, p. 373.

⁹⁴ T. Izutsu (*God and Man*, 1964, p. 170) interprets the meaning of the name Miṣḥal using the modern translation of the word—“carving knife”, which, in his view, might have alluded to the glib, eloquent tongue of the poet. The *dīwān* of al-A‘šā, however, interprets the word *miṣḥal* as “wild ass” each time mentioned. See al-A‘šā (d. 8/629), *Dīwān*, 1968, pp. 39, 125, 155, 221.

⁹⁵ By matter of coincidence, Ġandal is the name of al-A‘šā’s paternal grandfather. The name of the poet is Maymūn b. Qays b. Ġandal. See al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), *Al-aġānī*, 2008, vol. 9, p. 80.

⁹⁶ Al-Quraṣī (d. after 300/913), *Ġamharat aṣ‘ār al-‘arab*, 1981, p. 50.

group, Miṣḥal, is presented as a monster.⁹⁷ The third variation, in which Miṣḥal introduces himself as *hāġis*, does not fit any of the two groups outlined above. In this variation, the hero who meets the *ġinnī* without realising this is the poet himself, which is untypical for anecdotes about encounters with daemons-inspirers. Somewhere in Yemen, al-Aʿṣā is welcomed by an old man who turns out to be Miṣḥal b. Uṭāṭa, the *ġinnī* which was always assisting him in composing his poems. Miṣḥal examines the poet on his own production and even brings in front of him Sumayya and Hurayra—the girls al-Aʿṣā once imagined and poetised in his most famous odes.⁹⁸ The choice of the paternal name for “Miṣḥal b. Uṭāṭa”, most likely, alludes to the name of Muḥammad’s well-known companion Miṣṭaḥ b. Uṭāṭa (d. 34/655). The report is attributed to al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), who simply refers to al-Aʿṣā himself as a narrator. This variation, therefore, is not only marginal, but also the latest. This fact, however, cannot diminish the importance of the link between *hāġis* and Yemen reflected in the report.

The notion of the *ġinnī* as the poet’s familiar co-author is the only common and relevant element of all anecdotes about encounters with the spirits of pre-Islamic poets. In the case of al-Aʿṣā, all stories of this sort are based on the fact that Miṣḥal is not once addressed in his poems, where the idea of the attendant *ġinnī* as a friend and assistant is clearly reflected.

b) Friends and partners

Depicting his tandem with Miṣḥal in one of the poems, al-Aʿṣā says that they are “two close partners” (*ṣarīkān*) in the state of mutual sympathy (*hawāda*)⁹⁹ and “sincere friends—a *ġinnī* and a man in harmony [with each other]” or “a *ġinnī* and a man assisted [by him]” (*ṣafīyyān ġinnī wa-ins muwaffaq*). The poet declares that whenever the *ġinnī* affords him support, there is nothing he would have been incapable of saying in verse (*fa-lā a’yā li-ṣay’in aqūluhu*).¹⁰⁰ In another poem, al-Aʿṣā “calls his friend Miṣḥal” (*daʿawtu ḥalīlī Miṣḥalan*), refers to him as “my brother *ġinnī*” (*aḥī al-ġinnī*) and even employs the formula “may my soul be a ransom for him” (*naḥsī fidā’uhu*), which points to a very strong friendship or brotherhood.¹⁰¹ Similarly, Ḥassān b. Tābit, boasting in verse of his inspiration, refers to his genius as a “sharp-sighted brother from the *ġinn*” (*wa-aḥī min al-ġinn al-baṣīr*).¹⁰²

The same conception of the relationship between man and spirit is traceable in reports on early Arab poets. In the anecdote about an encounter with the *ġinnī* of Zuhayr, the spirit refers to the poet as *ilfī min al-ins*, which may be understood not just

⁹⁷ Al-Qazwīnī (d. 682/1283), *Aġāʾib al-maḥlūqāt*, 1967, p. 373.

⁹⁸ Al-Ālūsī (d. 1270/1854), *Bulūġ al-arab*, 1964, vol. 2, pp. 367–368; al-Baġdādī (d. 1093/1682), *Ḥizānat al-adab*, 2000, vol. 8, p. 396.

⁹⁹ In the version studied by T. Nünlist (see *Dämonenglaube im Islam*, 2015, p. 351), the word *mawadda* (love) appears instead.

¹⁰⁰ Al-Aʿṣā (d. 8/629), *Dīwān*, 1968, p. 221.

¹⁰¹ Al-Aʿṣā (d. 8/629), *Dīwān*, 1968, p. 125.

