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ROMANO-ARABICA

XVII

Fictional Beings in Middle East Cultures



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I. NOTES

SHAHMERAN – QUEEN OF THE SERPENTS

GABRIEL BIȚUNĂ

University of Bucharest

Among the countless figures from cultural and popular memory, the mythological hybrid creatures or *Mischwesen* (Frey-Anthes 2007) that combine serpent and feminine traits are very remarkable. They represent sinuous controversial beings that have been dwelling in the collective popular imagination for thousands of years, while maintaining their mysteries intact, no matter how many variations of legends are discovered in different cultures.

According to Donà (2013: 64), “the hybrid born from the association of serpentine and female shapes is very ancient. In ancient Europe, in particular, it is mentioned since prehistory and appears attested in several variants.” Goddesses or god-like creatures, in association with snakes, like the medusa, may come up in legends with bodies that have snake-like features, such as snake-like lower torso, snake-like tongue or snakes coming out of the body like limbs, etc.

One of the most notable anthropomorphic figures of Anatolian mythology is Shahmeran (*Şahmeran* in Turkish and Kurdish), which has received many epithets across time: “the goddess of wisdom”, “the queen of the serpents” (from Persian *šāh* “king” + *marān* “serpent”), “the guardian of secrets”, “the healer”, etc. Her story can be traced back “from the Middle East to India with different myths. One variation from the Arabian Night Tales is the story of Jemlia – the Sultan of Underground” (Yildiran 2005).

The story of Shahmeran begins with a traveler named Tasmasp or Camsap (these two names are the most commonly used in the Anatolian legends), who was gathering honey from the bottom of a well where he had been abandoned by his friends. Stuck underground, he is greeted by many snakes, ruled by Shahmeran, the queen of the serpents, who is a beautiful woman with the lower body of a snake. She welcomes him into her world and spends a few years with the traveler and tells him many wise stories about the origin and meaning of humanity. The two fall in love, but, after a while, the man wants to return to his family, in his country. Although, initially Shahmeran refuses to let him go, she finally agrees with his desire. She lets him leave under the condition that he should never mention anything about her to anyone. The man agrees and goes back home, where he finds his Sultan very sick. The Sultan said that his illness can only be cured by Shahmeran’s flesh. He ordered everyone to find her or to find somebody that knows her whereabouts. In order to find out who came in contact with her, his subjects would have to go to the public baths, because the water would turn their skin into snake scales. Tasmasp is forced to go into the *hammam* and his scales are revealed to everyone.

He is then tortured into telling the Sultan where Shahmeran was hiding. The Sultan finds her and right before she is slain, she tells them that whoever will take a bite from her snake flesh will gain the secrets of the world and be cured and whoever will take a bite from her human flesh will die. The Sultan kills her and feeds from the snake flesh, while Tasmasp feeds from the human one because of his guilt and not wanting to live anymore after betraying her. Nonetheless, the Sultan and the others die, because the human flesh was poisoned, while Tasmasp gains all of Shahmeran's knowledge and continues her legacy.

Shahmeran's story varies so much from one iteration to the other that several collections of narratives from the Turkish literature have been compiled by researchers to keep track of them and to understand how they evolved (Havlioğlu 2014, Ömer 2016).

What makes Shahmeran's depiction widespread as a symbol are the illustrations of her, as seen on the cover of this issue of *Romano-Arabica*. This kind of painting is achieved using an "under-glass technique," which is basically painting one layer after another, with the top layer painted first. Although Islam prohibits such paintings, they can be found in many regions in Turkey (especially in Mardin), hung on the walls of houses and teahouses because of their opulent and bright colors coming from the glass.

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II. FICTIONAL BEINGS IN MIDDLE EAST CULTURES

AZ-ZĀR BEINGS IN EGYPTIAN FOLKLORE AND FICTION

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Abstract. The article analyzes a folk ritual named *az-Zār*, widespread in Egypt to the present day, and its fictional beings – jinn and *sayyids*. The paper is a result of the author’s immediate observations of several years in this country. The article describes the proper ritual, the characters performing the ritual, the fictional characters, who are believed to exist in the parallel universe and have invisible relations with human beings, as well as some texts of *az-Zār* ritual and a reflection of this ritual in literature, which to a certain extent indicates the role of *az-Zār* in the Egyptian society.

Keywords: *Egypt, ritual, texts, beings, fiction.*

Az-Zār – the ritual which is found in Egypt to the present day implies curing human beings of a certain group of illnesses by means of a whole series of incantations, odes devoted to jinn and other similar acts. The author of the present article during her stay in Egypt in the 2000s was acquainted with its practitioners. In the article materials obtained from Egyptian and Sudanese informers and several texts recorded by the author are presented. Some details, including those linked with the origin and spreading of the ritual, are given relying on these informers as well as on the basis of some studies. As all other manifestations of folklore, *az-Zār* is also characterized by diversity. The present article describes *az-Zār* in the form as it appeared at the beginning of the 21st century in the processions performed in the so-called *ḥadāyi’ el-ahrām* – territory on the outskirts of Cairo, as well as in some regions of northern *aṣ-Ṣa’īd* (Upper Egypt). The article also deals with some fragments of Egyptian fiction, containing this ritual, specifically reflecting its details.

***Az-Zār* in the Egyptian Tradition**

In Arabic, the word *az-zār* must be of Amharic origin, deriving from the word *jār* (Yūnis 1983: 289; al-Miṣrī 1975:10-11). This lexeme must have found its way into Egypt and Sudan from Ethiopia. However, at the same time, *jār*, same as *yāro*, *dāro* (Behman 1953:2) was the main deity of the pantheon of the idolater Kush – the sky god, who then assumed another form and turned into an evil demon. This demon, according to the Ethiopians’ belief, lives in rivers, canals and in flowing water in general, and is able to make a person ill. It can be cast out of the body with the help of amulets and incantations. Exactly these rituals became the form of the *az-Zār* ceremony which is known to us at

present and which later on, from the 1860s, became established in Egypt through the Sudanese and Ethiopian slave women.

The basis of *az-Zār* is the belief in the so-called *sayyids* and jinn – spirits, demons, who can punish human by an illness or a misfortune. In *az-Zār* culture the difference between jinn and *sayyids* is that jinn are evil demons, whose enraging entails fatal results for a person, *sayyids* are amicable and it is possible to become reconciled with them, hence, the ill person can be cured. *Ummu Sāmiḥ*, *az-Zār* practitioner in Cairo (at the time of my contact with her, in 2004, she was 53 years old) confirms the widespread view that the total number of jinn and *sayyids* is 44. They can get angry with a human being because of a specific behavior: if a person asserts that demons do not exist, or throws something on the ground in the dark, walks in an impure place, sleeps alone, etc (al-Miṣrī 1975:18-19). According to another informer from Cairo, 'Usāma, jinn can get angry with a person if he accidentally hits a jinnee or jinn's child with an object thrown by him in the dark (it is regarded that jinn like to be in the dark). Therefore, before a person does something like this, he must utter a warning formula: *bismi-l-lāhi-r-raḥmāni-r-raḥīm* (in the name of Allah the gracious merciful) or *a'ūdu bi-l-ḥawābiṭ wa-l-ḥābiṭāt* (I ask permission from male and female jinn).¹

The *az-Zār* practitioners believe that in the world of spirits there is a certain hierarchy, they have families as well. E.g. *as-sultān al-'aḥmar* (the red sultan) and *as-sitt al-kibīra* are husband and wife and head this hierarchy. At the same time, patriarchy characteristic is violated – *as-sitt al-kibīra* is a more powerful spirit than her husband. Their daughter, little *rukūš* is a jinnee and her anger entails death. Each jinnee and *sayyid* has certain favourite objects or offering. For example, a red cloak, red candles and a red hen or a cock must be offered to the *Red Sultan* (*as-sultān al-aḥmar*). Among other jinn and *sayyids* are: *al-'arabī* – Bedouin *sayyid*; *bašīr* – Ethiopian spirit; *aṣ-šīni* – i.e. Chinese; *al-'arabi* – i.e. Bedouin, Bedouin *sayyid*; *dēr an-našārī* – Christian *sayyid*; *al-baḥarēya* – i.e. of the sea, a female *sayyid*, having the appearance of a fish, inhabiting water; *abū rawāyiḥ* – fragrant, who requires an especially large quantity of fragrance; doctor *sayyid ḥākimbāša* – pasha doctor; *lūliya*, *bašīr*'s sister, who asks for coloured clothing, intended for wedding; *safīna* – (lit. “a ship”), is a spirit of the sea; pairs of spirits: *sitt wa-sīdi* (i.e. lady and gentleman; it is noteworthy that first the lady is mentioned) – same *fārūk* and his wife, the same king and queen; twins *ḥārūt wa-mārūt* – angels known from the Koran, who assumed the form of magician *sayyids* (Koran, 2:101); *al-qārīna* the jinnee who is at enmity with new-born children, kills or eats them; *abū l-gindī*, to whom a grey lamb must be sacrificed; *an-nārī* (“fiery”), a person obsessed by this *sayyid* during *az-Zār* holds two sheets of paper set on fire till they burn up; *amīr el-ḥāgg* – king of pilgrims; *bandūḥ*, who demands the ill person to eat raw sheep testicles; *al-gamal* – a possessed person must whip himself till he loses consciousness; *al-ḥiḍr* – his prototype is Saint George, *Mursi Abu l-'Abbās* – the prototype of this *sayyid* is Sufi Sheikh *Abu l-'Abbās al-Mursi*, whose mosque is one of the oldest mosques of Alexandria; other *sayyids* are: *māmma*, *ar-riyās*, *rūm nagdī*, *yūsef*, *abū danfa*, *al-wazīr*,

¹ Interestingly, in the expression interdental friactives are attested, which are uncommon for the dialect. Such literary forms usually are uttered when citing the Koran. That means that in the imagination of the informant the belief in jinn and the like and the religion are closely related concepts.

al-'arabī, al-gindār, Šādeya hānim, etc. The names of these *sayyids* have been obtained from the Egyptian and Sudanese informers, some of them are attested in the specialized literature (Behman 1953; Weeks 1984: 58-59; Kenyon 1999: 89-108; Schienerl 1983: 16-20).

Three types of *az-Zār* are known in Egypt: Sudanese (*as-sudāni*), Egyptian (*mašri*) or *aš-ša'īdi*, i.e. Upper Egyptian and *abū l-ġīt* or *al-ġītanēya*. Of these, the latter two varieties are Egyptian proper, originating in Egypt. These three types differ from one another in nuances, but the main motivation, basis and manner of the ceremony are identical. In the past a fourth type of *az-Zār*, the so-called *rangū* ('Ādil al-'Ālīmī 1993 :42) occurred as well. In opinion of some people, this type of ritual has survived to the present day, but according to the information available in specialized literature, as well as the data provided by practitioners known to me, it does not function any more.

Az-Zār can be one-day (*yūmēya*) and it may last for 5-7 days. It may be performed by the commission of one particular person (*maḥšūš*), or for several ill persons (*el-gama'ēya*).

The performer of *az-Zār* ceremony is called *kōdiya*. More often *kōdiyas* are women, but there are male *kōdiyas* as well. *Kōdiya* is also referred to as *Šēha* (sheikness or *Šēh*, if it is a man). This is a person who inherits his profession and has adopted it in childhood naturally. *Kōdiyas* often boast of their Sudanese origin and of the fact that they were brought up in a family imbued with *az-Zār* traditions, which adds special validity to their professionalism. *Kōdiyas* often call themselves daughters of fragrances (*banāt el-buḥūr*), as fragrance is an inseparable element of *az-Zār*. A *kōdiya* is a person who has direct connection with *sayyids* and jinn, she sees and talks to them. A person is consecrated *kōdiya* as a result of a special ceremony, called *rabṭ el-ḥizām* "girding". At this time the person wishing to become a *kōdiya* takes a certain examination. Experienced women watch if everything has been performed properly, and then put a special girdle around the waist of the examinee, which means that from that moment this person has become a *kōdiya*.

The *kōdiya* is assisted in the performance of *Zār* by a group. It may consist of the following persons:

ōdiya – the main assistant, who knows by heart every ode in honour of all spirits, and may take upon herself the entire process, but unlike the *kōdiya*, she cannot get into contact with jinn and *sayyids*. An *ōdiya* is often a maiden who herself has an angered *sayyid*, or a son with homosexual inclinations, or a hermaphrodite.

sanja' – in Sudanese *az-Zār* the performer of ceremonies. Like an *ōdiya*, a *sanja'* cannot get in touch with spirits.

The so-called *ad-da''a'in* – in Egyptian *az-Zār*, in which men do not participate, these women beat percussion instruments with iron sticks.

satri – *mangūra* player. *Mangūra* represents goat hooves strung on leather, which are fastened to a thick leather belt. A player puts this belt around the waist and begins to move in rhythm with the movement of the hips. A sound resembling jingling is produced.

btā' tambūra – "tambūra man", player of the stringed instrument *tambūra*.

According to *Ummu Sāmiḥ*, there are *az-Zār* illnesses and doctor illnesses. If an illness is a doctor's, *az-Zār* will not prove useful in its curing, and vice versa – if the illness is of *az-Zār*, a doctor cannot cure it. *Zār* illnesses include: nervous disorders, mental illnesses, childlessness, gastric diseases, headaches, spine diseases, impaired movement, etc. *Az-Zār*

also helps a young girl who cannot get married, a woman who constantly miscarries, or gives birth to a dead fetus or sick children.

In Egypt *az-Zār* is mostly performed in the native Egyptian dialect, but the odes to some *sayyids* are performed in another language. ‘*Abd al-Ḥamīd Yūnis* notes that this is “*az-Zār* language”, which is regarded as the secret language and no one knows it except *az-Zār* groups (Yūnis 1983: 289). *Az-Zār* practitioners known to me avoided talking about this topic and refused to explain some phrases which were uncertain from the position of Arabic. Some practitioners note that this secret language is a certain Abyssinian language, but they do not know exactly which (Ejibadze 2008: 14). Even when *az-Zār* is performed in Arabic, in the Egyptian dialect, it has its professional slang, which may be ambiguous and unintelligible to those who are not familiar with this ritual (see, e.g., Ejibadze 2010:59-60). E.g. the phrase: *bēt ez-zār talāt adwār* (lit. there are three floors in *az-Zār* house) means that in *az-Zār* ceremony three types are singled out (i.e. there are three different types of *az-Zār*, etc.

Az-Zār amulets are mostly made of silver. The following are regarded as *az-Zār* amulets: bracelets, *khulkhals*, pendants, arm ornaments (Weeks 1984:58-59). As Schienerl notes (Schienerl 1983:16-20), only hand-made amulets, and not stamped ones, are valuable and fulfill their function in Egypt. Coloured, garish beads, scraps of fabric also serve as amulets, which are used for decoration of *az-Zār* instrument because coloured objects attract spirits and dispose them favourably toward humans.

The aim of *az-Zār* ceremony is to put the ill person into a trance. If this is achieved, the *sayyid* can temporarily enter his body. *Aḥmad* (about 55 years old, he did not know his exact age), narrated that at that time the patient may begin to speak in a strange, unusual voice. This will be the *sayyid* speaking through the ill person. The trance will be followed by curing.

If a person once resorted to *az-Zār*, he is obliged to “become enrolled in the guild” and to resort again and again to the so-called *karama*, a ritual of a lower rank than *az-Zār* for mollifying spirits, during which only food and different objects are offered to *sayyids*, and to order *az-Zār* performance for himself repeatedly. Otherwise, spirits will get angry with him (al-Miṣrī 1975:17).

Az-Zār requires from a family such great expenses and efforts that, as one of Kenyon’s informers noted, preparation for *az-Zār* is more complex than preparation for a wedding (Kenyon 1999:89-108). At that time close relatives and friends of the family are invited, who are treated to sweets, nuts and various dishes. In their turn, these visitors, who are called *ḥabāyib* (close friends) or *ṣuhūd* (witnesses), indulge the patient, are affectionate and fulfill his/her every caprice.

The ritual begins with the so-called *al-fātiḥa*, i.e. opening address, in which some researchers see a reflection of the Fatiha (opening *sūra*) of the Koran. *Ummu Sāmiḥ* uttered the following *al-fātiḥa*:

“*sīd ibrāhīm ad-dasū’i, sīd ‘izz ar-riggāl,
al-ḥiḍr wa-r-riyyās wa-l-mursi abu-l-‘abbās
yiḥdu d-duḥḥān w-yiddūki l-‘āfiya wa-l-burhān
biḥa’*” *gāhid an-nabī ‘alē ṣ-ṣalāt wa-aḥḍal aṣ-salām.*

bēt az-zār, bēt māmā w-atbā‘u, rūm nagdi w-atbā‘u, yūsef w-atbā‘u, abu danfa w-atbā‘u, al-wazīr w-atbā‘u, al-‘arabi w-atbā‘u, as-sulṭān al-aḥmar, dēr an-naṣāri, bēt al-ḥabaš, as-sittāt: šādēya hānim, al-baḥarēya. ana ‘arīt al-fātiḥa bi-l-amāna.”

“Sayyid Ibrahim ad-Dasuqi, Sayyid ‘Izz ar-Rigal, al-Khidr and Riyas and al-Mursi Abu l-‘Abbas will accept fume and will give you good health and harmony, by the right granted by the prophet, to whom we pray and devote the best greetings. The Zar house is the house of mamma and his followers, rum nagdi and his followers, yusuf and his followers, abu danfa and his followers, al-gindar and his followers, al-wazir and his followers, al-‘arabi and his followers, the red sultan and his followers, dair an-nasari, the house of the Ethiopians, of ladies – sadia hanim and al-baharea.

So, I have uttered the al-fatiha with peace!”

This is followed by odes dedicated to one or several *sayyids*, performed by the *kōdiya* and other members of the group, with very loud accompaniment of percussion instruments (sometimes together with *ṭambūra*). These are songs intended to win the disposition of *sayyids*. E.g. *Ummu Sāmih* in one of her odes to *al-‘arabi* sang (the hyphen at the beginning denotes the syntagma of the members of the group):

ṣallīt fi-l-ḥarām ‘ala l-bēt

*-w-ṣallu ‘ala l-‘arabi muḥammad.
ya ‘arabi ya zīn, ya kaḥīl al-‘ēn,
- w-ṣallu ‘ala l-‘arabi muḥammad.
ya nūr in-nūr, ya bahēya n-nūr,
- w-ṣallu ‘ala l-‘arabi muḥammad.
da ‘albi twalla‘ bi-ziyārt ar-rasūl,
- w-ṣallu ‘ala l-‘arabi muḥammad.
ya ‘arabi ‘urubān, ya ḥalāwa
l-hilalēya.
da zāyir nabīna mḥammad elli
yizayyin al-kufēyya,
ya ‘arabi ‘urubān, ya ḥalāwa
l-hilalēya.
ya šēḥ al-‘abīla ya ‘arabi,
da zāyir nabīna l-‘abari,
ya sīdi, wa-ruddu ‘alēya.
- ya šēḥ al-‘abīla ya ‘arabi,
da zāyir nabīna l-‘abari,
da ‘awāyidak sanawēya ya ‘arabi,
ya šēḥ al-‘abīla ya ‘arabi,
zāyir nabīna ya badawi.*

In the time of trouble I prayed to the house (i.e. kin of sayyids – N.E.), and you pray to al-‘arabī, Muhammad, You, Arab, with eyes decorated with kuhl, and you pray to al-‘arabī, Muhammad, Light, oh, light, endowed with beauty, and you pray to al-‘arabī, Muhammad, My heart kindled by the sight of the prophet, and you pray to al-‘arabī, Muhammad, You, Arab, Uruban (diminutive from “Arab” –N.E.), like the moon, sweet. Seer of the Lord Muhammad, which decorates with kufeya , You, Arab, Uruban, like the moon, sweet.

Chieftain of the tribe, you, Arab, Seer of the Lord, al-‘arabī, My Lord, and answer me. Chieftain of the tribe, you, Arab, Seer of the Lord, al-‘arabī, Your celebrations are annual, you, Arab, Chieftain of the tribe, you, Arab, Seer of the Lord, you Bedouin, etc.

The following ode was devoted by *Ummu Sāmiḥ* to a female *sayyid* – salma:

*ā, ya salma, ya salīma,
rā'iyat əl-ġanam, ya salūma,*

*šēḥat əl-'arab ya salūma,
ya zīna ya 'arabēya
šēḥat əl-'arab ya salīma.
ya ḥelwa šāyila raḥāya,
da līki hadāya ya salīma.
ya ḥelwa, miḥalli kalāmi. su'ālik ya
salīma.
enti salīma, da-nti salīma,
ya 'arabīya, da-nti badawēya.
labsa ḥuzām, da miḥalli ḥuzāmi.*

*salām 'alēki ya widdēya,
ya marḥaban bīki ya 'arabēya,
ya marḥaban bīki enti bidawēya,
ya salūma, d-dāya l-'arabēya,
ya marḥaban bīki enti l-bidawēya.*

Oh, salma, salima²,
Shepherdess, saluma (diminutive
address – N.E.),
Sheikhess of the Arabs, saluma,
Bedecked Bedouin,
Sheikhess of the Arabs, salima,
You, beautiful, carry a hand-mil
This is a present to you, salima.
You, sweet, you sweeten my speech
too. I shall ask you, salima,
You are salima, you are salima,
You Bedouin, you are a Bedouin.
You wear rings on the nose, you
decorate my jewellery.
Peace to you, (our) friend,
We greet you, Bedouin,
We greet you, Bedouin,
Saluma, Bedouin midwife,
We greet you, a Bedouin.

The rhythm of percussion instruments is more and more accelerated, then each musician approaches the ill person, who is dancing. Usually, these are simple, symmetric movements. The musicians beat percussion instruments with iron sticks at the ears of the dancing patient. Then the rhythm is broken and each musician plays with his own rhythm. Exactly at this time the patient must fall into a trance.

At the same time the bird or animal for slaughter is killed. If this is a bird, it is slaughtered exactly above the head of the ill person. If it is larger in size, it is slaughtered so that blood is not spilt and the patient is bathed in this blood. *Biyāda 'Aḥmad Ṭilib* (48-years-old in 2005) narrates that the blood-stained clothes must not be changed. After *az-Zār* the sick person dressed in these clothes is locked for several days – five, seven days, as the *kōdiya* orders. No one is admitted to him/her except one nurse, who gives him food silently. After the expiration of this term *az-Zār* is regarded to be finished. The blood-stained clothes are kept as precious objects.

The question arises naturally, as to whether *az-Zār* has any obvious results. It is attested that sometimes *az-Zār* indeed gives certain relief to the ill person. Behman (Behman 1953 :23-24) notes correctly that *az-Zār* is effective in two cases: 1. if an illness is of psychological character. By way of illustration the author cites the story of a girl whose engagement failed several times. This made her think that *sayyids* were angry with her, which led her to apathy. In a similar situation several procedures of *az-Zār* proved

² There is a pun here, the name *salma* is derived from the same root as *salīma*, which denotes “healthy”. So, *salīma*, on the one hand, is an affectionate, diminutive address to *salma*, and on the other, it has the meaning of “healthy”.

sufficient for curing the girl's mental disorder. 2. When a disease is organic and its symptoms are expressed by pain. The trance as a result of *az-Zār* may cause hypnotic anesthesia and temporarily alleviate pain (Behman, 1953 :24), which may, by the way, ultimately even entail fatal results, as due to artificial suppressing of pain the patient does not consult a doctor and the illness grows progressively worse.

***Az-Zār* in the Egyptian Fiction**

Az-Zār is also reflected in the fiction created in Egypt or by Egyptians, which is an additional argument to substantiate that this ritual is deep-rooted in the life of the Egyptian people.

Qūt al-Qulūb ad-Dimirdašīya, a public figure of Egyptian origin, in her autobiographic novel “*Ramza, Daughter of the Harem*” (*ramza ibnat al-ḥarīm*) describes *az-Zār* ritual, which was performed in her childhood due to her illness (ad-Dimirdašīya 1999: 45, 50). As noted, sleeping alone is one of the behaviors which may cause the anger of spirits. Therefore, *Ramza* (the only daughter of a wealthy Egyptian) was not allowed by her grandmother to sleep alone. At the same time, for fear of jinn and spirits every morning the *al-falaq* surah was “read”³ to her. Once *Ramza* fell ill. *Šēḥa Zuhayra* concluded that some jinnee, who fell in love with *Ramza*'s father, envied the child's mother, and this became the reason for the illness. As the child's father was a highly educated man, the superstitious women understood that he would have been against the ritual. Therefore, *az-Zār* was performed with a compromised form: without much noise. *Qūt al-Qulūb* notes that she had not witnessed such (silent) *az-Zār* before. *Šēḥa Zuhayra* read incantations for the child. At night over the child's head a dove was slaughtered, whose blood was made to flow on her face. When this method proved useless, a *kōdiya* was summoned and sheep and a goat were slaughtered over the sick child. The *kōdiya* took away the meat of the slaughtered animals “to throw to dogs”, whereas the amulet which she handed over to *Ramza* for protection lay under the pillow until the grandmother's death, as the old woman strictly prohibited to throw it away.

A reflection of *az-Zār* ritual and the attitude of the common Egyptians towards it are obvious in the novel “The Return of the Spirit” (*‘awdatu r-rūḥ*) by *Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm* (al-Ḥakīm 1987: 66-73). One of the protagonists, who has left behind her marriage age and is still willing to get married, is visiting the Sheikh. She gets acquainted with the mother of a sick infant, who is convincing her that doctors do not know anything and only the Sheikh can help her. Only the Sheikh's amulets made it possible that she got pregnant and therefore she believes that her child will be cured thanks to the same Sheikh. As regards the protagonist, at first the required fee seems too high for her, but when she learns that this money will be spent to sacrifice a sheep, to make a talisman and amulets, to burn incense to beg for mercy of jinn, she is glad that the jinn demanded a light *daqqa* (a single ritual of *az-Zār*) and agrees to pay the fee.

³ The expression *yi'ra ‘a-d-dimāg* – to read over the head – means reading the Koran text or incantations in the ear of a sick person in a whisper; similar “reading” (of the Koran text) also occurs for a deceased person.

We have cited these two fragments from fiction to indicate that *az-Zār* ritual with its characters – jinn and *sayyids* – was such an ordinary phenomenon in the life of the Egyptians that it was quite naturally reflected in fiction as one of the typical aspects of Egyptian ethnography.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be noted that *az-Zār* ritual is quite an interesting phenomenon, which apparently will gradually fall into oblivion and disappear altogether. However, its observation offers interesting material for scholars of different disciplines – from the viewpoint of ethnography, linguistics, folklore, music, psychology, medicine, etc.

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THE THEOPHORIC ELEMENT <'L> IN IBN AL-NADĪM'S LIST OF DEMONS

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Abstract. In his *Fihrist*, the tenth-century scholar Ibn al-Nadīm produces a list of seventy names of demons, unfortunately without providing any information on his sources. Five names mentioned clearly contain the Semitic theophoric element <'L> 'God', attested in various orthographies, which may indicate that these names were incorporated as a result of contact with other religions and beliefs. To this end, some other names with likely Semitic origins will also be discussed. The goal of this essay is to establish whence Ibn al-Nadīm took these names and what this implies for our understanding of the contact between Muslims and non-Muslims in early Islamic Mesopotamia.

Keywords: *demonology, language contact, Islamic studies, Arabic, Aramaic, Mandaic*

Establishing the general context

The collapse of the Umayyad dynasty in the middle of the 8th century led to a dramatic shift of power in the Islamic world. Instead of Syria, the new political and cultural centre of the Islamic world now lay in Iraq, which exposed the new Muslim administration to a strongly eclectic religious landscape in which beliefs and religions interacted with a large degree of fluidity (Crone 2006:2-38). Particularly from the 'Abbasid revolution onwards we encounter an intensification of the religious formalization of Islam, including the collection of hadith by Bukhari, the appearance of Tabari's *History of Kings and Prophets*, and the rise of ethnic, religious, and intercultural debates and polemics (Goutas 1998:11-20; Savran 2007:42-52).¹

By the beginning of the tenth century the immediate political implications of these debates had died down, but their cultural and religious significance lingered on. Although it seems that the majority of the population in Iraq had by now converted to Islam (Kennedy 2004: 199-201), it is apparent that many pre-Islamic beliefs survived in the popular religion of the time. We must also place the writing of Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* in the context of a culturally mixed environment (Dodge 1970:xx-xxi).² In his own words,

¹ It would take too much time to discuss the full extent of the political and cultural consequences of this shift in power, but much has been written on this subject. Crone elegantly phrases it as "the convergence of a great variety of faiths and confessions into a single cultural environment".

² Fairly little is known of Ibn al-Nadīm's person, except that he was regarded highly in society and may have held a position in the court of the Caliph. It is unclear whether he was a Shii'ite himself, but it is

the work was intended as a catalogue of ‘all the books both of Arabs and non-Arabs’ (Nadīm 1961:2-3),³ and contains information on a variety of subjects, including grammar, history, poetry and philosophy, as well as folklore and popular religion.

The eighth chapter deals with ‘legends and fables, charms and bewitchment, and magic tricks’; this itself being divided into three sections – ‘sayings and books of storytellers’; ‘accounts of exorcists, magicians and enchanters’; ‘names of fables known only by their nickname’. The paragraph containing the list of demons occurs in the second, and is preceded by two short accounts on the use of talismans and the summoning of demons. The list itself can also be divided into two parts, consisting of the names of seventy demons “who served Solomon” plus an additional seven, apparently associated with particular days of the week. The paragraph itself is introduced by a short description of how Solomon is considered to have subjugated these demons.

This association of Solomon with the domination over demons plays an important role in Muslim folklore in general: we find a similar story in al-Kisā’i’s *Stories of the Prophets* (*Qiṣaṣ al-’anbiyā’*), which recounts how King Solomon’s subjugation and subsequent employment of demons in the construction of Jerusalem (Kisā’i 1922:277-285), which seems to parallel one found in the the fourth century pseudepigraphic text *The Testament of Solomon* (Duling 1983:960-987), indicating a culturally fluid environment through which these legends spread.⁴

General orthographic remarks

None of the names listed by Ibn al-Nadīm contain the graphemes *ḡayn* (غ), *ḍād* (ض) and *zā’* (ظ). The *tā’ marbūṭa* occurs in five different places and the Arabic definite article /al-/ probably occurs three times.⁵ The lack of these graphemes, used for the representation of certain phonemes which in Arabic developed differently with regards to most other Semitic languages may thus indicate a non-Arabic origin of the majority of these names (Kogan 2011: 54-56).⁶ Furthermore, the orthography indicates a large amount of foreign vocabulary: about fifty out of seventy names contain quadriconsonantal or quinqueconsonantal roots, and several exhibit an orthography which indicates borrowing, e.g. <sydwk>; <n’m’n>; <q’rwn>. Other names are clearly of Iranian origin, such as <fyrwz>, <hrmz>, <frwḥ> etc.^{7 8} In addition, several names appear to be exceedingly

clear he was very interested in them and may have harboured sympathies for Shi‘ite movements. For a more extensive overview, see Bayard Dodge’s introduction to his translation of the *Fihrist*.

³ *hādā fihrist kutubi ḡamī’i l-’amami mina l-’arabi wa l-’aḡami*

⁴ This has not gone unnoticed by earlier scholars of the text; Dodge mentioned that some of these demons were named in the same Testament. This will be discussed later.

⁵ This depends on interpretation, of course. Dodge considers the article to occur in four places (Dodge 1970:728)

⁶ These graphemes indicating the Classical Arabic derivations of Proto-Semitic /*ṣ/, /*ṭ/ and /*y/, realised (for example) in Hebrew and Syriac respectively as /s/ and /ʔ/; /ṣ/ and /t/ and /ʔ/.

⁷ Respectively *Fērūz/Pērūz*; *Hormiz* (<Ahuramazda>); *Farrūḥ*; possibly also *sydk* (sēduḥt?), but I have not found the Persian equivalent. Interestingly, many of these are still popular names in the Middle East to this day, and Hormiz in particular occurs frequently in Mandaic incantational texts as the personal name of one or several individuals.

⁸ See discussion below.

difficult to analyse, such as <š's'h>; <zbw'>; <dywyd> and could be compared with the so-called *nomina barbara* frequently encountered in incantational texts (Forbes 1995: 153-155).⁹

The problem of sources

The issue of orthography also raises the problem of Ibn al-Nadīm's sources. As Hoyland pointed out, the culture of late antique and early Islamic periods in the Middle-East was characterised by a fluid mixture of widespread literacy as well as a strong emphasis on oral prowess and eloquence (Hoyland 1998:41), which in the Islamic literary tradition can be seen through the extensive usage of verbs expressing oral transmission, i.e. in the verbs *qāla* and *dakara* (Kennedy 2006:351, Hoyland 1998:43). In the *Fihrist* – particularly in chapter eight – Ibn al-Nadīm frequently employs the verb *za'ama*, 'to assert; suppose', both here and in other places, which conveys a sense of scepticism or incredulity. Dodge interpreted the usage in this place – *za'amū 'anna sulaymāna*, etc. (Nadīm 1961:370) – to mean that the demons themselves were doing the asserting, but considering the large degree to which Ibn al-Nadīm uses this verb, this does not seem very likely (Nadīm, 369-371).¹⁰ The usage of this verb to express a sense of scepticism is not unique to Ibn al-Nadīm: it occurs with the same meaning in the writings of Tabari, Ibn Iṣḥāq and al-Mas'ūdi (Khalidi 1975:8) and its usage in the Quran seems to be similar. There the verb refers almost exclusively to the speech of non-believers (Quran: 6:136; 17:56; 18:48; 62:6), and Ibn al-Nadīm's own usage likely indicates that he considered these sources unconfirmed, controversial, or false.

It bears mentioning that none of these names appear in al-Kalbī's *Kitāb al-'aṣnām* ('The Book of Idols'), which may indicate that these demons were not part of pre-Islamic Arabian mythology.¹¹ However, it is possible that at least one appears in the Quran: <q'rwn> 'Qārūn' must likely be identified with the eponymous tyrannical Quranic character (Quran 28:76,79; 29:39; 40:24), derived from the Biblical figure Korah (Exodus 6:21; Numbers 16:1-40; Jeffery 2007:231-232).

⁹ For a discussion on the function and usage of these *nomina barbara*, see for example: C. Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment*: (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck: 1995): 153-155.

¹⁰ For example, in the previous section he states that 'the sorcerers and magicians assert that devils, demons and spirits answer to them' (*za'ama al-mu'azzimūna wa l-suḥḥaratu 'anna al-ṣayāfīna wa l-ḡinna wa l-'arwāḥu tai'a-hum*) and '[certain] groups of philosophers, and star worshippers assert that they create talismans' (*za'ama tā'ifatu l-falsāfati wa 'ubadatu l-nuḡūmi 'anna-hum ya'malūna al-talismāti*).

¹¹ As far as I am aware, the *Kitāb al-'Aṣnām* mostly contains information on the deities mentioned in the Quran as well as some additional gods considered to have been worshipped in the pre-Islamic Arabian peninsula.

Names containing the theophoric element <'l>

The element occurs in three different forms: <'l>; <'l>; and <yl>, almost exclusively as the second part of a compound, but in three cases as a prefixed form. In the latter case, we must be careful not to confuse this particle with the Arabic definite article *al-*.¹²

Despite the fact that these names indicate a Semitic root, orthographic variations indicate that Ibn al-Nadīm's sources were likely highly eclectic.¹³ Naturally, similarity does not necessarily mean correspondence: similar Arabic forms are not necessarily derived from earlier Hebrew or Aramaic sources. Apart from attempting to locate these demons in earlier sources, I have also endeavoured to explain the historical processes underlying the orthographic variations encountered.

I shall now discuss the theophoric names in order of appearance; providing transcriptions of the name as they occur in the *Fihrist*, the preceding numbers referring to their exact place in the list. Wherever necessary I shall refer to Dodge's transliteration or interpretation, and in the appendix I have provided a full list of all the names occurring in the text.

4. <šmr' l>

The first part of the name is derived from the Hebrew root *šmr*, 'to protect'; which is also attested in Mandaic in the sense of 'to watch over; to guard' (Drower 1963:179).¹⁴ The *'ayin* is not part of the stem, but rather a mater lectionis representing the /e/ or /ē/ (Burtea 2011:673, Macuch 1965:13-15), so Dodge's transcription of Šimr'āl should probably be rectified to read */šimrēl/. Based on the orthography of the form, it is likely that this name entered into Arabic through contact with Mandaic. I have not found an attestation of this name in any of the incantational texts or religious scripts consulted, although some similar names are attested in varying sources: Azazel <'z(')zl> is a well-known entity mentioned in association with scapegoat rituals (Leviticus:16), and other such names appear throughout a variety of religious texts in the region, both official and unofficial (Lidzbarski 1925:144, 291) particularly in the form of adjurations and invocations (Shaked 2013:12-13, 333-343). It is possible that future discoveries and/or publications might reveal such a name.¹⁵

¹² For example, the twelfth name 'ld'hs/'lr'hs must be read as al-Dāhis, 'spreader of discord': firstly, the Syriac root *rhs* is only attested from the 19th century onwards, which Brockelmann likely correctly assessed as a loan from Arabic *rahāsa*; and secondly, the name al-Dāhis is widely attested either way (Ibn Manẓūr, 1861:1335; Clouston, 1881:287-288)

¹³ The geographical diffusion of these names was also discussed by Bayard Dodge in his translation of the *Fihrist* (Dodge 1970:728)

¹⁴ The form is eventually related to Classical Arabic *tamala*, 'to support, aid, protect' (Klein, 1966:668).

¹⁵ To my understanding dr. Bogdan Burtea is currently preparing an edition of some previously unstudied Mandaic texts, which may contain this name.

6. <mh'q'l>

It is likely that the Mandaic name <mahqaiil> is in fact the same, but its single attestation can only be dated to the 19th century at the earliest, which makes it impossible to determine if the name is in fact pre-Islamic in nature. Drower and Macuch considered this to be a theophoric name to be derived from the verb (*h*)'uqqa (ܚܩܩ), 'to fear'; interpreting the mīm as marking the active participle, hence their translation 'oppressor; tormentor' (Drower&Macuch 1948:137a; 240b). This form – without the theophoric element – is attested from a much earlier age onwards, its occurrence in the Canonical Prayerbook of the Mandaeans implies that it can be dated to at least the third century CE (Deutsch 1999:79), which would clearly establish a pre-Islamic root for this name.

Alternatively, we could consider the mīm as a part of the root. In this case, the form would most likely be derived from the root *mḥq*, the guttural /ḥ/ being weakened to the /h/, which is well-attested in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (Bar-Asher Siegal 2013:169-170; Yamauchi 1967:69-71).¹⁶ The root *maḥaq* occurs as a Biblical *hapax legomenon* in Judges 8, 'to pierce' (Klein 1977:337), although it is attested frequently in both Jewish Palestinian and Babylonian Aramaic, particularly in the menaing 'to rub out; erase' (Sokoloff 1992:656a; Schulthess 1903:108). In this case, I would argue that the form in fact represents a JBA active participle on the pattern *katāv* (Sokoloff 2011:666). Although Sokoloff employs the yod as a mater lectionis for the patah, the JBA encountered in different texts and manuscripts contain such a disparity of vowel letters (Bar-Asher Siegal 2013:38-39) that we cannot discount this as a serious possibility.

29. <'lhym>

This is undoubtedly one of the more fascinating names. Dodge interprets the initial <'l> as a definite article, which is certainly not impossible, but gives us a rather odd interpretation as *haym* usually means 'to be madly in love' (Kazimirski 1899: 2863). Alternatively, the more obvious interpretation is to read Hebrew Elohim – (אלהים), the most common Biblical name for God (Mulder 1991: 352). This raises the question of how the central deity in Judaism came to be integrated into Islamic demonology, which may be explained by looking at the Mandaic religious codices. In these texts, the God in Judaism is considered to be an evil deity – the name appears in the *Ginzā* as <'dwny> 'Adonai', as a result of the Jewish tradition of reading the Tetragrammaton in this way (Lidzbarski 1925:43, 135, 410; Rudolph 1978:4). Moreover, in the incantational bowls from the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic period we similarly encounter Adonai as the king of demons (Yamauchi 1967:36), which would further support a borrowing from Aramaic.¹⁷ (Lidzbarski 1925:44).

¹⁶ In fact, we encounter evidence of a similar weakening within Ibn al-Nadīm's list of demons: the name 73 <dnhš> must be the same as the *dan(a)ḥīš* (דנחיש) encountered in the bowl inscriptions (Shaked 2013:256-257, Montgomery 1913:195-196).

¹⁷ Lidzbarski translates: "Lobpreiset nicht den wütigen Šamiš (die Sonne) dessen Name Qādōš, dessen Name Adōnai, dessen Name Ēl-Ēl ist."

It must be noted here that Adonai is essentially equivalent with Elohim (Spronk 1991: 531-532), and considered synonymous in popular religion at the time. Strangely, the name only occurs very sporadically in the Mandaic texts, spelled without vocalisation as <lhym> (Shaked 2013:206, Montgomery 1914:270), and does not occur in the *Ginzā* or Canonical Prayerbook at all. Moreover, in this single attestation Elohim is considered a benevolent, protective deity, which likely indicates that such deities were not necessarily considered wholly good or wholly evil.

42. <'br'yl> and 44. <šftyl>¹⁸

Two of the demons mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm, <'br'yl> and <šftyl> also occur in the Jewish magical text *Sepher ha-Razīm* ('The Book of Mysteries') as the angels <'bry'l> (אבריאל) and <špty'l> (שפטיאל), associated with protection against wild animals and interpretation of dreams respectively (Morgan 1983:40-41, 52-53). When the two forms are contrasted, the most obvious differences are the elision of the penultimate alif in the first and the metathesis of alef and yod in the second name.

The form encountered here is likely derived from Hebrew *špt*, 'to judge; to punish', which would probably give us a name 'God judges; punishes' (Klein 1966:674-675). A similar root *spt* also exists in Mandaic, with the meaning 'to fetter; to bind', but this is likely an independent development, although likely related to the Hebrew form (Drower 1963:334).¹⁹ Similarly, the name <'bry'l> is likely derived from the Hebrew root 'br, 'to be strong'; also attested in Akkadian as /'abāru/, giving a possible etymology 'God is strong; God has strengthened' (Drower 1963:5). The elision of the 'alef in the first name and the metathesis of alef and yod in the second can be explained by looking at orthographic variations in the area. In the Mandaic incantational texts, vowels are often lost (Yamauchi 1967: 73), which would explain the loss of the 'alef in the first name (Shaked 2013: 167-192).²⁰ Secondly, the metathesis of 'alef and yod is already attested in the different variations of the name Gabriel, originating from Hebrew גבריאל, but spelled in Christian Palestinian texts as <gbry'yl> (ܓܒܪܝܐܝܠ), and occurs in widely varying forms in later Arabic texts (Jeffery 2007: 100-101). If this is the case, then this likely indicates a Palestinian Aramaic text of either Jewish or Christian origin, as Ibn al-Nadīm's point of reference.

Implications for early relations between Muslims and non-Muslims

As we have seen, the majority of the names discussed above were likely taken from Mandaic written sources. However, this does not necessarily mean that these names represent a belief system expressed in the orthodox Mandaic texts: as several authors

¹⁸ Dodge reads 'yr'yl instead, but I have not encountered this name anywhere.

¹⁹ In fact, the root /špt/ is attested from a very early age onwards, found in both Ugaritic and Punic.

²⁰ Consider also the variant spellings of the demonic deity Elisur Bagdana's first name, attested variously as as 'lyswr, (JBA 30, 32); 'yl'yswr (e.g., JBA37, 38); and 'l'yswr (JBA 40).

have pointed out that despite the anti-Jewish character of its official texts, the widely-spread incantational bowls mention various names of the God in Judaism as a propitious agent (Drower 1943: 163; Yamauchi). Furthermore, the *Sepher ha-Razīm*, the book containing the two names /'bry'l/ and /sftyl/ similarly contains a large amount of angelic names representing deities from other – particularly Graeco-Roman and Egyptian – religions, which further supports the notion of a syncretic religious landscape (Morgan 1963: 9-11; Bohak 2008: 247-250).

This kind of syncretism is expressed with regards to the strong association with astrology, which must definitely be emphasised here. Evidence for this relationship between the deification and demonisation of earlier celestial deities can be discerned from the presence of the name /kwkb/ (13), unambiguously *kawkab*, 'star; constellation'. Moreover, the name *kyw'n* (3) must definitely be interpreted as Kaywān²¹, the Mandaic name for the planet Saturn, the worship of whom can be traced back to the Babylonian period (Drower, 1949: 70; Yamauchi, 1967: 252-253). Although the relationship of the orthodox theology with astrology could be complex and tense (Zatelli 1991: 202-203), its widespread popularity in almost all religious traditions of the Middle-East has been well-documented by modern scholars and certainly did not go unnoticed by other medieval authors (Shahrastani 1983: 260; Ibn Waḥṣiyya 1983: 233-255).

Although not originally considered to be an evil deity, over time Kaywān came to be associated strongly with ominous or maleficent powers, and by the Mandaean period he had primarily become a demonic figure (Bohak 2008: 253; Drower 1943: 19).²² The same process of gradual 'devolution', as Yamauchi puts it, of beneficent or ambivalent deities and spirits occurs in other places as well. Some remainder of the early Babylonian *šedīn*, still considered benevolent in the Akkadian sources, but unambiguously negative in the Aramaic and Hebrew sources (Kaufman 1974:101-102; Deuteronomy:32; Psalms:106) may be found in the Fihrist under the compounded name <šd'n 'lhrt>, ²³ who came to be considered ominous or maleficent (Bohak 2008: 253; Drower 1943: 19).

The location of the passage containing the list of demons may similarly be considered, as the same section of the Fihrist also mentions the worship of stars ('*abadat al-nuḡūm*) and observation of constellations ('*irṣād al-kawākib*) (Nadīm 1961: 348), indicating the apparent association of demonology with astrology, an association by all means not exclusive to the Islamic world, as the transformation of the beneficial Babylonian planetary deities into demonic beings is attested in Mandaic incantational texts from the late Sassanian period onwards (Moroney 2003: 86-87; Yamauchi 1967: 63). The degree of continuity between the Mandaic and early Islamic perspective on demonology is noteworthy, as Mandaeism was strongly opposed to Judaism, frequently incorporating angels and beneficent agents in earlier religions as evil spirits (Yamauchi 1967: 32-33).

²¹ Or Kīwān/Kēwān, etc.

²² Interestingly, Yamauchi notes that the Mandaic bowl inscriptions consider Kīwān/Kewan to be a 'God of the Jews'.

²³ The presence of the dāl likely reflects the spirantisation of the dental consonant [d] to [ð] in post-vocalic environment in Hebrew and Aramaic.

Conclusions

The historical data and orthographic indications suggest that the list of demonic names discussed by Ibn al-Nadīm reflect a type of religious syncretism and cultural fluidity, characterised by the high degree of fluidity by which both beneficent and maleficent agents were adopted by the members of different religions. This is also supported by their appearance in the pseudepigraphic texts and incantation bowls, which likely reflect a popular version of various religions relatively unconcerned by the spiritual boundaries imposed by their respective orthodox writings. It is evident that despite these boundaries, people continued to worship or fear beings, some of which had already been feared or worshipped centuries earlier.

Considering the relatively low amount of definitive attestations in earlier manuscripts, it is difficult to draw any direct conclusions pertaining to the degree of continuity they reflect: we find several names to correspond with those of creatures already considered demonic in the Mandaic and even Akkadian periods, but others appear to reflect those of angelic beings. Further comparative analysis of more of these names – particularly those of Iranian origin – would undoubtedly shed more light on the degree of syncretism in popular religion of the early Islamic Middle East.

APPENDIX A: Full list of demons

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. fqṭṣ | 26. mz'ḥm | 51. 'šḡ' |
| 2. 'mrd | 27. mrt | 52. nwdr |
| 3. kyw'n | 28. ftrt | 53. tyš'mt |
| 4. šmr'ʿl | 29. 'lhym | 54. 'š'r |
| 5. fyrwz | 30. 'rhbt | 55. t'b'n |
| 6. mh'q'l | 31. ḥyt' | 56. n'm'n |
| 7. zyzb/dyzb | 32. xyftt | 57. nmwdrky |
| 8. sydwk | 33. ry'h | 58. ṭb'bwr |
| 9. ḡndrb/hbdrb | 34. rhl | 59. s'htwn |
| 10. sy'r | 35. zwb'/'dwy'h | 60. 'd'fr |
| 11. znbwr | 36. mḥtwkr' | 61. mrd's |
| 12. 'lr'ḥs | 37. ḥyšb | 62. šytwb |
| 13. kwkb | 38. tqy't'n | 63. z'rwš |
| 14. ḥmr'n | 39. wq'š | 64. šḥr |
| 15. d'hr | 40. qdmnt | 65. 'l'rmm |
| 16. q'rwn | 41. mfrš | 66. ḥšrm |
| 17. šd'd | 42. 'br'yl | 67. 'šd'n 'lhrt |
| 18. š'š'h | 43. nz'r | 68. 'lhwyrt |
| 19. bkt'n | 44. šftyl | 69. 'zrh |
| 20. hrṭmt | 45. dywyd | 70. fqrwn |
| 21. bkml | 46. 'nkr' | |
| 22. frwḥ | 47. ḥtwft | |
| 23. hrmz | 48. nnkywš | |
| 24. hmhmh | 49. mslqr | |
| 25. 'yz'n | 50. q'dm | |

Demons associated with particular days of the week

1. dnhš	4. 'br'	7. bhṭš
2. š'ḥb'	5. msm'r	
3. mrby'	6. nmwdrky	

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أصوات وضجيج الجنّ في الموروث العربي القديم: دراسة صوتية ودلالية

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مركز البحث العلمي والتقني لتطوير اللغة العربية - وحدة البحث تلمسان-الجزائر

الملخص: يتناول هذا البحث أصوات الجن في الموروث العربي القديم، وتكمن أهمية هذه الدراسة في أنها تكشف عن علاقة هذه الأصوات وارتباطها بأصوات الكائنات الحية والجمادات، فكما رسم لنا العرب هيئات الجن وتشكلاتهم كما تخيلوها عن طريق الرؤية، كذا سجلوا لنا أصواتهم كما تخيلوها عن طريق السمع، وسموها عزيفاً، وهو ما يشبه الضجيج العميق، وقد فرقوا بين هذه الأصوات نسبة لقوتها وصخباتها وجرسها وتلونها وخفتها ودمدمتها وشوشتها وهمسها، وبنوا ما فيها من غرابة وغموض، وسحر وتهويل، وما فيها من قرع وسخط وتهديد. يهدف هذا المقال إلى دراسة العلاقة بين الأصوات ومدلولاتها وذلك بالتركيز على الدلالة الصوتية لمجموعة من الألفاظ الدالة على أصوات الجن وكيف وصفها العرب القدامى في أشعارهم، ليضعوا بين أيدينا تسجيلات متنوعة من أصوات الجن وأنغامهم وسنصف نماذج منها لتبيان ماهيتها.

كلمات مفتاحية: أصوات الجن، الموروث العربي، الشعر الجاهلي، العزيف، الدلالة الصوتية.

المقدمة:

إن البيئة التي عاش فيها العرب كوّنت عندهم فكرة أنّ للجنّ أصواتاً كما للإنس، فكان ما تصوره من صوت الجن ليس سوى أصداء الصحراء وأنغامها، وكان الجنّ لا تعرف النطق بلغتها، فقد تفوهت بلسان الفياضي والحيوان والطير والشجر، وفي رنين السهم والوتر، ومن أصداء الصحراء، أتت هاته الأصوات من بعيد، لم يشبها بعد المكان والزمان، بل زادها القدم روعة وسحراً. هذه الأصوات التي تكوّنت من حروف مختارة، فشكّلت أصواتاً مختارة، تستوعبها مجموعة من الألفاظ ذات نغم وجرس وإيقاع وصدى، وهذا ما يسمى باستبحاء الدلالة الصوتية التي تستمد من طبيعة الأصوات نغمتها وجرسها ومن الواقع السمعي للفظ والتأثير النفسي للكلمة والمدلول الانفعالي بالحدث.

1- الجنّ في المفهوم اللغوي والاصطلاحي:

تدور الدلالة اللغوية المحورية للفعل (جَنّ) حول معنى التسترّ والاختفاء، نقول جَنّ الشيء يجنه جَنّاً: ستره، وبه سمي الجنّ؛ لاستتارهم واختفائهم عن الأبصار. والجنّ ولد الجانّ، وهم نوع من المخلوقات سماوا بذلك؛ لاختفائهم عن الأبصار، ولأنهم استجنوا فلا يُرَوَّن. والجان: أبو الجن خلق من نار، ثم خلق منه نسله (ابن منظور، د: 219). ولم تختلف صورة الجن في الذهن الإسلامية عنها في الجاهلية، إذ أشار القرآن الكريم إلى أن الجن مخلوقات شفافة يرون الناس ولكن الناس لا يرونهم وذلك في قوله تعالى: أنه يراكم هو وقبيله من حيث لا ترونهم (سورة الأعراف، 27)، واثبتت الآيات القرآنية أن الجن مخلوقات نارية خلقت قبل آدم عليه السلام في قوله تعالى: (والجان خلقناه من قبل من نار السموم) (سورة الحجر، 27) (وخلق الجان من مارج من نار) (سورة الرحمن، 15).

2- أصوات الجن في الشعر الجاهلي، دراسة وصفية:

العزيفُ، زعم الجاهليون أنهم يسمعون أصواتاً غريبة نسبوا إلى تلك الكائنات، وأطلقوا عليها عدة أسماء، أشهرها (العزيف)، وعزفت الجن تعزف عزفاً وعزيفا، أي صوتت ولعبت، ولم تأت هذه التسمية من فراغ؛ لأن العزيف في اللغة صوت الرمال إذا هبت بها الرياح، وعزف الرياح أصواتها، والعزف صوت في الرمل لا يعرف ما هو، وفي حديث ابن عباس-رضي الله عنهما قال: "كانت الجن تعزف الليل كله بين الصفا والمروة"، وعزيف الجن جرس أصواتها، وقيل هو صوت يسمع بالليل كالطبل، وقيل هو صوت الرياح في الجو فتوهمه أهل البادية صوت الجن. (ابن منظور، دبت: 11/ 149-150) فالوهم هو الأساس ولعل الذي خيل إليهم ذلك، هو رجوع الأصوات، وصدى الريح المتناوحة، والعود القاصفة، والوحوش المصوتة، في بيداؤها كلها وهاد ونجاد (الحوفي، 1952: 373)، وسجل الشعراء ذلك في أشعارهم، فما هو عبيد بن الأبرص يقول:

قليلاً بها الأصوات إلا عوازفاً عراراً زماراً من غياهيبي آجال¹

ويرد عزيف الجن في قول نابغة بني شيبان، مقرونا بالصحراء والليل:

كانَ أصداءها والليل كاربها أصوات قوم إذا ما أظلموا هتفوا
يسمغ فيها الذي يجتاب قفرتها أصوات جن إذا ما أعتموا عزفوا

فهذه القفرة لخلوها من البشر؛ تبدو مأهولة بالجن، فلا يسمع فيها إلا عزيفها، وربما كان هذا هو الدافع الذي دفع شاعراً آخر، إلى ربط الموسيقى المصاحبة للشعر المرتل بصوت الجن، إذ يقول: (ابن منظور دبت: 11/ 149-150)

وإني لأجتأب الفلاة وبينها عوازف جنان وهام صواخذ

وقد كانت الموسيقى وسيلة تخاطب الجن، ولعبت دوراً كبيراً، في حياة الشاعر الكاهن في الفكر الديني الجاهلي، لذلك اقترن العزف الموسيقي المصاحب للسفر المرتل، بصوت الجن (فارمر، 2014، 45).