¹⁰² Ḥassān b. Tābit (d. 54/674), *Dīwān*, 1994, p. 106.

as “my familiar from humankind”, but also as “my friend from humankind”.¹⁰³ Similarly, al-Farazdaq, a court poet of the Umayyads, according to an anecdote by Abū ‘Ubayda, invoked his *ġinn* in the moment of need by exclaiming: “Respond to your brother!” (*aġībū aḥākum*).¹⁰⁴ In the same situation, Ġarīr, his competitor, is reported to address a pair of his familiar spirits by exclaiming: “Oh two companions (or friends) of mine!” (*yā šāhibayya*).¹⁰⁵

It is noticeable that the discussed conception of the relationship between the poet and his inspiration is reflected for early Arab poets of all generations and types. While al-A‘šā (d. after 3/625) was a pre-Islamic wandering artist who travelled in search of earning opportunities, Zuhayr (d. 609 AD) remained purely a tribal poet. Ḥassān b. Ṭābit (d. 54/674) started his career as a tribal poet, but later became a wandering artist and, finally, converted to Islam and gained the ascendancy of “the poet of the Prophet”. Al-Farazdaq (d. 112/730) and Ġarīr (d. 110/728) were tribal poets of Bedouin background who became famous as court poets of the Umayyads. Judging by the quoted examples of poetry, the referred reports of the ‘Abbāsīd period may have leaned upon the earlier notions of poetic inspiration. If so, the fact that the tradition associates the outlined conception with such a wide range of early Arab artists may indicate that the representation of the attendant *ġinnī* as the poet’s friend or brother was widespread and maintained for a relatively long period.

The dependence of the early Arab poets on their *ġinn* is different from that of the *kuhhān* illustrated above, in the beginning of section V. The soothsayer depends on secret knowledge imparted with him by *šayāṭīn* and must always utter what he receives. As opposed to this, the dependence of the poet on his fellow *ġinnī* implies no obedience and is best described by the expression “a friend in need”. Studying the context in which the dependence of early Arab poets on their *ġinn* is indicated, one easily recognises the same typical situation: the poet experiences powerlessness in the moment of inability to compose a verse when inspiration is urgently needed but not coming.

The mentioned cases in which al-A‘šā, Ġarīr and al-Farazdaq invoke their *ġinn* are very similar. In each of them, the poet receives a poem and has to compose a better one of his own. Feeling challenged, he does not delay the endeavour till the next day and tries to compose the response in the night, but realises at the dawn that the inspiration has not come. Thus, in each case, not the poet must be loyal to his familiar spirit, but rather loyalty is expected from the poet’s inspiration.

Al-A‘šā is attacked by an opponent whom he mentions as Šarāḥīl b. Ṭawd. Alluding to his unsuccessful nightly attempts in absence of inspiration, the poet depicts his bitter feeling in the following words: “*I was not an apprentice* [in the craft of poet-

¹⁰³ Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), *Mu‘ġam al-udabā’*, 1993, p. 2161.

¹⁰⁴ Abū ‘Ubayda (d. 209/825), *Kitāb al-naqā’id*, 1998, vol. 2, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), *Al-aġānī*, 2008, vol. 8, p. 51.

ry], *but I thought to myself: If only Miṣḥal would grant me words, I would utter [verse]*".¹⁰⁶ The *qaṣīda* in which al-A'ṣā invokes Miṣḥal to attack another opponent of him, 'Amr b. Qaṭan, is also related to the situation of challenge: the poet needs urgent inspiration to defend himself in the face of the attacking enemy.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, Ḥassān b. Tābit, boasts of his "brother from the *ġinn*" in the context of challenge, when being insulted by enemy poets. This clearly follows from the two lines preceding the verse in which the poet mentions his inspiration.¹⁰⁸

Returning to the context of ineffectual attempts, some other examples should be mentioned. Ġarīr depends on his *ġinnī* in a specific situation, when challenged by a poem in which the poet Surāqa al-Bāriqī (d. 79/698) preferred al-Farazdaq over him. The insulted poet unsuccessfully tries over one night to compose invective response and then hears the voice of his *ġinnī* addressing him from the corner: "Do you pretend to compose poetry yourself? I was not with you during this night, and that is why you were unable to compose anything".¹⁰⁹ The challenge of al-Farazdaq is to compose a poem which would be more beautiful than an ode by Ḥassān b. Tābit occasionally recited to him in Medina. After intense, but unsuccessful, nocturnal efforts, early in the morning, he rides a she-camel into the desert to find his familiar *ġinn*, and the latter help him to compose an entire poem of one hundred and thirty lines.¹¹⁰

In the referred anecdotes about al-A'ṣā and Ḥassān, as well as in the accounts on al-Farazdaq and Ġarīr, nothing testifies that the poets themselves imagined their inspiration as monsters, old men or any other visible beings. *Ṣayāṭīn* are only represented as an inexplicable force that can suddenly appear and provide the poet with powerful imagination and linguistic virtuosity. According to one of the reports on al-Farazdaq, he laughed when an unknown poet praised his *ġinnī*, widely known as 'Amr, and depicted the spirit as a creature with a head "which looks like if made of clay for seals" (*ka-annamā ra'suhu ṭīn al-ḥawātīm*). In response, al-Farazdaq explained (probably in jest and implying that only the quality of poetry matters) that no more than two *ṣayāṭīn* of inspiration exist: al-Hawbar, responsible for perfect, clear poetry, and al-Hawḡal, which brings unsuccessful verse.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Al-A'ṣā (d. 8/629), *Dīwān*, 1968, p. 221. On this verse, see also: T. Izutsu, *God and Man*, 1964, p. 170; T. Nünlist, *Dämonenglaube im Islam*, 2015, p. 349.

¹⁰⁷ Al-A'ṣā (d. 8/629), *Dīwān*, p. 125.

¹⁰⁸ "I compete in dignity with those who challenge my dignity, // and my claw is turned against the one who bears a grudge [against me and insults]. // I do not steal from [other] poets what they told. // On the contrary, my poetry does not correspond (i.e. is not similar) to their poetry. // (...) // And my sharp-sighted brother from the *ġinn* // has decorated [my] speech with the best ornaments". See Ḥassān b. Tābit (d. 54/674), *Dīwān*, 1994, pp. 105–106.

¹⁰⁹ See al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), *Al-aḡānī*, 2008, vol. 8, p. 51. It should be reminded that this example is employed by T. Fahd (*La divination arabe*, 1966, p. 74) to prove the thesis of "the absolute dependence of the poets with regard to their *ṣayāṭīn*".

¹¹⁰ Abū 'Ubayda (d. 209/825), *Kitāb al-naqā'id*, 1998, vol. 2, p. 4. On this anecdote, see also I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen*, 1896–1899, vol. 1, p. 11.

¹¹¹ Al-Quraṣī (d. after 300/913), *Ġamharat aṣ'ār al-'arab*, 1981, p. 63.

Thus, the conception of inspirational *ġinnī* as “a friend in need” is not relevant for throes of art as such. Rather it should be a situation of battling, challenge and urgent need for inspiration to defend the poet’s honour. One reason for this is probably that true poetry in Arab tribal culture does not appear for the poet’s own sake, but, as S. Sowayan holds, has to defend a case or lay a claim.¹¹² Another possible reason linking the use of *ġinn*-imagery specifically to poetic battling is that the genre of invective maintained the archaic idea of word-magic longer than any other types of Arabic poetry.¹¹³

In the early Arabic tradition, the representation of the relationship between man and spirit as friendship is stressed by verbs describing the process of communication as *granting* and *presenting*: *ḥabā*, *saddā*, *manaḥa*, *nāla*. For example, Ḥabīd, the familiar spirit of ‘Abīd b. al-Abrāṣ, stresses that he has *granted* rhymed words (*ḥabawtu al-qawāfiya*) to the chieftains of the tribe of Asad.¹¹⁴ Al-A‘šā boasts that his brother-*ġinnī* used to *grant* him (*ḥabānī al-aḥī al-ġinnī*) poetry.¹¹⁵ Dreaming of inspiration, he exclaims “If only Miṣḥal *granted* (*saddā liya al-qawla*) me words”.¹¹⁶ Lāfiḥ b. Lāḥiḥ, the attendant *ġinnī* of Imru’ al-Qays, says that he has *granted* the poet (*anā wa-Allāhi manaḥtuhu*) all the amazing in his poetry.¹¹⁷ ‘Amr, the *ġinnī* of al-Farazdaq, is described as “the one who grants him” (*nā’iluhu*).¹¹⁸

This is a proper moment to remind that, in the contemporary tribal tradition of Yemen, *hāġis*, as a familiar prompter, is also presented as a friend that is expected to grant words when needed. This may be illustrated with the following lines from a *qaṣida* recorded by S. Caton: “The anxious one (i.e. the poet) said: // ‘Hand over [verses], O my genius // do not make excuses to me, // refrain from apologies. // It is as if you relied on me // and then you left me in the lurch // in this ignominious time // helpless.”.¹¹⁹ That the poet refers to himself as “the anxious” (*al-mu‘tanī*) indicates that rhymed words are needed to him urgently. This is stressed by the request not to make excuses of him and hand over as much verses as possible. The genius is referred to as *milgan-ī*, which can be literally translated not only as “my inspirer”, but also as “my prompter” (cf. CA *mulaqqin*). Then, as pre-Islamic poets longing for inspiration and urging their familiar assistants to come and grant words, the contemporary Yemeni poet describes the situation of inability to express himself when it is so necessary as helplessness and ignominy. Similarly, openings such as “Oh, my *hāġis*! I got used to your prompt replies” or “Oh, my head, remember this evening your *hāġis*!” indicate

¹¹² S. Sowayan, “A Plea for an Interdisciplinary Approach”, 2003, p. 134.

¹¹³ On this point, see T. Izutsu, *God and Man*, 1964, p. 169. On the problem of linguistic magic, see T. Izutsu, *Language and Magic*, 1956.

¹¹⁴ Al-Quraṣī (d. after 300/913), *Ġamharat aš‘ār al-‘arab*, 1981, p. 48.

¹¹⁵ Al-A‘šā (d. 8/629), *Dīwān*, 1994, p. 125.

¹¹⁶ Al-A‘šā (d. 8/629), *Dīwān*, 1994, p. 221.

¹¹⁷ Al-Quraṣī (d. after 300/913), *Ġamharat aš‘ār al-‘arab*, 1981, p. 51.

¹¹⁸ Al-Quraṣī (d. after 300/913), *Ġamharat aš‘ār al-‘arab*, 1981, p. 63.

¹¹⁹ S. Caton, *Peaks of Yemen*, 1990, pp. 190, 319.

that *hāġis* is a familiar assistant, from whom loyalty and aid are expected as something usual.

c) Creative energy without impelled discourses

In the context of poetic battling, *ġinn*-imagery is used to talk of inspiration understood as creative energy. Mūsā b. Ġābir al-Ḥanafī, one of the poets of the straddling period (in Arabic, these poets are referred to as *muḥaḍramūn*), once expressed his readiness to carry on battling against his opponent in the following way: “My *ġinn* have not yet fled” (*fa-mā nafarat ġinnī*).¹²⁰ On the other hand, ‘Abdallāh b. Ru’ba al-‘Aġāġ, the poet of the same period, admitting his defeat in a poetic duel, described the situation by saying about his opponent: “My invective could not contain his *šayṭān*” (*fa-lam yulit šayṭānu tanahhumī*).¹²¹ This discourse does not necessarily reflect beliefs in *ġinn* as a genus of anthropomorphic creatures. Basing on the examples provided above and below, one may only conclude that conventional imagery is used to speak of a specific emotional experience of challenge and contest.