الصنوج:

شيءٌ يتخذ من صفرٍ يُضربُ أحدهما على الآخر، وهو أيضاً " آله ذو أوتارٍ يُضربُ بها، وصنوج الناس صنوجاً: ردّ كلاً إلى أصله، وصنوج: بالعصا: ضرب بها. وصنوج الجن صوتها، (الزبيدي، 1965: 73/6) فقد تصورها العرب إذا خفتت ولطفت كضرب الصنوج، قال القطامي:

تبيت الغول تهزج أن تراه وصنوج الجن من طرب يهيم (ابن منظور دبت: 3/ 135-136)

وأورد البكري لرؤية قوله:

كان عزف الجن بالأهراج به حنين الرجل الصنّاج (البكري، 1348هـ: 21)

فالشاعران متفقان في سماعهما عزيف الجن كإيقاع الصنوج. أما ذو الرمة فتبلغه أصواتها أشد وأرفع، فهو يصورها بنسف الرمل كضرب الطبل إذ يقول:

¹ العرار: صياح الظليم، الزمار: صوت النعام، الغياهيبي جمع غيهيب يقصد النعام السود، الأجال: جمع إجل وهو القطيع من البقر والظباء.

ورمل عزيف الجنّ في عقداته هريير كتضراب المغنين بالطبل (الجاحظ: 1965: 176/6)

الهِرِيرُ من هَرَ هَبْرُهُ بالضمّ وَيَبْرُهُ بالكسر هَرّاً وَهَرِيراً: كَرِهَهُ، أَي هَرِيرُ الكلب: صَوْتُهُ وَهُوَ دُونَ نُبَاجِهِ مِنْ قَلَّةِ صَوْتِهِ عَلَى الْبَرْدِ. وَقَدْ يُطْلَقُ الْهَرِيرُ عَلَى صَوْتِ غَيْرِ الكلبِ، وَمِنْهُ الْحَدِيثُ: "إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ هَرِيراً كَهَرِيرِ الرَّحَى" أَي صَوْتِ دَوْرَانِهَا، وَالتَّهْرُ هُرٌّ: صَوْتُ الرِّيحِ تَهْرَهْرَتْ وَهَرَهْرَتْ (الزبيدي، 1965: 278/6-279) كقول ذي الرمة:

فلاة لصوت الجن من منكراتها هريير، وللأبوام فيها نوانح (الجاحظ: 1965: 176/6)

الهَرْجُ:

وَهُوَ صَوْتُ مُطْرَبٍ. وَقِيلَ: هُوَ صَوْتُ فِيهِ بَحَجٌّ. وَقِيلَ: صَوْتُ دَقِيقٍ مَعَ ارْتِفَاعٍ. وَكُلُّ كَلَامٍ مُتَدَارِكٍ مُتَقَارِبٍ فِي حَقِّةٍ: هَرْجٌ. وَالْجَمْعُ أَهْرَاجٌ. وَبِهِ سُمِّيَ وَقِيلَ: سُمِّيَ هَرْجاً تَشْبِيهاً بِهَرْجِ الصَّوْتِ. وَقَالَ أَبُو إِسْحَاقَ: التَّهْرُجُ: تَرَدُّدُ التَّخْسِينِ فِي الصَّوْتِ. وَقِيلَ: هُوَ صَوْتُ مُطَوَّلٌ غَيْرُ رَفِيعٍ، وَفِي الْحَدِيثِ: "أَدْبَرَ الشَّيْطَانُ وَلَهُ هَرْجٌ، وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ: وَرَجُّ الهَرْجِ: الرَّنَّةُ، وَالْوَرْجُ ذُونُهُ وَهُوَ صَوْتُ الرَّعْدِ وَالذَّبَابِ، وَالهَرْمَجَةُ كَلَامٌ مُتَتَابِعٌ وَاخْتِلَافٌ صَوْتِ زَائِدٍ وَالصَّوْتِ الْمُتَدَارِكِ. (ابن منظور د.ت: 214-215/3).

الرَّجْلُ:

ويعرض الأعراس لنوع آخر من أصوات الجنّ، وهو الرَّجْلُ، ذلك الصوت الذي يعبر عن الطرب، ويربط سماع هذا الصوت بالليل، فيقول:

وبلدة مثل ظهر الترس موحشة للجنّ بالليل في حافات زجل
ولكنّ الجن لا تلزم جرسا واحدا معيناً، فإنها كما تتشكل وتتلون بهيئاتها، كذا بأصواتها، تنساب إلى أذن الشاعر نفسه كأحاديث السمّر، قال:

وكم عرست² بعد السرى من معرس به من كلام الجن أصوات سامر

السَّمَرُ: السَّمَرُ: المُسَامَرَةُ، وَهُوَ الْحَدِيثُ بِاللَّيْلِ. قَالَ الْأَصْمَعِيُّ: السَّمَرُ عِنْدَهُمْ: الظُّلْمَةُ وَالْأَصْلُ اجْتِمَاعُهُمْ يَسْمُرُونَ فِي الظُّلْمَةِ ثُمَّ كَثُرَ الْإِسْتِعْمَالُ حَتَّى سَمُوا الظُّلْمَةَ سَمَرًا، السَّمَرُ: الْمَوْضِعُ الَّذِي يَجْتَمِعُونَ لِلسَّمَرِ فِيهِ وَأَنْشُدُوا: وَسَامِرٍ طَالَ فِيهِ اللَّهْوُ وَالسَّمَرُ، السَّمِيرُ: السَّمِيرُ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَحَدَّثُ مَعَكَ بِاللَّيْلِ. فَقَدْ زَعِمَ أَنَّهُ عِنْدَ نَزْوَلِهِ لَيْلًا لِلإِسْتِرَاحَةِ لَمْ يَشْعُرْ بِوَحْشَةِ الْمَكَانِ لَمَّا اسْتَأْنَسَ بِهِ مِنْ سَمْرِ الْجِنِّ فِي تِلْكَ الْفِتْرَةِ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ. وَلَا غَرَابَةَ أَنْ يَتَوَهَّمُ الشَّاعِرُ ذَلِكَ، لِأَنَّ أَصْدَاءَ اللَّيْلِ تَغْلِبُ عَلَيْهَا السَّكِينَةُ وَالسَّجْوُ. فَقَدْ بَدَأَ لَهُ صَوْتُ الْجِنِّ وَكَأَنَّهُ سَمِرٌ لَطِيفٌ، وَبِمَا أَنَّهُ هَاوِي مَغَامِرَاتٍ وَأَلِيفَ أَسْفَارٍ وَأَخُو قَلَوَاتٍ فَانَّهُ يَطْرِبُ لِسَمَاعِ أَصْوَاتِ الْجِنِّ فِيهَا وَيَتَصَوَّرُهَا غِنَاءً: (نعمة، 1960: 126)

كم جيت دونك³ من يهماء مظلمة تيه إذا ما مغني جنّه سمرا (الجاحظ: 1965: 176/6)
وقال: بلاد ببيت اليوم يدعو بناته بها ومن الأصداء والجن سامر

² التعريس: النزول في أواخر الليل للاستراحة.
³ الضمير يرجع الى ممدوحه عمرو بن هريرة

ويبدو أن ذا الرمة كان أرفف الشعراء حسًا بعزيف الجان، وكانت أذنه تألف أصواتهم وتميّز بنها تمييزاً دقيقاً، حتى جمع منها ضروباً متفرقة من التوقيعات. فإننا بينما نراه يأنس لسمر الجن ويستلطفه، إذ به يستنكر سماعهم عندما يقع على أذنه نابياً قويا.
فهو يقرن أصواتهم بنعيق اليوم⁴ لاستهجانها إياها واستيحاشه منها. وكثيراً ما يقترن صوت الجن بصوت اليوم في قصائد شعراء آخرين. قال الراعي:

وداويةً غبراء أكثر أهلها عزيف وبوم آخر الليل صائح (الجاحظ: 1965: 177/6)

وذلك بسبب الجوار والاستيحاش. فالبوم تعتاد الأماكن المقفرة التي زعم العرب أنها مساكن للجن، فلا بدّ لهم عند سماعهم نعيق اليوم، أن يقرنوا به عزيف الجان.
أما الصدى وإن ارتبط بالهامية ارتباطاً وثيقاً، وتبادل المواقع معها، في الدلالة، إلا أن هناك من يقول إنه الذكر من اليوم، وهو طائر يُصْرُ بالليل ويطيّر، وهو طائر يخرج من رأس المقتول إذا بلي (الألوسي، د.ت: 311/2)، وكلاهما يرتبط في الدلالة على: "الصوت والموت والليل والاختلاط والجن" (الديك، 1999: 634) بدليل ما ورد على لسان أسماء بن خارجة (الأصمعي، 1979: 50).

وبه الصدى والعزف تحسبه صدحُ القيان عزفن للشرب

النّعيقُ:

نعقَ الراعي بغمه أي: صاح بها وزجرها. وفي الحديث: "وإياكُنْ ونعيقَ الشيطان" يعني الصياح والنوح وأضافه إلى الشيطان لأنه الحاملُ عليه. وقوله تعالى: (ومثل الذين كفروا كمثل الذي ينعق بما لا يسمع إلا دعاءً ونداءً). وهو صوت الغراب، ونعق الغراب نعْب؛ صاح، صوت (الزبيدي، 1965: 452).
وكلّ هذا ناجم من التوحّش والانفراد اللذين يسببان الهواجس والوساوس، فيخيل للإنسان أنه يسمع أصواتاً ويرى أناساً، وما ذلك إلا التماساً لترويح عن نفسه في مثل هذه الحالات المقلقة التي تنتابه. فإن كان ما يسمعه مؤنسا غلبت شجاعته على وساوسه ومخاوفه، وإن كان ما يسمعه مريباً مستنكراً غلبت وساوسه عليه، فمصدر هذه التخيلات: مزاج الشاعر وحالته النفسية. ذلك لأن الجن كانت تمثل الحيوان في المخيلة العربية، وكذلك نوعية الجن لم تكن محصورة في الحيوانية، بل كل شيء مخيف أو صوت غريب أو بناء عظيم يستلفت الأنظار كان متعلقاً بالجن. (خان، 1981: 85).

فنو الرمة تتغير عليه أصوات الجن في الأماكن ذاتها، فبينما نراه ينزع منها، إذ به يستسيغها في البيت التالي:

وللوحش والجنان كل عشية بها خلقة من عازف وبغام (الجاحظ: 1965: 177/6)

فهو وإن أراد في هذا البيت وصف المهامة ووحشتها، نجده لا ينفر من عزيف جانيها، لأننا نراه يقرنها بالبغام، والبغام صوت الطباء وهو جرس يألفه العرب ويستأنسون به.

البُغامُ:

بُغامُ الطّبيبة صوتُها بَعَمَتِ الطّبيبةُ تَبَعَمَ صاحبتُ إلى ولدها بأرخم ما يكون من صوتها وبَعَمَتِ الرجلُ إذا لم تُفصح له عن معنى ما تُحدّثه به. والمُباغمةُ المُحادثةُ بصوتٍ رَجِيمٍ. بَعَمَ صوتُهُ، أي لَانَ وَرَقَ.
وكانوا إذا سمعوا هبوب الريح، وصغير الأعاصير قالوا: الجن. وقصف الرعد قالوا: الجن، وحفيف الأشجار، قالوا الجن:

⁴ للغراب والبومة رمزية خاصة في الثقافة العربية، فالبوم طائر يكثر ظهوره في الليل ويسكن الخراب ويضرب به المثل في الشوم، والغراب نذير شوم كذلك وظهوره يدل في ذهنية العربي على أمر غير سعيد يلوح في الأفق.

للجن في الليل في حافاتها زجل كما تناوح يوم الريح عيشوم (ابن منظور، د.ت: 331).

والعيشوم شجر له صوت لدى هبوب الريح (ابن سيده، 2000: 387) فتخيلوه عزيزا.

الهَمْهَمَةُ:

هَمْهَمَ الرجلُ: تكلَّم كلاماً خفياً يُسمع ولا يُفهم محصولة. والرَّعْدُ: سمع له دويٌّ. والهَمْهَمَةُ في الصحاح في اللغة: ترديد الصوت في الصدر. وهو كلُّ صَوْتٍ معه بَحْحٌ، وهو التكلم بكلام خفي غير مسموع. (ابن منظور، د.ت: 106). قال الجاحظ: انهم كانوا يسمعون في الجاهلية من أجواف الأوثان همهمة، وان خالد بن الوليد (رضي الله عنه وأرضاه) حين هدم العزى رمته بالشَّرر، حتى احترق عامَّة فخذه، فبريء لما عاده النبي عليه الصلاة والسلام (الجاحظ، 1965: 201/6) وبهذا تكون الهمهمة صوت الشيطان، وإِيا تسرَّبت إليهم همهمة من أصداء الفلوات، قالوا أحاديث الجن. ويعبر عنتره عن نوع آخر من أصوات الجن، وهو "الههاهم والدمادم"، وهي أصوات غير مسموعة وغير واضحة أو غير مفهومة، (ابن منظور، د.ت: 107) فيقول:

والجنّ تفرّق حول غابات الفلأ بهماهم ودمادم لم تُفعل

الهَسْهَسَةُ:

هي صوت حركة الدرع والخلي، وحركة الرجل بالليل ونحوه. وهَسَّهَسُ الجنّ: عزيفهم. والهَسَّهَسُ: حديث النفس وسوستها، والهَسَّهَسُ: الكلام الخفي لا يُفهم (الجوهري، 2009: 1201). والوَسْوَسةُ الذي يحدث بكلام خفي قوله تعالى: ﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعَلَّمَ مَا تَوْسَّوَسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ﴾ (سورة ق، 16) والذي يغوي بالشر ويزينه، قال تعالى: ﴿الَّذِي يُؤَسَّوَسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ﴾ (سورة الناس) وهي حديث النفس (عمر أحمد مختار، 2002: 479).

وإِيا سمعوا أزيز الذباب وما شابه زعموا أنه صوت الجن، أنشد ابن الأعرابي:

تسمع للجنّ به زي زي زما هتاملأ من رزها وهيمنا

وجاء في هذا الباب، على سبيل التشبيه والاستعارة، نسبة كل صوت منبه غريب للجنّ. فكانوا إِيا ما سمعوا حركة خفية في الليل، حركة بعض الصعاليك الذين كانوا يتسللون ليلا طلبا للرزق بالعنوان على المواشي وغيرها، قالوا الجنّ والهَمْهَمَةُ من هَمْهَمَ وهي الكلام الخفي وهتمل الرّجلان تكلمًا بكلام يُسرانه عن غيرهما. (ابن منظور، د.ت: 213) وإِيا نفّوه أحدهم بكلامٍ ي أرنان مستحب شبهوه بنطق الجنّ. كذلك إِيا كان نطق بعضهم غليظا مستهجنًا مثلوه بالجنّ. قال الزّفيان العوافي (وهو عطاء ابن أسيد أحد بني عوافه بن سعد)

بين اللّها منه إذا ما مدّ مثل عزيف الجن هدّت هدا(الجاحظ، 1965: 175/6)

والهدّة صوت وقع الحائط ونحوه، والهادّ صوت يسمعه أهل الساحل يأتيهم من قبل البحر، له دوي في الأرض وربما كانت معه الزلزلة ودويّه هديده. وهدر الحمام هديرا أي صوت، وهدر البعير أي: ردّد صوته في حنجرته، وفي المثل: كالمهدّر في العتّة يضرب للرجل يصيح ويجلب وليس وراءك شيء وتهدج الصوت تقطعه. وهضب القوم في الحديث أي أفاضوا فيه وارتفعت أصواتهم (الجوهري، 2009: 1202). وفي قوله تعالى: ﴿وَاسْتَفْزِرْ مِنْ اسْتَضَاعَتِ مَنْهُمُ بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَعِدْهُمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا﴾ (سورة الاسراء، 64)

قال أفزعه الخوف واستفزه أي أزعجه واستخفه، وصوته دعاؤه إلى معصية الله تعالى، وقيل: أراد بصوتك: الغناء واللهو واللعب الجلبة وهو الصباح وربما قالوا الجلب كما قالوا الغلبة، والغلب والشفقة والشفق، وقال الليث وأبو عبيدة: اجلبوا وجليبوا من الصباح (الرازي، 2004: 6-7).
وغالبا ما كانوا يشبهون انين السهم عند انطلاقه بالأزمل، قال أوس بن حجر يصف سهما:

كتوم طلاع الكف لا دون ملنها ولا عجبها⁵ من موضع الكف أفضل⁶
إذا ما تعاطوها⁷ سمعت لصوتها إذا انبضوا عنها ننيما وأزملا

والأزمل كل صوت مختلط، وسمعت أزمل القوس أي رنينها (ابن منظور، دت: 329/13).
وقد نقد الجاحظ ما يتصل بذكر عزيف الجن، وتغول الغيلان، وأعاده إلى الوحشة أو الوسوسة أو إلى الكذب (الجاحظ، 1965: 249-259). كما ميّز العرب بين صوتين مختلفين للجن، العزيف الذي يسمع ليلا بالصحراء، ولا يفهم منه شيء، والهاتف الذي يسمع ويفهم، فيقوم الجن بمخاطبة الإنس، ويناشدهم شعرا، ويخبرهم بما لا يعرفون، والقصص والروايات في ذلك كثيرة (صالح، 2005، 92).

3. دراسة صوتية دلالية لأصوات الجن : 3-1. الدلالة الصوتية وأنواعها:

إن الدلالة الصوتية هي ما تؤديه الأصوات المكونة للكلمة من دور في إظهار المعنى، وذلك في نطاق تأليف مجموع أصوات الكلمة المفردة، سواء كانت هذه الأصوات صوامت وتسمى بالعناصر الصوتية الرئيسية التي يشكل منها (vowels) أو حركات (consonants) مجموع أصوات الكلمة التي رمز إلى معنى معجمي، كما تتحقق الدلالة الصوتية من مجموع تأليف كلمات الجملة وطريقة أدائها الصوتي ومظاهر هذا الأداء، وهذا ما يعرف بالعناصر الصوتية الثانوية التي تصاحب الكلمة المفردة (عكاشة، 2005: 17)، ويوضح أحد الباحثين مفهوم الدلالة الصوتية بقوله:

تعتمد على تغيير الفونيمات، أي باستخدام المقابلات الاستبدالية بين الألفاظ حتى يحدث تعديل أو تغيير في معاني الألفاظ لأن كل فونيم مقابل استبدالي لآخر، فتغيره أو استبداله بغيره لا بد أن يعقبه اختلاف في المعنى، كما نقول في العربية: نفر، ونفذ، فيمجرد استبدال الراء بالذال يتغير معنى الكلمتين بصورة آلية (مجاهد، 1985: 166).

ويخلص إلى نتيجة عامة، يقول:

"وعليه كل حرف أو حركة في اللغة العربية يمكن أن يكون مقابلا استبداليا، فالحروف في تبدلها ذات وظيفة فونيمية، كذلك الحركات لها دلالة صوتية، أي ذات وظيفة فونيمية أقرب إلى وظيفة الحروف في تغيير معاني الكلمات" (المرجع نفسه، الصفحة نفسها).

وتكون الدلالة الصوتية إما ذات دلالة وظيفية مطردة، وإما ذات دلالة صوتية غير مطردة. فأما الدلالة الصوتية المطردة فهي ما كانت لها دلالة تخضع لنظام معين أو قواعد مضبوطة، فهي التي تعتمد على تغيير مواقع الفونيمات، أي باستخدام المقابلات الاستبدالية بين الألفاظ حتى يحدث تعديل أو تغيير في معاني الألفاظ. لأن كل فونيم مقابل استبدالي لآخر، فتغيره أو استبداله بغيره لا بد أن يعقبه اختلاف في المعنى وقد يكون هذا الاستبدال استبدال حرف بحرف، أو حركة بحركة في الكلمة الواحدة. وأما الدلالة الصوتية غير المطردة، فهي تلك الدلالة التي لا تخضع لنظام معين أو قواعد مضبوطة، ومن صورها، الأصوات الثانوية، أو ما يطلق عليها الأصوات فوق التركيبية النبر والتنغيم والوقف (suprasegmental phonemes)، وغيرها من الملامح الصوتية التي لا تدخل في تأليف البنية الصوتية للكلمة، ولكنها تظهر في الأداء فقط (هادف، 2009: 103-119).

⁵ عجبها: طلاع الكف، مقبض القوس.

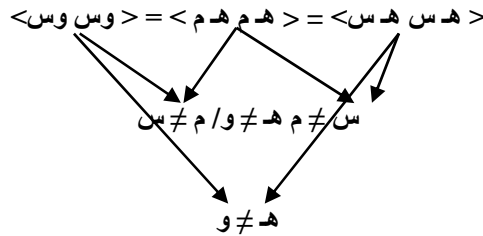
⁶ أفضل منها: أزيد.

⁷ حرّكوا وترها لترن.

ويمكن تقسيم الدلالة الصوتية إلى قسمين:
 أولاً: الدلالة الصوتية الطبيعية: وهي ما تؤديه الأصوات الصادرة عن مظاهر الطبيعة المختلفة، كذلك أصوات الإنسان والحيوان من أدوار في تحديد المعنى، فهي ذات علاقة بنظرية المحاكاة تقليد أصوات الطبيعة في نشأة اللغة أو ما يعرف بالعلاقة الطبيعية بين الدال والمدلول.
 ثانياً: الدلالة الصوتية التحليلية: وهي تلك الدلالة التي تستنبط من:
 1. دلالة الفونيمات التركيبية (Segmental Phonemes)، الحروف (الصوامت) والحركات (الصوائت).
 2. دلالة الفونيمات غير التركيبية (Suprasegmental Phonemes) مثل: النبر والتنغيم، وغيرهما من الأداءات الصوتية المختلفة.

أ- الدلالة الصوتية الطبيعية:

والمقصود بالدلالة الصوتية الطبيعية تلك الدلالة الطبيعية بين الدال والمدلول التي ترتبط ارتباطاً وثيقاً بنظرية محاكاة وتقليد أصوات الطبيعة في نشأة اللغة وأصلها، وهي نظرية بنيت على أساس وجود مناسبة طبيعية بين اللفظ ومعناه كحكاية الأصوات، والتي نحن بصدد الحديث عنها تعدّ المصدر الرئيسي لنوع من الأفعال درج العلماء على تسميته بالفعل الرباعي المضغّف، ثم يؤكد أن هذه الأفعال وأسماءها ما هي إلا حكاية أصوات الطبيعة والحيوانات المندفعة إلى تكرار المقاطع (الفاخري، دبت، 73) مثل هسهس وهمهم ووسوس، إبدال السين المهموسة ميماً مجهورة فالهاء المرققة أخت السين الصفيرية في الهمس والرّخاوة والميم أخت والواو في الجهر وكلاهما صوت بين الشدة والرّخاوة، فجمعت بين الهمس واللّبونة، فكان صوت السين خير معبر عن هذه الأجواء فهو صوت مهموس أسناني يحدث صفيراً عند النطق به. كذلك أنك تجد المصادر الرباعية المضغفة تأتي للتكرير و الاضطراب (ابن جني، دبت: 153/2) كما يشير جيسبرسن إلى ما عرف عند علماء العربية من أن زيادة المبنى تدلّ على زيادة المعنى (أنيس، 1984، 70).



جدول 1

جدول قياس درجة القوة والضعف لأصوات (هسهس وهمهم ووسوس)

الصفات الحروف	مهموس °0	مجهور °1	شديد انفجاري °1	رخوي احتكاكي °0	مركب °0.5 +/-	متوسّط °0.5	مفخّم °1	مرقّق °0
الهاء	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
السين	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
الميم	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
الواو(لين)	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
	2	2	0	2	0	1	0	2

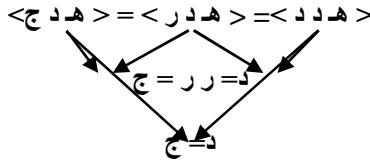
نلاحظ أن صفة الهمس والاحتكاك هي 4 درجات مقارنة بدرجتين 2 فقط للجهر وهي صفة ضعف لهذا تشابهت في المعنى وهي الكلام الخفي الذي لا يسمع.

ب. الدلالة الصوتية التحليلية:
الاتفاق في الحروف:

وهو على ضربين اتفاق كلي واتفاق جزئي، أما الاتفاق الكلي، فيقصد به أن تكون الحروف التي تشكل الكلمة متفقة بغض النظر عن ترتيبها، ويتجلى لنا بوضوح فيما يعرف (بالاشتقاق الكبير) الذي يقوم على نظام التقاليب بأوجهها المختلفة للأصل الواحد (ابن جني، د.ت: 146) نحو (ع ز ف) و(ز ع ف) و(ف ز ع) (أبو منصور، 2001: 390) فالفاء المهموسة المرققة أخت الزاي المجهورة الصغيرية والعين في الرخاوة وهي أصوات مرققة، والفاء الاحتكاكية المتفشية توحى بانتشار الصوت خاصة أنها جاءت قبل الزاي الصغيرية التي أعطته حدة وقوة أما في (عزيف) فهنا نلاحظ زيادة ياء المد التي تدل على امتداد الصوت واتساعه.

إن تقاليب الأصل الواحد ينتظمها معنى عام حسب مفهوم الاشتقاق الأكبر. وهذا الضرب من التصاقب أكثر ضروب التصاقب اتساعا، فهو قائم على تقاليب كل ما تألفت حروفه من الأصول الثلاثة⁸. أما الاتفاق الجزئي فذلك أن يشترك اللفظان بأكثر حروفهما لا بجميعها وذلك واضح فيما تداخل من الأصول الثلاثة معنى ولفظا (المصدر السابق: 145) ومما تقارب من الأصول الثلاثة والرباعية فتداخل معنى (هزج) و(هزمج) و(زمل) و(أزمل) فتكون حروف الثلاثي محتواة في الرباعي، ف(هزمج) احتوى حروف الأصل الثلاثي (هزج) وزادت الميم، وأما عن تقاربهما في المعنى فالهزج هو صوت دقيق مع ارتفاع والهزمجة هو كل كلام متتابع واختلاط. كذلك بالنسبة (زمل) و(أزمل)، فزملت القوس صوتت وسمعت أزمل القوس أي رنينها. ما اتفق بعض حروفه وتضارعت الأخرى وهو على ضربين:

أ- ما اتفق فيه الحرفان وتضارع الثالث: وذلك نحو هدد وهدر وهدج فالدال أخت الراء والجيم في الجهر والدال والجيم تحملان صفتي القوة: الجهر والانفجار وهي تعني الصياح والجلبة وهو أن تتقارب الحروف لتقارب المعاني (ابن جني، د.ت: 164/2).



جدول 2

جدول قياس درجة القوة والضعف لأصوات (هدد وهدر وهدج)

الصفات الحروف	مهموس	مجهور	شديد انفجاري	رخوي احتكاكي	مركب	متوسط	مفخم	مرقق
	0	1	1	0	0.5 +/-	0.5 ≈	1	0
الهاء	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
الدال	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+
الراء	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+
الجيم	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+
	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	3

نلاحظ أن درجة القوة للجهر والانفجار هي 4 درجات مقارنة بدرجتين 2 فقط للهمس والاحتكاك وهذا ما يوكد نفس النتيجة التي السابقة.

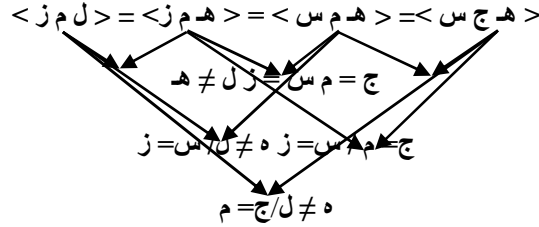
وفي ذلك أيضا قوله سبحانه وتعالى: أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ تَوْرَهُمْ أَرَا (سورة مريم، 83) أي تزعمهم وتلقهم، فهذا في معنى تهزهم هزاً، والهزمة أخت الهاء؛ فتقارب اللفظان في تقارب المعنيين. وكأنهم خصوا هذا المعنى بالهزمة لأنها أقوى من الهاء وهذا المعنى أعظم في النفوس من الهز؛ لأنك تهز ما لا بال له، كالجدع وساق الشجرة، ونحو ذلك. (ابن جني، د.ت: 164/2) ويورّ يهيج ويزعج بصوت (عمر أحمد مختار، 2002: 86).

⁸ ينظر (باب في الاشتقاق الأكبر) و(باب تصاقب الألفاظ لتصاقب المعاني) و(باب في أساس الألفاظ أشباه المعاني) الخصائص لابن جني.

يتضح لنا من خلال هذا القول أن بني يذهب إلى أن مجرد الاشتراك في بعض الحروف يكفي أحيانا للاشتراك في الدلالة فالهزّ والأزّ متقاربان في المعنى، وهما أيضا متقاربان في اللفظ. وحين نقارن بين أَرْ وهَز نرى أن التضعيف في الصيغة الثانية قد زاد في دلالتها.

وكذلك في همس وهجس والميم المجهورة المتوسطة هي أخت الجيم المركبة وكلاهما يتقاربان في المعنى، فالهمس صوت خفي في قوله تعالى: **يَوْمَئِذٍ يَقِفُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا عَوجَ لَهُ وَخُشَعَتِ الأصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا** (سورة طه، 108) (عمر أحمد مختار، 2002: 466). والهاجس الخاطر، هجس في صدري شيء يهجس، أي حدس، والهجس النبأ تسمعها ولا تفهمها. (الجوهري، 2009: 1190) والهاجس هو الجن الذي اختص ان يوسوس للإنسان لتنتابه الخواطر المغلفة والأفكار المزعجة فتنتقل عليه الهموم وتلازمه فيصبح شبه مخبول. ويحكى أنه كان للأعشى هاجس يوسوس له فيسلبه الطمأنينة والراحة (الألوسي، د.ت 368/2)، ولعل سورة الناس قد نزلت حرزا لهم من شره فمن يتلو: **قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ مِنْ شَرِّ الوَسْوَاسِ الخَنَّاسِ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ** (سورة الناس) فقد طرد هاجسه عنه.

وكذلك بين همز ولمز فالهمز هو خطرات ووساوس وهمز الشيطان الانسان أي همس في قلبه وسواسا في قوله تعالى: **وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ** (سورة المؤمنون، 97) والهمز واللمز هو الطعن في أعراض الناس بكلام خفي. فاللمز أقوى من الهمز لأن اللام المشددة أقوى من الهاء المهموسة، فجعلوا السين لضعفها لما لا يظهر ولا يشاهد حسنا.



جدول 3

قياس درجة القوة والضعف لأصوات (همس وهجس وهمز ولمز)

الصفات الحروف	مهموس °0	مجهور °1	شديد انفجاري °1	رخوي احتكاكي °0	مركب °0.5 +/-	متوسط °0.5 ≈	مفخم °1	مرقق °0
الهاء	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
السين	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
الجيم	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+
الميم	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
اللام	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
الزاي	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	+
	2	4	0	3	0.5	1	0	4

جدول 4

صفات الحروف	شديدة	رخوية	المجموع	النسبة المئوية
مهموسة	02	25	27	34.17%
مجهورة	15	15	30	37.97%
المتوسطة	22		22	27.84%
المجموع			79	100%

من خلال الجدول نلاحظ أن درجة الهمس والاحتكاك والترقيق هي الغالبة قدرت بـ: °9 درجات مقارنة بـ: °5.5 بالنسبة للأصوات القوية، مما يدل على أنها تتفق في المعنى وهي الكلام الخفي.

ب: ما تضارع فيه الحرفان واتفق الثالث:

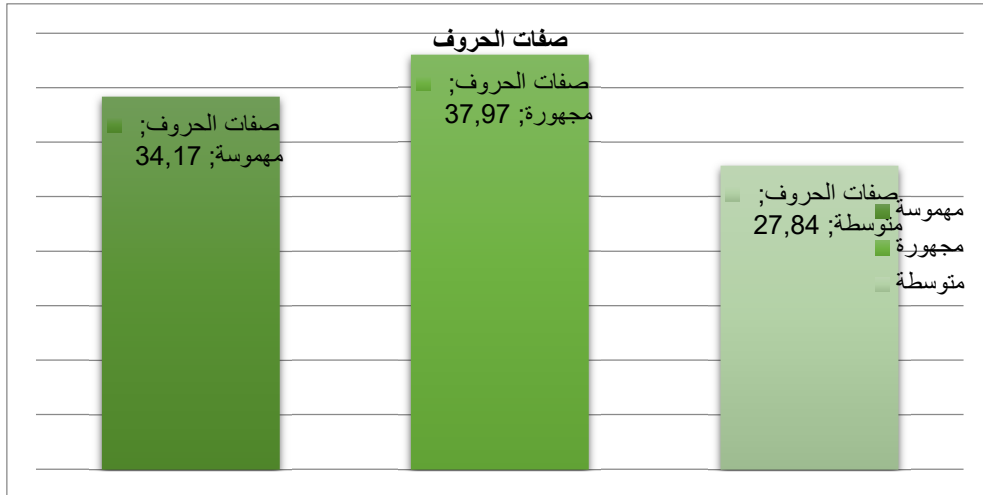
وذلك نحو (هضب) و(جلب)، فالضاد الانفجارية المفخمة هي أخت اللام المتوسطة في الجهر، وصوت الجيم المركب (شديد ورخو معا) (فياض، 1998: 40) وهو أقوى من الهاء المهموسة الضعيفة والباء هو صوت انفجاري مجهور لذلك نلاحظ غلبة الجهر والانفجار بأربع درجات حسب الجدول وهذا ما أدى إلى اتفاق اللفظين في المعنى وهو الصياح والجلبة.

جدول 5

قياس درجة القوة والضعف لأصوات (هضب) و(جلب)

الصفات الحروف	مهموس	مجهور	شديد انفجاري	رخوي احتكاكي	مركب	متوسط	مفخم	مرفق
	0	1	1	0	0.5 +/-	0.5~	1	0
الهاء	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
الضاء	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
الجيم	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	+
الباء	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+
اللام	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+
	1	4	2	1	0.5	0.5	1	3

4. الدراسة الاحصائية:



الدلالة الصوتية	دلالة الأصوات التركيبية	صفات الحروف				الصيغة الصرفية	الاسم	نوع الفعل	الجزر	
		المتوسطة	مجهورة		مهموسة					
			بين الشدة والرخوة	رخوية	شديدة					رخوية
صوت يسمع بالليل			العين/ الزاي		الفاء	الفعل	العزيف	ثلاثي لازم متعد بحرف	ع ز ف √	
ضرب الصنوج		النون		الجيم ¹	الصاد	الفعل	الصنج	ثلاثي لازم متعد بحرف	ص ن ج √	
صوتٌ دقيقٌ مع ارتفاع كلام متتابع واختلاط صوت زائد اللعب والجلبة ورفع الصوت	اتفاق الحرفان وتضارع الثالث	الميم الواو	الزاي	الجيم	الهاء	الفعل	الهزج	ثلاثي لازم متعد بحرف	ه ز ج √	
كل صوت مختلط،	اتفاق الحرفان وتضارع الثالث	الميم/ اللام	الزاي	الجيم	الهاء	الفعللة الفعل	الهزجة الوزج	رباعي ثلاثي لازم متعد بحرف	ه ز م ج √ و ز ج √	
		اللام	الزاي	الجيم		الفعل	الزجل	ثلاثي لازم متعد بحرف	ز ج ل √	
		الميم/ اللام	الزاي	الجيم		الأفعل	الأزمل	ثلاثي لازم متعد بحرف	ز م ل √	
الحديث بالليل	اتفاق الحرفان وتضارع الثالث	الميم/ الراء			السين	الفعل	السمر	ثلاثي لازم متعد بحرف	س م ر √	
		الراء			السين/الهاء	الفعل	السهر	ثلاثي لازم متعد بحرف	س ه ر √	
الصياح والنوح		النون	العين	القاف		الفعل	التعيق	ثلاثي لازم متعد بحرف	ن ع ق √	

¹ - الجيم العربية الفصيحة يختلط صوتها الانفجاري بنوع من الحفيف يقلل من شدتها (أنيس، دت: 25).

التكلم بكلام خفي غير مسموع	الاتفاق في الحروف	الميم/ الميم			الهاء/ الهاء		الفعلة	الهمهمة	رباعي لازم	هَمْهَمْ √
الكلام الخفي لا يفهم	الاتفاق في الحروف				الهاء/ السين الهاء/ السين		الفعلة	الهسهسة	رباعي لازم	هَسَهَسَ √
الكلام الخفي		الميم/ اللام			الهاء	التاء	الفعلة	الهمثلة	رباعي لازم	هَثَثَ √
الصياح والجلبة صوت يصيح ويجلب	اتفاق الحرفان وتضارع الثالث	الراء		الذال/ الذال الذال/ الجيم	الهاء الهاء الهاء		فعل	الهدئة	ثلاثي لازم متعدد بحرف	هَدَّدَ √ هَدَّرَ √ هَدَّجَ √
ارتفاع الصوت الصياح	ما تضارع فيه الحرفان واتفق الثالث	اللام		الضاد/ا لباء	الهاء		الفعل الفعلة	الهضبة الجلبة	ثلاثي لازم متعدد بحرف	هَضَبَ √ هَبَّ √
يزعج بصوت تزعج وتقلق صوت الريح	اتفاق الحرفان وتضارع الثالث	الراء/ الراء	الزاي/ الزاي/ الزاي		الهاء الهاء	الألف	الفعل الفعل الفعل	الأزر الهرز الهرير	ثلاثي مضعف رباعي لازم متعدد بحرف	أَزَّرَ √ أَرَّ هَزَّرَ √ هَرَّ هَرَّرَ √
صوت خفي النباة تسمعها ولا تفهمها	اتفاق الحرفان وتضارع الثالث	الميم		الجيم	الهاء/ السين الهاء/ السين		الفعل الفعل	الهمس الهجس	ثلاثي لازم متعدد بحرف	هَمَسَ √ هَجَسَ √
خطرات ووساوس	اتفاق الحرفان وتضارع الثالث	الميم الميم/ اللام	الزاي الزاي		الهاء		الفعل الفعل	الهمز اللمز	ثلاثي لازم متعدد بحرف	هَمَزَ √ لَمَزَ √

بعد استعراض مادة البحث من جرد وتصنيف واحصاء وتحليل، لا بدّ من الوقوف على بعض النتائج التي خلص إليها وأهمها:

- نلاحظ ان نسبة شيوخ المجهورات أكثر من المهموسات فقدرت نسبتها بـ: 37.97% مقارنة بنسبة الأصوات المهموسة 34.17%، أما الأصوات المتوسطة فجاءت بنسبة ضئيلة قدرت بـ: 27.84% لأن الكثرة الغالبة من الأصوات اللغوية مجهورة. ومن الطبيعي أن تكون كذلك والأفقدت اللغة عنصرها الموسيقي ورنينها الخاص الذي يميز به الكلام من الصمت والجهر، و من الهمس والإسرار. (أنيس، دبت: 23).

نلاحظ كذلك أن أصوات الجن جاءت تارة خفيفة مهموسة وتارة أخرى قوية مجهورة، فحين تغلب الأصوات المجهورة على المهموسة وتكون حروفها بين الشدة والرخاوة، تكون الأصوات في أغلبها مرتفعة كالصياح والجلبة والإزعاج، أما إذا غلبت الأصوات المهموسة على المجهورة تكون الأصوات خفيفة كالكلام الخفي الذي لا يفهم معناه. وهذا ما يؤكد أن للصوت في اللغة العربية قيمة دلالية مستمدة من الصوت نفسه، فالأحداث الشديدة تناسبها أصوات شديدة، وعلى العكس منها الأحداث السهلة، حيث تناسبها أصوات غير سهلة. (الفاخري، دبت: 152)

ارتباط معظم الألفاظ الدالة على أصوات الجن بالليل، فالعزيف هو صوت يسمع بالليل، والسمر والسهر هو الحديث بالليل، والنعيق هو صوت اليوم بالليل، لذا تنطوي دلالاته في الشعر على معنى الإدراك الحدسي للأشياء والشعور بالرهبة التي تلحق بالنفس في الظلام، والخوف من المجهول.

الخاتمة

إن أصوات الجن تتقارب مع أصوات الانسان والحيوان من حيث المخارج والصفات، وذلك لقدرة الجنّ على التلون والتحوّل والظهور والاختفاء، فالجن لهم حقيقة موجودة فعلا ولهم القابلية لإدراك أصواتنا سماعا وفهما وتأثرا وهذا ما يدلّ على أن كيان الجنّ غير مرئي للبشر، في حين أن كيان الانس مرئي للجنّ، وخلاصة القول أن العرب القدامى اكتفوا فقط بوصف أصواتهم من خلال قوة حاسة السمع التي كانوا يستغلونها ليلا ونهارا وفي الظلام والنور، فالسمع يدرك الأصوات من مسافة قد لا يستطيع النظر عندها إدراكا، إلا أن الأصوات الحقيقية للجنّ والتي تميّزه عن باقي الخلائق تبقى في عالم الغيب، والأحرى بهذا التصوّر أن يفسح في شعور الانسان بالكون وما يعمره من أرواح وقوى وأسرار قد يجهلها الانسان ولكنها موجودة بالفعل من حوله.

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UNE HISTOIRE SANS FIN : SUR L'ALKARISI ET LES MÉTAMORPHOSES DES DÉMONS EN TERRES TURQUES

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Abstract: The demon best known in Turkey under the names of *alkarısı* and *albasi* has long been considered a personification of puerperal fever and is generally associated with childbirth and its dangers. It is said to attack pregnant women, women in labour and newborn babies, but also has a reputation of occasionally harassing other humans, especially men, by sitting at night on their chests and inducing them asphyxia, nightmares and a large variety of disorders; in this last form it is equally believed to attack young girls. Some other legends pretend that the demon amuses itself by riding the horses of the locals in the hours of darkness and plaiting their manes and tails. When attacking women in labour or women after childbirth, it steals their liver and takes it across a running water (stream, river), sometimes a lake, or soaks it in it; if it succeeds in its actions, the woman dies, her rescue becoming impossible. Although the majority of Turkish scholars consider that this evil spirit, which is also known in Armenia and other Caucasian countries, in Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, is of Turkish origin, we maintain and try to demonstrate that it is nothing but a late version of an ancient Mesopotamian demon (or family of demons), which survived by virtue of the Jewish successive reinterpretations of Babylonian demonology. In other words, the Turkish *alkarısı* is a local adaptation of the primeval Lilith, which became notorious especially in the Middle Ages.

Keywords: demon, childbirth, *alkarısı*, Lilith, Babylon, Jewish tradition, Turkey.

Une histoire de la peur en terres turques ne saurait omettre de son inventaire démoniaque un personnage fabuleux dont les origines restent obscures, sinon disputables, malgré sa relative notoriété : il s'agit du démon connu surtout sous les noms d'*alkarısı*, *alkarı* ou *albasi*.¹ Les croyances concernant cet être maléfique sont le plus souvent mentionnées par les autochtones ou les voyageurs étrangers de passage en Turquie dans la catégorie nébuleuse et hétéroclite des « superstitions » (en turc, *hurafe*, emprunté au persan *khoraḫāt*).

À la différence d'autres entités maléfiques sans identité ou fonctionnalité précise, dont les traits distinctifs flottent souvent dans le vague, la créature appelée *alkarısı* est associée, le plus souvent, en Turquie comme dans le reste du monde turc, à une phase

¹ Le démon est connu, en Turquie comme dans le reste du monde turc, sous plusieurs noms, tels *alana/alanası*, *alperisi*, *alkızı*, *aljelini*, *albıs*, *alvasti*, *albassı*, *albarısı*, *albaslı*, *albaslı katın*, *hal*, *hallanası*, *alması*, etc. (Inan 1933 : 160 ; Güngör 2006 : 82-83 ; Boratav 2012 : 32 ; Peler 2013 : 2047). S'y ajoutent, sans doute, les autres génies malicieux étalant des caractéristiques similaires à ceux de l'*alkarısı*, mais ayant des appellations « de terroir » : *haft/heftik*, *pirabok/piravok*, *hibilik/gibilik*, *kapoz/kepoz*, etc. (Sarpkaya 2014).

précise de l'existence humaine, à savoir l'accouchement et la période critique des couches. Par suite, l'*alkarısı* revêt l'aspect d'un génie spécialisé, attaquant notamment les parturientes, les accouchées et les nouveau-nés qui se trouvent, en raison de leur précarité existentielle, dans la « période liminaire » ou le « stade de marge » (Van Gennepe 1981 : 30) qui accompagne et découle de la parturition. La parturition a toujours été regardée, depuis l'aube de l'humanité, comme entourée de mystère et menacée de dangers imprévus, étant appréhendée non seulement par ses acteurs immédiats, tels la parturiente et l'accoucheuse, mais aussi par toute la famille impliquée comme une véritable frontière entre « l'ici et l'ailleurs » : « L'accouchement est représenté comme une frontière difficile, un moment important où la vie et la mort se disputent l'issue avec acharnement : *rjel fe dounia ou rjel fe lakhra*, ce qui signifie : "l'accouchement, c'est un pied ici, un pied dans l'au-delà". [...] La maternité n'est heureuse qu'à partir de l'allaitement. En amont, dit-on, il y a concertation entre les anges pour la vie de l'enfant : le laisser ou le reprendre, c'est ailleurs que cela se décide », affirme Malek Chebel (1999 : 52) au sujet de l'accouchement au Maghreb, mais ses propos sont valables pour tout processus d'enfantement dans les sociétés prémodernes. En Turquie, par exemple, « on croyait que durant ce laps de temps² le tombeau de l'accouchée était "ouvert" et que l'accouchée qui expirerait pendant les quarante jours s'ensuivant à l'accouchement allait devenir martyre » (Emeksiz 2009 : 257). Suivant les Turcs Tahtacı, « l'embouchure du tombeau de l'accouchée et de l'enfant reste ouverte pendant quarante jours » (*loğusa kadın ve çocuğun mezarının ağzı kırk gün açık kalır*) (Selçuk 2004 : 170). Dans certaines régions du monde, les dangers de la parturition n'ont jamais cessé de rester actuels. Aussi toutes les ressources apotropaiques dont disposent les sociétés respectives sont-elles mises à l'œuvre afin d'assurer le dénouement heureux du travail et de protéger ceux qui, d'une manière ou d'une autre, se trouvent à la lisière de la mort. Parmi ceux qui menacent constamment la vie des parturientes, des accouchées et des nouveau-nés se trouvent les mauvais génies, qui entraînent la maladie et, plus d'une fois, la mort.

Le démon *alkarısı* est présenté le plus souvent comme un démon féminin ou travesti en femme, ce qui renvoie, en jugeant d'après les contextes dominants de son évolution, à une « affaire de femmes »³. Il est considéré, plus d'une fois, comme une personnification de la fièvre puerpérale (Inan 1976 : 236 ; Koç 2010 : 81-82 ; Önal 2011 :

² C'est-à-dire durant les quarante jours qui s'ensuivent à l'accouchement.

³ L'accouchement et, de manière plus générale, tout ce qui relève de la maternité passe dans les sociétés prémodernes pour une « affaire de femmes » : « All the actions around the birth of a new person were an exclusively female affair, with the presence of men wanted only at the beginning – for conception », remarque Tünde Lengyelová (2005 : 117), de même que Leyla Önal : « Labour was considered largely as a "female problem" » (2011 : 102). Ceci implique, en quelque sorte, l'idée que tout accident survenu dans ce processus délicat était imputable aux mêmes actants. L'accouchement reste une « affaire de femmes » même immédiatement après la parturition puisque, chez les Turcs, le cordon ombilical du nouveau-né est coupé par la sage-femme (*ebe*), qui jouit également du privilège d'octroyer à l'enfant son premier nom, le « nom ombilical » (*göbek adı*). D'après la croyance populaire, « il ne faut pas que l'enfant, au cas où il ne pourrait survivre, quitte ce bas monde sans avoir reçu de nom. C'est d'ailleurs ce nom que l'imam prononce par trois fois à haute voix à la fin de la vie, lors de l'enterrement. De la même façon, c'est par ce nom que le défunt sera appelé au tribunal de Dieu lors du Jugement dernier. » (Hitzel 2001 : 247-248). Ce nom ne sera jamais employé dans la vie quotidienne – il s'agit, en quelque sorte, d'un nom réservé à « l'au-delà ».

97; Köroğlu & Köroğlu 2013 : 785), vu le but favori de ses attaques. Pourtant, il possède aussi d'autres valences qui, pour nébuleuses, même incohérentes qu'elles soient, donnent sérieusement matière à réfléchir sur ses prémices. En outre, comme tout mauvais génie respectable, il est réputé pour son apparence repoussante, épouvantable, ayant, pourtant, des limites et des points faibles qui, dans certaines circonstances précises, le rendent vulnérable. Nous allons examiner dans ce qui suit son apparence et ses hypostases, ses manifestations de prédilection, les méthodes traditionnelles prescrites pour le combattre, ainsi que ses possibles origines.

L'apparence du démon *alkarisi*, sa conduite et ses instruments de prédilection

L'*alkarisi* constitue le sujet de bon nombre de légendes turques, avec certaines variations de détails et de séquences qui ne modifient pas essentiellement son profil de « démon liminaire », ayant trait à la mise au monde et, finalement, au passage d'un état d'indétermination ontologique à l'existence. En échange, il est absent des contes de fées, quoique nous soupçonnions que certains de ses traits définitoires se retrouvent chez les personnages du type *cadı*, « sorcière » – quintessence de la malice humaine, mais aussi d'une menace féminine perpétuelle dont les échos traversent les siècles, en souvenir peut-être d'un matriarcat toujours difficile à digérer. Les légendes qui entourent ce personnage semblent inépuisables, car « il en naît à chaque instant à propos de visions et d'apparitions, surtout de soi-disant revenants et démons. » (Van Gennep 1912 : 261).

La créature appelée *alkarisi* se présente généralement sous l'apparence d'une femme ou, plus souvent, d'une vieille femme monstrueuse, terrifiante, répugnante⁴, dépourvue de toute humanité. À part cette tournure en quelque sorte traditionnelle, elle possède la capacité de se métamorphoser en maintes autres entités, animées ou inanimées, mais aussi de se soustraire aux regards des humains, pareil aux démons du vent ou de la tempête du temps jadis.

Suivant les croyances populaires de Çukurova, dans le sud de la Turquie, l'*alkarisi* dispose d'une capacité de déguisement remarquable : il peut prendre l'apparence d'une proche parente, d'une femme répugnante, d'une tête de bête, d'un chat, d'un chien, d'un bouc, d'une chèvre, etc. Le thériomorphisme paraît, de manière en quelque sorte naturelle, plus approprié aux mauvais génies que l'anthropomorphisme, mais les deux ne sont guère exclusives ; de surcroît, le démon reste souvent invisible, donc d'autant plus difficile à combattre. Il n'attaque pas seulement les accouchées, qui constituent, pourtant, sa proie de prédilection, mais aussi les hommes, bien que, paradoxalement, il doive en avoir peur ; un autochtone qui prétend l'avoir rencontré le décrit comme une créature laide, ayant une grosse tête et des cheveux ébouriffés (*çirkin, koca kafalı ve dağınık saçlı*

⁴ L'imaginaire populaire fonctionne d'après une logique simple, manichéenne qui est rarement contrariée : les gens beaux sont bons, les gens laids sont mauvais ; la beauté et la laideur commencent avec le visage, qui exprime le mieux la personnalité de l'individu. Les créatures à l'apparence humaine qui incarnent le mal ou qui sont les messagers du monde infernal ne peuvent être que repoussantes, désagréables, affreuses. Elles sont d'autant plus détestables qu'elles sont vieilles : dans les récits et les contes, la beauté est toujours associée à la jeunesse, étant en quelque sorte conditionnée par l'âge des protagonistes (Aksel 1960 : 40-41).

bir yaratıktır). À part les hommes, la créature harcèle parfois les jeunes filles, cette fois-ci sous une autre identité – celle de l'*albıs* –, et les juments, qu'elle tourmente toute la nuit⁵ dans les écuries pour tresser finalement leurs crinières et disparaître au jour levant. Suivant les légendes qui circulent dans l'Anatolie orientale (les régions de Kars, Erzincan, Gümüşhane, Diyarbakır, Bingöl, Elazığ, Malatya), le démon tente de s'emparer du foie des parturientes, des accouchées et même des nouveau-nés, mais lorsqu'immobilisé au moyen d'une aiguille enfoncée dans sa poitrine, il reste dans le service de la famille respective pour bien des années. D'après une légende de Çukurova attestée également, avec quelques différences de détails, dans les provinces mentionnées ci-haut, un bonhomme dont la femme vient justement d'accoucher trébuché, dans la chambre de celle-ci, contre l'*alkarısı*, s'empare d'une aiguille et l'enfonce dans sa poitrine⁶ ; à ce moment précis, le démon prend forme humaine (on en déduit qu'il était jusqu'alors invisible) et se met à l'implorer de le délivrer, afin de rejoindre les siens. Le geste de l'homme confronté à l'entité inconnue est assez transparent : il agit pour rendre le mal visible et soustraire ainsi sa femme à la possible emprise du démon. Devenu captif, le mauvais génie se met à faire le ménage de ses maîtres, dont la maison devient plus prospère que jamais ; il se rend un jour au puits pour apporter de l'eau et demande à un enfant qui joue dans la proximité de celui-ci de sortir l'aiguille introduite dans sa poitrine. Une fois délivré du charme associé à l'aiguille, l'*alkarısı* se précipite dans le puits dont les eaux deviennent rouges sur-le-champ, ce qui indique, suivant son présage, qu'il a été abattu par ses proches (Şimşek 1990 : 538-539). Suivant une autre variante de la même légende, en circulation dans la région d'Elazığ, un certain Ismail Ağa – remarquons ce détail précis, typique des légendes, où « le lieu est indiqué avec précision, les personnages sont des individus déterminés, leurs actes ont un fondement qui semble historique et sont de qualité héroïque » (Van Gennep 1912 : 22) – tombe un jour sur une scène apparemment de famille, dont le protagoniste est un démon féminin du type *alkarısı* qui prépare, assis du côté d'un feu, du rôti de foie à l'intention de ses rejetons. Comme ceux-ci se déclarent toujours affamés après l'avoir dévoré, l'*alkarısı* leur promet de les rassasier du foie de la bru d'Ismail Ağa, qui est censée accoucher le lendemain. Prévenu des astuces du démon, Ismail Ağa parvient non seulement à déjouer ses plans, mais aussi à l'assujettir, grâce à une aiguille qu'il plante dans sa poitrine. L'*alkarısı* reste au service de sa famille pendant douze ans, au bout desquels elle se jette dans un lac, tout en promettant qu'elle ne nuira jamais à ses anciens maîtres. Ses affines ne l'acceptent plus, de sorte que les villageois trouvent plus tard son corps ensanglanté dans les eaux du lac (Güler 2000 ; Şimşek 1990 : 540).

Le même démon peut se présenter parfois sous l'apparence d'un gros oiseau, l'*alkuşu*, ce qui suggère, grosso-modo, une créature ailée qui n'est pas sans rappeler les démons babyloniens, la variante talmudique babylonienne de Lilith⁷, mais aussi la

⁵ Les ténèbres sont particulièrement favorables à l'évolution des mauvais esprits, quelle qu'en soit la typologie ou l'origine ; ceci est valable non seulement pour les *alkarısı*, mais aussi pour les *djinn* et les *div*.

⁶ Une autre manière d'assujettir la créature serait d'arracher le peigne qui maintient ses cheveux en ordre (Boratav 1973 : 139).