According to the Islamic literary tradition, early Arab poets did not have to obey their companions, while *šayāṭīn* could not impel their utterances. Judging by one of the poems of Imru’ al-Qays, in his imagination, the *ġinn* that surrounded him were responsible for transmitting his poetry and setting it to music (*tarwī mā aqūlu wa-ta’zifu*).¹²² In the mentioned anecdote about Ġarīr, being discontent with the first of his two inspirational agents for long absence, the poet rejected his assistance and turned to the second companion.¹²³

The notion that the *ġinnī* does not speak through the poet’s lips is reflected in several other reports, of which the most noticeable is that on Abū ‘Aṭā’ al-Sindī (d. shortly after 158/774). The poet lived in Kūfa as a client of the Banū Asad. Being born to a father from Sind, he had impure Arabic pronunciation and once remarked in jest that even his *šayṭān* complained about his accent (*wa-šakānī min ‘uġmatī šayṭānī*).¹²⁴ Thus, unlike the *šayāṭīn* of the *kuhhān*, the *ġinn* of poetry were not regarded as capable of controlling the pronunciation of their familiars.

Poets occasionally reflected on the fact that they did not utter every verse their *ġinn* offered. Already Imru’ al-Qays, boasting of his rich inspiration that allowed him to choose and present best poetry (or, probably, to choose the best among several variations in process of composition), declared: “*Ġinn offer me to choose from their poems / / and I choose what I want from their poetry*”.¹²⁵ According to an anecdote provided by al-Ġāhiz, in response to a boastful mockery of one poet claiming “I compose a *qaṣīda*

¹²⁰ Al-Marzūqī (d. 421/1030), *Šarḥ Dīwān al-ḥamāsa*, 2003, p. 270.

¹²¹ Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1312), *Lisān al-‘arab*, 2003, vol. 2, p. 186 (root *l-w-t*).

¹²² Imru’ al-Qays (d. 565 AD), *Dīwān*, 1984, p. 325.

¹²³ Al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), *Al-aġānī*, 2008, vol. 8, p. 51.

¹²⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), *Al-aġānī*, 2008, vol. 17, p. 242.

¹²⁵ *Tuḥayyirunī al-ġinnu aš‘arāhā / / fa-mā šītu min šīrihinna ištāfaytu*. See Imru’ al-Qays (d. 565 AD), *Dīwān*, 1984, p. 322.

every hour, while you produce one in a week”, the second parried: “This is because I do not accept from my *šayātīn* the kind of things you accept from yours”.¹²⁶ This was a metaphorical way of saying: “I do not utter all nonsense coming into my mind”. Similarly, Baššār b. Burd (d. 176/783), the early ‘Abbāsid master of invective, claimed that he not once restrained himself from insulting his friend, the poet Ḥammād b. ‘Ağrad (d. 161/778), with too pungent lines of lampoons coming into his mind. Describing the situation, he used *ġinn*-discourse in the following way: “I used to return to my *šaytān* some parts of invective [he gave me against Ḥammād] so that my friendship (with Ḥammād) would survive”.¹²⁷ Another relevant line of Baššār is an expression of his refusal (apparently, in a bad mood) to compose poetry following the invitation of his familiar *ġinnī* named Šiniqnāq: “*Šiniqnāq called me from behind a young she-camel, // but I said: Leave me, as solitude is better*”.¹²⁸ It is unimaginable that a *kāhin* could claim to voice only a part of words received from *šayātīn* or to refuse to repeat them at all.

d) Boasting the strongest talent

When an early Islamic poet boasts of having the best *ġinnī* or describes how his familiar spirit has beaten the inspirational agent of his opponent, conventional imagery is applied for claiming one’s leadership or supremacy of one’s personal talent. Ḥassān b. Tābit says that his *ġinnī* “decorates his speech with *the best ornaments*” (*ḥāla al-kalāma bi-aḥsani al-ḥibri*).¹²⁹ In another poem he boasts of having “a companion (*ṣāhib*) from the Banū al-Šayṣabān”,¹³⁰ implying the tribe of the greatest *ġinn*, which, consequently, must be best in poetry. It is noticeable that the “poet of the Prophet”, who must have been well-acquainted with the Qur’anic discourse, does not mention his attendant inspirer as *šaytān*. It is possible that, even if he did, he corrected his pre-Islamic poems after conversion. One cannot exclude, however, that they were also edited after his death. By the way, the graphic representation of *al-Šayṣabān* in the *rasm* script, where the long vowel *-ā* could be not necessarily written as *alif* in the line, is very similar to that of *al-šayātīn*.

Al-Farazdaq, who is reported to have a familiar *ġinnī* named ‘Amr, in the poem of praise for Asad b. ‘Abdallāh al-Qaṣrī (d. 120/738), the governor of Khorasan in 106–117/724–735, boasts of his own panegyric and claims to have the best inspirational *ġinnī*: “*As if with pure gold has decorated it (this panegyric) // the tongue of the most po-*

¹²⁶ *La-innī lā aqbalu min šaytānī miṭla alladī taqbalu min šaytānika*. See al-Ġaḥiẓ (d. 255/869), *Al-bayān wa-al-tabyīn*, 1998, vol. 1, pp. 206–207.

¹²⁷ *La-qad kuntu aruddu ‘alā šaytānī ašyā’a min ḥiğā’ihi ibqā’an ‘alā al-mawadda*. See al-Iṣfahānī (d. 356/967), *Al-ağānī*, 2008, vol. 14, p. 223.

¹²⁸ *Da’ānī Šiniqnāqun ilā ḥalfi bakratin // fa-qultu utrukannī fa-al-tafarrudu aḥmadu*. See al-Ta’alibī (d. 429/1038), *Timār al-qulūb*, 2003, p. 65.

¹²⁹ See Ḥassān b. Tābit (d. 54/674), *Dīwān*, 1994, p. 106. The commentary explains that by the word *ḥibr* (ink) the poet implies *wašy* (ornament).

¹³⁰ Al-Ta’alibī (d. 429/1038), *Timār al-qulūb*, 2003, p. 65.

etic *šayṭān* of all God's creation".¹³¹ Ġarīr, after receiving from the caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (d. 86/705) less money than he expected, complains in verse: "*I found that [my] šayṭān's incantations (ruqā al-šayṭān, i.e. poetry) were not exciting him, || [even though] my šayṭān was the most charming among the ġinn*".¹³² In another poem, Ġarīr claims that his poetry comes to him from "the most mature of the *šayāṭīn*" (*muktahal min al-šayāṭīn*) and the greatest devil of the devils (*iblis al-abālīs*).¹³³ Similarly, an unknown poet quoted by al-Ġāḥiẓ simply claims that his *šayṭān* is the greatest among the *ġinn* (*fa-inna šayṭānī kabīr al-ġinn*).¹³⁴ In all these examples, *šayṭān* means simply "poetic talent", which indeed can be great, mature or charming.

Accordingly, to ascribe to a poet more mastery and talent than to his competitor, it was enough to declare that the *ġinnī* of the first was better than that of the second. For instance, al-A'šā of the Banū Sulaym, a second/eighth century poet, preferring al-Muḥabbal al-Qaysī (d. 12/633) over al-Farazdaq and other poets, claims that "*the ġinnī of al-Farazdaq is not the one to follow, || whereas none of them (of the ġinn) could have come near the genius of al-Muḥabbal*".¹³⁵ In the next line, the poet declares that, "after 'Amr, there is no poet like Mišḥal", which simply means that, in his view, the talent of al-A'šā b. Qays is the second greatest after that of al-Muḥabbal.

Much more original claims for leadership, exceptional mastery and victories in poetic battling are based on sexist expressions. The most vivid example dates back to the third/ninth century, showing the burlesque character of *ġinn*-discourse. When the court poet Marwān b. Abī al-Ġanūb al-Ašḡar was challenged by the caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 232-47/847-61) to compete with the poet 'Alī b. al-Ġahm (d. 249/863), the former attacked the latter with invective, saying amongst others: "When we (he and me) clashed (in a competition), my verse mated (*nāka*) his verse, and my *šayṭān* has 'screwed up' (*nazā*) his *šayṭān*".¹³⁶ That the images of the *ġinn* are used for constructing a metaphor clearly follows from the fact that the verses of two poets are brought into the same relation as their *šayāṭīn*. In the quoted verse, Marwān al-Ašḡar implies that his talent is male, while that of 'Alī b. al-Ġahm is female, which is also a traditional way of mockery in poetic battling and does not necessarily reflect sincere beliefs in how the world of *ġinn* is organised. A similar example belongs to the Umayyad poet Abū al-Naḡm al-Ġlī (d. 120/738). Claiming the strongest talent, he proclaimed that the *šayṭān* of each human poet is female, whereas only his *šayṭān* is

¹³¹ Al-Ġāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), *Al-ḥayawān*, 1965–1969, vol. 6, pp. 226–227. In the *dīwān* of the poet, the text has: "the greatest *šayṭān* among the inhabitants of the Earth". See al-Farazdaq (d. 112/730), *Dīwān*, 1987, p. 633.

¹³² Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (d. 328/940), *Al-ʿiḍ al-farīd*, 1983, vol. 1, p. 327.

¹³³ Al-Ṭa'ālībī (d. 429/1038), *Ṭimār al-qulūb*, 2003, p. 64. The referred verse provided by al-Ṭa'ālībī is not included in the *dīwān* of Ġarīr, but may be used as an example of how *ġinn*-imagery is employed to claim the greatest talent.

¹³⁴ Al-Ġāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), *Al-ḥayawān*, 1965–1969, vol. 6, p. 229. Another version has: "the prince of the *ġinn*" (*amīr al-ġinn*). See al-Ṭa'ālībī (d. 429/1038), *Ṭimār al-qulūb*, 2003, p. 66.

¹³⁵ Al-Ṭa'ālībī (d. 429/1038), *Ṭimār al-qulūb*, 2003, p. 65.