⁷ « [...] il faut attendre le Talmud de Babylone, dont la rédaction s'achève au V^e siècle après J.-C., pour affirmer dans le judaïsme l'existence d'un personnage fabuleux du nom de Lilith et en tracer des

représentation iconographique d'Umay, l'unique déesse connue des Turcs pré-islamiques (Beydili 2003 : 580-581). Dans cette hypostase il attaque notamment les nouveau-nés, qu'il étouffe en se posant sur leurs poitrines. Afin d'atteindre son but, il se sert d'une perle qu'il jette dans tout récipient à eau resté découvert, pour profiter ensuite de la lumière éblouissante qu'elle dégage et infliger ses maléficaes. Si la perle est sortie de l'eau par un homme, le mauvais esprit ne pourra plus s'enfuir et finira par se métamorphoser en femme (Şimşek 1990 : 540-541 ; Karini 2013 : 69). Il serait à remarquer que, dans cette variante, la fonction apotropaïque de l'aiguille est attribuée, par une sorte de charme inversé, à la perle, dont le symbolisme reste assez ambigu.

Cette dernière légende, avec ses variantes respectives, est également attestée dans la région de Khālkhāl (anciennement Herowābād/Hirābād), faisant partie de la province iranienne d'Ardabīl, habitée notamment par des Turcs azéri. Dans l'une de ses variantes, le démon *alkarisi*, connu par les autochtones sous le nom d'*al hayvani/alhayvani*, « la bête *al* », s'introduit dans la chambre où se trouvent une femme en couches et son bébé par le tuyau de la cheminée (*baca*), à l'intention de leur faire mal. L'accouchée saisit la tenaille à feu (*maşa*) et s'en sert pour arracher le collier de perles que le mauvais génie porte autour de son cou. Le démon, craignant la réaction de sa mère et de sa tante à l'ouïe d'une perte pareille, se met à supplier la femme de le lui rendre. Il récupère son collier en échange de la promesse de ne pas nuire aux descendants de l'accouchée pendant sept générations. Dans une autre légende azérie, l'accouchée voit le démon, appelé cette fois-ci *hal anası/halanası*, pendre dans le tuyau de la cheminée, s'empare de la tenaille à feu, déchire le collier que la créature porte autour de son cou et en place les perles sous l'oreiller du nourrisson. Malgré les menaces et les supplications ardentes du mauvais génie, l'accouchée refuse de lui rendre les perles : celles-ci seront distribuées à ses voisins, afin de les protéger contre les maléficaes du démon (Karini 2013 : 69). Suivant Gülcan Karini (*ibid.* : 71-73), ce collier, qui représenterait la source du pouvoir du mauvais génie, suggère une possible connexion entre *halanası* et Nintu ou Belet-ili, la déesse de l'accouchement dans l'ancienne mythologie mésopotamienne, mais aussi entre *halanası* et la déesse babylonienne Ištar qui, toutes les deux (ou les trois ?), se servent de colliers pareils pour garder vif le souvenir du Déluge ; à en croire les habitants de Halhal, le collier de l'*alkarisi* est constitué de *göy muncık* (*gök/mavi boncuk*), ce qui fait penser, une fois de plus, au collier en lapis-lazuli de la déesse Ištar⁸. Remarquons, en outre, que le

contours plus spécifiques : ceux d'un démon ailé à figure de femme, doté d'une longue chevelure et dont il fallait se garder des attaques nocturnes » (Bitton 1990 : 117) ; cf. Patai 1990 : 223.

⁸ Le motif du collier réparait sous une autre forme, plus vague, dans les relations concernant les coutumes post-partum d'Erzurum : l'accouchée y est munie d'un collier noir et vêtue de vêtements rouges ; sous son oreiller sont placés un exemplaire du Coran, un livret de prières contenant certains versets coraniques (le soi-disant *Enam*), des ciseaux, des couteaux, des morceaux de peau de loup. Les accessoires défensifs impliquent, de plus, un pantalon noir d'homme placé sur le lit de la femme en couches, une aiguille enfoncée dans la couverture de son lit et un morceau de foie suspendu quelque part dans la maison (Kaya 2001 : 211). Le « trousseau » des accouchées Nogai comporte à peu près les mêmes catégories d'objets apotropaïques (Ergönenç Akbaba & Benli 2011 : 94). Le pantalon est remplacé parfois par une veste, mais les autres accessoires ne changent jamais de manière significative (Peler 2013 : 2048).

démon s'insinue parfois dans les maisons par les cheminées⁹ : à Ergani (région de Diyarbakır), les tuyaux étaient bouchés jadis avec des touffes de Paliure épineux (*karadiken*), afin d'empêcher les mauvais génies de s'introduire furtivement dans les maisons par ce trou (Uçak 2009 : 227).

Une variante de cette légende, qui ne fait pourtant aucune référence à la perle magique, circule également aux alentours de Samsun (région de la mer Noire), où la mort subite des nouveau-nés est mise sur le compte d'un oiseau qui s'insinuerait dans les demeures et étoufferait les nourrissons en se posant sur leurs poitrines et en les empêchant ainsi de respirer ; les personnes sauvées de ce danger (*kuş çalması*) pendant leur petite enfance restent vulnérables aux attaques de l'oiseau jusqu'à leurs nuits de noces, qui sont considérées comme particulièrement périlleuses et imposent des mesures de protection supplémentaires. Parmi les précautions prises contre l'oiseau figurent le bouchement des tuyaux ou, le cas échéant, le placement d'une faucille dans son ouverture (Bulut 2014 : 422-424).

La légende qui suit met en évidence une autre forme de manifestation de l'*alkarısı* ; suivant l'informateur, les événements narrés se seraient passés il y a cinquante-soixante ans dans un village situé dans la province d'Erzincan. L'un des notables du lieu découvre une nuit son cheval préféré tout en sueur, avec les crins tressés, se rendant ainsi compte que celui-ci est possédé par les démons (*alkarıları*) et décidant de le faire garder chaque nuit, afin de le protéger. Une nuit, lorsque le gardien manque à son devoir, le cheval est de nouveau attaqué par un démon *alkarısı*, qui le chevauche jusqu'au lever du jour et l'abandonne ensuite éreinté de fatigue. Le notable met alors la selle sur son cheval, enduit de résine (*çam sakızı*) sa bride et se met à l'affût dans un recoin de l'écurie. Aussitôt arrivé, le démon monte sur le cheval, qui commence à se débattre violemment, en essayant de s'en dégager, et continue de le tourmenter même à l'approche de l'homme. Le notable du village enfonce alors une aiguille dans le corps de la créature, qu'il suppose être restée collée contre le corps de la bête, et la rend ainsi non seulement visible, mais aussi prisonnière. Le démon *alkarısı* servira exactement sept ans dans la maison de son dompteur et deviendra célèbre notamment pour son pain excellent. Au bout de cet intervalle, le démon se rend au puits pour apporter de l'eau et demande aux enfants qui jouent dans la proximité de celui-ci de sortir l'aiguille enfoncée dans son col. Une fois dissipé le charme, la créature redevient invisible. Partis à sa recherche, les domestiques du notable du village découvrent l'eau du puits respectif est devenue rouge sang car, suivant la légende, la race des *alkarısı* n'accepte plus dans ses rangs les démons « déchus » et, par conséquent, les tue (Sakaoğlu 1989 : 67-68).

Selon une autre variante de la même légende recueillie chez les habitants de Diyarbakır (sud-est de la Turquie), un certain Ahmet Amca, constatant que son cheval transpire abondamment dans l'écurie, fait des recherches à ce sujet et arrive à la conclusion que sa bête est constamment talonné par *pirevok* (ou *alkarısı*). Il enduit son cheval de poix (*zift*) et parvient ainsi à capturer le démon, qui reste collé contre l'animal, puis enfonce une aiguille dans son corps. Devenue son esclave, la créature, qui passe pour un véritable porte-bonheur, reste à son service pendant exactement sept ans, au bout desquels elle supplie son maître de lui rendre sa liberté. Une fois affranchie, elle se dirige

⁹ Cette habileté renvoie, peut-être, à l'identité lointaine de beaucoup de démons, qui étaient associés au début aux phénomènes extrêmes de la nature, tels le vent et la tempête.

vers un lac se trouvant dans la proximité du village, en marchant en quelque sorte vers sa destinée, et disparaît dans ses eaux ; suivant son présage, les eaux du lac deviennent rouges sang, ce qui indique qu'elle a été immolée par ses semblables (Uçak 2009 : 228).

À ce que l'on constate, la créature est connue dans la province de Diyarbakır non seulement sous le nom d'*alkarısı*, mais aussi sous celui de *pirevok* (*pirabok/piraboçik*) ; les gens d'Ergani l'imaginent comme étant une femme corpulente, aux cheveux noirs et ébouriffés, aux bras longs et minces, aux ongles/griffes en fer¹⁰, dont elle se servirait pour arracher le foie des accouchées ; elle est définie comme une *yaşlı cadı*, « vieille sorcière » (Uçak 2009 : 227), ce qui suggère une fois de plus que la vieillesse, de même que la sorcellerie est toujours sujette à caution.

Dans une légende recueillie chez les habitants du village d'Öbektaş (Gindeherek), situé dans la proximité de Gümüşhane (région de la mer Noire), une personne que les villageois regardent comme un djinn (son sexe reste, ainsi qu'il advient souvent, indéfini) se met à harceler une femme qui vient d'accoucher. La femme tente de se défendre par ses propres forces, mais finalement en prévient son mari. La présence masculine s'avère, comme toujours, salutaire, car l'homme parvient à neutraliser la créature, arrivée après minuit à l'intention d'étrangler la femme, en se servant d'une aiguille qu'il enfonce dans son corps. Après avoir servi nombre d'années dans la maison respectueuse, la créature, qualifiée le plus souvent de *cin*, « démon », est relâchée par son maître, qui extrait l'aiguille introduite dans son col (*yaka*) ; elle disparaît sans trace et ne trouble plus jamais la paix de la famille qu'elle avait tourmentée jadis (Sakaoğlu 1989 : 69).

Il serait à remarquer dans les légendes ci-dessus l'hésitation ou l'imprécision terminologique des témoins : la créature *alkarısı* est définie tantôt comme un *djinn*, tantôt comme une *yaşlı cadı*, « vieille sorcière », ce qui renvoie aux formules stéréotypées des contes. Sa catégorisation implique, d'ailleurs, toute la palette d'esprits malfaisants, puisqu'elle est également présentée comme une *peri*, une *alperisi* ou une *peri kızı* (Blunt 1878 II : 6-7 ; Garnett II 1891 : 473 ; Garnett 1909 : 228 ; Inan 1986 : 171 ; Peler 2013 : 2046) ; il est difficile d'apprécier, pourtant, s'il s'agit d'une confusion taxinomique ou d'une contagion typologique. De toute manière, la perception de *parī/peri* comme figure démoniaque s'origine à une époque plus reculée de l'histoire de l'imaginaire turc ou, plutôt, turco-islamique, puisque dans l'étape moderne de la langue et la littérature persanes, ce personnage semble avoir perdu ses connotations négatives¹¹.

Certaines légendes se bornent à évoquer les effets funestes entraînés par l'intervention des *alkarısı* dans l'existence des femmes en couches et des nourrissons,

¹⁰ Ces caractéristiques évoquent en quelque sorte l'aspect des *dīv*, qui sont souvent conçus comme des créatures farouches, au teint noir, velues, pourvues de crocs et de griffes ; leur univers quotidien imite parfois dans le moindre détail celui des humains. Pourtant, leur aspect et leur comportement semblent avoir également emprunté des traits qui sont propres aux démons de la tradition arabe, tels les *ghūl*, les *jinn* et les *ifrīt* (Omidşalar 1995/2011). Les *dīv* sont, entre autres, réputés de faire l'inverse de ce qui leur a été indiqué, caractéristique qui se trouve aussi chez certains démons *alkarısı* assujettis par les hommes (voir Şimşek 1990 : 540 ; cf. Beydili 2003 : 34) ; ceci s'explique, peut-être, par une contamination réciproque des deux catégories de légendes.

¹¹ « Except in the Mazdean religious texts written in Persian, by the time we reach the Modern Iranian phase and the literature written in the pertinent languages, we see only a shell of this ancient relic. By now, she has lost almost all of her negative attributes and has turned into a beautiful creature, *parī* 'fairy, nymph,' and often appears alongside the less benign jinns (*jenn o parī*) » (Adhami 2010).

sans trop insister sur l'aspect et même le sexe du démon, tandis que d'autres offrent des détails inouïs, plus d'une fois bizarres à ce propos. La créature appelée *albastı*, réputée pour tourmenter les gens pendant la nuit en se posant sur leurs poitrines et en les suffoquant ou, parfois, en suçant leur sang, était imaginée comme une femme repoussante, au teint rouge, aux cheveux blonds, ébouriffés, aux seins flasques, tombants, touchant ses genoux. Certaines sources affirment qu'elle se présenterait sous l'apparence d'une femme hideuse, munie de soixante-dix seins aux pointes desquels pendraient soixante-dix bébés, qu'elle allaiterait en même temps (Çulpan Zaripova Çetin 2007 : 21-23), ce qui pourrait indiquer non seulement sa maternité débordante, mais aussi son aspect de « génératrice », de « mère de démons ». Afin de démasquer cette créature nocturne, qui n'est qu'une hypostase de l'*alkarısı*, agissant en succube ou en incube, suivant le contexte, il faut se placer derrière elle, car son dos, dépourvu de peau, laisse voir ses organes internes.

Chez les Nogai de Turquie et du Caucase du Nord, l'*albastı* (*alkarısı*) passe pour une créature hybride, mi homme, mi animal, terriblement laide (*bir dudağı yerde, bir dudağı gökte*), vêtue de rouge et ayant un seul œil au milieu du front (donc, l'apparence d'un cyclope). Elle est conçue parfois non pas comme un être animé, mais comme une maladie, désignée par des euphémismes tels *gelincik, karıştı, havale, alcama, cinuğrağı, ağırlık çökme, albasu* ou *albasması*. Elle se remarque par sa capacité de se métamorphoser et de devenir méconnaissable, donc difficile à combattre : elle est capable, par exemple, de prendre l'apparence d'une vieille femme habitant dans le voisinage de la maison de l'accouchée et s'insinuer dans la proximité de celle-ci sous le prétexte d'emprunter quelque chose ou de faire son ménage. Les mêmes sources prétendent, sans trop de cohérence logique d'ailleurs, que le démon est coiffé d'une casquette d'or, qu'il abandonnera en prenant la fuite s'il sera battu par l'un des vieillards de la maison avec une ceinture de coton appelée *belbav* (Ergönenç Akbaba & Benli 2011 : 94-95).

Les Turcs de Chypre se figurent le démon appelé *alkarısı, alanası* ou *alperisi* soit sous l'aspect d'une créature au visage terrifiant, vêtue d'un voile rouge, soit sous l'aspect d'une femme costarde, même corpulente, à la peau blanche, vêtue d'un voile noire, soit, enfin, sous l'aspect d'une entité haute de taille, ayant les yeux au sommet de la tête et une voix grondante. Il possède la capacité de se métamorphoser en chat, en chien, etc.¹² et de prendre, d'autre part, l'aspect d'une personne familière qui s'introduit dans la proximité de l'accouchée pour la priver de son bébé (Peler 2013 : 2046-2047).

Les Turcs Tahtacı de Mersin (sud de la Turquie) ne se forgent aucune idée précise sur l'aspect du démon, mais l'associent aux mauvais esprits du type *cin, peri* ou *şeytan* et se montrent persuadés de son habileté de se transformer en chien, en chat ou en renard pour tromper la vigilance des gens et d'accomplir ses maléfices (Selçuk 2004 : 177). La croyance au démon est présente, d'ailleurs, dans la plupart des communautés Alevi-Bektaşî, ainsi qu'il ressort des enquêtes de terrain faites par Orhan Türkdoğan en Anatolie il y a plus d'une vingtaine d'années : par exemple, suivant les habitants de Çomakdağ/Kızılağaç, un village Alevi situé à 16 kilomètres de Milas (sud-ouest de la

¹² Tout comme les *djinn* (Boratav 1991 : 548-549), les *dīv* (Omidşalar 1995/2011) et les *parī/pairikā* (De Bruijn 1995 : 271 ; Adhami 2010) qui, en tant que créatures démoniaques, disposent eux-aussi de la capacité de se métamorphoser en animaux, en objets ou en êtres humains.

Turquie), l'accouchée ne doit jamais être laissée seule pendant les quarante jours qui suivent l'accouchement, afin de ne pas être affectée par « la lourdeur », c'est-à-dire le coup des djnns ou des diables » (« *ağırlık* », *yani cin ve şeytan basması*) (Türkdoğan 1995 : 71). L'entité connue sous le nom d'« Al » est définie par un villageois d'Orta Kışla (province de Çorum, région de la mer Noire) comme une « force maléfique » (*kötü güç*) qui dévore les enfants ; elle passe pour un ennemi redoutable des accouchées et des nouveau-nés (*ibid.* : 297). Enfin, suivant un *şeyh* Alevi d'un village situé près de Tokat (région de la mer Noire) et habité par une population descendant de la tribu Oğuz de Beğdili, l'*alkarısı* y revêt un aspect insolite, étant réputé pour son habitude de tresser les crinières des chevaux (*ibid.* : 521). Il s'agit là d'une autre hypostase du démon à laquelle nous allons revenir un peu plus bas dans cet article.

Voici une autre description fort curieuse des effets de l'attaque du démon connu sous le nom d'Al : « Il est une maladie, désignée par les Turcs sous le nom de *Al*, qui atteint souvent les femmes dans les quarante jours qui suivent l'accouchement. Cette affection est caractérisée par un rétrécissement extraordinaire du lobe de l'oreille et par une série d'évanouissements se succédant à des intervalles fort rapprochés. Il faut, aussitôt que s'annonce l'*Al*, qu'un homme très fort tire les oreilles de l'accouchée. Sans cette précaution, les oreilles se retireraient dans *l'intérieur du cerveau* où elles disparaîtraient pour toujours ! Lorsque la femme s'évanouit, des hommes tirent de nombreux coups de fusils, tandis qu'une autre personne appuie fortement des deux mains sur le foie de l'accouchée. Mais le procédé le plus sûr pour guérir l'*Al*, c'est de faire venir le *foyer*¹³, sa ceinture ou, à défaut, quelque autre objet qui lui appartienne. Dès que le *foyer*, ou l'objet qui est à lui, est entré dans l'appartement de l'accouchée, celle-ci reprend ses esprits et recouvre la santé. Un homme de mon pays devint le *foyer* de l'*Al* de la façon suivante: Cet homme – le nommé Indgé – était un jour parti avec sa femme au bord de la rivière, pour l'aider à laver le linge. Comme il y arrivait, il vit la Maladie – l'*Al* – tenant à la main le foie d'une nouvelle accouchée. Indgé songea : “Voici l'*Al*, et l'accouchée va mourir aussitôt que la Maladie aura trempé / plongé le foie dans la rivière.” D'un bond, il courut à l'*Al*, la terrassa et lui serra la gorge pour l'étrangler. “Ne me fais pas mourir, je t'en supplie, bon Indgé ! implora l'*Al*. Si tu me laisses la vie, je te donnerai le pouvoir de guérir toute femme atteinte de l'*Al*.” Indgé réfléchit un instant, accepta et laissa partir la vieille. Depuis ce temps, Indgé fut le *foyer* de l'*Al* et jouit de la faculté de guérir les femmes nouvellement accouchées. Avant de mourir, il eut soin de transmettre ce don que possède encore aujourd'hui un de ses descendants, bien qu'Indgé soit mort il y a quatre-vingts ans » (Carnoy & Nicolaïdes 1889 : 330-332). Cette légende illustre, outre la manière d'agir du démon et son aspect de prédilection, la manière dont une personne quelconque, n'ayant rien à faire avec la sorcellerie ou l'appivoisement des démons, est censée devenir d'un coup *al ocaklısı* ou *alcı*, « dompteur de l'*Al* ».

Les mêmes effets bizarres des assauts du démon, avec des effets néfastes sur l'ouïe des accouchées, trouvent leurs échos dans les croyances populaires de Mersin, où les femmes exposées à ce genre de violences prétendent voir des créatures épouvantables et expérimenter des sensations de suffocation. Une fois saisies par le mal, elles ne seraient plus capables de

¹³ En turc, *ocak*, au sens de « guérisseur ».

parler et perdraient leur ouïe ; cette maladie inexplicable serait déclenchée par l'enlèvement de leur foie par l'*alkarısı* (Çıblak Coşkun 2011 : 7).

La croyance à l'*alkarısı* se retrouve aussi, en tant que réverbération (post) moderne de sa source populaire, dans le roman autobiographique d'Elif Şafak intitulé *Siyah Süüt* (*Lait noir*) et publié en 2007, qui porte sur la dépression post-partum dont souffrit l'écrivain à la suite de la naissance de sa fille. À en croire l'auteur, les femmes qui l'entouraient à l'époque, notamment sa grand-mère maternelle, ne se lassaient pas de réciter des prières et de les « souffler » (*okuyup üfleme*k, c'est-à-dire réciter une prière et ensuite souffler, pour l'envoyer aux esprits) afin de tenir les mauvais esprits, et particulièrement l'*alkarısı* à l'écart, torréfiaient du sel¹⁴ de mer, paraient la couverture de son lit avec des épingles de nourrice et des ceintures rouges, la saupoudraient de graines de cumin noir (*çörek otu*)¹⁵ et ne quittaient jamais sa chambre. D'après les bonnes femmes, qui avouaient n'avoir jamais vu le mauvais génie, mais en avaient entendu parler leurs aïeules, la créature appelée *alkarısı* serait affreusement laide – une véritable grognasse (*cadalozun teki*). Elle aurait une peau d'un jaune maladif, des cheveux hérissés, de grandes oreilles pendantes, des yeux exophtalmiques, une bouche gigantesque, rappelant une cave sombre, infernale, des dents irrégulières, une voix aiguë, un rire déchirant, des doigts filiformes, longs et osseux, des ongles courbées (Şafak 2008 : 254-255).

À ce que l'on peut constater, la plupart des légendes relatifs à l'*alkarısı* et à ses manifestations mettent en évidence le penchant du démon pour le foie de ses victimes : l'absence du foie, enlevé et plongé par l'*alkarısı* dans une eau quelconque¹⁶, entraîne inexorablement la mort de ceux-ci. L'insistance sur ce détail, qui semble avoir perdu sa teneur première avec le temps, nous amène à penser à la signification subtile attribuée jadis à cet organe qui passait pour essentiel, sinon vital, en tant que « siège de l'amour maternel. Il est, dans la mythologie arabe ancienne, le siège de la personne elle-même. » (Chebel 1995 : « Foie », s.v.). Malek Chebel évoque, pour en souligner la portée symbolique, la manducation du foie de Hamza par Hind, femme d'Abou Soufyân, lors de la bataille d'Ohod (mars 625), car « le foie est le siège de l'endurance, vertu si vantée par les Arabes », suivant le verbe *kâbada*, « endurer, supporter » (*ibid.* : 174). Pourtant, cette pratique n'est pas exceptionnelle ou, disons, singulière, puisque « dans la Chine antique on mangeait le foie de ses ennemis : c'eût été douter de leur courage que de ne pas le faire. C'était aussi s'assimiler leur courage » (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1990 : 452). Le foie devient parfois, lorsqu'on parle de l'amour parental, notamment maternel, un substitut du cœur : « Comparativement au cœur, le foie ne jouit que d'un nombre très limité d'évocations. Pourtant une situation le consacre roi de tous les organes du corps, il

¹⁴ La sel est investi depuis les temps les plus reculés de propriétés lustrales, voire sacrés. Il était souvent employé comme tel dans les rituels post-partum ; les Turcs Tahtacı de Mersin, par exemple, préparent un mélange de sel et de sucre avec lequel ils recouvrent le corps du nouveau-né (Selçuk 2004 : 167).

¹⁵ Employé aujourd'hui encore en milieu rural comme amulette végétale, afin de protéger les jeunes enfants contre le mauvais œil (Nicolas 2009-2010 : 72).

¹⁶ La connexion avec l'eau apparaît, avec quelques menues variations, dans plusieurs récits : il arrive, par exemple, que les membres de la famille de la parturiente ou de l'accouchée agitent les eaux d'une rivière ou d'un ruisseau dans la proximité de la demeure afin de chasser le démon, qui est supposé se trouver à l'affût (Peler 2013 : 2048).

s'agit de l'amour parental porté vers la progéniture. La mère ne parle de son nourrisson qu'en utilisant ce terme, summum de l'amour et de la tendresse : *El kabda* (le foie), *kabdti* (mon foie). Deux expressions qui contrarient la prééminence du cœur dans le domaine restreint de ce type de relations. » (Chebel 1999 : 77)¹⁷.

Pour ce qui de la langue, mais aussi de l'imaginaire turcs, il serait à remarquer que le vocable *ciğer*, emprunté au persan, peut indiquer non seulement le foie, mais aussi les poumons et, lorsqu'il s'agit d'animaux, les entrailles dans leur totalité. À part cela, il se confond avec le cœur, mais plutôt au sens de fond secret de l'être qu'au sens physique. Cette dernière nuance sémantique nous paraît évidente dans nombre d'expressions idiomatiques qui ressemblent beaucoup, du point de vue de leur sémantisme, aux expressions évoquées ci-haut par Malek Chebel : *ciğerimin köşesi*, lit. « le recoin de mon cœur », au sens de personne tendrement aimée ou d'enfant chéri ; *ciğeri sızlamak*, « avoir mal au cœur, éprouver une peine » ; *ciğeri yanmak*, lit. « avoir le cœur brûlé », au sens de « souffrir beaucoup, éprouver une grande souffrance » ; *ciğeri parçalanmak*, « avoir le cœur déchiré » ; *ciğerini (delip) delmek (geçmek)*, lit. « passer par son cœur en le trouant/trouer son cœur », au sens de « broyer /briser son cœur » ; *ciğerine işlemek*, « affliger, blesser son cœur », et notamment *ciğerini sökmek*, lit. « arracher le cœur (de qqn.) », au sens de « (lui) porter de grands préjudices », qui n'est pas sans évoquer, à notre avis, les attaques des *alkarısı* contre les parturientes ou les femmes en couches (voir, pour les exemples ci-dessus et pour d'autres pareilles, *Türkçe Sözlük* 2005 : *ciğer*, s.v.). Ajoutons-y la locution dialectale *ciğerevi/ciğer evi*, au sens de « cœur », attestée dans plusieurs régions de la Turquie, dont Isparta, Istanbul, Antalya (*Derleme Sözlüğü* III 1968 : *ciğerevi*, s.v.). Enfin, tout comme le cœur, le foie est parfois regardé comme le siège de l'âme, ainsi qu'il ressort d'une incantation (*afsun*) récitée par les *bağşi* kirghizes qui s'emparent des *albastı* et les obligent à remettre les foies volés à leurs victimes : « Oh, *albastı*, créature tyrannique, / Remets son foie (*ciğer*) à sa place, / Rends à cette malheureuse son âme... » (Inan 1986 : 169). Le foie était donc conçu plus d'une fois comme siège des émotions, de l'affectivité, à l'instar du cœur¹⁸. L'association du foie aux émotions est, d'ailleurs, de très ancienne date même dans le monde turc. Le synonyme turc du vocable *ciğer*, à savoir *bağır*, est attesté avec le sens de « source des émotions » avant le XIII^e siècle¹⁹ ; un exemple fort éloquent, venant à l'appui de cette assertion nous paraît l'expression « *oğlum bu bağrım otu*, “my son, this fire in my liver” (*i.e.* dearly loved) » (Clauson 1972 : « BĞR », s.v. ; cf. Eren 1999 : 72), qui met en relief l'idée du « foie comme siège de l'amour parental ». Elle se remarque en outre par l'association du foie au feu, qui est plus rare, car le feu est rattaché d'habitude au cœur (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1990 : 435-436). La signification attribuée autrefois au foie est également à

¹⁷ Suivant Louis Massignon, qui met en exergue la découverte du cœur comme organe de la contemplation par les mystiques musulmans, « la littérature arabe [...] situe généralement le contre-coup des émotions dans le foie et la bile » (1913 : 197).

¹⁸ Les deux autres sens dialectaux attribués au vocable *ciğer*, à savoir « proche parent » et « femme laborieuse » (*Derleme Sözlüğü* III 1968 : « Ciğer », s.v.), nous semblent eux-aussi intimement, bien que d'une manière plus obscure, rattachés au sens général de « cœur/partie profonde de l'être ».

¹⁹ « Properly “the liver” with various extended and metaph. meanings, the latter mainly arising from the belief that the liver was the source of the emotions. S.i.a.m.l.g., sometimes with large phonetic changes. » (Clauson 1972 : 317).

décèler dans certaines expressions idiomatiques actuelles, telles *bağrı kara* et *bağrı yanık*, « (personne) qui a beaucoup souffert, qui a enduré beaucoup de peines » (voir *Türkçe Sözlük* 2005 : « Bağır », s.v.).

Pour ce qui est du cours d'eau ou du puits où l'*alkarısı* trempe le foie de ses victimes ou, dans d'autres variantes, disparaît à la suite de son affranchissement, ceux-ci évoquent, en tant que « sources de vie et sources de mort »²⁰, la frontière entre le monde terrestre, habité par les humains, et le monde plan infernal, peuplé de monstres farouches, territoire de l'inconnu et du non-retour, des ténèbres et de la mort. L'eau est, donc, présente dans ces contextes avec ses connotations négatives, destructrices, maléfiqes.

Dans une autre catégorie de légendes dont la connexion avec les légendes concernant l'*alkarısı* comme ennemi juré des parturientes et des accouchées est assez obscure, l'*alkarısı* s'en prend aux chevaux dans les écuries, les tourmente jusqu'à l'aube, à l'abri des ténèbres, en montant sur leurs dos et, surtout, n'oublie jamais de tresser leurs crins avant de les abandonner, ce qui représente, en quelque sorte, son « sceau ». Puisque le rapport entre les deux catégories de légendes reste plutôt énigmatique (il serait à souligner que les deux manières d'agir de l'*alkarısı* ne sont jamais conjointes), il y a lieu de se demander si la deuxième classe de légendes ne ferait pas allusion à une sorte de « fièvre des chevaux », par analogie avec la fièvre des accouchées. Le sexe de l'animal mis au supplice par le démon n'est pas important dans le contexte ; les légendes recueillies de Çukurova (Şimşek 1990 : 538-539) parlent de juments, ce qui nous indiquerait un « démon spécialiste du domaine féminin ». En échange, l'une des légendes rapportées par H. Carnoy et J. Nicolaïdes et intitulée « Les Génies des Écuries » parle de pouliches et de poulains ; dans ce dernier exemple, les mauvais esprits des écuries ne sont pas mis en relation avec le démon *al/alkarısı* – il s'agissait peut-être au début de légendes autonomes, qui ont fini à un moment donné par fusionner : « Il y a des génies qui s'attachent aux écuries ; ils tressent les crins des chevaux, montent sur le dos des pouliches et des poulains, et courent toute la nuit par les vallées et les montagnes. Le matin, on trouve les pauvres animaux exténués de fatigue et couverts de sueur. Comme on le voit, ces génies rappellent trait pour trait le *Drac* du Midi si bien décrit dans le charmant ouvrage d'Hippolyte Babou : *Les Païens Innocents*. » (Carnoy & Nicolaïdes 1889 : 364). Ce dernier type de légendes est également rapporté par Abdülkadir Inan, qui affirme en avoir entendu parler les habitants d'Erzincan et d'Erzurum (est de la Turquie) dans les premières décennies du XX^e siècle ; ici, l'*alkarısı* (ou l'*albastı*) trouverait son abri dans les étables ou les écuries et se plairait à tresser les crinières des chevaux²¹ ; son identité serait différente de celle du mauvais esprit qui s'en prend aux accouchées, le nom de ce dernier étant *karakura*²² (Inan 1933 : 162 ; Inan 1986 : 171 ; Boratav 2012 : 49 ; cf.

²⁰ « L'eau est source de vie et source de mort, créatrice et destructrice. » (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1990 : 376)

²¹ Un comportement similaire des esprits est rapporté chez les Kallars de Ienisseï, suivant lesquels la distraction favorite de l'esprit des rochers et de la montagne serait de tresser les crins des chevaux (Inan 1933 : 163 ; Inan 1986 : 172).

²² Ce *karakura* est, sans doute, le même avec le *karauğra* évoqué par les femmes du district de Kavak (région de Samsun), qui affirment qu'il correspond au Satan : il revêtirait l'apparence d'un chat avec une queue extrêmement longue et noire, ou bien d'une femme couverte d'une pèlerine noire et ayant un trou au creux de l'une de ses paumes (Bulut 2014 : 424-425). La même créature est appelée par les gens de Sivas *karavura* (Sarpkaya 2014).

Boratav 1973 : 95). Les chevaux en difficulté sont secourus, tout comme les accouchées sujettes aux harcèlements des démons, par un homme, le plus souvent leur maître, qui met fin à leurs tourments. Il serait à remarquer que cette hypostase du démon n'est pas universelle : elle est rapportée surtout dans la moitié orientale de l'Anatolie et trouve peu d'équivalents dans les régions plus ou moins avoisinées, exception faite du Pamir (Asatrian 2001 : 153)²³.

Le tressage des crins indique l'assujettissement des chevaux suppliciés par le méchant génie, car tresser signifie fixer, lier, attacher, dominer, posséder à travers les nœuds ; le nœud, de même que la tresse, peut acquérir dans certains contextes des connotations positives²⁴, ce qui signifie qu'il jouit d'un symbolisme ambivalent (Cirlot 2001 : 191-192 ; Chebel & Gheerbrant 1990 : 668-669). Son symbolisme reste ambigu même en terre d'Islam : « Il est censé autant protéger du mal d'autrui que lui en faire. Il provoque la souffrance, mais la soulage aussi, il empêche l'accouchement et le facilite », dit Malek Chebel (1995 : « Nœud », s.v.). Pourtant, chez les Turcs d'antan le cheval, « symbole ancestral du ciel » (Esin 2001 : 89), passait pour intouchable par les mauvais esprits, d'où la coutume de suspendre des crânes de cheval dans la proximité des demeures, suivant le dicton : *bir evde at olursa o eve cin ve şeytan girmez*, « s'il y a un cheval à la maison, les démons et les diables ne s'y insinuent pas » ; les crânes de cheval suspendus près des maisons étaient censés, d'autre part, préserver leurs habitants du mauvais œil, alors que les têtes de cheval jetées dans les cours d'eau étaient créditées du pouvoir de provoquer la pluie (Uraz 1992 : 148).

Il serait, enfin, utile à observer que l'*alkarisi* et ses semblables étaient suffisamment notoires pour attirer l'attention des voyageurs ou des résidents étrangers en Turquie, de plus en plus nombreux à partir du XIX^e siècle : « There is a curious, but deeply rooted superstition, accepted by all Turkish women, which imposes on them the necessity of never leaving mother and child alone, for fear they should become *Albalghan mish*, possessed by the Peris », remarque Fanny Blunt (1878 II : 6-7). Lucy Garnett passe en revue bon nombre de superstitions concernant les démons qui sont dits menacer la vie des accouchées et des nouveau-nés pendant les quarante jours de « marge » qui suivent les couches chez les Vlachs, les Bulgares, les Arméniens, les Juifs, les Albanais et les Turcs (« Osmanli ») de l'Empire ottoman à la fin du XIX^e siècle. Elle apprécie au sujet de ces derniers, sans paraître, pourtant, très bien documentée et, assurément, sous l'influence de Fanny Blunt, qu'elle évoque plus d'une fois : « The Peris of the Moslems do not, like the Nereids and Vilas of the Christians, appear to be in the habit of carrying off new-born babes, but they are not the less to be guarded against, and the mother and child should not be left alone until after the bath ceremony has taken place, for fear of their being possessed by them (*albalghan mish*). » (Garnett II 1891 : 473)

²³ Le motif en question, peu attesté dans les légendes, mais présent les contes de fées, est inventorié par Stith Thompson (1956-1958), avec ses variantes respectives, comme suit : « F366.2. *Fairies ride mortal's horses at night*. » ; « F366.2.1. *Fairies plait manes and tails of horses*. » ; « F473.4.1. *Spirit rides horses and mules at night, wears them out*. » ; « G241.3. *Witch rides on horse*. » ; « G265.3. *Witch rides horse at night*. ».

²⁴ « Like bunches of ribbons, rosettes, ties and knots, the plait is symbolic of intimate relationship, intermingling streams and interdependence » (Cirlot 2001 : 256).

Fernand Grenard retrace, toujours à la fin du XIX^e siècle, les croyances fondamentales des Kazaks et des Kyrghyzs du Turkestan, sans oublier de mentionner notre mauvais génie, qui semble y tenir une place de choix : « Les superstitions, que l'islamisme n'a pu détruire, sont nombreuses encore et diverses. On croit aux revenants, aux bons et aux mauvais génies, avec plus de modération toutefois qu'en Chine. Il existe une sorte de gnome, *albâsty* [...] qui prend différentes formes, souvent celle d'une vieille ébouriffée et velue ; parfois il est invisible, mais fait sentir son souffle, entendre sa voix ou le bruit de sa marche. Il se plaît à effrayer le voyageur solitaire ou à tourmenter les hommes durant leur sommeil. On croit au mauvais œil et il y a des *jettatori* de profession dits *nazerbân* [...]. On prend soin de ne montrer à personne l'enfant nouveau-né. » (1898 : 254) Ici, le démon qui nous intéresse paraît se confondre à d'autres catégories de mauvais génies, plus ou moins spécialisés. Fernand Grenard ajoute à sa relation la description d'une cérémonie destinée à chasser le démon de la maladie, dirigée par un sorcier-guérisseur appelé *piroukhoun*, qui « n'est en réalité qu'un *chaman* dégénéré qui tient son pouvoir des ancêtres sacrés » (*ibid.* : 255), ce qui n'est point rare en Asie Centrale, même de nos jours.

Quelques méthodes traditionnelles de protection ou de défense contre le démon

Les méthodes de protection ou de défense contre l'*alkarısı* impliquent bon nombre d'éléments conventionnels, répétitifs, qui se retrouvent dans la plupart des pratiques magiques dirigées contre les esprits malins, de même que certains détails qui, en l'absence de leur raison première, s'avèrent plus d'une fois surprenants, sinon bizarres. Il serait à observer que l'*alkarısı* a ordinairement peur des hommes²⁵, parfois des vieillards qui, nous dit-on, sont intouchables. Pour intouchables qu'ils soient, ce sont toujours eux qui se chargent de son expulsion par une large variété de moyens qui impliquent la violence physique ou symbolique : ils tirent au fusil, crient, font du bruit²⁶, agitent dans l'air des sabres ou des couteaux. Outre les hommes, en général, les *alkarısı* craignent de manière tout à fait particulière les forgerons et les guérisseurs connus sous le nom d'*ocaklı* (Inan 1933 : 161-162 ; Inan 1986 : 168-169). Ces derniers, qu'ils soient hommes ou, plus rarement, femmes, habitent couramment dans les parages d'un tombeau attribué

²⁵ Qui, suivant Celal Beydili (2003 : 44), représenterait de manière symbolique le forgeron, également admiré et redouté dans le monde turc ancien, d'autant plus qu'il est toujours muni d'une arme ou d'une pièce de fer.

²⁶ Les démons, quel qu'en soit le « domaine de prédilection », sont particulièrement sensibles aux bruits excessifs : « [...] an eclipse of the sun or moon is habitually attributed to a jinn or dragon trying to swallow the heavenly luminary. The people then get out at once with guns, tin pans, and anything than can make a noise, and try to intimidate and frighten away the awful monster. The sun and moon are always saved, and people rejoice that their efforts have been successful. » (White 1907 : 186). Dans le village de Kayaköprü, situé dans le district d'Akyaka (province de Kars), les femmes en couches sont protégées contre les attaques des mauvais génies en faisant hennir des chevaux devant leurs demeures (Gökşen 2011 : 186) ; cette pratique pourrait s'originer dans la croyance concernant les aptitudes apotropaïques des chevaux car, dans l'Iran occidental, le démon est tenu à l'écart de la demeure de l'accouchée en promenant un cheval jaune autour de la maison de l'accouchée et en traçant, peut-être, de cette manière un cercle de protection magique autour de celle-ci (Şamlū 1985/2014).

à un saint homme (*yatır*) dont ils prétendent avoir hérité le don (*ocaklık*) de guérir une maladie ou l'autre ; cette aptitude est transmise d'habitude d'une génération à l'autre à l'intérieur de la même famille, mais il n'existe pas de règle absolue dans ce sens. En Anatolie, cette espèce d'habileté pouvait passer jadis d'un homme à une femme et vice-versa, ce qui est plutôt rare de nos jours ; de plus, il pouvait passer non seulement d'un musulman à un autre, mais aussi d'un musulman à un chrétien et inversement, suivant le choix de l'*ocaklı* en titre (Boratav 1973 : 138 ; Carnoy & Nicolaidès 1889 : 334), ce qui indique, à notre avis, les sources non-islamiques de ces pratiques thérapeutiques. La transmission du don se réalise lorsque l'*ocaklı* reconnu comme tel se trouve à l'article de la mort ; il fait venir la personne qu'il a choisie comme successeur, lui fait baiser sa main droite, prononce la formule de « transfert du pouvoir » et puis crache ou fait semblant de cracher dans sa bouche (Carnoy & Nicolaidès 1889 : 334). Les hommes peuvent devenir des *alocaklısı* ou *alcı*, « *ocaklı* guérisseurs d'*al* », sans plus passer par cette formule d'initiation s'ils parviennent à assujettir une *alkarısı* : dans cette circonstance précise, ils acquièrent la faculté de voir la créature, invisible pour les autres, de la capturer et de guérir ainsi les femmes sujettes à ses attaques (Boratav 1973 : 139 ; Zarccone 2013 : 192). Les *alocaklısı* ou *alcı* ressemblent, du point de vue de leur fonction et de leur manière d'agir, aux soi-disant *parī-kvān* et *perižuni* de Nouristān (nord-est de l'Afghanistan), qui sont capables de convoquer les *parī* et, d'autre part, de soulager la souffrance causée par leur immixtion dans l'univers des humains (Adhami 2010). Ce qui paraît en quelque sorte inaccoutumé chez les *alocaklısı* par comparaison avec d'autres guérisseurs qui acceptaient, du moins à la fin du XIX^e siècle, de petites récompenses, notamment des coqs et de la cire, en échange de leurs services, c'est que les premiers ne pouvaient rien accepter en contrepartie : « Pour la guérison de l'*Al*, le *foyer* ou l'*odjak*, ne peut rien accepter, sous peine de cesser d'être *foyer*. » (Carnoy & Nicolaidès 1889 : 336). Les « foyers de l'*al* » jouissent, donc, d'une position singulière parmi les autres thérapeutes, en raison, peut-être, de la place occupée par notre mauvais génie dans le pandémonium anatolien.

S'y ajoute, dans quelques régions de Turquie, l'intercession supplémentaire des saints (*evliya*) locaux, spécialistes du domaine de l'accouchement et de la maternité. Par exemple, les gens qui habitent dans la proximité de Dişli, petite ville située aux environs d'ù, font des pèlerinages au tombeau (*türbe*) d'Albasan Dede, se trouvant dans la bourgade de Çatalı, région d'Emirdağ, ou, le cas échéant, à Özburun, un village qui conserverait les chaussures et le bâton du saint. Celui-ci est réputé de venir à l'appui des femmes stériles et de celles ayant perdu des enfants en bas âge ; il ferait parfois son apparition dans les demeures, se laisserait voir et, à l'occasion, délivrerait les animaux attachés dans les étables ou les écuries (Köroğlu & Köroğlu 2013 : 785).

Les instruments de prédilection employés pour chasser le démon *alkarısı* sont des instruments en métal, le plus souvent pointus, tranchants, perçants (aiguilles, couteaux, ciseaux, faucilles), étant destinés non seulement à menacer ou épouvanter la créature, mais aussi à la blesser, à lui faire mal ; les objets de ce type sont placés à côté, dans ou sous le lit de l'accouchée et du nouveau-né, mais aussi sous les pièces de literie qui sont en contact direct avec leurs corps respectifs, tels les draps, les oreillers, les couvertures, etc. (Türkdoğan 1995 : 71 ; Kaya 2001 : 211 ; Abdülaziz Bey 2002 : 14 ; Selçuk 2004 :

169 ; Çıblak Coşkun 2011 : 7 ; Karaaslan 2011 : 1444). À quelques exceptions près²⁷, la plupart de ces instruments sont en métal. Le métal, notamment le fer, qui jouissait d'un prestige particulier parmi les Turcs anciens, se trouvant, d'autre part, parmi les accessoires immanquables des chamans²⁸, est investi d'un symbolisme ambivalent, tout comme l'eau dont on parlait plus haut, car il « protège contre les influences mauvaises, mais il est aussi leur instrument » (Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1990 : 433). Suivant la croyance populaire, il a la propriété de canaliser les énergies négatives et, partant, de guérir le mal, ce qui expliquerait la multitude de rituels apotropaïques qui l'impliquent et, d'autre part, son emploi pour la confection des talismans (Chebel 1995 : « Métaux », s.v.).

Outre son prestige dans la tradition turco-mongole et dans les cultures avoisinées²⁹, l'emploi du fer contre les mauvais génies menaçant la vie des parturientes et des femmes en couches est attesté même en terres d'Islam, ainsi qu'il ressort de la littérature islamique de haute époque : « La mère du Prophète, raconte-t-on, avait, sur le conseil qui lui en avait été donné, porté du fer sur elle pendant sa grossesse, mais elle y renonça quand elle s'aperçut que le fer avait été fendu. » (I. Goldziher, *apud* Chebel 1995 : « Fer », s.v.)³⁰. De nos jours, le fer est remplacé parfois par l'acier (Peler 2013 : 2048), ce qui revient au même.

Observons aussi l'insistance des légendes sur la fonction apotropaïque des aiguilles qui, outre leur substance métallique, servent à clouer, à neutraliser et, finalement, à retenir notre mauvais génie pour des périodes plus ou moins longues³¹. La commodité de cet objet banal, facile à se procurer, se trouvant à la portée de tout le monde, est de nature à expliquer, sans doute, son emploi obstiné dans les pratiques magiques et les exorcismes de Turquie, comme d'ailleurs³².

²⁷ Par exemple, les rouleaux à pâtisserie, employés comme armes défensives.

²⁸ Pour Mircea Eliade, « le métier de forgeron vient, au point de vue de l'importance, immédiatement après la vocation de chaman. 'Forgerons et chamans sont du même nid', dit un proverbe yakoute. [...] Les forgerons ont le pouvoir de guérir et même de prédire l'avenir. » (1968 : 366).

²⁹ Par exemple, dans une formule de conjuration en mandéen inscrite sur une coupe d'incantation employée en Perse vers le VI^e siècle, le démon dit Lilith était « immobilisé », neutralisé au moyen de plusieurs instruments en fer (Patai 1990 : 229).

³⁰ Cette « légende » tissée autour de la mère du Prophète ne saurait pourtant être prise au pied de la lettre ; la tradition populaire roumaine prétend, par exemple, que la Sainte Vierge aurait été tourmentée durant sa grossesse par l'équivalent roumain de l'*alkarisi*, à savoir Samca ou Avestița, Aripa Satanei (« Avestița, l'aile de Satan »), pour être finalement sauvée par Saint Michel, qui aurait fustigé le démon en se servant d'un fouet de feu. Parmi les amulettes destinées à préserver les femmes enceintes de cette créature se trouvait un petit livret contenant « la prière de Saint Michel », qui devait toujours être mise sur le papier par un vieillard (Marian 1892 : 27-28 ; Gorovei 1909 : 18-19).

³¹ L'incapacité des démons *alkarisi* de se libérer de leurs dompteurs une fois capturés de cette manière évoque l'incapacité des *parī* iraniens de se libérer à eux seuls lorsqu'enchaînés ou de s'évader des cercles magiques tracés autour d'eux (De Bruijn 1995 : 271). Les cercles magiques apparaissent d'ailleurs, avec la même fonction, même chez les Akkadiens (Smith 2011 : 211).

³² Malek Chebel (1995 : 23, « Aiguille », s.v.) évoque, en se référant à la signification de l'aiguille dans le monde arabe, un interdit local (algérien) concernant l'emploi de celle-ci, en raison de la matière dont elle est faite et de sa forme pointue, qui la prédestinerait au mal ; d'ici parfois ses dénominations euphémistiques. Nous nous demandons, pourtant, si les interdits de ce genre ne découlent pas de l'emploi des aiguilles dans les pratiques magiques, ainsi qu'il advient chez bien des peuples, y compris les Turcs.

L'accouchée est souvent « gardée » par un balai³³ placé dans sa chambre ou dans la proximité de son lit (Blunt II 1878 : 6-7 ; Garnett 1909 : 228 ; Abdülaziz Bey 2002 : 14 ; White 1919 : 185 ; Kaya 2001 : 211). Le manche du balai est surmonté à l'occasion d'une tête d'ail afin d'en augmenter la force talismanique : l'ail est crédité d'une force apotropaïque exceptionnelle, en raison de sa puanteur, considérée comme très efficace contre les démons³⁴. Le balai peut être remplacé, suivant les circonstances, par une perche au sommet de laquelle se trouvent enfoncées des têtes d'oignon ou des gousses d'ail ou à laquelle on attache des chapelets d'oignon ou d'ail (Blunt II 1878 : 3 ; Garnett II 1891 : 473 ; Asatrian 2001 : 151) ; cette véritable « installation » est suppléée quelquefois par des têtes d'oignon ou des gousses d'ail transpercés d'objets métalliques et suspendus aux murs des demeures (Türdoğan 1995 : 71).

L'accouchée n'est jamais laissée seule durant les premiers quarante jours³⁵ qui succèdent à l'accouchement. Ce laps de temps passe pour dangereux et imprévisible tant pour la femme en couches que pour le nourrisson, s'achevant par une cérémonie qui marque le « retour de couches social », la « réintégration de la femme dans sa famille, son sexe et sa société générale » (Van Gennep 1981 : 65), mais aussi l'agrégation du nouveau-né à la collectivité dont il fera dorénavant partie ; cette double insertion sociale est marquée par un bain de l'enfant (parfois, son premier bain, mais ceci ne semble pas être de règle)³⁶. Cette cérémonie, appelée en turc *kırklama*, « (fête de la) quarantaine » et évoquant en quelque sorte les rituels de « relevailles » chez les catholiques, sans impliquer pourtant aucune dimension religieuse, est pratiquée un peu partout dans le monde turc. L'intervalle de séparation sociale de l'accouchée est réduit parfois à sept jours, surtout en milieu urbain (Abdülaziz Bey 2002 : 14) ; Lucy Garnett (1909 : 229-232) parle, au début du XX^{ème} siècle, d'une véritable cérémonie de réception présidée par l'accouchée au troisième jour de l'accouchement ; à l'époque en question, le rituel du bain avait lieu au quatrième jour de l'événement chez les pauvres, étant différée en échange jusqu'au huitième jour chez les riches³⁷.

³³ L'emploi du balai pour épouvanter les mauvais esprits est attesté chez maints peuples : chez les Roumains, par exemple, la tradition populaire recommande de ne pas laisser le nourrisson seul avant le baptême ; si les circonstances l'imposent, il faut placer un balai à côté de son berceau (Candrea 1999 : 269 ; Candrea 2001 : 241).

³⁴ L'ail est employé comme moyen de protection contre les mauvais esprits dans bien des cultures, antiques comme modernes. Il faisait partie, par exemple, à côté de la laitue et du miel, de l'arsenal défensif qui accompagnait les femmes égyptiennes lorsqu'elles fredonnaient une berceuse magique à l'intention de leurs enfants (Bunson 1991 : 224). Les Juifs l'employaient, à leur tour, pour protéger les enfants en bas âge et les jeunes femmes contre les génies malicieux (Lévy & Lévy 2013 : 159).

³⁵ Cette intervalle de réclusion est attesté dans beaucoup de cultures, européennes ou non (Van Gennep 1981 : 64-65) ; pendant cette période liminaire, l'accouchée est considérée tantôt impure, tantôt malade (Türdoğan 1995 : 71, 297) ; en raison de sa condition particulière, elle est plus exposée que jamais aux attaques des mauvais génies et nécessite des mesures de protection spéciales.

³⁶ On considère que le démon perd son emprise sur l'accouchée et le nouveau-né après la « cérémonie du bain » (Asatrian 2001 : 151) ; en contexte chrétien, cette cérémonie est remplacée, en quelque sorte, par le baptême, dont les significations sont, naturellement, beaucoup plus complexes.

³⁷ Il serait peut-être utile de remarquer que, chez les Juifs, la période critique durant laquelle les nouveau-nés étaient censés être sujets aux agressions de Lilith était initialement de huit jours pour les garçons (jusqu'à la circoncision, qui allait les protéger) et de vingt jours pour les filles (Scholem

Les attaques des mauvais génies, et particulièrement celles des *alkarısı*, se produisent de règle à l'abri des ténèbres, d'où les précautions spéciales prises contre eux à la nuit tombante (Öger 2014 : 1683-1684) ; les Turcs Tahtacı de Çukurova Mahallesi, Kaşdişlen, Bozyazı, Kayabaşı, Kuzucubelen, Erdemli ont l'habitude de laisser allumées les lampes dans la chambre de la femme en couches durant la quarantaine qui succède à l'accouchement (Selçuk 2004 : 169), ce qui n'est pas sans rappeler une autre pratique, à savoir celle d'entretenir le feu dans la même enceinte durant l'accouchement et la période liminaire de quarante jours, car le démon est tenu pour avoir peur du feu (Kalafat 1998 : 103 ; Gökşen 2011 : 186-187).

La porte de la chambre de la femme en couches est entourée d'un drap rouge³⁸, pour prévenir les étrangers de son état à part (Öger 2014 : 1685), mais aussi pour la protéger. Le nouveau-né est, à son tour, emmaillotté dans une couverture rouge, couvert d'un tissu rouge et coiffé d'un bonnet rouge orné d'objets apotropaiques : une gousse d'ail, un morceau d'alun, un talisman triangulaire du type *muska*, renfermant deux ou trois versets du *Coran*³⁹ enveloppés dans un chiffon bleu, ainsi que nombre d'ornements bleus en forme de main, de fer à cheval, etc. (Blunt II 1878 : 2 ; Garnett II 1891 : 473)⁴⁰. Le symbolisme du rouge dans les circonstances qui nous intéressent reste assez ambigu⁴¹ : certains auteurs prétendent que le démon aurait peur du rouge, mais il existe, d'autre part, des situations où ceux impliqués dans les rituels post-partum lui font des offrandes consistant en sucreries rouges (Inan 1933 : 162 ; Inan 1986 : 171 ; Abdülaziz Bey 2002 : 14 ; Koç 2010 : 81-82). La plus fameuse de ces friandises reste, sans doute, le « sorbet de l'accouchée » (*lohusa şerbeti*) ; celui-ci est préparé à l'intention de la femme en couches pendant les premiers sept jours qui s'ensuivent à l'accouchement, mais les femmes, parfois même les hommes qui viennent lui rendre visite durant cette intervalle de temps peuvent également s'en régaler sans restriction. Le sorbet, appelé aussi « sorbet

1974 : 359 ; Schwartz 2004 : 144, 217). Plus tard, cet intervalle de quasi armistice allait être prolongé à quarante, respectivement à soixante jours (Scholem 1974 : 359).

³⁸ Dans d'autres cas, le rouge est frappé d'une interdiction spéciale, étant censé attirer l'*alkarısı* : suivant Abdülaziz Bey (2002 : 14), durant les premiers sept jours qui suivaient l'accouchement, les femmes portant des vêtements rouges unis (*düz kırmızı*) n'étaient pas autorisées à entrer dans la chambre de la femme en couches.

³⁹ En milieu chrétien, les versets coraniques sont remplacés par des prières, des images du Christ, de la Sainte Vierge, des saints tels Saint Sisianus ou Saint Michel chez les Roumains (Cartoian 1974 : 184-191), Saint Cyprien et Saint Sisianus chez les Arméniens, etc. (Şamlı 1984/2014.).

⁴⁰ Les accessoires apotropaiques évoqués par Fanny Blunt ne sont pas exclusifs ; ils comportent assurément bon nombre de variations ou de combinaisons : « Pour préserver du mauvais-œil les petits enfants, on leur attache un talisman sur le *fez*. Ce talisman sert aussi pour les bestiaux. Il doit contenir : du cumin noir, de l'ail à un seul grain, de l'alun et de l'œillet ; il doit aussi se terminer par un morceau bifurqué – en cornes – du bois d'un certain arbre nommé en turc *dardagann*. Quelquefois on se contente des cornes du *dardagann*. » (Carnoy & Nicolaïdes 1889 : 353). Le *dardagann* dont parlent H. Carnoy et J. Nicolaïdes est, sans doute, le *dardağan*, le « micocoulier de Tournefort » (*Celtis tournefortii*), moins populaire que le *çitlembik* (*Celtis australis*), employé souvent dans la confection des amulettes végétales destinées à la protection des enfants contre le mauvais œil, surtout en milieu rural (Nicolas 2009-2010 : 72).

⁴¹ Il le reste, d'ailleurs, même chez d'autres peuples : dans les milieux juifs, par exemple, les rubans rouges attachés au berceau du nouveau-né étaient considérés comme un succédané des amulettes employée jadis pour neutraliser Lilith (Schwartz 2004 : 217), la « rousse » du Zohar...

rouge » (*kırmızı şerbet*), était préparé jadis de sucre, de girofle (*karanfil*) et de kermès (*kırmız*), auquel il devait d'ailleurs sa couleur rouge (Abdülaziz Bey 2002 : 16-17 ; Boratav 1973 : 187). De nos jours, le sorbet est préparé de *lohusa şekeri*, un mélange constitué de girofle, d'autres épices telles la cannelle et de raisin d'Amérique (*Phytolacca americana*) – en turc, *şekerciboyası* –, en vente chez les marchands d'épices.

Le poids du rouge dans l'ensemble des mesures de protection contre l'*alkarısı* est tout aussi saillant chez les Tahtacı de Mersin : l'accouchée y est coiffée d'un fichu rouge, le nourrisson est couvert d'une couverture rouge, le lit est entouré d'un drap rouge, les belles-filles de la famille doivent se couvrir la tête d'un fichu rouge pour avoir accès à l'accouchée et au nourrisson, on attache un chiffon rouge à un arbre ou à un pilier quelconque si par devant ou par la proximité de la maison de l'accouchée passe une procession de noces, etc. (Selçuk 2004 : 169).

Des mesures de protection en quelque sorte similaires sont attestées chez les Turcs Kachkaï, peuplade turque essentiellement nomade qui habite dans le sud-est de l'Iran, et surtout dans la région de Chiraz : à part l'emploi immanquable des tissus rouges, les nomades Kachkaï entourent la tente de l'accouchée d'une corde, enduisent ses poignets de suie, attachent à ses poignets des ficelles tressées de poils d'animaux, prononcent des formules d'exorcisme telles *kaç kara kaç !*, « enfuis-toi, le noir, enfuis-toi ! » ou *melune çabuk git !*, « va-t-en vite, (esprit) maudit ! », ont recours à des amulettes confectionnées de crocs ou de griffes de loup et, bien sur, s'adressent aux *ocaklı*, dont il a été question plus haut (Karaaslan 2011 : 1444).

Un autre moyen de protection efficace contre l'*al* serait, selon Murat Uraz (1992 : 144), l'emplacement d'un lambeau de peau de loup sous l'oreiller de l'accouchée ; d'autre part, les femmes dont les enfants meurent en bas âge ont l'habitude de trouser une peau de loup et de faire passer leurs nourrissons par ce trou. Les Ouïghours suspendent un os de loup (ou un morceau de pain) pourvu des mêmes propriétés apotropaïques au chevet du berceau ou dans la proximité de celui-ci (Öger 2012 : 1689, 1693). L'appel aux techniques magiques ancestrales est, par ailleurs, usuel dans toutes les régions habitées par les Turcs ; dans la petite ville de Dişli (province d'Afyon), les nouveau-nés attrapés par un mal mystérieux qui les afflige durant les premiers quarante jours de leur venue au monde et qui est mis au compte de l'*alkarısı* sont passés par l'os de la cuisse d'un cheval (*kalça kemiği*) (Köroğlu & Köroğlu 2013 : 786).

S'y ajoutent les fumigations, qui sont d'ailleurs en grande faveur chez les Turcs. Les Ouïghours emploient à cet effet un mélange composé de chardon-Marie (*deve diken*), d'yeux de mouton, de pommes déshydratées, de feuilles de genévrier, d'un poil appartenant à un membre de la famille et de sel (Öger 2014 : 1689). Suivant Abdülaziz Bey (2002 : 15), les Istanbulais préféraient utiliser dans le même but la nigelle cultivée, connue aussi sous le nom de « cumin noir » (*çörek otu*), et le harmal ou la rue de Syrie (*üzerlik otu*), réputés pour leurs vertus miraculeuses. Dans la ville de Dişli, mentionnée plus haut, les gens ont recours, dans des circonstances pareilles, aux chaumes ramassés du toit de la maison où demeure l'accouchée (Köroğlu & Köroğlu 2013 : 785).

Sur les origines lointaines du démon *alkarısı* et ses racines mythiques

Bien que très présent dans les récits concernant « les superstitions des Turcs », notre démon hante, avec certaines caractéristiques qui nous sont déjà familières, beaucoup d'autres civilisations du Moyen-Orient. Edward G. Browne le découvre, par exemple, à la fin du XIX^e siècle en Iran : « Another superstition (not, however, connected with the desert), of which I heard at Teheran, may be mentioned in this connection. A form of cursing used by women to each other is “*Al-at bi-zanad!*” (“May the *Ál* strike thee!”). The belief concerning the *Ál* is that it attacks women who have recently been confined, and tries to tear out and devour their livers. To avert this calamity various precautions are taken : swords and other weapons are placed under the woman’s pillow, and she is not allowed to sleep for several hours after the child is born, being watched over by her friends, and roused by cries of “*Yá Maryam!*” (“O Mary!”) whenever she appears to be dozing off. It is worthy of note that the *Ál*, as well as its congeners, is supposed to have flaxen hair. » (Browne 1893 : 166). Les informations de E. G. Browne seront reprises presque à la lettre, quarante ans plus tard, par Clément Huart⁴². Il serait à observer que la variante iranienne du démon est douée de cheveux blonds, ce qui la rend sans doute voyante dans un pays dominé par les bruns ; ce détail apparaît, d’ailleurs, également dans quelques variantes turques de la légende (Zaripova Çetin 2007 : 21-23 ; Inan 1986 : 171). Du reste, le démon iranien ressemble à son homonyme turc : il est décrit de manières très diverses, étant le plus souvent associé, en raison de son nom, au rouge (peau rouge, cheveux rouges), il s’en prend aux femmes en couches, en tâchant d’arracher leur foie (parfois, leur placenta) et de le tremper dans un ruisseau ou de le transporter à travers un ruisseau/une rivière, ce qui entraîne leur mort ; il craint les instruments en fer, les armes, le charbon, la couleur noire, l’odeur de l’oignon. (Šāmlū 1985/2014).

Notre démon ou, du moins, la classe à laquelle il appartient est également signalé, cinquante ans avant la relation d’Edward G. Browne, par G. T. Vigne dans la province de Kaboul, située dans l’est de l’Afghanistan : « The Aals form another race of preternatural beings ; they are said to resemble women of about twenty years of age, but with long teeth and nails, and with eyes that are curved down the side of their noses, and their heels placed where their toes ought to be. They are, I suppose, the Gouls of the Persian and Turkish tales, as they meet in grave-yards, and feed on the dead bodies of men and horses. » (1843 : 211-212 ; cf. Coulter & Turner 2012 : « Al », s.v.) D’après ce que l’on peut constater, Vigne parle de toute une classe de démons (« les Aals ») et non pas d’un démon « spécialiste des couches » et de leurs suites.

Les démons dits *Al* sont aussi largement attestés en terres arméniennes, où ils présentent des similitudes frappantes avec les *alkarısı* turcs. Ils y sont décrits comme des créatures mi humaines, mi animales, velues et ébouriffées, masculines ou féminines, qui, de surcroît, ont une « mère »⁴³. Outre ce portrait conventionnel, « d’apparat », ils sont

⁴² « The demon Al is dreaded by women, who do not hesitate to invoke him against their companions when they are angry. He attacks women in labor and tries to rend and devour their liver. Various precautions are taken against this calamity: sabres and other weapons are placed under the woman’s pillow, and she is not allowed to sleep for several hours after her child is born; she is watched over by her friends, who cry “*Yā Maryam!*” (“O Mary!”) whenever she seems to be sinking into a doze. We may note that the demon Al, like his *confrères*, is supposed to be fair-haired » (Huart 1932 : 52).

⁴³ Cette particularité les apparente, une fois de plus, aux *alkarısı* turcs, qui jouissent d’enfants nourris de foie humain et qui sont supposés avoir à leur tour une « mère ». Les *al* ou *alkarısı* ne sont pas,

capables de changer d'aspect, de s'adapter rapidement aux circonstances, ainsi qu'il ressort des prières dirigées contre eux, dont la valeur documentaire est comparable à celle des incantations : dans une telle prière, ils sont présentés comme des esprits impurs, aux yeux brillants, munis d'une paire de ciseaux en fer, qui mènent une vie errante ou trouvent leur refuge dans des lieux sablonneux. Le même esprit est dépeint par un auteur anonyme comme un homme ayant des cheveux semblables à des serpents, des dents en fer et des crocs de sanglier, qui est assis sur le sable (Ananikian 1925 : 88). La fonction première des *Al* arméniens, qui était celle de susciter les maladies les plus diverses, se serait rétrécie avec le temps pour arriver finalement à se limiter aux attaques dirigées, d'une part, contre les fœtus et, d'autre part, contre les parturientes et les femmes en couches ; les démons étaient dits de s'en prendre notamment aux femmes en travail, en brûlant légèrement leurs oreilles⁴⁴, en arrachant leur foie et en les étranglant, à côté de leurs enfants non nés. Ils avaient également l'habitude de voler les fœtus âgés de 7 mois, c'est-à-dire de provoquer des fausses couches⁴⁵, de les aveugler, de sucer leur sang et leur cerveau, de dévorer leur chair. Les femmes en train d'accoucher étaient, par conséquent, entourées d'objets en métal et d'armes, employées pour agiter l'air dans la chambre où elles se trouvaient ou l'eau des rivières situées dans la proximité de leurs demeures, qui étaient supposées abriter les mauvais esprits.

Mardiros Ananikian (1925 : 88) apprécie que ce démon, hérité des Babyloniens et semblable, en raison de ses cibles, à la Lilith des Juifs et à la Lamia des Grecs, a été, probablement, emprunté par les Arméniens aux anciens Syriens ou aux Iraniens. Son assertion nous amène au vif d'un autre sujet, concernant les origines possibles du démon *alkarisi*, qui fait l'objet d'intérêt de notre article. Les savants turcs (Inan 1933 : 163-164 ; Inan 1986 : 172-173 ; Ögel 1995 : 514-518 ; Boratav 2012 : 33 ; Beydili 2003 : 44-45) considèrent presque sans exception que le démon *alkarisi* – personnification populaire de

d'ailleurs singuliers sous cet aspect dans l'univers des démons : les *parī*, masculins ou, plus souvent, féminins, sont à leur tour censés se marier et avoir des enfants (Adhami 2010). Lilith, dont on va s'occuper de plus près, figure parmi les quatre « mères des démons » de la démonologie cabalistique, à côté de Agrat, Mahalath et Na'amah (Scholem 1974 : 358).

⁴⁴ Détail plutôt rare dans l'ensemble des récits concernant les effets nuisibles des attaques des *al*, qui nous fait penser à la relation de H. Nicolaïdes (Carnoy & Nicolaïdes 1889 : 330-332, *supra*).

⁴⁵ Cette fonction paraît également transparente d'un récit signé par H. Carnoy & J. Nicolaïdes : « Les malades et ceux qui ont fait des vœux passent la nuit dans l'intérieur de l'église où ils dorment aussi tranquillement que chez eux. Sainte Macrine visite les plus pieux des pèlerins endormis. Ceux qui sont honorés de cette visite sont guéris de leurs maladies, ou voient leurs souhaits accomplis. Maria-Sava Philippidou désirait passer une nuit dans l'église. Elle y arriva à une heure fort avancée et ne put trouver une place où se coucher, tant la chapelle était remplie de dormeurs. Force de chercher, M. S. Philippidou trouva un endroit écarté où une femme venait de se coucher avec son fils possédé du démon. "Mon enfant ne vous fera pas de mal ! assura la femme." La tante de M. Nicolaïdes se plaça sur l'escalier qui servait de lit à la mère et à son fils. Le sommeil vint bientôt. M^{me} Philippidou, bien que dormant profondément, entendit un bruit de conversation et y prêta attention. Un des interlocuteurs disait : "Avancez-vous ; marchez sur le ventre de cette femme. – C'est dommage, disait l'autre ; la tête de son enfant n'est pas encore formée." En même temps, elle sentit que quelqu'un marchait sur son ventre. Maria Philippidou se réveilla et ne vit personne. La mère et l'enfant dormaient toujours. La tante de M. Nicolaïdes était alors enceinte de quelques mois » (Carnoy & Nicolaïdes 1889 : 206-207). Suivant les auteurs, l'histoire évoquée plus haut se serait passée durant un pèlerinage consacré à Sainte Macrine, l'église en question se trouvant dans un petit village appelé Hassa-Köy, au sud d'Ince Su (Césarée de Cappadoce).

la fièvre puerpérale – s’originerait dans la culture turque préislamique et proposent une corrélation entre les manifestations de cet esprit et le culte du feu (*ot*), avec quelques rituels spécifiques tels l’*alaslama/alazlama* – une méthode de purification et de traitement à travers le feu et les fumigations. Suivant cette logique, l’hypostase maligne de cette entité, telle qu’elle fut forgée par l’imaginaire populaire, ne serait que le résultat d’une évolution ou, plutôt, d’une involution d’un génie tutélaire originaire, celui du feu ou de l’âtre, qui était envisagé parfois comme une vieille vêtue de rouge (Ögel 1995 : 518). D’autres chercheurs (Çoruhlu 2002 : 54) proposent une corrélation entre l’*alkarısı* et l’ancienne déesse turque Umay, dont le nom désignait au début le placenta, qui fut vénérée par la suite comme protectrice des femmes et des enfants, en raison, peut-être, des propriétés magiques attribuées à l’arrière-faix (Clauson 1972 : 164-165 ; Beydili 2003 : 580) et qui finit par revêtir les attributs d’une déesse de l’âtre (Esin 2001 : 60) ; cette déesse protectrice aurait été sujette à une sorte de métamorphose mystérieuse qui l’aurait transmuée en l’hypostase essentiellement maléfique qui est parvenue jusqu’à nous.

Garnik Asatrian (2001) passe en revue les récits multiples sur l’évolution du démon en Arménie, en Iran, en Géorgie, dans le Caucase du Nord, en Afghanistan, en Asie Centrale, qui partagent beaucoup de détails communs. Il apprécie que l’origine du mot *āl* reste sujette à caution, malgré son association conjecturale avec le nom d’Ahura Mazda, la divinité centrale du mazdéisme, mais que, de toute manière, la thèse de l’origine turque du nom Almasti – sorte de sobriquet du démon en Asie Centrale – devrait être définitivement abandonnée. Il invoque à l’appui de son assertion le théonyme Almešti, découvert par l’indianiste suédois Olaf Hansen dans un manuscrit sogdien – Almešti y figurerait comme dieu suprême, vénéré par Zoroastre, bien que son nom semble relever d’un développement dialectal du mot, et non pas dériver du nom d’Ahura Mazda. La forme *āl* (*ol, hāl, xāl, yāl*) devrait être considérée, par conséquent, comme le résultat d’une contraction secondaire du nom Almešti, ce qui ne rendrait pas caduque l’idée d’un *āl* (*almasti*) féminin, quoique la plupart des incantations arméniennes médiévales parlent d’un *āl* masculin (Asatrian 2001 : 154-155).

Les langues turques, dépourvues de genre, ne sont pas confrontées à ce type de dilemme, ce qui n’implique pas que l’identité et la nature du démon dans l’espace turc seraient plus faciles à discerner. Nous considérons utile de remarquer pourtant que le vocable *āl*, regardé parfois comme étant d’origine iranienne (Šāmlū 1985/2014)⁴⁶, fait partie depuis longtemps du lexique des langues turques. Suivant Gerard Clauson (1972 : 120-121), le chromonyme turc *a:l* serait un emprunt mongol, désignant au début « the colour of the (Chinese) scarlet ink with which the rulers sealed documents », donc un rouge vif, écarlate ; le même mot fut emprunté en russe, sous la forme *alyi*, dans le même

⁴⁶ Bedros Kerestedjian (1971 : 16), dont l’ébauche de dictionnaire étymologique de la langue turque date de la fin du XIX^e siècle, considère lui-aussi que le vocable turc *āl*, « écarlate », provient du persan, mais garde une réserve prudente au sujet du deuxième sens du mot, à savoir « fièvre puerpérale (dans l’expression *āl basmaq* = attaque d’*āl*) », en y ajoutant la note suivante : « À considérer les moyens superstitieux employés en Orient pour préserver l’accouchée de cette maladie dangereuse, on serait porté à chercher ailleurs l’origine de cette dernière locution. » Il n’hésite pas, en outre, de faire des renvois au « sumérien *alal* et assyrien *alu* = sorte de démon », sans en offrir d’autres détails, et de signaler d’autres expressions similaires en turc « concernant l’action des esprits malfaisants », telles *cin basmak*, « attaque de djins », *ağır basmak*, « attaque d’incube ».

sens. *A:l sariğ* désignait un jaune orangé (*reddy yellow*) ; pourtant, *a:l* pouvait également signifier « orange » ; l'épithète respectif s'appliquait aux roses, aux visages ou, plutôt, aux joues, à certaines races de chevaux, aux sceaux des souverains turcs. Le sens du vocable mongol dont parle G. Clauson nous amène à penser aux « sceaux rouges » (*āl tamgā*) des Il-Khans mongols de Perse (Doerfer 1984), par l'intermédiaire desquels ce chromonyme aurait pu être emprunté au persan ; G. Doerfer considère que le vocable en question était d'origine turque, étant emprunté par les Mongols aux Ouïghours. D'après Mahmoud de Kachgar/Kaşgarlı Mahmūd (2005 : 137), qui acheva son « recueil des langues turques » (*Dīwān Luġāt al-Turk*) vers 1074, le mot *āl* désignait une variété de tissu de soie orange (ou orangé), employé pour les étendards des khans et les couvertures de selle de leurs chevaux ; en même temps, il signifiait « orange », ce qui nous indique un rouge clair tirant sur le jaune – une espèce de corail, de rouge vermeil.

Outre la question du nom de l'*al* (*alkarisi*), dont l'arrière-plan historique et linguistique a servi, à notre avis, de support et a renforcé le poids de l'étymologie populaire dans la perception du démon, on ne saurait s'empêcher de constater que notre mauvais génie revêt des traits similaires dans une zone géographique assez bien circonscrite, qui renferme notamment l'Iran, l'Afghanistan, l'Asie Mineure, l'Asie Centrale, le Caucase. Les peuples habitant ce vaste territoire ne semblent plus avoir que peu de choses en commun de nos jours, hormis les échanges multiples qui ont marqué leurs histoires respectives à travers les époques. La région satisfait pourtant à toutes les conditions requises pour être regardée comme une « province ou aire thématique », l'emportant sur les barrières linguistiques ou ethniques, pour emprunter la terminologie proposée par l'ethnologue français Arnold Van Gennep au début du XX^e siècle⁴⁷. L'existence de cette « province supratoritoriale », qui s'est constituée depuis la plus haute antiquité, a facilité non seulement la circulation des biens ou des marchandises, mais aussi la circulation des idées, des faits culturels et a renforcé les lignes de force de la mémoire collective. C'est justement dans ce contexte que notre thème (ou, parfois, motif, suivant les circonstances) a « voyagé » à travers le temps, a été transporté d'un endroit à l'autre, accompagnant les gens et leurs histoires, et a été transmis, d'autre part, d'une génération à l'autre par le processus d'enculturation. S'y sont ajoutés, sans doute, les contacts historiques, individuels ou collectifs, qui, dans notre cas précis, n'ont fait qu'accroître les chances de survivance et de perpétuation d'une idée touchant à la sensibilité commune des communautés impliquées dans ces mécanismes de transfert.

À l'origine de cette réaction en chaîne se trouve, à notre avis, le « trésor démoniaque » mésopotamien, dont la richesse et la diversité constitutives se sont soldées à la longue par un véritable effet boule de neige, influençant de manière durable les croyances et les coutumes des peuples du Moyen-Orient. Les créatures fantastiques

⁴⁷ Il définit le concept respectif comme suit : « Il existe des “provinces” ou des “aires thématiques” qui ne répondent ni aux provinces linguistiques, ni aux provinces ethniques, ni aux provinces culturelles. Autrement dit, la production thématique populaire ne dépend ni de la langue, ni de la race, ni de la civilisation. Tout au plus semble-t-il exister une concordance entre elle et les régions géographiques. L'Europe et l'Asie septentrionales ; l'Europe centrale ; le bassin de la Méditerranée ; le bassin du Niger ; le bassin du Congo ; l'Extrême-Orient avec le Tibet, l'Inde et l'Indonésie ; l'Océanie, avec infiltrations diverses ; l'Australie : ce sont là autant de régions géographiques qui coïncident avec ce que j'appelle les *provinces thématiques* » (Van Gennep 1912 : 44-45).

couvées dans l'ancien territoire suméro-assyro-babylonien et les régions limitrophes se sont rapidement répandues dans le monde ; les noms et même les raisons d'être originaires de ces génies appartenant à la haute antiquité ont été oubliés, substitués, hybridés, mais ils n'ont jamais cessé d'informer, de manière plus ou moins subtile, l'imaginaire démoniaque des civilisations qui ont pris la relève pour la transmettre, par la suite, à d'autres civilisations. Par conséquent, il serait plus utile de chercher non pas un germe unique, mais des points de départ multiples qui eussent pu servir de catalyseur pour la cristallisation du démon qui nous intéresse dans cette étude.

Une analyse typologique de ses possibles sources d'inspiration ne saurait se passer, sans doute, de la catégorie prolixe des *alū* suméro-babyloniens : ils sont en quelque sorte omniprésents dans les incantations prononcées par les exorcistes akkadiens contre les génies malicieux (Smith 2011 : 199-201, 211). Ils forment toute une classe de démons qui suscitent la maladie⁴⁸, de sorte que leur nom puisse être regardé plutôt comme un hypéronyme plurivalent. En Babylone, *alū* était une divinité de la tempête⁴⁹ et du cauchemar qui provoquait à ses sujets une espèce de dévitalisation, sans cause apparente (MacKenzie 1915 : 68-69). Ce mal indéfini prenait parfois, par métonymie, même leur nom : « *Alu*-disease has clothed itself in my body / like a garment; / sleep in a net enmeshes me ; / my eyes stare but see not, / my ears are open, but hear not ; / weakness has seized all my body. » (Jacobsen 1976 : 162). Outre cela, les *alū* possèdent en quelque sorte le don de l'ubiquité – ils sont présents partout et n'épargnent personne, ils attaquent n'importe qui, à tout instant ; on en parle, donc, en termes tels « the evil *a*-ghost who blocks the street for those who go about at night » ; « the evil *a*-ghost who strikes everywhere like lightning » ; « evil *a*-ghost who envelops (his victim) like a garment » ; « the *a*-demon has put on my body as if it were a garment » (Oppenheim, A. Leo, *et al.* 1964 : « *Alū* », *s.v.*). M. Ananikian (1925 : 88) apprécie qu'à l'origine des *al* arméniens qui, il faudrait le noter, ne sont mentionnés qu'à partir du Moyen Âge, se trouvent justement les *alū* babyloniens, qui auraient été empruntés soit aux Syriens, soit aux Iraniens.

Néanmoins, la figure la plus remarquable du pandémonium babylonien reste, dans notre perspective, Lamaštu, spécialiste du domaine de la grossesse, de l'accouchement et, disons, de la « néonatalogie » à Babylone et en Assyrie et présentée le plus souvent comme une créature démoniaque, bien qu'elle fût regardée au début comme une déesse. Ses victimes de prédilection étaient les fœtus et les nouveau-nés, mais elle était également associée parfois à d'autres maladies, induits cette fois aux hommes, ce qui renvoie à l'évolution ambiguë, sinon contradictoire constatée quelquefois chez les *alkarisi* de

⁴⁸ À l'époque prémoderne, l'étiologie de toute maladie présuppose, en l'absence d'un agent pathogène palpable, l'ingérence d'un démon. Par conséquent, « chaque maladie, chaque symptôme même de chaque maladie peut être un démon. Chaque rêve suggère un démon, comme chaque hallucination. Aussi les récits sur les démons ont-ils un caractère spécial : ils sont à la fois objet de croyance, merveilleux, instructifs, explicatifs et parfois même magiques, en tant que rites verbaux » (Van Genep 1912 : 101).

⁴⁹ « Regarded as the demon of the storm, and possibly, in its origin, the same as the divine bull sent by Ištar to attack Gilgameš, and killed by Enkidu. It spread itself over a man, overpowering him upon his bed, and attacking his breast. » (Pinches 1906 : 108 ; cf. MacKenzie 2005 : 65, 68-69). Beaucoup de démons ont été d'ailleurs à l'origine des personnifications du vent, de la tempête et de l'orage, en Babylonie comme ailleurs ; leur nature violente, farouche les rend non seulement dangereux dans les confrontations directes, mais aussi capables de s'insinuer n'importe où, à l'insu de leurs victimes.

Turquie. Le portrait de Lamaštu est complété par sa monture traditionnelle dans l'iconographie babylonienne, à savoir l'âne (Black & Green 2004 : 115-116), qui la rend d'autant plus digne d'intérêt et nous amène à nous demander s'il n'existe pas une relation quelconque entre ce détail apparemment insignifiant et l'hypostase de « cavalier / cavalière » des *alkarisi* turcs ; cette dernière variante reste assez originale et non pas moins mystérieuse dans l'ensemble des légendes concernant « les démons de l'accouchement », parce que sans liaison apparente avec leur enjeu. Enfin, l'image de Lamaštu ne serait pas complète en l'absence de la barque dont elle se serait servie pour traverser les eaux des Enfers (Black & Green 2004 : 155) ; est-ce que ce dernier détail iconographique aurait pu jouer un certain rôle dans l'association ultérieure des *alkarisi* avec l'eau marquant, pour les accouchées dépouillées de leur foie, la frontière entre la vie et la mort ? On l'ignore, mais ce serait une autre piste à investiguer ou, du moins, à ajouter à l'inventaire de l'héritage mésopotamien du démon turc.

Notre répertoire démoniaque ne devrait, sans doute, négliger une autre famille de démons redoutables, à savoir Lilū (fém. Lilītu), dont *ardat-lilī* jouissait de la réputation de harceler ou même agresser les enfants en bas âge (Oppenheim, A. Leo, *et al.* 1973 : « Lilū », s.v.)⁵⁰. Cette dernière filière nous conduit, finalement, à Lilith, plus célèbre que ne le sont les cohortes de démons de la haute antiquité suméro-babylonienne, bien qu'elle héritât beaucoup de leurs charges et leurs manières d'agir. L'histoire de Lilith, celle créée par Dieu « depuis l'intérieur vers l'extérieur »⁵¹ ou, suivant d'autres variantes du mythe, l'histoire « de l'autre Ève », nous intéresse dans plusieurs perspectives. Il s'agit tout d'abord d'un personnage plurivalent, qui incarne non seulement « la meurtrière d'enfants », mais aussi « la séductrice létale », le « succube fatal », par la suite d'une fusion entre deux personnages démoniaques s'originant en Babylone, à savoir Lamaštu et Lilū/Lilītu (Scholem 1974 : 356 ; Schwartz 2004 : 216-219). Ces deux hypostases du démon rappellent l'hétérogénéité constatée parfois chez les *alkarisi* turcs, qui sont réputés pour s'en prendre non seulement aux parturientes, aux accouchées et aux nouveau-nés, mais aussi, en tant que succubes, aux hommes pendant leur sommeil. Retenons aussi que Lilith devient après son bannissement une créature plutôt nocturne, qu'elle habite dans des caves et d'autres endroits ténébreux, dans la proximité d'une eau (la Mer Rouge, qui jouit d'une réputation douteuse, puisque débordant de démons). Ses cheveux longs sont tantôt d'un noir de jais (version du Talmud), tantôt rouges, ainsi que le sont également ses vêtements de courtisane, d'un rouge flamboyant, écarlate (version du Zohar) (Schwartz 2004 : 217-219 ; Patai 1990 : 233-234). La version talmudique de Lilith émane de l'élite cultivée, alors que celle des gens du commun est mieux illustrée par les inscriptions araméennes sur les coupes d'incantation découvertes à Nippur, en Babylonie, et datant des VI-VII^e siècles de l'ère chrétienne. Il en ressort un démon hybride, qui reste un

⁵⁰ « The male *lilū* and the two females *lilītu* and *ardat-lilī* are a sort of family group of demons. They are not gods. The *lilū* haunts desert and open country and is especially dangerous to pregnant women and infants. The *lilītu* seems to be a female equivalent, while the *ardat-lilī* (whose name means 'maiden *lilū*') seems to have the character of a frustrated bride, incapable of normal sexual activity. As such, she compensates by aggressive behaviour especially towards young men. The *ardat-lilī*, who is often mentioned in magical texts, seems to have some affinities with the Jewish Lilith (e.g. Isaiah 34:14) » (Black & Green 2004 : 118 ; cf. MacKenzie 2005 : 67-68).

⁵¹ « [...] the first Eve was created from the inside out – first her bones, then her flesh, and finally she was covered with skin » (Schwartz 2004 : 140).

danger perpétuel pour les femmes dans les périodes névralgiques de leurs existences, mais surtout pour les accouchées et les nouveau-nés ; il agit parfois en succube, sous l'aspect de Lilith, parfois en incube, sous l'aspect de Lilin. Il déteste les rejetons de son partenaire humain, qu'il soit homme ou femme, et les attaque, les blesse, suce leur sang ou les étrangle ; il peut également provoquer des fausses couches et des accidents pendant l'accouchement (Patai 1990 : 225). Dans l'une des incantations évoquées plus haut on parle d'une créature presque nue, avec les cheveux en désordre, ayant deux hypostases, masculine et féminine. (*ibid.* : 226). Cette ambivalence se retrouve pareillement dans les incantations en araméen et mandéen inscrites sur les coupes d'incantation employées en Perse à la même époque (*ibid.* : 228-230).

Si nous avons tellement insisté sur Lilith et son arrière-plan, c'est parce que, de manière en quelque sorte surprenante, l'histoire de la création d'Adam et de sa première épouse est reprise d'une manière presque identique à celle du Zohar dans la mythologie arménienne et, plus généralement, caucasienne : ici, le rôle de Lilith, la rebelle, la pécheresse *ab origine*, est distribué à Āl qui, à la différence d'Adam, créé depuis la poussière, est créée depuis le feu, étant de surcroît un cyclope. Suivant le mythe, Āl n'aima pas l'apparence d'Adam et Dieu, se rendant compte de l'incompatibilité de ce premier couple, créa Ève, qui prit la place d'Āl et la détrôna ; Āl devint, par la suite, l'ennemi juré d'Ève et de sa progéniture (Asatrian 2001 : 149 ; Beydili 2003 : 44-45 ; Šāmlū : 1984/2014). Cette histoire indique, sans doute, une identification ancienne de notre démon avec Lilith : plus exactement, Āl est Lilith ou, autrement dit, Lilith est Āl. Remémorons aussi la description de Lilith dans le Zohar : elle, la « grande pécheresse », a des cheveux et des vêtements rouges, ce qui la rend impossible à confondre avec d'autres déités ou démons. Ce sont justement ces signes distinctifs qui ont probablement contribué au changement de son nom dans la « province thématique » qui constitue notre point de départ : à notre avis, *āl* était au début un nom informel, peut-être un euphémisme employé dans les milieux populaires pour désigner Lilith la farouche ; comme le nom du démon s'originant dans la démonologie babylonienne, possiblement même sumérienne (Scholem 1974 : 356), n'avait aucune relevance pour les cultures locales, ce surnom allait se substituer peu à peu, en raison de son usage, au nom du démon qu'il désignait au début. Ce processus de substitution remonte, probablement, au Moyen Âge : c'est l'époque à laquelle prend naissance l'histoire juive du premier couple humain, formé d'Adam et de Lilith (Scholem 1974 : 357 ; Patai 1990 : 232)⁵², mais aussi l'époque des premières attestations arméniennes de l'*āl* (Ananikian 1925 : 88). Ce dernier mythe, qui ne faisait que renforcer un mythologème vieux comme le monde, a vraisemblablement éclos dans les milieux juifs, qui gardaient vive la mémoire des civilisations mésopotamiennes en raison de leur exil babylonien, pour se propager ensuite en Iran, en Arménie et dans les autres territoires du Caucase, dans l'est de la Turquie actuelle, mais aussi, probablement à travers l'Iran, dans l'Asie Centrale. Cette diffusion sur un vaste territoire a été probablement consolidée à partir de la fin du XV^{ème} siècle, après l'émigration des Juifs expulsés de la péninsule ibérique vers l'Orient, surtout vers l'Empire ottoman, qui se trouvait à l'époque en plein essor et allait contrôler bientôt tout le Moyen-Orient. La

⁵² Les sources principales de celle-ci sont le *Midrash Akbir* (X^e siècle), le *Zohar* (XIII^e siècle) et les textes cabalistiques (Patai 1990 : 232). Pourtant, remarque G. Scholem (1974 : 357), la personnification de Lilith comme « étrangléuse d'enfants » était déjà présente dans les incantations juives écrites en araméen babylonien, qui avaient précédé l'*Alphabet de Ben Sira*, devenu célèbre notamment en raison de cette histoire.

typologie du démon dans la « province thématique » évoquée plus haut semble conserver ses lignes de force originaires : il est un ennemi implacable des femmes « accomplies » (parturientes, accouchées, en couches), descendantes d'Ève, et de leur progéniture, il est velu⁵³, parfois ailé, mi humain, mi animal, il peut agir de plusieurs manières (tantôt en succube, tantôt en incube)⁵⁴, il est souvent associé à l'eau (comme Lilith qui, repoussée par les chérubins, trouve son refuge dans les tréfonds de la mer Rouge ou dans une cave située sur le rivage de celle-ci). De surcroît, la plupart des récits ou des légendes consacrés à ses méfaits le présentent comme une entité féminine.

Si l'identification de notre *āl* et de ses avatars avec l'hypostase juive (ou, plutôt, les variantes juives successives) du démon, à savoir Lilith, en sa qualité de résurrection de l'ancienne *lilītu* (*ardat lilī*) babylonienne, nous paraît assez plausible, l'hypostase « cavalière » attribuée parfois au démon en terres turques reste obscure et non moins mystérieuse. S'agit-il d'un écho tardif de la représentation iconographique conventionnelle de Lamaštu, à savoir l'âne, et, partant, du remplacement de la Lilith hébraïque par un onocentaure dans la Septante⁵⁵, remplacement qui, à notre avis, n'est nullement innocent ? Ou bien d'une allusion à la dispute primordiale entre Adam et Lilith concernant leurs positions respectives durant l'acte sexuel et, partant, d'une allégorie du triomphe final de Lilith en tant que succube ? Ou, enfin, d'une métamorphose d'un génie local obscur qui finit par se confondre avec l'*al* (*karısı*) ?

Pour conclure, les *al* des Turcs, en tant qu'*alkarısı*, *alkarı*, *alkızı*, *albastı*, *albis*, *alvasti*, *albassı*, *albarstı*, *albaslı*, *albaslı kadın*, *hal*, *hallanası*, *almastı*, *alana*, etc., pour n'évoquer que les appellations, les sobriquets ou les euphémismes les plus communs associés à cette catégorie de génies malicieux, ne représentent que des échos tardifs, adaptés, « accommodés » d'un « mytheme de la féminité démoniaque » (Bitton 1990 : 114) datant depuis la plus haute Antiquité qui, ayant pour point de départ la mythologie babylonienne, même sumérienne, arriva à hanter l'univers quotidien des générations futures par le truchement de la mythologie juive.

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⁵³ Lilith était envisagée par les cabalistes du XVI^e siècle comme une créature entièrement recouverte de poils, à l'exception du visage (Patai 1990 : 248).

⁵⁴ Cette plurivalence paraît plus saisissable lorsque le démon est appelé, chez les Turcs de Turquie comme chez d'autres peuples turcs tels les Kazakhs, les Touvains, les Kumuks, les Nogaïs, *albastı* : l'*albastı* est censé parfois entretenir des relations sexuelles avec les hommes (Grenard 1898 : 254 ; Şimşek 1990 : 538, 542 ; Zaripova Çetin 2007 : 22-23), mais aussi attaquer les jeunes filles (Inan 1986 : 170 ; Şimşek 1990 : 538), ce qui suggère qu'il agit tantôt en succube, tantôt en incube, comme les *lilū* babyloniens.

⁵⁵ « Et les démons s'y rencontreront avec les onocentaures, et ils se crieront l'un à l'autre. C'est là que demeureront les onocentaures ; car ils y trouveront un lieu de repos » (*La Sainte Bible* 1872 : Isaïe 34 : 14).

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A TALE OF “THE LORD OF THE SEA” IN QATARI FOLKLORE AND TRADITION

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Abstract: The following paper is dedicated to a mysterious creature found in the tales of the Persian Gulf, so called *Bū Daryā* – ‘The Lord of the Sea’. This legendary character was believed to be an evil and maleficent jinnee, appearing in the middle of the darkest of nights to kill and devour pearl divers of the Gulf. Various versions of the folktale appear in Qatar, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates, however it is always the story about a bravery of divers struggling against the tremendous and mighty malicious water jinnee. The research is based on available literature and my own fieldwork in Doha, Qatar. It contains a brief introduction presenting the importance of pearl diving in Qatari culture. The main part of the article provides a detailed description of the tale with reference to its numerous links in Qatari folklore and traditions. The characteristics of the legendary creature as well as all citations used in the article are based on an original folktale of *Bū Daryā* registered during my fieldwork in Qatar. All cultural references are supported by sources in Qatari traditional and modern literature.

Keywords: *The Lord of the Sea, Qatari Folklore & Tradition, Arabic Folktales, Qatari Arabic, Arabic Dialectology*

1. Pearl Diving in Qatari Folklore and Tradition

The State of Qatar recently undergoes a fast and boosting process of transformation in various aspects of its development. Changes touch both Qatari economy and culture and they therefore shape local folklore and tradition. This is only one of many reasons why tradition of pearl diving is nowadays so important in the Emirate. Numerous fests, cultural events and marine festivals are held in Qatar every year, as well as more and more detailed publications are published in Doha to commemorate glorious past of pearl diving in the Gulf.¹ For years, relation of Qatari society with the sea was strong and inspiring. The sea used to be a source of living for numerous generations of Qataris since prehistoric times until the recent and partly unexpected discovery of oil and natural

¹ For six years Qatar Marine Festival is being held at Doha’s Katara Village under the motto: “Dive into the Past Sail Towards the Future” (since 2010) and there is an annual presentation of traditional boats from the whole Gulf region at National Dhow Festival since 2011. For more see: <http://www.onlineqatar.com/events/qatar-marine-festival.aspx>; <http://marhaba.qa/the-first-national-dhow-exhibition/>; last: 14.10.2016.

resources of gas.² The impact of maritime traditions on Qatari culture is overwhelming and regards every aspect of it – literature, poetry, painting, sculpture, etc. A Qatari researcher in folklore and heritage - ĤAlī ĤAbd Allah Al-Fayyād - has poetically compared his nationals' relation with the sea to a love affair in such words:

Since Qatar appeared in shape of a hand extended in the Arabian Gulf basin; to form a peninsula surrounded by water from three sides and connected from one side by land, it became tightly linked to the sea life and the Qatari had been tintured by the sea just like a lover affected by his beloved one.³

Therefore, without hesitation it can be said that the sea played an important role in shaping Qatari national identity. In Qatari heritage there are numerous verses and volumes of dialectal poetry, stories and songs (i.e. two tomes of *Al-Qiṣaṣ aš-šafbiyya fī Qaṭar* and three volumes of *Al-ʔUġniya aš-šafbiyya fī Qaṭar* by Muḥammad Ṭālib ad-Duwayk)⁴, operettas (i.e. *Al-Lūʔūʔa - beyna ād-dašša wa- āl-qifāl. Al-masraḥiya al-ġināʔiyya*. of Qatari writer ĤAbd ar-Raḥmān Al-Mannāʔī)⁵ and folktales (i.e. *Folktales from the Arabian Peninsula* by Nadia Jameel Taibah and Margaret Read MacDonald)⁶.

Among these local stories and folktales connected to maritime traditions, there is a tale of a tremendous and mighty water jinnee called *Bū Daryā* – ‘The Lord of the Sea’.

2. A Tale of ‘The Lord Of The Sea’ in Qatar

In the Gulf there is a popular folktale of *Bū Daryā* that tells the story of a maleficent water jinnee that lives in the Persian Gulf. It is a fictional character from legends and stories of sailors, pearl divers and fishermen of the Gulf. The story is popular throughout the Gulf region, i.e. in Qatar, Bahrain⁷ and United Arab Emirates.⁸ The story is very popular in Qatar where all old pearl divers, pearl merchants, fisherman and sailors know it and retell it with every detail.⁹

² The archaeological excavations in 1957 at Ġabal al-Ġassāsiyya at northeast coastline of Qatar revealed probably first rock carvings depicting drawings of boats and oars proving ancient ties between local population and the sea. For more about Qatar's petroglyphs see: Al-Xulayfī, 2003, p. 60 – 63; <https://medinapublishing.com/hiddeninthesands/chapters/rock-carvings/> and <http://www.qm.org.qa/en/project/cliffs-carvings-and-islands>; last: 14.10.2016.

³ See: al-Fayyād, 2004, p.8.

⁴ See: ad-Duwayk, 1975 and 1984.

⁵ See: Al-Mannāʔī, 2010.

⁶ See: Taibah, 2016, p. 63-66.

⁷ About a folktale of *Bū Daryā* in Bahrain see: <https://culturebh.wordpress.com/2012/02/10/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AE%D9%84%D9%88%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%88-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7/>, last: 09.01.2016.

⁸ About a folktale of *Bū Daryā* in United Arab Emirates see: <http://www.mindbodydynamixs.com/uae-folktales/>, last: 09.01.2016.

⁹ See: *Carnival*. 2013.

The etymology of the name *Bū Daryā* is derived from the combination of two words from Arabic and Persian languages. The word 'bū' stems from Arabic 'ʔabū' that means 'father' but which may also mean 'an owner' or 'possessor of a certain feature'. Whereas, a word 'daryā' in Persian means 'sea'. Therefore, we can translate the name of the legendary creature 'Bū Daryā' as a 'Father of the Sea' or a 'Lord of the Sea'.¹⁰ What may be particularly interesting, taking into consideration partly Persian origins of the story, is that I have never come across any reference to it neither in Persian literature nor Persian researches in that topic.¹¹ The legendary creature is sometimes named 'Šeytān əl-bahār' which means the 'Sea Devil'.

According to a popular belief *Bū Daryā* is a mighty jinnee, menacing and dangerous, that poses a threat to life and health of sailors, pearl divers and adventurers sailing on distant waters of the Persian Gulf. In legends, divers were describing the appearance of the 'Lord of the Sea' as a terrifying and horrible. According to folktales he would look like a half-man and a half-fish, who instead of its legs would have a huge fish tail.¹² That is a description of *Bū Daryā* depicted by one of my informants during an interview in Doha, Qatar:

*w-kān yigūlūn inna ə-hwa yaʔnī maxlūq muxīf | ə-hwa yiʔatabar maxlūq
muxīf | yaʔnī inna nəʔs-ū l-īlwē ʔalā š-ʔakəl rağul w-ən-nəʔs ət-tānī ʔalā š-
ʔakəl dəyl əs-semaka | w-yaʔnī ʔalā r-rağm enna mā-ħad ʔāf-ā | mā-ħad
yaʔnī | ʔāf-ā wağh-ū li-wağh | bass inna l-ğamīʔu yittafaq inna ə-hwa
manzara karīh | manzara muxīf | fa-kān yusammūn-ā | ʔeytān əl-bahār | aw
yusammūn-ā bū daryā | yaʔnī hiyya | hiyya isəm māxūq min | walsəd əl-
biħħār | walsəd əl-biħħār | yaʔnī yigūlūn inna huwa ʔakl-ā | ʔakl-ā wāyid
xaʔīr | ə-kbīr | w-ə-huwa | kān yigūlūn inna huwa yiʔakkəl yaʔnī | xaʔar ʔalā |
əl-qawwāʔīn əllī kān yaqūʔūn ʔalā l-lūlūa | aw əllī yiʔīd | yiʔīdūn əs-semək*

Translation: „They were saying that he is a frightful creature. He is believed to be a tremendous creature, that one part of his body resembles a man and another has a shape of a fish tail. Although that no one [ever] saw him, no one [ever] saw him face to face, but all agree that his appearance is abominable, is frightful. So they were calling him: 'Sea Devil' or 'the Lord of the Sea'. A name stems from a 'Father of the Seas'. 'A Father of the Seas'. They were saying that his shape inspires awe, that is huge. They were saying that he poses a threat to pearl divers that were diving for pearls and to [those] who were fishing.”¹³

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ It may mean that legendary creature of *Bū Daryā* does not exist in Persian folklore and folktales. There is also no mention of it in: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 1996-.

¹² See: *Carnival*. 2013.

¹³ Whole transcription of the folktale is presented (with translation into Polish) in my unpublished M.A. thesis: Pechcin, 2010, p. 120-122.



Figure 1. A drawing of a legendary creature *Bū Daryā* sketched by Qatari artist Šukrī aš-Šukrī for Qatar National Museum publication on Qatari folktales, source: <http://mulpix.com/post/1124189479789568860.html>

The image of *Bū Daryā* as a scary and formidable monster, who was regarded one of the biggest threats to the safety of ships and seafarers, has been shaped for many years basing on traditional legends and folktales. People believed that they should take attention of possible encounter with dreadful ‘Sea Devil’ while flowing to the deep sea. The more stories were told the greater the fear was, especially that there was a popular belief that inevitable disaster could have happened if powerful *Bū Daryā* was faced with.



Figure 2. An image of the Lord of the Sea, a copy of a page from a brochure: Carnival. Dive into the Past Sail Towards the Future. Entertainment Events.

Tales of the 'Lord of the Sea' vary and there are many versions of the same story. Probably there are as many versions, how many storytellers convey it. However, two main versions of the story can be distinguished. The first one, that coincides with the story told by my informant, mentions a terrifying monster that was believed to sneak on the ship under cover of night and snatch sleeping sailors. It was not rare to him to carry them away to some distant places where he could silently devour them. The attack of formidable 'Lord of the Sea', according to the legend, would take place late at night, between the evening prayer and the call to pray at dusk. After the attack on a ship, the 'Sea Devil' would snatch sailors to kill and devour them in solitary, while their ships with goods would be completely destroyed and sunk by him. Therefore, sailors and fishermen had a habit of keeping a night watch to guard sleeping companions. The night watch was obliged to look out for the monster in the darkness and give any prior warning to sleeping sailors before the unexpected attack of the merciless creature would have happened. If the attack happened, the guards would pound the alarm. The call for the alarm would be:

„*Hātū l-mišāra wa-l-ğaddūm!*” what means: „Seize saws and adzes!”¹⁴, to alert sleeping crew of the ship of the approaching threat and to encourage them to fight.¹⁵

I have registered such a version of that story told in Qatar:

*kān yigūlūn inna huwe | yisrəq aw yinhab əl-baḥḥāra atnā nowm-hum |
lammā l-baḥḥāra | yanām | əl-baḥḥāra fī s-sufun | fa-ə-hwe | yisrəg-hum | w-
kānū yaʕnī yigūlūn | inna huwe sāʕāt yāxəḍ əl-baḥḥāra | yaʕnī atnā nowm-
hum | yāxəḍ ilā amākin baʕīda w-yāksəl-hum | fa-kān əl-baḥḥāra | yigūlūn
yaʕnī kānū | inna ihmā yaḥrisūn baʕz-hum baʕz | mā yanāmūn | fī l-leyl |
yaʕnī ʕašān yaḥmūn nafəs-hum min bū daryā | yaʕnī | yuhāğim-hum*

Translation: „They were saying that he snatches sailors during a sleep. It was said that while sailors were sleeping he was sneaking on the ship and carry them away. They were also telling that sometimes he was snatching sailors, during a sleep, carrying them away to distant places and devouring them [there]. Sailors were telling that they watched each other [then]. They were not sleeping at night but guarded each other so he did not attack them at night.”¹⁶

There is also a second main version of the story. According to the other interpretation, every sailor, fisherman or pearl diver of the Gulf has probably at least once heard screams and calls of the ‘Lord of the Sea’ while sailing on a sea journey. That would have been a fearsome and ear-splitting screaming of that terrible creature rendering the silence of the night. However, a face of that monster nobody has ever seen. Most often it was a false cry for help echoed throughout the night and resounding in the darkness on the sea. This cry for help was of course a false “singing” of the ‘Lord of the Sea’ that was designed to lure sailors into an ambush. The singing would somehow resemble a singing of mythological sirens in the culture of the Mediterranean. If there had been any brave Qatari sailors who would decide to bring help to the alleged “victim”, they would have been pulled in an ambush of *Bū Daryā* and driven into unknown and dangerous waters. A ship that had been lured in such a trap, would have been inevitably robbed of food and water supplies and - most probably – irreversibly rampaged and finally sunk. According to a popular belief, the only remedy for threats of a temptation and an allurements of the deceitful ‘Devil of the Sea’ was reciting verses from the Quran.¹⁷

Probably the second version of the legend is more focused on trying to explain the unknown - both the natural phenomena and dangerous sounds coming from the depths of the sea. Thus, in some ways there is more rational cognition in it. However, on the other hand it includes some spiritual interpretation of the ancient legend. Would it have then

¹⁴ ‘Adze’ (or ‘adz’) is a cutting tool used for smoothing or carving wood in hand woodworking. It is similar to an axe or hoe but it has a wooden helve and its blade is set at right angles to its helve. Used since stone age, known in Ancient Egypt for boat-building.

¹⁵ About that version of the legend see also: http://asateerwahikayat.blogspot.com/2009/12/blog-post_1710.html, last: 18.10.2016 r. The version of the legend known in United Arab Emirates is available on: <http://www.mindbodydynamixs.com/uae-folktales/>, last 09.01.2016 r. Interesting is also the difference in meaning of the word just ‘mišāra’ – the Emirati blog explains it as a ‘small sharp dagger’.

¹⁶ See: Pechcin, op. cit., p. 120-122.

¹⁷ See: http://asateerwahikayat.blogspot.com/2009/12/blog-post_1710.html, last: 18.10.2016 r.

more didactic and moralistic value than only literary when compared to the first version of the legend of the 'Lord of the Sea'. Moreover, introducing a religious thread may suggest a later – or possibly secondary – origin of that legend, comparing to the first version. At the same time, inclusion of the religious context emphasizing the role and essence of quoting verses of the Holy Book of Islam - the Quran - to the legend seems to clearly indicate the interference of a Muslim education in the old tradition.¹⁸ A purpose of this religious interference to the folktale is most probably a religious obligation to give an instruction to the listener that a prayer is the only effective salvation if encountering the mythical creature – 'the Lord of the Sea'. On the margin, it is worth recalling that the very existence of *Bū Daryā* is rather contrary to the monotheistic doctrine of Islam so therefore the prayer would rather have a function of an exorcism aimed to expel the demon – the 'Devil of the Sea'.¹⁹

Probably this is more rational – given the attempts to explain logically unfamiliar sounds of the sea and numerous "mysterious" disappearances of ships - interpretation of the legend, recalls my informant while ending her story and saying:

*qişsa xayāliyya mū / mūš wāqaṣiyya / bass yaṣnī mumkin ə-hya əllī inna
kānū awwāl mā fī yaṣnī əllī ə-hwa / li-šān əl-ḥādī əllī kān təqişş / əl-amwāğ
āw / ər-riyāḥ / fa-kān mumkin yikūn rīḥ / yaṣfus / fa-hiyya tkūn āṣifa
bahriyya / fa-ə-hmā yusammūn ḥādī / yətxayyilūn inna huwa ka-šaxšin ḥāyiğ
/ yisrəg-hum*

Translation: "A made-up story, not real. But it is possible that formerly [*she does not finish her thought, but a meaning of it was* – they were not telling it just for fun]. [Formerly, that one who was telling the story] heard waves and winds. So it was possible that it was just the wind blowing or it was a sea storm and they named it, they imagined that it was like a terrifying creature coming to snatch them."²⁰

Today, the story of 'the Lord of the Sea' is an example still alive Qatari folklore associated with pearl fishery. A common example of a practical use of this folktale is a parental habit of scaring small children with the story of an evil monster 'Sea Devil' that may come and catch them. It would prevent children from any nocturnal expeditions of adventure on the sea shore or could simply help parents to calm their children down and force them to sleep. From my dialectal text, there is a confirmation of a multigenerational tradition of storytelling of that legend as well as an example of such an "educational" use of the tale:

*w-kān ṭabaṣan / əl-kəll kān yaṣnī yigūl annū qişaş muxtalifa / w-kəll wāḥid
kān yaḥkī qişaş muxtalifa ṣan bū daryā / fa-yaṣnī ə-hya iḥnā yaṣnī / yaṣni min
abbūḥāt-nā yaṣnī / yaṣnī anā əllī əl-ḥīn atakallam ḥāyy qişşa / anā abu-yī kān
fī l-qōş / kān rayiḥ əl-qōş / ʔe / fa-yaṣnī lammā kənt asīl / atḍakkər / anā w-*

¹⁸ That is not a single example of the interference of a Muslim religious education with the traditional culture. There is also an example of such a phenomenon in Qatar regarding another traditional Qatari custom – 'əl-ḥiyya biyya' described by Holes, 2004, p. 275, 282-284.

¹⁹ A problem of interpretation of 'the Lord of the Sea' in Qatari Wahhabi tradition will be also discussed below.

²⁰ See: Pechcin, op. cit., p. 120-122.

*sġira kənt asīl asīla ʕan bū daryā | fa-ə-kān yigūl | ʔe bū daryā ēyy mawġūd |
w-čī | bass ə-hwa yaʕnī kān qišša xayāliyya | kān yitkallam | ēyy | kān naħnā
yaʕnī kān sāʕāt yuxawwifūna atfāl qum b-yiġī-kum bū daryā | nāmū*

Translation: „Of course, everyone was telling different stories about him. Everyone was telling different story about the Lord of the Sea. And we know them from our fathers [predecessors]. For example, I – as I am telling this story now [I know it from my father] – my father was diving for pearls. He was sailing for pearls. Yes. And when I was asking – I remember when I was small and I was asking about Bū Daryā, he was saying: “Yes. Of course, that Bū Daryā exists.” And so on. But it was just a made-up story. He was just saying so. And we sometimes were scaring children saying: “Go on because Bū Daryā will come to you! [Go to] sleep!”.”



صلوا على النبي ليانا وياكم خير لفانا ولفاكم وشر تعدانا وتعداكم يحكى ان هناك مارد في وسط البحر يعرف بأسم أبو درياه..