¹³⁶ Al-Šafādī (d. 764/1363), *Al-wāfi bi-al-wafayāt*, 2000, vol. 25, p. 230.

male.¹³⁷ Most likely, in the same context of masculine domination one can regard the use of *ġinn*-discourse by al-A‘šā, who, counterattacking ‘Amr b. Qaṭan, claimed to have invited Miṣḥal to deal with Ġihinnām, implying that the latter was a female-gendered muse of his opponent.¹³⁸

e) The talent of the tribe

Judging by the anecdotes of the early Islamic period, at a certain stage, there were notions of the *ġinn* as a genus of earthly beings that may assume animal form,¹³⁹ may be invisible,¹⁴⁰ but may also appear in human form and, like humans, are divided into male and female varieties, have offspring, are organised into nations and clans, have creeds and beliefs, and share the principles of tribal loyalty.¹⁴¹ The conception of inspiration shared by the early Arab poets was influenced by these notions, which is expressed in the idea that some *ġinn* of poetry could be related to each other as family members. At the same time, indications of this idea mainly exemplify the use of *ġinn*-discourse for boasting of poetic talent shared by relatives as part of tribal heritage. Apart from that, specifying family relationship between *ġinn* of poetry could be used to describe one poet’s influence on another.

By way of illustration, al-Ḥakam b. ‘Amr al-Bahrānī, a poet of the second/eight century, in a *qaṣida* dedicated to the “wonders of creation” (*ġarā’ib al-ḥalq*), talking of a female-*ġinnī*, defines her as “the daughter of ‘Amr (the daemon of al-Muḥabbal), whose good [maternal] uncle is Miṣḥal (the familiar spirit of al-A‘šā)”. In the same

¹³⁷ See al-Ġāhiz (d. 255/869), *Al-ḥayawān*, 1965–1969, vol. 6, p. 229. Even such a ridiculous, exaggerating verse is traditionally interpreted outside the context of poetic battling as an evidence of beliefs in *ġinn*. T. Fahd regards this verse only as an evidence of the belief that the *ġinn*, in the consciousness of the ancient Arabs, could be both male and female. To provide an additional argument he mentions a modern tribal Yemeni belief in a female-*ġinnī* named Ḥalīla (*La divination arabe*, 1966, pp. 73, 74 n.1). Š. Ḍayf simply writes that the author of the verse believed that his *šayṭān* was male while the *šayṭān* of the others were female (*Tārīḥ al-adab*, 2003, vol. 1, p. 197). It is notable, however, that no poet boasted of having a female *ġinnī* as his inspirational agent.

¹³⁸ Al-A‘šā (d. 8/629), *Dīwān*, 1968, p. 125. The assumption is correct if one admits that the name mentioned in the poem is Ġihinnām, which means a deeply insightful or deeply perceptive woman (*ba‘dat al-qa‘ar*). Another version is that the name is Ġuhunnām, and that it refers to ‘Amr b. Qaṭan himself. See Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1312), *Lisān al-‘arab*, 2003, vol. 12, p. 112 (root *ġ-h-n-m*). Finally, Ġihinnām may be the name of al-A‘šā’s female-gendered muse, the counterpart of Miṣḥal. See Ġ. ‘Alī, *Al-mufaṣṣal*, 1993, vol. 9, p. 120.

¹³⁹ On this, see J. Tritton, “Spirits and Demons”, 1934, pp. 718–721; A. El-Zein, *Islam, Arabs, and Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 2009, pp. 89–102; R. Lebling, *Legends*, 2010, pp. 94–100; T. Nünlist, *Dämonenglaube im Islam*, 2015, pp. 123–143.

¹⁴⁰ Some persons were believed to be capable of seeing *ġinn* even when invisible for the others. It is reported that the Umayyad caliph ‘Umar (II) b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (r. 99/717 to 101/720) saw angels before his death. According to the tradition, he told: “Verily, I see beings who are neither *ġinn* nor humans”. See al-Mawṣili (d. 185/801), *Kitāb al-zuhd*, 1999, p. 224. This indicates a belief that, theoretically, one could recognise *ġinn* and distinguish them from humans.

¹⁴¹ See J. Tritton, “Spirits and Demons”, 1934, pp. 717–718; J. Henninger, “Beliefs in Spirits”, 2004, pp. 27–28; A. El-Zein, *Islam, Arabs, and Intelligent World of the Jinn*, 2009, pp. 15–17; R. Lebling, *Legends*, 2010, pp. 110–114; T. Nünlist, *Dämonenglaube im Islam*, 2015, pp. 152–162. For some notes on beliefs in *ġinn* in medieval Yemen, see G. Rex Smith, “Magic, jinn and the supernatural”, 1995, pp. 11–13.

verse, the poet declares that his own maternal uncle is “Humaym (i.e. al-Farazdaq), the companion of [the *ġinnī*] ‘Amr”.¹⁴²

Firstly, al-Bahrānī puts the talents of al-A‘šā b. Qays and al-Muḥabbal in the relationship of brothers-in-law. This may imply that, unlike al-A‘šā of the Banū Sulaym, who, as shown above, assigned to al-A‘šā b. Qays only the second place and preferred al-Muḥabbal over him, al-Bahrānī appreciated both poets equally and, probably, even found that both could share some artistic features.¹⁴³ That the daemons of al-A‘šā b. Qays and al-Muḥabbal could not be brothers or cousins is well explainable: al-A‘šā’s tribe Bakr b. Wā’il were the enemies of the tribe of Tamīm, from which al-Muḥabbal originated.