Figure 3. An image from a Qatari comics “Māl Lawwal” presenting an old sheik telling the story of Bū Daryā, source: http://qataricomics.blogspot.com/2012/11/blog-post_14.html



وكان يسكن في أوساط البحار وفي أعماقه ، وهو عدو السفن فأذا
أستيقظ من منامه وأحس بسفينة حطمها وظلت الناس تخشاه
وتخافه ، وكان الناس الي يعيشون بالقرب من البحر يخافونه

Figure 4. An image from a Qatari comics "Māl Lawwal" presenting Bū Daryā, source:
http://qataricomics.blogspot.com/2012/11/blog-post_14.html

The old folktale about the Lord of the Sea from the times of the great fisheries has been recently included in the modern canon of stories for children. Based on that story, there is a modern comics from the series of *Māl Lawwal* ('From the Old Times')²¹ and illustrated story book for children telling the history of pearl diving in the Gulf entitled: *Al-Intiṣār 'alā 'Abī Daryā. Malḥamat istiḥrāğ al-lū'lū' min 'a'māq al-ḥalīğ al-'arabī* ('The Victory Over the Lord of the Sea. A Struggle for the Extraction of Pearls from the Depths of the Gulf')²². The story is mounted on a fictional sea shore of the Gulf Coast nearby an inexistent village called 'Tiny Pearl' (*Qarya Gmāša*). The book tells a story of a young boy Rāšid that sets up for the first pearl diving journey of his life. The story is introduced by words:

²¹ See: Qatari comics *Māl Lawwal*, http://qataricomics.blogspot.com/2012/11/blog-post_14.html, last: 18.10.2016.

²² See: ṢAlī, 2010.

For thousands years, since the time of the Assyrians and Sumerians, the people of the Gulf led constant and arduous struggle to dive for pearls in the depths of the sea. Their enemy was the Lord of the Sea, the legendary guardian of the Kingdom of Sea, who possessing supernatural powers have been using them to defend treasures of his Kingdom. This is story like many that are being narrated in the Gulf region for probably more than two centuries.²³

That clearly shows powerful influence of the story of *Bū Daryā* on the Gulf and Qatari folklore and tradition, as well as popular and numerous representation of it in local literature and pop culture. As far as the versions of the story are concerned in modern literature of Qatar there are above mentioned versions existing in the pop culture (i.e. a book for children and a comics) and previously not mentioned book: *Myths form Qatar Heritage* that also consists a version of the legend²⁴. However, there are not so many commentaries to the legend itself. Besides the above mentioned brochure (*Carnival. Dive into the Past Sail Towards the Future. Entertainment Events*) there are no commentaries or publication on that topic. There is for example a new publication of the Qatar Museums Authority on fictional beings in Qatar: *Marvelous Creatures. Animal Fables in Islamic Art*, although there is no mention of *Bū Daryā* in the collection.²⁵

3. Fictional Beings in Qatari Wahhabi Tradition

There are of course various fictional beings known in Qatari culture like houris, angels, demons or ghouls that are widely known in Islamic tradition. However, the creature of *Bū Daryā* seems to be slightly different as it is not commonly known thorough the rest of the Arab or Islamic world besides the Gulf region. At the same time, the essence of the Qatari 'Sea Devil' has even stronger meaning as he is being called locally 'the Lord of the Sea' while 'the Lord' can only be one according to monotheistic doctrine of Islam. It is even more surprising in this Wahhabi Emirate, than maybe would it be in some other parts of the Islamic world. Of course, the folktale must be much older than the history of Wahhabism in Qatar, what explains the origins of the first version of the folktale. Therefore, we have probably a reasonable explanation for emergence of the other – more rational version of the story. That is also the case of why the Islamic education had to interfere with the legend, giving to its later versions an additional religious valour explaining the desired behaviour while encountering *Bū Daryā*. According to an Islamic education what was probably the most important in the story, was not the real behaviour of sailors while facing the creature, but the lecture that the listeners of the story were

²³ Translation from Arabic: Katarzyna Pechcin. For Arabic original text see: Ibidem, p.3

²⁴ See: al-Ġānim, 2015 and http://www.qm.org.qa/sites/default/files/user_uploads/pubcat-en.pdf, p. 32-33, last: 20.10.2016.

²⁵ See: Chekhab, 2015; <http://www.mia.org.qa/en/marvellous-creatures>; <http://www.mia.org.qa/docs/study-guides/study-guide-marvellous-creatures.pdf> and http://www.qm.org.qa/sites/default/files/user_uploads/pubcat-en.pdf, p.14-15.; last: 20.10.2016.

taking while listening to the legend. The above mentioned role of prayer as a kind of an exorcism aimed to expel the demon is therefore crucial in understanding the acceptance of *Bū Daryā* story in modern Qatari Wahhabi tradition.

4. Conclusion

Summarising, fictional beings were and still remain present in Qatari tradition and culture. Among them, there is a mystical creature of formidable and terrifying water jinnee called 'the Lord of the Sea'. Various versions of a legend exist in Qatari folklore, that have been told in every generation of Qatari society participation in creation of a national identity. Despite changes and variations in the story of *Bū Daryā* it is certain that the legendry creature will always have its place in the Qatari literature among popular folktales. It is the essence of existence of magical beings in every culture. As Omani researcher ʔAḥmad ar-Rāwī wrote:

In all cases, the belief in such a supernatural being is still solid mainly among uneducated people who are plagued by ghoulish tales from their early childhood until their death. What is striking is that the ghoul refuses to fade away from the imagination of some people regardless of the great passage of time and the various cultures and religions it has encountered.²⁶

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²⁶ ar-Rāwī, ʔAḥmed. 'The Mythical Ghoul in Arabic Culture' [in:] *Cultural Analysis* 8, The University of California, 2009, p. 58.

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III. STUDIA VARIA

THE CASE FOR PROTO-SEMITIC AND PROTO-ARABIC CASE: A REPLY TO JONATHAN OWENS

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Abstract: In several works (1998a;b, 2006/9, 2015), Professor J. Owens has developed a revisionist history of the Arabic system of nominal case inflection. Rather than reconstructing the case system of Classical Arabic, cognate with Akkadian and Ugaritic, for Proto-Arabic, he proposed several scenarios in favor of a caseless variety of Proto-Semitic from which the modern Arabic dialects descend. This article engages with the Owens' methodology, data, and claims in a defense of the traditional reconstruction – Proto-Arabic had a nominal case system similar to Classical Arabic that was lost in the modern dialects. We reconstruct a historical scenario to explain the eventual breakdown and disappearance of case in modern Arabic.

Keywords: *Proto-Semitic case, Proto-Arabic case, case inflection*

1. Background

In 1998a;b and again in 2006/9, Professor J. Owens challenged the accepted reconstruction of the Proto-Semitic nominal case system and its survival into Classical Arabic (Huehnergard 2006; 2008). Instead, he argued that case was an innovation in one Proto-Semitic dialect group, which gave rise to the Semitic languages bearing case (including Classical Arabic), while the other Semitic languages descend from the more archaic Proto-Semitic dialect grouping lacking this feature (including the modern dialects of Arabic) (as represented in Figure 3.1 in Owens 2006/9: 115). His argument is based on a few points: the first is that the modern Arabic dialects do not have a system of nominal case inflection, and caseless varieties of Arabic existed as early as the 8th century CE; the descriptions of case by the Arab grammarians suggest that there was some free variation in the assignment of case; and case is not readily reconstructible for Proto-Semitic.

Owens' reconstruction has not gained a wide following among Semiticists or most Arabists. In an article published in 2015, Owens renewed his position that case cannot be

¹ Disclaimer: The authors wish to state explicitly that the contemporary dialects of Arabic must play an essential role in the reconstruction of Arabic's linguistic past. We do not believe that the spoken dialects are corrupted forms of Classical Arabic or collectively descend from Classical Arabic, a literary variety. Our understanding of the developmental trajectories of the myriad of Arabic varieties, ancient and modern, from Proto-Arabic is an on-going process and this paper hopes to contribute to that effort.

so easily reconstructed for Proto-Semitic. He further argues that the accepted reconstruction is the result of dogmatism on the part of Semiticists, who impose the Classical Arabic/Akkadian system on all the other languages, and that his arguments have been ignored or misrepresented (as exemplified by his criticism of Hasselbach, p.162²). We hope that by engaging with this argument in a detailed and empirical manner, rather than ignoring it, we can close the case on the matter, and return our focus to sharpening our reconstruction of Proto-Semitic nominal morphology. We begin with explaining how the reconstruction of nominal case inflection for Proto-Semitic is not controversial and the identification of case endings in many of the extinct daughter languages is not the result of dogmatism on the part of the entire community of linguists/philologists working on other Semitic languages. In the second section, we focus on parts of the case system that are often excluded or ignored, such as the masculine sound plurals, the duals, and diptotes, and why commonalities here rule out a polygenetic origin of case inflection in Semitic. We conclude by asserting that the absence of case inflection in the modern Semitic languages is not a counter-argument for its existence in Proto-Semitic, and that there is in fact no controversy with the current reconstruction of case for Proto-Semitic and Proto-Arabic.

Before addressing the individual points in Owens' papers, we will try to illustrate what he is contesting: Akkadian (Old Babylonian), Classical Arabic, and Ugaritic attest a nominal case system that looks as follows:

Classical Arabic

	Singular	Five-Nouns singular	Singular Diptote ³	Dual	Masculine Plural	Feminine Plural
Nominative	<i>u(n)</i> ⁴	<i>ū</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ā(ni)</i>	<i>ū(na)</i>	<i>ātū(n)</i>
Genitive	<i>i(n)</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ay(ni)</i>	<i>ī(na)</i>	<i>ātī(n)</i>
Accusative	<i>a(n)</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ay(ni)</i>	<i>ī(na)</i>	<i>ātī(n)</i>

² Owens (2015: 162) claims that Hasselbach (2013: 69) misrepresents his view that Proto-Semitic had no case, but according to his diagram (fig. 3.1 in Owens 2006/9) it is clear that he implies that the caseless form of Proto-Semitic is older and gave rise to case forms. So perhaps it would have been more accurate to state that early Proto-Semitic had no case while late Proto-Semitic did? Nevertheless, Hasselbach's statement is not factually incorrect, strictly speaking, but possibly not as nuanced as could have been.

³ Diptote is a kind of second declension of certain nouns, usually those belonging to the elative noun pattern, proper nouns, and a few other categories.

⁴ The parentheses include part of the declension ending that does not mark case but rather 'state', that is, whether the noun governs another noun or pronoun. When the noun governs a genitive noun (genitive constructions) or takes a possessive clitic pronoun, these final nasals and vowels disappear.

Ugaritic

	Singular	Five-Nouns singular	Singular Diptote	Dual	Masculine Plural	Feminine Plural
Nominative	<i>u</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ā(ma)</i>	<i>ū(ma)</i>	<i>ātu</i>
Genitive	<i>i</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ay(ma)</i>	<i>ī(ma)</i>	<i>āti</i>
Accusative	<i>a</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ay(ma)</i>	<i>ī(ma)</i>	<i>āti</i>

Akkadian

	Singular	Five-Nouns singular	Singular Diptote	Dual	Masculine Plural	Feminine Plural
Nominative	<i>u(m)</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ā(n)</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>ātu(m)</i>
Genitive	<i>i(m)</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ī(n)</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>āti(m)</i>
Accusative	<i>a(m)</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ī(n)</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>āti(m)</i>

Each of these languages is attested in a different branch of Semitic and, most importantly, the same system is attested in both primary branches of the Semitic language family – East and West. This fact has led scholars to reconstruct the following case system for Proto-Semitic:

Proto-Semitic

	Singular	Five-Nouns singular	Singular Diptote	Dual	Masculine Plural	Feminine Plural
Nominative	<i>u(m)</i>	<i>ū</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ā(na)</i>	<i>ū(na)</i>	<i>ātu(m)</i>
Genitive	<i>i(m)</i>	<i>ī</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ay(na)</i>	<i>ī(na)</i>	<i>āti(m)</i>
Accusative	<i>a(m)</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ay(na)</i>	<i>ī(na)</i>	<i>āti(m)</i>

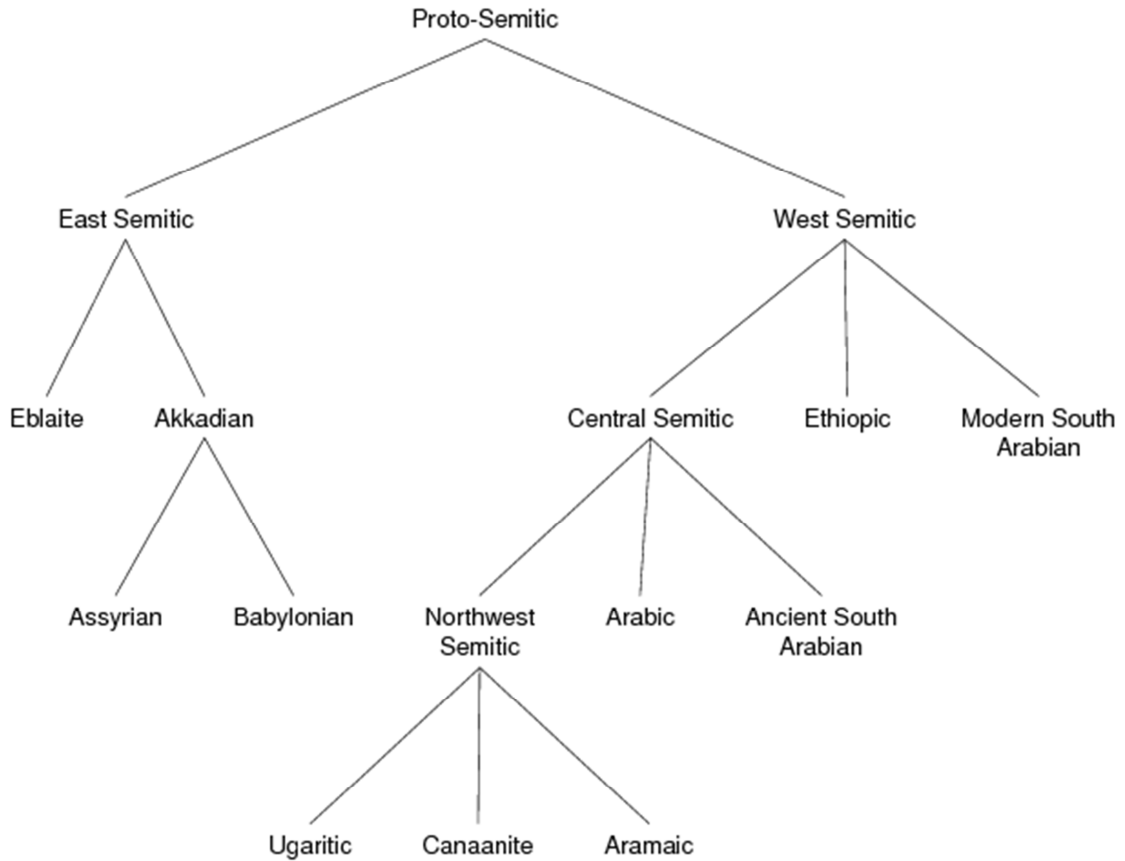
A final and very important point made by E. Cohen in the session of this paper on Academia.edu goes as follows:

Not only form-related peculiarities are attested across the Semitic languages, but yet another thing, just as important—the functions this case system exhibits: a three-case system may work in different ways (compare, for instance, Modern Greek). Yet there are things in the Semitic languages which are unique to the group and are the result of shared retention. For instance:

1. The idea that a verb complement is in the accusative, no matter which verb type is involved. *ḥabar kāna* is basically an accusative complement. The same phenomenon is found in Akkadian, and perhaps elsewhere, whereas non-verbal clauses behave in a totally different way (the predicates are marked as nominative).
2. The genitive case is not only adnominal as is usually the case elsewhere but rather follows construct state, or entities marked as heads (prepositions, adjectives, adverbs, etc.). It is never a verbal complement.

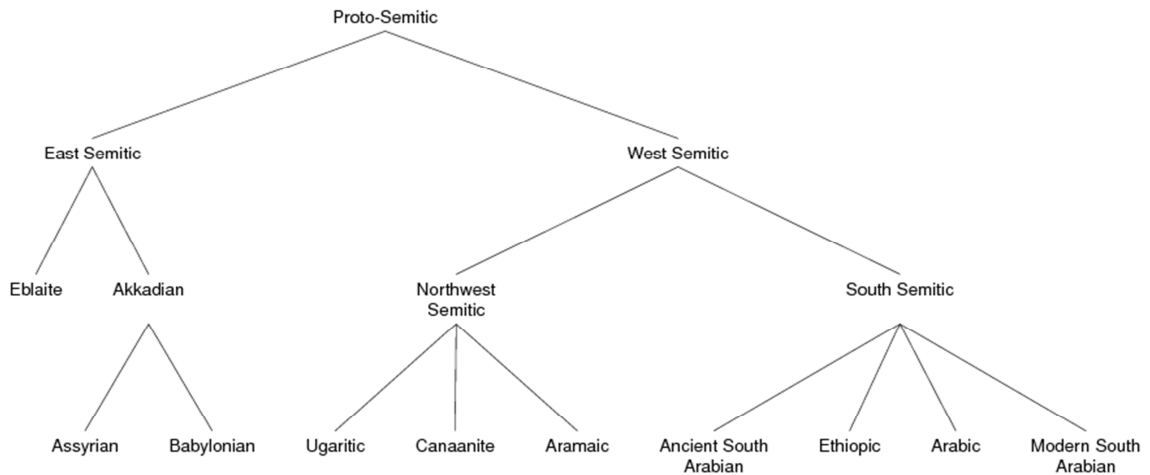
These idiosyncratic functional and formal peculiarities shared by the Semitic languages tell only one story: they are original, from day [one] of Proto-Semitic, and when they are absent, as in the Arabic dialects, it is simply because they were lost.

If we consider the classification of the Semitic languages, we find that these cognate case systems are attested across the family:



According to established historical linguistic methodology, the presence of a nearly identical case system in Ugaritic and Arabic indicates that it was an inheritance from their closest common ancestor, Proto-Central Semitic. In turn, the presence of this system the other main branch of Semitic, East Semitic, indicates that case was an inheritance from their closest common ancestor of all three, Proto-Semitic. Even if we adopt an alternative classification of

Semitic that invokes the existence of a ‘South Semitic’ branch, we come up with the same results:



According to this model, the presence of a nearly identical case system in South Semitic (Arabic) and Northwest Semitic (Ugaritic) indicates that it is an inheritance from their common ancestor, Proto-West Semitic. Again, the presence of the same system in East Semitic the indicates that this system was inherited from Proto-Semitic.

Owens challenges this fairly straight-forward reconstruction based on two observations: (1) all of the modern Semitic languages, including modern Arabic, lack a nominal case system that is cognate with the ancient one and (2) many of the ancient languages exhibit a reduced case system or lack case altogether. Rather than trying to explain the absence of the case system in these varieties through normal processes of language change, he argues that case was actually an innovation and he reconstructs a caseless proto-Semitic. In other places (2006/9), Owens argues that Proto-Semitic had two dialects, one with the case system described above and one without, but maintaining that the one without is older. He then argues that the Semitic languages lacking case did not lose the system but rather descend from the variety without case while those with case system descend from the Proto-Semitic system with case.

Both of Owens’ views fail to explain several important issues. The first, with a single, caseless Proto-Semitic, does not explain how the precise case system emerged independently in members of both East and West Semitic. The chances of the same case system, with its idiosyncrasies in both form and function, emerging three independent times is infinitesimally lower than the original case system being lost multiple times in different branches of the language family, something which has many cross-linguistic parallels. The second view requires a major reshuffling of the Semitic family tree, placing all the caseless languages together against those with case. Owens never justifies this re-classification with other linguistic features. In fact, all of the other linguistic isoglosses support a basic East - West split. This issue of classification will be taken up in more detail below. Finally, he never accounts for why it is more economic to post two proto-

languages distinguished by the feature of case rather than just one and explaining its loss in the daughter languages.

Given these deficiencies, we think it is clear that the scholarly consensus on the matter of the antiquity of both the Arabic and Semitic case system holds. In the remaining pages of this paper, we will examine Owens' individual arguments and treatment of the Semitic data to establish clearly that all the evidence points towards a Proto-Semitic case system that was lost over time in the various branches of Semitic, including modern Arabic.

2. Is case largely illusory in other Semitic languages?

2.1 Languages without case examined

Owens begins his papers on this subject with calling into question the interpretation of case in the Semitic languages that do not preserve the full Proto-Semitic system. In his latests article (2015), he begins with a list of the Semitic languages that have case, those with no case, and those that have case and caseless varieties. The languages he gives without morphological case are the following.⁵

Geez
Aramaic
Amoritc
Hebrew

It is simply incorrect to consider Geez a caseless Semitic language. It marks the direct object of transitive verbs, adverbs, and other syntactic functions with a final /a/, which is cognate with the accusative in other Semitic languages (Weninger 2011). Moreover, when the writing conventions of Geez were fixed, the nominative and genitive were still expressed by a word-final /ə/, the normal outcome of *u and *i. At a later point, /ə/ was lost in word-final position (Voigt 1983; Correll 1984; Diem 1988; Al-Jallad 2014). The sound plurals *ūna/īna* have been lost, replaced by a single termination, *ān*, and the dual, which also exhibits case, is lost, which happened eventually in most Semitic languages.

Finally, Geez still retains case in the construct forms of three of the so-called “five nouns”, with nom./gen. *-ī*, and acc. *-ā* before pronominal suffixes (Tropper 2002: 78). The only thing one needs to account for is the apparent merger of the nominative and the genitive. While this cannot be achieved through regular sound law, it is trivially easy to understand the breakdown of the distinction. In all other positions where case is expressed, the nominative and genitive merge (through the regular sound law *i, *u > ə). That this distinction would be lost in the Five Nouns, as the distinction no longer existed anywhere else, is unsurprising.

⁵ Missing from this list are the Modern South Arabian languages. The modern Ethio-Semitic languages are also missing, but some of these, like Amharic, do express case (an accusative). These markers, however, are clearly innovations and not cognate with the ancient Semitic case system.

	Geez		Classical Arabic	
	Free	Pre-pronominal	Free	Construct
nom.	<i>ʔab(ə)</i>	<i>ʔabū-ka</i>	<i>ʔabun</i>	<i>ʔabū-ka</i> ‘father’
gen.	<i>ʔab(ə)</i>	<i>ʔabū-ka</i>	<i>ʔabin</i>	<i>ʔabī-ka</i>
acc.	<i>ʔaba</i>	<i>ʔabā-ka</i>	<i>ʔaban</i>	<i>ʔabā-ka</i>

The exact same paradigm is also found for *ʔəḥw* ‘brother’ (N/G *ʔəḥū-*; A *ʔəḥwā-*) cf. CAr. *ʔah-* and *ʔaf* ‘mouth’ (N/G *ʔafū-*; A *ʔafā-*), cf. CAr. *fum-*.⁶ This morphological idiosyncrasy which is completely isolated in Geez and Classical Arabic cannot be explained in any other way but shared inheritance.

Thus, not only does Geez have a functioning case system, but it is the expected reflex of the reconstructed Proto-Semitic case system based on the sound changes and morphological processes that operated in the language. To be clear we are not claiming that Geez preserves a case system identical to Arabic or Akkadian, we are stating that the sound changes and other processes of morphological loss that operated in Geez would produce its case system from a starting point similar to Arabic or Akkadian. Therefore, the Geez system does not contradict the reconstruction of the Proto-Semitic case system based on Classical Arabic, Akkadian, and Ugaritic, languages that did not experience wholesale or partial final-vowel loss.

While Official Aramaic and later varieties lack case, its status in the earliest varieties depends on the classification of the Northwest Semitic language attested at Zincirli, termed Sam’alian by modern scholars. This language attests a systematic distinction between masculine nominative plural *w /ū/* and oblique *y /ī/*, the exact distribution we find in Akkadian and Arabic.⁷ The ability to detect case in other situations is limited by the orthography, and cannot be considered an indicator that it had disappeared completely or that it was present.

The most important one of these assertions to treat is Amoritic, what is usually called Amorite in the literature, as this “language” seems to function for Owens as a model of the caseless, but final-vowel-having, Proto-Semitic. First, while the term ‘Amorite’ refers to an ancient Northwest Semitic language, or perhaps dialect continuum, no attestations of this language survive. What we do have is a corpus of personal names borne by people who were ethnically and presumably linguistically distinct from the East-Semitic speaking population of Mesopotamia.⁸ The corpus stretches from the mid-third millennium BCE to 1200 BCE, and so naturally it exhibits considerable variation. A corpus of personal names cannot be treated as a reflection of the synchronic grammar of the language of their bearers – this much is common sense. Names are traditional, are often coined in different periods of a language’s history, and rarely have a single

⁶ Only *ḥam* ‘brother-in-law’ seems to have lost the case inflection and has N/G/A *ḥamū-*, cf. CAr. *ḥam*.

⁷ See Noorlander (2012: 223-224) for a discussion on the background of this feature, and on the classification of Sam’alian. In the case of the */y/* ending an apparent subject in H 13 (Tropper 1993: 74), it is possible, following Tropper, that the word *ʔlhy* is to be interpreted as ‘my gods’, with a first person suffix. It is therefore not a solid argument for some kind of free variation in the masculine plural.

⁸ Streck (2011: 453) gives the possibility that Amorite could reflect different Northwest Semitic languages, but states that the pursuit for linguistic boundaries is irrelevant because of the nature of the data.

etymological source. As a thought experiment, consider writing a synchronic grammar of any spoken dialect of Arabic based on the names of its bearers. One would find examples of *h*-causatives, such as *Muḥaymin*, a productive C-stem (IV form), *ʿinʿām*, and the preservation the *t* ending in pause, *Hikmat*. Great variation in the vowels of compound names in modern Arabic could also suggest a situation where final vowels seem to be used randomly without any specific function: *ʿabdillā*, *ʿabdallā*, *ʿabdullā* and *ʿabidallā* can all be heard synchronically, and a quick google search will produced many examples of each. When the “Amorite” methodology is applied to modern Arabic, we can clearly see how it would form an unreliable synchronic description of the language. With this in mind, the seemingly random distribution of final vowels in Amorite personal names can reflect a large number of things: they could point towards the breakdown of case in the synchronic variety and the re-interpretation of these vowels in traditional names, just as in the *ʿabdallā* example. Therefore, one would be wrong to conclude that the source language from which these names were drawn lacked case and had non-functional final vowels, but simply that the synchronic grammar of the language in which they were used did.

Secondly, we must also keep in mind that the “Amorite” names are not situated in their etymological linguistic context; they are used in Akkadian. Names often lose their ability to inflect when they are placed in a foreign context; just consider Latin names in English or, for a Semitic example, Arabic names in Nabataean Aramaic. The latter often terminate in *-w*, likely the nominative ending /u/, no matter their syntactic position. Vestiges of early case inflection can be found on some compound names, such as *tmʿlhy* /*taymollāhe*/. This name is also spelled as *tmʿlh* /*taymʿallāh*/, without the final *y*.⁹ It would be wrong to conclude definitively from such an example that final *y* was in free variation with \emptyset . It is equally possible, and more likely in light of the comparative evidence, that the former word reflects an earlier linguistic stage of the language and was renewed in some pronunciations to *tmʿlh* /*taymʿallāh*/, cf. Arabic *ʿabdullā* and *ʿabidallā*.

Thirdly, since many of these names are entire sentences, we cannot be sure if they were still parsed as such or simply lexicalized. If this was the case, then synchronic sound changes, such as vowel reduction, deletion, and so forth, could have operated on these lexicalized strings. Some Nabataean Aramaic names were no longer conceived of as compounds as is evident from spellings such as *ʿbdllhyw*, where *ʿbdllhy* was lexicalized and *wawation* was added to the original genitive ending, as it was no longer analyzed as such. Moreover, personal names in West Semitic (Sabaic, Arabic, and Ugaritic) tend to be diptotic. Some irregularities in the distribution of final vowels may have to do with the onomastic category itself.

Fourthly, we cannot be sure that all the Amorite names attested reflect the same morphological form in the source language – that is, some could reflect citation forms, while others could be extracted from different morphological positions.

The combination of all of these issues makes the use of the Amorite corpus of personal names very tenuous for the advancement of a theory that final short vowels were

⁹ See Negev 1991 on variants of these names. Vocalization of Nabataean names follows the values given to the short vowels in Greek transcriptions; see Al-Jallad (forthcoming) on the phonetic realization of the vowels in Old Arabic.

non-functional in Proto-Semitic. It is methodologically incorrect, therefore, to compare such a corpus to languages represented by full prose texts.¹⁰

2.2 Languages with case systems examined

The languages that Owens marks as *having* case are only two:

Akkadian
(?) Ugaritic

Owens marks Ugaritic in his chart with a question mark in front of it. While he does not elaborate on what this signifies, we can only assume that he intends this to mean that it is not clear whether or not Ugaritic has case – this much can be deduced from his statements about Ugaritic in previous works (e.g. Owens 2006/9: 83f.). This is misleading. First of all, we have several examples of Ugaritic in syllabic cuneiform script, which expresses short vowels, allowing us to confirm the presence of final case vowels nom. *-u*; gen. *-i*; acc. *-a* (perfectly corresponding to the system attested in Arabic and Akkadian) (Tropper 2000: 302ff.). But even in alphabetic writing there is evidence for the final case vowels. Ugaritic has three separate signs to write the glottal stop, depending on whether it is followed by *u*, *i* or *a*, conventionally transcribed as *ú*, *í* and *á*. Nouns that have a stem-final glottal stop would therefore be expected to express case, and this is indeed exactly what we find, e.g. *ksú* ‘throne’ which is attested in all three cases (examples from del Olmo Lete & Sanmartín 2003: 460):

<i>tšdb</i>	<i>ksú</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>yttb</i>
was prepared	throne.NOM	CONJ	sat down.3MPL
‘a throne was prepared (for them) and they sat down’ (nom.)			

<i>grš-h</i>	<i>l- ksí</i>	<i>mlk-h</i>
drove.3MS-3MS	PREP- throne.GEN	royal-3MS
‘he drove him from his royal throne’ (gen.)		

<i>yšdb</i>	<i>ksá</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>ytb</i>
place.3MS	chair.ACC	CONJ	sit.3MS
‘he places a chair and sits down’ (acc.)			

There are many other examples, e.g. *šbu* ‘army, militia’ (del Olmo Lete & Sanmartín 2003: 777) and *llú* ‘suckling (lamb or kid)’ (del Olmo Lete & Sanmartín 2003: 498):

¹⁰ To be clear, we are not disputing the scholarship on Amorite that analyzes these final short vowels as cases, but specifically Owens’ treatment of the entire onomasticon as reflective of a synchronic linguistic system.

šbũ-k *ũl* *mād*
 army.NOM-2MS force immense
 ‘your army (will be) an immense force’ (nom.)

ršp *šbī*
 Ršp.CONSTRUCT army.GEN
 ‘Ršp (deity name) of the army/militia’ (gen.)

šbũ *špš*
 setting.NOM.CONSTRUCT sun
 ‘the setting of Špš’ (nom.)

šbā *rbt* *špš*
 setting.ACC.CONSTRUCT great lady špš
 ‘at the setting of the Great Lady Špš’ (acc.)

āl *yʿdb-km (...)* *k-llī* *b-tbrn*
 NEG he places -2MPL PREP- suckling.GEN PREP-opening
qn-h
 esophagus-3MS
 ‘let him not place you (...) like a suckling in the opening of his esophagus’ (gen.)

aḥ (...) *llā* *kl[ātṇ]*
 take suckling.ACC both hands
 ‘take (...) a suckling with both (hands)’ (acc.)

Likewise, we can find examples of the masculine sound plural suffix *-ūma* and *-īma* with fully functioning case, e.g. in the *rpū* ‘divine ancestral hero’ in the plural is spelled *rpūm* for the nominative and *rpīm* for the oblique (examples from del Olmo Lete & Sanmartín 2003: 743):

tlḥm *rpūm* *tštyn*
 ate Rpu.NOM.PL drank
 ‘the Rpu’s ate and drank’

qrū *rpīm*
 invoke Rpu.ACC.PL
 ‘Invoke the Rpu’s’

These examples clearly illustrate that Ugaritic has a fully functioning nom/gen/acc contrast, which is visible, even within the consonantal writing. Moreover, the function of the vowels that mark the case align perfectly with the one that we find in Classical Arabic and Akkadian.

According to Owens’ classification, Akkadian belongs in the present category. Akkadian is attested over the span of two and half millennia. Over this period, one can

witness the breakdown of the case system, so that Neo-Babylonian likely lost case distinction in all nouns.¹¹ Thus, Akkadian should go in the category of languages with and without case, but with a clear caveat – the caseless varieties are demonstrably younger, in absolute terms, than the varieties with case.¹²

Missing from the list of case-bearing languages is Amarna Canaanite, the language of cuneiform tablets sent to Egypt by Canaanite vassals in the late Bronze Age (Rainey 1996) and Eblaite (Streck 2011b). Both of these exhibit a strikingly similar case system to Arabic, Akkadian, and Ugaritic, with the idiosyncrasies of diptotic inflection and distribution.

2.3 Languages with and without case

Among the languages that have case and no case, Owens lists Sabaic from the Ancient South Arabian family. His main criticism is that case distinction only appears in one lexeme, the word for ‘sons’. Again, this criticism seems to stem from the limitations of the orthography rather than a true absence of case – the spelling conventions of Ancient South Arabian do not indicate internal vowels of any length or word-final short vowels. This means the only place one can expect to encounter case is in construct masculine plurals, where it would be indicated with a word-final long vowel. The commonest word belonging to this category is clearly ‘sons’, and so here we see a distribution that matches Arabic, Akkadian, Sam’alian, Ugaritic, and so on.

External Masculine Plural Case Marking in Semitic

	Arabic	Sabaic	Ugaritic	Sam’alian	Akkadian
Nom.	<i>banū</i>	<i>bnw</i>	<i>rpūm</i>	<i>mlkw</i>	<i>šarrū</i>
Obl.	<i>banī</i>	<i>bny</i>	<i>rpim</i>	<i>mlky</i>	<i>šarrī</i>

¹¹ See Woodington (1963: 63-65) for a discussion on the distribution of the case vowels. In the plurals the distinction seems all but gone, while in the singular the genitive appears to survive a bit longer than the other cases, but its inconsistent use seems to be a reflection of a learned register rather than the spoken language. The few examples of Neo-Babylonian written in Greek letters indicate that final short vowels had altogether disappeared, e.g. *īīñō* = *muršu* (Westenholz 2007: 284).

¹² The unawareness of the chronology of case underlies one of Owens’ hypothesized scenarios for the origins of case in Arabic. He suggests that Arabic-Akkadian bilingual speakers, or Akkadian speakers shifting to Arabic, may have interpreted epenthetic vowels in Arabic as true case vowels, as in Akkadian (2006/9: 101, n.22). This contact scenario is based on the appearance of the word ‘arab’ in an Akkadian text from 853 BCE. Even if we place such an event in this period, the Neo-Assyrian case system was much evolved and very distinct from the Arabic one, with only a nominative/accusative *u* and genitive *i* distinguished in the singular and case distinction totally obliterated in the plurals (Hameen-Antilla 2000: 77). Such a system could not have stood behind the reinterpretation of epenthetic vowels into the robust case system attested in Classical Arabic, along with all of its idiosyncrasies, including diptotic declensions. Moreover, this does not explain at all the verbal mood system, nor case expressed as long vowels.

To illustrate, the Sabaic inscription Bāsh 2 attests both forms in a single inscription in their expected syntactic environments.

<i>ḥm w-ʿhy-hw</i>	<i>Sʿd</i>	<i>w-Rbs²ms¹m</i>	<i>w-bn-hmw</i>	
PN conj-brother.du-3MS	PN	conj-PN	conj-son.pl-3MP	
<i>bnw</i>	<i>Btʿt</i>	<i>ʿdm</i>	<i>bny</i>	<i>[Sʿh]ymm</i>
son.CNST.PL.NOM	PN	vassals.CNST	sons.CNST.PL.OBL	[Sh]ymm
‘Ḥm and his brother Sʿd and Rbs ² ms ¹ m and their sons, the children of Btʿt, vassals of the children of Shymm’				

Besides this, it is simply not true that *bn* is the only lexical item that expresses case. The plural relative pronoun *ʿwy* also clearly expresses case, as is shown by Stein himself in the book that Owens cites. The correct construct case vowels are attested in other lexical items as well, but these, being not as frequent as the word for ‘son’, do not have both case forms attested. The nominative plurals of such nouns, however, show up in nominative positions only.

CIS 102

<i>b(n)w //</i>	<i>Mḏn</i>	<i>ʿbkln</i>	<i>ḥwrw</i>	<i>hgrn</i>	<i>ʿmrn</i>
son.CNST.PL.NOM	PN	TN	inhabitant.CNST.PL.NOM	city.DEF	TOP
‘Sons of Mḏn, of the tribe of ʿbkln, inhabitants of the city of ʿmrn’					

So then, the very fact that the distribution of *w* and *y* in the Sabaic word for son matches the distribution across other branches of the Semitic family strongly suggests that the nominative-oblique distinction in the masculine plural is reconstructible for Proto-Semitic. Even if this distinction is lost in later forms of Sabaic, the fact that they functioned correctly (meaning as in other Semitic languages) in Old Sabaic is enough to reconstruct this distinction for the language. Owens’ cites the fact that the words for ‘brother’ and ‘father’ do not match ‘sons’ in exhibiting case inflection as an argument against the presence of nominal inflection. The logic of this statement is not immediately apparent. The word for father is never written with a final vowel when in construct, so it is impossible to say how it inflected. Why ‘father’ was written in a proclitic fashion, where the final vowel was considered word internal, while ‘sons’ was not, is unclear. The second word *ʿh* ‘brother’ is often written with a final <y> when in construct, but not always and there are plenty of examples of the expected form <ʿh>, which matches ‘father’ (<http://dasi.humnet.unipi.it/>, s.v.). For the latter situation, again, we cannot make any claims about case inflection as the long vowel was treated as if it were word internal. The interpretation of the <y> with pronominal suffixes is interesting, but according to the rules of Sabaic orthography, it cannot represent an internal /ī/ vowel, as *matres lectionis* were not used in this position. It may be the case that the form with a final <y> represents a diminutive, similar to the generalized diminutive form in some Levantine dialects, e.g. Lebanese *ḥayyak* ‘your brother’, *ḥayyo* ‘his brother’, etc. Whatever might be the sources of the construct <y>, it must be stressed that it represents either a diphthong /ay/ or /āy/, or simply a consonant /y/, and is not cognate with the genitive ending on /ʿaḥī/. The point

is that not all <y>'s are equal, and so the presence of an inflectionless <y> in *ʔh* is not immediately comparable to the <y> of oblique *bny* 'sons'.

Thus, we must conclude from the evidence that in Old Sabaic a nominative-oblique distinction masculine plurals obtained. The word for brother seems to have sometimes taken a <y> suffix when in construct, but this glyph cannot represent a generalized genitive ending /ī/. The orthography of Sabaic requires a consonantal interpretation, meaning it is not related to the case system. As for whether case was present in singular nouns, we simply cannot know; the orthography does not permit us to arrive at any conclusions.¹³

2.4 The alleged “a”-adverbial ending in Semitic

While Owens dismisses the likelihood of a full-fledged case system for Classical Arabic, he does admit the possibility of some type of adverbial ending /a/ based on evidence from Hebrew (the so-called he-locale, e.g. *hab-bāyt-ā* '(in)to the house'). While some scholars have interpreted the Hebrew termination as cognate with the accusative /a/ of Arabic and Akkadian (Wright 1890: 141), its survival in Hebrew runs counter to the loss of word-final short /a/ in other environments (Suchard 2016, §8.2.1). A terminative ending <h> occurs in Ugaritic, which cannot represent a vowel in the orthography but a true consonantal /h/. This ending, scholars concluded, was the true cognate of Hebrew terminative ending *ā*, as by the time of the Masoretes, final /ah/ had already developed into *ā*. This further explains why this final vowel was not lost or subject to the Canaanite shift (**ā > o*). Finally, this Northwest Semitic terminative ending **-ah* is cognate with the Akkadian terminative ending *-iṣ, -aṣ*, from Proto-Semitic **-is, *-as*, through the West Semitic sound change of **s > h*, and cannot be seen as the precursor to the accusative case.

2.5 Is Case a Grammarian Conspiracy?

In section 2.4, Owens (2015: 167-169) argues for, what can only be interpreted as a grammarian conspiracy. He suggests that “at the time of Sibawaih, ca. 150/770, Arabic had the type of free variation among final vowels as Amorite had”. It was the “genius of Sibawaih” that introduced the “idea that short vowels need to be distinguished in terms of lexical value [...] vs, grammatical value”. Eventually Owens puts forth that “the suggestion can be made that Sibawaih took as his empirical input a situation similar to Amorite, and *from it created a case system* which in part reflected the biases in the input itself, but which was not structurally unambiguous system which he defined.” (emphasis our own).

¹³ These conclusions do not differ from Beeston (1984: 32), who recognizes a case system in the demonstratives *w* nominative and *y* oblique, and posits that the nominal case system in the masculine plural may have broken down by the middle Sabaic period.

This hypothesis is of course incompatible with the hypothesis that Classical Arabic case goes back to Proto-Semitic (Owens 2006/9: 115).¹⁴ Moreover, the likelihood that Sibawaih or any other grammarian came up with the Classical Arabic case system, and by sheer chance ended up looking exactly like that which we find not *only* in Akkadian as Owens claims, but also at the very least in Ugaritic, is so infinitesimally small that it deserved no serious defense.

Even if we accept this already unlikely scenario, we still come to a conclusion that is demonstrably wrong, and it stems from the oft-repeated, but wrong, simplifying assumption that case is marked only through final short vowels. Case is also marked with long vowels.

We have Quran manuscripts that predate Sibawaih. Nevertheless, the Quranic consonantal text clearly displays case in the sound masculine plural, the dual, the five nouns and the indefinite accusative. This would be impossible had case been invented by Sibawaih or any other grammarian. Even if one does not accept the existence of Umayyad Qurans, which in our opinion by now is proven beyond much doubt, we can still cite early Islamic inscriptions that easily predate the grammarians that display case, e.g. the Dome of the Rock inscription, dated to 72AH/694AD:

<i>w-slmw?</i>	<i>tslym?</i>					
and-greet.MPL	greeting.ACC					
‘and greet [him]’						
<i>w-kfy</i>	<i>b-ʔllh</i>	<i>wkyl?</i>				
and-sufficient	PREP-Allah	protector.ACC				
‘and it is sufficient with Allah as protector’						
<i>ln</i>	<i>ystnkf</i>	<i>ʔlmsyh</i>	<i>ʔn</i>	<i>ykwn</i>	<i>ʕbd</i>	<i>ʔllh</i>
NEG.FUT	disdain.3MS	the Messiah	that	be.3MS	servant	Allah
<i>wl?</i>	<i>ʔlmlykh</i>	<i>ʔlmqrbwn</i>				
nor	the angels	close.MPL.NOM				
‘Never would the Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor would the nearby angels’						
<i>ʕhd</i>	<i>ʔllh</i>	<i>ʔn-h</i>	<i>l? ʔllh ʔl?</i>	<i>hw</i>	<i>w-ʔlmlykh</i>	
witness.3MS	Allah	that-3MS	not god except	he	and-the	angels
<i>w-ʔwlv?</i>		<i>ʔlʕlm</i>				
and-REL.MPL.NOM		knowledge				
‘Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and so do the angels and those of knowledge.’						

¹⁴ It is unclear to us whether Owens has abandoned this idea for the Sibawaih conspiracy theory, or whether he thinks either might be true, but does not know which.

<i>bny</i>	<i>hḡh</i>	<i>ʔlqbh</i>	<i>ʕbd</i>	<i>ʔllh</i>	<i>ʕbdʔllh</i>	<i>ʔlʔmʔm</i>
built.3MS	this	dome	servant	Allah	Abdallah	the Imām
<i>ʔlmʔmwn</i>	<i>ʔmyr</i>		<i>ʔlmwmnyn</i>	<i>fy</i>	<i>snh</i>	
al-Ma(ʿ)mūn	commander		the faithful.MPL.OBL	PREP	year	
<i>ʔʔnyn</i>	<i>w-sbʕyn</i>					
two.OBL	and-seventy.OBL					
‘The Servant of God Abdullah, the Imam al-Ma’ mūn the commander of the faithful built this dome in the year 72AH’						

One can anticipate the argument that the Grammarians did not invent the system from scratch but rather borrowed it from other Semitic languages, like Akkadian or Ugaritic, and applied to Arabic. The problems with this hypothesis speak for themselves: there is no evidence that Akkadian or Ugaritic were known in the 8th century CE or that any grammatical tradition associated with them survived. Moreover, if some faint memory of Akkadian somehow survived among the occult in Mesopotamia in the 8th century CE, and this formed the basis for Arabic case, then the Arabic case system would resemble the latest stages of literary Akkadian, that is, Neo-Babylonian. As such, we would expect a system that expresses both the nominative and accusative with the /u/ and the genitive with the /i/, and with no distinction in the plural. This is not the Arabic system. Thus appeals to borrowing from other Semitic languages, as implausible as they may seem from a chronological perspective, do not work on a formal level either.

3. Case and Classification

It should be clear by now that case is attested across the Semitic family, and if indeed we choose to maintain Owens’ model of a caseless Proto-Semitic that is the ancestor of the Semitic languages without case, we must imagine that case was an innovation in a common *Classical Arabic-Akkadian-Sam’alian-Ugaritic-Ancient South Arabian-Geez* sub-grouping, or that it developed in a parallel way independently in each of these groups. The attestation of case across all branches of the Semitic language family is a strong argument against Owens’ innovation proposal. Owens dismisses this argument by stating that the classification of Semitic is not agreed upon by all scholars, rejecting Hetzron’s classification (which has since been modified) and citing Brockelmann’s geography-based proposal from the beginning of the 20th century and some of its revised reiterations (2015: 160). This is misleading. While opinions differ as to the validity of a “Central Semitic”,¹⁵ especially with regard to the place of Arabic in the family tree, no serious classification of Semitic has proposed that Classical Arabic belongs to the same sub-grouping as Akkadian against, for example, Hebrew, Aramaic or Proto-Arabic. Viewing case as an innovation would require a major re-shuffling of the classification of the Semitic family, which cannot be justified on the basis of any other morphological features.

Another important argument against the polygenetic origins of case is the presence and reconstructibility of the various asymmetries in the case system. While singular

¹⁵ For a balanced discussion of the various views, see Huehnergard and Rubin 2011.

nouns exhibit a tripartite *u* nominative, *i* genitive, *a* accusative system, how are we to explain the fact that the feminine plural has a diptotic declension with *u* nominative and *i* oblique, and that this asymmetry is found everywhere case distinction is present? The dual and masculine plural inflection agrees across all languages that maintain these distinctions, and these again do not correspond to the triptotic singular inflection. If the category was an independent innovation, surely we would encounter more variation in the manifestation of these systems, especially because the motivations for diptotic declensions of the plural, dual, and especially the feminine plural, are not at all clear. More problematic is the existence and reconstructibility of the Arabic diptotic declension in singular nouns where, in contrast to the feminine plural, the oblique case is represented by *a*, while the nominative by *u*. Moreover, these nouns lack mimation/nunation, unlike the feminine plurals:

	Diptote Feminine Singular		Diptote feminine plural
	<i>makkatu</i>		<i>kitābātun</i>
	<i>makkata</i>		<i>kitābātin</i>
	Triptotes	Singular Diptotes	Feminine Plural Diptote
Nom.	- <i>u(n)</i>	- <i>u</i>	- <i>u</i>
Acc.	- <i>a(n)</i>	- <i>a</i>	- <i>i</i>
Gen.	- <i>i(n)</i>	- <i>a</i>	- <i>i</i>

A similar situation is encountered in Ugaritic, where it is observed in cuneiform syllabic writing. Place names in the genitive (where in a triptotic system *-i* would be expected) are found with an *-a* ending (Huehnergard 2012: 40). Place names are also in Arabic one of the types of nouns that have a diptotic flexion. This semantic/morphological idiosyncrasy shared between Ugaritic and Arabic is so unusual, that it is impossible to have developed independently. While final short vowels are not detectable in Sabaic, the absence of mimation, another sign of diptosity, is encountered in some place names, such as *thmt* /tihāmat/ rather than ***thmtm*, and in the nominal stem *ʔaCCaC*. A late development of such a feature is difficult to explain, while its absence in Akkadian is justified by the fact that it is not analyzable in the synchronic system, and so triptotic inflection was then leveled to this category of singulars.

The presence of case in both East and West Semitic, a basic division that is established by a number of important isoglosses, suggests that case was a Proto-Semitic feature *or* a parallel innovation. The cognate asymmetries in the system attested across these branches make parallel development from an earlier caseless variety virtually impossible.¹⁶ Therefore, even if case cannot be reconstructed to the ancestor of every West Semitic linguistic subgrouping, e.g. Modern South Arabian or Aramaic, the fact that it is securely reconstructible for Proto-West Semitic means that it is more likely and economical that the system was lost in the ancestor of those language groupings rather

¹⁶ Note that case has emerged secondarily in Amharic, and it can in no way be confused with the ancient system. If, indeed, the morphological category developed independently across multiple branches, we should expect this degree of dissimilarity.

than developing parallel in the East and West Semitic languages that exhibit case. Thus, the only reasonable conclusion emerging from the study of this data is that the case system was a Proto-Semitic feature that was lost over time.

4. Case in Afro-Asiatic

Owens (2015: 161) briefly discusses case in Afro-Asiatic, and concludes that, since no case system like Semitic's can be found in any of the non-Semitic languages of the family, and therefore "case in Semitic needs to be seen as innovative". This conclusion cannot be drawn from the Afro-Asiatic data available to us.

Proto-Afro-Asiatic reconstruction and even the reconstruction of its daughter Proto-Languages other than Semitic is currently in its infancy. Any pronouncement about the presence of case in Proto-Afro-Asiatic is extremely premature. Some preliminary work on consonant correspondences has been undertaken (e.g. Takács 2011), and even these attempts can be considered speculative at best. If we move past the most uncontroversial sound correspondences, we are left with no more than one or two examples of every reconstructed Proto-Afro-Asiatic consonant. Almost no work has been done on the vocalic reconstruction of Proto-Afro-Asiatic. As case in Proto-Semitic surface as vowels, we would not even know how to start to prove that there is no cognate case system in Proto-Afro-Asiatic.

With that, we have to take into account the massive mismatch in time-depth of the different Proto-Languages and the lack of long written history of many of these families. As an example we take Proto-Berber. Proto-Berber is dated by Louali & Philippson (2004) around the first millennium BCE, while Kossmann (2013: 51) argues for a similar period between 500 BCE and the beginning of the christian era. Lexicostatistical dating by Blažek (2019) yields a similar date (680 BCE). Even if Proto-Berber forms a sub-branch of Afro-Asiatic with Semitic (which by virtue of several striking morphological similarities does not seem unlikely), we must conclude that the ancestor of Proto-Berber must have split off thousands of years earlier than the point to which we can reconstruct Proto-Berber, by virtue of the first Semitic languages already being attested thousands of years earlier than Proto-Berber (similar point are raised by Blench 2001 and Louali & Philippson 2004). Considering this situation, it would be a miracle if Proto-Berber *had* retained final short vowels that would still be reconstructible from the modern data that we have, which is more than two millennia later than Proto-Berber. Similar problems are present in Cushitic and Chadic.¹⁷ Thus, the state that Afro-Asiatic reconstruction is

¹⁷ Even so, as Owens points out, Appleyard (2011: 48) reconstructs a case system for Proto-Cushitic that looks as follows: Masculine nominative *i*, absolutive *a* genitive *i*; Feminine nom. *a*, abs. *a* gen. *(a)ti*. As Lameen Souag points out in an academia.edu session, Appleyard's reconstruction supports the reconstruction of *a* as a marker of direct objects, one of the two primary functions of the absolutive, and of *i* as the marker of the genitive older than Proto-Semitic. If the Cushitic nominative originated in a focus morpheme, then it would be the only one that disagrees with the Semitic system, and may therefore even be a Cushitic innovation. But without regular sound correspondences established, it is also possible that Cushitic *i* is cognate with both Semitic *u* and *i* in this position. The Cushitic data of the

currently in, and – barring the discovery of ancient documents of Berber, Cushitic or Chadic – the state in which it will probably remain, it is simply unthinkable to use Afro-Asiatic evidence to make any pronouncements for or against case in Proto-Semitic being innovative or archaic.

5. The absence of case in Modern Arabic and why it isn't a big deal

The absence of case in the Modern Arabic dialects appears to Owens as an insurmountable problem in the reconstruction of Proto-Arabic as a language that used to have case. This is problematic for two reasons: first, the selection of varieties to decide on reconstruction is limited for no obvious reason. Second, there are easily explained internal developments that lead to a caseless system in the modern dialects. We will discuss these two points separately.

5.1 Selection of varieties for reconstruction

Owens insists that for the reconstruction of Proto-Arabic, one ought to make use of the modern dialects. Indeed, if one takes the modern dialects we would be hard pressed to reconstruct a fully functioning case system (although one can certainly see vestiges, for which, see below). As Owens states, “the comparative method is a retrospective method based on reconstruction of attested varieties. In the case of Arabic, reconstruction proceeds from the attested contemporary dialects, backwards (2016: 161)”. However, Classical Arabic is, of course, also an attested variety, as is the pre-Islamic evidence of Arabic.¹⁸ It is not clear why Owens excludes these varieties and solely relies on contemporary dialects for reconstructed Arabic. The obvious result, however, is that it excludes all varieties of Arabic that have clear attestations of case. The resulting incomplete reconstruction will therefore obviously yield a Proto-Arabic without case.

Internal reconstruction (see below), the pre-Islamic evidence, and the comparative Semitic data reveal that Classical Arabic is simply more conservative in this realm of morphology than the modern dialects.¹⁹

The vast majority of Semitic languages that have written records disappeared as spoken languages ages ago and have no surviving contemporary dialects, but these are

masculine, taken at face value then, supports the idea that the Semitic nominal case system is older than Proto-Semitic.

¹⁸ To be clear, pre-Islamic Arabic does not refer to the dialectal material collected by the Arab Grammarians or the pre-Islamic poems that were recorded in the Islamic period. What we mean by this term is the documentary evidence of Arabic produced prior to the rise of Islam. For an outline of this corpus and its linguistic features, see Al-Jallad (forthcoming).

¹⁹ That is not to say that Classical Arabic is always more conservative than the modern dialects in every respect. For example, Najdi Arabic retains the ancient Proto-Semitic Barth-Ginsberg alternation of the prefix vowel *ya-ktib* ‘he writes’ versus *yi-smaʿ* ‘he heard’ (Ingham 1994: 22f.), a feature completely absent in Classical Arabic. Its presence in Najdi Arabic confirms that we have to reconstruct this alternation for Proto-Arabic, despite its absence in Classical Arabic.

essential to the reconstruction of Proto-Semitic. As Owens clearly recognizes the value in the use of non-contemporary dialects for the reconstruction of Proto-Semitic (e.g., his use of Amorite), it is wholly mysterious why non-contemporary dialects are not to be used for the reconstruction of Proto-Arabic.

5.2 *Loss of case in the Arabic dialects*

The loss of case in all modern dialects of Arabic is easily understood as the result of regular phonetic developments. The vast majority of nouns in Arabic express case distinction with final short vowels with or without nunation. All modern dialects lost final short vowels, as clearly exemplified by the fact that the 3ms ending on the suffix conjugation is gone: *katab* vs *kataba*; prepositions like *qabla* become *qabl*; the dual is *-ēn* or *-ayn*, rather than *-ayni*, and the plural is *-īn* rather than *-īna*, etc.²⁰ Beside nominal case inflection, the loss of final-short vowels has obliterated the distinction in the moods of the prefix conjugation, e.g. imperfect (final *-u*) from the subjunctive (final *-a*) and the jussive (no final vowel). From such a situation, where the vast majority of the nouns no longer distinguish case, it is perfectly imaginable that other case distinctions would become less clear to its speakers, and would eventually be lost.

Examples of petrified case persist in exactly the environments where case would not be lost due to regular sound laws, but through analogical leveling. The indefinite accusative, used for adverbial forms, which, when not completely replaced by the classical *-an* form, shows up as *-a* in many modern dialects, e.g. Moroccan Arabic *bərra* ‘outside’ < **barrā* < **barran* (Harrell 1966: s.v.); Mardin Arabic *ḡadde* ‘tomorrow’ < **ḡaddā*; *qable* < **qablā* ‘early’ (Grigore 2009: 252-253); Algerian Arabic *ḥəqqə* ‘really’, *dima* ‘always’ (L. Souag, p.c.); CyA *parra* ‘outside’ < **barrā* (Borg 2004:154), vocative forms like *yammā* ‘O mother’ and *yābā* ‘O father’ (see Appendix I for discussion), and of course the common greeting *halā* < **ḡahlā* < **ḡahlan*.

In a reply to a draft of this paper on Academia.edu, Owens suggests that one of the reasons why reconstructing case vowels in Arabic is problematic, is because, according to him there are reconstructible short vowels in the pronominal system, which challenges the loss of the short case vowels through a process of apocope.

It goes without saying that, due to pressure of various analogies from various parts of the paradigm, a pronominal system is not exactly the place where one should look for the otherwise elusive proof of final short vowels. Some of the examples Owens summons as proof have already been discussed. The forms he mentions are:

²⁰ The “preservation” of vowels in the feminine suffix conjugation and pronoun *anti* is explained through leveling with the 2fs prefix conjugation ending, *î*. The form *anta/inta* goes back to one with a final /h/, *antah*, while the form *ant/int* is the proper reflex of Old Arabic *anta*; see Al-Jallad (2014).

-tu '1SG'	<i>qəl-tu</i>	'I	said'
-ti '2FSG'	<i>qəl-ti</i>	'you.F.SG.	said'
-ta '2MSG'	<i>qul-ta</i>	'you.M.SG	said'
-na '3FPL'	<i>yaktub-na</i>	'they.F	write'
-ki '2FSG, object'	<i>beet-ki</i>	'your	house'
-a	doubled verbs in western Sudanic Arabic, <i>tamma</i> 'finish'		
-u	suffix of indefinite nouns in Tihama Arabic.		

The final *-a* in doubled verbs in Sudanese Arabic is explained by Owens himself in a footnote in his reply, but we will replicate the argument in full here. As is common in the modern Arabic dialects, the final doubled verbs have partially merged with the stem II final-weak paradigm, e.g. in Eastern Libyan Arabic we find (Owens 1984: 116):

	Doubled		Stem II weak	
	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
1s	<i>daffēt</i>	<i>daffēna</i>	<i>ṣallēt</i>	<i>ṣallēna</i>
3m	<i>daff</i>	<i>daffo</i>	<i>ṣalla</i>	<i>ṣallo</i>
3f	<i>daffat</i>	<i>daffan</i>	<i>ṣallat</i>	<i>ṣallan</i>

The initial merger of these two classes is presumably from the fact that the 3sg.f. forms look identical (also in Classical Arabic). The complete merger of these paradigms as attested in Sudanese Arabic is a trivial analogy when all but the 3sg.m. paradigm had already merged.²¹

What is important in this discussion however, is that this data cannot be solved within Owens' reconstruction of a caseless form of Proto-Arabic any better than it can in a case-bearing Proto-Arabic. We will, for this discussion limit ourselves to the perfect suffixes *-tu*, *-ti*, *-ta*. These suffixes are distributed across the dialects in a rather haphazard way, (examples taken from Fischer & Jastrow 1980):

	Mekka	Baghdad	Qarṭmīn	Yemen
1s	<i>-t</i>	<i>-it</i>	<i>-tu</i>	<i>-tu</i>
2sm	<i>-t</i>	<i>-it</i>	<i>-it</i>	<i>-ta</i>
2sf	<i>-ti</i>	<i>-ti</i>	<i>-ti</i>	<i>-ti</i>

2sf

The reconstruction of 2sf appears to be evidently **-ti*. None of these dialects would have lost **i* here. However this conflicts with the 2sf pronominal suffix, presumably to be reconstructed as **-ki* (see also Owens 2006/9: 246), which surfaces in Mekka and Yemen as *-ik*, in Baghdad as *-iĉ*, Qarṭmīn as *-ĉi* and Yemen as *-ik*. *-ti* and *-ik* cannot both come

²¹ A similar complete merger of Doubled and Stem II weak verbs is attested in Jabal Rāziḥ, e.g. *ṣammē* 'to smell' (Behnstedt 1987: 145).

from a final short vowel **i*, as they clearly yield two different results. One can try to save this by assuming the 2sf suffix is **-ik*, but this is obviously special pleading, and does not explain the Qarṭmīn (or Classical Arabic) form. Without a regular sound correspondence, we cannot reconstruct a single short vowel **i*. We must thus also explain this form through some analogy in Owens' caseless model.

1s

Baghdadi and Mekkan shifted **-tu* to *-t* (and Baghdadi subsequently *-it*). So we may posit a sound law **u > ∅* in word final position. If we maintain however that the 3sm pronominal suffix **-hu* is also to be reconstructed with a word-final short vowel (as Owens 2006/9: 253 would), we run into a problem. The reflexes in all of these dialects of that form is not *-hu*, but rather *-uh* or similar, even in Qarṭmīn, where final *-u* is expected to be retained if one reconstructs the 1s form as **-tu*. Once again, in the absence of a regular sound law we must assume some kind of analogy.

2sm

All dialects lost the word final short vowel **a*, except Yemeni. The sound law **a > ∅* presents itself on the basis of just this form. However the 2sm possessive suffix *-ak* in all of these dialects likely also comes from **-ka* (Owens 2006/9: 250). Here once again we are unable to account for both forms.

Owens (loc. cit) assumes that in the pronominal forms **-ki* and **-ka*, an epenthetic vowel was inserted in the **CC* cluster that developed when added to a nouns. But the apparent non-operation of this epenthesis rule in the verbal suffixes is not accounted for. Nor is the syncope of the final short vowel **a* in the Yemeni form, after the insertion of the unaccounted for epenthesis.

In other words, for these forms to be reconstructible for Proto-Arabic, both in Owens' model and in our model we would have to find some form of analogical explanation to explain these -VC versus -CV doublets. The only difference in this case is that we have provided an analogical solution to solve at least the doublets of the 2s forms, while Owens (2006/9; 2016) has not. Due to these problems, these forms cannot possibly be used as evidence of retention of final short vowels in the modern dialects.

The final example that Owens cites is, what we will call here "Tihāmah Wawation". This final *-u* does not co-occur with the definite article, nor in construct or with indefinite diptotic nouns such as *ʔaffal*-elatives, and adjectives of colors/physical defects. In other words: Tihāma Wawation occurs in the exact environments where Classical Arabic has nunation.

Combining this with the fact that in the Ṣaḍdah region we find the Im-Maṭṭah dialect that has the exact same distribution, but with a suffix *-in* (Behnstedt 1987), and that several of dialects of the Tihāmah have *-un* rather than *-u* (Behnstedt 1985: 60), there is truly no doubt that this form should be derived from original Classical Arabic-like

Tanwīn, probably continuing the case vowel of the nominative, which was either guarded from syncope by the final *n*, or was actually lengthened to *-ū* (compare indefinite accusative *-an* > *-ā* in Classical Arabic pause).

5.3 Talking past each other?

One cannot shake the feeling that Owens and we are to some extent talking past each other. Owens (2006/9: 116) states that "[s]ince caseless forms can be comparatively reconstructed at least as early as the seventh/eighth centuries, from the time of the Arabic diaspora, they are minimally as old as the case-Arabic described by Sibawaih, and hence can be projected into proto-Arabic as well".²²

We do not necessarily agree with Owens that caseless forms have to be reconstructed back comparatively as early as the seventh and eighth centuries. It is possible that much later dialectal contact may have levelled case bearing dialects towards the caseless varieties. These dialects did not exist in isolation. But it is certainly a defensible position, and at least partial breakdown of the case system must have been in place in several Arabic varieties (see section 5.4). However, the second part of the conclusion that caseless forms and case-Arabic are both to be reconstructed back to the Proto-Language, because both must have existed in the seventh/eighth centuries, does not follow from the first part of the sentence in what is normally understood by the term "Proto-Arabic", i.e. the common ancestor of all forms of Arabic.

This is the canonical meaning of a Proto-Language, and any textbook on historical linguistics will say this, e.g. Trask (2015: 167), Campbell (2004: 125), Beekes (2011: 4). If a caseless and case bearing variety indeed go back to Proto-Semitic, whether the innovations is having case, or being caseless, the earliest common ancestor of Arabic would, in fact, be Proto-Semitic. But these are, in Owen's model two separate stages. It is therefore regrettable that Owens (2006/9: 2) does not actually define what Proto-Arabic means to him:

"Proto-Arabic. The fundamental object of any historical linguistics is the reconstruction of a proto-language. This is a well-known and established concept which will be familiar to most readers, and which is not dependent as a concept or as a method of application on the circumstances of any individual language or language family."

As a result we are unable to criticise Owens' ideas within his own definition of a proto-language.

²² Owens seems to have changed his mind on his conclusions, as in his 2015 article he states: "There is no evidence from such reconstruction that proto-Arabic had case: reconstructed Arabic had no case." (pg. 161). However no explanation is given how he has arrived at this different conclusion, as the section quoted purports to be a summary of Owens (2006/9). It should also be noted here that the quoted sentence seems to suggest that he envisions a difference between Proto-Arabic and reconstructed Arabic. We do not understand what the difference would be.

At risk of setting up a straw man, our most generous interpretation of these statements, is that Owens, having a dialectological background, has a more variationist approach to the concept of “language” than is often assumed within historical linguistics. In this view then, two linguistic features may exist side-by-side for a period of time, without one necessarily outweighing the other. We infer this view from Owens’ exposition on linguistic variation being present in a language for a period of time in his book (2006/9: 116f.). It is true that traditional comparative historical linguistic methodology is not very well equipped at reconstructing such situations,²³ hence the resulting absurd conclusion that that Proto-Arabic would be the same as Proto-Semitic.

However, it is important to note here that even if we take this, hopefully correct, interpretation of Owens’ meaning, the conclusion still does not follow from the premise. The fact that it is possible that at the Proto-Arabic stage there was a diglossia or internal dialectal/sociolectal variation of case bearing and caseless varieties does not mean it *necessarily* has to. All we can conclude is that, at the earliest time that we have written evidence of Arabic, there is a case bearing variety, and certainly evidence for varieties where case is absent in all contexts that we have evidence for. There is no *a priori* reason to think that this situation goes back to a Proto-Arabic stage.

At the basis of this misunderstanding, seems to lie a misconception about the comparative method. Owens says that “if a trait is attested across different sub-branches of a family, it is a proto-feature” (Owens 2015: 160). It is not exactly clear from the context if he is attributing this view to semiticists, or uses it as a criterion himself, or both. We assume the latter, but the view expressed is not how the comparative method works.

Owens sees the branches with languages with case (e.g. Akkadian) and branches without (e.g. Hebrew). From this according to the cited criterion should follow that both having case and having no case is simultaneously a proto-feature. Applying this criterion indiscriminately obviously yields a reconstruction of a Proto-language that can never have branching features. Proto-Semitic would have to have simultaneously VSO order (most of Semitic) and SOV order (Akkadian, Amharic); Proto-Germanic simultaneously would have a definite article marked for case (Icelandic, German), and one without (Dutch, English). If a plausible scenario exists that can explain two features as having developed from a single one, then that scenario is the most parsimonious.

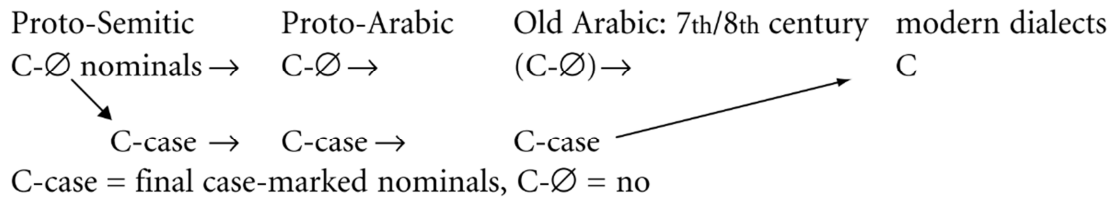
Owens finds the hypothetical case-bearing/caseless stage of Proto-Semitic likely because, in his view, there is clear evidence of other caseless Semitic languages. We hope to have shown in section 5.2, that all instances of potentially caseless varieties, a case-bearing ancestor is the likely a precursor. More importantly, the hypothesis that Proto-Semitic already had this caseless/case-bearing dichotomy, would be significantly strengthened if there was evidence of other Semitic languages that had the same dichotomous situation that Owens supposes for Proto-Arabic. As individual Semitic languages are either case-bearing or caseless, projecting the supposed Proto-Arabic situation back to Proto-Semitic, is assuming an extraordinary stability of this supposed Proto-Arabic situation, without explaining why it was unstable in all other Semitic languages. Without supporting evidence for such a claim, the reconstruction of Proto-Semitic with case,

²³ For a discussion on these problems, see Trask (2015: 219f.).

and showing that case was lost through trivial sound laws and several morphological developments in the language that do not have it is the preferable.

5.4 A nuanced timeline of Arabic

Owens (2006/9: 115) presents a timeline of how he envisions the development of varieties of Arabic having case and not having case, into the modern era. Owens, unlike other scholars that have cast doubt on the history of case in Arabic (e.g. Lancioni 2009), admits that it is not likely that these case systems in the different Semitic languages developed completely independently. But he maintains that the modern Arabic dialects *must* have developed from a caseless variety, and in the article under discussion here, he has attempted, unsuccessfully in our opinion, to show that caseless varieties of proto-sub-branches of Semitic are necessary to reconstruct as well. And as, apparently the loss of case is, to him inherently unlikely, he projects the caseless variety of Arabic, back to a caseless variety of Proto-Semitic. This timeline looks as follows:



This timeline cannot be maintained for Arabic, nor for any other Semitic language. As we have hoped to show, it requires only a few global and simple steps to arrive at caseless Arabic from a system that is essentially identical to what is retained on Classical Arabic.

Let us assume, for example, the following rules,²⁴ all of which are common cross-linguistically, which would cause enough upheaval to potentially invoke the complete breakdown of the case system.

1. $*a, *i, *u\#^{25} > \emptyset$
2. $*n\# > \emptyset$;²⁶
3. $*i, *u\# > \emptyset$.²⁷

²⁴ Other steps of the development with equally trivial and common sound laws may be proposed as well, and we by no means claim here that these are the sound laws that work for all dialects of Arabic. They are however consistent, at least, for the dialects that have $-a < *-\bar{a} < *-\text{an}$ as the regular reflex of the adverbial ending.

²⁵ Cf. French *poule* [pul] < Latin *pullus*; *hôte* [ot] < Latin *hostis*; *terre* [tɛʁ] < *terra*.

²⁶ Cf. Hollandic Dutch *lopen* ‘to walk’ originally pronounced $*l\bar{o}p\bar{a}n$ (hence the orthography) now [lowpə].

²⁷ Cf. Modern Japanese, e.g. *kaku* ‘to write’, [kak] or [kaku]; *kaki* ‘writing’ [kak] or [kaki]

The table below lists the categories that have case expressed in the language, and what their result would be after these three sound laws.

	Before loss	After loss	Syncretism
Indefinite triptotes	3 cases	1 case (acc.)	no cases
Definite triptotes	3 cases	no cases	no cases
Diptotes	2 cases	no cases	no cases
Five nouns (indef.)	3 cases	1 case (acc.)	no cases
Five nouns (construct)	3 cases	3 cases	no cases
Sound masc. plural	2 cases	2 cases	no cases
Sound fem. plural	2 cases	no cases	no cases
Dual	2 cases	2 cases	no cases

As one can see in this table, an large amount of the distinctions would have already been lost from these sound laws. A few simple steps can then get rid of the remaining case distinctions.

1. Triptotes (with only one case, and only in the indefinite) and diptotes (with none) merge.
2. The five isolated nouns that have a three case distinction not expressed anywhere else is levelled to a caseless forms.
3. The two cases expressed by the masculine plural and dual are levelled with the feminine plural which has lost all case distinction.

It is important to note here that it is too simplistic to deal with the definition of varieties that have case or are caseless. This is a false dichotomy that not only Owens (2006/9; 2016) falls prey to, but also among many others Lancioni (2009), Blau (1977), and Corriente (1971). Pointing at the fact, as Diem does, that case appears to have broken down where we see it in late Nabatean Arabic, does not prove that *all* case marking is gone in Nabatean Arabic.²⁸ By virtue of the corpus of Nabatean Arabic being almost exclusively names in a Aramaic context, we lack most contexts where we would be able to see case. All we can say about Nabatean Arabic is that it does not obviously express case in the form of final short vowels. Needless to say, case is not only expressed in the final short vowels. It is also expressed in the five nouns as long vowels, in the sound masculine plural suffixes and in the dual suffixes. We have none of these in Nabatean Arabic, and simply cannot say anything about how case developed in these contexts.

²⁸ And certainly does not prove that case has never existed, nor even allow that as a possible interpretation of the data. The many forms like <ʃbdlhy>, whether archaic or not, cannot be interpreted as anything other than reflecting the form /ʃabdu-llāhi/, with the final case vowel in the genitive. The final vowel marking in Nabatean Arabic is *always* Ø or <w> and never <y> unless it is a compound name of the type mentioned here. This is exactly where we expect the genitive case.

However that a stage would have to exist before the phonetic loss of the final case vowels and the complete breakdown of the system, is not only logically plausible, it is exactly what we see in the Early Islamic Graeco-Arabica. Here we find clear examples of the noun *ʔab-* ‘father’ that still has case (at least the nominative and the genitive), despite the final short vowels have already been lost. This is obviously the stage after the sound laws that caused the loss of many case distinctions, but before the general collapse of the complete case system. Some examples are the following (and in the Papyri we find many more like them):

Αβου Σουφουαν
 /ʔabū sufwān/ (not **ʔabū sufwānin)

Οβαιδαλλα β(ιν) Αβιλααζ
 /ʕobaydalla(h) bin ʔabī l-ʕāṣ/ (not **ʕubaydullahi bnu ʔabī l-ʕāṣi)

This should not be meant to taken as evidence that the loss of case had only just started at the start of the Islamic Period. This situation is more complex and more diverse. The Pre-Islamic Graeco-Arabic inscription in Al-Jallad & al-Manaser (2015) seems to point at a variety of Arabic that underwent a different development with a different breakdown of the system. Here the short accusative vowel *-a* is present, but all other short vowels are not.

A timeline of case from Semitic to the modern dialects then, would be more accurately represented as this:

Proto-Semitic	Proto-Arabic	Old Arabic: before 7th C.	Early Islamic	modern
C-case →	C-case →	C-case →	C-case (?)	
		C-partial →	C-partial	
		C-∅ (?) →	C-∅ →	C-∅

C-case = Dialect that retains essentially the Proto-Arabic system (e.g. Classical Arabic, Early Nabatean Arabic (?))

C-partial = Dialect that retains part of the Proto-Arabic system (e.g. Safaitic, Early Islamic Arabic)

C-∅ = Dialect that has lost case (e.g. the modern dialects, Late Nabatean Arabic (?))
 (?) is a sign that the evidence is not quite clear as to whether such a variety existed as a living language in the given period.

It should be noted here, that such a chart can be highly misleading. So here are some notes as to explain what we do not propose it means: We do not envision a linear path of modern caseless varieties back to ancient caseless varieties. Varieties that had case, or partial case may have developed into caseless varieties as well, due to individual

developments or dialect mixing. The other direction seems more difficult to envision, but perhaps not completely impossible.

What is important to note is that, it is much more economical to assume that all of Arabic derives from a single Semitic case system, rather than two systems. The caseless system can easily be derived from the case system through simple sound laws and analogies. Losing the final unstressed part of a word is cross-linguistically so incredibly common, that it is hardly surprising that it happened multiple times. The chances however, of retaining a Proto-Semitic dialectal split of case-bearing and caseless varieties, all the while undergoing all the shared innovations of Arabic, without ever splitting off into completely different languages over a period of thousands of years, is such an extraordinary claim, that the mere absence of case in the modern dialects simply is not enough evidence to defend such a claim.

6. Case Closed?

Owens is 100% correct in emphasizing the need for critical doubt, and engagement with his skepticism will no doubt lead to a sharper and more complete justifications for reconstructions among Semiticists, especially ones that can be more readily interpretable by those coming from other fields. We hope to have shown that, at least when it comes to case, there is nothing controversial about its reconstruction for either Proto-Semitic or Proto-Arabic.

We also hope to have shown that the three alternative options presented by Owens are all improbable if not impossible:

1. Proto-Semitic did not have case, it was innovated in several clearly unrelated languages in the same way.
2. Arabic's case is an invention of the grammarians.
3. Proto-Semitic and Proto-Arabic had caseless and case-bearing varieties within the same language. This situation was stable enough to persist unaltered for thousands of years into Arabic.

Appendix I: the diachronic background of vocative forms terminating in *-ā* in modern Arabic

In Classical Arabic, vocative nouns normally take the nominative ending *-u* without nunation, but when they are in construct with another noun or a clitic pronoun, they take the accusative ending *-a* (Fischer 2002: §157a). This highly idiosyncratic behavior of construct vocatives is replicated in petrified vocatives of some kinship terms in the modern dialects, e.g. *yābā*, *yābāy* 'O my father' or *yammā* 'O my mother'. Owens, in an Academia.edu reply to an earlier draft of this paper, cleverly identified a parallel in the vocative of nouns with the first person singular clitic pronoun in the work of ibn Yaʿīš, a 13th c. grammarian. One can say for 'O my servant boy' the following:

- a. *yā ġulāmī*
 b. *yā ġulāmi*
 c. *yā ġulāmā*

Example a is the common Classical Arabic way of expressing this construction, while example b is attested in the Qur'an and reflects some contextual shortening of the vowel e.g. *yā-qawm-i* 'o my people!', *yā-ʔabat-i* 'o my father', *yā-ʔibād-i* 'o my servants!', *yā-rabb-i* 'o my lord!'. c is also attested in the Qur'an for 1cs vocatives that function as expressions of woe. In the Quran it is written with *ʔalif maqṣūrah*, e.g. *yā-ʔasaf-ā* 'o my sorrow!' (Q12:84), *yā-waylat-ā* 'O my woe!' (Q5:31; 11:72; 25:28), *yā-ḥasrat-ā* 'O my regret!' (Q39:56).²⁹ We would interpret example c to reflect the following:

**yā* *ġulāma* *-ya*
 VOC servant boy.ACC my

Now, while Classical Arabic neutralizes the expression of case in singular nouns with the clitic pronoun *-ī*, other Semitic languages do not do this. For example, Ugaritic preserves a consonantal *y* 1cs ending in nouns in the genitive and accusative while collapsing it to a vowel in the nominative:

mlk /malkī/ 'my king.NOM'
mlky /malkiya/ 'my king.GEN'
mlky /malkaya/ 'my king.ACC'

Example c may, in our opinion, be an archaism where the expression of the accusative case is preserved, making use of the *-ya* allomorph of the 1cs pronoun that occurs after long vowels in Classical Arabic. In the language of the Quran the form appears to be an archaism only retained in expressions of woe, where perhaps the *-ā* ending was no longer felt as a 1cs suffix. The final *ā* is the result of the collapse of the ensuing triphthong, **ġulāmaya* to *ġulāmā*, just as *banaya* 'he built' becomes *banā*.³⁰ The Ugaritic paradigm may be original and the Classical Arabic distribution would then reflect leveling of the nominative allomorph for all members of the paradigm.

Forms like *yammā* may reflect the same phenomenon: *yā ʔimma-ya*. 'O Father' exhibits two forms: *yā-bā-y*, which reflects the original long accusative vowel (<**yā ʔabā-ya*), and *yā-bā*, which could reflect pattern copying from *yammā*. These forms are especially interesting because they cannot be interpreted as borrowings from the literary variety, as example c is marginal in Classical Arabic at best. Thus, these expressions cannot be written off as Classicisms, but are true reflections of a colloquial case-bearing variety.

²⁹ We thank Ibrahim Hawari for pointing this out to us.

³⁰ Note that both the vocative *-ā* and the *-ā* of *banā* are written with an *alif maqṣūrah* and both are read with an /ē/ vowel in the reading traditions that distinguish the original **-ā/-awa* from **-aya*; see Van Putten (2017) for a discussion.

Appendix II: Lancioni's "provocative solution"

While Owens (2006/9: 101) has argued that case vowels may have originally been epenthetic vowels of some sort, only later grammaticalizing into case vowels, he does not provide any explanation as to the process and context in which these epenthetic vowels came to be inserted.

Lancioni (2009: 231-236) proposes a "provocative solution" to the enigma of the case endings. He suggests that these epenthetic vowels were inserted, essentially *metri causa*, for Arabic poetry which strongly favours CV syllables to "comply with the needs of the rhyme system" (p. 235). Lancioni's hypothesis suffers from all the same weaknesses as Owens'. He ignores the obvious examples of case not marked by final short vowels (sound masculine plural, dual and the five nouns). Moreover, Lancioni claims that Arabic case is "[...] marked by a lack of allomorphy (see Table 3 above)". The cited table in fact contains the diptotic case endings, which are a textbook example of allomorphy. We therefore also cannot agree that "one can reasonably assume that they are not originally cases, but epenthetic vowels."

Besides these shortcomings, the suggestion that Arabic would require such epenthetic vowels to compose poetry has several large implications. First, it would mean that the poetic meter used in Arabic would be fundamentally incompatible with the syllabic structure of the Arabic language itself. Such a mismatch between poetic structure and linguistic structure is, of course, not *a priori* impossible. However, it does seem highly unlikely that such a mismatch between poetic and linguistic structure can develop in a native tradition, rather than a borrowed tradition to which the meters may have been better suited. As we have no reason to assume that the metrical poetic tradition of Arabic was imported from some other language with a similar poetic tradition, this explanation remains fully *ad hoc*. Most importantly, this does not explain the presence of a nearly identical case system in other Semitic languages, like Akkadian and Ugaritic. Both these languages did have a poetic tradition, but the Akkadian nor the Ugaritic tradition made use of meter or rhyme in their poetic tradition. The emergence of a nearly identical case system *metri causa*, is therefore impossible for these languages.

Finally, it is not clear that Lancioni's incompatibility hypothesis is correct. There is in fact poetry composed in modern dialects with meters close to the Classical Arabic meters, which are nevertheless completely caseless, and do not have a need for epenthetic vowels to create CV syllables. Short syllables may simply either be CV or C. An example of this is given by Clive Holes in his *EALL* article on Nabaṭī poetry (Holes 2011), which has a – U – | – – U – | – U – – meter, essentially identical to the Classical *sarīf* save for an additional final long syllable in the third foot.

To conclude, Lancioni's "provocative solution", solves none of the problems present in Owens' original hypothesis, and does not provide a plausible model for understanding the appearance of Owens' hypothesized epenthetic final vowels.

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LINGUISTIC AND FOLKLORISTIC REMARKS ON TWO TEXTS IN THE DRUZE DIALECT OF ABU-SNĀN ON THE HOLY SITE OF THE PROPHET ZAKARIYYA

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Abstract: This article is vital folkloristically and linguistically since it gives us details on Druze dialects in Northern Israel. These dialects as a whole had not been well researched until now. The village of Abu-Snān is located some ten kilometers northeast of Acre. The holy site of the village is a *mazār*, and not a *maqām*. The prophet *Zakariyya* is vindictive by nature – a characteristic also manifested in the two texts presented in this article. Dialectologically, the Druze-Arabic dialect of Abu-Snān village shares common features with other Druze dialects in the Galilee region and in Lebanon, Syria and even in Jordan, yet it can be regarded as belonging to the sub-northern Palestinian coastal dialects in Israel which share also conjoint characteristics with some Moslem and Christian North-Palestinian dialects.

Keywords: *Druze, fieldwork, folklore, holy saints, holy sites, Galilee, Palestinian dialects, Zakariyya.*

1. Background

I recorded these two texts in the village of Abu-Snān in September 1996, while collecting material for my planned PhD dissertation on the Druze Arabic dialects in northern Israel. During this period I collected numerous texts from various Druze villages on Mount Carmel, Upper Galilee, Lower Galilee and the northern coastal region. The aim was to collect new material on the Druze dialects after the publication of Haim Blanc's book in the early 1950s.¹ A year later I decided to change the subject of my dissertation after finding new material on the old Arabic dialects of the city of Haifa.² In my fieldwork in Abu-Snān, which the Druze of the village also call *Bu-Snān*, I was accompanied by my Druze friend Fāyiz ʿAzzām [فایز عزام] who helped me find linguistic informants among the Druze population in the Galilee region. The informant of the two texts in this article was Maḥāsīn ʿAbbās, a dweller of the village born in 1945.

After more than 19 years, late in November 2015 I returned to the holy site to see if things had changed. I met there the holy site keeper (*qiyyim*) Mr. Yūsif Xēr [يوسف خير]

¹ Haim Blanc, *Studies in North Palestinian Arabic: Linguistic Inquiries among the Druzes of Western Galilee and Mount Carmel* (Jerusalem: Israel Oriental Society, 1953).

² See Aharon Geva Kleinberger, *Die Stadtdialekte von Haifa in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004).

from whom I heard old-new stories about the place, and I rechecked the two stories that I had recorded in 1996. This time there were some changes in the versions of the stories as related on that visit.³

The holy site in Abu-Snān⁴ is actually a *mazār*, and not a *maqām*, as it is called in the two texts by the linguistic informant. The difference lies in the nature of Druze holy sites. A *mazār* does not contain the tomb of a prophet or a sheikh. It derives from the root *zār* [to visit] and means that the holy prophet only visited the place during his religious activities; a *maqām* by contrast contains the tomb of a holy person. In Abu-Snān there is no tomb of the Prophet *Zakariyya*, so it cannot be called a *maqām*, as the local population call it, not distinguishing the two terms. Thus, the holy site keeper cannot actually be called a *qiyim* [Classical Arabic: قائم or قائمًا] with its connotation of a religious functionary. The holy site had been renovated and enlarged. Even a new hall for vows is now being built. As a whole the place is much cleaner than it was on my last visit 19 years ago and has been made attractive for tourism. Near the holy site there is a Druze praying chamber (*xilwi*⁵) which serves the religious Druze (*ʿuqqāl*).⁶ Before entering the holy site one must remove one's shoes and put a hat on one's head, and women have to be dressed decorously. For this purpose some items of clothing may be found on the left side of the entrance, under the candle niche. The holy site itself has a door leading to an inner room. This room is simply decorated with the Druze flag and some tiny pictures, one of which shows a scene of horses in different colors, as it appears in the Jewish version of the biblical book of *Zachariah* also.⁷ From this room steps lead down to a

³ Mr. Luʿāy Marzūq, who also works at the holy site, attended this meeting as well.

⁴ Compare Shimon Avivi, "Ha-Mekomot ha-Kdoshim la-Druzim be-Yisrael" ["The Holy Sites for the Druzes in Israel"] in *Ariel* 22 (142), 2000, pp. 86: In Greater Syria and the Holy Land there are at least six holy sites dedicated to the Prophet Zachariah, the most prominent being in Damascus and Jerusalem. Zevi Gilat mentions two graves of Tzaddikim in Israel that are attributed to righteous men with the name Zekhariah: one in Jerusalem, named for *Zekhariah Ben-Yehoyadah* [compare: the prophet Zachariah is called *Zachariah Ben-Berachiah Ben-Ido*] and one in *Kfar Hananya*, east of Acre, which is named for *Zekhariah ha-Katsav* [= "Zekhariah the Butcher"]; he does not mention the holy site in Abu-Snān, perhaps because it does not contain a tomb. See Zevi Gilat, *Kivrey Tzaddikim* [= *Graves of the Tzaddikim in Israel*]. (Tel-Aviv: Mapa, 2005), pp. 58-59 and 249-250. Nor does Zvi Ilan mention the tomb of the prophet Zachariah in Abu-Snān. Instead he locates his tomb in Jerusalem. See Zvi Ilan, *Kivrey Tzaddikim be-Erets Israel* [= *Tombs of the Righteous in the Land of Israel*] (Jerusalem: Kana, 1997), pp. 243-244.

Canaan, in his book *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (Jerusalem: s.n., 1924), p. 50-52, calls these sites *maqāms without a tomb*. He also specifies several holy sites that have a tomb without a building. The holy site in Abu-Snān does not have a specific date for an annual visit (*ziyāra*); compare Canaan's Arabic version of his book which is more detailed: *al-ʿAwliyāʿ wa-lMazārāt al-ʿIslāmiyya fī Filasṭīn*. Translation: Nimr Sirḥān (Ramallah: Muʿassasat an-Nāshir, 1998), 191-198.

⁵ $\sqrt{x-l-w}$ =to be celibate.

⁶ The majority secular Druze are called *ḡuhhāl*, literally "ignorant."

⁷ Zachariah 6, 1-7: "I looked up again, and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze. ²The first chariot had red horses, the second black, ³the third white, and the fourth dappled—all of them powerful. ⁴I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?" ⁵The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. ⁶The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the one with the dappled horses toward the south."⁷ When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, "Go throughout the earth!" So they went throughout the earth."

lower cave.⁸ Over the entrance to the holy site an antique inscription describes the persons who built it, dated to the early eighteenth century; this shows that this place was at that time regarded as a holy site.⁹ Near the door to the site there is a hatch for lighting candles for the prophet *Zakariyya*. When entering one finds a niche to the left the threshold containing a closed box for donations for charity. In the wall of the compound opposite the holy site there is a room assigned to the holy site keeper.

2. Abu-Snān:

The village is located in Israel's northern coastal region some ten kilometers northeast of Acre. It has a mixed population of Muslims (about half the population), Druze (some 40 percent of the population) and a Christian minority. At the time of the recording the village had less than 10,000 inhabitants, while today the number exceeds 13,000.¹⁰ Abu Snān lies near a group of four more Druze villages in the northern coastal region of Galilee. The Abu-Snān dialect resembles the Druze-Arabic dialects of Yānūḥ and Ḥatt villages more than the dialects of the other two villages of the cluster, namely Yirka and Ḥūlis, which tend toward a different dialectal type.¹¹ In sum, in this part of Galilee three Druze dialectal sub-groups are found, because the dialect of the Druze inhabitants of the city of Šafaḥ [Hebrew; Šfāḥām] also belongs to the northern coastal Druze-Arabic dialectal group. Generally, these dialects differ also from the other Druze-Arabic dialects of the region, especially those on Mount Carmel (ʿIsifya and Dālyit ilKarmil) and a bigger group which contains all the other Upper Galilee Druze-Arabic dialects [Bēt Ḥann, Saḥūr, ʿEn ilAsad, Ḥurfēš, irRāmi, liBqēʿa, Kisra, Kufur Smēʿ], while the dialect of liMgār forms a separate sub-dialectal group. As a whole, all the Druze dialects in Galilee resemble each other since they all preserve the interdental and the ancient *q. All the Druze villages and urban settlements may therefore be distinguished as sub-groups and not as entirely different macro-groups.

⁸ Canaan found many holy sites that contain a cave as a basic element. See *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, pp. 42-46.

⁹ This inscription is Islamic in its spirit, verbalization and terminology; it is carved over the entrance as follows: "بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ لا اله الا الله ومحمد رسول الله عمر هذا المقام المبارك على اسم النبي زكريا عليه السلام سعا في عمارته احقر العبيد احمد ابو زلطة عمره المعلم كيوان وكان الفراغ نهار السبت في خمس عشر خلت من جمادي الاول في سنة الف ومائة وثلاثين للهجرة النبوية والله الموفق لمن عمل خيرا فيه"

"In the name of God the companionate and merciful; there is no God but Allah; the one who built this blessed [=holy] *Maqām* of the Prophet *Zakariyya*, may peace be on him and the person who initiated the idea of building of it is the most despicable slave Aḥmad Abū Zalaṭa and the person who [actually] built it was the architect Kīwān; the completion of construction was on Saturday, 15 days before the end of the [Islamic month of] Jumādā lʿawwal in the year 1130 (=April 16th, 1718); may God prosper the way for anyone who does good in it." Compare Shimon Avivi, "Ha-Mekomot ha-Kdoshim la-Druzim be-Yisrael", pp. 86, he calculates mistakenly the year 1744 AD.

¹⁰ The 1922 census shows that the village had only 518 inhabitants.

¹¹ In Yirka and Ḥūlis there are more pausal forms and also a wide tendency to monophthongation. In Yirka there is also a unique consonant inventory.

2. Local folkloristic traditions on the Prophet *Zakariyya*

The prophet *Zakariyya* is vindictive by nature¹² – a characteristic also manifested in the two texts presented in this article. According to the first of these, when somebody steals¹³ any objects from the holy site, soon enough the prophet takes his revenge, even if the items are marginal and insignificant.¹⁴ Also in this text we are told that the passer-by took only a negligible sum of money – just seven piasters from the money-tray that in the past was placed in the holy site for donations to charity.

As in numerous Palestinian holy sites, the prophet *Zakariyya* compound in Abu-Snān is guarded by an animal. The local animal here is an immense terrifying snake, who also guards the rooms and the cave as well as the garden at the entrance. Several contemporary tales are about this petrifying creature, since it was charged with defending the holy site and also protecting an alleged treasure supposedly buried under an olive tree¹⁵ in the garden. All these stories are confirmed by the site keeper, Mr. Yūsif Xēr.

The prophet's vindictive character is apparently a product of the ominous prophetic spirit of the biblical prophet Zachariah about the end of the days. Still, the prophet can also be beneficent to visitors who kiss the holy site's walls and offer sincere pleas and prayers.

The Druze tradition on *Zakariyya* is based on the Qur'ānic verses on this prophet,¹⁶ on the Jewish traditions and on the biblical book of Zachariah. From the Qur'ān we understand that the prophet *Zakariyyā*¹⁷ begot a son, *Yihyā*, in his old age. More details about the prophet are found in al-Ashrafani's Druze book, which sets these stories in the time of King David, blending them with tales about the building of the temple in Jerusalem, *Israiliyyāt* and traditions about John the Baptist, who according to the Qur'ān was *Zakariyya*'s son.

¹² On the vindictive character of another Druze prophet, *Nabi Hazzūri*, see Aharon Geva-Kleinberger, 2010. "A text in the Arabic dialect of the Druze of Ayn Qinyi/ the Golan Heights." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam (JSAI): Studies in Honour of Prof. Aryeh Levin*, pp. 47-58.

¹³ See also in the biblical book of Zachariah, chapter 5, 3: "And he said to me, "This is the curse that is going out over the whole land; for according to what it says on one side, every thief will be banished, and according to what it says on the other, everyone who swears falsely will be banished."

¹⁴ Mr. Xēr told me a story about the contractor who was building the holy site, who took a plain bucket from the holy site and could not therefore maneuver his car freely, but felt that a spirit was steering it.

¹⁵ Canaan found 16 olive trees growing near holy tombs in central parts of Palestine. See: Tawfiq Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, p. 31

¹⁶ The prophet *Zakariyyā* is referred to seven times in the Quran in chapters *al-ʿImrān*, *al-ʿAnʿām*, *Maryam* and *al-ʿAnbiyāʾ*. According to the Quran, as a gift from God, Zechariah was given a son by the name of John (*Yaḥyā*), a name specially chosen for this child alone. Muslim tradition narrates that Zechariah was 92 years old when he was told of John's birth.

¹⁷ In accordance with Zechariah's prayer, God made John renew the message of God, which had been corrupted by the Israelites and lost. As the Qur'an says: "O Zachariah," (it was said), "We give you good news of a son by the name of John. To none have we attributed that name before." "How can I have a son, O Lord," he said, "when my wife is barren and I am old and decrepit?" (The angel) answered: "Thus will it be. Your Lord said: 'This is easy for Me; for when I brought you into being you were nothing.'" (Zachariah) said: "O Lord, give me a Sign." "Your sign," He answered, "shall be that you shall speak to no man for three days, although you are not dumb."—*Qur'an, sūrat Maryam*, verses 7–10.

3. Major linguistic comments on the text

In the Druze tradition the folk-etymon of the village name Abu-Snān reaches back to the Sheikh who established the village in the 13th century who brandished a tooth-like sword. The Christian account is that Jesus Christ, who sojourned for a while in the village as a child, produced his first tooth there.

Phonological remarks: The Abu-Snān dialect preserves all interdental – as in all Druze dialects in Galilee. It also preserves the ancient *q. Normally the prevailing sound of the ancient *q is /z/ but some words, especially those containing the root √ جمع*¹⁸, evince inconsistency between ġ~ž, with an preponderant tendency to ġ. This feature can be explained on a religious basis: the root in Islam denoting “mosque” [جامع] and “Friday” [جمعة] might have been borrowed; thus the word for “week” is usually ġim^ʿa~ġum^ʿa [e.g. II, 10, 14], but also žim^ʿa~žum^ʿa [e.g. II, 7].

An interesting feature attested in the text is the pausal form *nabayy* [II, 11] for the *nabiyy* [prophet]. Although monophthongation is limited in Abu-Snān, this effect is widespread in Yirka and Žūlis, just a few kilometers south.

Morphological remarks: The keeper of the holy site is called *qiyyim* (<Classical Arabic: *qāʾim* [قائم]) in the Druze dialect of Abu-Snān, while in other Moslem dialects of the region the morpho-phonological form is usually *qāyim~qāyem* or a compounding morphological pattern *qaymaqām* (<قائمقائمًا) which goes back to قائم المقام [=the holy tomb~holy site-keeper]. Interesting is the local Druze feminine form *qiyyami* [<قائمة*], attested in the second text [II, 2, 20].

Expressions: Some temporal expressions in the text connect the plot to the time of occurrence. At first this time-anchoring seems accurate, but in terms of folklore these expressions have inaccurate time frames. In the two texts in this article the plot is set in the British Mandate period in Palestine (1918-1948), as several times the linguistic informant uses the expressions like *zamān ilʔintidāb* [I, 7, 11; II, 1: "During {the British} Mandate Period"]; this expression can occur also in other variants too, such as ^ʿ*a-zaman*¹⁸ -*ilʔintidāb*~^ʿ*a-zaman-ilʔInglīz* [=during the time of the {British} Mandate or during the English time]. These time indications can usually be found at the beginning of a text in order to set it temporally. In folklore apparently, to denote a remote period the linguistic informant names the period of the British, although historically the actual events related could be fluid, flexible and undefined. Other period expressions not found in the text below are also noteworthy; I collected them during my fieldwork among the Druze population of Galilee including Abu-Snān: ^ʿ*a-zaman-ilʔAtrāk* [in the Turkish time¹⁹] or ^ʿ*a-zaman-ʔIsraʔil* [since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948].

The second text contains another temporal expression *lēlit ilġimʿa*, which can be translated literally “the night of Friday.” But it refers to “Thursday evening” [II,2, 10] since in the Druze tradition, as in the Moslem rituals (and even traditionally in Judaism), the day begins with nightfall of the previous day.

Some euphemisms connect the texts to Druze society. These phrases can be understood semantically only in the local Druze environment and can be interpreted

¹⁸ In the Galilee dialects, including the Abu-Snān dialect, we find both *zaman* and *zamān* [=time].

¹⁹ Which lasted for almost four centuries in the Galilee region – until 1918.

differently by the Moslems. One such subtle expression is 'bi-ġa' 'inna'ar' [I, 4] which appears in text, for example, before mention of a Moslem person. A Moslem can understand it blandly – "by the way," but as for the Druze it denotes semantically another group, not them, yet does not offend someone of a different ethnicity who may be listening to the story. Generally, euphemistic expressions are widespread among the Druze of Galilee.²⁰

There is an interesting echo-word used in the second text (*tāl̄ti-ġāl̄ti*) [II, 9] [=the third time or the third try is the crucial one and the most important]. This expression is rare and hardly used, and is almost obsolete nowadays. More common today is the expression *tāl̄ti-tābt̄i* which is not constructed as an echo-word. The root √ġ-l-t̄ is rare in Classical Arabic, albeit attested. It has the meaning of "victorious in a war clash,"²¹ hence "the third attempt in a battle is the one which is most crucial and can be also victorious".

The two texts recorded in 1996 and on my visit in 2015 display some changes in the folklore aspect. One prominent change is in the second text, where the animal responsible for breaking the oil-lamps was not the badger, as in the earlier version, but another animal in the oral stories told by Mr. *Yūsif Xēr* in 2015: it was not a badger (*ġrēri*) [II, 16, 23], but a fox (*ħsēni*). In any event, both animals have the same morphological linguistic pattern of *f'zeli*, a linguistic feature that appears in the local dialect in diminutive.

Another change was that the lady who in the 1996 version was the holy site keeper, had 2015 version become the sister of Mr. *Xēr*, the current holy site keeper, *'Anīsi*. The story in the latter oral version is set "some years ago," while in the second text recorded in 1996 the plot takes place during the British rule of the region.

4. The Texts

I.

1. 'inna maqām 'ismu nNabi Zakariyya šalla Aļļa 'alē. 2. biqūlu innu hū 'abu l'anbiyā' ill 'ihna bin'āmin fihun. 3. 'issa nNabi Zakariyya būdukru qišštu [AGK: ilmakān mawżūd hōn?] - ilmakān mawżūd bi-lqurb min bēti, ya'ni mīt mitir ila l'ziha ššimaliyyi ġarbiyyi. 4. biqūlu fī...šaxš māriq min ilbalad, w hū lyōm min Dannūn²² ya'ni, ba'ariḡš 'iḡa kān ba'ado tayyib 'aw twaffa...muslim bi-ġa' 'inna'ar ya'ni, hāḡa miš ya'ni la-l... 5. 'issa hāḡa maraq min...bi-lqurb min ilmaqām, trayyah bi-žanbu, fī tāqa, min 'adat idDrūz ṭab'an yžūdu bi-ma ya'ni nafshin btismāhilhin, biħuṭtu fī-ha-ṭāqa hāy...kān mawżūd fīha sabi'

²⁰ For example, instead mentioning sexual organs, religious Druzes use the euphemism *maḡāšim* [محاشم] which is considered more delicate and modest.

²¹ "والغلت: الشديد القتال المُرَوِّ لمن طالب أو مارس"

Ibn Man'ūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dār Šādir and Dār Bayrūt, 1955-1956), v.2, pp. 171-172. This expression is actually obsolete, that is, no longer in use in Galilee (compare the negative meaning in Classical Arabic of the expression *الثالثة الأثافي*, in which the third time is always a bad omen; see *Lisān al-'Arab*, v. 14, p. 114:

قال أبو عبيدة: *ثالثة الأثافي* القطعة من الجبل يجعل إلى جانبها اثنتان --- وقال أبو سعيد: *ثالثة الأثافي* معني قولهم رماه الله بثالثة الأثافي أي رماه بالشر.

²² This village is also called *Šēx Dannūn*, near the city of Nahariyya, north of Abu-Snan.

qurūš fi-haḍāk ilwaqt lamma kān...6. ʔiḍan sabiʕ qruš biqūlu hāda iššax...bižūz ʕan qašid, bižūz ma-fakkar ʔinnu ššaqli fīha, ʔinnu mawžūd fi maqām maṭalan...7. ṭimiʕ, ʔaxaḍ issabʕ ʔqruš; bi-ma ʔinnu kānat ilḥayā faqīri wēn ma-kān; hāda lḥaki ʕa-zamān ilʔintidāb. 8. ʔaxaḍ issabʕ ʔqruš...w bi-lqurb min ilmaqām fi nušš qannīnit kāz. 9. ḥīmilha maʕā w rawwaḥ. 10. lamma wišil ʕala lbēt ṭabʕan ḡassal w ḡayyar ʔawaʕi, w qaʕad ʕala lfrāš; maʕadš qām min haḍāk ittarīx illa biqūlu yimkin šahrēn ṭalātī maʕadš qām min lifrāš, fi lʕarabi lʕammi biqūlu "karsaḥ", izzalami. 11. ma-xallūš dakātra, dakātra šaʕbiyyīn, wasfāt ʕarabiyyi šaʕbiyyi...fi lmanṭiqa, ʔaw yomkin dakātra kamān ʔInglīz, ʔilli kānu yištiḡlu fi lmustašfayāt ilʔIngliziyyi...ʕa-zaman-ilʔInglīz, naʕam. 12. maʕišš natīzi, ma-saʕadš ilʕamr. 13. fi lʕāxir ʔiža wāḥad qarīb ʔilu. 14. yā židd...yā sīdu, yā ʕammu, yā wāḥad mn-ilbalad qallu : "ʕammi, ʔinti biširš ʔilla ḡēr ʕāmil ʕamli. hāy lā tuḡtafar, rabbna miš-rah-ysāmḥak ʕalēh, baddak ʔtqulna²³ šū ʕāmil, ʔay kallalna²⁴ ddakātra. 15. hāy kilmit 'kallalna ddakātra' yaʕni... ʔʕabnāhin ʔkīr. 16. qallu: b(i)ddak ʔtqullna šū ʕmilt. 17. qallu: ʔana miš mitḍakkir ʕāmil ʔiši hāda, ʔamma ʔana batḍakkar ʔāxir innḥar illi ʔana ižīt fiyyu la-hōni w qaʕadit, maraqt ʕala nNabi Zakariyya...kān laqēt sabʕ ʔqruš fi ṭāqa, w nušš qannīnit kāz w ʔaxaḍthin maʕāy. 18. qalūlu: hōn bēt ilfaraž...ʔiḍan māxiḍ min inNabi Zakariyya, btiʕrafš ʔinnu hāda māl waqf w ḥarām, yaʕni nnak miš lāzim ʔtqaddim ʕalē? 19. qallhin: hāda ʔilli šār. 20. qāmu l...ʔahlu w ʔaqārbu... badal sabiʕ-qruš xamaštaʕšar qirš, yaʕnu²⁵ ʕaʕfūn²⁶, hēk hēk ʕala ḥaki irrāwi. 21. žamaʕu xamaštaʕšar qirš... w badal qannīnit ilkāz žābu galan²⁷ kāz. 22. wa... qālu la-wāḥad min qarāybīnu²⁸, ʔaxū, ʔibin ʕammu, ʔilli hū : "baddak twaššilni ʕala nNabi Zakariyya ʔilli fi ʔAbu-Snān, šalla lḷā ʕalē". 23. wišṭ...bass waššalhin ʕala nNabi Zakariyya, izzalami qām min lifrāš. 24. qām min lifrāš...qalūlu : "ʔissa, baʕid ʔtqaddim ʕala māl waqf? 25. qallhin: ittōbi. 26. w hāy ilqušša lli badkurha ʔana...smiʕtha min ʔahad yaʕni ʔafrād ilbalad.

II.

1. ʔiḍan, hādi qušša ṭānyi ʕan-inNabi Zakariyya, šalla lḷā ʕalē, ʔilli smiʕtha min qarāyib illi kānu qayymīn ʕala lmaqām iššarīf. 2. būḍukru kamān fi zamān ilʔintidāb ʔinnu lqiyyami, illi kānat mitʕawwdi tinzal ʕala lmaqām, w tiʕwi nnabi lēlit ilimʕa...lēlit ilžimʕa...yimkin maʕrūf ʕind ilkaṭīr nnu hī lēli mḡaddsi ʕind iddrūz. 3. nizlit, ʕawat ilmaqām, w ṭāni yōm nizlit ʕala lmaqām minšān ʔtnaʕʕif ilqandīl, ʔaw issrāž hāda minqullu. 4. lāqat ilqazāzi maksūra, w il..qa...zzēt ʔilli kānu yiʕwu fiyyu ilqindīl³⁰, makkūb ʕala lmaštabi. 5. ṭabʕan ziʕlit... w ʔʔattarat. 6. rawwaḥat. wālat, yaʕni : ʔAlḷa yžāzi ʔilli kān issabab. 7. ṭāni ʔusbūʕ. ṭāni žumʕa kamān, nizlit, ka-lʕādi, ḥatta tiʕwi lmaqām, w ṭāni yōm, nizlit ta-tnaʕʕif ilqandīl ʔaw issrāž...laqatu kamān maksūr miṭl ilḡumʕa lli fātāt. 8. kamān ʔʔattarat w ziʕlit, qālat : ta-nšūf šū bišīr. 9. ṭālīṭ ḡumʕa...kamān hū maʕrūf ʕind ilʔinsān ʔinnu "ittālṭi-ḡālṭi" biqūlu.

²³ ʔtqūlna > ʔtqulna

²⁴ √k-l-l="to exhaust"; rarely used in the colloquial language.

²⁵ A variant of yaʕni.

²⁶ <ʕaʕf

²⁷ English loanword <gallon, borrowed with the consonant /g/.

²⁸ A variant of ʔaqārib.

²⁹ <wišil.

³⁰ A variant of qandīl.

10. *tālīt ġim³¹ nizlit kamān ‘awatu kēkt ilġum³²a...w tāni yōm nizlit ta-tna* ‘if ilqazāzi, laqato³² maksūr. 11. *šū qālat? qālat : ‘ida ‘inti nabayy³³, miš ġādir ti³⁴mal ma³⁵ā ‘iši la-hāda ‘illi biksir ilqazāzi, ‘ay ‘ana šū biddi ‘a³⁶mal ma³⁵ā? 12. ya³⁷ni bižūz hī...‘an-ḥamaq ‘inti nabi miš ġādir ti³⁴mal ma³⁵ā, ‘ana šū baddi ‘aḡdar ‘a³⁶mal ma³⁵ā? fa-rawwaḥat. 13. ‘issa, hāda ba³⁷id-ma ḥakat w rawwaḥat. 14. ilġim³²a rrāb³²a, nizlit ‘awat, ṭab³²an lilmaqām, li-³²annu hēk ilwāžib ya³⁷ni biṭṭalab. 15. tāni yōm iṣṣubih, tannha ka-l’awāyid, biddha tīži tna ‘if ilqazāzi... 16. ‘illi kān yiksir ha-lqazāzi w ykubb izzitāt³⁴...ṭili³⁴...ḡrēri, yā ‘ustāz Fāyiz, ḡrēri, kān mistħiff ‘ala ha-lqandil illi fīyu zēt, kinnu ‘āhir bilḥas izzēt aaw būklu... 17. šū kān yi³⁶mal? ‘idan kān yīži yfūt w yiksir ilqazāzi. 18. ‘amma šū laqatu... fi ḥadāk innhār? 19. laqatu m³⁶allaq raqabtu bēn ilbāb w ilmalban taba³⁶ ilbāb, mašnūq w hū wāqif. 20. ta³⁶ni ṣall llaḥ³⁵‘āla sīdna Zakariyya, ‘istažāb la-kalāmha, la-hāy ilqiyyami w hāy il³⁶ažūz, 21. w ‘illi kān issabab fi kasr ilqazāzi māt ‘a-lmaḥall. 22. w hāy ilquṣṣa biḍkrūha fi³⁶lan, ya³⁷ni ṣārat. 23. fī ‘inna quṣṣa tālt... ma-hū kān yiftaḥu fi ‘ižru la-barra...bti³⁶raf fīyu marṛāt fi ttilfizyōn minšūf ‘ašyā³⁶ min ha-ššikil... 24. badd yiftaḥu la-barra...‘issa mā fawwat rāsu qām... ilbāb, ‘aṣṣ... il...kitfu ma³⁶ raqabtu ‘iliq bēn ilbāb w ilmalban, ‘all³⁶ miyyit ‘a-lmaḥall. 25. qālatlu : ‘issa, ‘ā, ‘issa ya³⁷ṭik il³⁶āfyi! 26. ‘ay ‘i... hāda hēk lāzim yṣṣr min ‘awwal marṛa.*

Translation:

I.