Secondly, unlike al-A‘šā of the Banū Sulaym, al-Bahrānī appreciated al-Farazdaq, his own maternal uncle, and may have pointed out that al-Farazdaq was assisted by the same *šayṭān* as al-Muḥabbal.¹⁴⁴ This could make sense as both poets belonged to the tribe of Tamīm, and al-Farazdaq even mentions al-Muḥabbal among his teachers.¹⁴⁵

The idea that one familiar spirit may be employed in service of several poets within one tribe, and that relatives from the *ġinn* must assist relatives from human-kind, can be also found in the accounts on the *ġinnī* named Habīd b. al-Šalādim. This daemon is reported to boast of inspiring at least two chieftain-poets of the tribe of Asad: ‘Abīd b. al-Abraš (d. 597 AD) and Bišr b. Abī Ḥāzim (d. 590 AD). Apart from that, according to the tradition, Habīd claimed that his paternal cousin, Mudrak b. Wāḡim, inspired al-Kumayt b. Zayd (d. 126/743), another famous poet of the Asad, and that their (Habīd’s and Mudrak’s) fathers (respectively, two brothers, al-Šalādim and Wāḡim), were among the best *ġinn* of poetry.¹⁴⁶ This anecdote, which even contains a piece of poetry ascribed to Habīd, must have been composed to claim that, over generations, the Asad boasted best poetic talents, because their poets shared, preserved and developed the poetic tradition of the tribe.

¹⁴² Al-Ġāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), *Al-ḥayawān*, 1965–1969, vol. 6, pp. 225–226.

¹⁴³ That the sameness of style was sometimes expressed via metaphors of kinship can be illustrated by another example. The poet ‘Umar b. Laḡa’ al-Taymī (first/seventh century) claimed that his poetry was better than that of his colleague, arguing this in the following way: “I compose a verse and his brother, while you compose a verse and his [paternal] uncle”. See al-Ġāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), *Al-bayān wa-al-tabyīn*, 1998, vol. 1, p. 206.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Ġāḥiẓ (*Al-ḥayawān*, 1965–1969, vol. 6, pp. 225–226), noting that the *šayṭān* of al-Farazdaq was called ‘Amr as well as that of al-Muḥabbal, does not make clear whether the same ‘Amr is implied in both cases. The idea that al-Muḥabbal and al-Farazdaq might have been assisted by the same *ġinnī* was definitely not shared by al-A‘šā of the Banū Sulaym, who, as already mentioned, told that the *ġinnī* of al-Farazdaq was not the one to follow, whereas none of the *šayṭān* could come near the genius of al-Muḥabbal. See al-Ṭa‘ālibī (d. 429/1038), *Ṭimār al-qulūb*, 2003, p. 65.

¹⁴⁵ In one of his poems, al-Farazdaq outlines a group of prominent pre-Islamic poets that influenced him and granted him his mastery of *qaṣīda*-odes. Al-Muḥabbal al-Sa’dī is mentioned in his verse as Abū Yazīd. See al-Farazdaq (d. 112/730), *Dīwān*, 1987, p. 493.

¹⁴⁶ Al-Quraṣī (d. after 300/913), *Ġamharat aš‘ār al-‘arab*, 1981, p. 48.

VI. Conclusion

Already in the sixth century AD, the Arab poet was an artist rather than a shamanistic figure. Coming into being, amongst others, as a successor of the pagan diviner, he inherited from the latter not only the name of the profession (*šā'ir*), but also a special mode of knowing related in the popular consciousness to inspirational agents imagined as *ġinn* (and equally referred to as *šayātīn*). In the late *ġāhili* period, an association between divinatory and poetic inspiration may have remained at the level of popular superstitions, because, due to the old pagan beliefs, the process of verbal communication coming to a human being from a preternatural force was still imagined in both cases as identical. At the same time, since most poets of the late pre-Islamic period were artists rather than shamans and did not purport to gain secret knowledge or produce magical effect, their communication with spirits had been reinterpreted as reception of excessive imagination and linguistic virtuosity. By the late pre-Islamic period, the *ġinn* of poetry had transformed from an invisible source of secret knowledge and magical power into embodiments of inspiration and talent. Accordingly, they were believed not so much to impose discourses as to inspire imagination and accelerate consciousness. From a controlling, directing and possessing force, they had turned into assistants invoked in the moment of need. From a force demanding full loyalty from their adherents—into intimate friends, from whom loyalty was expected by the poets themselves.