1. We have a holy tomb which is called "Prophet Zakariyya [Zachariah]," may God pray over him. 2. Our ancestors used to say that he is the father of [all] prophets in whom we believe. 3. Now, *Prophet Zakariyya*, we would recall his story [AGK: Is the holy tomb here?] - The holy tomb is close to my house, I mean one hundred meters northwest of it. 4. They used to say... there was a person who was passing through this village, now he lives in *Dannūn*, I don't know if he is still alive or has died...he is Moslem by the way, it is not for... 5. Now, this...person was passing by... near the holy tomb, he wanted to relax; inside there is a tray [for money] at the side, since it is one of the customs of the Druze people to place a sum of money, as far as they are able to give, in this tray...and there were already seven piasters there when he...6. Well, these seven piasters...they say that this person...purposely or maybe he did not realize that there is in the holy tomb for example... 7. He made up his mind and took these seven piasters, since life used to be very poor everywhere; this story occurred during the (British) Mandate (period³⁷). 8. He took these seven piasters... and there was also nearby a small container of petrol. 9. He took them and went away. 10. When he arrived home, he washed himself and changed his clothes and went to sleep in bed; he did not get out of his bed from that time, as people

³¹ A variant of *ġum³²a*.

³² *qazāzi ~qazāz*; the first word is feminine, the second masculine. We might have expected *laqata* here.

³³ A pausal form from *nabi* [=prophet]; see linguistic remarks (3).

³⁴ Here as an undefined quantity of oil.

³⁵ Here deemphatic.

³⁶ ‘*all miyyit* is used here to mean "he was killed."

³⁷ 1918-1948.

say, for maybe two or three months: as we say in colloquial Arabic, "He became disabled." 11. He went to all the popular doctors, folk doctors and [they gave him] popular Arabic prescriptions ... [doctors] from the area or even English doctors, who worked in the English hospitals... I mean, during the British rule. 12. Yet, there was no [good] result, nothing helped. 13. Finally, one of his relatives came. 14. [He said to him:] "Oh my grandpa! Oh my uncle!³⁸ ...my uncle...," or one of the villagers said to him: "My uncle, you must have done a bad thing that cannot be forgiven and God will not forgive you for it; you have to tell us what you have done because we've tired the doctors out." 15. This expression "we have tired the doctors out" means that "we have really exhausted them."³⁹ 16. They said to him: "You must tell us what you've done." 17. He said: "I don't remember doing anything [bad], but I remember that at the end of that day I came here and became a cripple, I passed by the holy tomb of *Zakariyya*... I found seven piasters in the tray and also a container of petrol and I took them with me." 18. They answered him: "This must be the solution... Well, you took [something] from the Prophet *Zakariyya*; don't you know that this money is a charitable religious endowment and you shouldn't have taken it?" 19. He replied: "It happened just like that." 20. His family and his relatives began to...collect money, fifteen piasters instead of those seven piasters – so they doubled the sum of money, according to the prevailing version. 21. They collected fifteen piasters... and instead of the petrol container they brought a whole gallon of petrol. 22. They said to him – one of his relatives, his brother or the son of his paternal uncle, as follows: "You have to take me to the holy tomb of *Zakariyya*, may God pray over him, which is in *Abu-Snān*. 23. He took...as soon as he took them to the holy tomb of *Zakariyya* – this man became healthy again [literally: "he got out of his bed"]. 24. He became healthy again [literally: "he got out of his bed"]; they said to him: "Now, will you ever again dare to take a charitable religious endowment?" 25. He replied: "Now I have repented." 26. This is the story that I remember... I had heard it from someone, I mean from a dweller of the village.

II.

1. Well, this is another story about the [holy tomb of] the Prophet *Zakariyya*, may God pray over him, which I heard from my relatives who once were keepers of the holy tomb. 2. It is said that it too happened during the period of the British rule, that a woman, who was a keeper of the holy tomb, who used to go to the holy tomb to light a candle for the prophet on Thursday evening⁴⁰ ... Thursday evening... it might be known to many that this is a holy evening among the Druze people. 3. She went down in order to light up the holy tomb and the next day she went to the holy tomb to clean up the [residue] of the candles, or the [residue] of the oil-lamp, as we call it. 4. She found the glass broken and

³⁸ Vocative forms to show close relationship.

³⁹ The informant hints sarcastically at a well known adage *فقد أعيت من يداويها* "Every disease has its own cure except stupidity, since it is already exhausted all the doctors who have tried to find a cure for it."

⁴⁰ See 3. Major linguistic comments on the text.

the... oil for lighting the lamp spilt onto the ramp. 5. Of course she became angry... and agitated. 6. She went home and said: "May God punish that person who did it!" [literally: who was the reason for it]. 7. The following week...also the following week, she went down as she usually did, in order to light up the holy tomb, and the next day she went to clean up the [residue] of the candles or the oil-lamp...and this time too she found it broken, like in the week before. 8. This time too she was agitated and angry and said [to herself]: "Let's see what happens now." 9. The third week – as we usually say "Number three is always critical." 10. The third week she also went down to light it up on Thursday evening...and the next day she went to clean up the oil-lamp [here: the glass fragments] and she found it broken. 11. What did she say? She said: "If you are really a prophet, can't you do something to this person who always breaks the glass? [If you cannot] what can I do with him?" 12. Well, maybe she...did it out of stupidity, [saying:] "You're a prophet and you can't do anything about him, so what can I do about him!?" and then she went home. 13. Now, this was after she had said it and had gone home. 14. The fourth week she went down to light it up – of course, the holy tomb, as usual, since it had to be done. 15. The next morning, as usual, she wanted to clean up the glass fragments... 16. The one who broke the glass and spilt the oil...happened to be...a badger...Mr. Fayez,⁴¹ like a badger, who crept around near the oil candle, as if it was licking or eating the oil... 17. What did he do? Well, he would go inside and break the glass. 18. So, what did she discover... that day? 19. She found him hanging by his neck between the door and the doorstep, hanging while upright. 20. This means that the holy *Zakariyya*, may God pray over him, accepted her words, the [words] of that holy tomb keeper, the old lady. 21. And the one who was responsible for breaking the glass – died on the spot.⁴² 22. I still remember this story vividly, since it really happened. 23. We have here a third⁴³ story... It [the badger] opened it with its legs as it was going outside, or with its arms... he opened the door as he was going outside... you know, sometimes we see such things on television... 24. It wanted to open it as it was going outside... well, when it stretched out its arm... the door crushed its... shoulder together with its neck and he was hanged between the door and the doorstep, and it died on the spot. 25. She said to him: "Now, indeed, good for you! [literally: be healthy!⁴⁴]" 26. Meaning it had to be like that from the beginning on.

5. Conclusion

The Druze-Arabic dialect of Abu-Snān village shares common features with other Druze dialects in Galilee, yet it can be regarded as belonging to the northern Arabic coastal dialects in Israel. In a wider sub-grouping it especially resembles a cluster of other Druze villages in that coastal area, especially the nearby villages of Kufr Yasīf, Yanūḥ and Ḥatt,

⁴¹ The informant refers to Mr. Fāyiz Azzām who came with me to the first visit; see 1. Background.

⁴² This expression has a double meaning: a locative and a temporal.

⁴³ The informant did not tell me the third story.

⁴⁴ A sarcastic expression here.

and in a still broader range also to the dialects of Yirka and Žūlis, which comprise other linguistic features.

The recorded texts of 1996 and the oral stories I heard from Mr. Yūsif Xēr in my visit in 2015 differ in some ways. These shifts strengthen the folklore and popular components, and add a touch of color touch and fortify the holiness of the site.

The folktales about the holy site of *Zakariyya* are syncretic in and they preserve old traditions and folk customs, but also some linguistic features which are obsolescent or risk being forgotten, especially in the field of expressions no longer in use. The holy site itself is a good example of traditions about holy places and holy tombs widespread among Palestinians until the middle of the twentieth century, and are preserved in Dalman's, Canaan's and Kahle's studies. These traditions would be condemned to the limbo of forgotten things were there not a holy site, which time and again revives old customs, at times traceable and datable to ancient times.

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DIALECT CONTACT IN THE BEQAA VALLEY (EASTERN LEBANON)

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Abstract. The major aim of this paper is to underline the dialectological interaction which exists between the sedentary and the formerly nomadic Bedouin populations of the Beqaa valley in eastern Lebanon. This type of contact is rare in this country and it seems important to us to give information about it. This study will be based on two axes. At first, we will examine the sedentary borrowings that have made it in the Bedouin varieties and, then, we will take the opposite path. After obtaining the results, we will discuss the conclusions of these contact phenomena as they highlight sociological tendencies.

Keywords: *Bedouin, Sedentary, Lebanon, Beqaa Valley, Contacts, Borrowings*

1. Introduction

The Beqaa valley is located in eastern Lebanon alongside the border with Syria. It stretches from the north to the south of the country and offers a diverse panel of ways of life, communities and climates (Salamé: 1955; 1957, ADL: 2007, 17, 29, 85-87, 113, 122-126). The southern end of the valley, although narrow, is a very fertile ground for agricultural activities and productive purposes as it is also the case in certain central regions of the Beqaa valley. On the opposite, the northern parts of the valley as well as the piedmont of the Anti-Lebanon mountain range correspond to the driest regions of the country and are not suitable for agriculture. Consequently, this zone is the main pastoral area of Lebanon since it receives no more than 200mm of precipitation per year.

These facts lead the populations of the Beqaa valley to look eastward towards central Syria as it always appeared to them as their natural outlet. The result of this attitude is that long-time contacts have taken place between the populations of this region. We find in the Beqaa valley Arabic communities belonging to several sectarian and/or social groups (Shiites, Sunnis, Maronites, Greek catholic, Alawites and Bedouins) as well as Armenian (Migliorino: 2008), Turkmen (Oytun: 2010) and Gypsy communities (p.c. from Herin Bruno).

The great majority of the Bedouin tribes living in the Beqaa valley are nowadays settled. Some semi-nomadic groups still exist but the pastoral way of life as it was the rule some decades ago vanished in the eighties as a consequence of the Lebanese civil war (Younes: 2014). A lot of these tribes live side by side with sedentary villages, of which some are Shiites, others Sunnis or even Maronites (personal data). An areal contact phenomenon rose from this great vicinity. This contact process is spreading bidirectionally since it occurs in both sedentary and Bedouin communities. Due to these

peculiarities, the investigated varieties of Arabic display characteristics which are not to be found in other related dialects. Hence, this creates a particular transitional zone.

Our inquiry focused on four Maronite villages: *Dayr ʔl-ʔAḥmar*, *z-Zarāzīr* (small hamlet in the « suburb » of *Bəšwēt*), *Barʔa* and *ʔAynēta* for what concerns the sedentary dialects. On the other hand, the harvested data is compared with the material obtained from two Bedouin Sunni tribes, the *ʔAbu ʔId* and the *ʔIdīn*, respectively investigated in the villages of *Hōš an-Nibi*¹ and *ʔağ-Ğirāhiyyä*. The whole corpus is about ten hours and was recorded with an Olympus LS-11 dictaphone, read by ELAN and transcribed by Word.

Mainly, the data is composed of spontaneous speech - sometimes including several actors - in which speakers of different ages and sexes have been asked to participate. In addition to this, a quite respectable part of the corpus is composed of tales talking about the desert heroes of the past and recalling the virtues of the nomadic life. Sometimes, elicitation was used to clarify some verbal or pronominal paradigms as well as some lexical items. Last but not least, some samples of poetry are to be found in the data gained from certain Bedouin speakers.

¹ The village is composed of some settled *ʔAbu ʔId* tribesmen living alongside a Shiite sedentary community of little peasants and land-owners.

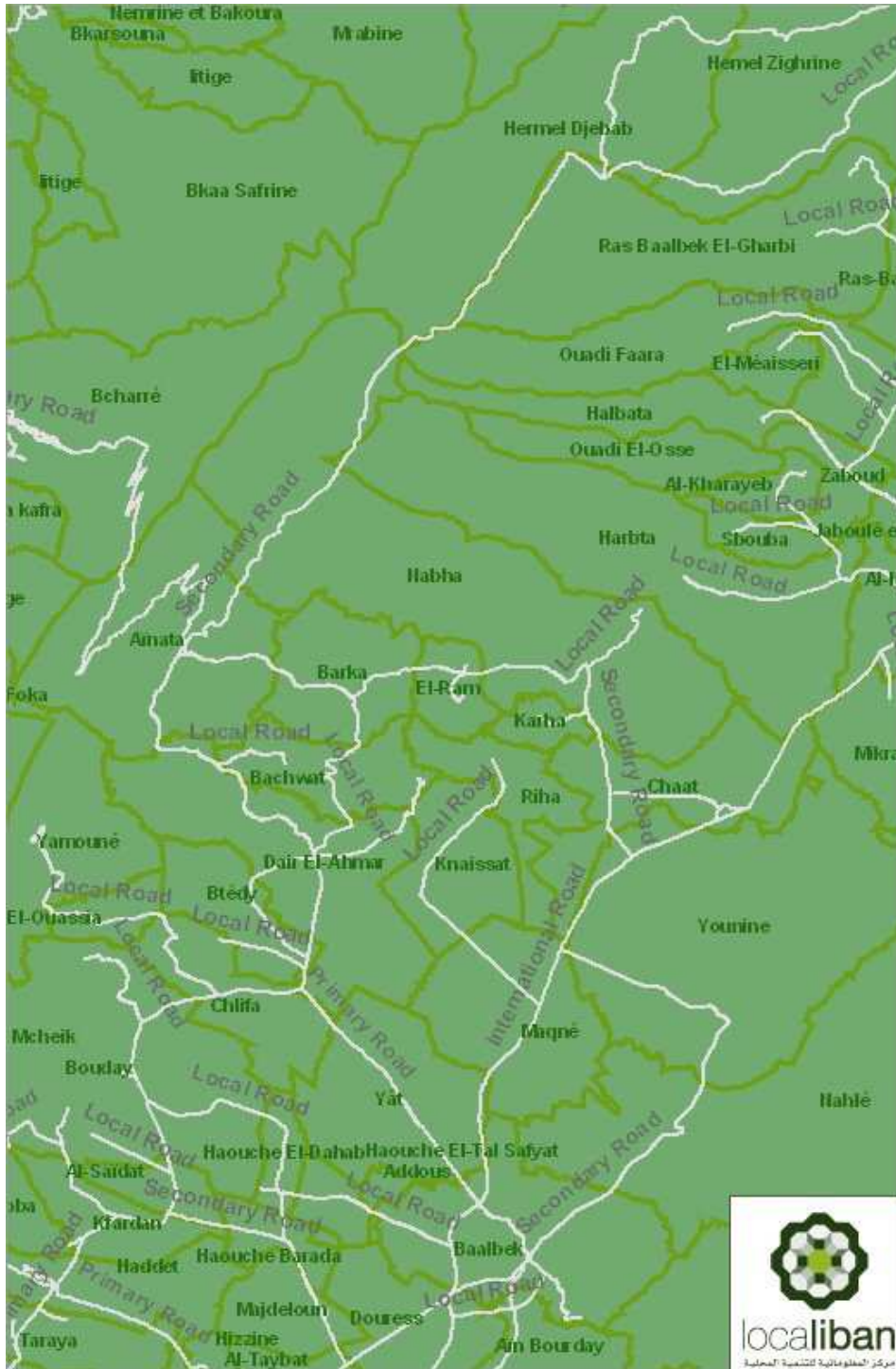


Figure 2. Geographical localizations of the Maronite villages investigated

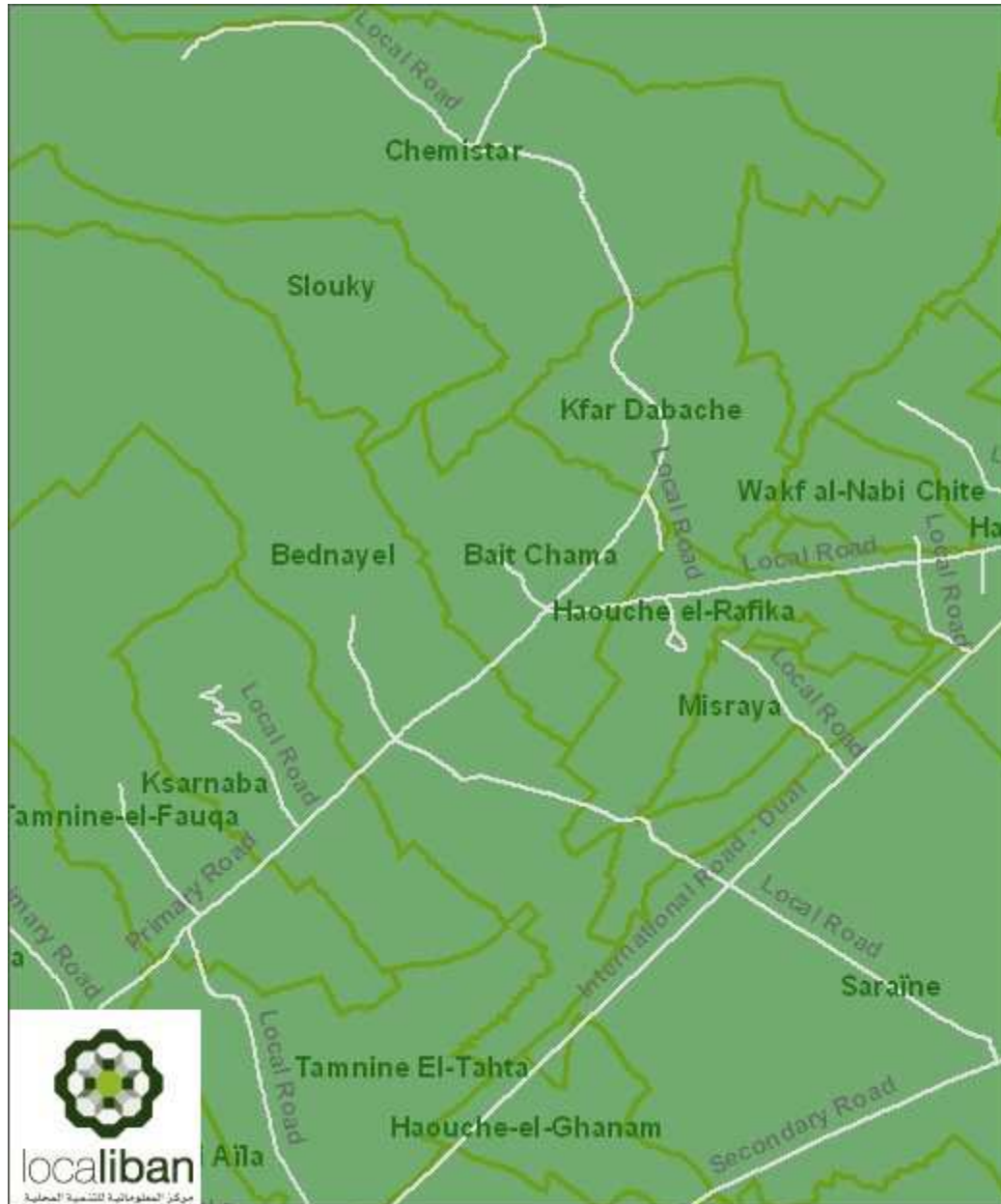


Figure 3. Geographical localizations of the investigated tribes²

² The two tribal villages investigated do not appear on the map of Table 3, they are located in the Bait Chama district.

This study will be organized to put in contrast the different branches of the grammar affected by these contact phenomena. First of all, we will focus on the sedentary borrowings which have made it in the Bedouin varieties and, then, we will take the opposite path.

2. Sedentary borrowings in Bedouin dialects

Phonology

1) The pausal and non-pausal diphthongization (/aw/)

The Bedouin dialects spoken in the Beqaa valley are mainly from the sheep-breeder type or - in other words - from the C group as rambled by Cantineau (Cantineau: 1937, 226-229). However, the investigated tribes belong to the Ca group (personal data). Both groups - C and Ca - are not characterized by diphthongization if compared to other related varieties, whether in Syria, Jordan or elsewhere (Cantineau: 1936; 1937). On the opposite, some sedentary Lebanese dialects are well-known for having maintained historical diphthongs */aw/ and */ay/ (Iványa: 2006, 642).

- (1) *'ummahāwt-na* *w-ḥabbābāwt-na* *kúll-hən* *idúggan* *'ala-šdūr-hən*
 mothers-1pl grandmothers-1pl ADV-3fpl to_knock.3fpl PREP-chests-3fpl
 “Our mothers and our grandmothers, all of them make tattoos on their chest.”

- (2) *'aš-šibāwb* *u-l-banāwt#*
 ART-young_men CON-ART-girls
 “The young men and the girls.”

2) Dental realizations of historical interdentalals */d̪/ and */t̪/

On some lexemes, some roots or some demonstrative forms, we have noticed the switch of the historical interdentalals */d̪/ and */t̪/ to the respective dentals /d/ and /t/. Bedouin dialects are usually characterized by the preservation of the three interdentalals /d̪/, /t̪/ and /d̪/ (/d̪/ < */d̪/ and */t̪/) even though some isolated clans do not display this feature (Arnold: 1998; 2006, 112 and personal data). The loss of these historical realizations to the benefit of the sedentary ones is another example of the permanent interaction between the two communities.

- (3) *nīštī* *b-árđ* *al-Gōʿ* *b-al-blād* *hādīč*
 to_spend_winter.PRES.1pl PREP-earth al-Gōʿ PREP-ART-village DEM
 « We spend winter around *al-Gōʿ*, in that zone over there. »

- (4) *'al-klašinkōf* *yúdrub* *əb-tányä* *talāitīn* *đárub*
 ART-kalashnikov to_hit.PRES.3msg PREP-second thirty shot
 « The kalashnikov shoots thirty shots per second. »

Morphology

1) Lengthening of the short stressed vowel on certain schemes

Actually, this feature is a morphophonological interface in which the phonotactic analysis is required. Nevertheless, we have decided to put it in the morphological branch of the grammar. When we are dealing with schemes as *C₁áC₂C₃ or *máC₁C₂aC₃, the stressed vowel can - as it is the case in the sedentary varieties of the *Biqā* ' valley and of the *Bšarre* district - become long (personal data). Once again, Bedouin dialects of the region do not exhibit this peculiarity strengthening the idea of an areal-type borrowing.

- (5) *ṭābul* *u-zámur* *u-šə 'ōr*
 Drum CON-flute CON-poets
 « [With] drums, flutes and poets. »
- (6) *'a-l-xádd* *u-hīna* *ygūlū-lha* *mārwad*
 PREP-ART-cheek CON-ADV to_say.PRES.3mpl-3fsg *mārwad*
 « On the cheek and here, we call it *mārwad* (a certain kind of tattoo). »

Note that in example (6) the /r/ of *mārwad* is not pharyngealized. In fact, as the long vowel /ā/ is not etymologic, the spreading of the pharyngeal trait did not happen in the word. Thus, we have to posit the existence of a particular vowel /ā/ which exists as an allophone of /a/. In consequence, this vowel is phonetically long (in surface) but phonologically short (etymologically).

Syntax

1) Genitive exponent

Normally, the different Bedouin dialects are not distinguished by their frequent use of the genitive exponent. Construct state is, by far, preferred (Rosenhouse: 2006, 266; Taine-Cheikh: 2006, 248). In that sense, these varieties are maintaining an “ancient” state of the Arabic language. Nevertheless, it is not rare to find some Bedouin speakers using from time to time a sedentary particle in order to form the genitive exponent. In the surveyed zone, the sedentary dialects mainly use the particle *tāba* ' which can be augmented by the bounded suffix pronouns (Näim: 2009, 181). This particle has been sporadically recorded only from young Bedouin speakers. This may also infer a generational variation amongst the receptiveness of the borrowings.

- (7) *'al-əxtúma* *táb* *aš-šyúx* *əmn-as-Sə 'ūdíyyä*
 ART-seals GEN ART-patriarchs PREP-ART-Saudi_Arabia
 « The patriarchs' (tribal) seals come from Saudi Arabia. »

Lexicon

It is interesting to notice that the only grammatical branch which is free from sedentary borrowings in the Bedouin varieties is the lexical one. In fact, this branch will always be perceived by the Bedouin collective unconscious as « inferior » in terms of authenticity when compared to the Bedouin dialects which is, indeed, rather true (Younes & Herin: 2013, 54). Consequently, we did not observe any example of lexical borrowings in our quite sound corpus.

3. Bedouin borrowings in sedentary dialects

Phonology

As it is the case on the lexical side for sedentary borrowings in Bedouin dialects, a grammatical branch is lacking Bedouin borrowings in sedentary varieties: the phonological one. Here again, the collective unconscious plays his role. The sedentary speaker is not able to assimilate the Bedouin phonology. Furthermore, this reticence is reinforced by the fact that the most striking Bedouin phonological feature in the region is the conditioned affrication of */k/ and */q/ in /č/ and /ğ/. This hallmark is so typical that Bedouin themselves are aware of it. Indeed, when a camel-breeder tribe settles in a sheep-breeder environment for a certain time (as it is the case for the *'Abu 'Īd* and the *'Īdīn*), the first levelling process that occurs is the adaptation of the conditioned affrication to the sheep-breeder tribe's phonology (Cantineau: 1937).

Morphology

1) The upholding of the /h/ in the suffix pronoun

In certain cases, the /h/ of the 3fsg suffix pronoun is kept. Especially when bounded to kinship terms. It may not be a clear borrowing from the Bedouin dialects because of its lexicalized aspect and its absence in the suffix pronoun of other persons. If this is the case, it may then be a “respect mark” similar to the pharyngealization of /l/ in the word *'allāh* “God” (Ferguson: 1956, 446-448) or a reminder from a southern areal diffusion. Whatever it be, the sedentary varieties of Lebanon do not exhibit this peculiarity (El-Hajjé: 1954, 34; Grotzfeld: 1967, 292; Naïm: 2006, 279) while, on the other hand, this feature is present in nearly all Bedouin dialects (Cantineau: 1936, 1937; Den Heyer: 1980-1981, 60; Rosenhouse: 1982, 23; 1984, 514; 2006, 264; Talay: 2007, 6; El-Khalaf: 2011, 18; Younes & Hérin: 2013, 42).

- (8) *mən-báyy-hö* *w-`úmm-hö*
 PREP-father-3fsg CON-mother-3fsg
 « From her father and her mother. »

Moreover, on the other side of the *ʿAynēta* pass, on the western slope of the Mount-Lebanon mountain range (*Bšarre* district), we find realizations maintaining the /h/ of the suffix pronoun in lexemes which are not related to kinship³.

- (9) *w-b-əš-šáte* *mənbí'-hö*
 CON-PREP-ART-winter to_sell.INA.1pl-3fsg
 « We will sell them in winter. »

Syntax

1) The existential phrase marker

Syntactically, what strikes the most is the use of certain forms for the existential phrase marker. Normally, the sedentary varieties of Lebanon have *fí* “there is”. The four investigated Maronite villages had - alongside the “standard” *fí* - forms as *bí* or *mábi* for marking negation. These forms must be considered as intermediary between the common sedentary realization (*fí*) and the Bedouin form that we encounter in the region: *bú*. The vocalism is inherited from the sedentary dialects while the consonantism is conforming to Bedouin varieties. Even though, it is not a direct borrowing, there is no doubt about the Bedouin form’s influence. This hybrid form seems to resist to the more common one as it has been recorded from several young speakers. It is also present on the western slope of the Mount-Lebanon mountain range, more precisely in the region of *Bšarre* (personal data).

- (10) *bí* *ʿənd-na* *ʿarba mūt* *rōs* *gánəṃ*
 EXIST PREP-1pl four_hundred head ovines
 « We have four hundred heads of sheep. »
- (11) *mábi* *gér* *əbšarṛānīyye* *hōn*
 NEG.EXIST ADV people_from_Bšarre ADV
 « Here, there is only people from *Bšarre*. »

Lexicon

Unlike what is happening for the borrowings going from the sedentary dialects to the Bedouin varieties, the Bedouin lexicon seems to be valued, at least by some sedentary speakers. We think that it is explainable by the same reasons that make Bedouin speakers

³ In this region, the Maronite populations of both sides of the Mount-Lebanon mountain range are strongly linked by matrimonial alliances, clannish affiliation and political orientation (personal data).

stay away from the sedentary lexical domain. The number of these lexical borrowings is quite substantial. Because this modest study does not have the pretention of exhaustiveness, we will present only four items, two nouns and two verbs.

- (12) *nēs* *mən-rabá'-na* *byízra 'o* *duḫḫōn*
 people PREP-clan-1pl to_cultivate.INA.3pl tobacco
 « Members of our clan cultivate tobacco. »
- (13) *'ābn* *əj-jáməl* *mən 'úl-lo* *ḥwōr*
 son ART-camel dire.INA.1pl newborn_camel
 « We say newborn camel for the camel's son. »
- (14) *'an-yisáwlaḥ* *'an-yəḥki* *yá 'ne*
 PROG-to_speak.INA.3msg PROG-to_speak.INA.3msg that_is
 « *sawliḥ* means to speak. »
- (15) *tlēt* *sē 'ēt* *əz-zálme* *bináffəd* *hawník*
 three (f.) hours ART-man to_arrive.INA.3msg ADV
 « The guy arrives over there in three hours. »

4. Summing up

The first assessment that we can take in this study is that the borrowings occur bidirectionally. The frequency is as high in both groups and prevents us from grasping a particular tendency towards this or that prestige variety. However, there is no doubt about the fact that the sedentary dialects are the majority in the inquired zone. To realize certain tendencies for what concerns the borrowings, we must examine this or that grammatical branch with a closer look. Once this is done, we notice that, from both sides, only three of the four grammatical branches display borrowings coming from the other dialectal group. Last but not least, a sociological tendency shows itself in the nature of the borrowings. On the sedentary side, Bedouin phonology is rejected because of its “bizarre” nature while on the Bedouin side, sedentary lexicon is moved aside because of its innovative and modern tendencies.

5. Conclusion

The investigated region represents only a small part of the north-central Beqaa valley. Thus, it is hasty to draw a clear conclusion or to extract some rules linked to these areal propagations. Consequently, at the moment, we cannot do more than invite researchers to investigate deeply the zone in order to list the dialects and the languages in use in this

region⁴. In a second phase, the gleaned data will permit the drawing of representative maps according to the formerly retained isoglosses. Lastly, the sum of all this will allow us to establish a complete typology of the idioms used in the Beqaa valley. This task will be harsh but fascinating.

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 PHOTO 2 & 3 are taken from the website: <http://www.localiban.org/>
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⁴ We know from now on that five different languages are spoken in the Beqaa valley: many varieties of sedentary and Bedouin Arabic, Turkmen, Armenian, Domari (gypsy communities) and Kurdish (pardon communities).

IV. BOOK REVIEWS

Muhammad al-Sharkawi, *History and Development of the Arabic Language*, London and New York, Routledge, 2017, 274 p. ISBN 978-1-138-82152-1

GABRIEL BIȚUNĂ

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The book consists of an introductory section, which includes “List of Maps”, “Preface”, “Introduction” and a section about the geography and demography of pre-Islamic Arabia. It also consists of four other chapters, entitled “PART 1. Sources of the study of Arabic” (pp. 19-48), “PART 2. Pre-Islamic Arabic” (pp. 49-128), “PART 3. Arabic and Islam and diaspora” (pp.129-202), “PART 4. Classical Arabic” (203-226), as well as a section dedicated to “Conclusions” (pp. 227-229), followed by an Appendix section with tables, references and indexes (pp. 230-245).

The “Introduction” contains a noteworthy remark from the author, where al-Sharkawi states that “although Arabic is one of the classic well-established Semitic languages, its internal position among its peers in the family is far from settled, and its status as a language vis-à-vis other Semitic dialects is also growing to be a burning question and a subject for further study and sometimes speculation.” (p. xvii) The entire discussion revolves around the issue of Arabic dialects, the spoken varieties of Arabic, which coexisted with the written form for more than a millennium.

In Part 1 (Sources of the study of Arabic), the author discusses the importance of different types of data for Classical Arabic, analyzing aspects such as the way Arabs perceived their own language, especially after the revelation of the Qur’an; the Arabic language found in the Qur’an and its importance in early Islamic education; the language used in pre-Islamic poetry; dialects, recorded in pre-Islamic poetry and in the centuries that followed by Arab grammarians, considered as a source of data, all of which guide the reader to a better understanding of how Arabic has developed, not only in its written form, but in its spoken one as well.

Part 2 (Pre-Islamic Arabic) is mainly a descriptive section of the book, including chapters about attitudes that traditional Arab, modern Arab and Western scholars have towards the linguistic circumstance in the peninsula during the pre-Classical Arabic era;

descriptions of medieval Arab grammarians of various pre-Islamic dialects (like Hijaz, Yemen, Huḍayl, Tamīm, etc.); discussions about the development of these dialects diachronically, as well as the way they are grouped together geographically; a brief, yet thorough discussion about the morphology of the dual paradigm, as extracted from medieval sources; an analysis of the situation of the case system (phonological and morphological data) in all the major dialectal groups of pre-Classical Arabic.

Part 3 (Arabic after Islam and diaspora) concentrates on the development and emergence of Arabic dialects in the Middle East and North Africa, as a result of the religious influence of Islam in the region, the conquests of the Arabs (which have led to Arabic becoming the *lingua franca* of many peoples, as well as having many languages which came in contact with Arabic, have some level of influence on its development), the arabicization of non-Arabic speakers (a section which discusses theories which claim that, after the conquests, the new vernaculars are the by-products of an incomplete learning process of the language, pp. 177-188). There is also a section entitled “Dialect division” (pp. 189-201), which briefly touches on the division of sedentary and Bedouin dialects, communal dialects, as well as language islands.

Part 4 (Classical Arabic) touches on the pre-Classical phase of the Classical Arabic, until the emergence of Islam (with notes on phonology and morpho-syntax, as well as the pre-existent language levels of the Qur’an language vs. the language varieties employed in pre-Islamic poetry); the beginning of Classical Arabic (after the Arab grammarians had begun describing it in the 8th century). An interesting note is that “the selection of pre-Classical Arabic to become the official language of religious prestige is not incidental. It is natural and organic. The choice of the pre-Classical variety for the *Qur’an* allowed the variety its high status in comparison to the other varieties of Arabic in the peninsula” (p. 225).

In the “Conclusion” chapter, the author points out some remarkable notes, such as the fact that one of the most important generators for the development and spread of the Arabic language outside the Arabian Peninsula and into the Middle East and North Africa was the Qur’an, but also that “the New Arabic vernaculars with their daily communicative functions could have been separate from the Classical Arabic variety. Classical Arabic became a language of learning and literature in a largely illiterate society” (pp. 227-229).

Maḥmūd al-^cAšīrī. 2014. *Aš-šīr sardan: dirāsa fī naṣṣ al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* (“Poetry as Narrative: A Study in the Text of the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*”). Beirut: Al-mu’assasa al-^carabiyya li-d-dirāsāt wa-n-našr. 364 p. ISBN: 978-614-419-401-0

OVIDIU PIETRĂREANU

The first aspect that stands out when approaching the book of Maḥmūd al-^cAšīrī for anyone interested in classical Arabic poetry is that it appears, by its very title, to be a far aiming endeavor. It becomes clear, from the very beginning, that he seeks to contribute to a decisive reevaluation of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry in a matter that seems to have been pretty much settled and to enjoy a broad consensus within the specialized circles, namely the widely accepted and oft-repeated idea that this poetry does not have a narrative dimension per se, and, if there are passages where such a dimension can be detected, they are not to be ascribed the function of conveying a story, but, based on their internal structure and on their place within the text as a whole, rather that of conjuring up, or even alluding to, events or narratives already integrated into the fabric of the intended public’s collective memory, functioning as devices generally meant to serve an argumentative purpose.

The corpus used for this undertaking is the collection of poems known as *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, named after their compiler, the Arab philologist al-Mufaḍḍal aḍ-Ḍabbī (VIIIth century CE). This work is described in detail in the last section of the introductory chapter, which also contains the reasons why it was chosen, chief among which are the fact that it is reputedly the oldest Arabic poetry collection, its widespread popularity and authority among the literati of the subsequent eras, the diverse authorship of its poems, their variety in terms of both size and content and their representativeness for the Arab society of their age, all these qualities being deemed suitable to provide the study with a solid basis for its findings (pp. 36-42).

The author sets out to challenge the assumption that pre-Islamic poetry is exclusively lyric and lacks a real narrative dimension by painstakingly gathering a broad array of data and arguments pertaining to modern narrative theories and other fields of knowledge like semiotics, anthropology, mythology. In the foreword (pp. 9-12), the concern for this topic is linked to a broader interest in literary and, more particularly, narrative structure and the way in which its components interact and contribute to the dynamics that breathe life into the literary work. One of the most salient starting points in his argumentation is that poetry was “the genre of genres” in the pre-Islamic Arab milieu, the activity that was unanimously enjoying the highest, unchallenged status of a fully recognized and appreciated literary art form. This unrivaled prestige was correlated with poetry benefiting from a concentration of efforts and talents that would have otherwise

been invested in developing different literary genres, which makes it possible for poetry, in this context, to be taken as an equivalent of that which, in other cultural or linguistic areas, would be literature as a whole. Therefore, ascribing to pre-Islamic Arabic poetry a solely lyric character, to the exclusion of all other possible framings, is unjustifiably restrictive and unfit for its complexity; on the contrary, one is entitled, in the author's view, to try and hope to find in this literary corpus whatever one can legitimately look for in different genres in other literary traditions: various types of texts and content, such as narratives, elements of drama, argumentative passages, covering themes ranging from homiletics to polemics, praise, satire, elegy, celebration of love, etc.

The introductory chapter contains a series of considerations aiming to pave the way for the detailed exposition of the author's reasoning in the two following chapters (each of which is divided into three sections, further divided in their turn, with a few exceptions, into several studies), beginning with an effort to considerably widen the scope of the central concepts involved in his ample demonstration. Among the first concepts subjected to this operation is narration itself, which is afforded a recognition going far beyond the boundaries of literature and literary texts, being taken as an all-permeating presence in our lives (narration is further discussed with the same purpose of arguing in favor of expanding its boundaries, with the support of definitions and perspectives provided by modern and post-modern critique, at pp. 31-36). Narratives are deemed to mold, and interact with, the most fundamental aspects of our existence, such as individual and collective identities, which are deemed to be in a continuous interaction with narratives that can be both imaginary and rooted in history, so that, in the particular context of poetry, narratives having played such a pivotal role in shaping the reader's background are bound to have an impact upon his reception of the poetic discourse. It is also assumed that this very same factor comes into play when it comes to poetry being created - in the particular case of pre-Islamic Arab culture, and especially if one recalls the initial thesis of poetry being, for pre-Islamic Arabs, an all-embracing creative activity corresponding to literature as a whole in other cultures, it becomes, quite expectedly, a receptacle of their most diverse and, at the same time, representative, experiences, values and convictions, qualifying as a heritage shared by all Arabs, irrespective of their social status or religious affiliation, and thus revealing some important aspects of their "narrative identity" (pp. 15-19).

A similar approach is favored in engaging with the concept of literary genre, which, after a review of the theoretical views on the subject of some of the leading modern literary critics (Mikhail Bakhtin, Tzvetan Todorov), is described mainly as a dynamic reality, with one particular genre being morphed by different audiences, works, types of content, as well as by its constant interaction with other genres (pp. 19-21). In connection with this view, the exclusively lyric character that is generally attributed to pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is linked to the static view of the concept, rooted in the European traditional literary theory dominating the Arab scene since the *Nahḍa* and going back all the way to Aristotle's tripartite classification of poetry (dramatic, epic and lyric). The fact that Arabic poetry seems to fit best in one of these three categories is taken as a proof for the fact that the European theory of literary genres is just not a suitable tool for the analysis of this corpus, which takes the author back to his initial considerations about Arabic poetry encompassing, albeit in a germinal state, many an element which would

have become a full-fledged genre in a different literary tradition (the metric system and the rhythms it produced, taken as an integral, undetachable part of the *qaṣīda*, are pointed to as a possible hindrance having prevented such a development from actually taking place). This position is strengthened by references to statements about poetry of pre-modern Arab authors that revolve more or less around the famous adage *aṣ-ṣīr ru dīwānu l-^ḥarab*, which, in the light of all these considerations, is reinterpreted so as to signify not only that poetry is the depository of the Arabs' knowledge and traditions, but also that it really does contain the potentiality of all literary genres (pp. 21-28).

The first chapter (*Aṣ-ṣīr wa-sard al-ḥayāh*) begins with a section titled *Aṣ-ṣīr wa-sard al-wāqī^ḥ*, which opens with a discussion about the multidimensionality of literary works, envisaged here primarily as a reflection of their functioning as "signs" in the semiotic meaning of the term. Literary works are said to reunite a series of apparently contradictory qualities (artistic value and existential relevance, timelessness and historicity, independence and relatedness). The first constituent of each of these binomials is often highlighted at the expense of the other by virtue of the very nature of a literary text, understood primarily as a work of art, whose value is supposed to be intrinsic rather than reliant on external props. Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is no exception in this regard – the independent, imaginative function of these texts is the dominant one, which does not preclude them from also exerting an informative function. Whatever elements of reality a poem might point to, however, are transformed by its dominant function, becoming relevant not for an objective, referential reality, but for a "textual" one, where the conventions of the literary genre and the dominant discourse of society as a whole come into play. These seemingly unassuming elements (the remains of an encampment, the desert, the rain, the wine, the spear, the horse, the camel etc.) point to specific realities corresponding to the physical environment of pre-Islamic Arabs, but also take part, at the same time, in conveying the multifaceted narrative of the poet's life and inner being, of his society, its values and its collective conscience, together with a whole aesthetic experience distilled in the matured form eventually taken on by this genre and its conventions (pp. 47-54). These views are exemplified by the Arab poets' fondness for mentioning placenames and other proper nouns in their poems, in connection with their *nasībs* and, more precisely, with the topos famously known as *al-bukā'/al-wuqūf ^ḥalā l-^ḥaṭṭal*, as well as with other themes, deemed a literary device supporting a narrative whose conveying relies, to a considerable extent, on the audience's familiarity with the real places and people referenced by those names (pp. 54-58). The author then proceeds to investigate the features that have come to be commonly associated with both fictional and historical narratives – such as thematic unity and cause and effect relationships within a temporal frame – noticing that narratives in pre-Islamic poetry do not necessarily run along these lines, but often choose to capture one particular moment or scene from a whole sequence of events, in order to highlight a moral or social value readily perceivable for the audience addressed by the poet. The basic building blocks of a narrative are, moreover, identifiable as such and they are shown to interact in a meaningful way in a series of examples (pp. 59-65). The investigation is carried on by a look into passages where the poet appears to be asking for his message to be delivered to a third, absent party. These passages are taken as a reflection of the primarily oral character of the cultural milieu that gave birth to Arabic poetry, given that they bear witness to the

author's attempt to convey his message not only to that third, individual or collective, party, but also to a generally wider audience, extending beyond those who are directly exposed to the poet's work through his own recitation. Another interpretation, not necessarily mutually exclusive with the previous one, posits that the poet's not deigning to personally deliver his message to his addressee(s) could reflect his desire to point to a hierarchical relationship whereby he holds a superior position, or to another situation not easily compatible with the two parties coming in contact with each other. All these and other possible interpretations are presented as proof of the openness of the *qaṣīdas* containing such passages towards the realms of the temporal and the historic, towards the referential world lying beyond the literary text (pp. 67-76). Another line of reasoning pursued by the author takes him to the field of pragmatics, as this discipline seems particularly suited to provide the necessary tools for challenging the perception of the *qaṣīda* as a "closed" text. This approach is justified by the assumption that narratives can be subordinated to the pragmatic functions of a text, can be adopted as a means to enhance its illocutionary and perlocutionary functions, especially if one takes into account the primary setting of the utterance of a *qaṣīda* and its role in supporting a rather complex network of social connections. The recorded cases of poems that acted as perlocutionary utterances (by, for instance, proclaiming or breaking an alliance), or those poems in which formally assertive statements are used to perform illocutionary acts (such as blaming or issuing threats) are seen as examples of language and literature in general, and narratives in particular, breaking their barriers and reaching out to the real world, to the referential plane. The emergence of this continuum reuniting the literary work with reality involves the poet himself – the distinction between him as a real person and him as a character becomes more or less irrelevant when the effectiveness of his threats relies on his credibility as an individual or as a representative of his tribe. The discussion of this point includes a series of examples illustrating different ways in which poems become pragmatically significant acts, ending with considerations about the paramount importance of the elements of meaning which become involved in sustaining these acts and their lying at the center of the semantic network reuniting the whole poem, including those elements which can be deemed to have a narrative nature (pp. 77-91).

The second section of the first chapter (*Aṣ-ṣīr wa-sard al-'uṣṭūra*) deals with the mythical dimension of some of the narrative elements of the pre-Islamic *qaṣīda*. The concept of "myth" operated with here is defined, from different angles, as a "recurrent narrative formula", a secondary symbolic system based on language as a primary one, an expression of collective and deep-rooted attitudes towards generally major existential issues such as life, death or the divine. A closely linked concept used in this context is the "scenario", seen here as a frame already embedded in the collective conscience of a community, consisting of a certain amount of stable elements succeeding each other according to a preexisting system, which makes it a valuable tool for detecting a myth when only a few of its narrative constituents are explicitly present in a poem (pp. 95-97). The two following studies are dedicated to the myths of the "wild bull" and the "wild donkey", seen as telling embodiments of the ways in which myths can contribute to upholding the narrative dimension of the *qaṣīda*. The myth of the wild bull is first described by emphasizing the stable elements of its scenario (revolving around the bull's struggle to escape from the hunter and his dogs) and the recurring expressions used to

depict the different stages of its unfolding, then it is placed within the most likely contexts provided by the pre-Islamic poetic tradition, where its different elements and possible outcomes are used to interact with, and capacitate, other key elements that play a part in conveying the poem's overall message. One of the main aspects highlighted by means of a considerable number of examples is the way in which poets make use of allusions, of selective references to the scenario, that can work as narrative elements integrating the scenario they belong to into the fabric of the text, acquiring their effectiveness and evocative power from the scenario being embedded in the cultural background of the audience. The values being communicated by these means can cover a broad range, pertaining to such fundamental issues as man's engagement with his environment, with matters of life and death. The myth does belong, to a great extent, to the Arab poetic tradition, but, at the same time, it can also be at least tentatively treated as a very distant reflection of ancient sacred myths. At this point, the author outlines some of the Middle Eastern mythological elaborations weaved around the bull and associating it with different deities (such as Atum and Osiris in Egypt, Almaqah in the South Arabian pantheon and Baal in Ugarit), noticing in particular the strong parallels between the bull's struggle and Baal's conflicts with rival deities in the Ugaritic pantheon. The author ends this study by summarizing the symbolic aspects of the bull's story, noticing that the features ascribed to the bull and the scenes that depict its behavior in coping with its ordeals make it fit to play the part of a totemic figure, epitomizing the forces of life and death and also entailing a possible sacred dimension going back to a distant, barely discernible spiritual heritage dimly echoed by the Arab poets' creation (pp. 99-143). The study of the wild donkey's myth goes along more or less similar lines: it begins with an outline of the stable, recurrent elements of the myth's scenario, then, in close connection with the wider contexts encompassing them, it identifies the values they communicate to a discerning audience (not without pointing to the similarities and differences between the two myths – one of the main differences is the apparent lack of any grounding in a sacred, transcendental dimension of the wild donkey story, a fact which, however, is not seen by the author as diminishing its mythical status) (pp. 145-158).

The third and last section of this chapter (*Al-ḥabar hāmišan ʿalā l-qaṣīda: min sard al-qaṣīda ʿilā sard al-ḥabar*) tackles a particularly sensitive issue for any attempt to prove that narratives have a significant presence in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. One of the strongest factors contributing to the reinforcement of the idea that this poetic tradition is a predominantly non-narrative one is, by the author's own admission, a longstanding reality when it comes to reading, understanding and enjoying its output – pre-Islamic Arabic poems are often read together with commentaries written by well established names of pre-modern Arabic philology, wherein it is a very common occurrence to find explanations in the form of narratives. This, in turn, engenders the habit of expecting to find an explanatory narrative outside the poem itself and gives credence to the idea that full-fledged narratives about the subject treated by a *qaṣīda*, with the unmistakable and defining characteristics of the genre, are to be found outside the *qaṣīda* itself. This is how these narratives are granted a somewhat complementary status, acquiring the function of supplementing a deficiency within the text of the poem, of contributing to a fuller understanding of its premises and its context. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that the author addresses this matter in a particularly vigorous manner, stating, from the very

beginning, that these narratives are not to be taken as independent, parallel sources of information, but as limited expansions, as mere prose rewritings dependent upon the narratives already embedded in the poems themselves. Moreover, these external narratives are deemed detrimental for the very fact that they provide specific contexts, circumstances and objectives for the creation of a given poem, thus restricting a process of interpretation that should be much more open to the existence of multiple layers of meaning, only one of which may be accurately assessed by the commentator. The author also notices a hierarchical shift between poetry and accompanying explanatory narratives that can be traced back to the initial paradox of these narratives being taken as a basis for understanding poetry, notwithstanding their dependence on it: as these narratives elicit an increasing interest for themselves, they gradually come to the fore and leave behind their initial status of mere marginalia to poetry, finding their way in history books and biographies, while poems or fragments thereof begin to function as marginalia to these texts, although even in this somewhat subordinate role they still play a key part in legitimizing them as valuable literary works. The propensity for pinning down, by means of prose narrative texts, of information deemed relevant for the understanding of poetry can be explained by the sheer prestige of poetry itself, which was bound to elicit such an interest, but, in some specific cases, it might also have been brought about by the outstanding stature of some poets who enjoyed the status of quasi-heroes, of larger-than-life figures. In any case, these texts are considered valuable not as tools for interpreting poetry, but rather as documents concerning its reception in specific times and milieus. The last and largest portion of this section is replete with concrete cases meant to illustrate the complexities of the relationship, in terms of narrativity, between the poems and the collateral information provided by their commentators (pp. 161-191).

The first section of the second chapter (*Aš-šīr wa-t-tamīl as-sardī*), titled *As-sard aš-šīr bayna l-^calāqāt as-sababiyya wa-z-zamāniyya*, approaches two important and usually intertwined ingredients of a narrative text – temporal and causal relationships – which contribute a great deal to its unity and cohesion. It is commonly expected that there be a correlation between the temporal and causal succession of events within a given narrative sequence, but, according to the author, pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, much like novel in its maturity stage, oftentimes discards such conventions and shatters the predictable concatenation of the events through interruptions, postponements and other devices, triggering from its audience a constant effort to rearrange them according to their “natural” succession. These phenomena are scrutinized in the light of narrative time as a central theoretical concept, which provides the author with the means of assessing the ways in which poets handle the order of the events within narrative sequences and pace their delivery. The assessment of these aspects is pursued at different levels of complexity – the structure of the text as a whole, syntax (particularly clause order within the sentence), going all the way down to morphology and grammatical category. This last level is approached in detail especially in the last part of this section, in which a poem by Ta’abbāṭa Šarran (VIth century CE) is discussed at length, as the author points to an increased frequency in descriptive passages of nominal parts of speech, including nominal derivatives of verbs (adjectives, participles, verbal nouns), which, lacking the grammatical category of tense, can either designate permanent qualities or take on a more precisely circumscribed temporal dimension from the wider context of the narrative they help

conveying. In addition to other aspects relevant for the management of time and pacing in unfolding the poem's narratives, the author also notices that, in the particular case of this poem, in the context of the poet's keenness to stress his qualities, and above all his speed, time is integrated into the fabric of the events narrated by the poet (pp. 197-229).

The second section (*Aš-šaḥṣiyya wa-s-sard aš-šīʿrī*) includes two studies focusing on the treatment of characters in the narratives contained within pre-Islamic Arabic poems. The first study focuses on the recurrence of specific proper names in a great number of poems as an integral part of a process of stereotypization incurred by certain characters. This phenomenon is noticeable especially in *nasībs*, the amatory preludes of *qaṣīdas* and, in general, in erotically themed passages, where the name of the woman loved by the poet oftentimes becomes an axis around which a narrative can revolve, and also the focal point of the character as a whole, which takes shape as a cluster of actions and qualities gathering around that name. These proper names are handed down from one generation of poets to the next, and with each retelling the narratives associated with them are renewed, revitalized and salvaged from oblivion. The proper name serving as an example for this process in this study is *Salmā*, which generally occurs in *nasībs* and, according to the author's conclusions, is constantly used to designate the woman of lost love, of separation experienced in the present, who can often lie at the center of a temporal bifurcation starting from the present time of loss and distress and extending towards both the past, through the recollection of the happier times when the couple had not yet been torn apart, and the future, through the poet's actions meant to get her back, which are, in many instances, integrated into the theme of the journey and its usual motifs. The second study looks further into the stereotypization of the characters of narratives in pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas* by carrying on the investigation of the profile of *Salmā*, this time drawing a parallel with another female character, named *Rābiʿa*, that appears constantly as the woman with whom the poet has a love relationship in the present. The author points to the dominant presence of epithets in the references to *Rābiʿa*, which are thus generally descriptive. Not only that, but these epithets designate qualities pertaining to physical appearance, which suggests a certain lack of depth in the depiction of this character. In broad terms, the narrative of *Rābiʿa* is predominantly static, mainly as a result of her being the woman who, by reciprocating the poet's love, does not pose any challenge for him. She appears, therefore, as an almost perfect counterpoint for *Salmā*, the unattainable target of the poet's affection, whose narrative appears to be dynamic in more ways than one: it relies mostly on verbs, each one of which marks a turning point in the narrative, her image being thus outlined mostly by facts and events; the temporal and logical succession of events within it is typically dismantled and rearranged, in accordance with the prevalent treatment of narratives in pre-Islamic poetry, and entails projections towards both the past and the future, as it has been previously shown, whereas on a spatial level the longing for her makes the poet embark on journeys and other enterprises meant to help him reach her again; natural landscapes are used to reflect and enhance the tribulations of this complicated relationship. The narrative of *Salmā* can facilitate the transition towards two possible themes – either the journey or the war, as if the two were interchangeable in this context; this is seen as a result of both themes providing a suitable context for the poet's self-praise. These observations rely on the parsing of a great number of *mufaḍḍalī* poems, and also, out of a desire to verify their

validity with regard to pre-Islamic poetic tradition as a whole, on the study of a considerable number of poems by well known pre-Islamic poets not included in the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* (pp. 233-283).

The third and last section of the second chapter (*Aš-šī'r min dātiyyat as-sard 'ilā ta'addud al-'aṣwāt*) deals with a series of issues that can be said to gravitate around the coexistence of subjectivity and narration in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. The first study of this section begins by taking note of the correlation between objectivity and impersonal constructions, on the one hand, and subjectivity and personal constructions, on the other (with an emphasis on pronominal markers, verbal tenses and other elements of linguistic expression that make them up), mentioning that the former pair is regularly associated with narratives by literary theorists. Pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas*, however, do not neatly fit into this model – they generally represent a deeply personal and subjective form of discourse and, at the same time, make subjectivity and personal speech into a frame for the objective and the impersonal. The poet features most of the time as a central character of his own narrative, even though he sometimes takes a step back and, resorting to impersonal constructions, refers to elements of his environment, creating narratives that insert themselves in the form of digressions into the main, subjective and personal narrative. One of the most obvious manifestations of subjectivity is the direct address to the other, whose identity can be very diverse (it can be the poet's own alter ego, wife, lover, rebuker etc., or even an unidentified addressee or an abstract entity). The beginnings of *qaṣīdas* are always formulated as personal constructions, or, if they contain formal markers of impersonal speech, they most probably allow themselves to be interpreted as personal based on other, neighboring markers or on the presence of figurative speech (such as the name *qalb*, “heart”, standing for the poet's self in one of the examples adduced by the author), and the same goes even for the beginnings of particular subdivisions of a *qaṣīda*. The poems discussed in this study exhibit a great degree of cohesion between statements framed by personal and impersonal markers, so much so that personal constructions can subsist even if the apparent incentive for the creation of the poem seems to lie outside the poet's inner world (as is the case with a praise poem whose author highlights his own virtues alongside those of the character taken as the object of his praise). The recognition of the strong presence of the poet's voice in poetry in general, and in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry in particular, is the starting point of the second study, which aims, however, to look for the presence of the plurality of voices within the same poem, not necessarily in order to prove that poetry is as polyphonic as novel or other prose genres (which the author himself admits is not the case), but with the conviction that detecting the presence of more than just one voice and one point of view has an important part to play in facilitating the narrative reading of a text. The theoretical premise of this discussion is the social character of language in general, whose usage is bound to reflect the fact that self-awareness always inherently entails the awareness of the other. One of the main tools for conducting the analysis of the material at hand in this respect is the classification of a character's discourse into three main types (narratized, transposed and reported), according to the degree of the narrator's involvement in reshaping it. Among the examples subjected to analysis, one can notice cases where the poet communicates himself even when he conveys the sayings of a character as reported discourse (in one of these cases, reported discourse is used to

reinforce the polemical tone of the poet's sayings). Sometimes a character can act as narrator, conveying another character's saying as transposed discourse. Another possibility is that a poem be almost entirely made up of an exchange between two characters, whose sayings can be conveyed as reported speech, with a minimal degree of direct intervention from the poet/narrator. In all these cases and others the choice between the different ways of conveying the characters' sayings appear to be selected so as to contribute to the enhancement of the poet's own message (pp. 287-346).

The book ends with an afterword in which the author summarizes the main ideas and conclusions of his investigation (pp. 347-352), followed by an ample and useful bibliography.

By challenging a considerable number of received ideas about the nature of pre-Islamic poetry and some prevailing positions on theoretical literary matters, Mahmūd al-°Ašīrī's book is a valuable addition to the debate about Arabic literature and the adequate theoretical frames for describing it and classifying its contents. As for whether anyone ends up embracing the author's conclusions, that is, quite expectedly, entirely dependent upon whether (s)he adopts what may be the most important premise of his ample demonstration, namely his definition of what a narrative is, or prefers to stick to a more traditional understanding and treatment of the concept. This is, however, one of those situations where the journey is by no means less important than the destination, for no matter where you stand on this matter when first delving into the pages of the book and where you end up standing when you finally put it aside, there is no denying that you find yourself having greatly benefited from reading it. The present work of Mahmūd al-°Ašīrī bears vivid witness to how fruitful the junction between a keen interest in, and a deep knowledge of, Arabic classical literature and a great familiarity with modern literary theories can be; in a larger sense, it can be taken as a testimony to the vitality of a literary and cultural heritage that is, perhaps, too often met with a certain ambivalent reverence and whose canonical status seems sometimes to prevail not only with regard to its texts, but to their interpretation as well.

Nadia Anghelescu. 2016. *Noi și Orientul arab*. Iași: Polirom. 334 p. ISBN: 978-973-46-6114-5.

ANDREI A. AVRAM

Much of Nadia Anghelescu's work centers on the complexities of the relationships holding between language, culture and identity in the Arab world, on which she has published a number of outstanding works¹. This is also, to a large extent, the thread that binds together the 17 essays in this volume. Of these two – chapters 1 and 12 – are previously unpublished texts. The remaining 15 are texts originally published between 1967 and 2007. Included are articles and studies published, in Romania and abroad, in specialized academic journals – *Studia et acta orientalia* (1971), *Taqāfat* (2005) and *Romano-Arabica* (2001, 2002, 2004, 2005), in prestigious Romanian cultural magazines – *Secolul XX* (1995), *Adevărul literar și artistic* (1996, 2000), *Luceafărul* (1967, 1990), in *Diplomat-club* (2001), as well as in three Festschrifts - *Omagiu Virgil Cândeia la 75 de ani* (2002), *Antic și modern. In honorem Luciae Wald* (2006), and “*Faut-il qu'il m'en souviene?*” *Mélanges Paul Miclău* (2007).

The book consists of “Introducere” [= Introduction] (pp. 5-9), five parts, and four interviews.

Part 1, “Cine sunt arabii?” [= Who are the Arabs?], starts with the chapter “Limba arabă, națiunea arabă și comunitatea musulmană (câteva repere istorice)” [= The Arabic language, the Arab nation and the Muslim community (some historical landmarks)] (pp. 13-39), in which the author discusses a series of key terms, such as *'umma*, *'arab*, *ġāhiliyya*, *al-šu'ūbiyya*, *qawmiyya*, *'adab*, *ḥadīṭ*, *al-fuṣḥā*, which are essential to understanding the emergence and evolution of the Arabic language, of the Arab nation and of the Muslim community.

Chapter 2, “La originile identității arabe” [= At the origins of Arab identity] (pp. 40-58), is concerned with the influence of European models, the role of the Arabic language, the part played by language contacts, and the myth of the ideal Bedouin in shaping Arab identity.

Part 2, “Cum cunoaștem Orientul arab” [= How we know the Arab Orient], aiming at offering a critical perspective on the cultures of the Orient as part of world culture, is made up of six chapters. Three of these – chapter 3, “Orientalistica, pentru și contra” [= Orientalism, for and against] (pp. 61-76), chapter 4, “Orientaliștii, denigratori ai Orientului?” [= Orientalists, denigrators of the Orient?] (pp. 77-85), and chapter 6,

¹ These include, but are not limited to, *Limba și cultură în civilizația arabă* [= Language and Culture in the Arab Civilization] (1986. Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică) and *Identitatea arabă. Istorie, limbă, cultură* [= Arab Identity. History, Language, Culture] (2009. Iași: Polirom).

“Orientalistica văzută din Est” [= Orientalism seen from the East] (pp. 95-128) – focus on the controversies regarding the status of Oriental studies. Taken together, these chapters are an impassionate, but wholly persuasive, defence of the field of Orientalism, with a focus on works dealing with Arab culture, Arab literature and the Arabic language, against the various charges levelled by Edward W. Said² as well as by others, mostly, but not only, Arab scholars (sociologists, historians, specialists in cultural studies, etc.).

Chapter 5, “Stereotipuri privind islamul și lumea arabă” [= Stereotypes regarding Islam and the Arab World] (pp. 86-94), discusses a number of selected stereotypes, which have gained wide currency in the West, on the one hand, and in Muslim and Arab countries, on the other hand.

The remaining two texts, chapter 7, “În spiritul dialogului. Dialog și cunoaștere reciprocă” [= In the spirit of dialogue. Dialogue and mutual knowledge] (pp. 129-139), and chapter 8, “Dialogul islamo-creștin azi” [= The Muslim-Christian dialogue today] (pp. 140-151), are a plea for intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, i.e. between the Orient and the West and between Christianity and Islam respectively. These are highly complex issues, which the author has previously addressed, on a number of occasions³.

Part 3 is entitled “Cum traducem ‘Orientul’” [= How we translate the “Orient”]. The title, however, is something of an understatement. Indeed, the topics covered go beyond a mere discussion of, for instance, the technicalities involved in the process of translating from Arabic. In chapter 9, “Traducere și receptare” [= Translation and reception] (pp. 155-164), the author starts by illustrating various expectations lay people (the general public) in Europe, or, more generally, in the West frequently have of the languages of the “others”, such as oriental ones, hence different. This is followed by a discussion of the impact of the Whorf-Sapir hypothesis, including on theorizing about the psychology of the Arabs or the Arab mind. The author notes that the expectations of (part of the) readers are met in the case of some translators who deliberately choose not to translate even non-culture-specific terms such as *hurūf* or *ma'nā*, to increase the feeling of exoticism, i.e. of “otherness”. In the concluding remarks, it is suggested that a translator who is also a professor of foreign languages or a researcher in the field, is, in principle, better equipped to act as a mediator between cultures.

Chapter 10, “Literatura arabă în oglinda Europei” [= Arab literature in Europe’s mirror] (pp. 165-178), deals with various aspects of the reception of Arab literature in Europe, such as the representativeness of the texts translated into European languages, the role of Orientalists, the dilemmas of translators. Also included is a brief summary of the reception of Arab literature in Romania.

Chapter 11, “Orientul ‘exotic’ în literatura tradusă din arabă” [= The “exotic” Orient in the literature translated from Arabic] (pp. 179-194), outlines several trends illustrated by the types of texts translated from Arabic into European languages, particularly in the 20th century. The author tackles issues as diverse as the selection of texts, preferential attitudes towards particular Arab writers, specific cultural policies, the

² In his book *Orientalism* (1978. New York: Pantheon Books).

³ See for instance *Al-‘istiṣrāq wa al-ḥiwār al-ṭaqāfī* (1999. Sharjah: Dā’ira al-ṭaqāfa wa al-‘i‘lām). Nadia Anghelescu is also the author of *Introducere în islam* [= Introduction to Islam] (1993. Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică; second edition 2014. Iași: Polirom).

considerable persistence of clichés and stereotypes (e.g. *One Thousand and One Nights* as the epitome of “Arabhood”). The essay ends with a brief overview of the translations into Romanian of Arabic literary works.

In chapter 12, *Netraductibil și netradus* în traducerile din literatura arabă [= Untranslatable and not translated in the translations from Arabic literature] (pp. 195-204), the author looks at a particular feature of translations of Arabic works in prose, namely the occurrence of untranslated words. The analysis is made with the reference to the distinction between overt and covert translations, the former preferring to preserve terms in the source language, which are explained in notes or comments. The author rightly notes that, since such terms are not infrequently in rather wide use, the fact that these are not translated is likely to suggest that the Orient is untranslatable. Yet, according to the author, this is a risk sometimes willingly taken by translators from Arabic, who appear to be torn between the desire to unveil the Orient and their fascination for mystery.

As indicated by its title, Part 4, “Ce avem în comun” [= What we share], focuses on commonalities which cut across artificial divisions between the Orient and the West. Chapter 13, “La porțile Orientului” [= At the gates of the Orient] (pp. 207-216), first traces the emergence of the culturally and ideologically loaded images of the Orient in Romania. This is discussed in relation to issues such as national identity, imagined communities, and even imagined (and mobile) geographical locations. Also mentioned is the role of the West (particularly of French authors), as an intermediary filtering many of the components of the image of the Orient in Romania. The author adduces arguments in favour of the necessity of recognizing a pluralistic cultural identity, which would highlight universal values, rather than intercultural differences.

Chapter 14, “Metafore conceptuale comune: inima” [= Shared conceptual metaphors: the heart] (pp. 217-235), examines metaphors of the heart in several languages, especially in Romanian, Arabic and French, and to a lesser extent in other European and Asian languages. Six shared underlying conceptual sub-models are identified: the significance of the heart for the individual; the symbolic centrality of the heart; the relation of the heart with the soul and the mind; the individual’s capacity to manipulate the heart; the dissociation of the heart from the ego; the structure, temperature and colour of the heart. The author concludes that these metaphors are explanatory models of the human body and psyche.

Part 5, “Incursiuni în literatura arabă: teme și figuri” [= Inroads into the Arabic literature: topics and figures], contains four essays. The first two are grouped in section A. “Despre iubire, în Spania cucerită de arabi” [= On love, in Arab-occupied Spain]: chapter 15, “Ibn Hazm, despre iubire” [= Ibn Ḥazm, on love] (pp. 239-253) and chapter 16, “Iubirea în metafore arabe” [= Love in Arabic metaphors] (pp. 254-265). Both chapters look into the conceptualization of love and the types of metaphors for love in Ibn Ḥazm’s *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*. Section B. “Alte figuri din literatura arabă [= Other figures in Arabic literature] consists of chapter 17, “O mie de ani de la nașterea lui Al-Hamadhani” [= A thousand years since the birth of Al-Hamadānī] (pp. 266-270), and chapter 18, “Taha Hussein, după douăzeci de ani” [= Ṭaha Ḥusayn, after twenty years] (pp. 271-281), an overview of Ṭaha Ḥusayn’s aesthetic credo and of his views on topics such as world culture, literature or Arabic pre-Islamic poetry.

The volume ends with a section entitled “Interviews”. Included here are the following interviews: “Pentru ei, recursul la integrism este rezultatul unei crize profunde”

[= For them, resorting to integrism is the outcome of a profound crisis] (pp. 285-293), granted in 1991 to *Litere, arte, idei*, a weekly supplement of the daily newspaper *Cotidianul*; “Orientaliștii sunt cei care deschid punți între culturi” [= Orientalists are those who build bridges between cultures] (pp. 294-299), granted in 1999 to *’Aḥbār al-’Adab*; “Suntem supuși aceluiași proces, ireversibil” [= We are subject to the same irreversible process] (pp. 300-316), granted in 2010 to Radio France Internationale; “Dacă tinerețea ar ști, dacă bătrânețea ar putea...” [= If youth knew, if old age could ...] (pp. 326-332), granted in 2014 to the monthly *Familia*.

To conclude, the volume reflects the author’s long-standing interest in linguistic anthropology, ethnology, Arab-Islamic culture and Islam as well as her impressive scholarship in these fields. Extensive in its scope, both authoritative and highly readable, the book is an important contribution to our understanding of the Arab Orient.

Ioana Feodorov. 2016. *Tipar pentru creștinii arabi: Antim Ivireanul, Atanasie Dabbās și Silvestru al Antiohiei*. Brăila: Editura Istros a Muzeului Brăilei. 399 p. ISBN: 987-606-654-214-2

OANA GHICA

Ioana Feodorov's new book, *Printing for the Arab Christians. Antim the Iberian, Athanasios Dabbās and Sylvester of Antioch*, analyses, from a linguistic and a historical perspective, an important moment of printing in Arabic.

Annemarie Schimmel noted in her book *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture* that “the art of writing has played, and continues to play, a very special role in the entire Islamic culture, considering that through the Arabic letters – heritage of all Islamic societies – the Divine Word is preserved. The writing is empowered with magical powers; sometimes it becomes a sort of amulet, and, on many occasions, despite its illegible character, it conveys *baraka* to the onlooker” (Annemarie Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, New York, 1984, p. 65).

Ioana Feodorov included in her new book epigraphic, linguistic, historical and ethnographic elements, in order to bring the reader closer to a topic that played a very important role in the context of the birth of the concept of nation in the Middle East.

The significance of the printing press in the cultural and social advancement of Syria in the 18th century was revealed by the historians of the past century. As the author explains, the spread of printing and the emergence of the first political newspapers contributed significantly to the birth of a national conscience in the Ottoman provinces where the Arab populations represented a majority, and to the birth of movements of independence in present-day Syria and Lebanon (p. 264).

For Eastern Christianity, Syria and Lebanon are two areas equally rich in historical traditions. While in Lebanon the profound confessional roots of the political system ensured the flourishing of the Christian community, one could not say that Arab nationalism had the same outcome in Syria. Lebanon is, for the Middle East, an exceptional case of concentration of Christianity in a small area, which has allowed this community to be largely safe, along history, from various dominations. In Syria, although the number of Christians is higher than the one in Lebanon (around 1 000 000), they hardly represent 10% of the population and are spread in a way that prevents them from carrying out a census.

Pope John Paul II noted in his Apostolic Letter *Orientalis Lumen*: since its origins, the Christian East has embraced various interior shapes, thus being able to embrace each culture's features and show respect for each community.

From the perspective of an elite specialist of the Arabic language and civilization, sensitive to the values that have been promoted by them, the book reviewed here contributes, through modern means of evaluation, to the recovery of the historic steps taken by the first Levantine books, by bringing to light the role played by Antim the Iberian in the context of this historic moment, taking place in Aleppo.

The author, Ioana Feodorov, describes in Chapter VII, *Final Arguments*, the cultural dimension of her efforts which shed light on the typographical relations between the Romanian Principalities and the Orthodox Christian Arabic-speaking world at the beginning of the 17th century:

1. Antim the Iberian carved a complete set of Arabic letters and created xylographic plates with Arabic letters (for titles), with which he printed the first two Arabic books (with parallel Greek text) in Eastern Europe. He has shown extraordinary skill in the art of engraving and printing, by printing bilingual books - in languages belonging to different families, with a different writing direction, etc.

2. The special relationship between Antim the Iberian and Athanasios Dabbās made it possible for books to be printed in Syria, an Ottoman province where the Sultan's laws were observed. At a distance from the capital of the Empire, Dabbās had the audacity to print liturgical books for Christians, taking advantage, perhaps, of the local governor's lack of interest (or his interest in not getting involved).

3. Antim the Iberian wished to help the Christian communities in Syria because they were under the obedience of the Church of Antioch and All the East, as well as his Georgian brothers, whose national Church had long depended on the same Patriarchate.

4. The printing of church books in Arabic has (predictably and desirably) resulted in the standardization of liturgical texts according to the versions that had been revised by the great hierarchs of the Antiochian Church and who had checked the old Arabic versions against the Syriac and Greek originals, thus preserving the traditions of this Church with Apostolic roots. Again, the aspirations of the scholarly hierarchs of the Romanian Principalities coincided with those of the Syrian Christians: spreading of liturgical writings in canonical form, in accordance with the Orthodox dogmas, thus preserving the traditions of the Eastern Churches.

5. Dabbās's printing activity allowed the spreading of this revolutionary technique in time and space: his disciple 'Abdallāh Zāḥer established a second printing press in Lebanon, at the Monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Šuweyr, relying on the work that was started in Aleppo, but following another program, adapted to the requirements of the Greek-Catholic believers and the Jesuit missionaries in the Levant.

6. All the printing works related to the Arabic books that took place in the mid-18th century in Iași, Bucharest, Šuweyr and Beirut were the result of the first endeavors of Antim the Iberian and Athanasios Dabbās (p. 267-268).

The book is divided in 7 chapters, 2 annexes (Annex 1 consists of the translation to Romanian of the Arabic Preface to a *Hieratikon* printed in 1701 by Antim the Iberian and Athanasios Dabbās, while Annex 2 is devoted to Ibrahim Müteferrika and the first Turkish books printed in Istanbul after 1729), Acknowledgments, Index of names and places, Transcription of the Arabic Alphabet, Bibliography, and Illustrations.

As the author, Ioana Feodorov confesses, "within the pages of this book I bring convincing arguments, which are based on accurate documents and testimonies,

contemporary to the events, opposing certain legends or preconceptions (*idées reçues*) and correcting inaccuracies or errors, some a century old, which, by being repeated in the works of the historians and researchers mentioned in this book, have been credited over time as undeniable truths” (p. 266).

The book begins with the explanation of the historical context of the access to printing in the Ottoman Empire, reporting on Arabic printing in workshops in Western Europe until 1700, the attempts of the Antiochian hierarchs to print liturgical books for the Arab Christians, and the printing press at the Qozhaya Maronite Monastery in Lebanon. Chapter III introduces us to the world of the Arab liturgical books printed in Wallachia in 1701-1702 and the long-standing fraternity between the Romanian Orthodox and the Antiochian Christians. This study is also rich in details on the education and works of the hierarch of the Antiochian Church Athanasios Dabbās, a guest of Constantin Brâncoveanu at the Court of Bucharest. Also in this chapter, convincing arguments are brought regarding the way the Wallachian printing dedicated to the Christians in Syria became a form of art by the participation of Antim the Iberian in the typographic works. As Ioana Feodorov asserts, the works of Antim the Iberian brought great benefits to the Romanians, the people who adopted him, to the Georgians, his native people, and to all the Christians who had access to his spiritual, scholarly or printing activities.

In the 5th chapter there is a description of the printing works of Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch in Iași and Bucharest, accompanied by a catalog of the Arabic books that he produced.

Ioana Feodorov’s book is an original contribution to an important chapter of Arab Christian culture and civilization, a study that will certainly become a landmark for researchers interested in this field. She presents a unique perspective of this period, through which she explains the cultural relations between Romanians and Arab Christians, thus continuing the scholarly interest of her father, Virgil Câdea, for the Orthodox Christians of the Levant.

Catalina Girbea. *Le bon Sarrasin dans le roman médiéval (1100-1225)*. Paris : Classiques Garnier, « Bibliothèque d'histoire médiévale » 10. 2014. 678 p. ISBN 978-2-8124-2860-9.

LAURA SITARU

Avec le livre de Catalina Girbea on se trouve au milieu d'un monde médiéval peu connu surtout dans son définition identitaire et la manière de se rapporter à l'autre. Le titre lui-même allume la curiosité du lecteur qui n'est pas très à l'aise avec l'image d'un Sarrasin *bon*, d'un oriental généreusement peint en couleurs positives dans les *obscurs* temps médiévaux des XIIème et XIIIème siècles. Même pour ceux qui s'intéressent aux études identitaires en toute profondeur l'image d'un Sarrasin *bon* peut représenter un aspect peu commun.

Qui est l'homme médiéval et qui serait l'*Autre* en ce qui le concerne ? Voilà les deux questions que le livre doit clarifier dès le début pour pouvoir ensuite construire sur la base des narratives médiévales considérées fondamentales l'image de l'Autre. Il semble que l'Orient de l'homme médiéval soit plus complexe en termes d'identité spatiale que les dimensions dont le concept d'Orient revêtit aujourd'hui, ainsi l'Orient de l'homme médiéval est-t-il à la fois « confus, éclaté et nuancé. Il englobe le monde musulman et Byzance, sans parler de l'Espagne [...]. L'Orient peut être aussi tout ce qui vient du Nord, les Saxons, les peuples baltiques, tous appelés Sarrasins, ou les Basques transformés en musulmans dans la Chanson de Roland » (p. 32). Cette représentation assez large de l'Orient et, par extension, de l'Autre dépasse l'identité religieuse, bien que celle-ci ne manque pas du portrait de l'homme médiéval vue plutôt en tant que identité spirituelle, dans le jugement de l'auteur (p. 33). Une autre idée qui peut s'avérer essentielle pour lire correctement l'image du Sarrasin dans les narrations médiévales réside dans la relation entre l'*étranger* et l'*autre*. Est-ce qu'il y a vraiment une équivalence entre les deux notions en ce qui concerne la lecture du Sarrasin ? Les médiévistes cités par C. Girbea trouvent que le héros musulman des narrations médiévales n'est en fait « qu'une projection du héros chrétien, seul son paganisme étant reconnu comme différent », ce qui traduirait une assimilation assez impropre de l'altérité transformée très vite en intolérance et désir d'anéantissement de l'*Autre-similaire* (p. 29). « Le juste sans loi », « le non circoncis de Saint Paul », « admiré et craint », « aimé et détesté », le Sarrasin et les généreuses significations qu'il incarne représentent en effet « le rapport d'amour-haine que le Moyen Age entretient avec l'Antiquité, avec le Vieux Testament, avec l'Altérité » (p. 42).

Considéré dans l'ensemble de l'analyse de C. Girbea, le Sarrasin résulte d'une importance vitale pour la construction du genre romanesque médiéval qui est bâti à la confluence de l'héritage grec et oriental, ou en d'autres mots, en dehors de l'espace chrétien dans son acception strictement occidentale. Le Sarrasin devient ainsi un motif

ou, peut-être, un *leit-motiv*, du roman (aussi du proto-roman) médiéval, surtout en ce qui concerne le roman du XII^{ème} siècle en tant qu'œuvre qui « aspire vers une esthétique autonome, impliquant un *homo creator* » et qui « incarne le combat entre l'anthropocentrisme et le théocentrisme » (p. 43). Le roman médiéval se fait porteur de valeurs antiques, tout en traduisant du latin et du grec vers les langues vernaculaires à peine naissantes dans l'Occident européen l'héritage thématique des produits littéraires de l'Antiquité. De cette prestigieuse panoplie, le Sarrasin est lui-aussi récupéré et devient l'un des acteurs de la chevalerie romanesque au XII^{ème} siècle considérée par C. Girbea comme « un miroir commun où se regardent, d'une part, les Sarrasins et de l'autre, les chrétiens » (p. 45). Malgré les perceptions communes sur le Moyen Age, C. Girbea insiste sur les réalités multiples qui animent le monde et la société médiévale qui « n'est pas un simple monolithe, obsédé par le christianisme triomphant [...] étant tiraillée entre des tendances contraires et parfois chaotiques » et dans laquelle « l'aristocratie porte un savoir complexe, au même titre que les membres du clergé » (p. 47).

Dans son analyse, C. Girbea suit en toute priorité trois textes médiévaux, à côté d'autres séquences narratives de la même époque, mais d'origine germanique, qu'elle considère utiles pour la démarche analytique poursuivie ; les trois textes sont *Floire et Blanchefleur*, dans ses deux versions conte et roman, *Partonopeu de Blois*, roman et *l'Estoire del saint Graal*, roman qui appartient à la Vulgate arthurienne. L'étude est structurée en trois parties – chacune d'elles au statut quasi indépendant, mais toutefois liées entre elles comme un roman médiéval. *Sous le signe de Babel* se déroulent les premières deux cent pages de l'étude à travers desquelles C. Girbea se promène en toute maîtrise du sujet entre l'héritage grec et le patrimoine judéo-oriental en tant qu'éléments essentiels pour la composition romanesque médiévale. Ici s'imposerait peut-être une petite remarque : le Babel dans le contexte médiéval occidental représente en effet la revendication des langues néolatines de leur droit à l'expression, quelquefois au détriment du latin, phénomène qui implique une sorte de revalorisation des mythes et thèmes d'inspiration prélatine.

Parmi les possibles filiations thématiques du roman médiéval, C. Girbea mentionne les sources arabes dont l'influence sur la littérature occidentale est bien connue et amplement étudiée ; ainsi, l'histoire de Floire et Blanchefleur rappelle-t-elle à la mémoire du lecteur les contes de *Mille et une nuits* (p. 115), mais aussi l'amour impossible de Majnūn pour sa cousine Leila qui est devenue l'un des thèmes favoris de la poésie arabe avec ses prolongations andalouses et troubadouresques. C. Girbea note qu'il « est fort probable que le Conte de Floire et Blanchefleur soit issu d'un récit arabe ou perse ou arabo-perse, mais il est aussi possible que ce récit ait été transmis vers l'Europe par le biais de Byzance qui l'a contaminé d'éléments grecs » (p. 118). Dans l'analyse de C. Girbea, l'Orient et la Grèce antique constituent souvent, au niveau de la narration romanesque médiévale, une source commune d'inspiration qui donne naissance aux éléments descriptifs stéréotypés : « [...] les sources les plus diverses semblent leur servir, des traités savants de Pline et d'Hérodote, des lapidaires et bestiaires, jusqu'aux récits de voyages et aux merveilles des contrées éloignées » (p. 127). La connaissance plutôt livresque du monde donne naissance dans le roman médiéval à une géographie approximative qui place la figure du Sarrasin sur les coordonnées du modèle gréco-hébraïque plus familier. Les narrations romanesques médiévales s'intéressent à la

toponymie dans la mesure où celle-ci est pertinent pour le tissu narratif ; Babylone, ville importante car le siège de la Tour Babel, change assez souvent la position géographique de la Mésopotamie à l'Arménie ou bien au Caire (p. 139). Une place problématique est occupée par Bagdad dont la situation géographique n'est pas très claire, et ainsi de suite pour Alep, Damas, le Maroc et l'Arabie (p. 143).

Les images stéréotypées dans la description du Sarrasin, qu'il soit bon ou méchant, utilisent tout un arsenal lexical qui s'avère décisif dans la construction romanesque du personnage : ainsi, le mot choisi pour désigner l'adversaire devient-il un indice précieux pour l'attitude du narrateur envers *son Sarrasin*. « Les mécanismes linguistiques semblent changer en profondeur l'archéologie des représentations : [...] dans le Conte de Floire, le souverain de Babylone est appelé émir » ; cette appellation, très limitative de point de vue identitaire et associée à la Babylone païenne, change spontanément à partir du moment où celui-ci fait preuve de la générosité et de la charité dignes d'un roi chrétien. Il devient *Roi* et on lui donne ce nom : « [...] plus les Sarrasins s'ouvrent à la charité et deviennent sensibles à l'histoire d'amour des personnages, plus ils sont **linguistiquement épurés** de leur traits orientaux et commencent à être assimilés à des personnages occidentaux » (p. 157).

On remarque aussi, à côté de C. Girbea, la dimension modulatrice et les valeurs morales que les narrations médiévales assument dans l'ajustement moral du Sarrasin : « le mauvais Sarrasin est en fin de compte un bon Sarrasin potentiel » (p. 162), mais aussi une somme de qualités qui permettent à celui-ci d'être capable des gestes bienveillants. « L'expression stéréotypée de l'empathie avec le Sarrasin est la phrase : *dommage qu'il soit païen* qui suit généralement un portrait parfait, émaillé de superlatifs » (p. 163). En plus, toute une *anthropologie de la lumière* est employée pour la description du Sarrasin et des lieux qui le définissent, ce qui fait réfléchir C. Girbea à l'influence de la philosophie arabe pour laquelle la lumière et l'intellect forment un binôme essentiel. « La littérature du XII^{ème} siècle [...] exploite l'emploi de la lumière, en en faisant à la fois un outil esthétique, mais également un apanage quasi-polémique d'un monde profane et laïc où la lumière n'est pas un signe de l'unité entre l'homme et Dieu, mais des hommes entre eux » (p. 168). Dans le sens de cette *esthétique anthropocentriste* qui domine le roman médiéval, surtout au XII^{ème} siècle, C. Girbea remarque la fascination du narrateur pour la toute-puissance du *homo faber* et les merveilles techniques d'origine orientale, arabe et byzantine (le trône en or du basileus qui flotte en lévitation ou bien l'arbre à oiseaux des califes abbasides). Celle-ci est doublée de l'admiration pour les vertus du *homo bellicus* qui renvoie à l'humanité de facture universelle spécifique à la création romanesque du XII^{ème} siècle.

La deuxième partie de l'étude – *Le Sarrasin et la chevalerie* – est d'une remarquable profondeur académique. Pour comprendre les étapes de la construction du *bon Sarrasin* dans les textes analysés, C. Girbea explique exhaustivement la différence entre la chevalerie classique ou terrienne (construite sur le principe *translatio*) et la *militia Christi* ou la chevalerie croisée (*renovatio*) caractérisée d'une portée religieuse chrétienne assez exclusive (p. 209-211). Ainsi, la chevalerie classique représente plus qu'un groupe social, elle propose un langage commun, « une solution à la fracture babélique, [...] un pont de communication entre chrétiens et Sarrasins » (p. 209). Les vertus du *homo bellicus* sont quasi sacralisées par la chevalerie classique pour laquelle « le païen est perçu comme source et modèle des vertus guerrières » (p. 251). En plus, ce type de chevalerie, durant le processus de *translatio* qui lui donne les caractéristiques fondatrices,

arrive à une forme de sacralité (*merveille*) qui est « fondamentalement non-chrétienne » (p. 251). Par conséquent, « la chevalerie médiévale est inséparable de la *translatio*. Elle revendique un ancrage ancien, païen et, d'une certaine manière, universel, de même qu'une capacité d'éternel renouvellement [...]; l'*admiratio* pour les Anciens et l'*oemulatio*, l'imitation des Anciens, définissent le regard porté sur cette chevalerie translaturée » (p. 253). Quant à la chevalerie religieuse (*militia Christi*) qui anime surtout les romans médiévaux du XIII^{ème} siècle, elle propose une grille chevaleresque exclusiviste dans laquelle « les adversaires, Sarrasins, musulmans, païens ou représentants de l'Ancienne Loi, sont tous, de façon plus ou moins sanglante, tués, sans l'ombre d'un remord » (p. 375).

La conversion et l'anthropologie morale est le titre de la troisième partie du volume recensé, caractérisée par une minutieuse analyse du processus de la conversion du Sarrasin qui indique, au-delà de la signification religieuse, une tension identitaire spécifique aux sociétés médiévales. Dans ce contexte, C. Girbea fait référence aux affirmations soutenant *l'incapacité des médiévaux de comprendre l'altérité* (Paul Ricœur), le païen étant une sorte de soi-même (« il s'occupe des mêmes choses, il aime, il fait la guerre de la même façon »), mais différent sous la perspective de la religion (p. 385). Ainsi, définir le Sarrasin est-il fondamental dans le processus identitaire autoréférentiel de l'homme médiéval ; donc, qui serait-il le Sarrasin ? « C'est l'ennemi à convertir. C'est l'adversaire à respecter. C'est la femme musulmane à aimer. [...] C'est l'autre et le même. [...] Il est au cœur de l'anthropologie des premières formes romanesques [...]. Il est également au cœur de la morale et de la réflexion médiévale sur l'altérité » (p. 381). L'étude continue à faire un classement des types de conversion en fonction des éléments qui les provoquent : l'amour, l'amitié et le sermon. L'amitié est, du moins dans notre perception, le plus chevaleresque des motifs qui lient les deux mondes, vu que « la mixité religieuse et les alliances sont à l'ordre du jour dans plusieurs régions médiévales » (p. 411) et même dans les territoires devenus possessions des croisades chrétiennes. Les narrations médiévales sont pleines de personnages légendaires, d'héros, chrétiens et Sarrasins, qui se partagent la gloire de la guerre et de l'amitié : Richard Cœur de Lion, Roger de Sicile, le grand Cid, Lancelot, Saladin, Baybars et beaucoup d'autres.

Finalement, on doit remarquer l'appareil critique très extensif et les repères bibliographiques qui assistent le lecteur dans la tentative d'avoir un regard complet et exhaustif sur les études médiévales contemporaines. La bibliographie en soi représente une source et un outil indispensables pour les chercheurs médiévistes.

Robert Gleave & István T. Kristó-Nagy (edited by). 2016. *Violence in Islamic Thought from the Qur'ān to the Mongols*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 278 p. ISBN: 9781474417938.

LAURA SITARU

Violence in its ambivalent status – as a concept and daily representation – is constantly associated with Islam, especially nowadays. Where in Islamic thought or Islamic tradition resides the roots of the *so-called* perpetual violence? In addition, what is the difference in terms of conceptual understanding between legitimate and illegitimate violence in Islam? *Wa lā taqtulū n-nafsa l-latī ḥarrama Allāhu ‘illā bi-l ḥaqqi* (Qur’ān, 17:33) – “And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right”. Therefore, the right to practice violence against the other must be rightly delimited and defined. István T. Kristó-Nagy in his introduction to the volume postulates the universal recurrence of violence: *Life is replete with violence. All living beings, even plants, apply it in a direct or indirect way and it is likewise applied against all of them [...] Humans are social animals. We are characterized by low individual and high group aggression. Murder is atypical, but war is typical. Violence against personal enemies within a group is condemned, but against unknown members of another group is heroism* (p. 5).

The volume edited by Robert Gleave and István T. Kristó-Nagy approaches the topic of violence in Islamic thought in two distinct parts: “Jihād and conquest: attitudes to violence against the external enemies of the Muslim community” and “The challenged establishment: attitudes to violence against the State and in its defence within the Muslim community”, and has as its start point what Kristó-Nagy argues by saying: *As with all world religions, Islam is not one religion, but an infinity of changing religions. A religion exists in the people who adhere to it (and, to some extent, in all the people who has views about it), and the countless multitude of ways Muslims have been living Islam reflects the variety of their lives* (p. 11). Furthermore, the editors’ perspective on Islam and Islamic thought must be understood in the key of the continuation they are postulating between the world of late Antiquity and the Arab Muslim Empire (p. 17), denouncing the *myth of fracture* as yet another academic stereotype.

Violence in Islamic thought has multiple dimensions and needs to be contextualized as any other concept. As a phenomenon, violence has to rely on something, it has to be justified, and quite often the sacred text of Islam is being used for this purpose. Therefore, anyone is trying to explain violence in Islam returns to its religious fundamentals, especially when it comes to *jihād* practice and its historical evolution.

There is no doubt that the Islamic conquest in its earlier times has given rise to a memory of violence in the people in the conquered land. As Sarah Bowen Savant put it in

her study titled “Shaping memory of the conquest: the case of Tustar” *the military conquest of a hostile territory is a paradigmatic form of violence*, but in the same time, she argues that we have to pay more attention to the narrative of violence which *in specific historical cases can bring to light the multiple functions that memories of violent conquest can serve* (p. 70). For instance, the Arab Muslims’ conquest of the Iranian city of Tustar has a tremendous description in the Khūzistān Chronicle, a short seventh-century Nestorian work, whose description of Tustar’s conquest is as it follows: *The Arabs proceeded to spill blood there as if it were water. They killed the exegete of the city and the bishop of Hormīzd Ardashīr, along with the rest of the students, priest and deacons, shedding their blood in the very sanctuary* (p. 71). The same fragment is reformulated by much later Islamic sources that are not stressing out the violence perpetrated against Christians in Tustar city, but they are choosing a more “politically correct” formula and more useful in terms of Islamic religious principles. Consequently, for serving this strategy, *a vocabulary featuring terms such as mushrik and kufr was employed to efface the identities of Christians and other faith groups* (p. 83).

The second part of the volume opens with the article written by István T. Kristó-Nagy who raises a fundamental research question for the entire book: “Who instigated violence: a rebelling devil or a vengeful God?” (p. 93). In other words, who made the first, nascent gesture of violence? Who is bearing this huge responsibility? *Qāla fa-hruḡ min-hā fa-‘anta raḡīm^m* (“Go out from the Paradise, you are *raḡīm*”). It seems that the meanings of *raḡīm* that were deeply and profoundly analyzed by the author could explain the initial constitutive violence in Islamic religious and cultural system. Understanding *raḡīm* as “stoned” would let anyone to believe that God had the initiative of violence, by punishing Satan for his insubordination (p. 97). For István T. Kristó-Nagy, the idea of divine punishment is crucial for understanding the violence in Islamic thought (p. 98): *we gather from the Qur’ān’s description [...] that violence does not come from the Devil, but God. And since God is worshipped as being perfectly good and just, it means that violence applied against one who disobeys God it is not evil, but just and good* (p. 98). However, as expected, religious dimension has social implications in Islamic thought; which leads to the integration in the society of the myth of Iblīs whose *rebellion and punishment can be interpreted as indicating the right of the society and its leaders to apply violence against those who disobey their rules and orders* (p. 102). Moreover, the image of God seems to be closely linked to that of the Muslim ruler, who is imitating Him in everyday action: *according to Islamic political thought, one of the principal functions of the ruler is to secure society against fitna and one of the main function of the Devil is to incite it* (p. 103).

The articles approaching intra-communitarian violence have an important place in the volume, as they bring valuable social and cultural information. “Violence against women in Andalusī historical sources”, for instance, represents a serious questioning of historical documents on the real situation of women during the medieval Andalusī period, beyond the official and traditional narrative. The place women have had in Andalusī society was fluctuating depending on their social status, and accordingly to the acts of violence perpetrated against them. Maribel Fierro, the author of the article, brings into attention cases of slave women known as *ḡawārī* whose destiny was definitely related to their master (pp. 157-160).

Geert Jan van Gelder's article titled "Sexual violence in verse: the case of Ji'thin, Al-Farazdaq's sister" offers an astonishing example of literary incarnation of invectives and shameless attacks against women's honor. Ji'thin, the sister of the famous poet Al-Farazdaq, was the subject of a rival tribe aggression, as she was dragged out from her tent by night. The poet Jarīr ben 'Aṭīya, known for his literary duel with Al-Farazdaq *heard about the matter and exploited it repeatedly in many of his lampooning poems, called naqā'id, grossly blowing up the incident by graphically depicting a gang rape in obscene detail, while accusing the victim's brother of being scandalously remiss in rescuing her* (p. 176). Salma Jayyusi, cited by the author, in the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature, condemns Umayyad satire against women as *being excessively gross and obscene [...] crossing the frontiers of satire into pornographic fantasies that arrive at absurdity* (p. 177). Discussing Jarīr's satirical poems in terms of legitimate or illegitimate violence, Geert Jan van Gelder postulates the idea of a special status for poetry comparing it to the other kinds of literary texts, being not different from that of belles-lettres in Western culture (p. 187). Moreover, judging Jarīr's act of dishonoring Al-Farazdaq's sister at the literary level Geert Jan van Gelder argues that the Umayyad poet could be accused, in Islamic terms, of *qadf* – the false accusation of illicit sexual intercourse, one of the major sins, *al-kabā'ir*, in Islam (p. 188), and more certainly by slander or *namīma*.

Eating human flesh – how moral or immoral is it for Muslim thinkers and travelers. Zoltán Szombathy approaches the topic in his article "Eating people is wrong: some eyewitness reports of cannibalism in Arabic sources". For reaching his research purpose, the author brings into light three medieval Arabic accounts of African anthropophagy as it follows: a tenth century letter written by Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Yūsuf, secretary of the Būyid monarch, describing the occupation of Oman and the annihilation of the East African bantu slave troops; Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's account about Mali empire, and the third report representing a fragment of 'Aḡā'ib al-Hind by Buzurg bin Shahriyār al-Rāmhurmuzī. It is not surprising to notice that cannibalism characterizes people situated at the cultural and geographical frontiers of the Islamic regnum, and that Islam is meant to liberate them from such disgusting habits. Cannibals are "pagans", "blacks", "dogs", and the Muslim armies *are purifying the land and the see of their wantonness and abuses - taḥhara l-barra wa-l baḥra min 'abaṭi-him wa ma'arrati-him* (p. 203). I would remark along with the author that all the reports are presented as accounts *heard from* eyewitnesses (p. 205), but in this type of research, the image and the stereotype offer more cultural information than factual, objective history.

An important part of the article is dedicated to the necessary clarification of medieval Islamic notions of savagery and civilization and Islamic conceptions of the inviolability of the human body. The practice of cannibalism in Islamic medieval discourse must be read between the notion of temperateness - *i'tidāl* -, and anomaly - *inḥirāf* (p. 210), although, apparently, there is no interdiction in the Islamic jurisprudence related to eating human flesh. Al-Ġāḥiẓ, for instance, argued that *God did not prohibit eating dogs, because a reasonable man would never touch such a thing*, argument that allows the author to conclude: *it is unnecessary to prohibit something that man naturally finds disgusting* (p. 214). Ibn Ḥazm himself classifies human flesh together of other types of instinctively disgusting organic materials (p. 215), but the main reason for not eating humans would be because it contravenes the obligation of burial, at least for Ibn Ḥazm, as

Zoltán Szombathy rightly noticed (p. 216). The author raises another crucial question for the discussed topic: could we relate the traditional Islamic category of *ḍarūra* (necessity) to the principle of *survival cannibalism*? Well, it seems that Islamic legal sources are silent about it, excepting Ibn Ḥazm and a few Shāfi‘ite authorities (p. 216). “Human flesh is utterly prohibited, whether in normal or abnormal circumstances (*lā yaḥullu min ḍalika ṣay^{an} ‘aṣt^m lā bi ḍarūratⁿ wa lā bi ḡayri-hā*)” for Ibn Ḥazm and for the famous thinker and philosopher al-Ġazālī, fact that allows Zoltán Szombathy to postulate that cannibalism represents a non-issue for the larger majority of Islamic judicial and religious sources (p. 217). As mentioned before, there are some Shāfi‘ite authorities authorizing human flesh only in cases of extreme starvation, because “the dignity of a living person takes precedence over a dead human corpse” (p. 218). Zoltán Szombathy, who definitely has an exhaustive knowledge of the topic, brings a series of examples of wars and famine periods during which cannibalism was practiced, but every time the perpetrators were punished by capital penalty (p. 219). Worthy also to be noticed that an expression like “eating Ḥamza’s lever” continues to be until nowadays the metaphor for *an evil and un-Islamic act* (p. 220).

Finally, it has to be noticed that the entire volume represents the first part of the generous research project *The legitimate and illegitimate violence in Islamic thought* (www.livitproject.net) funded by the RCUK Global Uncertainties Programme, administrated through the Economic and Social Research Council. Moreover, it has to be said that the volume *per se* could and has to be used as teaching material for students in Arabic and Islamic studies.

V. CONFERENCE REPORTS

INSATIABLE APPETITE: FOOD AS A CULTURAL SIGNIFIER
AGYA Conference Report. Beirut - 12-14 May 2016

LOUISE GALLORINI

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The Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) has organized an international and interdisciplinary conference entitled *Insatiable Appetite: Food as a Cultural Signifier* in Beirut. AGYA's goal is to strengthen international cooperation between young Arab and German researchers in the various fields of sciences and humanities, with an interdisciplinary perspective. This conference was organized by Julia Hauser (Assistant Professor of Global History, University of Kassel, Germany), Bilal Orfali (Associate Professor of Arabic, American University of Beirut, Lebanon), and Kirill Dmitriev (Lecturer in Arabic, University of St Andrews, UK). Food in the lens of a common heritage and common challenges: this was the focus of the participants' lectures and activities held over three days, with the added presence of food historian Charles Perry.

The conference was hosted at the American University of Beirut, as well as the Orient Institut in Beirut and various other places: indeed, some of the lectures were delivered during a trip that had been organized through Lebanon on Friday 13th, "Excursion along the Lebanese Food Trail", and a dinner event was being prepared in parallel at the Bristol Hotel in Beirut, for Saturday 14th, entitled "Discover Abbasid Food", which was to conclude the conference and take participants from food theory to food practices.

The lectures were grouped among seven panels with the following themes: Food and Social Status, Prohibitions and Prescriptions, Body, Intoxication, Abstention, Scarcity and Humanitarianism, and Food and Gender.

Thursday 12th May

1 - Food and Social Status:

Chaired by Torsten Wollina (OIB), this panel inaugurated the first day of the conference, with what food says about social positions and symbols. It began with Brigitte Caland (AUB) and her talk on food as a display of power from the antiquity to the Ottoman Empire, food as part of an *art de vivre* and as a symbol of the intellectual movements of the past, going through examples such as the kitchens of Nineveh's queen and Rome's extravagant meals and some amusing anecdotes.

The second talk was dedicated to an understudied part of cultural history of the Arab East: Tarek Abu Hussein (Harvard) focused on the social role of food, linking or separating groups and people in the Damascus of the late Mamluk and early Ottoman period, and how social interactions around food helped creating a distinct elite. This study of social dining adds to the study of material culture and everyday life in pre-modern Syria.

In the third talk, Nuha Al-Shaar (Sharjah) moved onto the ritualization of food and table talk, its motives and social significances, with a special focus on Abbasid literature, whether religious, philosophical or literary, and the themes of banquets and wine. She also drew some comparisons with Greek and Persian traditions to underline the changes in the ritualization of food.

This panel was concluded by traveling from the Ancient and Medieval East to 20th century Germany, with the analysis of Norman Domeier (Stuttgart) of archival material disclosing numerous details of the “Banquets of the Foreign Press” in Germany during the 20’s and the 30’s. He covered the diverse questions which could be drawn from such details, and the greater social and political implications, by making it a case study of the relationships between politics and food, and more generally the significance of food inside the field of cultural history of politics.

2 - Prohibitions and Prescriptions (two sessions):

The second panel, chaired by Kirill Dmitriev (St Andrews), covered the subject abstentions and prescriptions around food, both religious and non-religious. It was opened by Yasmin Amin’s (Exeter) paper on the history of onion and garlic. Sometimes viewed as positive, sometimes as negative, they were omnipresent in Arabic classical texts, from their mention in the Qur’ân to their different prescribed uses throughout history in food recipes, or medical books.

This was followed by the study of Al Shayzari’s 12th century manual, where Karen Moukheiber (Beirut) showed how medieval food industry and food regulations in Syria went beyond following the Islamic law on the subject: public satisfaction and welfare, hygiene, as well as a sense of equity and civility were aimed at. The authorities were equally concerned with food availability, diversity, preparation, and fair pricing.

After lunch, the panel was continued by two studies focusing on present-day concerns. The first presentation, by Mariam Al-Attar (Sharjah) examined contemporary Muslim ethics regarding genetically modified food. While traditionally and mainly concerned with forbidden food mentioned in the Qur’ân, legal Islamic bodies are now facing a new concern which is widely discussed across the world: GM food. Though usually made permissible, attitudes vary and are not always well informed.

The section was concluded by a presentation of Shaheed Tayob (Göttingen) on the Mumbai food industry, through the ethnographic study of interactions between customers and sellers, as an example of the perceptions of quality and production of trust. There, side by side is to be found the older way of slaughtering animals, with what it entails of sights and smells, and the newer hygienic and refrigerated delivering of meat to the client.

3 - Body

The next panel, concerned with the role of food in bodily self-fashioning as well as bodily Othering, was chaired by Alexis Wick (Beirut). The first talk was by Christian Junge (Marburg), who focused on Ahmad Faris Al-Shidyaq's novel *Leg Over Leg, On the Person of al-Faryaq*. Studying the affective and corporeal appreciation of the changes happening during the Nahda through description of scenes involving food and different social and religious groups, Junge shed new light on a much studied period of Arab history.

Silke Hackenesch (Kassel) explored in her talk the case of a German advertising icon, the Sarotti Mohr, which appeared in chocolate commercials from the 1900s. She studied its imagery and narrative, and how chocolate, a product involving the hard work of Black people and the consumption of European elites, constituted a racial signifier,

Keynote Lecture: "The Abominable Pig and the Mother of All Vices"

Hosted at the Orient Institut, the keynote lecture was delivered by Eric Dursteler (Provo, USA), on two alimentary products in the Early Modern Mediterranean, which are still subject to this day much controversy: pork and wine. This lecture is part of his ongoing work on a book about food and foodways in this historical period of the Mediterranean region. He explored how these two products served as social, gender, political and cultural markers in Spain during the Reconquista, where converts' attitudes regarding pork and wine, supposedly revealing the sincerity of their conversion, were closely monitored. While wine found wide acceptance, pork, albeit a staple in Spanish cuisine otherwise, continued to be viewed with suspicion, although some converts were engaged in its fabrication. Dursteler's lecture therefore shed light on the dynamics and nuances of Mediterranean cultural differences and identities.

Friday 13th May

4 - Intoxication

This panel was held during an excursion along the Lebanese food trail. Chaired by Mario Kozah (AUB), it began with a talk by Bilal Orfali (AUB) on wine and humanism in Islamic thought and literature. While Islam is usually considered to strictly prohibit alcohol, the study of various religious, legal and literary texts shows that this discourse emerged in reaction to an ambivalent stance towards it in Islamic culture involving diverse interpretations of the different Quranic verses about alcohol.

The ensuing paper by Danilo Marino (Paris) dealt with the consumption of food and hashîsh in Mamlûk literature in the works of two authors of the 9th century, with a comparative perspective of the literary motif of "edible architecture", or Land of Cockayne, in both Medieval Middle Eastern and European literatures.

Saturday 14th May**5 - *Abstention***

Chaired by Bilal Orfali (AUB), this panel dealt with dietary exchanges and conversations between cultures in discourses on vegetarianism. The day began with a talk about vegetarianism in Antiquity at the crossroads between East and West. Pedro Ribeiro Martins (Göttingen) gave a lecture about the writings and arguments of Porphyry of Tyre on vegetarianism, to which discussions about foodways in different parts of the world were central.

Moving on later in historical times, from vegetarianism to veganism, the second talk was given by Kevin Blankinship (Chicago) on the poet al-Ma'arri's personal correspondence. In an environment where animals were widely regarded as food, the poet exposed his adverse position in – frequently caustic – verse. Blankinship's paper therefore explored the links between ethics and authorship in a particular political context.

The concluding talk by Julia Hauser (Kassel) looked at the perception of foodways in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, which were central to an evolving vegetarian discourse in late nineteenth-century Britain and Germany. On the basis of observations made in outdoor lower-class settings rather than in the domestic sphere (often inaccessible to male Europeans), authors ascribed a striking frugality to locals, thereby taking lower-class foodways as *pars pro toto* for society as a whole. While their view was largely positive, it collided with scathing remarks on practices of halal slaughter and the supposed treatment of animals by Muslims.

6 - *Scarcity and Humanitarianism*

Chaired by Julia Hauser (Kassel), this panel focused on food in the context of humanitarian aid and crises. The first lecture by Lola Wilhelm (Geneva) tackled an under-explored part of the studies about humanitarian food aid: while the greater part of research is concerned with the macro- and institutional level, Wilhelm studied the local histories and changes induced by food aid and the implications of aid in recipient countries by looking at North Africa and Lebanon.

The second talk by Reem Maghribi (Beirut) analyzed the role of food, and the change of foodways, in the lives of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. On the basis of interviews, Maghribi showed how displacement affects the way Syrians prepare their food, the role of hospitality, and their ways of coping with their situation.

Tylor Brand (Sharjah) concluded the panel with a paper on the famine of World War I in Ottoman Syria through the lens of food consumption and practice. Reading through memoirs and correspondences of the time, he explained that food had a palliative role in times of shock, aside from its role as a social marker between those who could afford food and those who could not.

7 - Food and Gender

The last panel of this third day, chaired by Julia Hauser (Kassel), was concerned with how food helps shape gendered roles and activities in society. It started with a lecture by Rania Elsayed (London) on a particular fruit, the quince, and its supposed effects on both male and female bodies. The ancient Greeks dedicated it to Aphrodite the goddess of fertility, and the Prophet of Islam recommended its consumption by both men and women although for different results according to the sexes.

In the next paper Christian Sassmannshausen (Berlin) discussed food consumption in Ottoman Greater Syria as a local reflection of a growing circulation of diverse foods across the globe. He explained how this consumption reflected social ideals and gendered practices according to people from different Syrian social backgrounds, and how class, domestic architecture, and foodways were interdependent.

From Syrian kitchens to Egyptian kitchens, Anny Gaul (Washington) gave the last lecture about the emergence of cookbooks written by Egyptian women in the 20th century after centuries of cookbooks written by men, and what it reflected about foreign influences, culinary encounters between social circles, gender and class distinction, from adapted foreign dishes to domesticated street foods.

From theory to practice: the dinner event “Discover Abbasid Food”

As a way of concluding these intense three days, the conference’s participants and other guests were invited to share in a special dinner orchestrated by Brigitte Caland at the Bristol hotel of Beirut, in which dishes from the Abbasid period were reconstructed and reinterpreted with the support of the hotel cooks and staff.

Being both a scholar and a high-level trained cook, she was able to research during the months leading up to the conference through numerous books regarding Abbasid kitchens and recipes, to come up with a series of appetizers, dishes and desserts for this special occasion. Her double formation and past experiences in preparing such historical dinners allowed her to make do with the lacunae of the old recipes. Trying to retrieve ingredients, or use the closest local ones available in Lebanon, she kept the spirit of the recipes and insisted on a traditional preparation. Specific ways of preparation and ingredients sometimes bewildered her team, unused to deal with such old recipes and what a historical reinterpretation of meals meant in practice.

After these week-long preparations, she and her temporary Bristol team delivered more than a dozen appetizers, 8 main courses and several desserts, accompanied by Kefraya wines and seasonal fruits. The dinner was presented to its guests by scholars Vahid Behmardi and Charles Perry, and the dishes themselves presented in a refined style that must have been such as what one imagine was to be found on the Abbasid Caliphs’ table, during these times called by many the Golden Age of Islamic civilization.

Being able to taste dishes bearing the names so often encountered in classical Arabic texts, scientific or literary, created a direct and tangible sensory connection to these much studied and read-about distant times and places.

Concluding thoughts

The richness of these lectures and events should be documented in written form rather than this report or the conference abstracts allow to, possibly in the way of a book assembling texts of each of the participants. These texts could be grouped by historical periods or geographical interests. As many interesting subjects were touched upon and viewed in new perspectives, and through the popular theme of food through time and space, such a book would certainly gain the attention of a wider audience.

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For more information about AGYA: <http://agya.info>

The videos of the different lectures are available on Bilal Orfali's Youtube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEhQdsdon0x2eh72IKJKKVw>

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