Reports on encounters with visible, human-looking *ġinn* claiming responsibility for the production of certain pre-Islamic and early Islamic poets, most likely, appeared much later than the poets they mention lived. Except for the late pre-Islamic idea that the poet's *ġinnī* does not take possession of the artist, but rather assists him in one way or another, these anecdotes do not reflect the beliefs of the poets themselves. In poetic allusions to *ġinn* by some early Arab poets, as well as in the accounts describing how these poets invoked their familiar spirits, nothing testifies that the artists themselves imagined their inspiration as visible beings. Taking into account that *ġinn*-related discourse was usually employed in a very specific context of contest and challenge, and considering the metaphorical and sometimes burlesque manner of its application, it is highly probable that references to inspirational agents were often made with tongue half in cheek and do not indicate a true cult of the *ġinn*. At the same time, the references made by a number of early Arab poets to their familiar spirits, precisely as resorting to *hāġis* by contemporary Yemeni tribesmen, may be regarded as a sort of professional superstition. Thus, in both cases, one may talk of an ambivalent attitude towards the *ġinn* of poetic inspiration.

Unlike the early *ġāhili* conception of divinatory-poetic inspiration, which equally connected the soothsayer's talent and the poet's genius to spirits taking possession of their adherents to speak through them, the late pre-Islamic idea of the *ġinn* of poetry did not imply full loyalty and dependence of selected persons on their attendant spirits. In case of the early Arab poets, a *ġinnī* could visit his familiar and offer him poetry without being invited. This metaphorically describes the situation of verses coming to the poet without his intention and anticipation. In this case, however, sixth to

eighth-century poets, unlike the soothsayers, were free to choose only part of words offered by their *ġinn*, or even to reject any poetry coming into mind.

The conception of *ġinn* as assistants summoned when needed, but easily refused if not desirable, is different not only from the early pre-Islamic, but also from the Qur'anic representation of the relationship between mantic figures and their spirits. The latter interprets inspirational *ġinn* as perverting *šayāṭīn* taking possession to lead astray and help in lying. This impure source is opposed to the pure one—the Trustworthy Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-amīn*)¹⁴⁷ or the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-qudus*),¹⁴⁸ which, at a certain point, came to be identified as the angel Gabriel (*Ġibrīl*).¹⁴⁹ It is noteworthy that early Muslim poets, being familiar with the concepts of the Trustworthy Spirit as well as with the idea of angels, and being fully aware of the Qur'anic negative stand towards the pre-Islamic agents of inspiration, continued to associate their talent and creative energy with *ġinn* and, moreover, to refer to inspirational agents as *šayāṭīn*. In Arab tribal culture, the association between exceptional talent and daemons has been preserved to the present time. At the end of the last century, tribal Yemeni poets were not familiar with poetic inspiration coming from angels.¹⁵⁰ Pious poets who addressed inspiration in the opening part of the *qaṣīda* used to combine invocation of God and praise of Muḥammad with invocation of *hāġis*.¹⁵¹ It is interesting that the familiar assistants of both early Islamic and contemporary tribal poets, unlike the Muses of Homer, Vergil, and Milton, were not interpreted as spirits in God's service and, therefore, were never perceived as guarantors of poetic truth associated with divine knowledge. At the same time, they were not rejected because of the Qur'anic association between inspiration through *šayāṭīn* and mendacity.

It is exactly the coexistence of the Qur'anic and the late pre-Islamic conceptions of poetic inspiration after the advent of Islam that may explain this phenomenon. The examples provided by the mediaeval historical-literary tradition, on one side, and by contemporary ethnographic data, on the other, indicate that, generally, in the Islamic period, with respect to the issues of inspiration, talent and creative energy, poets remained within the late *ġāhili* paradigm presenting the relationship between man and spirit as assistance offered to the poet by his loyal "brother". As opposed to it, the Qur'anic conception of impure inspiration through *šayāṭīn*, which does not distinguish between divinatory and poetic, seems to be proximate to the early pre-Islamic model depicting this relationship as possession, control and direction. This model helped to dissociate the Messenger of Allah equally from the poets and the soothsay-

¹⁴⁷ Q 26:193.

¹⁴⁸ Q 2:87, 253; 5:110; 16:102.

¹⁴⁹ The identification of the angel Gabriel as *rūḥ al-qudus* clearly follows from the hadith tradition. See, for example, the report on Muḥammad sending Ḥassān b. Tābit to attack the opponents from the tribe Qurayš with invective: "Attack them with invective, and may Gabriel, the Holy Spirit, be with you!" (*Uḥḡuhum wa ma'aka Ġibrīl, rūḥ al-qudus!*). See Ibn Rašīq (d. 463/1070), *Al-ʿumda*, 1963, vol. 1, p. 31. This report is also a rare example of the attempt to make the Holy Spirit the source of inspiration of the faithful poets.

¹⁵⁰ M. Rodionov, *The Western Ḥaḍramawt*, 2007, p. 164.

¹⁵¹ S. Caton, *Peaks of Yemen*, 1990, pp. 188–190.

ers, but was, probably, different enough from the conception of inspiration through *ġinn* shared at the advent of Islam by the poets themselves to affect it.¹⁵² Another possible explanation of the phenomenon is that *ġinn*-imagery and the related discourse are, first and foremost, an artistic convention. As such, they could have been kept by Muslim poets among other traditional pre-Islamic elements of tribal poetry, most of which appeared to be too stable or useful to be easily given up.

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¹⁵² Regardless of the differences between the late pre-Islamic notions of poetic inspiration and the conception of divinatory-poetic inspiration elaborated in the Qur'an, for a number of poets, Islam brought an ethical conflict between religion and poetry precisely because of the *ġinn*-issue. See F. Meier, "Some Aspects of Inspiration", 1966, p. 425.

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